

The FAithful

CORY PARELLA

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DEDICATION

To my grandkids, and your grandkids.
History won't tell you the same story as Family chronicling Family.
History is not written by the winners, but by the survivors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lute Olson did not coach a single team alone any more than Joe Parella answered any 911 emergency calls by himself. It was always a team effort. To list all the names of those who were a part of this era would triple the length of this novel.

These were two men among many who heard the Call of God and served Him to their last breath.

To those of you who continue to serve your communities as peace keepers and financial innovators, I thank you and I love you.

To those of you doing nothing, or little, consider this an invitation to change the world.

- Cory Parella
- Colorado House of Representatives 2022, candidate

CHAPTER 1

The Promised Land.

March 27, 1988 Tucson, Arizona.

Every TV in the city was tuned into CBS and watched as the faces that had become house hold names in Tucson mobbed each other at mid court, having just defeated the North Carolina Tar Heels in the West Regional Final of the NCAA Tournament. They were going to Kansas City.

Bobbi found a way to the floor, furiously waving a pompom, aided by stadium security, and found Lute, who looked up at the stands, just like Herb Brooks had done

eight years before at Lake Placid, to see her walking his way.

She told him before the game, win or lose, she'd be right here waiting for him.

The patriarch and matriarch of college basketball embraced in a hug that lifted Bobbi off her feet. In real time, it lasted just under seven seconds before both realized that CBS Sports, and thus the world, was watching, and that their long-await moment of intimacy, a return to the Final Four, was on the arena's big screen, giving Arizona fans even more of a reason to cry tears of joy.

Arizona's first national championship in men's basketball was 9 years away.

Chapter 2

April 7, 1988

Arizona Stadium was packed for a non-football event, the homecoming of the Final Four team that had just lost to Oklahoma.

It was hard for Lute Olson to keep thinking about his second trip to the Final Four in 10 years.

The crowd was so abuzz with excitement, it was just like Iowa City nine years before. It felt like they had won the entire tournament, not that they had lost in the national semifinal game.

The only fans who could really relate to it had been in Brooklyn, New York in November, 1955, when the Dodgers rejoiced of the World Series victory of their team, led by Jackie Robinson, as they finally

conquered those malicious Yankees and their mercilessly taunting fans.

Bobbi poked Lute in the ribs gently amidst the noise and said, “I want us to enjoy this a little before you start thinking about next On television, the cameras followed the Olsons car as well as the team’s entourage for miles, the local CBS Sports affiliate KOLD, anchored by Kevin McCabe, giving the play by play of the ambience, and the season, “for those just tuning in, having lived under a rock for the last 5 years, unfamiliar with the events of the recent month,” as fans cheered on the passing cars to the unending sounds of victory.

35-3.

The 1988 Wildcats had etched itself into the hearts of Wildcat fans worldwide, praying for a winner, just like the 1927 New York Yankees (known as Murderer’s Row), the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers, and the 2004

Boston Red Sox - a team that ended what was known as the Curse of the Bambino.

Sean Elliot. Anthony Cook. Tom Tolbert. Joe Turner. Craig McMullen. Jud Buechler. Kenny Lofton. Harvey Mason.

Steeeeeeeeeeeeeeve Keeeeeeeeer. And something about Gumbies. Yeah, it was just like that.

On the east side of Tucson, Joe Parella was a man in his early 40s, one among hundreds of neighbors residing on Watson Drive who watched local CBS 13 broadcast from the Team Four precinct, as with his wife, teenage son, and teenage daughters meandered in and out of the room, half-attentive.

Just three years before, their TV was in the other side of the house, and as the final score of the first-round game versus Alabama posted on the screen, Joe stood and watched

in amazement as the sounds of the post-game show filled the family room.

Joe's 11-year old son, unaware of the journey of the program, only knew the winning team that Olson had put together for the 1984-85 season. Joe's son was still sore from his beloved Cubs losing a heartbreaking playoff series to the San Diego Padres a few months before, was now bellowing as if his dog died with the "50-41" score glowing on the TV.

His classmates at Secrist Middle School were merciless about both losses.

Joe tried to lend an ear to his son describe the taunting, his classmates squeaky, pre-puberty voices taunting him, "*The Cubs suck! The Wildcats suck! Go Georgetown!*" The Hoyas would lose to Villanova within three weeks. One of the boys who taunted him for his choice of teams died of cancer before his 18th birthday.

Still, at 11-years old, the pain was unbearable. “I hope their bus blows up!” he cried, speaking of the Crimson Tide.

Joe rebuked him, citing that such a tragedy *had* happened and that he shouldn’t say such things.

“Go to your room if you can’t control yourself!” Joe barked, trying to hear the commentators over his son’s tantrum.

“Cory! Listen!”

The TV still had a manual knob for volume control and he did his best to turn it up without twisting it completely off.

“Uuuuu of Aaaaaaa! Uuuuu of Aaaaaaa! Uuuuu of Aaaaaaa!” the crowd screamed, as Crimson Tide players congratulated the Wildcats at mid court.

The last time that sound had been heard with as much passion was at Lake Placid in 1980, with a slightly different chant, “U-S-A!”

Brent Musburger and Billy Packer recalled the story again, Musburger's deep, fatherly voice narrating the action, "This was an Arizona team that went just 4-24 four years ago. Lute Olson, hired from Iowa, after leading the Iowa Hawkeyes to their first Final Four in 47 years...hired by Cedric Dempsey, and this crowd is letting 'em know how proud their are of 'em..."

As his son did pull himself together, Joe focused on the TV and enjoyed the moment. He knew this was special. He felt it. Everyone residing in Tucson felt it. He saw it in their eyes of the people he worked with on the job, on every call he responded to as a cop.

The city had changed.

It was only a basketball team, but it was *a* form of hope.

And, they were coming back next year. The football team was doing well. The baseball team showed signs of being playoff bound.

It was in Albuquerque, New Mexico where Lute, fresh from telling his team how proud he was of them, sat in front of the press conference and explained why his team didn't win, the first of many first-round losses he would be maligned for.

Among the media was Arizona's self-appointed critic, judge and executioner of Wildcat sports, Greg Hansen, who even sitting down, looked as tall as the athletes who walked around the arena. A former pro baseball player himself, and a *Star* beat writer since 1980, Greg mercilessly fired question after question at Lute.

Most figureheads had speech writers, press secretaries or aides who filtered both questions and answers for their statesmen.

The University of Arizona played no formal role in protecting their most recent hire.

“How do you explain losing to an Alabama team that barely made the tournament?”

Greg asked, not afraid to hide the irritation in his voice.

Lute was at a loss for words. What he did say would have sufficed for most sports fans anywhere in the country to read.

We gave it our all.

We have a lot to look forward to.

Look at what we’ve done. In 18 months.

Or something like that.

That wasn’t good enough for Greg. The ‘Cats other teams, from track and field to golf to softball had all won titles and dominated their competition. Why was the basketball team getting such special treatment?

It was as if the Fred Snowden era never happened.

The answer was that basketball made for a perfect color television sport. In an era when cable TV companies expanded faster than the continental rail road linked the east to the west, Lute's timing with Arizona could not have been better.

He looked the part. His players looked the part.

His mentoring at coaching clinics had found its way into the dialogue of Angelo Pizza's screenplay for the 1985 film *Hoosiers*. Much of Gene Hackman's dialogue came straight from Lute Olson.

No other college sport had received this kind of attention on national TV, ever.

In hindsight, he could have remained at Iowa and been moving on toward their second consecutive national championship

and third Final Four. But, no, he took up the challenge of picking up where Fred Snowden had left off, given the black hole of Ben Lindsey's brief tenure in 1982.

Greg pushed and prodded with each question, reiterating the same question over and over.

What Didn't You Win This Game?

Why Didn't You Win More?

Every other sports team at the UA wins.

Why can't you?

John Wooden would later cite that Lute had to win in a tougher conference. The Dance was augmented to require winners play more games, and in short, had Wooden been tasked of coaching again, he would never have had the level of success he had at UCLA.

In the same dynamic that Arizona competed in, UCLA would have won one or two national titles. No more. It was just harder.

In 1985, when the Nielsen ratings came out for the Arizona region, for the time period covering the first 64-team field of “March Madness”, the Arizona-Alabama game was atop the charts, surpassing even *60 Minutes* and *ABC’s Monday Night Football*.

This wasn’t new to Lute, but it was new to Tucson. When the Iowa Hawkeyes were winning, NBC was forced to move *Hill Street Blues* to a different night in their region or risk losing a few Nielsen points.

Crimson Tide coach Wimp Sanderson stood off-camera, waiting to address the media. Though he was enjoying the win, he knew all too well how talented Lute Olson’s team was, and had the tournament been a double-elimination format, Arizona might have faced Georgetown in the final.

He knew he would see the Silver Fox again. Lute got up to relinquish the mic and gather his team to head home. Bobbi Olson stood

next to Wimp, exchanging amicable glances, both awaiting the end of this interrogation for different reasons. Wimp knew that Bobbi had been the Final Four before, and Wimp hadn't. Their brief glance at each other somehow acknowledged that fact.

Just then, as Hansen and his *Arizona Daily Star* colleagues were getting warmed up to corner Lute and essentially force him to answer according to the predetermined coach quote that might result in another Pulitzer nomination for the *Star*, Lute was intercepted by an aide of someone who wanted to talk to him.

Lute and Bobbi Olson were shielded from further questions by this man and a few sheriffs deputies, escorted toward the locker room where he was offered the job at Kentucky.

“I’ve called every week, for the last six months, coach. My boss has requested

permission to talk to you,” said the suited man with long sideburns and a southern drawl.

Lute and Bobbi were taken aback by the moment, with the Tucson paparazzi not far behind them. The players seemed to be escaping to the team bus. Lute saw his players and team managers pile out of the locker room, ready to board.

“He can call me, but, I turned it down last year and, I’ll probably turn it down again. I’m happy at Arizona,” Lute said, drawing an ambitious smile from the man who asked him.

“So he can *call* you?” the man asked again. Lute nodded, offering back a smile that indicated he would not likely return his call.

Lute and Bobbi turned as if waltzing together, and walked swiftly to the team bus where their boosters awaited them. Before

that man left the arena, Greg Hansen stopped him and asked him who he was.

The boosters were made up of a ragtag clique, George Kalil, a man of stocky build and dark sandy hair, tall Jim Stebbens and his short wife Bobbie, who was Bobbi's best friend and resembled actress Yeardley Smith, paced the ground just outside the bus as players boarded it.

As they all boarded, Lute found his seat near the front, and Bobbi did her usual walk-through from back to front, both counting the players and asking each student how he was doing, including the equipment managers.

George sat in a chair near Lute's and said, "You want me to file a complaint with the NCAA about the ref?"

Lute leaned forward in his chair to hear George, and for a moment, looked down and then back at George, shaking his head.

The driver took his seat right in front of them. Then Bobbi appeared from the back and stood leaning against the seat next to Lute, forcing the men to become immediately quiet, like two high school kids having an unauthorized conversation.

“You got ten minutes to get over it, then I don’t want to hear about it again. We’ve won as many games by bad calls as we’ve lost. What’s really going to make a difference is when they put a 3-point line on the courts.” She gave an unconscious look to Steve Kerr.

“Coach Bobbi!” a cry came from the back.

Without looking back, Bobbi answered as a mom would, addressing the player by the sound of his voice, “What Morg?” referring to Morgan Taylor.

“Any chance I can get some pancakes when we get back?”

She sighed quickly as she tried to bring closure to the trip. “Sure. Anyone else want some?”

After a split-second silence throughout the bus, everyone erupted with, “Yes, I want some...me too!” This response in unison made everyone laugh and relieved the tension induced by the score of the game.

In three weeks, they would watch from their homes as Villanova upset Georgetown, and they realized Coach Olson had been right.

They were *that* close. They just needed to believe it.

Bobbi shot Lute a quick I Love You glance and watched him settle back into his seat, look out the window, trying to decompress.

His mind was still in the last five minutes of the game, still trying to win. He couldn’t turn off his brain, much less sleep...

Chapter 3

Back in Tucson, McKale Center was packed, welcoming the team home.

Alabama who?

They had finished 2nd in the league, stood toe to toe with longtime powerhouses UCLA and Oregon State, and made it to the Big Dance just 24 months after recording the worst record in school history. It was a foundation to build on.

Bobbi shook Lute awake. He couldn't fall asleep, but he could pass out, and apparently had.

By 3:30 a.m. the *Arizona Daily Star* had reported that not only had the Wildcats lost to Alabama by 9 points, but that Lute Olson was considering the job offer from Kentucky.

After about three hours sleep, Lute got up, ignored the sleep- deprived headache he carried from the bedroom to the kitchen and groggily read his paper. He became instantly disgusted.

“*None* of this is true,” he muttered, and Bobbi read over his shoulder with a look like she was ready to kill someone. Lute understood the consequences of any decision he made getting publicity.

He was a celebrity. His life was in a glass house. It came with the job. Legendary basketball coach and TV analyst Al Maguire had warned him ten years before, when he coached Iowa to a win over Louisville. *Your life will never be the same*, he said to Lute.

And when he made mistakes, like calling a time out when they didn’t have any left, thus costing them a close game, he admitted it.

But *this* was downright wrong.

“I’ve had it!” Bobbi said with a tone that makes children who are in trouble afraid for their lives.

She picked up their phone and began to dial.

Later that day, in the office of the publisher of the Tucson Newspapers Incorporated, the senior editor sat with two lawyers and the publisher, opposite Greg Hansen.

“Kentucky is denying it ever happened,” the lawyer sitting next to the editor’s desk said to Greg, implying that his job was on the line. “The last guy who got a story about Lute wrong got fired. *Uniform-Gate?* Magruder?”

“I know what I saw,” Greg answered.

“I don’t care,” the editor said, his voice ending on an angry note.

The publisher didn’t waste any time speaking up, “Would you all excuse us for a moment?”

With a glance to the editor, everyone left the room except he and Greg, the door hinge snapping shut behind the last set of hands.

The publisher asked him, “What is your problem with Lute Olson?”

“I want to show this guy for what he is. An overpaid, imperialistic petty (expletive). Do you know what he said to me after the press conference?”

“I already know. I just got off the phone with Bobbi Olson and right now she wants your job or your silence or your obituary. And those are my words, not hers. Sweetest lady in college basketball hates your guts. At Iowa they called her the First Lady of college basketball, and she’s calling me asking me to remove parts of your anatomy. And considering how you drilled Lute at the press conference, I can see why,” he said, getting a look back from Greg’s face that is self-justifying.

“If you do that to *me* after I coach my kid to a losing season in little league, I’m gonna do more than make a phone call. We’re gonna visit the parking lot and find out who’s a man. You get my drift?”

“What are you saying?” Greg challenged, undeterred, leaning forward slightly.

“I’m saying if this was Indiana, or North Carolina, or Iowa, you’d be out of a job already.”

“But this isn’t Indiana,” Greg managed to say before being cut off.

“You were out of line!” the publisher growled, getting the attention of the entire newsroom, and subconsciously, a few people in the parking lot.

“This is college sports, not the NBA. Lute is not Tony Mason! He came here to rebuild the program and he has been *as billed!*”

“Don’t tell me you’re buying his act?” Greg pleaded.

“I’m not finished! Until someone else’s name signs your paycheck, you listen when I talk and don’t interrupt me again unless you wanna join your boyfriend Jack Magruder at that second rate halfway house he now writes for. The advertising division has just informed me that since the end of the 1985 basketball season, revenue from parties interested in anything related to University of Arizona sports, particularly the basketball team, *is up 600%,*” he said, his face bright red.

Greg kept his mouth shut for the next 33 seconds and thereby kept his job.

“Nobody’s asking you to write propaganda. If the guy robs a liquor store, write about it. But if the guy does all the good that he promised he would do when we hired him, then, by God, write about it. People want to

read about it. If for no other reason, *our readers, the people who pay you to write* want to read about it.”

“Okay. Can I go now?” Greg asked.

In 2006, Greg Hansen was elected to the Southern Arizona Sports Writers Hall of Fame. Over 65% of his career columns discussed Lute Olson.

Chapter 4

Three years later, 1988.

The Superdome, Seattle Washington.

CBS Sports captured the moment as Lute's players mobbed the floor en route the Final Four.

Arizona had experienced a lot of "firsts" that year. They were ranked number-one in the AP poll for the first time, and had swept the UCLA Bruins in league play for the first time ever.

UCLA players had boasted a lot to Los Angeles media and losing to the 'Cats both in L.A. and in Tucson was considered the epitome of humiliating. Lute was hired to deliver a winner and having just racked up his 35th win of the year, it appeared his team could do no wrong.

Escorted by local police, Bobbi Olson found her way to the court where her husband of 30 years grabbed her and hugged her, spinning her wildly, as the cameras rolled.

She had told him when they first met, as he had offered to walk her to and from school, that she would be *right here waiting* for him.

Now 30 years later, their kids grown, and grandkids growing up, Lute had become an icon once again, doing in Tucson what he had once done at Iowa, what he was asked to do at Kentucky, what he almost did at USC.

On East Watson Drive, June Parella could barely hear as her kids screamed for joy and danced wildly as the TV showed the action live.

Joe was at the Team 4 police station on Tucson's west side, watching one of several TVs along with an office full of cops. He got to a phone and shared his joy with his wife. "Wow, you see the game?"

“Yeah, I’m watching. It’s great!” she clamored. In truth, she could care less about sports. She couldn’t play them so she didn’t enjoy them. But she was happy that he was happy.

Everyone in the station was elated. 911 dispatchers answered calls of people calling to celebrate. Criminals who were in custody and the cops bringing them in in handcuffs both paused at the TV screens to watch the action. Cops and criminals alike seemed inspired by what they saw. Joe noticed this. The law notwithstanding, everyone loved these Wildcats.

“Any chance you’ll let me go?” a man under arrest asked. The officer smiled, “No sir. But you got to see it.” The man in handcuffs then broke into a nostalgic story of his own memories of the Wildcats as he was led off to be fingerprinted.

People howled and exchanged high-fives in the streets. There was a joy in the air not felt by many Tucsonans who had migrated west from New York since the Brooklyn Dodgers won the 1955 World Series. The snowbirds, as the winter residents were known, recalled this feeling, remembering it all too well. They had been instantly transported back in time to a sweeter part of Americana.

Green Bay's Vince Lombardi. Brooklyn's Walter Alston. Baltimore's Hank Bauer. Villanova's Jim Valvano. Teams that were not supposed to be there, winning it all.

Rocky.

Joe heard a call come in on the radio as he and his partner listened, parked at a drive-thru fast food restaurant near the intersection of 1st and Stone Ave. The dispatcher rattled off his number and Joe responded in code. The dispatcher explained, "1041 Male has requested you."

Michael Duckworth sat, clam, but drunk, in plastic wrist cuffs, on the sidewalk of a liquor store. Joe, just under 6' tall, and despite pushing 42 years old, remained as thin and athletically built as most olympic boxers, pulled up in his aged, dirty, black and white squad car.

He smiled, looking like a cross between actors Al Pacino, Richard Gere and Michael Landon, and he saw who was sitting there. He rolled his window down as he paused the car.

As if actor Henry Winkler had learned how to say his patented Fonzie, 'Heeeey' from Joe, the 15-year police veteran let Michael know his favorite cop had arrived upon hearing Joe's trademark, "Heeeey, Mike. What's up?"

The other cops gathered around another nearby squad car to track both ongoing calls on their tool belts, and looked over the

hands of a cop who had a portable 2” Sony TV.

“I can’t take it anymore, this life...” Michael said.

Michael had served in Vietnam during the same era that Joe had served in the Army, though Joe had been stationed in Germany, not Asian.

He had been unable to adapt. His wife left him, his kids struggled in school, and he could not hold a job.

In short, his pain, self-medicated by alcohol, was greater than his faith. Joe tried to encourage him.

Joe listened.

After about 45 minutes, the other cops had been assigned to other calls, and Joe was trying to get permission to take Michael home. “You wanna go home?”

“There’s nobody there,” Michael replied, becoming more sluggish than obnoxious. “No wife. No kids. Nothing.”

As Joe blurted more codes into the radio, he saw Michael lean forward and throw up on himself, then collapse onto the sidewalk. Before Joe let go of the radio, he raced to Michael and saw he wasn’t breathing.

Joe called for an ambulance and then did what most cops would never do, he called to Michael, took his pulse, and after a few seconds of no-response, he gave him mouth to mouth. The clerk of the liquor store saw this and reacted in jaw-dropping empathy toward Joe.

After all, the man had just vomited.

“Oh my gahd!” the liquor store clerk was quick to offer help. “You outta get a medal for that!”

Joe was able to revive him and paramedics came to wrap him up and take him to the hospital, and by the time, the adrenalin of the moment had worn off, Joe had down at least two Cokes to wash out his own mouth.

Witnesses of this praised him as he got back into his patrol car and returned it to the station. Just after parking his patrol car for the night, he saw the early edition of the local newspaper in a vending machine just outside the station.

Arizona In Final Four, Will Face Oklahoma Next Saturday

Just before going to the employee parking lot, a *Star* reporter, whom Joe had given many quotes to over time, Carmen Duarte ran up to him and asked, “Joe! Joe! Did you hear?”

