

# Red Tape War, Part 2

A Novel By Many Authors

# Introduction

The principal behind this book is simple. We are all the authors. Each individual is to write one chapter in the book and then pass it on to someone else so that they may do the same. And, of course, there are rules. We are trying to make this a challenging story to take part in so certain guidelines have been set up.

- Every chapter must be a minimum of five pages in order to keep the story flowing. Try to further the plot in some way so that the entire story becomes one unit rather than dozens of individual encounters and idiosyncrasies.
- Try to kill the main character. To make this challenging every chapter must end with the main character in a life or death situation from which you believe there is no escape. The next authors task will be the rescue of the main character and then put him in another life or death situation.
- No death or dismemberment of the main character. You are to put the main character in life threatening situations, but the words: "he dies." NEVER get written. The main character must be alive at the end of your chapter so that he may be saved. And, although not lethal, we would appreciate everybody not chopping up the main character. There ain't much a blind, deaf, mute, quadriplegic who is mentally retarded can do that will interest the reader.
- As for saving his life, nothing anyone does can be undone. Once it's written, it happened, no dream sequences or time travel (although that is a theoretical possibility, but most people can't cope with the paradox system that would evolve from such travel).
- Maintaining an obscure outside level of reality. There will be no direct manifestations from angels, rising from the dead, or other miracles as a means of escape.
- Have fun. Don't forget to develop the plot and don't panic. You only get a number of days equal to the chapter you are writing to complete your chapter or else you must surrender it to someone else claiming you know no solution to the life threatening scenario. The chapter must be passed on to someone other than the person who gave it to you.

Let the carnage begin...

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# Chapter One: "Welcome to my parlor..."

*By Caleb Michael Davis.*

As Shawn Walkman left the stage, an emptiness consumed him. He'd been playing guitar for WarCries for two years now, and everything had been going great. No one knew who he really was, or had any idea of his past. He was safe. And he was alone.

Funny isn't it? Thousands of people were chasing him, screaming their love and devotion, but he was alone in that big crowd. Every fan there would leave tonight, go home, get a kiss and fall asleep. Either next to the person they love, or curled up with a small child, or in an exhausted heap with a couple of real good friends. How it happens doesn't matter. Somebody cared for all of them.

Shawn looked at the other guys in the band. Benny, Oliver, Escar, and Gwaub, they were picking up girls from the mass of groupies waiting by the door. Everyone fills that empty void somehow. Shawn considered joining them, but decided against it. Meaningless sex didn't make him feel any better anyway. How could he have left everything behind, just to save his own butt? It was going to be another long night.

Shawn put on his sunglasses, bandanna, and a leather jacket and then walked right through the crowd and out the front door. Nobody noticed him leaving. So much for all his loving fans. He headed out to his van and climbed in the back. The next band was starting to play back in the club. He was already forgotten.

"Ah, who needs 'em," Shawn muttered, "I got a six pack of warm beer and a three day old pack of McDonald's fries. I'll get by."

Shawn smiled. He always sounded so convincing when he talked to himself. It was a big part of what made him survive from day to day. He could convince himself that he was happy.

"You know, you say that enough times and you'll start believing it."

Shawn looked up shocked. "Who the hell are you? And why are you in my van?"

"Get in the passenger seat, kid. We're going for a ride."

Shawn obeyed. It was half out of curiosity and half because, he realized, if this man meant trouble, he was going to get his way no matter what. The van started up and the two drove off into the night.

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They drove on forever. Shawn was starting to feel a little bit nervous. He grabbed one of his beers and took a drink. Most people thought it was a bit odd how he always drank with his left hand, but the scars on the palm and wrist of his right were the tell-tale signs of that encounter way back when. His right still cramped really easily due to the ripped muscles, which made guitar playing a bitch, but he found a way to cope. He took another drink and

started to work the kinks out of his hand.

"We're all sorry about the hand, you know."

Shawn looked up again. "Yeah, sure. No problem," he said. How did this joker know so much about him. The outside hope that this man was a record agent had been squelched. He was definitely going to mean trouble. Out the window Shawn saw a sign, you are now exiting Phoenix, AZ.

"So where we going?" asked Shawn.

"No where."

"Why we driving then?"

"I told you, we need to talk."

Shawn considered asking the man to go some place public to talk, but again realized this guy was driving and was going to do whatever he damn well pleased.

"So, what's your name?" asked Shawn, trying to spark up this 'talk'.

"Who I am is not as important as where I'm from. Surely you remember that."

"Okay, so where are you from?" asked Shawn feeling like an ass.

"I am Kosh. How many of your questions does that really answer?"

"None. That name means nothing. Where are you from?"

"We aren't here to talk about me. I'm from one of your half dozen ex-employers. If you switch sides enough times, you're bound to piss someone off."

"Who sent you?" demanded Shawn.

Kosh continued, ignoring the question. "You've been putting yourself before the group. I'm surprised you're still alive. I mean, come on, you haven't even been trying to keep a low profile. And a lot of people don't like you now."

Shawn looked down at his shoes, "yeah, well..."

Kosh went on, "But the point is, we're still on your side. Sure, you abandoned us and joined our enemies, but you played it strait and kept our secrets. We know how the KGB taught you. 'When you stab a back, stab lethal.' You did very little harm to us, which makes us think you've always considered coming back.

Shawn's head was swimming. He honestly didn't know where Kosh was from. Since his starting the KGB, he'd been in about every illegal, terrorist or foreign organization imaginable. And he'd sold out every time. Two years ago, he did it just to get a new license, birth certificate, passport and to be left alone. He wanted out of all the mayhem. But it hadn't exactly worked like that.

Kosh still didn't look at Shawn. "When you've been an indentured servant for two years, you build up a lot of emotions. Talk to me, kid."

"What the hell?" said Shawn as he unloaded his problems. And they drove about sixty miles. Kosh looked at Shawn as they stopped for gas. Kosh had long blond hair and a strong Roman nose. He was wearing a pink polo shirt and a tight pair of Guess jeans. Shawn was still sweaty and greasy from the show, he had cut off shorts and was not clean shaven. Shawn started to get a little bit self-conscious. Shawn got back in the car and the two drove off again. Shawn ate some fries and had another left-handed beer.

"So," Kosh said, "I'm here with you, and we're a hundred miles from home. Do you feel like they're looking out for you? Are you protected?"

"I can look after myself," said Shawn.

"That's what we love about you, kid,"? said Kosh, "you got guts. Not always brains, but guts."

"Uh...thanks."

"So, Shawn," Kosh continued, "you don't need us, right? And we don't need you. But we want you. And we think we can help each other. Think about it, Shawn. What do you want?"

"Don't ever ask me that question." said Shawn.

Kosh ignored Shawn's comment, "You gave up so much for this life of normalcy that makes you so miserable. I know there are things you miss. What do you want?"

Shawn let his mind wander. Back to everything in his past. His home, his friends, his dog, he regretted leaving any of it, but he could survive without it.

"There's nothing I want you could give me. Nothing tangible matters. And the rest I'll find on my own."

Kosh reached in between the seats and handed Shawn a briefcase. Shawn opened it and saw an adult magazine with various post-it notes on it. He turned to the pages denoted. A beautiful brunette, named Mandy, was being degraded. She wore nothing but a necklace that said "Forever Yours" inside of a heart. Shawn shut the briefcase.

Kosh smiled, "You always did have a soft spot for her. We started taking a second look at you after she had you arrested for stalking and you went back two days later and bought the strip club she worked at, just to make her talk to you. That's just beautiful."

Shawn tried desperately to remain unattached. He didn't want to show emotions. He didn't want to let Kosh know he had the upper hand.

"Yeah, we had a thing," Shawn said coldly, "why does that mean anything now?"

Kosh's smile grew and he got an evil glint in his eyes. "A certain someone we don't like has taken control of her. She's in danger. We are inconvenienced. Why don't you take care of him?"

"No," Shawn said flatly catching Kosh off guard.

"Oh really," said Kosh, "no?"

"you guys will handle whoever he is, if he is really hurting you, and I know that it's never one guy acting alone, that draws a lot of attention. Who is he? A mob boss. A fed. A drug dealer. I am not putting a big red bullseye on my head that says, 'kill me.'"

"yes, he is in organized crime," said Kosh, "you are so perceptive. And we will handle him. But I'm afraid he's not too high on our list of priorities. We can't guarantee Mandy will still be alive when we get around to it."

Shawn's eyes drew into a malicious glare. "You cold-hearted bastard. I forgot what you people were like."

Kosh smiled again, "what we're like."

Shawn breathed heavy, "Yes, what we're like."

"Great," said Kosh, "they're a Pennsylvania based family. And they probable already know you're coming."

"That doesn't exactly make things easy for me," Shawn complained. He was about to make a sarcastic comment, but the bridge over the 600ft deep gorge they were currently driving over collapsed under a huge explosion and the van with Shawn and Kosh in it fell towards the rocky ground.

## Chapter 2: "Sometimes dead is better..."

*By Luke Matthew Henry Wilson*

Shawn felt weightless as the van fell. Kosh meant nothing to him. The van meant nothing. His life, which up until now had meant nothing, suddenly offered him a way out, but he was afraid. He opened the car door and almost thought he heard Kosh say, "Jump, jump now!" as he leapt from the vehicle.

He reached out and found himself holding onto a power line by one hand while the other gripped itself around the briefcase that Kosh had shown him. Shawn heard a crash as he realized that the van, that he had been in mere seconds ago, crashed onto the rocks. No big explosions or fires. It just molded itself to the wet, rocky ground. He gave the quack that he had just met a moment of prayer before he turned his mind to the matter at hand, survival.

He considered his predicament. He was precariously hanging from one hand on an electrical line that ran almost to the water and rocks below him. If he had more than one hand on the power line at a time, he would be risking electrocution so climbing up wasn't an option. So, he carefully loosened his grip on the cable and began to slide down at an increasing speed. He had to stop every few seconds to let the heating effects of friction wear off, but he eventually reach the end of the line. With no other choices he let go and fell onto a nicely jagged rock.

