

THE WAY OF THE WEEKEND WARRIOR

CHAPTER 33

Jerome, wearing his Last Call face and demeanor, looked up dispassionately when Casey slammed both doors open to present a spasmodically twitching Wiley strapped to the mower's belly with hell in both eyes and foam oozing out from under the silver tape across his mouth. "Sorry, no recycle here. Dispose of him in the proper bin."

The denizens took in Wiley with the Zen calm a night of hammering cheap booze can produce. Jasper ventured, "Service entrance in rear."

Cathilda whinnied, "No in-flight refueling."

Strack rumbled, "That extreme skateboard games shit was last week."

Casey looked around at the Mimosa and its fauna, far from reassured. She set her self up for more self-castigation by being glad she had the gun.

Jasper approached Wiley curiously, examining him like Lord Curnarvon peering at a mummy prepped for cultural looting. "Not a bad ride, Hoss," he decided. "A rig like this could save a lot of problems for a lot of folks."

Wiley gibbered and gnashed beneath the tape. Coming to the realization, Jasper reached up and yanked it off with a helical *voila* move. Wiley howled like a gutshot coyote. Jasper looked down at the tape, which now depicted a map of Wiley's nape hair, mustache, and soul patch. "Oh, yeah. Sorry Bro."

Turning to Casey, he bowed. "Howdy Ma'am. I'm Jasper. That's Jerome behind the bar about to chuck us all out. And all those damn drunks over there."

"Hi. I'm Casey. Can you help me get this man functional?"

Cathilda wavered over to consult. "I doubt it, honey. That Spanish Fly stuff is bogus and Ginseng takes too long. Have you got any poppers? IV Viagara?"

The irregulars were crowding around Wiley, giving Jerome an opportunity to scoop up all their glasses without a fight. Wiley slavered at them, trying to bite anybody who got too close. One such lunge tipped the dolly and he whammed down on his back again, knocking him breathless.

"Okay," Casey asked wearily, "Now what?"

"Depends on what you want to accomplish," Jerome said. "In the next eight minutes."

Wiley got her attention by shyly booting her in the calf. She leaned over, straining to hear his labored words. Which were: "Calls for decompression. Gotta be done just right or I get the bends. And the kinks and beebie-jeebies."

Casey looked at Jasper with such palpable helplessness that Jasper patted her shoulder consolingly. "It's all right, Lady. This happens all the time."

Despair surfacing in the post-action lull, Casey murmured, "He has to write something for me. Or I'll kill him."

Which reminded her. She pulled out the pistol, causing Jerome to put his hands under the bar and regard her with an animal alertness. The patrons showed little reaction. Jasper shook his head sadly. "Won't work."

Horrified, Casey gasped, "No, no. I'm not going to shoot him. I just want you to dispose of..."

Jasper nodded, "Nope. Like I said, that gun won't work. Smokin' Joe got so cute cutting it down it won't fire anymore. Wiley just carries it to..."

Cathilda stomped on his instep. Jasper yipped, then looked hangdog. "Yeah, right. Anyway. Here, let me take it."

Casey held the gun out, hanging between her fingertips. Snorting, Cathilda snatched it and dropped it into the bottomless sea of her cleavage.

From the bar came the ragged voice of Strack. "You want to get him up and ready for action like right now, affirm?"

"Six minutes, max," Jerome intoned.

"Not a problem," Strack croaked. " Purely logistics." He wheeled around the bar, one hand spinning his wheels and the other holding a shot he'd hidden from Jerome. He surveyed Wiley's lash-up professionally. "Not bad. Small wheels though. You want to race afterwards?"

Casey shook her head, Strack shrugged and pulled some arcane paraphernalia from the nylon bag on his useless knees. He held up a convoluted, combat-ready-looking clump of hardware and smiled at it proudly. "Technology. That's what toppled the Russkies. You think they could build something like this?"

Casey doubted it, but didn't yet see why they would want to. The Mimosans all nodded at her, basking in second-hand pride over what had been wrought and was capable of more wrought on further notice. Flipping levers and valves, Strack walked her through a catechism *de rigueur* or *moqueur*.

