

# THE LAST TRAIN TO NOYO

*Tales from North County*

*A Novel*

# TERRY ROWAN



McCAA BOOKS • SANTA ROSA, CA



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# Stories

1. The Long Ranger	9
2. Shape-Shifter	15
3. Help Wanted: Lady Pirate	23
4. Sales Manual for Success	27
5. The Last Two Mormons	38
6. Don't take These Drugs	47
7. The Master of Repartee	53
8. Another Planting Error	59
9. The Invisibles	64
10. You'd Do This Right, Yes?	69
11. No Room in the Inn	88
12. Two Dreams	92
13. Ken and Barbie Bite the Apple	95
14. Demon Begone	100
15. Sartorials and Proxemics	105
16. Threesomes Can Be Confusing	110
17. Professional Standards	116
18. Come Follow Me	122
19. How the West Got Won	130
20. Let's Fly Together	146
21. The Greatest Joke Ever?	153
22. Taking One for Jesus	156
23. I Ran Away and Found Myself	163
24. Calibrating the Last Inch	171
25. Love Is Hearing a Voice Talk Back	176
26. Simple and Good Win Out	183
27. As Wesley Says, True Love	197
28. Loose Ends	215
Acknowledgments	224
About the Author	225

1

## The Long Ranger

**B**UZZ CUT, TWO HALF-CRUTCHES which he swings into the aisle ahead of him. Steadying himself, he clop-swivel-grunts his way to Harry's spot at far end of the car. One of the few people on the train to be wearing a mask and gloves because of the virus, about which the governor of California has just mandated such protective equipment. Standing a few feet from Harry and Jesse, he throws his crutches against the far wall near the bathroom; they slide to the floor in a clatter. Harry redeposits them against the far wall. The big guy takes off his mask, pockets it.

Name is Sid Baker. VA docs tell me it's good for me to talk about this crap, helps me recover. Glazed eyes, smeary smile, a sarcastic sneer. Served two tours in Afghanistan, finished just as Trump was mid-term. Corporal, Special Ops, Army Tactical Forces, -- a sniper. Two guys in support. Intel spots some Qaeda boys a few mountains over, we jump in a copter, drop off close to the targets, get at it. Not much talk, we look through long-range glasses, maybe we get some drone photos, blah blah. Are the targets muck-a-mucks, tribal chiefs, or grunts like us? Whatever, it made absolutely no difference to us.

We never knew what the hell the whole war was about. Command tells us to kill some guys, and if we can, that's what we do. Good guy, bad guy, not part of the story. Cause? Who knows? Criteria for success? Who knows? Big freakin' joke. You put guys in that kind of situation, I'll tell you exactly what happens -- we tune out all the BS we hear from officers, company men who just pass on total crap from above, reporting to politicians in Washington that a gigantic win is six minutes away.

That war was already 15 years old when we were there. Weak countries fight 15-year wars because they have to; strong countries fight 15-year-wars because they don't know what they want. Grunts like us learn to care only about ourselves. Do as you are told, but respect, belief,

buy-in – don't ask for that. Anyway, three towelheads about 2,000 meters out, mile and a quarter away, making their way across some low hill. My rifle, a one-off special made in Canada, shoots a three-inch shell 2,000 meters in just under 4 seconds. Gravity pulls the shot down the whole ride, so when you sight a target, you gotta lead him ... oh, maybe fifteen feet above the guy's head and another fifteen out front. Got a special sight made in Germany. If it all goes right, shot gets him in the gut. A tumbling shot can separate a guy's torso from his legs, so, like, there's no need to call an ambulance.

Whole purpose of the exercise is to scare the shit out of whoever the generals say we are at war with that day. Sure, drones are much more dangerous, but there's something about a rifle shot that's real personal. Word gets around. The target can't hear the shot; it's just THERE. The other two guys run like squirrels– it doesn't matter if they get away today, 'cause they know it can happen to them any time and from far out, so they'll never be able to plan for it.

