

Stage World

by

John Buffalo Mailer

Prologue

As they had done every night for three and a half years, Chuck and Jaime were arguing about who would marry Shelby Lynn. College buddies, about to enter the real world upon graduation in the spring, Charles Grunyon was the fat one, the hairy one, the funny guy outcast, obviously disconnected with the world; Jaime Duncan was the future movie star whose name, in fact, you've seen in recent papers. No one would have guessed at first glance that these two were friends.

"I'm going to be in movies with her, dildo. How are you going to meet her?"

"I'll work on her movies."

"Grunyon, you spend thirty-thousand a year to get a degree in Philosophy and end up doing shit work on film sets?"

"What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing. It just means that I'm going to be the one rubbing her belly at night while you're mopping my set."

Shelby was their age, twenty-two. She had been a movie star since she was fourteen and unlike so many other starlets, had managed to maintain a career into her adulthood. The boys were obsessed. She had been a part of their lives for eight years, and even though they knew the chance that she would meet either one of them, fall in love, and run off for a Honeymoon in Baja, California was slim, they enjoyed pretending this was a legitimate argument.

"Why would she run away with a fat, hairy, balding pud like you, when she could just as easily be with me, one of the most talented up-and-coming actors in Hollywood? Just give me one reason and I'll shut up." Jaime smiled.

"Because, you soon-to-be Hollywood homo, Shelby Lynn is from Kentucky. Kentucky women have a seventh sense."

"What would that be?"

"The stuff that tells you the *real* thing is standing in front of you. Look at me. I am one hundred percent man. Primal. You know why I don't wear cologne? Cause I emit a natural aphrodisiac."

"You smell like a pig and look like Wolverine on crack."

On they would go. The two boys held real love for each other. The kind of love which is dulled by throwing the word around.

Who could have foreseen that just two years later they would be having a conversation about what would be the best way for Chuck to kill Jaime.

RAVEN

The story's always different depending on who tells it. I guess everyone sees it from their side. I feel perfectly comfortable saying that my version is the most objectionable, and therefore the truest version. I was a part of the whole ordeal, yes.

I suppose I should start at the beginning. I was doing this re-shoot for a film called *Wave Length*. Total piece of action. Distilled crap. I'm not going to pretend I was happy with the direction my career had been taking. That's why the role of Spud Waters

in the new Jerry Grandeur flick, *Holing*, set to shoot in three months, was so important. I had it in the bag. I was Spud Waters for Christ's sake. Shelby, my wife, had already been offered the part of Katherine. A real Femme Fatale. Shelby was perfect for it. There must have been a bit of that old school Hollywood chatter about how much noise it would make to have us playing opposite each other. They were about to offer me the part when out of the blue, this little piece named Jaime Duncan has his debut performance in a film called *Nightlight into day*. Film's gross is higher in its first weekend than all of my last two films combined. James Dean, reduplicate, right? Right.

I had been in this business since I was twelve. I don't want to tell you how many soaps I did, but it was enough to make me regurgitate the Salisbury steak they gave us for lunch every third day of each week. After years of hard work and cultivated brown-nosing, I finally get a few movies. Nothing incredible, Pret-a-porter garbage for the teens, but they loved me. Every time I went to one of the malls, kids would come up begging for autographs. Begging. I had earned a following based on bad acting. Huge. It was starting to get to my soul.

I'm not pretending I married Shelby because of love. That's a no-sell fantasy in Hollywood. Out here, nobody gets married for love. You find someone you look good with, someone you don't mind chatting with during post-bone-pre-sleep time. But over and beyond, you marry someone who's going to advance your career. Bottom line, it's a cold world and the best thing to do is keep your cheeks toasty with a fat wallet because you never know when your loving public is going to desert you and your loving Execs are going to drop you on it. Bottom line.

Shelby married me for the same reasons that I married her. It's hard when you've been a star as long as she has. She could see I might be ready to take off like a skyrocket. I was the insurance policy in case her Execs began to notice the early cellulite on her thighs. It was a functional marriage.