The first thing he noticed was that if the police arrived, he was the prime suspect in Kosh's murder, and then he noticed the white, hard object protruding from his leg. He reached down and concluded that the object he was looking at was his right tibia. His right tibia concluded that he should have stayed home and told him so in quite a few more interesting ways.

By now there was a substantial amount of water building up on the other side of the fallen bridge as the gushing streams indicated. The former bridge turn dam moved towards Shawn until it hit the electric pole. The pole began to bend. Shawn was the sparks shooting from the broken end of the electric line and noticed the gasoline pool from the car crash and decided that now would be an opportune time to go for a quick crawl out of here.

Despite the complaints of his most irritated bone, he slid off the rock and into the water in hopes to out swim the electricity. As he flipped over to do the back stroke and show off to the crowd which would no doubt be gathering, he remembered his eighth-grade science teacher, Mr. Squire used to say, "electricity can out run any moron in ice cold water." He never knew why Mr. Squire would say that, but it looked like he was about to test the idea. Mr. Squire was right.

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Officer Jon Smythe surveyed the wreckage of his favorite bridge with disapproval. He hated whoever did this, and if there was one thing he was good at, it was baking coconut cream pies. But that wasn't important right now, and there was no way he would let he would let that stop him from finding out who had destroyed his favorite bridge and letting justice do its job.

Jon Smythe climbed in the harness and gave the order to be lowered. Once he reached the bottom he began to search for evidence of just how whoever destroyed his bridge had decided on why. After a few minutes of trying to figure out what he had meant, he found a briefcase that had been causally left on a rock. He called up to the others to send the next one down.

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Dr. Jennifer Susan Ivanova was not happy. She had been waiting two weeks to see "The Phantom of the Opera" live, and now she gets paged to come to the hospital immediately. Surely the dead can wait until morning, but the police thought that if the autopsy was done immediately then more evidence would be found.

Then when she rushed to the hospital at 65 miles per hour instead of the indicated 35, some stupid officer had the gaul to stop her and take away her license. So, walking in the rain, Dr. Jennifer Susan Ivanova decided that she saw going to give whoever gave the order for the immediate autopsy a big pain in the rear abdominal area.

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Shawn, on the other hand, was very happy. He had bought some illegal drugs from the convenience store to control the pain in his leg. The pain was definitely gone, but he did wonder where the dancing pickles had come from. As long as they didn't hurt him, he didn't hurt them either. Shawn was a little less happy when a passing police officer stopped him. Not that Shawn hadn't tried to get away, but one can only crawl so fast.

The officer stuffed Shawn in the car, "It's people like you who blow up perfectly nice bridges!"

Shawn cried, "I hurt. You nice. You help. You have my Mandy. you..."

Officer Smythe was getting quite annoyed, "if I wasn't in a hurry, I would take all of you slimes off the street and put you straight, like that crazy woman who was going 65 in a 35 zone. I should just leave you here, but that red dot on your back tells me otherwise." Smythe spun around and shot the sniper with his Ares Predator from 300 yards. He grinned, "Didn't pay for your last pickup?" Then Smythe finished shoving Shawn in the car despite his pathetic ranting and drove towards the hospital.

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The sniper was tired of shooting people and of being shot at by people. He wanted to make coconut cream pies, but life didn't let him so he did the next best thing. He had become a gun-for-hire. He had worked with the best: Al Capone, Jenny Hopwood & Bill Clinton. He remembered his mommy and daddy and the top secret projects he used to do at Area 5-1. There had always been that one he had loved so much. Some moron wouldn't listen to his superiors and accept that there weren't aliens on the base so he was called in to persuade the

moron to either accept it or tie both of his hands and feet together and leap from a plane. He chose the latter and had paid with his life when he forgot his parachute. That day he learned the lesson that saved his life today: Always wear a parachute.

When the stupid officer had shot him the bullet was stopped by lots of parachute material because he could never get the damned thing on anyway but backwards. Priding himself on being so cautious. The assassin set out after his prey.

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Jon Smythe was a great driver and no one could better handle a flat tire so there was nothing better suited to him than some half-mad nut shooting a hole in the side of his car. That is, until the car went through the door of a conveniently placed warehouse. Justice must be served was the only thought on his mind as he stepped out of the car and aimed his Gatling gun at the car of his oppressor.

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Shawn was well aware of he shooting going on around him. As a matter of fact, he had quite a few bullet holes through him right now and they didn't seem to want to stop bleeding. Shawn crawled out of the police car through the side door which had sprang open on impact. He looked on the other side of the car and saw that nice cop who gave him the lift to this hospital. he shouted a thank you that the cop probably didn't hear because he was pumping about 40 pounds of lead into a parked car on the other side of the road. "Oh, well." Shawn began to make his way to the receptionist's desk.

He passed some supply boxes marked "danger, explosive, please do not shoot at." He continued on. He knew sooner or later someone would help him. Then somewhere back in his memories of his science teacher, Mr. Squire, he remembered what Mr. Squire wrote on one of his tests: If you're ever high on drugs, in an explosives warehouse with four or more bullet holes, a broken leg and suffering from electrocution, do not pass out. Then everything went dark.

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Dr. Ivanova was definitely going to teach those stupid police officers a thing or two about giving people a break. She was in the back of an old explosives warehouse and had just finished wiring up her bomb as some god-damned policeman bumped into her and started the seven second countdown. the officer apparently thought he was helping when he pulled her away and made them both trip over the body of some mostly dead guy. Three seconds left to live, she thought. I hate police officers.

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Jon Smythe heard the lady whose license he had taken away before he met the druggie say that they had three seconds to live a second ago so he thought quickly and knocked some of the heavy boxes of explosives onto them to protect them from the madman with the gun.

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Shawn Walkman was sleeping well. Some might say, sleep was his only friend.

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Dr. Ivanova figured they had about two seconds when the stupid officer from hell knocked the boxes of extra explosives onto them and thought of how bad a day she had had. With one second left she thought: hey, this cop is kinda cute in a stupid, I'm going to die sorta way.

## Chapter 3: "A fox hunt in hell..."

*By Jacob Michael Pollman*

Beep...beep...beep...bee...

"Turn the fucking alarm off, mom!" screams the addled Shawn, "I'm too sick to go to school!"

Our protagonist shakes his head like a wet dog, clearing his senses only slightly. This has been quite a bad trip for him. He'll have to remember to switch to the children's dosage next time. If there is a next time.

He surveys the situation. The tones come from a little timer box wired up to some putty and a blasting cap. Nothing suspicious here. He scans on. Sticking out from under a huge box marked, "Explosive putty, Blasting caps, & tiny pieces of Wire" are two pairs of legs. It doesn't look like there is much room under there. He feels a strange pity for whoever got in the wrong place at the wrong time and ended up looking like the wicked witch of the east. But soft, what bone through your shinskin breaks? There are more pressing matters to attend to.

Shawn pops a few of the pretty pink one and resolves to make his way to Pennsylvania...

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Dr. Ivanova and Officer Smythe are pinned beneath the heavy box together. They are in love.

"Jon," says she, "I think we, are pinned beneath this heavy box together."

"I know, I feel it too."

"Do you think we'll live?"

"Not at all. I think we should make the best, oops, best of a horrible situation to fall in love."

"Agreed. Let us hold one another until the end comes."

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Theodore Sniperhiredbyamobossinpennsylvaniynski kicks open the door to an explosives warehouse and lets out a bellow: "Fear the Angry Bomber!" Sadly, there is nobody left to hear him. He surveys the room. Only boxes of explosives, a dud bomb and what he ascertained to be a blood trail leading in a Pennsylvanyosh direction. "Hmph. He hasn't a chance. Like a demon's fox hunt in hell. No need to help the competition."

Theodore decides to cover his tracks. He checks out the bomb as a potential power-broom. At first glance, it appears to be a common, simple bomb that any lady with a doctorate might make. With closer inspection, though, the Mad, er, Angry Bomber sees that the mushy

part is not really explosives, but is only silly putty. There is a little flag sticking out of the side of this "bomb". This flag says "Kabooooom!!!" Triggered also by the timer is a small black box that is laughing maniacally.

This is obviously the work of a disgruntled physician who only wishes to scare a cop who had pissed her off. It was a good scheme, but it was lost on the Angry Bomber, Theodore Sniperhiredbyamobossinpennsylvaniynski. He sees, this setup only as a bomb that was put together wrongly.

As he mumbles something about stupid kids, he carefully hooks up the correct wires to the correct explosive stuff and set the timer to --3:00--. He now has his trail all but blown away, and he makes good his escape.

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"I love you, Jenny!"

"How long do we have to live?"

"Until we dry up. The bomb was only a fabrication that I threw together to teach you a lesson in manners. We...

BOOOOM!

There is no more of them.

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Shawn sees the hospital blow up behind him. What a flash! He is temporarily blinded. He suddenly recalls what dear Mr. Squire said to him one day so long ago..."Shawn, listen to me. It might do you some good, one day. If you're ever high on pinkies, temporarily blinded by an explosion and running from a hit man, for christ's sake, don't fall into a god-damned hole!"

Predictably, Shawn Walkman does just that. Not seeing where he is going, his left foot shoots straight into nothing, and his body, for some odd reason, follows. He is falling and one can barely see a thing. So much for inspiring advice.

Shawn weighs his possibilities to live. He thinks a little. He realizes that he is not carrying anything with him, as his clothes had been burned off in that blinding flash. he is naked and empty handed. No help there.

How about surroundings? He looks up. There is only the quickly fading dot of light. That must be where he came in. He looks down. Nada. the walls seem to be made of a rough, shiny material. He reaches a hand (left) out to feel it.

It appears to be somehow as slippery as ice, yet at the same time, as sharp as razors. he brings back his hand, but it is too late. Only shredded meat is left where his fingers should be. They are still there, but totally unusable for the time being. he, in the ways of the old habit, puts his fingers into his mouth. He tastes a bitter chemical of high potency. "Wonder what it will do to me, since I've ingested it?" he thinks to himself. There is no time to think of it now. There is the immediate problem of landing. Oh, well. Some miracle will happen to save me. It always does.

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The Angry Bomber follows his prey to a deep, dark hole. "Good thing I've got my 'chute!" he thinks, and he jumps in.