"Okay, the business end here came off a standard respirator." Casey could now see that what she'd thought was some obscene sex gadget was a flesh-colored shroud to fit over mouth and nose. "Connected directly to the Main Chamber here." Which opened like a rifle breech to reveal a burnt interior. Strack touched a stud on the side of the device and a coil in the chamber glowed cherry red. "Electric ignition," he said proudly. "Nine volt". A matter of praise ran through the crowd. Pulling a tube with enameled dragon from his shirt pocket he carefully poured some fine grains of what looked like yellow sand into the breech, then sealed it. "Lebanese hash," he commented. "Crumbles up like sandstone."

Toggling open another chamber at the rear, he showed her a screw-down tensioner. "Drop an amyl nitrate cylinder in the Propellant Chamber," he told her, "Lock and load. Or nitrous. Different payload, but you get operating pressure either way."

He flipped what looked to Casey like a CO2 cartridge out of a cross-breast bandolier, slipped it into the cylinder and ratcheted it down. "Now this," he went on, "is optional, but advisable for this circumstance." He opened another small chamber with polished chrome interior and pulled on a strong around his neck. A titanium charger engraved with the Special Forces logo popped out of his collar and he positioned it over the chrome chamber and tumped in a few righteous jolts of coke. The crowd titter this time had a harder edge on it.

Strack sealed the cocaine chamber and adjusted a small set screw. "The Induction Chamber works on pure carburetion," he said, checking Casey for comprehension. "You know; Venturi principle, all that?" Casey nodded dumbly.

"So," Strack concluded, "Push this button and the hash ignites, hit this one and the amyl blows through the barrel, forcing the smoke out through the aspirator with a fine jet of some damn decent Peruvian toot." He held up the gizmo, which Casey now saw as freighted with catastrophe like a loaded torpedo. "Ta, daaaa. The Bongzilla, reporting for duty."

"Five minutes!" Jerome barked.

Jasper tipped Wiley back up to vertical hold. He looked like home-made dogshit. Strack rolled up, wheel to wheel with Wiley, and extended the mask. Wiley bowed his head as gratefully as any communicant, making a tight seal around his hemorrhoid orifices, aided by the remnants of the tape.

Strack touched the lighter stud, paused, then pulled the trigger for the propellant. The Bongzilla emitted a low, implosive hiss. Strack toggled the trigger, producing explosive puffs like a steam locomotive. Glancing at Casey, he moaned, "Wooooooo, woooooo! I think I can, I think I can, I think I can..." over the chug, chug, chug. Turning back to Wiley he said, "You're on the Peace Train, Asshole." Wiley's chest inflated, his eyes bugged out. Casey could have sworn smoke blew out his ears. When he started gagging and thrashing, Strack withdrew his portable gas chamber and observed the results with scientific detachment.

Casey saw no improvement in the situation. Wiley, supercharged from the nuke hit on his plundered store of brain chemicals, was not progressing. It was obvious to any experienced observer that the fury of the neurological storm had turned inward, poking tight twisters of havoc into cellars best left unexploded, avidly seeking out the fragile trailer parks of higher reason. She looked a question at Strack, who shrugged, "It's pure science. You want to apply it, you need to have some expectations."

"I need for him to give me a column." She met the circle of uncomprehending eyes, tugged out her recorder and waved it. "I need three thousand words in five hours," she yelled.

"Wrong," Jerome answered her. "Three minutes."

The denizens had it sussed out now. "Oh," they chorused, "A rant!"

Jasper nudged her, said, "You have to pull his chain." Casey glared at him.

"Crank him up," he clarified. "Get him started."

"Yo, Wiley," Clathilda purred mischievously, "What you think about Safe Sex?"

Wiley's eyes snapped open, pools of sardonic venom. "*Safe Sex*!?!?" he screamed. "Don't even get me started on that steaming pile of malicious misanthropy."

Strack leaned over to hit the "On" button of Casey's recorder, which she held up like a contributive Catholic virgin offering a candle to her starcrossed Savior while Wiley raved out of control.