Anyway, this fresh-out-of-college, know nothing actor, this Jaime, gets his first hit. So, now, talk of the town. The Execs are wondering if they want to take a chance on me. He's read the script and wants the role. Cute how things work out here, isn't it?

The execs called us both in for a meeting, sat us next to each other, to tell us they don't know who they want. Unbelievable. Never happened before. Not that it wasn't priceless. Two egos, extra large, are sat down next to each other in a waiting room. Hear the conversation.

ME: "Nice to meet you...dude."

HIM: "I don't think we should talk because of our situation. If we start a friendship, it might get bollixed-up because of the business of this particular deal..."

What an arrogant bastard, sitting there with his chin strap beard and long blonde hair. Even left his sun-glasses on. Not that I don't. Point is that is a privilege you earn. It's not automatic after one hit. As if he knows anything already about what it's like to be a movie star.

Next day I flew to New York to do a re-shoot on a scene in *Wave Length*. That's when I met Chuck Grunyon. Real nobody, a production assistant, a P.A. He was staring at me like a puckered asshole. To get him off my back, I asked him if he wanted an autograph.

Grunyon

Sometimes, life throws you an opportunity you have no choice but to take even though you know it ain't any kind of good idea.

Everyone always gets this story wrong. I don't know how so many people can go through an experience like this and trash all the details.

A lot of assholes say I wasted a good education with what I did after college, but the average A-hole couldn't see the meaning of life if it was written in his tofu-salad sandwich. Idiot Trust-fund hippies just waiting to shave off their dreadlocks so they can enter the Corporate world. I never went in for that bag of self-deluding bullshit. I got a degree in philosophy. Got it with the knowledge that in no way was my life going to be furthered by metaphysics. You want to know the truth? When I had to pick a major half way through college I had taken mostly philosophy classes, so I stuck with it. Didn't know if I'd put my chips on Schopenhauer or Nietzsche. I wanted reality – that was me. But I knew. Reality is complex and won't get easier by discussing what dead people thought a thousand years ago.

These idiots in my classes, some of the things they said.

"I'm going to be a teacher at the Yorksquire Prep school after I get my masters at Columbia. What are you going to do, Grunyon?" One of them asked me right before graduation.

"I'm gonna' work construction in Albuquerque." I told him.

"Very Mill, *very* Mill. You should read my thesis. It may serve you well on your travels." He gave me one cocky smile.

"I wouldn't wipe my ass with your thesis."

“Why not, Grunyon? Why not?”

“Cause you don’t use crap to clean up shit.” Philosophy did help in providing that remark.

I went to Albuquerque for a while, but my hairy body didn’t agree with the heat, so I came back to New York. Jaime hooked me up with some film crews and I started doing production. Nowhere work, but it was easier than construction and I made it clear I wasn’t gonna’ take no lip from anyone just because they were a Producer or director. To me, men are men and I don’t give two shits a month for what your title is, give me the respect I’m due.

I did that for about a year and got blacklisted. Off what? The hiring list for P.A.’s. The word was out. They didn’t like my attitude.

I bused tables, painted houses and a number of such jobs. Beats sitting in a classroom reading about dead people so that some day I could sit in a classroom and make other people read about dead people.

I got the call on a Saturday night. There was this strike going on in New York. All the production people wanted more pay. Something like that, I hadn’t really followed it. But there was a re-shoot going on for some piece of action flick called *Ocean Wave*. I think that was the title. They needed to put a crew together on the spot. The same yutz who fired me was now calling me up a year later to ask if I wanted a job.

Normally I would’ve told him where he could stick his wave, but I was broke. A hundred bucks a day looked acceptable. I only tell this so you can see that the chances of me being on this particular film set, on this particular day were minus-miniscule. I don’t

know if you're the type of person who believes in signs and all that crap, but I do.

Makes the world more interesting.