## Chapter 4: "And god shall sort the dead..."

*By Samuel Lee Moore*

As Shawn plummeted to certain doom only one thought entered his mind, "buy I wish I had a coconut cream pie right now." But enough with trivialities, he had to find a way to get out of this. Then he hit something.

"Nice to see you kid."

"Kosh, I thought you were dead!" cried Shawn, "How did you get out of the van!?!"

"Irrelevant," Kosh said as he put Shawn down, "the only thing that matters now is..."

"The only thing that matters now is...WHAT!?!"

But Kosh was already running down the hall. Shawn looked up, screamed, and followed as quickly as his bruised, drug-laden, broken leg would carry him.

The Angry Bomber hit the ground with a nasty, wet, crunchy sound as his bullet-riddled parachute trailed uselessly behind him. Shawn and Kosh returned to the body a short time later when they decided the sky wasn't really falling. As luck would have it, the Angry Bomber wore the same shoe size as Shawn, so he was no longer naked. He also carried a generous amount of hand guns and ammo to which Kosh helped himself.

Kosh carried Shawn down the hall and into an elevator. They rode for quite a long time until the rear of the elevator opened. Shawn looked out and stood dumbfounded.

"Welcome to MIB, Models In Bikinis, we're you first, last, and only line of entertainment at birthday parties, executive board meetings, and wakes," one of the gorgeous women Shawn was ogling at said as they entered.

"Oops, wrong floor," Kosh said as he dragged Shawn back into the elevator, "We want the next one down."

As the doors opened again, Shawn found himself in a small dimly lit room. It's only furniture was a table, two chairs, and a bare bulb hanging directly over one of the chairs. The duo walked past these, however, and moved into the nest room through the door in the back.

"There's some clothes in the room to our right if you want to get dressed," Kosh said as he pointed to a door, "Someone will meet you back here and bring you to me."

He found not only clothes, but a Do-It-yourself Bone setting and Cast Making kit. He followed the directions on the box, injected himself with the proper medication, and was soon hobbling around the room at a decent pace. As he was putting on the purple shirt and khakis they provided him he realized he didn't know who they were, but Kosh was here so he could probably guess. When he went back out into the hall, he was met by a strikingly beautiful, but somehow familiar, woman dressed all in black. As he was admiring her, she growled, "follow me," turned and stalked through a door on her left. He meekly followed and hoped someone would tell him what this was all about.

They had been walking down the hallway for maybe three seconds when the woman spun around and planted a kick directly in his solar plexus. As he fell unconscious he realized this woman looked exactly like the one who had tripped over him in that hospital, then it all went black.

When he woke up, Shawn first became aware of his feet. He couldn't feel anything under them so he guessed he was either lying down or hanging on a wall. The former was thrown out as soon as he became aware of his shoulders. As he was wondering whether or not he should think about the rest of his body, he noticed a motion in the corner of his eye. Kosh entered and sat down in the chair that was directly in front of Shawn.

"I'm disappointed in you, Shawn Walkman," Kosh said, "I really thought you were made of sterner stuff, but, that is irrelevant, you will be assimilated."

"Y' y' y' you're from The Collective," Shawn stammered. He knew all about The Collective.

"You don't know half of what you think you do about The Collective. You know only what your fears tell you. Ha, fear. Your petty emotions always did get in the way of logical thought." And with that Kosh pulled the mask off of his face.

"Borg! John Borg! Leader of The Collective. But, I saw you die fifteen years ago in Monte Carlo!" exclaimed Shawn.

"I cannot be killed that easily, Mr. Walkman," Borg stated, "And besides, how could I have aided in the abduction of your beloved Mandy if I was dead."

"You! I ought to kill you right now!" screamed Shawn as he braced his feet against the wall and pulled at his restraints.

"Come now, Mr. Walkman, let us not be so angry. There go those emotions again, just as I said."

Shawn continued to pull against his bonds as Borg left the room and it filled with a blue gas. As Shawn felt himself go to sleep he knew he had to kill John Borg.

Days later, when Shawn regained wakefulness he was in the same room that he was knocked out in. he was no longer, however, hanging on the wall. He was chained to a chair and looking into the eyes of Borg.

"So good to see you awake, Mr. Walkman. I was beginning to think we had given you too heavy a dose."

"Shut up."

"Very well, if that is how you are going to be, I had better just start. It was The Collective, acting with the family in Pennsylvania, who tried to kill you at the bridge, we also hired Theodore Sniper...inski. Nothing personal you understand, we were testing you."

"What do you mean, testing me," Shawn asked.

"Ah, now you decide to carry on a conversation, should I feel flattered?" John Borg said flatly, "Or should I feel grateful?"

"Shut up."

"We were testing your reflexes, ability to think while high on little pink pills...the list goes on and on and frankly I don't have the time. Final exams are coming up quickly and you have not even opened your book."

Shawn's head was reeling, trying to understand what Borg was talking about, when yet another of Mr. Squire's platitudes made it all clear, "Shawn, if you are ever being held by terrorists and some guy is talking to you about tests, duck."

Shawn dropped his head down on the table just as the fist belonging to the woman who had kicked him in the solar plexus swung.

"Monica, please do try to stop that." Borg told her curtly.

"This man killed my sister, Jennifer. I saw it happen. He left the warehouse and it blew up."

"That will be all! Please wait in the hall! Go!"

As she left, she glared at Shawn with such ferocity that if looks could kill, his head would have exploded.

"Now, Mr. Walkman, about those exams. I found you to be a worthy enough adversary. Have you ever fenced," Borg asked.

"Do you mean building a fence?"

"Not exactly."

Borg pulled two rapiers out from under the table, got up, unchained Shawn, handed him one of the swords, and back away. Shawn lunged, but Borg parried it easily. Unbalanced by the cast on one leg, Shawn fell. Borg put his blade up to Shawn's throat.

"You really disappoint me, Mr. Walkman." Borg sighed as he brought his blade back for the killing strike.

## Chapter 5: "Dressed to kill..."

*By Holland Marie Angran*

Shawn knowing much about sword fighting from watching many episodes of Highlander knew how to defend himself in this position. He rolled quickly to the side and grabbed his weapon. With 7 years of training in gymnastics, he did a back hand spring into a back tuck and swiftly shredded John Borg's head from his body. The bloody body then crashed to the ground.

Shawn screams into the air. "Why didn't I know this before. That's why he didn't die in Monte Carlo, he was immortal." then softly says, " He's now dead and my fears are no more."

Shawn knows all of the henchmen are waiting outside the closed door but then he sees a small trap door on the floor to the left. It must have been hidden under the rug but came uncovered in the fight.

Shawn sees a small, shiny, black tetrahedron with numbers on it by Borg's body. He looks at it with confusion but decides to grab it. As he picks it up the body disintegrates. He then knew that the small object must have been the device for assimilation people and the key to an unlocked door.

Suddenly, two members of MIB drop from the ceiling. The two attack him and say he is just what they've been looking for. They grab him and go back through the ceiling.

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After the journey up, they ask Shawn to take a test with a group of others. The test was to win a swimsuit contest with four members of the MIB as his opponents. He agrees and goes to the dressing room. There he finds a skimpy two-piece thong floral print bikini.

Shawn slips into the outfit and combs his hair. He takes off his tennis shoes and slips into a pair of thigh-high platform, metallic silver boots. He leaves the room and closes the door behind him. He is given a robe by a woman who was standing in the hall.

She says, "follow me to the judging room."

He follows contently into a small room to the left. As he walks in the door, two very muscular MIB agents block the door and to his surprise stands four beautiful blonds in bikinis. He looks towards the judge in shock. It's Ivanova's sister in a white trimmed black bikini.

He suddenly senses danger and makes for the door. But, the two girls guard the door.

The evil Ivanova stands up and yells, "get him."

The two women get into good stances and are ready to fight. Shawn steps back and runs toward them, jumps up into the splits and implants his heels into their foreheads simultaneously. They both fall down unconscious and Shawn makes his way back to the area where he came up through the ceiling. He hesitates and jumps down the hole.

The MIB were close behind and he had to hurry. He opened the trap door and jumped

into the dark tunnel. He closed the door behind him and scurried along the dusty path. It was very dark and the tunnel seemed to be getting smaller. Shawn's fear of tight, closed areas was starting to get to him. Just as he starts to hyperventilate, he sees a small dot of light in the path in front of him. Despite his problem, he pulls forward. As he reaches the light he smells that of something rotting. The light fragment was in a little triangular shape. He knew the tetrahedron must have something to do with this so he went to get it from his pocket. His palms were very sweaty and the air was very humid. He grabbed the object and stuck it into the hole.

The passage opened and he climbed into the dark room. He saw a single cot, a door with little bars, and a very angry man here. The passage closed and the tetrahedron vanished.

The burly man spoke, "Who goes there, I am the Grandé Barcos. this is my cell. Who are you?"

"I am Shawn Walkman, where am I?"

"Never mind that, you're kind of cute."

"What?"

"I have been in solitary confinement for 18 years of killing and eating my wife. Oh yeah, I also said you're cute."

"HELP," yells Shawn.

"No use, sound proof room. I guess you're the lucky man, bend over or die!"

Shawn clenched his butt cheeks together and said, "Never! Not in this lifetime."

"As you wish."

Grandé pulls out a dagger and runs toward Shawn.

## Chapter 6: "Enter Juán Borg..."

*By Guy Johnson*

Shawn stared helplessly at Grandé as he continued his death charge, gleaming dagger pointed at Shawn with purpose. Shawn pondered his option, he didn't have much chance of defeating such a monster with massive energies he had sustained in the consuming madness. He had even less time to act than he had options.

"It's my time to die." Shawn shouted bearing his chest to the Madman just before the blade slid easily between his ribs. "I hope those organs aren't important." Shawn said under his breath as he stared right into the eyes of the crazed Grandé which were wide with satisfaction.

"Now I dine!" Grandé said with a smile that made Shawn sick.

from the gaping wound in his chest, blood poured like a fountain. The meet with the MIB had torn open all of the bullet wounds he had managed to receive earlier. He also noticed a mass of greenish blood soaking through the poorly set cast and thigh high platform boots. "Infection," he said, his teeth closed tight in a grimace.