When the gigahit from the clusterbong died out, he slumped in his bonds, his verbal spew trailing off like a Walkman on the last few milliamps of its C cells. His head lolled forward. Drool dripped on his shoe and bare foot.

Jerome slammed the bar and bellowed, "That's it. Get your asses outta here!"

SAFETY COMES PREMATURELY

By Tim Wiedner Wagner

My position on sex is Male Superior. And my favorite male superior position is called 68. You go down on me and I owe you one. That's as safe as sex gets and it involves sticking sensitive, irreplaceable components between sharp teeth. Safe sex is a myth! They want you to believe it's safe so they can use it to sell you worthless junk.

Listen, I'm no prude, for crissakes. I receive the ministrations not only of columnist groupies, but also the old, the young, the incapacitated, the begrudging, the easily duped, the elated, unrated, inflated, animals (both stuffed and previously unstuffed), vegetables, minerals, leather and several modern synthetics of arcane properties, machines, chains, chain letters, chain letter sweaters, footwear, underwear, everywear, anywear, hardware, software, artificial intelligence, intelligent artifice, unintelligible artifacts, milking parlors, prods (both stock and custom), mammaries, memories, murmurings, prostheses, French ticklers, German sticklers, and Oriental pricklers that give tickling a whole new slant.

In short, whatever gets you through the night. Lech and the world leches with you, kvetch and you kvetch alone. Not that "alone" is without erotic possibilities. Best not to rule anything out, is the rule of thumb. In fact thumbs themselves can be sugar plum fairies: there are cults of digital freaks who spraypaint "Thumbs Rule" on freeway ramps. Find your personal fetish through the process of elimination. In fact, that process itself... but I'm sure you get the idea. Several maybe. If so, send them in care of The Week. If your obsession is chosen, you could qualify for my Queen For a Day Special, a ride on ol' Jumpin' Jack Flash, his own bad self.

It's not my job to educate anybody. I just wanna be your lover, not your limpdick fascist boss. I want you to have my multi-headed love child. I just want to give up all my crazed, retardo, muskrat love. I just wanna to be your everything, be your macho man, be your teddy bear, your handy man, your salty dog, your smooth-up criminal, your overnight sensation. I just want you to be my party doll, my inflatable date, my meat puppet, my lip-smacking, ham-slammin, joint-jumpin, nipple-nibblin', booby-woogy fool' . See what I'm saying?

But don't try to tell me any of the above is safe! There's nothing you can put on to make it safe, no pills you can take, no advice from the wise. Most of those just make it more dangerous, actually. In a safe world condoms and diaphragms would come equipped with emergency airbags. Don't think "cybersex" is safe, either. The synonomically-named "virus"...

Punching up smut on your laptop or fax machine. If all you can get on top of your lap is a computer, buddy, you've got problems. The micro, soft syndrome. But what pops up while innocently browsing seemingly innocent sites like CatholicCradleRobbing.com? Click Here To Meet Personal Dates. Danger! Danger, Will Robinson!

It's the spot market for Proper Genitalia, eBay for hiohazards. And don't even think about handing me that, "Oh, no. It's all about companionship." You can get companionship in a pet store. But they all play the game: "Friends First". Okay, sure, honey. "First" meaning, before what? Eh? All this platonic crap. To me, platonic friends are the kind you met in Plato's Retreat. But the game is to pretend that for platonic soul mates, Proper Genitalia doesn't matter. Well, here's the scoop. It does matter. Look at the top of the webpage: Men Seeking Women, Women Seeking Men, Transsexual Crossdressing Masochists Seeking Highly Confused Dudes. But see, it's not like "Seeking Whatever". One touch of an Improper Genitalia and you find out It Matters. Don't search the engine if you don't have a clear idea of what you are ISO.

All those code letters are a bad sign, right there. But at least we know what ISO means. Interested in Sucking Off. Some of these little codes in the ads are like, what is it? What does this bitch want from me? Okay, SWF, we know that one, we saw the movie. Means she looks like Bright Fonda. Or maybe it means Super Wack Freak. Just right for some AMF.