The set was as always, a bunch of morons running around trying to lick a little producer's hemorrhoid and make some connections. They had me locking down traffic a few blocks from where they were shooting. That's low. Nothing to do out there but tell cars they can't go down the street. You can't see what they're shooting and there's no action. Every once in a while, if you're lucky, some urban cowboy tries to get loud in your face. We're not supposed to touch pedestrians, but I didn't think that was right, so I ended up pushing some clown into a garbage can on the side of the road. He got huffy and said he would be coming back with the cops.

I walked to the set and grabbed one of the snot-nosed eighteen year old P.A.s. Told him our boss wanted us to switch jobs. The kid had been taking care of one of the stars. You know, get him coffee, wipe his ass. I sent him up to the corner I had been on and that's the last I heard from him.

The star I was supposed to baby-sit happens to be this guy Eric Raven, who happened to be married to Shelby Lynn, who happened to be – remember? - the girl of not only mine, but Jaime's dreams as well. This Eric Raven looked half Vietnamese and half from Los Angeles. Gonzo combo. All I knew was he was one piece-of-shit actor who made movies they should pay me to see. Yet, this same clown gets to go home and rub Shelby Lynn's belly at night. No justice, nowhere.

Anyway, I walk up to the guy to say hello. I was trying to be a little more open minded about things, it was part of this three-step plan I ordered off TV one night to make the world a happier place for myself. That's how they put it anyway. Apparently,

my anger was strong, a large contributor to my chakra force, but misdirected. I didn't need some new age goomba telling me my anger was misdirected, it wasn't. I was just mad at the world. People like these barefoot, beaded silk-dress-wearing, energy freaks mean well, but they don't have the capacity to understand the evils of true depression and how much of a drug it can be. Nevertheless, I ordered the tapes. I'd send the shit back when it didn't make me feel any better.

So, I go up to this prick with an open mind and the first thing he says to me, is "Do you want an autograph or something?"

"No, I don't want an autograph. I'm here to replace that yutzy kid they had pampering you before."

"Oh, okay," he said like that was all we had to talk about.

I knew about the whole deal with him and Jaime and that upcoming movie. I talked to Jaime about once a month, and our last conversation had happened the previous night. Don't want to beat you over the head with it, but just weigh the chances of all this stuff falling into place.

You know how if you're ever attacked by a shark, the best thing to do is hit him in his vulnerable spots, the eyes and gills. Well this guy Eric Raven stank of shark. I figured the most viable thing I could do was to throw it in his face a little, let him know he couldn't push me around without giving us both a headache.

"I think you know a friend of mine." I said.

"You don't say. Who?" Wasn't even looking at me.

"Jaime Duncan."

"You have got to be kidding."

His complete attention, mine.

"Yeah, I went to college with that asshole."

"Sounds like you two are great friends."

"We haven't talked much since he got famous." Never tell a stranger more than one side of the truth.

"I can't say your friend is one of my favorite people. He's trying to steal the role of a lifetime from me."

"It's a cut-throat world you live in, Tulip."

"Tulip?"

"Yeah, isn't that your name?"

"Raven. My name is Raven."

"Raven? So who's Tulip?"

"Couldn't tell you." He smiled.

"Well, it's a cut-throat world you live in...Raven."

"Brother, you have no idea what people will do to get a part like Spud Waters."

Brother? This guy's calling me brother. Is that his counter for 'Tulip'? I could tell just by looking at him he was crazy. Something in his eyes screamed "HEY! I got a screw loose. How you doin'?" Maybe it's some sort of masochistic tendency I have, but I dig talking to nut-jobs. You never know what they're gonna' say or how they'll react to what you do. We talked for a while. I was right. He was crazy. I guess being famous at a young age will do that to you. I told him what I thought of his sanity and he laughed. After a while I couldn't help myself. I had to say it.

"So, you're married to Shelby Lynn, huh?"

"She's my loving wife."

"If you don't mind me asking, what sort of marriage can two booming starlets have?"

"It functions well."

"Don't take this the wrong way, but what's it like to fuck her?"