That's when the dizziness hit him like a Japanese tsunami, his vision blurred, his puruer, Grandé, was nothing but a deadly flesh colored mass which seemed to dance around him mockingly.

Shawn felt his energy fade even more than it already had.

In a daze, he fell to one knee, he had lost a lot of blood. He had to get up, things may seem hopeless now, but if he could just get up, it's no use. He couldn't even behave himself anymore. So he let himself fall to the cold concrete floor of the prison cell. His face rested on its side. he let drool run from his open mouth and form a puddle at his cheek.

He heard Grandé's fanatic laughter. He closed his eyes. "Just get it over with." he mumbled as he lie waiting for Death's cold fingers to grip his heart.

A clap of thunder shook the tiny cell. Grandé's laughter suddenly came to a stop. Shawn opened his eyes, expecting to see the dark manifestation of death stalking his dying body like out of a nightmare, but what he saw was Grandé lying bloodied with a huge dark hole where his eyes should have been. broken jagged fragments of bone and gore lay all around Grandé's obviously dead shell. Right before Shawn lost consciousness, he saw the door to the cell was now open and revealed a beautiful bikini clad woman with long dark hair in her hand she held a large handgun. Smoke still bellowed from the muzzle. Blackness.

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When Shawn awoke he wasn't in the prison cell any longer, and all of his wounds were now cauterized. He had been cleaned, despite the fact it felt as if a silverback gorilla was using his brain for a speedbag.

"Hello, Shawn," came a sweet feminine voice from the swirling haze around him, "you

like hell," the voice continued. Shawn did note a tone of genuine concern in the voice, this put him somewhat at ease. but never did he let his guard down. He had learned that long ago, slowly his vision began to clear and the origin of the voice was apparent. The same bikini clad dark-haired beauty that held the smoking gun, and obviously saved him from a very uncomfortable experience.

"Where are you from? The MIB?" Shawn asked the woman as he quickly scanned the stump at the end of his right arm where his hand used to be. It had been cleaned and cauterized.

"What a odd way to begin such a grand reunion," the woman laughed, her laugh was almost intoxicating and almost forced him to retreat from inspection of his war torn body.

"What?" Shawn asked, now looking fully at the woman only now did her stunning beauty take full affect on him. She had dark brown hair that extended just beyond her shoulders which were naked. In fact, she was still clothed only in her white string bikini. "They really fucked your mind up good, you really don't remember me, do you?"

Shawn studied the woman again: 54, 150-lbs maybe lass, pleasing figure, not an anorexic stick like women tended to be. "No," Shawn answered simply. "Are you from the MIB?" Shawn questioned, rubbing his soar stump of an arm.

"I am now," she answered smiling, "but we share employers, I am an agent and have infiltrated the MIB."

"Who?" Shawn asked feeling a little stupid, he had been in so many different organizations in the past, it was really hard to remember which one.

"Not important, oh, and by the way, my name is Elizabeth." Shawn searched the dark caverns of his shadowy mind, nothing.

"Still don't remember?" she sighed.

"I'm sorry," Shawn sighed, "for some reason I...don't know, it's as if some one's slipped into my mind and buried a portion of my past life."

She had a pouty look of regret, "that's probably just what happened," her face brightened, "you don't even remember this?" she asked as she leaned close to him. She bent over his chest, her hanging hair trailed over his bare chest pleasantly tickling him. And she pressed her lips tightly upon his. As she moved away, Shawn regarded her with the same even stare as before as if nothing had even happened.

"No," he answered simply.

She laughed, "I guess we weren't as close as I thought."

Shawn just looked at her in silence.

"You've changed a lot Walkman," she said almost shivering. Shawn started to sit up, that's when he noticed his right leg, it was gone. Funny, it felt as if it was still there as if his toes were tingling and he could simply wiggle them to regain circulation.

"Your leg, we had to amputate, the gangrene was spreading, I'm sorry."

Shawn stopped staring at his leg and looked up at Elizabeth. "You said we, who's we?" he demanded.

"You'll find out. Now about your missing limbs." She trailed off. "We . . . have been able to fit a cybernetic hand for you, but at this underground facility, we lack the resources to get you a leg without blowing our cover, but we were able to get this threw without being detected."

From a cardboard box, Elizabeth withdrew the most beautiful leg Shawn had ever seen carved from what looked to be Ivory.

"That should be adequate." Shawn answered.

"good, we will put you out in a few seconds, the surgery is painful and intricate. When you awake you will no longer be in this compound. You will be alone in a motel room outside of town. There will be a list of capabilities of your new right hand and fingers for your left."

Shawn looked at his left hand, two fingers were indeed gone. He sighed, now even the comfort of his music was gone, and the pain from the torn muscles was worse than ever.

"You are to wait there, soon an agency will contact you."

Deftly, she injected Shawn with a clear liquid, the pickles began their erotic dance once again. Then he slowly faded back into unconsciousness.

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Alone in the blackness, a man sat. Devoid of hair, but for what he lacked in hair he more than made up for with metal implants all over his body which was enormous. The wrought iron chair in which he sat creaked and bent slightly.

"Juán," came a voice from behind the balm man, "Shawn got away. He killed Grandé.."

"Grandé was going to receive his implants today."

Juán answered his empty eye sockets hidden behind the cybernetic black visor.

"We think he may have made contact with the NWO. We're not sure."

"You must be sure," Juán said evenly.

"The tetrahedron is gone as well." The man cringed as he waited for Juán's reply.

"This is the fault of the MIB's loose security, they will get the tetrahedron back or they will pay. Tell them to send the Death Sluts." As the man rushed to comply to his orders.

As soon as he left, Juán stood, leaving his chair below him. Juán took the chair in his left hand by it's arm. Raising the chair effortlessly, even to his seven foot height. with this he took his right hand and placed it even with the other on the chair. The chair groaned in metallic pain but could not hold to the pressure of the inhuman arms that confined it. Now it's twisted metal laying at the feet of fear.

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Shawn opened his eyes. he lay in a motel room as Elizabeth had said. Above his bed

was a motel room fashion painting of a bowl of fruit, lovely.

There was a note on the bed beside him. A diagram of his hand and directions on it's use. "Perfect" He inspected his hand, it moved just like a normal hand, but it had certain modifications. His extra fingers worked properly as well. He looked down at his leg, it was beautiful, intricately carved to look just like a leg and foot.

There came a heavy knock at the door.

Shawn pulled his jeans down over his leg and went to the door. Still groggy from the drugs he opened the door without a second thought.

Instantly, he was thrown back on the bed with four guns pointed at his head, two on either side.

## Chapter 7: "Obligatory sex scene..."

*By Caleb Michael Davis*

"Quietly and quickly follow us," said the man furthest to the left, "and wisely refrain from foolishly and heroically futilely committing actions contrary to what we explicitly give you."

"Oh no!" Shawn moaned, "You're Dialects!"

"You incorrectly identify us by brashly and stupidly jumping to conclusions. we are a rogue group of Dialects known as the Adverb-Team."

"Oh, great. Even worse." Shawn moaned.

Shawn and the Adverb-team left the hotel and Shawn never did get to look at the instructions to his new cybernetic implants. But he assumed that sooner or later, he would figure out about them. The rogue Dialects took Shawn to a run-down school building somewhere in Southern Iowa. Shawn had only been in this part of the country once before, and it most definitely was among the poorer of memories.

"Humbly enter now." Shawn was told as he stood before the door to the principal's office. Shawn drooped his head and walked in.

This reminded him of his old middle school. He had been sent to the principal's office quite a few times for arms dealing and such. There was a woman with long brunette hair sitting in the large, padded swivel chair that only the important people get. On her desk, there was a name plate. It read "Jennifer Leigh Hopwood" but the "Leigh" had vainly been attempted to be scratched out. This was a name that almost rang a bell. If he had remembered her, then he most definitely would have recognized her.

"Welcome, Mr. Walkman," Ms. Hopwood said, "we've been expecting you."

It had been a very bad week for Shawn. His patience was shot. Shawn bluntly asked, "Are you going to kill me? Or try at least?"

"You'd be dead if we wanted you to," Ms. Hopwood replied, "but quite to the contrary. I would like you to do me a favor."

"What's in it for me?" Shawn smugly asked as he remembered Mr. Squire's extra credit question of 'Q: What bargaining ground do you have versus international terrorists who have armed guards outside the door and you live only by their good graces? A: None, you freaking idiot!'

"Impudent fool!" Ms. Hopwood screamed as she backhanded him across the face. "You will do exactly as I say."

Shawn noticed a horrible stabbing pain throughout his right (cybernetic) hand. Four metal rods slid out from his knuckles and fell to the ground. Shawn noticed a gleam of white before the exit holes closed up again. Shawn clenched his teeth in pain and a tear fell from his

left eye. Then he smiled, feel he'd actually kept his composure quite well.

"That will happen off and on," Ms. Hopwood announced, "the prosthetics we equipped you with are just a temporary addition while the speedily aid the regrowth of your missing appendages."

"Wonderful," Shawn moaned.

"But, back to business," Hopwood continued, "the only member of the Collective to ever leave, other than yourself, has been helping us for some time now. but recently, he was overpowered by the mind control of my dastardly arch-rival, Loulou Thumper of the Baptist Church. And as everyone knows, the Baptist Church is an international front for drug smuggling. Thumper's entering this obligatory Southern Iowa County was an obvious challenge against me for supremacy, but now with acquisition of my former aid and confidant, I fear she has the knowledge necessary to overthrow my rule."

A small trickle of spit hung from the corner of her mouth as she laughed diabolically.

Jenny continued, "Being as you are the only one with the direct knowledge of Collective behavior, I felt that you would be best suited for my compatriot's retrieval. And that will serve nicely as payment for those new hands of yours."

Shawn hated to admit it, but he was in for another fight. either here with the young Ms. Hopwood, or later with the Baptist Church. Deciding that discretion and treachery are the better parts of valor, Shawn decided to accept this offer and if it did prove too difficult, he would have one of his characteristic backstabbing change of sides.

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Three even less clothed members of MIB entered Juan Borg's office. Juan sat on his desk with his back towards them.