Joe presumed she meant the Wildcats had won their game against North Carolina. “Yeah, Kansas City.”

“No, yes, but no. So you *didn't* hear,” she said. “You’ve been nominated for Officer of The Year.”

Joe was shocked.

Two weeks later, the Wildcats fell to the Sooners, and he watched on TV as Lute and Bobbi Olson thanked the fans from the stadium- packed welcome they received. Each player took the mic and repeated how grateful they were for all of Wildcat Nation.

Joe was at home getting dressed for a banquet for being awarded Man of the Year by the Sons of the American Revolution. He has been awarded Officer of the Year the week before.

As he tied his tie in front of their wall-sized sliding door mirror, he looked just like his cine-counterparts from *The Godfather*.

His wife, June, emerged from their back bedroom in a dress that still made her look

like Nancy Sinatra. Joe's jaw dropped and he openly whistled his approval, his son and daughter grinning as they watched the TV on in the background.

Joe loved being spontaneous and reveled in the time he spent with his family. He glanced at his son and daughter, both preoccupied with projects unrelated to the TV, and asked, "Anyone watching this?" No, both kids answered. "Good."

He quickly turned off the TV and on the dated stereo system, playing Waylon Jennings' *Waltz Across Texas* waltzing his Jazzercise queen wife in her heels across their living room floor.

Chapter 5

December, 1989

Old Pascua Village, West Tucson, Arizona.

The world had just experienced the civilian-led deconstruction of the Berlin Wall in November. MTV had recorded it for a generation of young people unwilling to take the demands of Communism without a fight.

They fought not with guns, not with violence, but with love, songs and TV news cameras, not unlike their American counterparts in the late 1960s.

At Old Pascua Village, Joe and his team of Tucson cops worked with tribal leaders to derail what should have been a brief civil complaint about the living conditions on West Grant Road, despite the Tribe's acknowledgement as a sovereign nation

within their borders by the U.S. Government in 1979.

About 2000 people were trying to live on the same pile of dirt they had been allocated by conquering U.S. military forces since 1870. It didn't help that they couldn't agree on anything amongst themselves. The only thread that seemed to be found among the Indian nations was a mutual distain for non-Tribal cultures. They would collectively treat anyone from a Tribe with more respect than anyone who didn't look like an Indian, unless they absolutely had to fake it.

The elders of the Pascua-Yaqui Tribe watched helplessly as other tribes reached agreements with the U.S. government to enter the casino business. The Pascua-Yaquis were told many times, until they could police their own drug-infested communities, they would not be allowed to be licensed to own casinos.

A few of their citizens took matters into their own hands, and during Christmas week, instead of celebrating the birth of Jesus, they were watching their homes and neighborhood center burn.

It started with the serving of one warrant, a bench warrant for drug charges. The man was uncooperative and the cops did not show enough tact to make the arrest.

Quickly enough, residents came out of their homes, similar to the way residents in Watts rioted in in 1968 and Los Angeles burned in 1992, and threw a Tribal tantrum that lasted for about a week.

Many civilians, each with their own grievances, some shared by the entire tribe, some personal grudges, the result of selfishness, engaged in rioting.

Tucson Police wasted no time sending in the riot police.

Joe and his team worked relentlessly as diplomats. Within hours of the initial warrant being served, agents from Indian Affairs came by in their cars, but never got out. Three FBI agents parked their cars and got out of their trucks armed with shotguns.

Let's end this here and now, they thought.

A thousand miles away, actor Val Kilmer was reading a screenplay titled *Thunderheart*.

Joe realized this could get out of hand if he didn't intervene.

He went to the Tribal chief, Anselmo Valencia Tori, and said, "If you don't help me, this is going to be Wounded Knee all over again. Do you want that?"

The chief walked around the neighborhood, flanked by Joe, his team and the FBI, and told those who were rioting that if they did

not stop, they would be arrested or shot, and that he would watch them die.

Several men and women were arrested. Most were drug offenders trying to use the civil unrest to camouflage *their* warrants.

The rioting lasted, on and off, for a week.

Chapter 6

February 18, 1991. About 10:10 p.m.

Joseph Parella struggled to breath, the 100-something of his final 1000 breaths. He had turned 46 a few months before but would not turn 47.

He did not resemble the 5'10" 165-pound flag rider he was for the Tucson Mountain Bike Race, when he volunteered to ride his bicycle across the city of Tucson on February 19th, 1990 to promote the event.

He did not resemble the man who spent time with God each morning during a 30-mile commute from his east side home, across the city, through downtown, and to his west side precinct.

He no longer resembled the man who led a task force into Old Pascua Village in 1986

and succeeded where many other cops had failed.

He no longer resembled the man who used to toss his kids around their pool like rag dolls during endless summer parties. He no longer resembled the man who courted his wife of 23 years, over and over, nor the man who led a band of 12-year old Boy Scouts on a dangerous trek through the bottom of the Grand Canyon in 102- degree August.

All that remained of his body was shutting down.

Lymphoma cancer had made one of the strongest men Tucson ever knew into a bag of bones.

In early January, he saw his home for the last twenty-five years for the last time. He had spent the last 2 months living in his pajamas, working from home, and accepting the reality that he was going Home. His cancer sleep had finished strong, as Jesus

appeared to him and confirmed his faith. Joe was going to Heaven.

Not everyone who left this world from this hospital did. In fact, most did not. In most cases, as loved ones packed area churches for funerals, they had no idea, or suppressed the thought that the person's soul went to hell.

He lay in bed in the Cancer Ward of Tucson Medical Center.

His wife June, who in her early 40's could still pass for 1960s pop singer Nancy Sinatra, was outside his room talking to a nurse, his sister-in-law, Carol, watching over him as he slept. Carol resembled actress Shirley Jones.

Joe's longtime partner on the force, from the first day at the Academy until now, Jim Gerrettie, manned the room as if he was the head of the Secret Service and Joe was his dying president. He whisked in and out of

the area, following up on every detail, waiting on June's every need. If there were any questions by hospital staff about Joe, Detective Gerrettie was front and center with the authority of the police department and the Parella family, ready to address or comfort any scenario that presented itself.

It was the least he could do for a man who had been his brother. To survive being a cop in Tucson, you had to be cut from a certain cloth. Tough. Tender. Patient. Diplomatic. Only a few men in the world had managed to do it and maintain their sanity. These men did.

They weren't just losing a brother in arms, they were losing Lou Gehrig.

Joe was in a cancer coma, one of the final stages before death, and the moment he had been expecting to come at 104-years old had come before his 47th birthday.

He had taken care of business with Lord Jesus years before, unknowingly accepting Christ into his heart and proclaiming him before Man, as the Word required, singing along to the theme song from Jesus Christ Superstar while he drove his family on a holiday weekend, packed in their aging, ugly, rusting 1973 Chevy station wagon. The melody was a new number-one radio hit, “Jeeesus- Christ, Suuuper Staaaar,” and Joe would sing over the lyrics, “I know that you *are* who you say you are.”

Shortly after 10 pm., Joe sat up in bed, which stunned both women, held out his arms and looked at a corner of the room, smiling. The Light of the Lord had come for him. Though images of the film *Ghost* came to mind, the only one who really saw anything in the room was Joe.

June thought Joe might be having a heart attack, and bolted out of the room in search of the nurse on duty. They had become

regular visitors in the last two months, the nursing staffing cheering for Joe's miraculous recovery, which would fall short.

Joe looked at his sister-in-law, possibly thinking it was June, took her hand, and kissed it gently, his way of saying goodbye. A nurse had run in to witness this. Joe seemed to be cradled back into his bed, as if an invisible force was laying him back down, something that his body did not have the strength to do on its own. The owner of his body had claimed it, *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.*

His breathing was noticeably different.

When June returned with a nurse, Carol told her what had happened, and both instantly knew Joe would not leave his bed alive.

The women searched in vain for a place in the hospital waiting areas to lay down.

It had been about two months since either had gotten a decent night's sleep.

Other patients' families, predominantly Latinos, were sprawled out all over the place, throughout the halls and waiting rooms, making it impossible for the woman to walk, much less find a suitable place to lie down.

In hindsight, the soon-to-be-widow believed it was God's way of getting her to leave, go home, and prepare for the death of her husband. Palm-bearers had already been designated.

As frustrating as their sleepless months were, their puffy eyes seeing nothing but

working-class Latinos filling rooms that would have otherwise allowed her to stay, June was forced to retreat.

The ward's nurse and Carol coordinated efforts so that June could return home, knowing that Joe would probably not live through the night. The nurses saw this often.

But considering what they knew about the former Tucson cop, a man who had single handedly changed the perception of police in the State, they felt this moment in time from within the heart of Heaven, even if they couldn't quite understand it.

To even to the most cynical of Believer in God, it was clear that the Lord was managing this moment of transition, whereby Joe would leave his wife and teenage kids, and his Earthly friends, yet as the Bible declares in John 12:24, "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies,

it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

Indeed, it would produce many.

Carol took the lonely seat next to Joe’s bed. June managed to drive home to their east side paradise, with a thriving front yard and hand-made redbrick walkway, the pride of Joe’s vision of imitating various gardening magazines he poured over. He had labored over the half-acre plot for twenty years and recreated the ambiance of Tampa Bay.

June focused to get out of the car, open the front door with her noisy keychain, walked back to her bedroom, climbed into her bed, this time without the hope that Joe would ever sleep next to her again. There would be no rest found in this sleep.

About a week prior, Joe had awoken from a life-revisiting dream in which he relived his life subconsciously.

At the end of this dream, Jesus appeared to him and told him to grab the marble slab coming his way, in an environment I can only speculate about. The glorified Christ Joe described to his then-17 year old son, was the same as the glorified Christ described by the Apostle John two thousand years before.

No one sees Christ unless they had already accepted Him as their Savior, and this would plant the seeds of Salvation into his son's personal testimony in years to come.

When Joe had shared this with his eldest daughter, then an undergraduate student attending his alma mater, the University of Arizona, he reiterated to her with the most serious tone, "Jesus is the *only* way. There's no one else there. Tell your brother and sister...tell mom."

At just after 5 a.m., Joe took his final breath and was pronounced dead. The cancer was over. Joe was free.

A phone call at 5:23 a.m. would awake the house with a definitive sorrow.

As June tried desperately to put her pants back on after what seemed like an endless night, she wondered aloud if she would be able to drive.

Her eldest daughter entered my room, where I had just fallen asleep after a restless evening, “Cory,” she said with disbelief and devastation filling her voice, “Dad died.” On the other side of the phone, Jim Gerrettie watched the nursing staff unplug Joe from life support and prepare his body for the morgue.

His son felt the need to fixate his eyes on the clock. Five-twenty-six a.m. He didn’t know what to do. They wept together for a moment.

In a couple hours, he would get up and get on a school bus (where a 13-year old boy named Kenny Battle awaited him to confront in a fist fight over a petty dispute), and go to school.

After three months of waiting, of doctor visits, vows by gutsy Joe to beat this thing, it was over. No one knew what to do.

His son certainly wasn't ready to lead. He was enjoying his senior year of high school.

He knew that today, with all that was going on, the death of Joe would buy him some grace from an otherwise selfish and merciless student body. Upon hearing the news of his father's death, classmates backed off and teachers showed immediate concern. Even the least compassionate people gave him some space.

Mourning is really for those still on Earth.

For those who do not accept Christ as their Savior during their lives on Earth, death becomes a portal into darkness that exceeds all worst nightmares.

Hell is real, was created for the demons, and is infinitely worse for humans to spend eternity in. There is a reason why the expression, *go to hell* is considered such a grave insult, whether binding or not.

Joe had accepted Christ as his Savior some time in his mid-20's.

As Joe's eyes and senses were opened and increased, he saw the Earth get smaller and smaller below him. The bright light of God became brighter and brighter as he realized he was getting closer and closer to the Throne. Words failed to capture the moment, especially the limited English and Spanish vocabularies he used. Awe consumed him. Wow, he thought. I'm here. The peace.

The peace!

Joe was among several hundred souls entering the presence of God, welcomed by onlookers made up of family and friends. Millions of people died and were born on February 19, 1991, an average day of births and deaths in the history of the world.

His senses were immediately enhanced by a factor of a thousand, and the language he once spoke in his mind was being augmented by a Heavenly language which came as naturally as breathing had on Earth.

His heart leaped from his chest, and he was immediately self-aware that his old body had been replaced by a new, eternal one. No more sickness.

He and the others seem to do the exact same thing as they entered into the Light of Jesus.

Everyone identified loved ones, accompanied by a look of surprise to see who was here (and who wasn't). Joe saw the

blinding robe of Jesus, instantly aware of whose presence he was in.

Instead of being mobbed by family, it was clear that they were waiting for the King to greet each person individually, something Jesus could do all at once.

Every knee bowed upon entry, and the instinctive first act was to mouth the word, “Lord!”

Some felt more fear than joy, others more joy than fear, but all who come here are in awe of the King, and it really never goes away. In this moment when souls arrived back in Heaven, the Word is fulfilled.

“Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess you are God.” No more metaphors or faith or guessing. This is Jesus.

Is. He was the same resurrected Jewish man who had been missing from the tomb since the first Easter morning roughly two-

thousands years before, and the world was made by Him at the command to the Father.

Joe remained conscious of where he had just come from, and worried for a moment about his wife, realizing that he was no longer married to her. Until death had just happened. His marriage was in the past.

He looked upon his family for a moment, not sure what to do.

Those around him, mostly angels. which he would soon learn were be his eternal entourage, motioned him to go see the King. He stepped, a little cautiously, toward the Throne, as did others, and the Light of Jesus seemed to manifest Himself to spend time with each new arrival at the same time. His Light recognized the mutual Light of the Holy Spirit dwelling within each person, fulfilling Scripture, to know Him.

Joe stood before the Lord and though he felt nervous and excited and unprepared and

naked and self-conscious and giddy and a little worried, and many other emotions all rolled into one big holy-wow, Jesus smiled at him, with the warmth of his friend and Father who had been with him every day of his life, guiding him Home.

Jesus opened His arms, inviting Joe to hug Him. Before Joe could embrace Jesus, he felt himself fall to his knees, laying flat on his face, bursting into a loud, deep, guttural wail, one so powerful that his former body might not have handled the volume of release.

His sins poured out, through his heaving of tears, and the Hand of the merciful Savior embraced his face lovingly. As Jesus' hand touched Joe's head, Joe felt the rush of emotions that he finished his life with being pulled out of him, as if being emptied.

No more tears.

Joe felt his strength being restored and was able push his torso up, helped up to his feet by Christ.

“Welcome home Joe,” Jesus said.

Jesus walked with Him to his eternal home, literally giving him a tour of the Kingdom. Joe could sense his family and friends nearby, but he quickly realized his judgment had begun.

“How did I get here?” Joe asked.

Jesus didn’t answer him. “Let’s talk about your family. First, your son.”

As Jesus spoke, Joe’s mind flashed at the speed of movie editing to Cory’s birth, childhood, up until the last time he saw him.

In his mind, Joe thought, “Why did you allow me to die of cancer?”

Jesus answered him in his mind. “You were causing your son to grow away from Me,

among other things. I am very protective of My Name. You took pride in your infidelities. And I told you not to exasperate your children but, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of My Word. Through your kids I will move mountains. Through you, I would have continued to, but you went back to your old ways.”

Little Joey was quite cunning. In his early 40’s, Joe began to take personal glory in the things that God had done in his life.

“I share My glory with no man,” Jesus repeated to him.

As Joe had put more confidence into his own abilities and reputation among men, he took his eyes off the Lord, all but ignoring the grace of God. This effected how he treated others.

The youngest of three children, Joe’s traditional father made it seem that he was

unwelcome in their family. This was because Joe was the result of adultery.

Chapter 7

December 1943

Providence, New Jersey. The day was overcast.

Glen Miller's *In The Mood* played on the radio, the center of the family room.

Jenny Parella, a mother of two grown kids, was in the kitchen making lunch when she heard the front door open. She was an attractive teenager who married a man who would go on to work with gangsters during the end of Prohibition.

As Joey Bonanno was increasing in power, and the FBI was learning how to deal with the empire that would come to be known as the Five Families, her husband was one of five brothers and a sister born of Italian immigrants, and whose story would be romanticized in Mario Puzo and Francis Coppola's collaboration on *The Godfather*.

Family moments disclosed to Puzo during his novel research would find their way into the films.

Her brother in-law James walked in, a dark-skinned Italian man, just under 6' and lean. Jenny had always been attracted to him.

He brought in the mail and sat down, expecting to be served at the table at the center of the small kitchen. Without a word she pulled a cup from the cabinet and poured him some coffee, setting it gently in front of him and paused so that he knew she was still standing over him, almost draping herself over him from behind.

James didn't resist. They had an ongoing affair. He rubbed her arm as if she was his wife and without hesitation, kissed her, close-mouthed but hard, on the lips. The laws of physics could not prevent them from moving to the master bedroom where they committed adultery.

For a few short hours, they were a couple. He smoked a cigarette after they finished, and laid in his brother's bed, in the exact same place as his brother. He casually got up and began to put his pants on. Both of them reacted like demons reacting to the resurrection of Christ as the loud sound of the front door opening filled the stuffy, moldy house.

George Parella, Sr. walked in, and thought someone might be in the house, trying to rob it. He had no idea how right he was.

George was a short, stocky Italian, with thin oily hair and a condition of Osteoporosis, a bone disease that prevented him from being as agile as he might have preferred.

He made his way to the staircase, and at the bottom of it, he looked up and saw his brother, tucking his shirt in. His wife was still half-naked, now walking from the bed to the edge of the doorway where the

stairwell ended in a short landing. She had a look of embarrassment but not guilt.

Caught.

George would have been acquitted of murder by any jury in America in 1943. But, as his hands grabbed James and forcefully threw his taller brother down the stairs, no real injury occurred except in George's heart.

James got to his feet, expecting George to charge him in a rage, but instead, the two men just look at each other for a long time. Neither exchanged words. Jenny stood frozen at the top of the staircase, quietly enjoying the scene as the two men fought over her. She truly enjoyed that.

One might argue that for her, this moment was better than the sex.

James dared not speak. He fumbled for his hat, and when he regained his bearings, he

noted the door right behind him. As he glanced around, still expecting George to charge after him, he noticed George looking up at his wife with a look of pain that would never leave his face.

Jenny showed no remorse, almost taunting him. ‘What are you going to do about it?’ was felt but not spoken.

“This...never happened,” George said emphatically, loud enough for the sound formed by the words that came from his mouth to bounce off of every wall of the house several times.

No one else spoke. James walked out, walking briskly to his car. He knew he had wounded his brother deeply. George looked at his wife again and then went into the kitchen for a glass of water. Jenny stood at the top of the stairs, uncertain of herself, and thought about walking downstairs. She found herself sitting on the bed, the door

closing itself with her hand subconsciously involved, until a faint click of the shut door seemed to end the moment.

Joseph David Parella had been conceived.

As Joe seemed to see all this as it happened, his attention was turned by Jesus' eyes to a man who stepped out of a nearby crowd.

Joe knew him as George Parella, Sr., and another man walked right behind him. George introduced himself and the man next to him. "Joe, this is James, your biological father, my brother."

When Joe was about seventeen years old, he stood in his house and asked his uncle James, "Are you my father?" No, James insisted, a lie.

As the men shared this moment from time, from an eternal perspective, standing before Christ, the Word spoke to Joe, "The Truth will set you free."

George said, “Joe, it is time for you to be free.” Jesus placed his hand on Joe’s shoulder, allowed Joe to finally release an anger that he had held onto for his entire life, one that had been a barrier to every relationship, hindered him at work, in his marriage, unable to forgive, unable to form the words, ‘I’m sorry’, in his own mouth. A vapor seemed to leave Joe and dissipate into the smell of sulfur.

Wow, Joe thought, I could have used that a long time ago.

The Word came to Joe again. “The thief only comes to steal, kill and destroy. The anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.” Joe was astonished.

George could not contain himself, reaching out to hug Joe. “I’m sorry. Please forgive me,” he said, embracing his son.

George was about a foot shorter than Joe. James and Joe were of equal height. When

Joe and George parted enough for Joe to see James' eyes, they too were full of remorse and the satisfaction of knowing that Christ was here to save them all.

“I have come to to set you free, and you are free. I have broken your chains. You will never shed these tears or feel this pain again,” Jesus said to them. The memory of Joe’s mother Jenny came to mind.

“Where’s mom?” Joe asked. Smiles evaporated from their faces. Joe looked at Jesus, whose eyes were compassionate, but firm. Joe was shocked, but also realized that she must have denied Christ in order to not be here.

Joe looked around a little, and Jesus instantly took him to the gates of hell. Jesus motioned to where Jenny was, and saw her, burning, suffering. Part of him wanted to call to her, and part of him knew he could not. She had made her choices.

“But...she went to church every Sunday,” Joe said. What is the difference between me and her? Jesus looked into his eyes and flashed the following moments in time.