"Your finest fantasies could not compare."

Cocky little bastard.

"She used to be the girl for me and Jaime. We'd have fights all night about her."

"You went to college and got a degree in philosophy so you could end up being a production assistant? I don't get it. What do you want out of life, Chuck?"

"That's a strange thing to ask a stranger."

"I'm just getting warmed up." he said.

"I'm waiting for the adventure to start. What do you want?"

"I want to play Spud Waters."

"Good luck."

"You say you and Jaime have lost touch?"

"I wouldn't let him lick my boots." I was laying it on like you have to do when you're dealing with nut-jobs. Besides, I thought Jaime would get a kick out of the story. That's when Raven dropped the bomb on me.

"How does a man like you react to a proposition?"

"Hey, I ain't gay. Don't be getting funny ideas."

"No, no, nothing like that. But it is a funny idea." His mouth twisted into a warped smile, kind of looked like a 'W'.

"What are you talking about?" I broke the silence.

"One night with my wife."

Whoa.

"What would I have to do?"

He leaned into me. "If anyone asks, I'd deny what I'm about to say to you."

Looked around to make sure no one was in ear shot. Nothing but a kid P.A. eating a breakfast burrito and listening to his discman, singing along to Eminem or some other mindless pop idiot.

"What would you say if I told you I'd give you one night with my wife in exchange for the death of Jaime Duncan?"

"I'd say you were off your rocker."

"You know I'm off my rocker, you're a very perceptive man. You also know I'm serious."

"No bullshit?"

"Zero."

The little psychopath.

"What makes you think I would consider killing *anyone*, let alone a friend of mine?"

"You said you wouldn't let him lick your boots. Doesn't sound like much of a friend to me."

"What makes you think I *could* kill anyone?"

"You're waiting for the adventure to start. I'm offering you a once in a lifetime opportunity to fulfill a fantasy you've had since you were popping zits. Every man holds

within him the potential to kill. You telling me you're too much of a pussy to even humor the thought?"

"Watch who you call a pussy."

"I'm not calling you a pussy, Charles..."

"Chuck not Charles. Grunyon to you."

"I'm asking if you'll humor the thought...Grunyon."

"Hypothetically, if I say yes, how do I know she would even go for it?"

"We have that kind of relationship. I do what I can to further her career, she does the same for me. A partnership really. Besides, you're her type."

He wasn't kidding. I couldn't believe what my ears were hearing. Stuff like this doesn't happen in the movies. I met this guy half an hour ago and he's asking me to kill my friend? What kind of world did *he* live in?

"Everybody wins. I get my career making part, you get to do what most men only dream about, and Jaime Duncan gets immortalized as an actor who would've been the next James Dean and died just like him. It's perfect."

"A car crash?"

"Makes the most sense. There's also a bit of poetry to it, don't you think? All you'd have to do is disconnect his brakes and he'd go crashing off the road. He's not afraid to drink and drive, infamous for it."

"You do a lot of acid when you were a kid?"

"I'd sell my soul to the Devil for this part. Think I'm lying, look in my eyes."

Hollow eyes. A chill crept up my spine. I took his cell phone number and said I'd call the next day with my answer.

Shelby Lynn

Our relationship had always been warped and I didn't pretend to have any delusions about it being love or anything like that, but when he told me what he had said to this guy, Chuck Grunyon, I nearly pierced his right testicle with my favorite high-heeled stiletto pump.

I knew why he thought I would go for it. One time in bed after we'd had some of our better sex I was feeling open and told him about my prostitute fantasy. All girls have a fantasy at one time or other of being a prostitute. I think it has something to do with the fact that whores always make the most interesting characters in movies, but the point is it's a fun *fantasy*. The reality would suck. What can you expect from men, though. Their imagination is always cut short by their libidos. That's why most men make pitiful lovers, they get so overwhelmed by the actuality of what they're doing that they can't hold off on the climax for the sheer poetry of the moment.

"You think I'm a whore?" I said to him.