Let's see, I killed ... 213 ... uh, enemy ... this way. Never saw their faces close up, or knew anything about them, never cared to. Best not to know anything personal anyway.

Sid Baker's story is told in a flat monotone, like he's talking into a tin can.

One time, we're camping at night with a local warlord, supposed to be a friendly. Please don't ask me what that means – any two tribes in Afghanistan might get along Monday, but maybe not Tuesday. For my team, exchanging bona fides when we first meet these dudes, like we're supposed to be buddies, is a tricky business. Anyway, we're drinking the chief's vodka, eating his rice and lamb, listening to him complain about his life. His camp was full of his fighters, 200 ragheads with beards, crappy clothes, all smelling like goats. They watch us sit with their chief, but you never know if tonight maybe your throat's gonna get cut right in the middle of the only nice dream you've had in weeks.

Next morning, the chief whispers that two of his fighters are really Qaeda, guys who slipped in with some homies. ID'd by his intelligence guys as baddies. Do we care? Not really. Command tells us this chief is on the US Army payroll, so we need to stay friendly. He spots baddies for us, so cut him a little slack, you know, do a favor here or there if he asks for one. What does the chief want? In so many words, it would be

nice if we follow the two kids, pick a spot, then say a final goodbye to them from way out. Big favor, he'd let everyone who should know that he's real grateful.

Sure, Chief. Which way did they go?

The departing kids throw their crap all over the high desert, oblivious. We locate them within a single day. Making camp, three of them, the two Qaeda and a third unidentified someone else. Who's who? Like I said, we don't care.

We set up shop on a rise about a quarter mile away – from this close it's just a matter of making sure the kill shots are 'sincere,' as we say, clean and certain. In the glow of the firelight, it's easy to sight all three but it's gonna be tough to snuff all three 'cause it takes me five seconds to reset and sight for the next target.

I get the first kid taking a leak maybe twenty yards from their fire. The other two don't hear the report but they see their friend spin around, big hole in his back as he collapses like a lawn chair. They start to run. I reset as fast as I can, get the second kid running down a path towards some trees. The third kid makes it to the tree line and disappears. Did we get the right two? Guess what? I'm going to say we sure did.

About a week later, we're still out in the field, some other friendlies with onion-breath tell us the Qaeda kids we bumped off were really from another tribe, just Romeos who were doing the chief's eighteen-year-old-daughter, a precious darling he had promised to another chief's son.

So, we use them, they use us. My platoon Captain calls such activities 'Gestures of friendliness towards indigenous allies.' He's destined for great things in the Army.

On a short break in Kabul, I got wounded by an improvised bomb in a GI bar -- 3 guys killed, lots wounded like me. Got flown to a field hospital. Ruptured spleen, shattered femur, two fractured vertebrae, bad headaches, and I tell you, a real bad attitude. I wasn't sure I cared enough to participate in their recovery plan, just another machine part they got to recycle back into play or muster me out. I'm thinking maybe I did my part. Easy decision to quit, right, except what do I do stateside? The only thing I know how to do is shoot people from long distance.

A low point for me, everything crashing in. I realized how hollow I felt inside. When I look back at that time, only good thing was I refused their pain killers. I saw what those pills did to other guys, leaving them

dopey, dependent, crazy, suicidal. I just wanted to lie in bed and maybe die. Not feeling anything was one of my secrets there. They were feeding me OK, taking care of my wounds and such, getting me to regular therapies. All I had to do was hunker down and rest. So, that's what I did, like a deep sleep. But I was always feeling how dead I was inside. I was hoping somehow that would all change, maybe I'd wake up one day like that guy who went asleep for twenty years, found himself in a brand-new place.

Six months later, I'm back with the lady I married just before I left for the first tour, four years ago. We hardly knew each other. When I returned, I was so screwed up with stress, so bitter, I had all these symptoms of PTSD – headaches, bursts of anger, hyper-vigilance, sweats, jumping at loud noises. I couldn't tell her the stuff I had seen or done. Instead, I blamed her for being sloppy, careless, but that was not true. I called her lazy. Not true, either. I was unfair to her. When she left me, I did not blame her. Frankly, I was relieved.