Joe was driving on a family trip, the kids asleep in the back of the station wagon, his wife asleep in the passenger seat. The radio played the theme song from “Jesus Christ Superstar”. Joe sang along, a heartfelt, sincere praise of the Lord. “Jeeeeessuss Christ, Suuuuper Staahr, I *know* you are who you say you are...” Joe felt the Holy Spirit living inside of him.

Years earlier, as an eighteen-year-old who had enlisted in the Army, he stood in his home shower, having just experienced a supernatural moment in his car. He had been asking God to reveal Himself to him, and a radio station that normally played pop songs of do-wop and rock and roll had, astonishingly, played back to back Christian hymns, as if God was answering Joe through

the radio. Now, in the shower, the tug on his heart had grown heavy. He prayed the prayer. Jesus, come into my heart.

Joe then saw his dad, George Sr., talking to a minister at their church, sometime during the late 1950s. George was concerned about his business dealings with the mafia and wanted some advice on how to get out of it.

The pastor asked George if he wanted to receive Jesus as his Savior.

This, the pastor reasoned, removed death as the biggest threat. George prayed with the pastor. His wife Jenny was walking the kids to the car. Later that night, Jenny demanded to know what George was talking to the pastor about. As he told her, she became agitated. She didn't want to talk about it and said so. She made him dinner and they never discussed it again, though he tried to bring it up.

Joe flashed to James, being talked to about the Lord by his daughter in-law whose father was a minister.

As Joe looked at the vast population in hell, he thought to himself, even all the bad things I saw as a cop, nothing compares to the horror of this place. This is beyond horrible.

“Joe, time to go. You don’t have to stay.”

Jesus delivered him back to his family, and Joe became nervous, with an underlaying peace, realizing he was about to be judged, for real. His father and uncle, so to speak, said nothing as the Lord led Joe down a path. Jesus took him into a room. Joe somehow knew that room had been his designated place of judgment since he was born, and now, this was it.

He walked in and saw a plain, blank room with no color, if blankness can be imagined. Jesus seemed to become like a narrator, not

bodily present, but a Voice in his ear, as Joe was seated in a lone chair, and watched his life on the walls.

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Chapter 8

Spring 1952

North Dakota.

In a town of mostly white and blonde-haired people, Roberta Rae stood out like royalty.

Her friends called her Bobbi. She looked like a Marilyn Monroe with dark auburn hair.

She joined the choir to hang out with her friends, but quickly realized that if she was going to be able to date, she'd have to find a "nice" boy that both her parents and her pastor approved of.

When she was about 15, she went with her dad to a baseball game where she accidentally saw her future husband pitching.

She heard some of the men talking about the talented young kid with white hair who had struck out prospect Roger Maris.

She didn't know who any of those people were, but, she enjoyed watching.

She volunteered to play catch with the small children brought by some of the parents, behind the bleachers where most of the crowd was, and there, caught glimpses of athletic Lute from a distance.

She couldn't tell whether he saw her or not, but she noted the focus in his eyes and found herself very attracted to it, if not him.

The next year, she had heard of the tragic accidents that had led to the Olsons moving to their town, and the girls were gossiping

about the new boy coming to the high school for his senior year.

Before she could offer an opinion one way or the other, she saw him sitting across the church, with his mother and sister, his eyes innocently soaking in the ambiance of his newfound home.

She took a long enough look at him that she realized she needed to look away, for nothing could be as embarrassing as getting caught staring at him.

Before she could pull her eyes away, her mother whispered to her, “That’s the Olson boy. You saw him play baseball a time ago. Want me to create an introduction?”

Yes, of course, mother! Her heart leapt, but her head smiled coyly and shook a quick no to her mother.

The church service was a modest 45 minutes long, but felt like 10 hours to Bobbi. She

tried to gracefully make her way outside, where she was summoned by her mother and the pastor to meet Lute and his mother.

The pastor had already been prepped by Lute's mother and sister, and went out of his way to ask the 6'2"-and-growing ballplayer, "So, I heard you sing."

"Yes, sir."

"Wanna join the choir?" the pastor asked. It wasn't a question.

The fact is, Lute needed a way to process his trauma, away from sports, having lost his father and older brother in the same year, and spending some time among new friends might just be the best way to do that.

He didn't have the best voice, but, who cared? Bobbi thought he looked like Cary Grant.

Lute Olson was 17 years old when he made the determination in his heart to win the hand of Bobbi Russell.

She walked home from school the same way he did, but had shown no interest. He decided not to brag about himself, even though he had just been nominated for the state basketball player of the year, and he decided to learn what she liked by asking her. Most boys tried to guess, and perhaps woo a girl by merely trying.

He couldn't exactly sneak up on her, given how tall he was, so, he smiled as he caught up to her on the sidewalk, taking extra long steps to close the gap, not realizing she had slowed her own stride a little.

“Hi, I’m Lute, you’re Bobbi, right?” he asked, his voice nervously jumping about 3 octaves higher than he had intended.

“I know who you are. Sorry to hear about your dad,” she replied. It wasn’t love at first sight, but the ones that last usually never are.

“Thank you...yeah, a shock to us all. My mom’s still adjusting, not to mention my brothers and sister...can I carry those for you?” Lute asked, eyeing Bobbi’s stack of school books. *Why not*, she thought, *he was offering to carry her books, not marry her.*

“Ok,” she said, handing him all the books. He buckled slightly under the weight, but tried not to show it. “So, are you going to impress me with stories about what a great jock you are?” she teased.

“Not unless you want me to. I was thinking more like ice cream, on me,” he replied.

“I don’t think ice cream would look very good on you,” she sparred.

Indeed, she had spunk. He liked that.

He grinned helplessly, trying to find something to say. He was without words.

“I believe you are smiling ear to ear,” she said, taking a good look into his eyes. *Wow, she thought, jock or not jock, he was handsome...and not quite as arrogant as I thought he was.*

“So, how do you like it here, living here?”

“Love it. Never want to leave,” she replied. His face dropped a little.

“Really?”

“No. But if you’re gonna sweep my off my feet, you’re gonna have to think of something better than ice cream. My favorite color is blue and my favorite song is *How Great Thou Art*. Anything else you wanna know?”

“Everything. Anything you want to tell me,” he replied as she stopped in front of a certain house. A few girls walked past them on the

sidewalk, giggling as each made eye-contact with Bobbi and Lute.

“Thanks for carrying my books,” she said with enough fire in her eyes to melt him where she stood. He handed them back to her, and she walked through a gated fence. She turned around quickly to add, “Tomorrow morning, I’ll be right here waiting for you.”

She then walked into her house.

Just inside the doorway, Lute could not hear this exchange as he walked home, as gleeful as a 6’4” high school basketball star could be.

“Bobbi?” her mother greeted from another room. Books could be heard landing on the kitchen table as she reached into the refrigerator to grab milk and smashed a few freshly baked cookies into her mouth.

“Yes,” she responded with a full mouth.

“How was your day, dear?”

“About the same. But on my way home, I believe the man I am going to marry helped me carry my books.”

“*WHAT?*” her mother replied.

Bobbi didn't have to look far to see Lute each day. If he wasn't in school, he could be found working at any number of odd jobs. At the dairy, he was in charge of checking the eggs. At the women's boutique, he was in charge of putting the latest fashions on the mannequins, a job he secretly loved and hated. What kid wouldn't enjoy the irony of groping women's curves, while in the politically correct setting of a retail storefront, as the ladies his mother attended church with walked by?

As he was having a hard time getting one particular dress on, a stiff tapping on the glass was heard. The young man turned

around, only to blush, not realizing that Bobbi was blushing more.

After weaving through a couple of side doors, Lute made his way onto the street to talk to her.

“I didn’t know you worked here,” she said, amused. She liked how much she had to look up at him to look into his eyes.

“It could be worse. I mean, it’s nice in there. It’s air conditioned,” he replied.

“And that’s convenient knowing how hot it gets in North Dakota,” she quipped back.

“Um...you...you wanna...?” he asked, not realizing he didn’t finish his question.

He didn’t have to. “Uh-huh,” she replied, smiling. Wow, he wanted to kiss her.

Just then, the town’s 300-pound Avon lady shouted to them. “

Don't you two just make an adorable couple!"

"Oh, no," Bobbi asserted, "I was just window shopping."

The Avon lady had a keen eye for beauty and chemistry. "Doesn't look like a hardware store to me, dear," she said the play-on-words sailing completely over Bobbi's head.

Lute looked down to realize he was still holding a woman's blouse. "I suppose I had better put this back." The Avon lady continued walking by, winking at Bobbi, who gathered her composure and said bye to Lute.

"You going to the dance, big shot?"

"What?" he asked, having a hard time hearing hear through the glass wall.

“The dance. See you there? I was just saying big shot because you made that big shot the other night.”

Lute just smiled and nodded. Then his inner coach’s voice, still years away from being what it would be, pierced the glass, “I’ll be there. And I’d love to dance with you.”

A short time later, at the town dance, Bobbi was boy-watching with friends when Lute walked in. She played down her attraction to him to her friends. “He’s much too arrogant for me.” Her girlfriends turned to her in unison and offered a confronting stare, followed by deep contrite chuckles that only girls are capable of.

“What? What does that mean?” she demanded to know as he walked in, trying to find familiar faces.

“It’s obvious you are crazy about him.”

“Oh, bologna! I hardly know him,” she said, trying to sell her innocence to a jury whose verdict had already become school gossip.

Her friends broke into role playing, each mocking her and Lute.

One girl, doing a really bad John Wayne voice, imitated Lute, “Can I carry your books for you, little lady?” The other girlfriend jumped right in with the comedic timing of Lucille Ball.

“Oh, Lute, I’ll be right here waiting for you,” she said, fluttering her eyes while feigning a slight Vivian Leigh accent. This got them all laughing hysterically, as Lute walked into the dance hall and made his way over to said hello with the dexterity of Jerry Lewis.

“Hi!” Lute blurted out, watching their smiles disappear one by one as Bobbi’s eyes locked on his and the future newlyweds abruptly tuned out everyone else. The band had

started to play Al Martino's *Here In My Heart* as if on cue.

It was a moment straight out of *It's A Wonderful Life*.

Chapter 9

November 1952

They had two wedding ceremonies during the week of Thanksgiving break to accommodate each of their families.

The radio was on somewhere in the house, as if to calm their nerves. *You Belong To Me* by Jo Stafford was playing.

It may have been back luck for a marriage for the bride and groom to see each other before the wedding, but they did it anyway. Bobbi helped Lute choose the right tie. He held a few of them in his hand, which he had worn for years. She shook her head like a pitcher waving off pitch suggestions by a catcher and shifted her eyes up at him, then turning to a long box she had been hoarding.

“I was saving this for our honeymoon, but, you need it now.” She pulled out a new tie for him to wear and, it was a perfect fit. She

started to tie it for him, and his hands reached up to take over. Their fingers made love as they slowly pulled the tie down through the final loop.

They stood together and just gazed at their reflection in the small wall mirror. They were really doing this.

“We look good,” he said, meaning that *she* looked good. “Mm...you could use a watch. Someday, we’re gonna get you a Rolex.”

“I won’t wear it,” he replied. “There’s so better ways we could spend our money. All forty dollars.”

“I didn’t marry you for your money,” she said, her voice absent of sarcasm.

They fell into a lover’s silence and then the song changed to Patti Paige’s *I Went To Your Wedding*, which made them share a laugh.

“Let’s go,” she said, smiling. They both glanced at the bed behind them and then

made their way to the cars where family would escort them to the church.

The wedding ceremony lasted only a few minutes. Sharon Lutheran Church wasn't a large church, but their families and friends made it look enormous and crowded.

As Lute and Bobbi stood before the pastor, Forrest Monson, he asked, "Now, we do this again in a few days, right?"

Bobbi smiled, offering back a smirking nod. "Yeah, my parents couldn't make the trip. We're doing this again at *my house*."

"Not a problem, kids," he replied, smiling.

Lute heard the sounds of the church but only saw Bobbi. He hung on her every movement. She had an inner-beauty that he seemed to only notice right now, and thought himself, like Lou Gehrig, to be the luckiest man on the face of the Earth.

He was right.

Pastor Monson finished, “Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Mr. and Mrs. Lute Olson.” Everyone applauded. Lute glanced back at Forrest, and so did Bobbi, taking in the ambiance of the moment.

Without really knowing why, Pastor Monson said to them, “I foresee great things from you two.”

After the second ceremony at her house, Bobbi slipped out of her dress and into capris as her mother Louella found her and closed the door. It was clear she wanted to have a Mom talk.

“I wanted to share something with you, and I’ve been waiting for the right moment, and since you guys are probably going to leave soon...can we talk?”

Bobbi sat down obediently and listened with an open heart. She loved and adored her beautiful mother.

“Am I in trouble?” Bobbi asked.

“No! No!” Louella laughed. “What I wanted to say is this. How to keep your husband happy and endear the other men he will bring into your life. Always find something about them of virtue and validate it. Flirt all you want, but always treat them as brothers or sons. You’re drop dead gorgeous and some men won’t understand. You’re lucky that Lute isn’t the jealous type, but, as life happens, remember that kind words hold great power.”

Bobbi smiled and buried her face into her mother’s bosom one last time.

At the reception of the second wedding, Bobbi’s father John walked privately with Lute.

“Teaching is a solid profession. Augsburg is a good school. If you don’t mind me asking, why did you choose that one?”

Lute offered a slight shrug of his shoulders. “Kath’ and I went to see it last summer. It fit. When I met with the coach, he was also the janitor, mopping his own gym. I figured, a school that small, get a good education and I won’t have to compete to get any playing time.”

John nodded at the reason behind Lute’s choice. “Any job prospects?” he asked.

“Several,” Lute answered without enthusiasm. “If anyone knew how little money we have, you might not have given the bride away.”

He nodded with a brief chuckle. “Nah, I like you Lute, and you love Roberta Rae, so, welcome to the family.” And with that, he shook his hand, man to man.

The conversation began to trail off as wedding guests waved goodbye. Bobbi could be heard inside the house, offering goodbye hugs.

“You know where you want to live?” he asked Lute.

Lute replied, “Well, sir, I’d like to be anywhere I can coach *and* teach. I figure, as long as I’m coaching, I can always play the game and get paid for it.”

There was something bothering John.

“Teaching is a fine profession. But there’s something bothering me. You’ve got the face of a movie star, and Roberta’s got a...a head for people. I don’t know what that will mean in the future, but, whatever it is, she’s not just a way to make babies and cook meals. God’s got a calling on her life.

You’re meant for more. Both of you.”

Bobbi opened up the back door and waved to Lute outside. “You need to change if we’re gonna leave soon,” she said. The twilight hit her in just such a way that given her posture in the sun, her make-up just so, it was breathtaking.

Lou Gehrig's farewell sound bite went off in Lute's head, *I feel like the luckiest man on the face of the Earth.*

Lute barely heard Mr. Russell finish his speech, "Whatever you do, you'll do it together."

Later, after all the guests had gone, he shot baskets on a rim built in the back of the house. Bobbi sat watching him on a picnic table wearing an Elizabeth Taylor-style button up shirt and capri pants. "What'd my dad say?"

"He just said he thought we are meant for more," Lute said, swishing another shot from 10-feet away. He grabbed his ball, dribbled it one-handed to get it into his hands and holding it asked, "Anything else you want from me?"

Bobbi looked at him, sipping on a straw from a Coke bottle, and answered in a tone

that would have given most men heart failure.

“Babies.”

A stiff wind told them both that the weather was changing, and Lute said, “We’d better get going if we’re going to beat the storm.”

They raced to their motel where snow buried them for the night. They didn’t notice how cold it was outside.

Chapter 10

Summer 1954

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Bobbi sat at a reception desk in a small auto dealership, alongside four other women, and answered the phones as salesmen attended to prospective buyers. A couple young salesmen with no one to wait on flirted with the other receptionists in between calls.

Lute was in the passenger seat of a service truck marked *Dave's Popcorn Stand*, as it came to stop. He was dressed in an odd combination of a U.S. postal uniform and the Dave's Popcorn hat, in between job shifts.

“Thanks again for the ride, Dave,” Lute said, “I can’t believe she forgot these,” he said, a pregnancy medicine vile in his hand.

“A pregnant woman who forgets?” Dave said humorously. “Lute, take a look around. What do you see?”

“Debt.”

Dave nodded. “What do I always say?”

“Please get to work on time?” Lute answered, getting a brief humorous chuckle.

“Don’t put off for tomorrow what you can do today. Sometimes you *just do it*.”

“I can’t afford to buy a car.”

“Your wife is six months pregnant and she’s taking the bus.”

“Seven,” Lute corrected, “maybe they have some used ones somewhere,” Lute remarked, glancing around. “I hear what you’re saying, we can’t afford to buy a car. And I gotta get this to her.”

“You want me to wait?” Dave asked.

“No, I can walk from here.”

Dave didn't let it rest, poking his head out the window, “Hey, if you don't drive home yourself, at least let me offer your wife a ride home.”

Lute turned back one last time as he walked into the main entrance, and waved Dave off, “Thanks, we'll manage! See you tomorrow!”

Bobbi was beginning her third trimester as she was approached by one of the managers.

“Mrs. Olson,” he said with a fake smile, holding clip board, and acting like he was about to yell at someone, “your husband is here with something for you, for the baby?”

“Yes, sir, thank you,” she replied quickly, getting up to see Lute walking inside the showroom, dressed in a postal uniform, and carrying an empty mail bag, and wearing a Dave's Popcorn hat. The manager retreated

into a back office where he did start yelling at a salesman. The words were muffled through the door.

Lute smiled as he laid eyes on her, and did not notice people snickering at the tall, white-haired college jock, wearing multiple uniforms as he marched across the showroom floor to give his pregnant wife a warm kiss.

“Nice hat,” she said with a smile. Lute did not realize he still had it on.

“Darn it,” he said, taking it off. “This thing is bad enough. Here,” he added, handing her pregnancy vitamins.

Bobbi’s coworkers were abuzz about her husband. They had heard so much about him, that to see him was an experience all its own. One of the attention-starved salesman tried to haze him over the hat. He was barely 5-feet tall. Lute had finally hit 6’4”.

“Mrs. Olson, is this *Mr.* Olson?” he asked with more than a touch of sarcasm.

“Yes, this is my husband.” Before the shorter salesman could put his foot in his mouth, another manager came over and welcomed Lute, “You hit the game winner last year against Williston. I remember you. Olson. Heck of a hook shot, kid. Charlie Hudson, I own the place,” he said, extending a warm hand out to the part time postal worker.

“Yes, sir, nice to meet you,” Lute replied, “my wife enjoys working here very much.”

“Lute, right?” Charlie asked. “If you don’t mind me asking, what are you driving, when you’re not delivering mail?”

“A Dave’s Popcorn truck,” the short salesman added, without getting the chuckle he was expecting from the receptionists behind him. He did get an idiot laugh from another loitering salesman.

“I see,” Charlie said. “Mrs. Olson, why don’t you take a break and after taking care of your baby needs, come join me in the showroom. There’s a model I’d like to show you.”

“Um, that’s very kind of you, but, I’m not sure we can afford --”

“Didn’t your wife tell you? We give employee discounts and we have a very generous financing plan. Neil!” A salesman emerges from an office approaches Charlie as he walks Lute toward a line up of new cars.

“This is Lute Olson. His wife Bobbi answers the phones. They are in the market for the finest car we have. This is my top salesman. Neil, make it happen.”

Lute looked at the cars and swallowed hard. “Sir, these are really nice, but, I’m working four jobs right now and going to school full time. I don’t think I can afford any of these.”

Charlie smiled, “You don’t know remember me, do you? Do you remember striking out Roger Maris? The boy being scouted by the Yankees?” Lute’s eyes met his. His dealership name was on many baseball field billboards, one of them hanging in the showroom. Lute nodded. “So do I. Someday...you remember me.”

“Lute, you feel more comfortable buying used?” Lute nodded. “Ok.”

Chapter 11

1952

North Dakota Boys Basketball State Championship game.

In the closing seconds, Lute Olson did not expect to be the player holding the ball, taking the last shot, identical to the 1985 film *Hoosiers*.

Yet that's exactly what he did.

He never aspired to be a full time coach, but found his up-tempo style of play and dedication to academics made him a rising star of his generation.

By 1962, Lute found himself as the coach of the Marina High School boys basketball team, taking advantage of all the resources made available through coach's clinics by such legends as John Wooden, Dean Smith and Pete Newell. He spent six years learning

how to be the kind of coach he felt would make winners out of talent.

Coaching jobs did not pay well.

In the 1950's, even coaches were predominantly teachers. Few were just coaches. After he learned that pay scale was dictated by credit hours, he set his sights on counseling and wanted to coach part time.

At 18 years old, how many kids make choices that allow them to build on their foundations, rather than fix messes created by their youthful ambitions. Lute was encouraged by his father in law John and pastor to be the kind of father figure he didn't quite have.

At a park near his home, he could be found shooting baskets as his kids played on a nearby swing set and slide. His movements were calculated and professional, yet his eyes danced with a fever that his wife had

fallen in love with the the tune of their fourth child.

“I see you as a maker of men,” John said to him.

“I got to talk to John Wooden for a few hours the other day. He gave me some ideas on how to design practices,” Lute replied.

“See, that’s what I mean.”