"We've brought the tetrahedron back," said the respective 'first' member of MIB. "We hope you're not angry," added the 'second'.

"Anger," Juan questioned, "that is just another petty emotion. Your failure was expected and my plans can still be successful."

"So what do we do with this?" inquired the 'third' MIB while holding the tetrahedron.

"Ask John, it's his anyway." Juan replied coldly.

The MIB members looked around and obviously saw no one else in the room, other than the arc-welder assigned to fixing Juan's chair. They whispered to each other in a confused 'so-what-next' kind of way.

Juan turned and grabbed up the tetrahedron. With a few fluid motions rotated the corners so as each side's numbers matched. A holographic image of John Borg was projected into the room.

"You may leave us now," said Juan. The members of MIB promptly obeyed. The 'third' member eyed the arc-welder on the way out and began to hand him one of her business cards when Juan's voice boomed out denying the chapter title.

"Please refrain from granting sexual favors to my servants."

MIB scurried away like scared rodents and Juán turned to the John Borg projection.

"John, this is unlike you," Juán noted, "nearly as disreputable as the whole Monte Carlo incident."

"My projection simulation chamber lagged. I thought he was laying on the ground up to the point he attacked. In ideal conditions I would have easily parried his blow and struck him dead." John explained.

"Well, John," Juán replied, "it's placating to know the reason of your defeat. I will no longer need to search for your replacement. It greatly inconveniences me to have to travel half-way around the Earth to take over your American branch. Assimilate this young Walkman. We want him back."

"Yes, master," John subjected, "I will accomplish your bidding."

John Borg's projection shimmered away, as he turned his thoughts to his immediate surroundings.

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Meanwhile, in Area 5-1, a young petty officer packaged up some new, fancy weapon that looked as if it came from some extra-terrestrial world except for the made in Taiwan stamp on the side. This was the rookie officer's first assignment and he was trying to the best of his ability, but distracted by a pornography magazine also through the mail, he mistakingly addressed this weapon to Pennsylvania at a completely random location. One week later, when this was noticed, he was court-martialed and executed.

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Shawn sat in a van with the Adverb-Team outside of the local Baptist Church. Services would get out in a few moments and the complied mercenaries of Jenny Hopwood would attack. Thumper was inside spreading her message of hatred.

The local congregation left and Shawn and company leaped out of the van, guns blazing. several of the parishioners fell wounded or dead. Shawn quickly made the sign of the cross before somersaulting into the chapel and unloading two clips of ammunition into the pews of people still in prayer.

"Hey, Hamlet," Shawn mused, "that's how it's done."

Thumper ran to the podium and pulled down on the microphone, opening up the chapel floor. This revealed a huge metal thing which Shawn assumed was yet another enormous bomb to be threatening his life. Shawn let out a moan and a few sorted comments about the unoriginality of high explosives.

"Oh, but there's an interesting new twist," explained Thumper, "see the large spherical containers on either side. One contains 30 pounds of francium; the other 40 pounds of flouride. They approach each other in their reactionless containers until the spheres touch and we run an electric current threw the two spheres. That will cause a massive explosive reaction of

francium flouride. With this much of either element, the reaction will destroy everyone in this town."

With that lengthy soliloquy, Loulou & her few live followers opened a door in the large cross and hid themselves away inside. Then the cross launched itself out of the church towards safety and in the general direction of Pennsylvania.

Shawn peeled the remains of his tin foil-like right hand revealing a new, flesh, perfectly grown hand. Soon his left fingers would be human as well. He could go back to playing guitar and maybe even learn how to bake coconut cream pies. Shawn looked at the one foot remaining between the moving spheres, and began to weigh his immediate options. One possibility was to panic, scream like an idiot and hope someone else solved the problem. This recourse had already been taken by the Adverb-Team. The second option was to try and stop the spheres from touching.

Shawn then remembered Mr. Squire telling him, "if your life ever depends on keeping two electric spheres from conducting to each other, place a source of pure carbon between them to save your sorry behind."

Shawn quickly surveyed the room and found his savior: an inanimate carbon rod. Standing on this rod he was able to thrust his newly healed right hand between the spheres. Shawn knew that the human body had carbon in it so obviously human beings do not conduct electricity.

As his carpals in his right hand were shattered beyond the point of medical healing between the two spheres, he remembered being electrocuted back at the gorge. Shawn realized that the carbon rod kept the electricity from grounding so he took the only logical course of action. Seeing the church bell collapse through the ceiling, he reached out and touched the bell with his two metal coated left fingers.

"This should conduct the electricity out of me and keep me from being cooked..." were the last thoughts in Shawn's head as the electricity kicked on.

# Chapter 8: "Finally a chapter title that doesn't end with three periods."

*By Lord President Rassilon*

"Shawn, why don't you ever get it? I mean really? You're always taking my advice and then you distort it or ignore it or only remember it at the last moment. No wonder you had to take my class up to your senior year of high school."

"Mr. Squire?" Shawn asked. He was quite shaken by the quickly growing number of times he barely escaped death in the last few weeks. He was quite confused too. He couldn't even remember what happened after he reached out for the cloister bell while the Adverb-Team screaming about the end of all known linguistics.

"Oh, come my boy. Don't look so shocked. I mean really who did you expect, that half-naked woman who is in almost all of your dreams, hmm? Stop dilly-dallying and get control of the situation. Must I sing the entire Modern Major General Song again!" threatened the thin man with the wire rimmed glasses.

Shawn immediately screamed, "No!" But it was far too late. Mr Squire had began to sing the song which each eighth grade science student had to memorize in order to get out of Mr. Squire's detention. It was a lengthy song, and he would always make all the detained students line up in quartets and sing it. If your group sang the best you got out of detention, but if you sang as bad as Mr. Squire you had to keep coming back the next day to try again. Shawn had been in Mr. Squire's detention for three weeks straight for his lack of musical talent, but by the third week, he had mastered the entire song. In the end, Mr. Squire had made a deal with Shawn to let him graduate. Shawn had to sing the Major General Song at graduation in order to earn a passing grade from his eighth grade science teacher. Surprisingly, the song was enjoyed by the gathered parents, teachers and students; it was also the first time he played his guitar in public. The only thing that went wrong was when Mr. Squire ran on stage and sang the last verse with him. Mr. Squire sang about as well as Milli Vanilli and so Shawn was now stuck with a deranged science teacher singing the "detention song" to him in a horrible English accent exactly one key flat.

Mr. Squire was enjoying himself and started the entire song again:

"I am the very model of a modern Major-General,  
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral,  
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical  
from Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical,  
I am very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,  
I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical,

...

In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,  
He is the very model of a modern Major-General."

By the time Mr. Squire had reached the last verse, Shawn was doubled over on the floor mumbling to himself that Mr. Squire doesn't exist, and the entire song is nothing more than the sounds of the hopelessly out-of-tune Adverb-Team dying around him. He was nearly convinced that he was having a delusion before death (because he was quite sincerely hoping that hell was a nicer place than it's made out to be) when Mr. Squire stopped singing and after a moment of confusion asked Shawn what he was doing lying on the floor curled up like an infant.

"Shawn, you have really got to get a hold of yourself. After five years of my foresight and another five of participating in nearly every terrorist, unethical, and secret society around, you still haven't managed to get control of yourself. You go from being hero to King of the cowards. Look back at that confrontation with Grand,. You had chosen the cowards way to die when only moments before you had knocked two MIB bodyguards to the ground while you had a cast on one leg and all of your bullet holes broken open and bleeding again. What is wrong with you? Why didn't you learn to make coconut cream pies with the rest of the science class? Why can't you give yourself a purpose or keep a relationship with a woman? I'll tell you why, Mr. Walkman, you don't know who you are."

Shawn was reeling. Was it him, or was it getting really hot around here? After a few moments he uncurled and stared up at Mr. Squire. He began to reply, but Mr. Squire cut him off.

"You spent five years playing turn coat with one organization after another. You have knowledge of nearly every major terrorist group, and have had two years of peace in which you did nothing but hide everything you found out. You hid it from each group you joined by hiding it from yourself. Come on, show me that you have learned something from your extended education. Why did The Collective kidnap your Mandy?"

"Because..I don't know. I'm not in school anymore. Why don't you leave me alone."

Mr. Squire gave Shawn a that-is-not-the-answer look and asked the question again, "Why kidnap YOUR ex-girlfriend?"

"Because The Collective likes women who pose for adult magazines after dumping the guy who would do anything for her?" Shawn mumbled, not even trying to think about it.

Mr. Squire looked down at Shawn disapprovingly, "And then they would send you out to rescue your ex-girlfriend from them? Tut-tut. Even you could at least put two and two together whenever someone gave you a calculator. I hope The Collective likes people who can't play the guitar or bake coconut cream pies, because you haven't got much for brains..."

With those last words Mr. Squire turned into the Grim Reaper, climbed in the Bat-mobile and drove off into the sunset.

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"Ouch! Who said that? Oh, I did." Shawn was a bit confused about the last few moments. Wasn't Mr. Squire here? What happened to the unoriginal francium-floride bomb? And why were there people running about screaming, "We are all going to die slowly, painfully, with our bodies broken irreparably and burned extensively!"

Then Shawn Walkman, the hero-coward realized he had flipped out for fear of death when the bomb was powering up. He remembered the sound of transformers emitting their unceasing hum and the pain of his new hand which had been crushed between the two spheres. Then he had reached out to transfer the power to the bell when Jenny had just went up to the podium and pulled the microphone up. The voltage never got transferred to him and the spheres separated releasing his severely damaged hand.

Jenny then walked around the spot where the large cross was and after a moment began to laugh. It wasn't her diabolical laughter; it was the laughter of someone who had victoriously banished her more dastardly and frightening arch-rival. Of someone who was so far out of it, that they didn't realize that the entire chapel was filled with a fine white dust that tasted a bit bitter. So with cocaine affecting everyone one of her reasoning faculties, she gave Shawn all the money in her checking account and the keys to her car without a question. Of course, once the dust settled, the police arrived, and she was done bribing the police officials with money she no longer had, she realized that her charge from The Collective, Shawn Walkman, had escaped with her help as had her old rival with Ms. Hopwood's aid and confidant.