So, now I go to physical therapy twice a week, meet with a group of guys like me where we can talk through some of that crap. I can't say it's making a big difference but at least I don't feel alone. I found a small apartment in Santa Rosa, a quick turn I can meet myself coming the other way. I'm trying to stay away from people during this COVID thing. That doesn't bother me – I like staying away from people.

Sid Baker puts his mask back on, grabs his crutches, fits them into his hands and forearms, starts back to his seat.

Harry has two thoughts: one, all those high school kids who play war games on their computers, slathering to pop “enemies” from a mile out. God help them, and us. And two, what a bummer of a story. He asks as Sid retreats: Win any medals for those long shots?

No medals, a beautiful certificate, at the hospital in Kabul, before I shipped out to Germany. Longest sniper hit, ever – mile and a quarter.

Any good memories of Afghanistan?

Not really.

**HARRY CALCULATING:** Long-range killings – maybe a big audience for it. Four hundred million guns in private hands in America. So many dreams out there.

Harry had a high school teacher, a guy maybe twice his age now, not a burnout, not a guy who came in with old lessons that he just repeated like a zombie, but a guy who appeared to love kids, love his subject matter, walked around waving his arms while laughing, asking a ton of questions like he was having a conversation with friends he cared for and admired, wanted to be with, everything open-ended and searching. That memory always made Harry's heart beat hard for some reason. On the ride up to Willits from Santa Rosa this morning, he mentioned John Travolta's role as Chili Palmer in *Pulp Fiction*. Supposed to be a thug for the Miami mob, right? The way Chili always went to the movies, sitting all alone, watching his favorite flicks, that dumb happy grin on his face, mouthing all the lines?

Remember, Jesse -- Rene Russo walks down the dark aisle, sees Chili silently mouthing all those lines to himself. You know, just once I'd like to make a movie like that. Know what I mean?

**THE WINE TRAIN** GRINDS TO A HALT just at the edge of the first upgrade. Martin, the engineer, opens his cabinet door and purposefully strides down to Harry's end of the car, making his way carefully around Sid Baker and his crutches. He's wearing a concerned face.

I seen this crowd down here, this guy talking. What's goin' on?

We just heard this gentleman, a decorated soldier, tell us a little about his time in Afghanistan, says Harry.

Well, that's fine and dandy, but you gotta be sittin' in a seat, can't stand in the aisles. Against regulations, against the law, too. So, you can't do that.

Harry scans the brochure handed to him when they bought their tickets: Doesn't say anything here one way or the other about standing and telling stories.

Don't matter. Can't do it. Problem with liability and such. Sorry.

How about if someone stands inside a seat row, leans up against a seat, stays out of the aisle? How'd that be?

Martin is vexed. More crap, this latest coming from this passenger. He points at Harry: What the heck is this about, Mister? This is a wine train. We chug up a mountain, look at the pretty scenery. You want to tell stories, wait until you get to the meadow, 'bout another two hours. OK?

Mr. Martin, no offense. We all like the ride a whole bunch already. We just want to tell stories, that's all. Like free speech. Harry grins.

Martin's eyes are hot. Mister, I don't know what your racket is, but if you don't sit down I gotta call the Willits police. Take 'em 30 minutes to get here; they'll haul your ass off the train, that what you want?

No, I don't want that. And neither do you. We'll stay inside a seat area, out of the aisle. But we're gonna tell stories, Mr. Martin, because when it's all said and done, your company is in the entertainment business, just like I am, and there's one thing folks don't want, somebody telling them they can't have fun. So, let's cut the pie in half -- we obey the rules, and we tell our stories, too. OK?

Martin looks around the crowd. He's seen cars-full of tourists in the last nine years. Does he want to make a federal case about this? Does he care that much about the rules? Would his company back him up?