Lute grabbed the loose ball and looked back at him, wondering which part he thought was funny. “What? Practices need to be structured so the kids know what to expect,” he added, looking at his own kids playing and making noise. “Just like they teach new parents to get on a schedule. Players need to do the same thing.”

“I mean that you spent time *talking* to *John Wooden*,” John said. “Most coaches with your success would either be too proud to ask for help or think they know it all.”

“We’ve had *two* winning seasons,” Lute replied, “and if we don’t win more than 24 games next season, no one will remember my first year.”

“There you go again, making my point,” John said. “Most men your age don’t even know to look for the wisdom in that, much less let it drive them. And in return, your boys don’t just play well, they play smart.”

“Now to figure out how to keep them from falling out of the gym after a lay up,” Lute joked, referring to the structure of the gym being so small that an exit door was incidentally located close enough to the backboard that a player who drove too hard for a lay up could and had fallen like a cliff hanger into a stairwell, out to the parking lot before coming back inside.

“How’s Roberta holding up?” John asked, looking at her playing with the kids.

“Well, we don’t get out much, but, we did learn that 75-cents is enough for a night out in Boulder,” Lute joked.

“She told me about that. Well, you’re in Anaheim now. The Head Coach. Of the Olsonmen. You can afford to get out more.”

“We *can*?” he joked back. “You know I took a part time job as a driving instructor?”

Chapter 12

Infant Vicki Olson was sitting in her high chair, as Bobbi, six months pregnant, mixed apple pancakes as Lute wandered from their tiny bedroom and sat down to his wife's breakfast and his daughter's cute smile.

Lute looked tired. "Good morning." "Did you hear?"

"What?"

"The Dodgers are in the World Series. After Jackie Robinson, more black players are being added all over the league," she said with a smile. "Branch Rickey's plan worked."

"Wow!" Lute said, as he poured himself coffee. "That's big."

After a he had a moment to absorb that he said, "That's bigger news than what I had. Got in so late, I couldn't tell you."

“What?” she asked, pausing from pancake flipping.

“I got a job offer to teach *and* coach from Mahnomen High School, up north.” Judging his smile, Bobbi knew they were moving, almost to Canada.

Lute tore though her pancakes with additional enthusiasm after sharing his big news, and made a suggestion that would become folklore in the world of basketball, “Hey, would you mind if we ever have other coaches or recruits over, would you mind making these pancakes? They’re *really* good. Is this from a cookbook or from your mom?”

Bobbi smiled back at as if she wanted him there and then. *Whoops, kids-in-the-room, never mind.* She winked. “None of your business, my little secret. But thank you. Speaking of recruits...” she said, stuffing herself with the rest of the pancakes, “what

else can I do? I've mastered the art of being barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen, but, I can't just sit and watch your career from the stands."

Lute attempted to swallow a tall glass of orange juice in one gulp. Setting the cup down, and wiping his daughter's face, he thought about it. *What could she do?*

"I got it," Bobbi said, not elaborating.

Lute waited for her to tell him the epiphany she had, but she tucked her thoughts behind her smile and didn't. His usual poker face was unavailable, and his curiosity poured through his eyes, in an inaudible *what?*

She smiled at him again, enjoying the moment. She knew who she was, who she would become. And it made her glow even more.

And so became the inspiration for their next daughter.

A few weeks into the season, Bobbi walked across the parking lot with Vicki walking behind her, to the outdoor court where Lute was conducting practice, carrying a box of game film and ready-made meals.

The school's athletic director, Ron Raveling pushed a chalk-line maker on the football field near the court where Bobbi set the box and sat watching him imitate the opposing team's schemes. His voice could be heard for miles as he rapidly taught the boys how their play on the court worked within a system as defined by the rules of the game.

"Scoring it not a matter of luck. This is science," Lute said, jogging to a dozen positions on the court known as around-the-world, swishing his shot at every single one.

"The rim is twice as wide as the ball.

According to the laws of physics, should you train your body to propel the ball with the same velocity, arc and rotating, and it hits anywhere in the vicinity marked on the

backboard or the invisible cylinder over the rim, you will make your shot every time. The same logistics are used by the military in designing missile launching systems. When they hit their target, it is the result of calculated purpose and practice.”

It was hard not to be impressed by their coach. Lute bounced the ball to one of his players and then said, “You’re turn.”

The player turned to a distance about 20-feet back and started a shooting motion.

“Stop,” Lute said. “Have a plan before you shoot.” The player paused. “I started right under the rim because it is the highest percentage shot on the court. I want my body to memorize the motion of making *that* shot. After I made it, I moved out more. I don’t care where you start from, but have a plan. Do you have one?”

The player bounced the ball and thought about it. “Can I shoot from anywhere as long as I have a plan?”

“Yes,” Lute replied.

The player moved to the free throw line, dribbled the ball, and then paused. He then said with a big smile, “I have a plan.” He dribbled to where Lute started from and imitated what his coach just did, swishing every shot.

The other players looked on in awe. “I’m next!” a player shouted, the others quick to get excited. Lute put his foot in front of the next player and made an invisible line with it.

“Line starts here. When you’re all done, line up at the top of the key.” With each made shot, the players confidence grew.

Ron walked over to greet her. “Hi, Bobbi,” he said. “And who’s this little angel?”

“This is my daughter Vicki,” she answered, “we brought dinner and some game film.”

“Game film?” Ron asked, surprised.

“Yeah, and spaghetti,” she said. Ron leans forward just enough to get a whiff of the food and is immediately impressed.

“Wow, Mrs. Olson, you are some kinda-woman. Hey, Lute! Olsonmen!” he called to the court, grabbing Lute’s attention.

“Yeah?” he asked, the surgeon being called out of surgery. “Your wife brought you and your boys home-made spaghetti.”

“And game film,” Bobbi added, smiled into the blinding sun.

Lute smiled as he looked at her, sitting on the bench with Vicki. He glanced back at them and announced, “Done in five. My wife brought the game film I told you about.”

A couple of the players exchanged comments about being treated like big-time players.

“You boys like spaghetti?” she asserted, “I brought enough for everyone who wants to win.”

Ron opened up a classroom for them where they finished their practice, learning their playbook and getting to know their opponent.

As the team ate, Bobbi had accomplished what she set out to do, to make the basketball team, anywhere they went, with whomever gathered with them, an extended part of their family.

That team hustled its way to a 22-3 record and a last-second loss in the playoffs.

The teaching team who would become Lute & Bobbi were born.

Chapter 13

1962

The teacher in Lute spent a year as a middle school counselor at Baseline Junior High in Boulder, Colorado.

At night, he would visit the University of Colorado at Boulder to watch basketball games, and area high school games as they happened. Sometimes he would take his kids to them, enjoying quality time with dad.

Bobbi struggled to maintain the house, given the never ending amount of laundry, cooking and homework she was tasked to help with.

She loved the weather here, but knew they would not stay forever. Lute was taking a spiritual break from his first love, the game of basketball, and he would not be able to stay away from her forever.

Bobbi had chosen to accept it, given how happy it made him to play, and she was excited by the passion in his eyes whenever he talked about basketball. It was more than a game to him. It was a Heavenly language.

He explained to her one night when she was pregnant with their second child, “I tell the kids, use the sport to get somewhere, don’t let it use you.”

At the time, he was an assistant coach of the football team and taught P.E. classes.

He would soon apply his philosophy to basketball. *Use the game. Ask yourself what you want and use your skills to achieve it. Don’t let it use you.*

His time in Boulder was a comedy of errors.

Finally the day came when he could not spend another day apart from coaching.

God seemed to agree, for he got summoned into the athletic director’s office and was

offered the job of coaching the basketball team.

Chapter 14

Summer 1956

Morrisville, New Jersey.

Young Joey Parella had just finished playing in the forest near his farm along with his niece, who was only slightly younger than he was. She was the eldest daughter of his oldest brother, George Jr., 14 years older than Joey. She and Joe had become playmates. She had gone back to the main house, leaving Joe to enjoy the last few minutes of sunlight left in the day. He carried a small bow-and-arrow set on his shoulder.

A meteor appeared in the sky, seemingly chasing the eleven-year old Joey across the farm he lived on. As it streaked across the sky, he held his bow-and-arrow close to him and run toward the house where his mother

was inside preparing dinner. He took a shot at the fireball in vain, his arrow landing in the bushes a few yards away.

His father George had just come home from work. Joey rushed in to tell his mother what he had just seen, to no avail. She didn't believe him, or care, and television news was still years away from the Parella household.

As Joey tried to explain to his parents what he had just witnessed, both parents body language dismissed his ramblings as far-fetched kid banter. "Oh, Joeeeey," his mother would say. "That's nice," in a tone that sounded both flattering and dismissive.

He learned to hate her automatic reaction to his every spoken word, "That's nice." She made him dinner as his favorite TV show, *Bonanza*, came on. Little Joe, portrayed by Michael Landon, was his hero.

Joe vowed when he became a parent to show more sincere interest in his own kids.

George Sr. sat in his recliner chair two decades before actor Carole O'Conner would invent Archie Bunker, his wife Jenny waiting on him hand-and-foot like the TV caricature Edith.

They managed to spend thirty years of marriage just living for their next meal, passionless and profanity-filled. George Sr. was a man of few words, and what words he did say were often profane. Jenny was no victim.

She married a former mob enforcer and launderer, and enjoyed the benefits of being married to the mob. When George developed a bone disease limiting his movements, he realized he would not be able to continue his role in the organization.

He continued to do what was asked of him, mostly involving the transport of stolen

goods, but over time, he went out of his way to prove that he was not helpful enough to keep in the loop. One could say that the Bonanno family forgot about him. George was loyal, obedient, but a quiet worker. His eldest son had agreed to shield as much of this from his inquisitive little brother as much and as long as they could.

George Sr. did not want to feel contempt for his son Joey. The youngest of three, his oldest son George Jr., was about to leave for Korea. He wasn't happy about that.

George Sr.'s teenage daughter Charlotte was enjoying the attention of the neighborhood boys, but nothing worth worrying about. Every time his eyes met Joey's, the boy searched for love, while his father searched for forgiveness. Neither James nor his wife had ever spoken of it again, but everyone knew Joey was not his biological son.

George tried to show the boy love. “Joey,” he called to his son, whose hands was turning the TV dial in the living room, finding three different images to choose from. “C’mere.” George sat down in his recliner chair and summoned Joey to stand before him. “How’d you like to come work for me? I’ll pay you twenty-five cents an hour. It’s a man’s wage. You’ll need to show up on time and work like a man. How about it?”

Joey felt like a super hero. His dad had just asked him to work for him.

“Woooooow!!!!” Joey shouted, his face lighting up with a smile that seems to expire on humans once they hit puberty. The job hauling asphalt in wheel barrels made Joe so strong that by the time he started high school, he looked like an Olympic body builder.

George felt warm himself, smiling back at Joey as much as he could. The fact is life

had taken its toll on him and he regretted some of the choices he made, including becoming involved with the mafia.

Whatever he made from co-owning bars to plumbing, the bosses got their cut.

He warned his eldest son George Jr., to have nothing to do with them after he was gone, whenever that was.

It had never occurred to Joey that strange men had often visited their home with gifts and adult discussions that he was forbidden to even listen in on.

Jenny would cook for these men, and often had meals ready in anticipation. When *The Godfather* debuted in 1972, Joe sat dazed in a movie theater and remarked to his wife, “Wow, this is just like my life.”

No, Joe, that was your life.

Mario Puzo had interviewed men like Joseph Bonanno, who had retired to Fort

Lowell Park, Tucson, Arizona, in the 1970's, where Joe would eventually work as a policeman.

After gritting through high school, a counselor told Joe he was unfit for college. George Sr., then financially secure enough since changing trades from bar owner to driveway and road paver, could afford to pay the tuition for Joey to attend Fairleigh Dickinson University where he wanted to major in Engineering. Joe always wanted to learn how to build things.

It was 1962, and George Jr. had returned from Korea, honorably discharged, and was married with three daughters. His wife wanted at least one boy, but their fourth and final baby would be a girl as well.

Georgie had just lent his car to Joey for a date, only to have Joey ram it into a wall. He loved his little brother, and was proud to see him start college, something no one else in

the family had done. The condition was that Joey could live at home rent free, and go to college as long as he worked for the family business part time. The rugged pre-teen who grew into a man hauling asphalt had also grown to loath the job.

On one Saturday morning, Joey was beckoned to go work on a day when he was neither expecting it, nor willing to budge from his bed. His homework load was more than he expected and he refused to emerge from the sheets without a fight.

This prompted an argument that led to Joey leaving the house in anger. He wound up at an Army recruiting office where he enlisted. Jenny was crushed. His father and brother were upset at him, but over the next few weeks, they realized, it was probably the best thing he could have done.

He would meet his future bride while serving in the Army, and finish college in May, 1987 at the University of Arizona.

For most of his life, Joey had been told that he was stupid. The annunciation of the word ‘stupid’ by his family had become a thorn in his soul, prompting him to be very insecure about his intelligence.

The Army tested him. He was shocked to learn he was eligible for Military Police training and was assigned to West Germany in 1964 during a time when most of his peers were being assigned to Vietnam.

He did not know that his father called in a political favor, that his son would not be assigned to Vietnam. Any other assignment, as was ordered by the Bonanno patriarch. This too made it into the notes of Mario Puzo, albeit, describing third-string characters.

As Joe watched this moment of his life on the wall, Jesus asked him if he was ready to be the leader the Lord had Called him to be.

At first, Joe was confused. He looked at the wall, which was currently blank, and waited for the Lord to speak again. He repeated the Lord's questions to him in his own mind and answered, "I'll do whatever you want me to do."

"Are you ready to lead? Are you willing to serve?" the Lord asked again.

Joe was more assertive though still confused. "Sure. Yes." Joe thought this was his final destination, but answered the question being asked. The moment lingered, as of his eternal destination was still awaiting him to choose, he felt the tremor of incompleteness consume him.

Looking on his life as a completed work, it seemed there were pieces missing, and he knew his judgment had not yet commenced.

Those who wept for him on Earth felt it too, and as one man would say about his life span, “Forty-six, that’s too soon.”

Joe looked at his life and was fascinated to see how it coincided with other people’s lives, some now here with him, some on their way, and some who would never see this place if their omission of Christ remained unchanged.

Joe noted one part of his life that he was particularly proud of, his personal connection with the world’s fascination with the mafia.

Joe looked back at his life and saw the holes, the unharvested opportunities. Jesus had compassion on him and asked, “What are you willing to do about, Joe? I am Lord of Heaven and Earth, time and space.”

“One more day,” Joe said.

“Which one? Which day?” Jesus asked.

Before Joe could answer, Jesus suggested, “What if we go back together, day by day, and you tell me which one you’d like to do over. Keep in mind, whatever you do differently will have an effect in the outcome, and you will not add a single day to your own life.”

Jesus summoned the Days of Joe’s Life as if it were images on an editing timeline, in the form of a vapor. They presented themselves like a school of fish standing at attention before the Lord.

It was clear it was Joe’s turn to choose where to begin.

Jesus let him choose. Joe smirked at the days of his youth, and saw himself, growing up, palling around with his niece Donna, who was his brother George’s daughter. Because of the two-decade age gap between George Jr. and Joe, Donna was more like a little sister or younger cousin than his aunt.

Suddenly, something in the future caught Joe's eye. His son had married a woman who told his son, "You love watching the Wildcats because every time the game is on, it's like your dad's still alive."

"I got it," Joe said, without doubt in his voice.

Jesus smiled and replied, "Okay. But before I accept that as your final answer, let's go back."

Chapter 15

New Providence, New Jersey, 1962

George Parella sat in a chair across from an elegant desk where Joe Bonanno sat.

Another man, who sat and did a crossword puzzle and sipped coffee, listened to the men talk.

George was concerned. “My oldest son, Georgie, learned where the money was dropped and got to it first. He brought it to me and told me what Joey did.”

“Where’s Joey at now?” Joe asked, concerned.

“Little son of a gun joined the Army,” George replied, his astonishment only equalled by his irritation.

Before Joey could speak, George added, “I’m sorry for what he did. I know you were expecting a return. If you need to me to do anything to make up for it, let me know.”

Joey waved his hand casually, “Don’t worry about it. He joined the Army. You know what? Good for him. It’ll be good for him.”

George took a very deep sigh of relief. “Kids...” George kept glancing at Mario.

“Want a drink?” Joey offered. George nodded. “Sure.”

Chapter 16

“Bring me a drink,” Joey yelled, an order that was followed by a young man walking through the door wearing a suit, holding a drink, as if it had been prepared and waiting to be served.

George took it and tilted his glass to his mouth. “I bet you’re wondering who this is,” Joey said, motioning to Mario.

“Mario Puzo, George Parella,” Joey said. The two men exchanged nice-to-meet-you’s in Italian and shook hands.

“He’s a writer from Hollywood. He’s doing a story on Frankie Sinatra.”

“Oh yeah?” George asked, matter of fact.

“Yes, Mr. Parella,” Mario replied, “I’m under contract at Paramount to write

television comedy pilots. Problem is, I'm not funny. Before they got around to firing me, I pitched them on a story about Frank Sinatra."

"Oh yeahhh..." George replied, his voice tapering off into his trademark sigh. Mario took a sip of his coffee as an excuse not to say anymore.

"Tell him the title of it," Joey said, smirking devilishly.

"It's a working title, which means it's not final, but -- "

"I know what working title means," George said, cutting him off.

Mario cleared his throat and finished his thought, "The Godfather."

"Hm," George replied, thinking nothing of it. "I'll look for it."

Chapter 17

“You talked to dad about my future?”

“Yes, he has plans for you, if you’ll just be patient.” “My future? I got my own plans.”

Joe Parella looked at this scene from his life, and a flash from his memory of being in a movie theater watching *The Godfather Part II*.

“So they really did get this from my life,” Joe said.

“Mario prayed to me often that he wouldn’t got caught or killed for his work. He stole your story.”

Joe was dumbfounded by this, and on the wall, he saw what happened, as if it were captured on film.

In a moment just after taking his physical, awaiting his date for Basic Training, Joe saw himself driving his car through a light New Jersey snow fall in late November.

“God, if you’re there, if you’re listening, please talk to me.”

Jesus looked at Joe in such a way that realized the Lord had inspired the radio station general manager and program director to integrate some Church hymns, considering the nation’s nuclear crisis in Cuba, and in prelude to Christmas approaching.

So, listening to a mainstream station that would have normally played The Lion Sleeps Tonight, Duke of Earl and The Twist, the DJ seemed to answer Joe’s prayer by playing, “Ave Maria”, followed by “How Great Thou Art”.

“So you *were* listening,” Joe replied. Jesus chuckled, “I hear *everything*.”

Chapter 18

1966

Long Island, New York.

In August of 1966, June Ellen Slade had graduated from high school in Bellmore, New York, on the heels of an ultimatum by her father: college or car. She would not get both.

The U.S. Army had been conducting a variety of secretive exercises at a nearby base called Nike, (not associated with the shoe company), where Joe was stationed.

To save costs on boarding soldiers, the Army advertised the need for families willing to host one or more soldiers during the holidays. The mother of one of June's mother's friends responded, opening their home to two soldiers. After spending some

time with these young men, it was suggested that June and her friends take holiday food and music to the base's community room, in the spirit of the

USO, where the soldiers and young ladies could blow some steam.

June and her friend packed food, drinks and their music collection and brought them to the base where they saw Joe for the first time. June looked like Nancy Sinatra and her friend resembled Carol Burnett. Joe looked like a Shark from *West Side Story*.

Though Joe was known to be the base's gate guard who let no man pass without proper identification, having chewed out a few higher ranking officers who had attempted to bend the rules, he found the two attractive young ladies with food and music were on the guest list and ushered them in. Joe and June saw each other for the first time, but the moment passed without incident.

A few hours later, June and her friend Jill had fed some soldiers and were teaching them the latest dances. The 60's television was filled with woman dancing in cages to pop music, and they looked every bit the part as they swung their arms up and down like The Supremes.

As music filled the room of an otherwise cold and empty place, the soldiers were grateful for this visit from a local quasi USO tag team. About fifteen soldiers were enjoying food and music when Joe walked in, wearing his heavy Army boots. As he entered, all the soldiers shouted in greeting, "Eeeehy, Joe Patrelli!"

The first person Joe saw when he entered the room was June. His jaw dropped and under his breath muttered, "Oh my Gawd." A beat later, June had turned to see Joe and uttered the same thing. Though Joe had no rhythm whatsoever, complicated by dance-impairing Army boots, he learned the Mashed Potato

and other dances, while munching and joking with his fellow soldiers.

At one point, June turned to look for Joe in the room and saw Jill had grabbed Joe and engaged in a lip-lock. She was instantly jealous, but couldn't discern why. Before Joe left, he turned to June, who was standing next to Jill, and asked, "Can I have your phone number?" Jill gave her phone number to him, whereas Joe wanted June's.

After the soldiers had left, the girls packed up. June breached the kiss with Jill. "Why did you kiss him?" June asked her.

"I don't know," Jill responded, not aware that she had offended June. "Did you like him?"

"Yeah. That bothered me."