"He's not going to do it. I was just having fun with a worthless P.A.. It's jokes, baby. I thought you'd find it funny."

Nothing amuses me less than a man with no sensitivity to the nuances of fantasy, taste and imagination.

"Well I don't find nothin' funny about it! How dare you use my name in such a conversation? What if he goes to the papers? What about that? Do you have any idea how this would look for me? My God, you're an idiot!"

I knew I was being hard on him and not taking into account the fragility of his actor's ego. I mean, I think it was clear that he had some idea of how much I really wanted Jaime to be in the movie instead of him. All right. I told him straight out that was what I wanted, but I'm the type of girl that likes to have a good time in bed and I knew Jaime would be that if nothing else. Oh, by the way, it's true what you think about movie stars; when we get together to play lovers in a movie, we get together. That's one of the perks to the life. Believe me, there's downsides.

So I understood why Eric was feeling insecure and trying to assert his manhood, but that's always just a sign of a man's unconscious knowledge of his limitations in the sack. A tip for all you boys, don't show us your weakness. That bores us to no end.

On top of it all, I had actually gone to the execs and put in a decent, not overly, but a decent word for my idiot husband. People can say all sorts of things about me, but one thing they cannot say with any authority is that I am a back stabbing whore.

Eric's standing with me was not at a place where a mistake of this size would not have major repercussions. Don't get me wrong, I am not an evil woman. I'm just honest. Men say that women are inferior and expect them to be superior, but when you get right down to it, we're all made from similar stuff, and so we're all similarly selfish, vengeful, ambitious and pure as each other. When you look at it like that, why would men be any better than women or women any better than men?

Raven

The little hairy bum called me the next day. He would do it, but I had to throw in a few grand and pay his way to LA. He said it could be done the day after next if I flew

him up right then. What could I say, I never thought he'd say yes. But as I listened to him talking about how he had already planned everything out, I couldn't resist. I had never been an accomplice to murder before. The idea was *titillating*. I wired him the money under a different name and told him to call me when it had been done.

There was no way in hell I was going to let this animal near my wife. That was for sure. She had said the thought of it was repulsive to her and that she didn't want to see me for a week. At the time I assumed she was using this as an excuse to get away with one of her Barbados boys, but in retrospect I should have seen what she was plotting. Women like her have that in them. I suppose she realized the thought of this pig's paws all over her succulent, tanned body was repugnant to me. Yet I did not see the scheme in her face and so thought the possibility of these two unlikely bed partners fiction, nothing more.

The death of Jaime Duncan, however, had become a real possibility. I had started the ball rolling by playing the part of a Psychopath for some stranger on a movie set. Now that it was in motion, now that I was on stage, I couldn't very well break character. I had to ride this role out and see where it took me. Crazy, I know. But all great men's acts seem crazy at the time they do them. Crazy to themselves most of all.

Grunyon

I called Jaime right after I got home from the set. I told him everything the guy had said to me. He loved it. He always loved dramatic shit like that. It was *his* idea to

stage the death. Always talking about how theatre was going on all the time and anyplace in the world could be a stage and a whole bunch of other stuff I didn't really get. Point being, he wanted to fake his death for three days, have the whole country up in arms and then come out with the story, buy the rights and sell the screenplay for a million bucks. Pretty fucking warped, if you ask me, but I guess all these theatrical types got a slanted sense of reality.

Anyway, I agreed to do it. We were gonna crash his car right off his front driveway. A blue sixty-seven Chevelle. Cherry of a car, but it wasn't like he couldn't get another one, his bank roll. He lived on a huge hill and the driveway was designed by some monkey who thought it would be a good idea to build it so that if you went down too fast you wouldn't be able to make the turn at the bottom, in which case you'd fly off into the trees about fifty feet below. It had something to do with the aesthetic of the view or some such shit like that. Bad architecture if you ask me.