He turns abruptly, heads back to his cabinet. Hey, this what you folks want, tell your cockamamie tales to this . . . whatever he is, OK by me. Just stay out of the aisle.

But that's not the way he feels. He's angry. Not 15 minutes into this ride, and this jerk wants to hijack it. Screw him. Screw his company, too. Noyo Mountain, also.

**HARRY** WATCHES MARTIN RETREAT from his hissy-fit. He's not worried about the engineer so much, but the day is not off to the launch he hoped for. Depressive sniper boy. What's next?

A kid, middle twenties, waits until Martin grunts past to step into the aisle. Five feet, nine inches, built like a prizefighter, brown ponytail tied with a brown leather string, swimming in tattoos, tee shirt, blue jeans, work boots, a hard edge to his square, pockmarked face. He looks over the crowd as he strolls up the aisle, a pirate captain who's just captured the ship, and now he's checking out his new slaves.

2

## Shape-Shifting

**O**oooo, YOU LOOK DELICIOUS! My name is Luis Valdez. Once upon a time I am illegal immigrant. Thas' right, folks, from MEH-HE-CO! He waves his hands like he's putting out an imaginary fire. Is OK, OK, I become a legal citizen when I a little kid. Now I red, white, and blue jus' like my beautiful gringo friends in this car. We all Americans, ain't that great? He snickers like a zebra.

Well, les' see: when I am twenty I a big drug user. Plus, I break into . . . fifty houses, maybe more, looking for something I can carry out fast, -- drugs, money, jewelry, computers, somethin'. Then I get caught, go to jail for two years, but now I a perfect citizen, jus' like you folks." Luis slaps his thighs, laughs, then changes his expression in a flash. No, No, really. I change my life in prison. Wanna know how I do a life of crime, then how I reform myself? Good story, really. You know, self-improvement.

Eighteen, I outa my house. No Papa, three brothers, mucha drama, not enough food, Mama always working, tired, so I jus' gotta go, you know? I jump out right afta' high school. Dance outa there. Sing outa there. Free, like a bird. Work lots of quicky-mart jobs, long nights, sleep days, lousy pay, which I use to buy pot, crank, coke, whatever I can. One time I snort cleanser -- no high, but my nose is clean. Laughs again, havin' a swell time.

Sleep all ova, friends, crash here, there, in my car, wherever. Wasting time, sure, but I a kid, right? No parents checking on me, lotsa girls. No complaints. Les' see, first break-in happen by mistake. Walkin' home at four in the morning from some crap job, I see this guy leave his house. No lights inside; maybe no one else there? Hmmm, maybe there some stuff I can pinch? I sneak up on his porch, try the front door. Locked. Slip down the driveway, another porch in the back yard. Also locked.

I stop a minute – Hey, what I doing?

I remember this thing I seen on TV -- guy covers a rock with a cloth, breaks glass but light, tapping on it, not hard, only one piece fall inside, the rest he pick out the frame a piece at a time, slips his arm in to turn the lock. That's what I done with my handkerchief. Boom, I'm in the guy's kitchen.

Whoa! Do I really want to be here? I listen for noises like I got radar -- nothin'. Jus' so you know, this a crime -- Breaking and Entering, can get you a year or two. But hell, here I am. I start to look around in the kitchen in the dark for something to pinch. Hey folks, where would you look?

Drawers, cabinets, sure. Light a match, nothin' but crap. Open the refrigerator, then the freezer, more crap except a brown paper bag tied in tape, like half a brick thick. Pick it up, light. Tear off one end, -- Holy Cow, all fifties. Heart beating, eyes open, I can hear a mouse fart two planets away. Then, oh no, a toilet flush!. This lady's voice, Juan, you still here?

My ass slam shut. I jump off back steps, run down up the driveway onto the street, then three blocks before I slow down, look around, walk normal like everything OK. Hard breaths, dizzy, but no one afta me. No sirens. Nada.