Chapter 19

October 1966

A few weeks later, the two girls were enjoying post-graduation time parked outside a burger restaurant near the base. As they munched on food, Joe exited carrying the bags of food his fellow soldiers had ordered. He immediately saw June and stopped. “June!”

“Yeah?” she asked.

“Do you remember me? Joe.” The two girls asked each other what his name was, under their breath. Joe Patrolle? Bologna?”

“Yeah. You said you were gonna call me,” June said.

“I lost your number. Really.” Though June toyed with him for the rest of their marriage

about that, she had already learned that Jill had misunderstood Joe's request and had given him the wrong phone number, whether he lost it or not. June seized the opportunity. Joe declared, "My name isn't Joe Patrolli. It's Joe Parella."

"Well, hop in," she said, inviting Joe to get into the back seat of her convertible. Months earlier, her father made her an offer: a car and get a job or college. She was job hunting, kind of. The National Organization of Women had just been founded, but its political influence had not yet reached her Bellmore, New York community.

After a brief engagement to Joe, his father, a local earner connected to the Bonannos, would call his local bank and *suggest* they hire June for the summer as she 'rented' a room from their family. Fate had climbed into the back seat and would take June west.

Joe sat in the back, nervous but hungry and chatted with his future wife. June was unaware of Joe's lineage to the real life mafia, downplayed and openly denied by his father and brother. She was unaware of his ancestry of Christian missionaries, or his own natural desire to serve the poor. He had traded undergraduate status at Fairleigh Dickinson and a part time job working for his father for his place in the Army, a twenty-one year old man determined to see the western frontier before it was gone, again.

The two dated during November, 1966, and by Thanksgiving, they were in love.

Though June was seeing another young man in late October, 1966, she walked in on him in bed with another girl, a classmate just a few months before. By coincidence, the Nancy Sinatra song, *These Boots Are Made For Walking*, happened to be playing when

she walked in, practically choreographing what happened next.

She calmly saw them in bed, said hello to her friend, took her record player and walked out.

On their second date, June opened her mail as Joe waited to see how the evening would play out and she read an apology card sent by her now former-boyfriend. She noticed the pain on his face as she read the card. She threw it away and they enjoyed dinner and *Dr. Zhivago* together.

Eating after the movie, the two found a burger restaurant and ate. During their meal, June, ever conscious about manners and etiquette, accidentally let out a belch that would have won contests.

She pardoned herself, but was both surprised and relieved at Joe's reaction. "I am so relieved you did that." He lifted his leg to let

out gas that he had been holding all evening. The sounds of love had begun.

When Joe returned home to his farm that winter, he told his family that he had met someone. Perhaps it was the tone in his voice, or the timing in his life. His parents sensed this was his future wife and treated her as such. June and Joe had dates at the Army barracks where they fornicated. Joe mentioned this to his father and brother, who treated it with honor and chauvinistic chuckles.

The wall froze. Joe froze.

Jesus wasn't laughing. "Your testimony to your children made them believe that what you did was okay," Jesus said.

Joe began to realize how his selfish decision to have sex before marriage, and then brag about it, traumatically affecting his children.

Every unhealthy relationship they would ever have could be traced to this. Joe felt the Holy Spirit speaking to his heart. “God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” Joe came face to face with a sin he committed that no man could confront him on, nor judge him about, except Jesus. He sat in the presence of the only One who has the Authority to judge and was being asked to account for his heart during that moment.

Joe was speechless. The Lord asked him why he chose to fornicate, though He knew the answer. Joe replied, “We had decided to get married.”

The Spirit replied, “But you were not yet. What if you had not?” Before Joe could put another thought together, the Spirit reminded him of his first girlfriend, and their sexual relationship.

“As a dog returns to his vomit, a fool repeats his folly.” Joe nodded. He could not argue

against or defend this. He was wrong. He felt something he had not felt here yet. God was disciplining him by showing him the truth and making him answer for it.

Joe stared at the wall for a long time. He wondered if he would somehow be thrown into hell, or if some other punishment awaited him.

“I am waiting for you to acknowledge what you did,” Jesus said. “You always had a hard time admitting it when you were wrong. You committed adultery when you knew the difference between right and wrong. This one of the many reasons I blessed you with cancer. I guard My Name. To set an example of holy living, adultery of the heart is not acceptable. And, I protected you from life threatening diseases.”

The wall showed the week of his death, when the woman who had filed a sexual harassment charge against Joe tried to visit

him quietly, weary of June. She faced June, expecting a confrontation, instead the woman received a warm hug from June, and then walked out of their lives forever. Over time, June would visit Joe's grave and find fresh flowers laid there, presumably from the woman.

“Had you been faithful to Me,” Jesus said, “I would have added to you offspring and your provision. Wisdom would have saved you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead.

None who go to her return or attain the paths of life. But you sought the ways of this world in regards to your marriage. You took what was in front of you, because you could, not considering whether you should, as if there might be no more, and laughed as

scoffers do as if you had gotten away with something. I am all- knowing.”

Joe looked inside his own heart for the first time and realized, for the first time, he had sinned against God. The more he embraced that fact, the more he felt God’s power of forgiveness come over him. He expected condemnation, but only felt mercy.

“Good job,” Jesus said.

Darn, Joe thought. He realized he missed out on some blessings on Earth by refusing to be repentant toward God. More children? More wealth?

“Your unforgiveness, and your pride cost you your the rest of the days of life. You couldn’t let go of your personal glory on the police department. Even if you had made Chief, it would not have been enough. Your kids learned this from you. Jacquie cannot forgive those who criticized her metabolism. Jeni is as weak in the art of applying

correction as you were, and your son, your son has fallen in love with the spirit of Hollywood and the control the kingdom of darkness has over it. I care deeply about how your actions effect my other kids,” Jesus told him, “and that is why I took you Home. In time, I will send your children proper teachers who obey My commands and keep My Word. And they will teach your children with respect to My commands, not those invented by men, not those taught by the circle you surrounded yourself with.”

The wall flickered to a meeting of men at Saint Francis De Sales Catholic Church, in Tucson, 1979.

Chapter 20

1979

For a moment, Joe was fascinated at seeing himself, dressed in a suit, entering a row of the Catholic church near the front with his family. On the east coast, the wealthier the family, the more respected they were, the closest to the front of the church they sat. On the west coast, people cared a little less. Joe loved sitting in the second or third row.

They were dressed up, and were respected among the congregation.

In a flash, Jesus showed him most of those people in hell including the priests and nuns who staffed the church.

Joe's eyes became panicked as the images filled them. People he knew and loved were

in eternal agony. Most were those he had observed during his life whose actions were the epitome of evil, who attended churches and boasted of being derived from a form of godliness but denied its power. (2 Timothy 3:5).

Joe's decision to stop attending a protestant Lutheran church where the Parella clan had attended for decades and regularly attend a Catholic church was influenced by his new mother in law Carol. She had found refuge from the idleness and low self esteem that came from being a Depression-era housewife, which included alcoholism, and found purpose among the works-based Catholics.

Chapter 21

Joe was repulsed by his nieces and sister in law, and wondered how God's grace extended to them. The teaching of the pastors of that church was weak. The Catholic priests had answers during a time when Joe had questions. Why did God permit darkness? Ephesians 2:8-9, which said, *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast*, was hard for Joe to comprehend, much less how his immediate family somehow qualified. He saw greedy, profanity-spewing adulterers, not people who loved God among those he called family. He was embarrassed by them and longed to get away.

He had felt the presence of God while sitting in a Catholic church, whereas his new bride did not, but sat alongside him dutifully.

Even most of those he served as a deacon alongside burned. His mind suddenly registered what the Lord meant when He said through Isaiah, *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.* (Isaiah: 64:6).

Joe slumped in the Throne, exhausted by the sight of the burning souls. He wanted to cry, but tears did not flow.

Jesus had much more to show him.

Chapter 22

August 24, 1979

His son was anticipating his birthday party, but his classmates of the first-grade of Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School whom he had given written invitations to during school seemed to be elsewhere.

As the time for the party drew nearer, Joe got on the phone to the soccer team he had coached earlier that year and invited every player. Within two hours, the house was filled with six-year old boys and girls and pop music that had been wired to play in the house and outside, throughout the back yard where an in-ground pool highlighted a dirt yard and a few growing plants. Only two of his school mates showed up. When asked

the following Monday where they were, most responses were less than cordial.

“You saved the day,” Jesus said. Joe’s eyes lit up, receiving a compliment from Christ. Jesus sped up the images, showing Joe at work as a policeman.

As Joe watched his life on these walls, he had a thought. “Was this really the end?”

Jesus replied, “No. In a few days I will be returning to Earth to judge the living and the dead, and you will be with Me. You will be among those who reign with Me for a thousand years. But I want you to stay here for now and learn.”

Learn what? Joe thought.

“To think like Me,” the Lord responded. Joe saw the moment in time that was considered his most humbling appear on the walls.

“We’ve got a thousand years of rule before us, when you and I, and others will rule

Zion. It's still being built. I'm customizing it for each person who receives Me between now and then."

Humility has been described as "agreement with God". God hates the proud. Joe had a lot of pride that he was being judged for.

The wall showed Joe when he was in his late 20s, and just had a sexual affair with a woman in his own home.

June was seriously considering leaving him over this, among other acts of selfishness, taking their three kids with her to start their lives over again in Wisconsin.

Her father was an executive of a shoe company, and her mother had been a part time Catholic school teacher for decades.

The propaganda of what married life would be like for them that had been shoved down the throats of the women who went through high school in Bellmore, New York from

before 1962, through 1966, and beyond, and had been impacted by the change in perceptions of the martial roles of the early 1970s.

Families could no longer afford to remain as Television had portrayed them during its inception. Though the 1920s saw the largest wave of female college graduates in U.S. history, two world wars had required women to accept politically subordinate roles, with a few exceptions. Now, the nation really needed its women to be as educated as men, if not more, minus the pompous attitudes and authority-lording portrayed by characters like Archie Bunker.

The country had gone into a depression and June had not yet made a heartfelt decision to completely commit herself to her marriage, as described by the Bible. Since divorce had gone from unthinkable to a popular choice within the last decade, if they got a divorce, no one would notice. Sure, there were

friends who might gossip, but considering the stress of day-to-day life in Tucson, having a break from being an Irish-Catholic girl married to an Italian man, living in a predominantly Spanish city was exactly what she needed.

She took a vacation and made it clear she might not return. While spending time with her mother Carol, she vented all the things Joe did, from exhaustive camping trips that seemed to follow a script of things to be said and done, that only existed in his subconscious, to overspending in regards to newfound hobbies ranging from amateur carpentry to landscaping to his fascination with the old West. Joe had ridden a bronco in the police rodeo and fallen unconscious, which he didn't confess to her about for a month. Her mother played both sides of her daughter's emotions, "We never really liked Joe. We'll introduce you to the executive type," Carol said, daring her daughter to

make a decision about her marriage. *No man is perfect. You entered into the covenant of marriage, not a dating service. Divorce him or go back and make it work. Either way, you're not little Junie anymore. You have three kids. Go live your life.*

June did add that after recovering from the illness she incurred when Tucson Medical Center doctors flubbed her final baby delivery, Joe had managed to add on to their house by enclosing half of their backyard as a new dining room, augmenting their home value by about one-third.

The toughest sins to digest included the liberties Joe took with women, as his uniform sent a less than subtle message to female coworkers and female civilians alike: steady income, reasonably attractive man, sexy New York accent. June had a choice. She either let him do as he pleased in their bedroom as often as he liked, or lose this battle every time he left for work.

Joe boasted of his adoration of his wife, but that was only all-the- more appealing to the sirens who heard him. Given the nature of his undercover work, he was constantly subjected to opportunities of adultery.

At one point, he found himself on a sting that rendered him almost unconscious, and a prostitute took advantage of him. He awoke in an ambulance, not realizing that his suspects had tried to kill him. Tests concluded he had acquired a sex disease, and both he and June had to get shots.

It wasn't the only incident, but it forced him to sit in front of his locker, as the guys in his squad, Francis Karn, Jim Gerrettie, and Henry Leyva, would all prepare themselves to go out after the shift and party together. *Would he go along or go home to his family?*

Early in his career, it was a hard choice to make. He loved the camaraderie, something he didn't have back in New Jersey, except

when working with the man who recruited him from the New Providence Police Department to Tucson years before, Bob Gilmartin. A tall cop at 6' 3", Bob helped break Joe into the job by teaching him the fundamentals.

During one of his first calls, Joe was given conflicting orders and was reprimanded for not doing the right thing. Bob taught him, "No matter what happened, you obey the most recent direct order issued by your commanding officer." Reinforced by Matthew 8:5-13, whereby Joe finally understood how God's authority worked and his role as a cop under that authority, his concept of police work became clear.

The New Providence Police Department was a small houses divided by a few guys who manipulated the overweight, out of shape chief, and the cops who were authentic cops. Joe struggled with corruption as it stared him in the face, and found the Tucson Police

Department to be a fairly well run one. Bob had already served in Tucson after meeting his wife there, so when Joe transferred to TPD, had been embraced by his coworkers almost instantly.

But was the camaraderie worth his marriage? He had two girls who were old enough to read and a son who was learning fast.

Was this the kind of father he wanted for his kids? His own father was more of a reluctant care-giver who did not do anything with him.

Over time, Joe would learn that George Sr. wanted to do more, wanted to be with him more, wanted to love him more, but a bone disease prevented him from moving as fast as he thought and unspoken tension between him and Joe's mother Jenny over the biological conception of Joe always seemed

to get in the way. Make no mistake, George loved his son.

Choosing to go home, Joe watched the other cops go their separate ways, and on some occasions, he invited them all over to his house to enjoy themselves; he just had a pool installed and had wired the outside patio area with a stereo system, so it was, at least for those with kids, fun and safe.

Cops families spent a lot of time socializing with each other, such that anyone in uniform became instant family, not unlike the organized crime families Joe descended from. When news of this reached George Sr., and his son George Jr., both were relieved, thrilled and envious. New Jersey was dying. Sure, the paving business was steady when the phones were properly managed. But the Donnie Brasco case had reduced the family's reach and power to the point where most of the earners went their

separate ways, given the limited manpower to enforce paying dues.

Meanwhile, Joe had indeed found the frontier and his small ranch, so to speak, was doing well.

Chapter 23

1981

After June spent a third week on her extended vacation in Wisconsin, in the spring of 1981, Joe gathered his children around himself as he sat in their family room, perched on the large footstool of a black leather easy chair. To the children, the furniture had developed personalities. This was dad's chair, dad's throne.

The king was very sad, on the verge of crying. This was the first time the kids heard their father weep.

Joe did not admit his adultery directly, but said he “and mom were going through a difficult time,” and he, “was going to be nicer to mom. I love you guys. I don't want to lose my family.” On those words, he wept, embraced by his kids, the older

daughters, the youngest son. The eldest daughter had walked in on Joe and the woman while they were in the master bedroom, just a few weeks before.

“Why did you repent?” Christ asked Joe.

Joe had to think about it. “I wanted to keep what I had more than I wanted to lose it.”

“But why?”

Joe could feel his heart being examined by the eyes of God, and though all men’s hearts are examined by God during every moment of every their lives on Earth, there was always the sense that maybe God had turned His eyes away from us during those moment in which we were actively engaging in sin. Here and now, that is not the case.

“Why?” the Lord asked.

Joe understood the question, and realized that the Lord knew the answer before He asked it. Joe could not ignore Him.

At first Joe thought he lacked the words to describe how he felt. He then felt a flood of diction enter his mind that had not been there

before. He had all the tools to talk to God, as if empowered in the Truth by the author of the Word. He now had to choose to use them.

“I was conceited in my actions, believing I was entitled to have affairs because everyone else was doing it. I now realize that I am not being judged by men, but by God. I’m sorry. Please forgive me, Father.” Joe was stunned that these words came from his mouth. They were from his heart, but he hadn’t been able to speak like that during his time on Earth.

As if waiting for Joe to speak more, Jesus did not respond.

“Pride. Ego. I had given myself permission to say yes to sin.” Joe couldn’t believe those

words came from his own mouth either, but realized he meant them as well. A part of him struggled to discern the difference between the pride he was confessing and the righteousness he was feeling as a result of surrendering that pride. *Was it okay to be proud of no longer being proud, as in, the absence of boasting?*

Jesus then motioned for him to look back at the wall. It was his honeymoon and first months of marriage.

Joe watched in awe as he saw all the places where Christ was walking with them. Their humor was crude, their actions were reckless. But He remained faithful to them. Their first year of marriage was rocky. Both thought of leaving several times. In 1968, June became pregnant with their first child, a girl, Jacqueline Leigh. She would be known as Jacquie.

Though Joe had started a tree trimming business and worked part time for the New Providence Police Department, he was restless for the west he had grown up seeing on television. It didn't help that one of the chief's nephews was a manipulative backstabber whose alcoholism and drug addiction would eventually drive him to suicide; he created such a hostile work environment that the idea of transferring to Tucson where Bob Gilmartin's wife was from, became appealing, a way out of the mess this department was in.

Over time, the seeds sown by the corrupt cops in New Providence would inspire a film, *Copland*.

For now, all Joe and his comrades wanted to do was find a place to work that paid them adequately and raise their families in peace. Joe and Bob worked pumping gas and made deliveries for a drug store side by side until the opportunity to move west presented

itself. And when Joe did transition west, he stayed with Bob's family as he did ride-alongs, scouting the area in 1967.

Upon return to New Jersey, he took a a large water jug which he bought from a Tucson pottery store and wrote on it, "Arizona or Bust. God joined us west." He put spare change in it, which he used five years later as gas money for the cross-country trip.

Meanwhile, Joe's father and brother had successfully distanced their family from the mafia, to the dismay of their wives who had enjoyed the benefits for a time. A conversation happened one night over dinner among the men, as June nursed their baby girl.

George Sr., and George Jr., had called Joe into a meeting to discuss his future. A few years later, Joe would be amazed to see this scene play out in movie theaters in *The Godfather*, as James Caan

said identical words to Al Pacino at the film's end. Michael's surprise enlisting in the Army, his resistance to take over the family business, it was all too familiar to Joe. "This is just like my life," he uttered, as the film's credits appeared.

He had no idea how close to home the film was.

Chapter 24

1974

Tucson.

In a packed movie theater, Joe and June sat and watched a film.

“You talked to dad about my future?”

“Yes, he has plans for you, if you’ll just be patient.” “My future? I got my own plans.”

Joe Parella looked at this scene from his life, and a flash from his memory of being in a movie theater watching *The Godfather Part II*.

“So they really did get this from my life,” Joe said.

“Mario prayed to me often that he wouldn’t got caught or killed for his work. He stole your story.”

Joe was dumbfounded by this, and on the wall, he saw what happened, as if it were captured on film.

Chapter 25

1962

Mario Puzo was trying to make good on his contract with Paramount television, when he realized he and the other comedy writers didn't share the same thought pattern. His writing style was remarkable, but it wasn't the kind of funny that television audiences were used to. He asked the head of the network for permission to tap some of his childhood connections and write a novel about the mafia connections to Frank Sinatra. They agreed. He would travel to New York at his own expense, and if they liked the story, they agreed to buy it.

George Parella sat in a chair across from an elegant desk where Joe Bonanno sat. Another man, who sat and did a crossword

puzzle and sipped coffee, listened to the men talk.

George was concerned. “My oldest son, Georgie, learned where the money was dropped and got to it first. He brought it to me and told me what Joey did.”

“Where’s Joey at now?” Joe asked, concerned.

“Little son of a gun joined the Army,” George replied, his astonishment only equalled by his irritation.

Before Joey could speak, George added, “I’m sorry for what he did. I know you were expecting a return. If you need to me to do anything to make up for it, let me know.”

Joey waved his hand casually, “Don’t worry about it. He joined the Army. You know what? Good for him. It’ll be good for him.”

George took a very deep sigh of relief. “Kids...” George kept glancing at Mario.

“Want a drink?” Joey offered. George nodded.

“Sure.”

“Bring me a drink,” Joey yelled, an order that was followed by a young man walking through the door wearing a suit, holding a drink, as if it had been prepared and waiting to be served.

George took it and tilted his glass to his mouth. “I bet you’re wondering who this is,” Joey said, motioning to Mario.

“Mario Puzo, George Parella,” Joey said. The two men exchanged nice-to-meet-you’s in Italian and shook hands.

“He’s a writer from Hollywood. He’s doing a story on Frankie Sinatra.”

“Oh yeah?” George asked, matter of fact.

“Yes, Mr. Parella,” Mario replied, “I’m under contract at Paramount to write

television comedy pilots. Problem is, I'm not funny. Before they got around to firing me, I pitched them on a story about Frank Sinatra."

"Oh yeahhh..." George replied, his voice tapering off into his trademark sigh. Mario took a sip of his coffee as an excuse not to say anymore.

"Tell him the title of it," Joey said, smirking devilishly.

"It's a working title, which means it's not final, but -- "

"I know what working title means," George said, cutting him off.

Mario cleared his throat and finished his thought, "The Godfather."

"Hm," George replied, thinking nothing of it. "I'll look for it."