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When Shawn finally recovered from his own encounter with cocaine, he finally realized why he was being attacked by every organization on Earth and decided that the band should reunite for one last big hit. Then Shawn aimed Ms. Hopwood's car for Arizona and was off into the sunset, just like Mr. Squire except Shawn wasn't driving the Batmobile and Shawn couldn't bake a half-decent coconut cream pie if his life depended on it, and knowing his luck, it probably did.

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A few states away, Juán Borg and John Borg were making their final arrangements for Shawn's re-assimilation into The Collective. Thanks to the contributions of The Collective's newest member, Mandy Borg, The Collective was going to be able to lure one of the first members to rejoin the group with all of the intelligence information he had unwittingly gathered while on his extended leave.

"Mandy, your first objective is to convince Mr. Walkman that The Collective is and always has served the greater good of mankind. Second, you must not let him die until he has told you everything he knows about the NWO, Majestic 12 and the Chinese Salvation Army. Third,..." John Borg stated in monotone until he was interrupted by Jennifer Leigh Hopwood who burst into the room two paragraphs ahead of schedule.

"He has escaped, and the Chinese Salvation Army has joined with the drug peddling Baptist Church. The Church/Army appear to be aware of your plans and are trying to beat you to the middle east, our informants report," Jenny gasped quickly, hoping that the information about the Salvation army and the Baptists would distract them from the little phrase about Shawn escaping. Surprisingly it worked.

Juán immediately began to make arrangements to get the MIB and the Dialects to the middle east before their plans were destroyed. John Borg just continued implanting all of the subliminal objectives into the new borg. Mandy was to find out all Shawn knew about every

organization he ever joined, especially the Chinese Salvation Army, the NWO and Majestic 12. When she had that information, she was to make him rejoin The Collective, and finally, once he was a member of The Collective, he must be brought to the middle east immediately to do what he did best...

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Benny, Oliver, Esau and Gwaub were not particularly happy with their guitar playing friend. Perhaps, it was the fact that they had to cancel their last five performances and hadn't had any money for a week. Maybe it was the fact that their phone had been ringing day and night by people looking for their lost guitarist, but as it happened, the reason why the band wasn't really thrilled with Shawn right now was because some Baptist had invaded their two bedroom apartment and was threatening to kill them if they didn't tell her three very important things: where Shawn could be found, why they were wearing pampers deluxe diapers for girls, and to top it off, she wanted to know where the last beer was.

So, one could appreciate it when this obnoxious Baptist, who referred to herself as Loulou Thumper, was scared away by a fifty-seven year old science teacher who was dressed as Death and throwing lots of micro-machine Batmobiles at her. Naturally she ran away screaming, "I'll be back!"

Once the middle aged science teacher frightened the drug dealer away, he went to the refrigerator, took the last beer, mixed it into the four-week old pot of coffee and drank it down greedily. Oliver, who did not take well to middle aged science teachers who drink the last beer without asking, gently removed the man from the apartment and waited to have a chat with dear old Shawn.

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Jennifer Leigh Hopwood and Jennifer Suzanne Ivanova's identical twin sister, Monica Alyta Ivanova were under orders to locate and monitor the lost Shawn (soon-to-be-Borg) Walkman. It hadn't taken The Collective long to realize that she had tried to hide the fact that she had lost the operative who would possess the information they needed. As a punishment for her failure they forced her to give up her small district activities and help Monica retrieve the ward that she had lost.

With the Chinese Salvation Army on the move, they couldn't spare the forces to search for Walkman, and besides, he had proved he could deal with lots of attackers before in Monte Carlo. A group of two people stood a better chance. As soon as they found him, they were ordered to manipulate him so that he will find and rescue Mandy Borg.

The task itself would be difficult, but the company was worse. Monica would not shut up about how she was going to eat Walkman alive for killing her dear sister. Jennifer, on the other hand, was wondering how to get out of any of this alive. Before the duo had left The Collective's not so secret hideaway, Juan personally told them that failure would mean complete assimilation. Death would be too quick, but an eternity as The Collective's slave was considered a fair punishment for someone who had not been assimilated.

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Shawn was a little confused. He had finally realised that the collective wanted his knowledge of other organizations, and the other organizations wanted him for the same reasons. Logically, it occurred to Shawn that if one of these organizations couldn't get him, then they believed killing him would be the best way to silence him. There was just a few things that didn't fit though. He couldn't figure out why John Borg had tried to kill him. The Collective had him at the time and they were in no danger of losing him so why would John want him dead? Surely, he wasn't holding a grudge about that Monte Carlo incident.

Then there was the fact that of all the other people who had been in these other organizations weren't being hunted; he seemed to be the only one they were after. The band, for example, was nothing but a group of musical assassins and turn-coats. (As a matter of fact, they had considered naming the band, "The Assassins and Turn-coats," but it just didn't the right ring to it.) True he had been in more crime syndicates than the others, but the others had been in two or three and pretty high up, too. Gwaub used to work as assistant-director of the CIA until he joined the Scottish Mob. There was something that just wasn't adding up, but thanks to Mr. Squire (or was it Batman?) Shawn was catching on, however slowly. (Come to think of it, maybe it had been death in a Batmobile...yeah, that was probably it...)

Finally Shawn made it to the band's apartment. It was a little two bedroom, first floor deal with a broken toilet and bad wiring, but it was home for the last two years. Shawn couldn't help but think of how worried the guys must be. He found the door was unlocked and walked into a greasy, frying pan. By now he was habitually sleeping at two-thirty each afternoon from some sort of injury or torture so he felt just fine as his friendly, erotic dancing pickles once again arrived to cheer him up in never-never land.

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"A tracking device?" Jenny asked Monica. This last little detail had not been told to her until the evil Ivanova had asked why she wasn't using it.

"Yes, all Borg have a tracking unit so that they can be recovered in the event of death. When you were allowed to borrow him, he had new cybernetic attachments. We had planned to use these to implant the tracking unit and prepare him for when he rejoins The Collective. If you don't have a tracking unit, I have one." Monica stated without emotion.

It made sense to Jenny that the Borg would need these tracking devices to recover the dead bodies and remove the implants they had received, but if the temporary cybernetic limbs implanted the device, then she may have one inside of her. She had once been severely injured by Loulou Thumper and thanks to The Collective, she had been given back those legs.

As Jenny continued to think about the odd behavior of The Collective, she decided that it was kind of The Collective to help her, and concluded her mental conversation by telling herself that she had more important things to do, just like The Collective programed her.

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"Hey, he's got a fake leg!"

"Did you see the car he drove up in?"

"Looks like he hasn't shaved for a month!"

"You didn't have to hit him with a dirty frying pan."

"It was convent. And it serves him right. To think he had enough money to buy a mint condition 1969 Voltswagon beetle, and we were stuck here with no money, no food, no guitarist and a phone that won't stop ringing."

As if on cue, which it probably was, the phone started to ring. Oliver, one who commented on Shawn's facial hair, answered it.

"I'm sorry miss. Shawn's not here right now. I could take a message..." Oliver said humbly. He was hoping to get the lady's phone number, and if he was lucky, her address too. "She hung up."

Gwaub looked at Shawn and then at the other band members and finally said, "We had better put something other than pamper deluxe on, I think we're in for a long story."

So they each retired to their rooms to put on some "decent" clothes. When they came out, Shawn was in the bathroom cleaning the grease from his face and shaving the beard off his beat up face. Benny, Oliver, Esau and Gwaub waited for him to finish before they took the baseball bats to his battered body. Once they felt he had been taught his lesson, they stopped and let him try to explain.

"Well, uh..." Shawn began, "Some of my .... old gangs are...well, they're trying to get me back and they have taken my ex-girlfriend hostage and I have nearly been killed more than seven times and I want you to help me rescue Mandy and kill John Borg..." He trailed off. Shawn was never good at telling stories.

Esau, the most courageous member of the group, remembered the time he worked at Area 5-1. It was one of the greatest times of his life until that day when Captain Captain and his group of mercenaries kidnapped the ambassador from Exxilon, a small country that he was told was located between Madagascar and South Africa. He had been in love with they grey-skinned beauty and when he found out she had been kidnapped by a group of tea-time freaks, He abandoned his job as media officer and took off to find her. Of course, he never did. So with memories of him lost love, Esau decided to join Shawn.

Oliver, the brains of the band, was also having a flashback to Area 5-1, he was in charge of the counter-intelligence division of the base. He had found out that some reporter was close to figuring out somethings she shouldn't. So he broke into this Lois Lane's house in the dead of night to find out what she knew. She accused him of being in league with aliens and working at Area 51, but he corrected her by telling her that he worked at Area five dash one. Then he realized he had told her too much and was forced to kill the woman he had come to love in less than five sentences. Thankfully she was saved by this freak in a pink tu-tu, and he was sentenced to be executed instead of his love.

Benny, the self-appointed magistrate of the band, had no memories of love, but like all the other members of the band he had done his time at Area 5-1. He was discharged from service after he claimed that Esau was having an affair with an alien. Esau's wife then beat Benny senseless. When he later claimed that Oliver was leaking information to a reporter, Oliver broke into his room and stole his photos of the tests of extra-terrestrial spacecraft that were not happening. Benny was discharged the same hour.

Gwaub had never worked at Area 5-1. He had been in love every week though. He was the only member of the band who had made it on the TV Guide's top 25 most beautiful people. He used to work as director of the CIA. He had loved someone new each day. The CIA had a gambling system based on it. Each day the people would pay a dollar to buy a ticket for who they thought Gwaub would love tomorrow. The winner got 75% of the collected money, 5% went to Jerry's Kids, and the remaining 20% was used for various expenses like a new coffee maker, fireworks, and door prizes.

Shawn was worried. He saw the eyes of each band member looking at the others like "let's beat him to a pulp and then decide" but he knew how to deal with this. "I have over a quarter of a million dollars in my checking account." he remarked stupidly. The starving band members immediately took up position to eat him alive. All in all, Shawn decided that this was not what he had expected.