Well, life of crime not so hard. Maybe a little scary, but not so hard. My first big lie.

Back at my friend's house, I slip into the bathroom, count the fifties: Holy Cow again, \$3,350. Guess what? I'm movin' out.

Here the thing about being young and stupid: first, you think three thousand bucks is a lot of money. Then you blow \$500 right away on party drugs. The room rent in Santa Rosa is fifteen hundred dollars, first month and security. In two days, I out of money after my first score.

I start to think hard about this B&E business. Like I say, it don't seem so hard. I do some homework on the internet. Most home burglaries happen during the day, not at night 'cause everyone works during the day. Except now, with this COVID thing, 'cuz lotta folks working from home. Anyway, all this before the virus.

I buy myself uniforms from thrift shops: plumber, painter, construction guy stuff; clipboards, hats I pull down over my eyes. B&E guys park their cars near freeways so they can skip pronto, blend into the traffic fast.

Les' see: What kind of house do you pick? Car in the driveway -- forget about it. Dog barking, pass it by. Hey, dog can be handled -- but too much trouble. House with lots of trees and shrubs -- good. Alarm system? Gotta tell you, most break-ins take five minutes and you gone. Alarm signal goes from the entry to central station, they call back to check on possible false alarm, then call the cops or owner -- that takes ten minutes easy. I long gone by then. Cops ignore most house alarms, anyway -- too busy arresting Black people for being Black. Oh, hope I not insult anyone here, especially if a cop here taking a break.

Luis laughs at himself again, and you can hear the girl he left in his row down the aisle laughing loudly along with him.

Let me tell you nice white people what thieves do when they in your house. Remember, they on the clock. Gotta have a plan, move, move, don' waste a second.

First thing, what are you afta? Me, I'm afta jewelry, cash, computers, stuff I can grab and carry easy. Don' grab a painting worth ten thousand dollars, which I don' know anyway if I trip over one. What do I do with computer, watch, jewelry? Sell 'em to a fence. What's a fence? That a guy who buy items no questions, ten cents on the dollar. Thousand-dollar computer get you a \$80-90 bucks. Two fence guys in Sonoma County. If you don' mind, I will not ID them.

Same laughter from Luis and girlfriend.

Harry is confused: the kid's story seems real, but why the inside joking? Who are Luis and his girlfriend laughing at?

I practice. Knock on door, lady answer, check my clipboard: Hi Lady, sorry to bother you, look for Mr. Jones, Google say he live here, I got right place? Lady set me straight, she don' know Mr. Jones, I got wrong place, close her door.

But if everything look OK -- no car, no noise, no dog, no answer to my door-knock, I go to backyard, look for a sliding glass door between the patio and kitchen, slip my crowbar under the door, jack it up, snap the lock, and bingo, I in. I got five minutes -- move it.

Toss bedrooms, sheets, mattress, drawers, throw everything on the floor, same for closet, boxes and shoes, pat down suits; then, kitchen, refrigerator -- yeah, some people hide jewelry in ice tray. The garage, jack open paint cans. Know which paint can to look in? One not full of paint.

And oh yes, wear blue plastic gloves, jus' like everyone today 'cause of COVID. More laughter.

Stopwatch say in-out in 4:30 minutes. Good Boy. I do this twice a week for three months. I average \$8,000 a month in cash afta' I dump my stuff at fence. Bonus: lot of drugs lying around lots of houses. Prescription drugs, pain killers, and as good white folks like to say, recreational drugs for their migraine. What the heck wrong with America, anyway, all those drugs? Girlfriend laughter again.

Nex' three months, more cash. General rule: it takes four 'NO' deals to get to one good 'YES' deal. Man, that a lot of humping. Google search, check out good neighborhoods – big houses, near freeways, I gotta drive by to get a good vibe or not. Afta a while you get a feel for this kind of thing. Second three months, I clear almos' \$10,000 a month.