Chapter 26

Joe was in his early 20's and was eager to leave New Jersey. He had decided in his mind that he would spend his life anywhere west of the Mississippi River and had been praying regularly for God to guide him west.

He had previously been told by his father that his request for a personal loan to finance a home and business endeavors would not be granted.

His father and older brother by 14 years, tried to explain to him how to establish wealth slowly. They didn't articulate the issues of taxes, investments, and the ever-changing economy, (President Nixon had just taken the U.S. Dollar off the Gold Standard), but simply told him to be patient and wait. Given the ambiance he grew up under, he didn't feel that he could wait any longer. "*Wait, Wait for What?*" George

Bailey railed on Christmas Eve television, as *It's A Wonderful Life* aired on CBS.

Joe refused. As far as he was concerned, he was an adult serving his country and did not need to wait for anyone. He felt his father's refusal to finance his endeavors was in the same manner that a father could bar children from eating dessert after dinner. Other wounds gave Joe reasons to think the worst of his father.

During grade school, he showed that he had the talent to draw cartoons and commercial logos. George Sr. asked a neighbor if there was any money in it, which was more of a query, should I devote any time to developing this in my son?

The neighbor, knowledgeable in the field, remarked that at first, no, but with some education, absolutely.

It wasn't that George didn't know who Walt Disney was, it was that he knew the

financial needs of the family. The 1970s were shaping up to be a decade of war and consolidation among the families, and his own bar businesses were ending. He was eyeing a paving business, with the government contracts to build the national highway system expanding, and he saw great potential in doing patch work. No matter how many men any given contractor hired, there was just too much work to be done, which presented opportunity for him. They wouldn't go bankrupt. They wouldn't starve.

Joe saw George sneer at the lack of instant monetary gratification, not realizing that George didn't dismiss it all together, given the bigger picture in mind. Yes, had Joe worked the family business and gone to school in New Jersey, he could have received an engineering degree, or the like, but the teenage Joe did not see the bigger picture.

So, for the moment, Joe's brief hopes of becoming a graphic artist or animator were dashed. During high school, Joe had become an accomplished wrestler, in addition to a solid baseball player and feared football defensive back.

He pleaded for his father to attend his wrestling matches, but George Sr., did not. The toll the paving business was taking, and the demands of making sure the bar businesses satisfied the quotas they were expected to meet monopolized his time. The women in his life, his wife Jenny and his son's wife, Shirley, seemed terminally unhappy.

Shirley gave birth to four daughters, and no sons, and tried to self-medicate her insecurities by gambling, alcoholism, narcotics and adultery. George Jr. was like a rock, taking what he heard preached from the Lutheran church pulpit seriously, taking the reigns of the family business when his

father was physically incapable of doing it, given the mercilessness of his bone disease.

Meanwhile, the Parellas tried to enjoy the days together, watching Green Bay play the New York Giants on TV, followed by *Bonanza*, and during September of 1961, they cheered on Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle as the two men challenged Babe Ruth's home run record.

Joe had admired Vince Lombardi, and to the gritted teeth of his brother and father, he cheered on the Packers as they upset the Giants over and over again.

During Joe's senior year, he managed to reach the semi finals of his high school's wrestling state championship. After enough neighbors asked George Sr. about the upcoming matches, offering good luck to his son for competing in them, George relented and attended one match.

Joe always presumed that George was a reluctant father,

embarrassed by or disinterested in his son.

This was not the case at all, George was insecure about his own disconnect with pop culture, meeting income quotas for the Family, and his increasingly debilitating bone disease. He was old twenty years before his time and could barely move.

Though he had always planned to play catch with his sons, he physically couldn't anymore and it embarrassed him.

It hurt him all the more to know that his wife had deeper needs that he couldn't meet, and they led to her affair. Was his son as handsome and gifted in so many ways because his brother was more of a man?

As the two boys wrestled, these thoughts went through his mind, as he willed his son to win.

George had been pulled aside by the pastor of their church recently and confronted about his mob ties. The two men seemed to have some privacy just outside the church's main entrance as most people exited to their cars. George's family loitered in the lobby, talking to friends.

“George, we both know who you work for, but, do you do know God doesn't respect ties to the mob for Salvation, right?”

George nodded. “I know.”

“You wanna go to Heaven?”

George nodded, with tears building in his eyes.

“Do you acknowledge your sins and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?”

George nodded and shed a tear. The two men both looked up to make sure no one else was looking.

“Just you, me and God, George. This is important,” the pastor said.

“Yes, I do,” George said. “I love my family,” he added, leaning slightly into the pastor, who hugged him.

“If you mean it George, in your heart, then you’re saved.”

George nodded, wiping the tears from his eyes and straightening up.

George prayed for his son to win what appeared to be a critical moment in the match, whereby the two wrestlers were in position to execute a throw, depending on their footing.

Joe gave all he had but slipped on a sweaty party of the mat, lost his balance, and lost the match. George did not know how to articulate words of support for his son, and tried to use humor. His words came off as critical instead of humorous.

Joe also played short-stop in little league and high school. He couldn't hit very well, but his fielding, speed and precise throwing arm made him a defensive anchor. A wild pitcher struck him in the nose with a wild pitch during a crucial game, forcing him to stop playing, marked by another rare appearance by his father at one of his games.

“The heart of this man is why I sent you to Tucson,” Christ said, referring to a Catholic bishop in Gallup, New Mexico.

After getting married, Joe had written many letters to potential employers, including one to the Catholic bishop of a Mission in Gallup, New Mexico. Joe was aware of his ancestry, Italian missionaries from Parella, Italy, who had trekked to Oklahoma in the 1830s where they brought the gospel and intermarried with the Choctaw Nation until the 1860s. Joe heard of the poverty at the missions and wanted to serve there. His

letter was not well received by the bishop, and he decided to explore other options.

He and June had a second baby girl. They lived in a cramped two-bedroom apartment in New Jersey, and saw their families regularly, a little too regularly.

Shirley, Joe's sister in law, and Joe's sister Charlotte and his mother all sat around and complained about life. George's daughters all adored the all-girl band The Runaways, and unfortunately, this meant a constant battle with rebelliousness and revealing fashion.

Since Shirley was constantly drinking and smoking, the girls engaged in drugs and drinking early in their lives as well. This led to horrific parenting problems, which George Jr. could not master, no matter how much money or beatings he unleashed on his kids.

The choice of business George Sr. had switched to turned out to be a brilliant one,

and Parella Paving became a major presence on the east coast. An unexpected result was that the constant cash flow robbed George's family from having to learn about accountability. George's daughters never looked at price tags. They just demanded more money from their parents. If they didn't get it, they threw tantrums.

Joe did not want to have the same problems when he raised his own kids. He vowed to make sure that they would have a better understanding of money and its use as a tool, not an excuse to spend without consequence.

After having served for two years on the Providence Police Department, and with a military background, Joe found several academies that he qualified for, including Tucson. He sent out a dozen letters and decided to put his faith of the destination into the U.S. mail. The first yes gets him.

Chapter 27

1989

Joe sat in his bathroom and tried to read Greg Hansen's column. His stomach ached. His joints were stiff. He felt flu-like symptoms. He flipped the pages over in disgust, *more negative from Hansen. What is this guy's problem?* he thought to himself.

Can't they get somebody who actually likes the Wildcats to write about them?

The pings of pain persisted and were getting worse. Was his ulcer flaring up again?

Lute Olson's contract had been renewed, but not without a fight.

Star artist David Fitzsimmons had drawn a cartoon that struck a cord of tastelessness in Joe's mouth. It showed a man looking at a

headstone statue of Lute asking, “Is this how much you have to pay for a living god?”

Later that afternoon, Joe sat in a doctor’s office with his gown on.

His doctor stood across from him and said, “You need to get out of this line of work or you are going to die. The stress is killing you.”

It was about to get worse. The greatest threat to a cop is not the habitual threats from people, but the stress within that erodes their bodies. Joe was about to increase dramatically. It’s one thing to investigate crimes committed by strangers. But when something happens in your own home, to your family, it’s enough to push most people to their limits.

At home, Joe walked in to disturbing news. His son had been accused of inappropriate behavior with one of the Elrey boys, who was still in diapers.

Exodus 20:16 says, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

Sam Elrey only served on TPD for a few years, but during that time he met the widow of an Air Force pilot who had turned to the Mormon Church for financial support after learning of her husband’s death. She had two kids and a bitter battle with various mental health issues. They resided in the same Eastside neighborhood.

June and her daughter Jacquie had tried to reach out to her during the year following the death of her first husband, and Jacquie continued to babysit for them after she abruptly remarried, Officer Sam.

Their house was always a mess. They had three small children, but had no pets and open diapers with petrified human feces littered the floors of the entire home. Visitors often thought they were either in the process of moving or had recently been robbed.

In the early 80s, they moved away and rented the house out. Most of their tenants kept the house orderly, until the last family with two destructive little boys who managed to destroy the house even more than the Elreys had, an achievement in its own right.

Still, the Parellas managed to maintain civil relations with them, hosting them at pool parties and babysitting their kids. Elaine was the unofficial neighborhood gossip.

Since their husbands worked on the police force together, June and Margaret Kennedy were the best of friends. Both had kids about the same age, and both had similar interests.

Around 1980, Margaret's husband died suddenly leaving her with three children to raise. And whenever Margaret Kennedy came over to the house when June wasn't home and Joe was (typically to return cookware), Elaine made a phone call. *June*,

a woman was over at the house with your husband. The view of the neighborhood through her kitchen window was a gossip's paradise.

Apparently one day, while the flock of Elreys were swimming in the Parella's pool, presumably under the supervision of Joe's teenage daughters, Joe's son had been in his bedroom doing some sound mixing on his stereo, trying to use the clunky old dual tape deck the way iTunes and iMovie would eventually be used 15 years later.

One of the Elrey boys who was still in diapers waddled his way through the house, his older sister distracted from watching him.

He seemed fascinated by Joe's son, who was at 15-years old, a nice 'cool' guy, versus the violent teenagers who had moved away from East Watson Drive the year before.

Joe's son showed him how the tape deck operated and one of the toddler's older sisters appeared in the hallway, and led him away for a diaper change. All smiles, a seemingly harmless moment.

Shortly after that, Elaine was changing her son's diaper when he told her than "someone" said one day his private part would "grow like a flower."

Elaine was shocked and asked him who told him that. He was pensive and based on the scary face she made, he became afraid to tell her anything. The three-year old tried to think of any name that might help him make his mom not mad at him...

"Co-wee," he muttered.

Elaine immediately called June, and when Sam got home, informed him of what she had learned.

When Joe heard this he was troubled. “Cory doesn’t talk like that. He has never used those words. He wouldn’t.”

June agreed that it didn’t fit, but, the dutiful cop had been on the task force that had tracked down and shot Brian Larriva, known better as the Prime Time Rapist in 1986, and their family too was shocked that their son would commit those crimes.

Elaine demanded the police arrest Cory based on her son’s utterance.

Joe interrogated his son like he would any suspect. After about twenty minutes of this, he said, “You’re either a gifted liar, or you’re telling the truth.”

What happened next would change their lives forever.

Jacquie had been in France as a part of a student exchange program. They had just put a french teenager named Cedric Leroy

back on a plane after a six-month stay. The saga of his time in their home would make a good book of its own someday.

When Jacquie learned of the accusation, she heard of her brother's concerns that she would somehow side with the Elreys over him. She denied that vehemently, and when she came home to Tucson, she had less and less to do with Elaine Elrey.

Joe visited Sam at his office where he was now working as a chiropractor. Sam had a steady flow of clients due to his membership with the Mormon church. Once alone, Joe told him what he learned.

“It's possible my son is an incredibly gifted liar, but I don't think he is. Here's my suggestion. Let's take your son down to the hospital and have the police interview him properly.”

Special Victims Unit. They specialized in these matters.

Sam knew this would mean whatever truth he knew would be found out, and Joe's son would not be the scapegoat. If anyone had coached the Elrey boy to say Joe's son's name, these experts would sniff it out. His name didn't get uttered by the boy on accident. *Someone told him to say that*, Joe thought.

"No. We'll take care of it," Sam insisted.
"Tell Cory sorry," he said, his tone dead.

By the next morning, June called Elaine to inquire about how their kids were, and share what their husbands had discussed and asked her if her son had said anything else.

No. I have to go. Bye.

No charges were ever filed, but the damage had been done.

The Elreys did not come over to the house ever again except their eldest daughter, who visited briefly with June a few times. She

never openly confessed to having witnessed any sexual abuse, but considering the rage Elaine initially exhibited, and that neither she nor Sam ever brought it up again, all signs indicated a perpetrator who lived in the home.

By 2010, Sam left their home. There were no further accusations after he left. In one private talk between Jacquie and their eldest daughter, it was clear that unspeakably horrible things had occurred behind closed doors, but none of the kids had the courage to speak against their mother, and she had clearly demanded that they remain silent.

Joe looked at Jesus and asked, “What happens to them?”

“I cover the children and I destroy those who wound them. No one escapes My sword. No one. Look,” Jesus said, showing Joe all of those in hell whom he had known

were culprits of sexual assaults who had simultaneously denied Christ's grace.”

“Their sin is not that they wounded children, but that they denied My grace,” the Lord explained. “You had a hard time with that concept.”

Indeed Joe did. He would sit in church and try to ignore his disgust for the men who beat their wives and then showed up in church for the blessing of God.

“The priests called it the blessing. I use the word grace,” Jesus said. “Joe, My church is for the sinner to be cleansed. Where else would you have the sinners go to be cleansed?”

Joe sounded like he was arguing with Jesus, “But the way they did it, it was like their actions were being condoned.”

“That’s your point of view, Joe. I know their hearts. Some of them repented and some of

them didn't." Jesus glances at hell where many of those people are. Joe can't look for very long before wincing.

"I can assure you they are suffering, but know this, it's not for the crimes against man. Man's punishment of man doesn't have any value here. The only reason you are here, and they are not, is that you received Me into your heart and they did not."

"That's why you say, 'do not fear those who can kill the body...'"

Jesus nodded. "Joe, many of those kids went on to receive Me, as did many of those who raped and murdered children. Some of them elude justice on Earth, no one eludes Me."

Chapter 28

April, 1989

Denver, Colorado.

Lute faced the firing squad yet again, this time, after a buzzer- beating loss to UNLV. Greg Anthony was still sore about how the Wildcats had celebrated a win over the visiting Runnin' Rebels during the regular season at McKale Center, and after the game winning shot by Anderson Hunt, he didn't hide his feelings.

Lute was in such a daze about the final score, he didn't hear Greg curse at him.

“Hey Coach Olson! (expletive) you! And we'll beat you again next year!” In the commotion, Lute never heard the player's words; but plenty of other people did.

Jerry Tarkanian, whose UNLV team included boosters who were on the FBI's Rico Act watch list, was very sore at Lute for recruiting Tom Tolbert to Arizona.

Tolbert was all but registered and ready to play at UNLV less than 2 years before. Greg Anthony went on to a successful NBA career and became an anchor for CBS Sports' March Madness.

Greg Hansen was waiting in the press area, fielding nonstop harassment from other journalists, agents and coaches about his short-lived boasting about how deep Arizona would go through the 1989 Big Dance, as it was now known.

Lute wanted to go look at game tape and see just what happened that gave Anderson Hunt a wide-open look at the rim from behind the 3-point line with 2-seconds to go. Before he had a chance to really process what was being called a classic game (which only

added to the pain), he found himself having an out of body experience as he grabbed the chair perched behind the microphone, and prepared to be...civil.

The lights felt merciless.

How did he answer? What words could possibly console his team or the fans? They had spent the majority of the season ranked number 1, if not the top-10.

Did Tark really put a better team on the court? *Hell no*. And the last person in the world he wanted to deal with at that moment was the first one to ask the loudest question.

“Did you tell Damon Stoudemire to flop or did he do that on his own?” Greg Hansen asked. Other reporters in the room looked at Greg like he just asked a woman who just had a baby if she was still pregnant.

The fact was Lute’s system wasn’t designed to accommodate the Pac-10 Tournament,

and it had exhausted his team. Random thoughts crossed his mind so fast, and he tried to filter...Presidents had speech writers...

John Wooden never had to face a lot of the stuff he'd faced, and the media's demands were wearing thin.

If he ever did another car commercial...if only the boosters from 1985 had kept their word...

What if he had said yes to Kentucky? Or USC? or just stayed in Long Beach and turned that school into a major power, as Cal-State Fullerton had been, as Villanova and Gonzaga were becoming...

...he had even more recruits to visit right after this...how would this effect them?

It also didn't help that his players had hang overs from the last two years. ESPN had been so successful, the reality of players

leaving early for the NBA was now a factor every coach faced.

Bobbi stood just inside the side lip of the media curtain, and her hands squeezed it. *Just die*, she thought, with Hansen in mind.

Then came the question that almost transformed Bobbi into an eager member of the NRA. “Do you think a coach of your track record reflects the salary you’re being paid?”

As in, so, coach, you’re paid a lot now. Win or resign or give the money to me.

Shut up, Greg, Bobbi thought, almost loud enough for him to hear her.

She was suddenly nostalgic for Bobby Knight, who had proven to be a gentleman if he beat you and a nasty son of witch to you if he was beaten by you. *Knight over Hansen any day*, she thought, as she prayed for Lute to keep his cool.

He really struggled with stage fright, and finding the right words on the fly. Their first meeting and first date was a good indication of that. Though she found his fumbling charming, and eventually bore his children because of it, the media would not be as kind...

Apparently God heard her. Hansen's pager buzzed. Greg had to excuse himself before the question was answered. Lute did address it though.

"Greg, you asked me, and I'm gonna answer. But if you want me to respect your questions, you need to respect my effort to answer. Regarding my salary, that's inappropriate at this time. He hit the shot. No, I didn't order a player to flop. I wouldn't never order a player to flop or do anything like that. But it was a no-call. He got shoved by Anderson Hunt. Maybe that shouldn't been a charge and we'd have gotten a couple free throws. As far as my salary goes, you'll

have to take that up with the university. UNLV played a good game, two great teams...and that's all there is to it.”

Greg seethed for not only being, politely, asked to sit down and shut up, but Lute managed an answer that was respectable, despite the cheap shot he took from Hansen.

Meanwhile, back in Tucson, the boosters had heard that Kentucky had made Lute *another* offer and were preparing to replace him. His contract was up for renewal and the big question was, could Lute win it all? Or did he peak in 1988?

As he sat on the bed of his hotel room and watched one of the Final Four preview shows, Bobbi was getting out of the shower, drying her hair.

“What would you think of me taking the job at Kentucky?” he heard himself ask his wife. She clicked off the drier.

A newspaper bearing a mean-spirited cartoon sat on the bed, courtesy of the hotel.

It showed a statue of Lute's head being perched atop a museum- style display, with an observer asking, "Is this how much it costs for a living god?" Lute was hurt and insulted. The cartoon's scribe, David Fitzsimmons had almost single-handedly inspired Lute to accept Kentucky's offer.

"Really?" Bobbi almost asked. Before she could answer, the phone rang. It was Jim Click, Jr.

Tucson's historians at the *Arizona Daily Star*, neither its writers Carmen Duarte, nor Bruce Pascoe nor any of the other writers who would cover the Wildcats during that era would ever record the gravity of that phone call, whereby Jim Click heroically intervened in one of the most critical moments in Tucson's history.

Lute Olson was a single meeting away from accepting the offer to take over at Kentucky.

From his hotel room in Hawaii, Jim had heard that Lute was seriously considering their offer. He wondered why Lute would change his mind until he saw that morning's edition of the *Star*. *Dammit, Dave, that cartoon crossed a line...*

“Lute, it’s Jim.”

“Hi Jim...what can I do for you?” Lute responded.

“No, I think it’s what can we do to fix this. I heard you are taking Kentucky’s offer seriously.”

Lute vented to Jim, something he didn’t often do. Bobbi stood, holding the hair dryer and her breath; even the water in her hair waited a moment before evaporating, and she listened to Lute say what he’s been waiting to say for years.

Many broken promises by the University and its boosters, many hurtful comments by high-profile media figures, and yes so much more work to be done.

He had a long list of recruits yet to call this morning...would he recruit them for Arizona, or Kentucky? A kid named Chris Mills had already told him, *if you are still at Arizona next season, I'd love to come play for you.*

Jim's face stiffened and he said the words that need to be said the most.

"We'll do whatever it takes to fix this. Lute, I'm sorry. Let us fix this. We'll find a way to make it right. Please, don't go. Whatever they offer you we'll match it, and more. Let us make this right. Please."

A deal was later worked out by the car dealers, underwritten by Paul Weitman, to hire Lute to be their spokesperson for a few years, not because he was greedy. Though

writers like Greg Hansen tried to portray him to *Star* readership as some kind of quasi playboy, living it up at Arizona taxpayers expense, that was never the case.

Click and Weitman executed a masterful contract such that the contract the University had authorized would not be metttled with, and Lute could still receive the financial incentives, which included his home mortgage, and car being included, expenses that were otherwise balked at or breached by UA boosters who either couldn't or wouldn't honor their end of the deal.

Those car salesmen who made annoying TV commercials had saved Tucson from losing Lute Olson. Even if Kentucky didn't want him anymore, USC still did. And if USC didn't, Iowa would take him back in a heartbeat.