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Loulou Thumper of the drug running Baptist Church was disgusted by the speech pattern of the Dialects she had hired. They were called the Adjective-Team, the sworn enemies of the Adverb-Team. They were on their way to kill Shawn Walkman and anyone else who got in their way. Loulou was to guard the rear while they broke into Shawn's apartment and finished him and his band of assassins and turn-coats. Things were going well. Thanks to the Baptist Church's interference in the US postal system they had possession of the most powerful gun ever made in Taiwan.

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Shawn was unconscious at the time the Adjective-Team broke into his home and tied all of his pampers wearing pals to the broken toilet. They then proceeded to inject the comatose Shawn with an ugly blue serum that would kill him in roughly two days (just in case he managed to escape). The Dialects then proceeded to torture the rest of the band until they also fell unconscious.

When Shawn awoke, the first thing he saw was Loulou Thumper reading to him from her copy of the bible, "May god, protect you, and guide you to wealth and cheap slave labor; May god, take your soul into heaven, and show you the best ways to smuggle drugs across the boarder,...May god..."

Shawn was slow witted thanks to the slow acting poison, but he had been in church often enough to know that this wasn't near what he had slept through. Eventually she stopped giving him his last rights and then the Dialects came.

"Young, pathetic, weak and hopeless child we the strong, wise, powerful and great Adjective-Team are going to ask you seven simple riddles. If your inferior mind cannot properly answer each one of them then you will die. If you do manage to answer them then you will die. Either way, it is not good for you." the tall Dialect stated.

"The first, short and easy riddle follows," the cute Dialect said, "my riddle for you is a energetic poem:

Often talked of, never seen,  
Ever coming, never been,

Daily looked for, never here,  
Still approaching, coming near.  
Thousands for it's visit wait  
But alas for their fate,  
Tho' they expect me to appear,  
They will never find me here.

What is the simple thing that this poem remarks of?"

Shawn hated riddles. Shawn hated the fact the this was exactly like Mr. Squire's extra credit question. The memory crept up slowly on Shawn. The tall Dialect aimed this extra-terrestrial looking weapon at Shawn. Then he remembered Mr. Squire would always laugh at him when he couldn't get it and say, "I'll tell you tomorrow."

Shawn had no clue but he thought that maybe he could buy some time like Mr. Squire so he replied. "I'll tell you," Shawn paused wondering if he should ask for more than a day, but decided against it, "tomorrow."

"Good." the tall Dialect said.

"Second of the easy riddles," the next Dialect said, "If it takes six men, six hours to dig six holes, how long does it take one man to dig half a hole?"

Shawn was once again clueless, "I'll tell you tomorrow?"

"No." said the tall Dialect as he leveled his weapon which had been made in Taiwan. The other Dialects surrounded Shawn and chained him to the floor. He couldn't even breath. "I'm sorry," Loulou said, "but we know of your great ability to escape from life/death situations and we don't want that to happen again. This weapon can vaporize a target from a mile on it's lowest setting, it's currently on the second to highest. Watch."

The tall Dialect killed the other Dialect by the refrigerator, the refrigerator and it looked like everything for two New York blocks. Loulou continued, "Don't worry, you won't have time to feel a thing and there is plenty of charge left in the battery to kill you, your friends and my arch-rival, Jennifer Leigh Hopwood. Goodnight, Mr. Walkman, we can't have people with your knowledge walking around, now can we? My god abhors violence so I think I'll go back to guarding the rear while the Imperial Dialect finishes you."

With that, she left. Shawn, who had been unable to breath for a couple minutes now, was on the point of suffocating when the Imperial Dialect pressed the trigger.

## Chapter 9: "Hey stupid"

*By the Jesster and Lady Solace*

The gun, having been intended to have long recharge period after each shot, shorts out rendering the Imperial Dialect unconscious. The cute dialect was still staring stupidly at the remains of his junior officers when Lou re-entered the room.

“What the devil's going on?”

Realizing that the only person capable of answering her is suffocating, she loosens Shawn's chains.

“Well...” Shawn begins and is interrupted as the other four band members enter the room.

“How did you get loose?” Lou screamed. Suddenly, the blood drained from her face leaving it a pasty gray color. “Escar?”

Memories of area 5-1 once again came flooding forth into each band member's mind. Esau's real name was Escar. When he'd lost his alien girlfriend and experienced the death of his wife by the tires of an American cheese truck, Escar had because Esau. He couldn't face the pain & memories of his old life. This name hadn't been, really been, used since they all spent time at area 5-1.

Escar/Esau abruptly sat down. Finally the explanations began. At the disappearance of an alien by the name of Jhessail Ariadne (now know as Lou Lou Thumper), he had changed his name & joined Shawn's band.

Lou Lou, now & forever known as Jhessail Ariadne had been befriended by an organization called the baptist church. They had raised her and introduced her to their god. But the pastor and deacon's wives who raised her so tenderly had mysteriously disappeared. Jenny Hopwood had put her in charge of finding Shawn and his band. Jenny had led her to believe that Shawn and his band had captured the pastor and deacon's wives and children. She poins an accusing finger at Shawn.

“You,” she hisses, “you have them! Tell me where they are!” She grabs the gun from the still unconscious Imperial Dialect and aims it at Shawn.

Shawn slips out of his chair and scrambles to the corner.

“Wait,” Benny interrupts, “he doesn't have them!” He clamps a hand over his mouth. Immediately, they all pounce on him and being questioning him, slapping him roughly around.

At last, Jhessail persuades them to stop. There is a stirring in the corner. Alwen grabs the gun and blows the dialect away. Slowly, menacingly, he turns toward Benny.

“Now,” he intones forebodingly, “how about you telling us what the devil happened, hmm?”

Benny gingerly places his bruised posterior into the richly patched recliner. He sighs, “My name isn't Benny. It's really Benjamin Lucifer Spich. I've been in contact with Jenny

Hopwood under the name of Lucifer. I was supposed to make it look like their disappearances were Shawn's fault and did a bloody good job of it too. No, but, Jenny has them all held hostage under the school. She is in charge of the drug-running, not Shawn. He has nothing to do with it. It's Jenny that's using you, blackmailing you, for her drug running front. The Collective doesn't know..."

"What?" Shawn shrieks. "What's the Collective have to do with this?"

Benny gets a frightened deer-in-the-headlights look and realizes again he's blabbed. They pounce on him once more for info.

"Oh, bloody poo! Yes, she's working for the Collective, okay? But they don't know she's drug-running, or they'd want a piece of the action. She's overstepped her bounds. They'd kill her. She's my lover, okay? Yes, it's Benjamin Lucifer Spich and Jennifer Leigh Hopwood? Okay! Benny and Jenny!" He breaks into hysterics. Gwaub hauls off and slaps him across the face.

"Chill," is all he says. He goes back to checking out Jhessail's legs.

Since Shawn is the main character and they feel really bad for beating the crap out of him, they decide to help him save Mandy.

Stupid, cute dialect looks at Jhessail. "I thought we were a drug-running operation."

"No, stupid. We were blackmailed by Jenny. I was trying to protect the people at church, and I thought Shawn had them. That's why we were involved. But Jenny lied. She's a very bad woman & she was using us to smuggle drugs. And the Collective doesn't know she's drug-running? Got it?"

"Got it!" he says lightly.

"Good. Now shut up."

"Stupid," says Gwaub.

"Yes, ma-" the stupid, cute dialect slaps a hand over his mouth.

Oliver grabs Benny roughly by the scruff of the neck and hauls him out the door. Everyone else follows, including the stupid, cust dialect, still clutching his mouth. As they step out into the drive, a bright flash catches their eyes.

Big Bird strolls by, one brow cocked, staring intently quizzically at them. He stops and then continues on his way, shaking his head.

"Come on," Oliver says, dragging Benny to the side of the drive. They all pile into the old, brown, converted trade van that the band has been using to haul equipment.

Oliver climbs into the driver's seat, with Benny on the floor next to him. Shawn hauls himself into the passenger seat. Jhessail is smashed in between Gwaub and Escar in the back. Gwaub's hand resting on her knee. The stupid, cute dialect is dancing in the back, testing the trapset.

"What are you doing?" Escar asks him.

“Having fun!” he smiles in reply.

“No, I mean here, with us.”

“Following my employer. 'Sides, I got nothing better and more expedient to make a decisive end to my day. Is that an okay adjective?”

“Whatever,” Jhessail answers, resting her head on Escar's shoulder.

Oliver pauses. “Wait. I don't wanna have this skin-bag with us. He's a traitor, sold us out. We can't leave him here. Go get the chains!”

Escar throws open the door and rushes back into the apartment to get the chains with which Shawn had been chained. He brings them out. Oliver grabs Benny again. He and Escar proceed to lash Benny to the front of the van, grinning gleefully. Benny lets out a few high pitched shrieks.

“Ooo!” exclaims the stupid, cute dialect happily, “pretty hood ornament!”

Oliver and Escar climb back into the van. Oliver starts it and speeds off in a Pennsylvania-ish direction with the dialect pounding out a beat.

“Catchy!” cries Gwaub.

Oliver mismaneuvers the front of the van into a tree. A yowl pierces the night, punctuated musically by the dialects crazed thrashing of the drums.

“Musical!” says Jhessail.

Unbeknownst to our intrepid troupe, a group sent from the Collective pulls up in a shiny, black jag and piles out into the drive. The obvious leader, dressed in khakies and a sinhish polo shirt walks to the doorway.

“Come on,” he says, gesturing for them to follow. John Borg steps into the living room. “Looks like a struggle. Shawn and his men are probably alive.”

A body steps in behind him. “Their van is gone.”

“Dead dialect, a leader. Look at his height. We must find them. But first, I'm hungry. Why don't you go make a yummy coconut crème pie, John Smythe Borg. Now that we've assimilated you, aren't you glad you can do nothing but make those pies?”

“Yeah, especially when I get to leave jagged little pills in them.”

“Soon, soon.”

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In the van, Gwaub sniffs sheepishly. “Um, guys, I think we need to change diapers.”

Escar hurls himself into the back disrupting the dialect's musical interlude. He holds up a suitcase filled with clothing. Everyone piles out and grabs clothes.

The stupid, cute dialect shuffles around sadly. “All the guys get to change but me,” he sniffs.