I live alone. Apartment is full with crap the fences don' want. That bother me. What happen if the landlord stop by, he look around, see all this electronic crap stacked on chairs and bed, -- what he think? So, I gotta throw that stuff away in dumpster. You get paranoid. I avoid my old vatos. I still doing drugs, but now it more like tryin' to quiet down.

If I go to bars, I don' talk to nobody.

By month six I make \$12,000. Twenty years old, make almost one hundred-forty thousand, tax free. But when I check my stash at the end of that first year, I spend . . . les' see: Rent, \$24,000, used car, \$18,000, food, living expenses: \$20,000. Holy Shit – I spend \$15,000 on drugs. That be \$40 a day! That bum me out. I mean, where do that end?

Scary part about house break-in: no noise, no dog barking, no one answer door -- don't mean some cowboy ain't waitin' for you with shotgun aim at your sweet parts. Or, not waiting, but he come home right then. First time this happen I done the bedroom, quick run-through the downstairs, when the door jus' open and there she is messing with her keys and two bags of food. I ain't wearing a mask -- I freak out -- jus' drop my head and run past her, knock all her food on the floor, run like that Bolt guy from Jamaica down the street. She scream like a parrot with pencil up her behind. Did she get a good look at my face?

That happened two other times. Once, I in a garage, door jus' open up, I drop whatever, bomb outa there, but the guy pulling in, this crazy bastard throw his car in reverse, try to smash me between the car and

the garage frame, but I gone, baby, gone. I set a new world record for 800 meter run that time.

Paranoid? Oh Boy. And drugs make me more paranoid. Start to think about what I doing? In one kitchen I am stealing stuff, I see one of them things people sew and hang on wall inside a frame, *Intention Plus Opportunity = Change*. I think about those words the night they arrest me.

Thas' right, I get arrested. Here how that happen. In a bar, alone. Afta eleven, getting a little piss-drunk, ready to leave, guy at the other end leave his seat, kinda waddle over, can he buy me a drink? No thanks, I grab keys, start to walk. He whisper, Too bad, ain't tryin to offend no one, says he knows someone who knows me, but when he says the guy's name, that name don' ring no bell.

What does this dude want?

Bathroom on the way out. I flush, wash my hands. Dude is at the door when I leave, says, Stay, please, just five minutes. It be worth my time. I try to be nice: Don't know what you want but gracias, don't need nothing. I leave.

He says real low he can be trusted, he need jus' a little help, some advice. Five minutes, then I can go. OK?

Advice?

He planning a big thing. Need help to make it happen. Will I listen? A deep breath. Five minutes.

Side booth. Can he buy a drink? I stare at him.

He got proof about valuable goods that are . . . sitting . . . to be rescued -- the word he use. Deal needs two 'professionals,' he one of the professionals. I the other professional.

I laugh out loud: You are a freakin' thief, and you look for un idiota to help you.

Can I go on, he ask?

I laugh again. Man, how dumb do you think I am – you jus' come up to me in a bar and ask me outa nowhere do I want help pull a job? I mean, Holy St. Peter upside down.

Girlfriend in the back laughs loudly again.

Say he don't want the usual partner. One, Santa Rosa a small city, everyone in the business knows everyone else. Two, he says he needs a guy who works alone.

I stop this guy: Work alone at what?

Nobody know, exactly, but whatever it is, you quiet, don't talk, don't show off, not trying to prove nothing, just get the job done. That what he wants.

Oh, you nice white people on this train, I tell you this story because I am trying to show you how stupid I am. Lots of you think Latinos are dumb anyway, so this story will make you feel good about yourselves, because you could never be this stupid. I learn a new word in bar that night: 'Hypothetical,' Mr. Professional-looking-for-another professional, and he talks in '*hypotheticals*' for the next hour. I got twenty reasons to leave. Every minute I stay some angel standing over me checking off the stupid box. Mr. Professional explains he got this inside guy setting up big hit at the largest jeweler in Santa Rosa, a half-million grab, easy way in, schematics how to disarm everything, including backup alarm, a fence in San Jose who will buy the stash for twenty cents on the dollar, and big news for me, the second professional – me – I collect \$80,000 for one night's work!