These men salvaged the damage done by overgrown children who were the wealthy of

Tucson, whose bragging rights at the Tack Room were nullified when Anderson Hunt hit a buzzer-beating 3- pointer, and they were not willing or were unable, give the Recession of 1990 that was upon them, to pay for the things offered to Lute years before.

Lute had every incentive to leave.

Paul Weitman wrote the check, George Kalil was the political lobbyist who kept his micro utterances in the ears of ESPN figureheads like Dick Vitale, and Jim Click was the figurehead who kept Lute from leaving.

By the time they finished pleading, Lute opted not to confront the newsroom at the *Star* again, but got on a plane and visited a few new recruits.

He did leave one standing order for UA administrator Rocky LaRose to enforce in his office while he was traveling, “Should anyone from the *Star* call or come by, tell

them no comment until I get back and I'm not reachable my phone."

"My pleasure, Coach," she replied into her phone, grinning back from her small office in McKale Center.

Lute hung up a pay phone at Tucson International Airport and headed to his plane, only to be encountered by a dozen kids wearing UA hats and shorts, asking for an autograph. He swiftly obliged, and made it to his plane.

Chapter 29

June 1989

Team 4 Precinct, off Tucson's West Prince Road.

Joe went to work feeling very good about himself. His son's favorite sports team, the Cubs, were winning, to the delight of his teenage son. His kids were all doing well, and morning sex with his wife was really great lately.

Little did he know, June was undergoing a bout with chemical depression, and his less than discreet flirting with the coeds on the UA campus and his own coworkers, was taking its toll. In the Bible, God states that He hates seven things, and a haughty spirit is among them.

His daughters were in college. His degree was putting him in solid position to become Detective or Sargent, a promotion that had eluded him for a decade. The fact was, he had done the job without question, and without formal promotion. Why should the city promote him?

His coworkers had used their ethnic backgrounds to coerce the department to promote them over Caucasian officers, and in time, they would regret it. A lobbyist group hired by the Gay and Lesbians had targeted Joe and other senior officers to mire their careers somehow. Their plan was to get Elaine Hedke appointed as the city's first woman police chief. They would succeed, but their success would have collateral damage that would cause irreversible harm to the city.

NonCaucasian officers who were promoted because of their skin color would discover that regret would not come from the

advantages afforded them by racism like brown-supremacy, but the realization that their expertise was not enough to meet the needs the city so desperately cried out for.

In short, they couldn't do the job as well as others who didn't fit the profiles needed to satisfy the quotas as originally intended by Affirmative Action. The political favor they received backfired miserably.

Most of Joe's closest coworkers went on to work at different agencies. A few would go on to work for the G.W. Bush Administration's creation, Homeland Security, and policies conceived and practiced by Joe would be adopted and made national policy over time.

Of course, Joe wasn't thinking about any of these things as he walked into the precinct, with his professional 18-speed racing bike guided by the bike's throat dangling in his hand, his goggles and sweating body

bulging through his biking pants. Spandex would debut in the next few months.

Female officers coming out the door saw Joe, and gushed, trying to hide their reactions as they passed by him walking the opposite way. Yes, at 40-something years old, he still had the physique of a Chippendale dancer.

Joe liked this attention more than he would admit. By the time he reached the mens locker room, he became aware that at least one female officer wasn't content to keep their relationship professional. She too enjoyed bicycling, but not as much as Joe did. Yet to gain access to what is inside his pants, she would have to ride with him.

She was in her 30s. She was as attractive. When she was in her 20s, she had struggled with a common law husband who suffered from alcoholism, and had one child of her own.

When she saw Joe, she felt excited to be alive again. She knew he was married, having just reached his own 20th anniversary, and she knew his wife was a very nice, attractive woman, but she also knew he wasn't satisfied. Opportunity.

At home. June watched *The Oprah Winfrey Show* as she sewed on her large electronic machine, set in the laundry room, hearing her kids come through the door, one at a time.

She was sewing a custom dress she wanted to wear because her body was not cooperating. The guests of the show caught June's ear. Doctors who were specialists in Tourette's Syndrome were on the show, and June paused to listen closely.

She had lived it with her youngest son. Over time, he would excel in the arts, pursue his childhood hero's profession of filmmaking, and work with famous people, but right now,

he was struggling to get through high school, as he had struggled through middle school. The experts on Oprah's show made comments that echoed her own experiences.

It didn't help that their neighbors on East Watson Drive were less than understanding, and his classmates were fiercely antagonistic. She harbored resentment toward most of the other stay-at-home moms on the block, whose own demons, married to alcoholics or worse, wife-beaters, kept her from having any close friends nearby. June had plenty of acquaintances, but below the surface, below the smile of the woman who made world-class restaurant-caliber lasagna, hid a deep loneliness medicated with food.

She policed her son's medication, stayed current on all the aspects of motherhood and the duties of marriage, tolerated a level

of chauvinism once taught as normal during her formative years, now condemned by the

queen of day time television and the feminism being preached by shows like *Family Ties*. She tried to project self-confidence, but based on what?

June was about to graduate from Pima Community College with an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts, which she would be unaware of until a chance meeting with an alert academic counselor would inform her she was overdue for her diploma by 18 months in the Spring of 1993.

She had done, to the best of her ability, everything anyone had asked of her. And yet she remained distant from Jesus because she didn't know that He desired to have a personal relationship with her, not the indoctrination of Catholic dogma she had blindly accepted decades before.

This void fueled her insecurities. It was subconscious, taught from childhood, and she was trying to create a dress that fit her as

well as clothes had when she was 19. It was a losing battle, but what choice did she have?

She sewed with the same dexterity that boxers box, that runners sprint, that engineers at Apple were reinventing the computer age with.

Her potential was unrealized. She was obeying a misinterpretation of the Bible, that women needed a man for everything, and without one, a woman was worthless. In 1965, she had been repeatedly told how beautiful she was by the very men who abused her the most, physically and psychologically. Her home, if not her community, seem to encourage narcissism among men, and her closest friend's short-lived marriage ended tragically when the mentally-unstable husband murdered her and put her in a car truck. To add insult to injury, he was never prosecuted.

In Bellmore, New York in 1966, it was as if the 19th Amendment did not exist.

June watched a lot of TV, danced to whatever pop music was heard on the radio, and read a lot of magazines, envisioning herself as a flight attendant during an age when Pan-Am was filled with salesmen seeking flirtatious and sexually inviting women, as they canvased the country on behalf of corporate America.

Many girls, mostly the photogenic ones, went from high school to Pan-Am, just to get out of the house and perhaps find a husband. June had also considered becoming a teacher. She was good with small children and there were relatively few licensing requirements for teachers. Her father had been the marketing executive for a moderately successful footwear manufacturer called U.S. Shoe. The Slades of New York lacked for nothing.

Her father was a blue-collar guy who had learned how to be a white-collar guy. Her mother was a recovering alcoholic and a baby machine. She had an eighth-grade education, but found her niche as a Catholic Catechism Doctrine teacher. It was through her mother's chosen religious practices that she attended private Catholic schools and was raised to become a baby machine who might work part time at some remedial job.

Any greater aspirations were openly mocked and discouraged.

The words *you can do anything* were never uttered by her parents, least of all to her. Her older brothers basked in the encouragement and praise of their prospective professions.

She had taught these values to her kids so well that each suffered the side effects of idolatry.

Her eldest daughter battled her weight. Her middle child battled the stereotypes of being

considered shallow and could not process criticism, and her youngest son was caught between two extremes of masculine examples, the chauvinism he saw on TV and partially modeled by his father, and the feminism getting loud applause on daytime television, and rubbed in his face in the hallways of their own home.

Jacque's sharp criticism of his appeal to her schoolgirl friends confused him immensely. It wasn't until he was in his late 20s, dating a woman who had been a movie star, that he finally accepted that he was very photogenic. His conversation to Christianity would later teach him why. June's error in understanding the difference between humility and self-depreciation had caused her kids to stumble.

She was lost when it came to contentment.

In Genesis 3:16, it is written that a woman's desire will be for her husband, even if that

husband is Jesus Himself. But desire does not encompass free will. If given the opportunity to choose any trade, any way to spend her time, June simply did not know what she wanted. Her choice became to default to other people's choices for her. She openly qualified it as an act of sacrifice, which was a stretch.

This was self evidence whenever Joe took her or the family as a whole out to dinner. She would look at the menu and be unable to decide. Whatever she ordered, she was not quite satisfied with. Other people's food always looked more appetizing. The meat was never cooked enough. (She preferred a charring to her meat that most restaurants could not perform by law.) When she cooked at home, with the exception of an authentic Italian marinara recipe she was given by her mother in law, she burned most of what she made because that's how she liked it.

She found little joy in life, suffering from clinical depression, and she medicated herself through food.

She enjoyed the spousal privileges of both a UA alumni and a city of Tucson cop, both a civil servant and the reverence that came with Joe's record as a cop.

He was the living incarnate of *Miami Vice*.

Once, a traffic cop caught her rolling a stop sign. Though Joe paid the ticket, the cop was blackballed by his colleagues. He even asked her after running her driver's license, "What didn't you tell me you were Joe's wife?"

You didn't ask.

The truth was a little more embarrassing. The cop had written the ticket before stopping her, which was against the law at that time.

Yet she would bellow aloud in the front passenger seat, on any given night out to dinner and a movie, “We don’t have a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out of...” as Joe would drive their 1983 Lincoln Towncar across the east side of Tucson, asking her what she felt like doing next, her teenage kids arguing over cramped seats in the back, threatened each other with the prospect of farting.

Joe of course would always beat them to it, chuckling under his breath as he quietly used the power window master controls to refresh the air inside.

“Let’s go see how the other half live!” June would bellow, referring to those in the tax bracket just above theirs by a few thousand dollars. The fact is she lived in a nice home, enjoyed a husband with a steady income, and if anything, had too much spare time on her hands.

Even if she lived in those homes, had an extra ten thousand dollars a month to spend, and had no parental obligations, she still would not have been satisfied. She would find that out the hard way in 1992.

There was just no quenching the thirst the entire family had. Joe's last ditch effort to pass the sergeant's exam would not achieve it. Watching the Wildcats defeating a conference rival would not achieve it.

Joe indulging himself in the offers of sex from several female coworkers would not achieve it.

Silencing the demons that still haunted him from his father, his cousin and his sister in law's taunts of, "You're *stupid!*" now voided by his college degree, would not achieve it. Being named Officer of The Year did not achieve it.

Only His relationship with Jesus would.

June would not learn into this until years later, after Joe's passing, when all of her kids seem to have been tapped by God through outreaches of the Protestant church.

June would not come to the realization that she did not need any man, beyond Christ, until after her youngest child was engaged to be married himself.

She would be struggling with her second marriage by that time.

For now, she remained estranged from her husband. The fact is, despite a financially prosperous year, and the benefits of local celebrity that came from Joe's success as a cop, they were all spiritually dry.

As they drove home, during what would become one of the last nights the entire family would spend together, Joe was struggling with something that only June knew about.

Joe had been offered early retirement.

The next morning, as he changed from street clothes to his uniform, he saw his would-be mistress, whom he had to cancel a bicycle riding date with the previous week, per scheduling conflicts.

She saw him and realized something was wrong. When he wouldn't seek her out to talk to her, she became suspicious and went out of her way to show him her body language. He wasn't blind to this, and made a comment that would change his career path forever.

He was trying to refill his bicycling water bottle and grab his mail from the department mail box. She asked him from a few feet away if he would grab hers as well.

Under normal circumstances, he would have accommodated her. But not today. He really wanted to get at least one promotion before leaving the department and he had not done

it yet. She took his refusal to hand her whatever was in her mailbox, even with his hands being full, as a rejection of her as a whole.

She snapped at him, “Joe! Get me my mail!”

“Okay, *princess*,” he snapped back. She wanted his sincere emotions of that moment, and she got them.

Fellow officers chuckled as if Joe had made a sexist remark at her expense. At that time there was also an inner office war between the officers who practiced lesbianism and those who were heterosexual. Tensions between the sexes were high. Officers who had sex on the job were so common, it was embarrassing.

The both of them realized they had crossed lines they could not uncross.

“No, thanks, I got it,” she said, trying to go from concerned to cold toward Joe. She

forcefully grabbed her mail and went directly to human resources where she filed a complaint against Joe for Sexual Harassment.

The suit was dropped right after Joe's next physical, about a month later.

Chapter 30

June 1990

Joe was struggling. He had no peace. June's cooking didn't taste right. None of his usual hobbies held any pleasure for him. He had a hard time finding anything positive about his day.

Even if the Wildcats won, he didn't seem to care.

June was going through her own sense of hopelessness. Her kids had either moved out or were showing her little respect. Her teenage daughter had moved out with her boyfriend and that lasted about a month. The boy was nice enough, but he was an illegal immigrant she had met while working at a mexican restaurant.

The marriage she thought she had was evaporating. They were two unhappy people married to each other. She never got to be a bachelorette and she reminded Joe daily of her deep sense of regret.

At the same time, she wanted her husband back and he was aging rapidly. Neither one of them considered cancer.

They had worked together for 20 years on the house, on raising kids, on getting educated.

Now that they were living the American Dream they envisioned a decade before, it was empty to them.

They fought all the time. Their kids were all excelling in school. There would be a new president for the first time in ten years.

Instead of enjoying each other all the more, the freedom they had longed for while dealing with the endless demands of kids

and bills and home repairs was now upon them, and they couldn't stand to be around each other.

Would they separate? They opted for a marriage-reviving vacation. Joe had accumulated months of vacation time. His work ethic was aligned with Lou Gehrig, so they left their kids to fend for themselves for two weeks, and trekked across the country.

Colorado, northern Arizona, San Diego, Wisconsin, New York, name it.

They talked about moving to Prescott for their retirement. Joe said as they ate at a fast-food restaurant, "I was thinking about becoming a teacher." He had a recurring dream that he was teaching high school civics class. June meanwhile was still searching for her identity outside the lifestyle of motherhood.

Her indecisiveness was now gnawing at their marriage. It would take her years after

Joe's death and the conversation to born again Christianity by all of her kids for her to come face to face with the one thing she needed to feel whole: Jesus.

Not a husband.

Not stuff.

Not a photogenically perfect body, which she *had* for a third of her life - something most women would have gladly traded her for.

Not a cult of friends who thought well of her.

Not any of the things she had spent a lifetime trying to buy. Her kids had teased her that every time she walked into the front door, they could always identify her by the sound of her dangling key chain and plastic bags carrying God-knows-what.

She would receive Christ as her personal Savior a short time after the turn of the 21st century.

Chapter 31

January 1991

June hated visiting Joe at the hospital. She was burned out, overwhelmed, numb and terrified. Just a couple months ago, they had gone to see *Ghost*, and they talked about what they might do if one of them were taken earlier than expected. Joe had often boasted of living until he was 104.

His doctor at his annual physical was dead-on. If he didn't change professions, he was going to die. Stress was killing him.

He passed on early retirement, believing he could endure office

politics and get his promotion, maybe somehow shoot up the ladder to be the next chief.

He did not know that behind the scenes, lobbyists were pushing for the department to get funding by way of grants allotted to department that had female chiefs, qualified or not.

As the fury of moment to moment needs rushed June like a hailstorm amidst the dark, quiet hallways of Tucson Medical Center's Cancer Ward, she saw a familiar face walking cautiously toward Joe's room, holding flowers. It was her.

She had quietly let the complaint go when one of Joe's old academy colleagues told her that Joe had been diagnosed with cancer and that if she pursued this, her life would be investigated alongside his.

Joe had spent a few weeks working from home conducting applicant interviews when his Captain determined he was too ill to put his uniform on and drive a patrol car around.

Now, he could barely walk upright. The cancer was claiming him at an alarming rate. He was aging decades within a few weeks.

Few cops dared to visit him, though his get-well-card stack could have covered the walls of his room twice over had they been spread out and mounted.

This cop did.

She saw June and slowed down to a standstill. June had a choice. Did she throw a fit and curse at this woman?

The Lord whispered to June, “Let her say goodbye.”

June could not see her own Angel, the head servant in her Heavenly estate, motion God’s grace into her, causing her to realize, Joe is dying. They were both losing him.

Yes, this is, was, whatever, my husband, but, accept it, she loves him too.

A supernatural feeling engulfed her and instead of lashing out at her, she embraced her with a big hug.

After June released her arms, the woman went in and saw Joe for the last time.

She had tears in her eyes as she left, saying nothing to June as June watched yet another visitor leave, speechless. Yes, the soul of the Tucson Police Department was dying, or, depending on the perspective, going Home to Jesus.

The Catholic Last Rites had already been given, which terrified everyone in the room a few days earlier.

Another cop felt compelled to see Joe. Rick Hartigan walked in and saw what was left of Joe. The two had bonded since the Grand Canyon and Rick had gleaned from Joe that a little imperfection was okay. He was in plain clothes when he stood bedside and looked at Joe for the last time.

A nurse came in and offered him some ice chips, which he gobbled up. After she left, Rick asked Joe, “Is there anything I can do for you or June or the kids?”

Joe thought a moment. *Yes.*

“My swamp cooler and the furnace pilot light. I’m not there and

June doesn’t know how.”

Rick knew precisely what he meant. One of the things most homes in Arizona had that required constant maintenance was a swamp cooler. During the late winter months, he would put a ladder against his roof and climb up to replace the insulation pads. It was as common a ritual for Arizona residents.

But June couldn’t climb the ladder, much less change the pads.

And when the weather turned cold again, it had been his chore to maintain the pilot light for the unit that warmed the house.

“Consider it done,” Rick said, adding, “Joe, you’ve been a good friend to me, and barring a miracle, I want to thank you.”

With very limited strength, Joe extended his hand with a thumbs- up.

Rick turned to walk away and paused, realizing he had not said everything he felt and he knew he would not get another chance on this side of eternity.

“Joe,” he said, looking at his spiritual brother, “I love you.”

In what was left of Joe’s voice box, his raspy tone uttered, “I love you too.”

Rick took his mounting tears out the door and raced to the parking lot where, in the privacy of his car, he wept.

The next day, Joe's son was in a high school class, an American Government class he dreaded, one of the few required courses whereby he was lumped in with most of the undesirable classmates he had during high school.

Many would go on to prison. Most had failed marriages, and some would die before their 40th birthdays.

On this day, just before a lone short assignment was passed out, which would later prove critical in regards to his academic graduation, he was summoned by the assistant principal and a cop.

While classmates were in mid-sentence making crude remarks at his expense, the cop flashed his badge to the teacher and asked to see him in the hall.

Another classmate, David French, whose dad was a cop who worked with Joe for years in the Canine Unit, knew Joe was

dying, told the muttering morons to shut up, that no, Cory was not busted, that his dad was a cop, and was dying, and to back off.

Joe's months-long determination to beat cancer had inspired hope for a recovery of some kind. "Your father's taken a turn for the worst," the detective said.

Surreal.

It had been a few months since June had sat the three kids down on their home couch and broke the news no spouse ever wants to break to their kids, "Dad has cancer. The diagnosis is not good. Dad's gonna fight it, but..."

They all knew that Christmas, 1990 would be their last together.

Chapter 32

December 19, 1990

The Wildcats were favored to win the Pac-10 Conference, but the sight of the games on TV held no refuge from the agony of knowing “dad” would not be here this time next year.

The week of Christmas, a few of Joe’s son’s classmates decided it would be hilariously fun to vandalize one of their neighbor’s homes, by ripping down their lights and causing other damage.

Led by an entourage that included a classmate who had harassed his son since elementary school, Jason Marcone and a few other classmates used a pair of mid-sized pick up trucks and to carry out their fun, scaring the neighborhood, and provoking

what would become Joe's last off duty arrest as a cop.

They vandalized the home of former cop Sam Elrey, and one of the truck's license plates light flickered off as its driver, Jason Marcone raced away, thinking he hadn't been caught. He would be visited at his home by patrol cars and cited within the hour.

As neighbors who were home became aware of what was going on outside, and police sirens could be heard fast approaching, June screamed at the fleeing felon, "We've got your plates!"

The boy who drove the other truck happened to be the son of a Sheriff's deputy, to compound the embarrassment.

Both boys sat in one of his son's classes and glared at him the entire time. The American Government class was poorly run by an aging tenured teacher named Bob Brenner.

By April, his son's dreaded class had become the one course he dreaded attending, not because it was hard, but because it was a virtual Who's Who of unpleasant people, with a few exceptions.

The boy who had later been visited by Tucson Police for his role in that night of vandalism thundered away during a class debate about Due Process and the 4th Amendment, about how his truck had been illegally searched during that night of Christmas vandalism.

In the same breath, someone asked him what he was doing there, to which he smirked back, "Havin' fun!" His admission revealed his ignorance and his guilt. Anyone caught in the act of a crime could be searched, but hey, being a moron wasn't in itself against the law.

He was comparable to Chet from *Footloose*.

In hindsight, he was the product of a single mother home. He rolled his eyes at anything that didn't offer him immediate carnal gratification, and thus, rejected Jesus.

After that night, Joe realized why paying for martial arts training for his son was so critical. Wow, he thought, referring to these boys, these were really little (expletives).