We planned to do it the next evening. He said that was enough time for him to make the necessary preparations for his "vanishing". That's what he called it. I phoned Raven and got him to wire me the dough. I was getting a free weekend in LA and a night with the woman I'd been dreaming about forever. Sometimes you gotta' go with the adventure, no matter how nuts it seems.

I flew to LA, met up with Jaime, we had lunch and went over the final plans, which to tell you the truth, I had very little to do with. He had set up everything. Alls I had to do was wait in my hotel room, make sure no one saw me, and once I heard on the news that he was dead, go collect my prize. He said it wouldn't be a good idea for us to

see each other right after the performance. He would call me in New York in a couple of days.

Shelby Lynn

I read in the paper on Monday that Jaime had died in a freak accident while leaving his driveway. Police made no comment about whether or not they thought foul play was a factor.

I had already kicked Eric out of the house for the week. Shoot, he thought I was gonna' run off to the islands or something like that. He didn't know it, but I switched his cell phone with a duplicate I had picked up. When I read the Monday paper, I knew the call was gonna' come in soon.

Ring-Ring.

"Hello."

"Yeah, is Eric Raven around?"

"You must be Chuck."

"Who's this?"

"Shelby."

"Get the fuck out of here."

"If that's what you really want me to do. I thought we were gonna' have some fun though. Wasn't that the idea?"

"Is this really Shelby Lynn?"

Idiot.

"Yes, darlin'. You did call my husband's cell phone."

“Holy shit! This is fucking cool.”

Poetry.

“So, do you want to come over and receive what you’ve got coming to you? Or should I just stay here in bed and try to keep cool all by myself?”

“You don’t have Air Conditioning?”

“Yes. I have air conditioning.”

“What do mean by keep cool?”

“Never mind. Are you coming over or not?”

“Yeah. I guess I am.”

Grunyon

So far everything was lookin’ good. I showed up at their place in the hills and rang the door bell. She answered and let me in. I don’t know what I was expecting, but she lived up to it and more. I’m not one of those star-fucking asshole fans, so I was able to play it cool. After all, she was just a girl. The only difference was I had seen her in my dreams every night. She brought me into her bedroom. That’s when things got weird.

“Tell me why you’re here?” she said to me.

“I thought you knew.”

“I want to hear it from your lips.”

Weird.

“Your husband made a deal with me.”

“Elaborate, darlin’. Otherwise it just ain’t any fun.”

“He asked me to kill Jaime in exchange for one night with you. Jaime’s dead, I’m here, what more is there to say?”

Shelby

The plan was to get him on tape revealing the whole thing. Once I had that I’d send it to the papers and watch Eric and this fat man go down like Drano. The thing I didn’t count on was being attracted to the guy. There was something about him, I don’t know, some strange scent or somethin’. He had a kind of raw sex appeal, you know. The kind of guy you want to sleep with as long as no one finds out.

I used my remote control to stop the camera I’d had a technician set up behind the mirror earlier that day. We went to the bed.

This next part I’m goin’ to tell ya’ because I don’t really have a choice at this point. Normally this is the type of stuff I keep to myself. We got naked and I saw every inch of his hairy body. He was cute and I was curious if there was anything to that old rumor about balding men. Not to get graphic, but he also had the perfect sized member, about eight inches I think.

Now, I have to tell you somethin’ about myself. I wasn’t born with this ability, but after you run into enough men who can’t hold their stuff for more than a couple a minutes, you learn ways to become satisfied in a short amount of time. Don’t get the wrong idea about me, but I had it down to a science. I could get off five times in an hour with a minimal amount of concentration. It just takes a little practice.

He was all right. A little coarse around the edges but not a bad lover when you got down to it. Of course I wasn't about to show this guy the night of his life. Hell, originally I wasn't even goin' to sleep with him, but what can I say? He turned me on.

I had already had two decent ones when I saw he was getting close to popping his stuff. I figured I had about two minutes before the grunting and squeezing of his eyes began. I speeded myself up and had one hell of a third orgasm before I screamed and told him to get off me.

"What? What's the matter?"