Wow, lotsa hypotheticals. Lot's of money for Mr. Pro # 2.

Am I Interested?

No. And not in the next two bar visit over next two weeks, either. But looking back, just sitting still for those conversations, I was like a dumb fish -- little nibble here, little nibble there, not swallowing but not leaving, either. Guess what: little fish catch himself.

The Great Jewel Robbery happen one month later. A Santa Rosa jeweler, like he say, Fourth Avenue downtown. Park on a side street one block over. Mr. Professional Guy has drawings, details about where stashes are held. He got tools, details about alarms and bypasses, everything figured out. We climb a fire escape ladder to the second-floor, flat roof, locate alarm box, disarm it, break through upper door. Then, weirdo thing: he sits me on top step of the upper inside stair, say we need to wait, be quiet, just a few minutes. I sit, he checkin' his watch, but I got bad feeling already, and this sitting bit on top of stair gives me big headache. The voice in head says, Run Away Now.

But I don't. He checks his watch some more, then we go downstairs, break through the back door, follow script about who open what, I go to my side of the store, find drawers, begin to jack them open.

Boom: store lights go on. I look up: two uniform cops, one cop in a suit, and Mr. Professional, big smile, gives me a little wave while cameras record my sweet face.

My lawyer says I was entrapped. The prosecutor says I met four times to plan the robbery, then sat on the upper stairs for ten minutes – don't sound like entrapment to him. Jury finds me guilty in 17 minutes. The judge sentences me to 30 months. My lawyer plead this is my first offense, please send me to some place I have chance to rehabilitate myself. That turns out to be Susanville, a jail way up near Oregon, more like a rough camp.

This whole deal turns out to be a break, really. I was tired of the B&E life, tired of drugs. Susanville is a real jail, but I stopped using there, got myself straight, learned to ride a horse, lift weights, eat OK food, and started thinking about going to school when I got out.

Once, deep in woods cutting trees, the guard fell from his horse. Instead of skipping out, I told the other two prisoners I was staying – I had only one year to go. They think it over, and both stay, too. Guard comes to, nobody says nothing, but the guard is real happy about the situation without saying so. From then on, I am not a problem at the prison. Later, my sentence is cut four months for good behavior. When I got back to Santa Rosa, I got a job with the county cutting trees, clearing trails, nice outdoor work. A few bucks over minimum wage.

So, that's how vatos like me become true American citizens. If I ever have any bambinos, I will tell them to go to the good schools so if they want to cheat and steal, do it the way educated white people do, -- hedge funds, fake it till you make it dot-com's, Ponzi schemes, phony mortgages, hacking credit cards. That way, if they get caught, they get best lawyers to explain to white juries how free enterprise really works. Thank you, and I hope you like my story.

Luis looks around. He opens his arms wide: the spotlight is so bright. He loves his fans, they must love him, too. He knows he's terrific, everyone must know he's terrific, he starts to throw kisses to girlfriend in the back row. She has stopped fluffing her hair, she's clapping madly, laughing in big yowls. She jumps out of the aisle, dances up to meet him halfway, grabs him, plants an open-mouth kiss on his lips, slides her hand to his crotch, shouting, Oh, Guapo, you so hot! You make my eggs wanna hatch. She laughs like a mule again, teeth out, howling.

**HARRY HAS HIS MOUTH OPEN.** Everyone in the car is amazed? Or wary? Who the heck are these two? Girlfriend releases Luis, pushes him away, strides toward the spot Luis just vacated. On the way past Harry, she leans over quickly and bites him on right wrist. He pulls back in horror, shouts at her: Holy Crap, lady, what the hell are you doing?

Peasant blouse, scooped way down, no bra, black curly hair in wild ringlets, tight jeans, silver rings on all ten fingers, hi-beam eyelashes, heavy makeup, nails painted blue with glitter.