Here we got all these women looking for an LTR. What? Little Tickle in the Ribs? Love Triangle Rumble? Lowdown Twisted Rutting? Whatever, I'm there for it. Long as there's no commitment involved. Another thing they're all ISO, is stable. Spelled just like sounds: Stable. Very self explanatory.

Then we get to HWP. I figured that stood for Ho With Problems. Or possible Ho With... Hmm, what starts with P? How about Proper Genitalia? Then I found out it means Height Weight Proportional. Like this is a big deal. Whoa, that babe is really proportional! Look out sweetie, I'm proportioned like a horse. Hey, is Barbie HWP? Hell no. Would you have sex with her? You bet you did. Or Jessica Rabbit. Or probably even Calista Flockhart. Hey, check out Wilt Chamberlain. Far cry from HWP, okay? And he apparently did a different woman every 9.7 minutes from the time he was nine.

The problem is, what do you say if you're *not* HWP? Shamu look-alike? Roseanne Class Cruiser? Welterweight runt? No, you've got all these vague categories like "Dieting". "Pleasantly Plump". "Big Beautiful Woman". You gotta hope for at least two out of three on that one. Or "Lots Of Me To Love". Great: Single,White, lots of me to obsess over and harpoon and drown your whole crew.

Here's a few guidelines for these displacement classes. Just try this simple test. Have her sit on your face. If she's "Dieting" you can't breathe. "Rubenesque" and you can't see. If you can't hear, she's a "Big Beautiful Lot To Love". If you can't survive, she's an obese pig and what the hell were you thinking?

What's wrong with a little truth in advertising here? Like, "SWF, sloppy fat, but I sure can cook and I've got a proper genital and know how to use it.

So tell me. *Does any of that sound "safe" to you?* Or some treacherous bait/switch scam aimed at stringing you up, looting your finances and emotions, then gutting you out into societal fish stock? While relating you with some strain of incurable, transmittable, death-dealing cooties and serving you with papers to support a dozen ill-conceived little bastards brainwashed to call you Pappy?

Next time you're thinking stinky and assume you'll get away unscathed, ask yourself three questions approved by the Solana Beach Police Department:

1. Would Jesus do anything this disgusting?

2. Do you have an exit strategy?

3. What year was the Battle of Hastings?

That final question is a mere bagatrix for those lucky enough to have attended a reasonably cogent school district prior to the drugs and rap era. The rest of us (or what's left of us) share my personal experience; that those ignorant of History are duped to repeat it. Same deal with Math and English, I discovered.

The latter was a particular disappointment at the time, since I had assumed the course would teach me how to speak more like the Beatles and Rolling Stones. Fortunately, rock and drugs did that for me anyway, but by then I had slipped into one of those odd little psychic traps institutions lay for the underly wary and ended up becoming an English Major. That was disappointing, too, since I expected to get a short clipped accent and mustache to match, but I did learn how to say "Lefteant" and "Stand Easy". Not to mention the names of a baffling bevy of heavy old weirdos like Chaucer and Milton, who could barely write English themselves. That Chaucer was the hip-hopper of the day. Should have sung that gobbledygook and called himself Tew Lyve Crewe. Acid Chaucer, coz.

But I digress. Or had you already noticed that? The important thing to remember is: sex is spelled Danger! At the very least it makes you sleepy and stupid. It causes babies, who are eating us out of house and home. You can catch disease, wives, lawsuits, your death. Bottom line: how safe can anything be if you have to do it with women? Never trust women. Without them, I'd be on top: have God-like powers and the reach of empires. Instead of working for some miserable rag, surrounded by itinerant gophers and forced to flog my priceless (or at least cut-rate) wisdom to any semi-literate dipstick who cares to pick it up for free.

So, you get the general idea. And about time. Remember that nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come. Except perhaps a bull rhinoceros just about to come. In other words, nothing, but nothing can stop the Duke of Earl. Layeth not boogie-woogie on the Shadow of Vanzee.

Casey didn't know whether to be proud of what she had snatched from the jaws of a looming deadline or humiliated. The more she thought about it, the more alternative ways of feeling about it occurred to her. None of them self-actualizing.