"I just remembered, I have something I have to do now. You'd better leave."

"Are you kidding me?" he said. The poor fool didn't know what was goin' on.

"No, darlin'. I ain't kiddin' you. It's time to go."

"You're just gonna' leave me in this...state?"

"Well, sugar, it happens to women all the time. Look at it as a learning experience."

"You fuckin' whore." He was incredulous.

"I'm the whore? Honey, I just used you for some strange but oddly satisfying sex. I'm goin' to go outside, smoke a cigarette, and enjoy the night air. Who's the whore, big boy?"

"This isn't right."

"Not to rush you, but would you mind getting some clothes on and taking off? It's nothin' personal, I just don't really like to hang out with a man after I've used him in bed. You understand, don't you?"

"I feel cheap."

“Darlin’ from where I’m standin’ you were free.”

“You won’t do anything for...my state?”

“No, I won’t. And please don’t get any ideas about masturbatin’ on my bed or anything like that.”

“It would be justice.”

“Sweetie, I have a gun and it’s closer than you think. Once again, please don’t get any funny ideas.”

“This is so fucked up. Why would you do something like this?”

“Darlin’, if someone in this room has moral questions to ask themselves, it ain’t me.”

“What, Jaime?”

“Yes, Jaime. Your friend who you killed to sleep with me. Remember him?”

“He’s fine, it was all a hoax.”

“Come again.”

“I wouldn’t kill my best friend for a piece of ass. What do you think I’m sick?”

“If you didn’t kill him, who did?”

“He’s not dead.”

“Have you read the paper today?”

He just looked at me funny. I think his mind was still on his state. I showed him the picture of Jaime’s torso being pulled out of the ‘67 Chevelle in the paper. That’s when we heard Eric’s car pull up in the driveway. Grunyon took off out the side door.

I was still planin’ on sendin’ the tape to the press. No one would believe that I actually slept with this monkey, so my name would come out squeaky clean. But before

I could check the damn tape to make sure it had stopped recording at the right moment, my idiot husband came into the room.

It was an ugly scene between us. He saw Grunyon leaving the house. After some harsh words, I ran out and dropped the tape to the press. Of course the stop button didn't work on my controller or the rays didn't hit the machine or something like that, but the gist of it is that little dance Chuck and I did between the sheets was all recorded. That's why I'm sitting here in this court room, if you call it that, telling you this story.

I don't think Chuck knew that Eric had shown up at Jaime's house that night and fixed his brakes for real. How Eric guessed that Chuck and Jaime were in on it together, I'll never know. All that stuff really doesn't have a whole lot to do with me.

I don't know if y'all are planin' on puttin' me in jail or not, but I have to say I feel no guilt about anything. I think this is just a case of some men tryin' to use me as part of some conspiracy, and me just getting' the best of all of them. That's the way I see it, anyhow. I guess the real decision will have to be made by the public. I somehow doubt I'll ever get work in this town again. Not because of the scandal. Shoot, a scandal is one way to play for success in this biz. No, I don't think I'll ever work in this town again because my true nature was caught on tape. That scares you men. You saw me the way you wanted to see me, and now that you know what I'm capable of, you'll have to look at your own wives and wonder if they're capable of the same thing.

Good luck boys.

Epilogue

Jaime Duncan died from the impact of his Nineteen sixty-seven Chevrolet Chevelle with the trunk of his nineteen foot tall, three foot wide Oak tree at the bottom of his canyon. He was unconscious when placed in the automobile.

Eric Raven was arrested for murder and pleaded insanity based on his celebrity childhood having delusional effects on his grip of reality. He is serving fifteen years in the California State penitentiary.

Charles Grunyon was arrested for conspiracy to murder. He pleaded guilty and is serving twelve years in the California State penitentiary.

Shelby Lynn was acquitted on all charges of conspiracy to commit murder.

Holing was postponed for several months. It went back into pre-production in February of the following year. Shelby's contract had expired and was not renewed by the Executives. She has not worked since.