Jhessail grabs a spare change and hands the plaid flannel shirt and jeans to him. "These will keep anyone from guessing you're a dialect," she says.

"OOO! Goody!" The dialect drops his pants then embarrassedly wanders off, pants around ankles.

Escar strolls from behind a bush, looking dapper in his khakis and dress shirt. Jhessail tilts her head. "Yeah, but that diaper looked hot. Why'd you wear it anyway?"

"Toilet's broken. Gas stations have working toilets!"

Shawn reappears, looking refreshed.

"What about Benny?" Jhessail asks.

"Hee hee hee," Shawn laughs maniacally. "Leave him in his diaper. Let the bugs splat on him and have their way with his flash!"

The cute, stupid dialect reappears looking like a buff lumberjack, except for the silver platform boots someone mistakingly left about.

They all piled back into the trade van. Oliver ran into a low sign and Benny yelped. The stupid, cute dialect began drumming again. Five miles down the road, the stupid, cute dialect stopped drumming. "I gotta peee-eee."

"What'd ya do in the bushes?" Escar snapped.

"Changed."

Oliver pulled into the next gas station. The dialect threw himself out the door into the bathroom. Shawn looked at his hand & casually remarked, "Ooo, I forgot my hand is quite mashed. I'm gonna git some Tylenol extra strength."

Escar looked at Olivar and shrugged. Eventually they all converged at the registrar to pay for gas, a 40 pkg box of twinkies, and cheeseballs for Jhessail.

"Will that be cash or credit?" a familiar voice asked. Everyone except Jhessail looked up in honor. It was Mr. Squire himself. Screaming they threw money on the counter and quickly drove off.

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Mr Squire watched them drive off. Shrugging, he sighed. They drove off so quickly that he hadn't even had time to say anything quotable.

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Fifty miles down the road, what was left of Benny fell off and was hit by the van tires. They stopped to see if Benny was still alive.

"Well guys, I think he's dead."

"Is he? I dunno. He may look and even smell dead, but that doesn't mean he's dead."

However, after some discussion, they left him laying in the road.

After they'd driven a few miles, the stupid cute dialect sees a foot, currently unattached, protruding from under the backseat. "Uh," he begins.

Gwaub rubs Jhessail's knee; annoyed, she backhands him. He sees wrestling pickles doing an erotic version of the hula.

"Who's foot is this?" yells the dialect.

Suddenly Shawn remembers a question on a senior exam of Mr. Squire's: If you see a lone foot sticking out from under your car seat, you've had one too many twinkies. "Hey, stupid, how many twinkies did you eat?"

"Only about 37."

"Hey," Oliver bellows, "those were mine!"

"It's a pretty foot."

"Stupid..." Shawn says warningly. Suddenly a body appears between him and Oliver; it is a familiar body.

"Hey, the foot's gone!"

Shawn can't remember this body, although he knows he should. She's brunette, 5' 4"...for some reason he asks, "have I ever seen you in a strapless white string bikini?"

She glares at him and belts him across the face. "Hey guys, look! Sexy dancing pickles!"

Oliver asks, "What?"

Shawn doesn't even get out an answer before Elizabeth snaps, "Duh, stupid."

"I'm not stupid; he's stupid."

"I'm stupid!" a voice calls from the back.

"And cute," says Elizabeth.

"I'm Shawn, remember."

"You're the one who should remember, but listen. I'm with the N.W.O., the nude world order. We're trying to make clothing illegal."

"But you're in clothes."

"I've gotta blend, but I digress. I'm here to tell you that the Majestic 12 and Chinese Salvation Army have lost their drug-running front. They've contacted the Collective and have hits out on Jenny. By now my guess is that everyone knows about the drug front." A ring sounded. Elizabeth pulled out her cell phone. A distressed look spread across her face. She nodded and hung up. "Uh, guys," she drawled, "I just got word from my insider that the Collective has picked up what was left of Benjamin Lucifer Spich on the road. They now know about Jenny and the drug-running. They've been in contact with the Chinese Salvation Army and the Majestic 12. They all want Jenny dead and all knowledge destroyed along with all those who know. That means we've got to watch our butts. Um," she turns to Oliver, "in other words, go faster. They're ten minutes behind us."

Shawn addresses Elizabeth. "Wait a minute! Why are you here?"

"I have to have a reason? Um, I think stupid is cute."

"Oh, okay."

Gwaub remembers some of Squire's wisdom. He speaks more than he's spoken in ages. "Remember, when one calls you cute, don't argue." He turns from Jhessail and realizes that Elizabeth is rather buxom. He smiles. Money changes hands. Shawn and Oliver exchange a look and Oliver pockets the money.

Suddenly, the road in front of them explodes. Oliver screeches to a halt. They are surrounded by black Collective jags.

"What are you thinking? Don't stop!" screams Shawn.

"I was pondering the art of petting a bunny. What were you thinking?"

"We're surrounded by the Collective, and you ponder petting a stinking bunny! Stupid!"

"Now, we've already discussed this. He's stupid."

Oliver's door opens and he's hauled out of the van to face Benny.

"Remember what Mr. Squire always said? Shawn was right." He laughs maniacally. "It may look dead. It may smell dead. It may even be dead, but that doesn't mean it's dead!"

Shawn is dragged out to face John Borg and Jon Smythe Borg. John Borg opens his mouth. Suddenly, everyone stops. Camilla the chicken crosses the road, eyeing them warily.

John Borg sighs, "Shawn, I expected more. Why do I keep catching you? What's with the chicken?" John Borg beckoned to another Borg. "Now friends, we're going to tie you up and shove you into the back of your old, brown, converted trade van. Victor Borg here will take the driver's seat. You will follow us."

With that, all seven were tied up and thrown into the back of the van. Victor Borg climbed gracefully (for a Borg) into the driver's seat. All the black jags and the one old, brown, converted trade van sped down the road, in a Pennsylvania-ish direction.

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Many hours later, the caravan halted. The surrounding land was flat and fertile, full of farms and people dressed in funny old fashioned apparel.

"Look everybody!" Victor called into the back. "It's the Yoder-Borgs!"

Yes, they were in Pennsylvania Dutch country – the Borg neighborhood.

"There's my cousin, Ezekiel Borg. Hey Zeke!"

Victor climbed out of the van and nodded to the Yoder-Borgs. The back doors of the van opened, and the seven comrades were dragged out.

"You will come with me," said John Borg. He led the group into a rundown barn, up into the hayloft.

“Hey!” John yelled. Two Yoder-Borg teens, newly assimilated, lept up from the hay and hurried out of the barn. The boy falling on his Borg-bum. “Teen Borgs,” John sighed.

“Well Shawn, we're tired of this. Collectively, I mean. This can't go on. Stand on this chain.” He pauses to put a cassette tape of little bunny foo-foo music sung by George Michael, Boy George and the Spice Girls in the tape player.

“Ah, music to die by.” John comments. He threads a guitar string noose around Shawn's neck. Shawn realizes that he's craving a coconut cream pie. John sets a table of scrumptious coconut cream pies.

“Catch-ee, baby, yeah!” John Borg cackles gleefully. “If you reach for the pies, you slip and die. If you don't, you die of coconut cream pie depravation! Bwahahaha!” John did a sadistic twirl back to the tape player. He cranked the music higher. “It's got a funky beat and I can really bug out to it – yeah, baby, yeah!” John screamed.

The Yoder-Borgs began doing wild, frantic motions with their hands. Suddenly one burst forth from the others, a tall, Irish-American, barechested Borg man.

“Michael Flatley Borg is Borg of the Dance!” Everyone yelled happily. He danced frantically, grabbing a Baryshnikov Borg with whom to pirovette.

“Foo Foo Foo” the cadence grew into a loud hum, and the Borgs began to twirl like Dirvishes.

In the midst of this, no one noticed that the cute, stupid dialect had eluded being tied up. He made his way, cutely frolicking toward the table of pies and began eating hungrily.

Shawn howled in a fury at this and strained toward the pies. His foot slipped, and the chair fell.

The guitar string constricted around his throat, biting in like a rabid smurf. Elizabeth shrieked, but our heroes friends were too far to do anything.

Stupid stared stupidly, pie falling out of his maw, down his chin.

“Goodbye, o dear Nelly. I'm sorry I let the smurf nibble my nose!” Shawn managed to rasp out before his eyes clouded over and the world's light went off due to overdue electric bills.

# Chapter 10: "Saved"

*By Rassilon*

He dies.

# About The Story

*By Luke M Wilson*

The “Red Tape War, Part 2” was written by my friends and I in 1998. No, there was no “Red Tape War, Part 1”. It just seemed funnier to start with part two.

I originally posted the short story on a free webhosting account I “acquired” from a friend. The pages sat on the web for a while. I didn't think much about backing them up. After all, I could just browse the web to them, you know? Sadly, in the year 2000, the host of the website decided to delete old accounts that hadn't been accessed in a while. The account with the “Red Tape War, Part 2” was among those deleted. I had thought the content was lost.

A couple weeks ago (July 2006), I was going through some old boxes and found some 5.25 inch floppies. Much to my surprise, one of the disks was labeled “Red Tape War”. I grabbed my old floppy drive from the linen closet, plugged it into my FreeBSD box and mounted the disk. What luck! The files were actually still there. Indeed, the files were still readable. I quickly copied the files to a the BSD box and a second box (just in case).

Afterward, I started reading the files. Oh, how bad we were at spelling (and grammar, but especially spelling). Not just me, but all of my friends and I. Although, if I had to point out who did the best job, I would have to indicate Holland Marie Angran. She only had a few words misspelled. Everyone else had tons misspelled. Indeed, some people misspelled the same word a couple different ways within the same paragraph.

Anyway, I have tried to fix most of the spelling errors. I have fixed a few grammar problems, but others I left in. I didn't want to damage the original work. I realize this makes it harder to read, but I think it's a fair trade.

And now, I return the “Red Tape War, Part 2” to the web. Hopefully someone will find it as amusing to read as it was to write. If you have any comments about the work, feel free to email me ([rassilon@temporalapocalypse.com](mailto:rassilon@temporalapocalypse.com)).