Yes, trailer trash, without the mobile home park.

One of Joe's colleagues was a judge named Raner Collins. Joe often spoke of how consistent Raner was on the bench, but outside of court, what an arrogant jerk he seemed to be, abusing his authority when he wanted to.

When Joe's son complained about Raner's son Tameron, Joe would comfort, "The cream always rises to the top. You worry about you."

June watched one day in 1989, when a dozen boys, taunting her son in regards to another classmate who stood a head shorter, the smallest member of the Santa Rita High School wrestling team, Jay Johnston, all drove up to Joe's house and parked in front of it, believing they would see a bloody fight.

But it had already happened.

Her son had chosen not to smash the boy's eye out after he had taken as many physical and verbal cheap shots as he could. The martial arts training had paid off, and Jay ended up walking home bloodied.

Jay had even invited his younger sister to watch 'the big fight'.

The girl had the nerve to rebuke Joe's son during the match, "Don't hit my brother!"

Um, young lady, your brother is here because of his ongoing sexual harassment

and daily physical threats toward classmates during school. He initiated this.

If anything, the crowd was trespassing and was committing unlawful gathering. June recognized many faces from the little league soccer team Joe had coached years before and was disappointed. *If their parents knew where they were...*

After the No Tolerance policies had passed in 1999, most of those kids would have been arrested and expelled for their actions. But, in 1989, they faced little immediate consequences. In the long run, it set them up for future failures, for future job losses, relationship losses and more. They lacked self discipline and would pay with their souls.

The Bible says *God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. (Galatians 6:7)*

Alcoholism would claim the health and relationships of most of those who gathered

for a nostalgic reenactment of the dueling tracker scene from the original *Footloose*. By 2010, a few had taken their own lives.

By April 1990, Joe's son's fascination with how his favorite films were made became a college-level independent study of what would become the future of the media.

George Lucas innovations would paved the way for just about everyone else, but to state this in an ad-hoc lecture during John Baab's Introduction to Photography class would only result in Raner Collins' son Tameron mocking loudly, "The history of *Star Wars* by Cory Parella! Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!"

One of the students who howled in laughter along with the judge's kid that day had a slightly different look on his face in 1992, when the next time Joe's son saw him was at an unemployment office branch for the State of Arizona. Joe's son secured a job, whereas his former classmate's father was clearly

realizing the dramatically reduced income per his own unemployment claim.

The judge's kid would use his father's name to become a human resources manager for the city of Tucson. Over time, his choices for employees would profoundly impact the quality of life in Tucson. In short, it got much, much worse. Negligence became status quo.

By the time Facebook was being prepared for its Initial Public Offering, Joe's son had tracked down many of his classmates and reminded them of unresolved wounds.

Joe's inability to forgive had not only cost him treasure in Heaven, but had resulted in the stress that claimed his life, and that sin was being inherited by his son.

Feb 11, 1991

Chapter 33

As Joe's son sat down next to his dying father, he tried to behave like a man twice his age might, but the words just didn't feel right. Guilt over the stress brought on by his difficulty in dealing with classmates and neighbors over his first 17 years weighed on Joe's son's heart.

A flood of memories, both delightful and miserable, rushed from his subconscious to his throat as he tried to speak through the trauma.

"I love you dad," his son uttered, with Joe exuding what would be his last tears, "but your anger, your temper, dies with you." A few years later, *Braveheart's* Robert The Bruce would utter the same words, in an identical exchange.

Joe's son would come to understand the supernatural power of forgiveness as provided to all Believers through their relationship with Jesus, many years later, and after many relationships lost.

At this moment, guilt overwhelmed him. Did the stress placed on Joe by his son's difficulty coping with social issues really cause his death?

In some respects, yes. Joe couldn't handle the fact that his method of problem solving in regards to his son's social development was to be a model of self-discipline.

On the job, in uniform, with an imminently displayed badge and weapon belt, few dared to quarrel with a cop, much less Joe. He had a presence about him. Kind and gentle at first, and then firm, resolute. And then fierce, if not intimidating.

Joe could not see the thoughts that raced through his son's mind as he blamed himself for his dad's premature deathbed.

The incidents were in the millions.

Warranted or not, justified or not, Joe tried to protect his son, and all his kids, and his wife, from anything that made them feel unhappy.

School bullies, kids of adults who were otherwise considered friends, strangers, coworkers, and even extended family, Joe went to any lengths he could to play the diplomat.

He was not afraid to scold his son or exchange loud words with his wife if he felt he had been wronged or confused. But in the end, he wanted them to feel the love of a father that he never quite did.

Mission accomplished, but at a price. When he passed, their patriarch, their support system, the one who was expected to cosign

for his son's first car loan, and help him get through his freshman year of college, was gone.

Joe's son struggled to put his personal issues out of his mind as he spent this last few minutes with his dad.

Did he have the right to be angry at classmates from Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School, like Michael Galloway, who violated many federal discrimination laws by taunting his son's inability to stop twitching because of Tourette's Syndrome?

Or David Ormsby, who was a horror of the hallways at Secrist but who managed to read a very ad-libbed, obscure Bible passage during their 1987 graduation ceremony; Mike Murphy, one of the violent bullies from East Watson Drive whose father illegally ran a construction business out of a rented house; Scott Bevins, who would bring handcuffs to school and, running

alongside them, try to strap kids' hands to their handlebars as they tried to ride their nikes home after school.

Bevins also would stage WWF-like hyped "fights" between himself and all-comers at a patch of desert at the corner of Bonanza and Stella. His older brother 'Rocky' had been convicted of theft; Brad Strickland, who lived next door at 9631 East Watson Dr., took his rage of being an unwanted child out on Joe's son, given the amount of attention Joe gave to him. Then there was Wayne Catterton, a hillbilly raised by hillbillies, likely the result of painkillers and alcohol in the womb, who would also stage after-school fights.

The Catterton stage fight shows after school eerily imitated the plot of *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, whereby a dozen eleven and twelve-year old boys would gather with their bikes perched on the cliff overlooking a large ravine wash, (like the one used at the

end of *Grease*), whereby “two boys enter, one boy leaves” would be chanted. Most of these boys had seen the R-rated film and sadistically craved to see an actual murder.

The ravine wasn’t deep by adult standards, but like Captain Hook to Peter Pan, was menacing to an eleven-year old.

It was like a lynching, but among mostly white people, killing one of their own over who was the coolest or toughest in the neighborhood.

If a boy found himself thrashing away at Wayne Catterton, realizing Wayne didn’t really know how to fight, Wayne would change his tune, the bully-image proven to be a facade, and ask whomever he was fighting, “Wanna wrestle?”

If there was bloodshed, kids would gawk and then panic and leave. If there was no bloodshed, even after the same kind of gambling and taunting one would see at a

real boxing match, kids would leave out of boredom.

Years later, Wayne Catteron would connect to Joe's son on social media and send such inappropriate messages about his wife and family that he got banned.

Over time Joe would hear his son explain that he spent his days in perpetual fear of his classmates.

No one seemed to have the guts to strike him, but the fear of being struck, and worse, the fear of the punishment that awaited him in the event he was suspended for fighting - even in self-defense, wore on him daily. Secrist's Assistant Principal, the dean of discipline was George Pohlman. Parents called for his resignation in 1990. He was urged to take a long vacation and never return, which he did.

Meanwhile, Secrist remained a perennial cauldron of violence, despite the occasional

disciplinarian installed a principal. Adults had the recourse of calling the police when verbally threatened. That policy was not enforced in T.U.S.D. until after the tragedy at Columbine.

Joe's son and many of his friend suffered from daily crimes like sexual harassment, vandalism and aggravated assault.

Joe would come home each day and ask his son how school went.

As a cop, Joe always had funny stories to tell neighbors about the ridiculousness of certain calls.

Most were harmless and hilarious, stories about ordinary people who got in over their heads given poor choices or addictions, and called the police for help.

His son would try to echo how entertaining his father sounded by retelling the tales from

the classroom or school yard, usually starting strong and finishing weak.

When June would overhear these attempts to compare scars with his dad, she would respond coldly, “You deserve everything that happens to you.”

Joe would declare that if it was an instance of self-defense, he would defend his son if the school called home. Jesus recalled these conversations and showed on a split-screen the torture his son endured, how his advice fell flat and compassion was nowhere to be found, except in the eyes of Heaven. In one instance, crossing a desert hill left behind by construction workers at Watson Dr and Bonanza Street, Joe’s son picked himself up with a bloodied body and a crumpled bike, left behind by a pack of cowardly kids who’d attacked him 4-1 for the offense of leaving the schoolyard before they did, he looked to the heavens and cried out to God.

Joe's empathy jumped in the chest of his new body and he muttered, "Wow. I had no idea it was this bad."

"I took care of it," Jesus said. The Lord blessed the events of the day for the Parella family while the other boys and their families experienced demonic attacks until any one of them cried out to God for help. Two of the boys faced criminal charges for beating up their own siblings and one of the family's mother suffers a sudden heart attack and died.

Yet at the Parella home, from his bedroom, Joe's son felt almost alone as he drifted off to sleep each night, tears in his eyes from being yelled at for falling asleep in front of the TV, or some minor offense of his controlling sisters, and for the mere sight of a suspension notice from the school would offset that promise.

Meanwhile, June, who had never been in a fist fight in her life, would tell him that there were *no* reasons for fighting.

It was confusing. These words were echoed in the 1984 film, “The Karate Kid” as June watched the characters echo this exact exchange, while her son was beaten by a gang of 5.

The fact is that unless one was a pretty Spanish girl, most grade schools in Tucson were brutally violent. And, not just in Tucson.

Over time, *The Simpsons* became a ratings giant because it managed to capture the horror of grade school bullies with blunt accuracy.

Joe was always concerned that he couldn’t solve his son’s problems, yelling back at his son, “It’s always something! Why can’t you just go to school and get along with people?”

Because they are turds, dad, and their parents are the people you arrest for drug-related crimes.

Was this stress what killed him? His son carried this guilt around for years, and for the first ten years after his death, mourned with survivor's guilt in his heart. June's friends had the nerve to ask why her son was so angry.

Really?

Years before, when Joe's son was about six years old, a neighbor from the East Watson Drive neighborhood named Craig Adair stole Joe's police issue flashlight from a short lived fort the two had assembled.

Joe had to explain to his captain what happened. The boys were playing together, trying to build an overnight fort in the ally behind their homes.

Trying to pitch in to the supplies to fortify their fantasy fort, followings dad's example of contributing to community efforts, Joe's son fetched his dad's police-department issued flashlight, and, given the idea that the fort would need it, left it there.

Craig Adair had found it at their make-shift fort and took it home with him and refused to give it back. He even bragged about it to Joe's son, "I stole your dad's flashlight!" Craig frequently teamed up with his younger brother Brian and jumped Joe's son, causing countless bruises on his face and body. The one time Joe's son actually managed to defend himself, causing a bruise on the boy's back, June and Joe did not hear the end of it until that family moved to Minnesota.

The bottom line was, the Adairs had chosen atheism, and lived by the standards of the world, which were unjust.

Joe had asserted a liberal Catholicism in his home, and had accepted, to a point, that some people were just going to be difficult. “Don’t hate ‘em son,” Joe taught his son, “They don’t just do it to you. They do it to everyone,” he said, when asked about how to process the rage his son felt toward the humiliation and disrespect he experienced daily at Secrist Middle School.

Joe’s Bible taught him to forgive by the power of Christ, and to model forgiveness to his kids. On this Word, he stumbled.

Joe had pleaded with Craig’s mother to ask him about it, but she refused, knowing full well, the flashlight was in his bedroom. She had held it in her hands. After babysitting for those boys, Joe’s daughter Jeni denounced them as evil. The Adairs had moved out of state by 1989. Craig returned to Tucson as an adult to raise his own son, after failing to find steady work in Minnesota.

The worst offender was their next-door neighbor to the west, Brad Strickland, whose mother made it clear that he was an undesired product of her choice to have many sexual partners. And Debbie Barnes was far from beautiful. She was a loose-living saleswomen whose money would fail to bring her contentment.

By the time she married a man who was up to the task of fatherhood, Brad, a few years older than Joe's son, had taken his place among the most vicious and jealous bullies in the zip code. He would go on to a failed career in the military, cut short by a bout with alcohol. He too moved from Tucson in 1989.

Most of those who filled the local classrooms had been so profoundly effected by the transient workforce that rocked Tucson, by way of IBM, Raytheon, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, and more, that the majority of those who rented homes in the

East Tucson area were among the greatest consumers of narcotics and alcohol.

This created a generation of students who attended Secrist and Carson Middle Schools in the 1980s to be among the most violent and merciless in the city's history.

The rich claimed not to see much of it, except fragments seen and heard on the news. Until such dynamics hit the rich, change was hard to evoke.

Many people had scars from the wrongs committed against them. These were among those that belonged to the Parellas.

These thoughts raced through Joe's son's mind as he tried to stay focused on what was likely the last time he would ever see his father alive, on Earth.

"I expect you to be at my graduation," he said.

All Joe could utter back was, "Okay."

“And pop,” his son added, reminiscent of Joe’s semantical reference to his own father, “you’re the strongest man I ever knew.”

“You have such a bright future,” Joe said, having glimpsed the glory of God’s plan for the future during his cancer sleep. Joe’s son had one more thing to ask him about.

Apparently, so Jacquie said, Joe had awaken from his cancer sleep the day before and had seen Jesus.

There were racial tensions at his high school and his son thought that by stating that Jesus had no color, that might calm them. His journalism teacher, Michael J. Fox (not the movie star), refused to publish the editorial based on its religious rhetoric.

“He’s the only thing there,” Joe explained in a faint voice. “He had me grab on a slab of marble, and said, ‘Hold on.’ Then I woke up.” The Bible describes that marble is the

chosen stone from which the King's walls and floors are made.

Joe got a kiss and hug from his son, and watched him walk out of the room.

As his son leaned up against the side of the wall, right outside the room, he broke down into uncontrollable tears. Nurses buzzed around him.

None of them ever get used to seeing the first stages of mourning.

George Parella Jr. hugged his nephew and whispered to him, "You're the man of the family now."

He felt completely unprepared.

Chapter 34

1992

In the months that followed Joe's crossing over, June threw dozens of parties for herself as a way to mourn.

Her kids all mourned differently. Her eldest moped and cried a lot, struggling to finish her Bachelors Degree at the University of Arizona. She wore a cap and gown that bore the words, *For You Dad*. She looked beautiful in her gown.

Jeni got married. She had a daughter, and then battled her way to her own college degree. After a turbulent first marriage, she received Christ as her Savior and remarried a few years later.

Joe's son struggled to maintain his sanity. His numbness was

counterbalanced by an inner pull toward a creative career but the collegiate system, available to Tucsonans, was lousy.

Since relocating to Arizona from the east coast, Joe's family traditions included utilizing the professions and trades of neighbors to get certain tasks done. An accountant named Roger Shively, who lived a few doors down and whose kids were about the same age as Joe's, was hired to manage their money.

In 1992, June got an alarming letter in the mail when she had inquired about how much money she had. Roger had been convicted of fraud and embezzlement and was going to prison.

Of all the people he had stolen from, Joe was not among them. In one sense, June was blessed. Roger respected Joe and did not take advantage of his family after he learned of Joe's untimely death.

As June sat down with her grown-kids and read the will out loud, she asked each of them to sign over \$32,000 allotted to each of them.

Joe's son did so without thinking twice. Jacquie and Jeni talked about it a little more. June restrained her tears.

“Without this, I have to sell the house.”

She would sell it anyway in 1994.

Each of them endorsed the checks and handed them back to June.

“I want to give you all a thousand dollars to do whatever you want with now.”

June would eventually put her money into another house, and each of her kids went their own way. She had her freedom as a bachelorette until 1994, when she remarried, escaping from a sad ritual of dating as a widow. Just when she got what she spent 24

years of marriage longing for, all she wanted was her marriage back.

Joe visited her in a dream. “I’m not dead,” he said bluntly, the context of his eternal existence in Christ over her head.

“But what about the insurance money? We’ll have to give it back!” she argued.

“No we won’t. Just trust me. Know that I’m okay. Don’t worry about me. I’m fine.”

Chapter 35

May 1985

785 West Grant Road is the site of the Old Pascua Village Community Center, before the Casino Del Sol was built. It was allocated by the U.S. Government as a part of international treaties fumbled over by U.S., Mexican and Tribal leaders dating back to two centuries.

Tensions remained high. Alcohol had ripped through the nations made up of the descendants of the house of Jacob. The Pascua- Yaquis had the same Biblical lineage as the Pakistani and eastern tribes that make up modern day India.

European explorers like Columbus were half-right. Yet without the resources of modern day NASA, it would have been practically impossible to verify the history

of land migration incurred by the nations that filled what was regarded by Europe as the “new world”, given their oral traditions still intact since before Moses led the exodus of the Hebrews out of Egypt and was assigned the task of forming God’s Word in the form of written language.

As the Earth settled after the flood of the 2nd millennium, with more movement occurring below sea level than above it, and what was now known as the Pacific Ocean wasn’t as wide or as deep yet. It was fairly easy to get across, if one was brave enough to attempt the trip. Over the next four-thousand years, millions did.

Centuries of invaders had come and gone, some settling among those who stayed in what would become the North American continent, until a civil war among the European Americans forced NonCaucasians to choose sides. Neutrality was not an option.

When the Lincoln Administration achieved military victory over the Confederate States, the Reconstruction Act of 1867 contained provisions that were, in spirit, intended to respect the borders of the frontier known as the Great Plains. When the need to complete the Continental Railroad and its accompanying telegraph line (still in use in the 21st century), the political strategy to leave the Tribes of Oklahoma alone became impractical.

The spirit of the Reconstruction Act got ignored. By August of 1963 tensions between Tribal communities and their rival North American governments became strained to the point of civil uprisings.

Television gave these uprisings more dimensions than paper print ever could, and such events as Wounded Knee became instant reminders to a nation already upset over how Communism in east Asian was

being handled by the White House yet another reason to choose a side and fight.

Joe had been there a few times on patrols, but one day, returning from being out due to a knee injury, he was summoned by his captain, who gave him the assignment of a lifetime.

The office was small, and bleak-looking. White walls that could use another paint job, a conservative desk covered by government forms and a few pictures of the Captain's family. Book shelves containing hundreds of city regulations for police work lined the walls.

Joe saw his file open on the Captain's desk. "You're a quarter-Choctaw, right?"

"Yes," Joe acknowledged. "Can I ask why?"

"I have a special assignment for you. Both the chief and mayor asked for you," he said, settling any of Joe's fears of being in

trouble, and perking his ears to realize he was being flattered.

“Ok,” he replied with the same eagerness in his voice that he had when he started as an undercover agent ten years before.

“We have an ongoing drug operation going on at Old Pascua Village. The string of murders that happened out there are a direct result of it. The drug dealers have taken over. They hide in the junked vehicles, and they’ve taken over Richey Elementary. Right now, I got officers telling me they won’t go in if they get a call. And just last week, I had one officer almost beaten to death by a few guys, and we don’t know if they were drug dealers or just angry citizens. When we go in, they’re throwing bottles and rocks, and some guys have claimed to have been shot at.”

The Captain’s words were in his head as he walked to the pro shop where the weapons

experts were awaiting him to choosing whatever he needed to obey the order as it was passed down from the chief and mayor, “Kick ass, take names and restore order. And one more thing,” the Captain added. “I’m having a problem with cops stealing keys of squad cars from the lock box. I know you’re good with wood. Would you be willing to make me a locker that can’t be picked, something keyless?”

“Sure, I’ll try,” Joe responded, thinking nothing of it.

As soon as Joe walked into the pro shop, he saw every weapon James Bond ever touched, plus a few Mr. Bond hadn’t seen before, laid out for him to check out.

He watched each one get demonstrated in an impressive display of click-click, cock, push this, pull this, fold that. Aim, fire. “Thank you. I’ll come back.”

Joe sat at lunch with Bob Gilmartin, his first partner on the force dating back to New Providence, whom had recently moved on to the State Police, and told him about his new assignment. Bob was a head taller than Joe, even sitting down at this luncheonette. Joe was coming off his shift, while Bob was about to start his.

“Did I ever tell you about the time Pete Ronstadt and I were shot at driving down Grant Road?” Bob asked, giving Joe an idea of what to expect.

Joe shook his head, “You may have.”

“Pete wasn’t the chief yet and we were driving east bound on Grant, and thank God, I was wearing a helmet. And I felt a zip and bang, in the car. I took off my helmet to realize an Indian from Old Pascua took a shot at me. Pete pulled the car over and asked me if I was okay.”

At home, Joe prayed as he watched the news about Lute Olson declining Kentucky's offer to coach. June walked into the room carrying a large tub of laundry and made her way past where he was sitting.

"You need any help with that?" he asked, almost subconsciously.

June put it down in the laundry niche with a splat, and replied, "Not anymore," with a light chuckle. She saw some of the books he was reading on Pascua-Yaqui culture.

"Is that for school?"

"I wish," he replied, "I got a new assignment."

He explained to her what it was. During all his time working in narcotics, June was seldom scared, though he purposely kept her in the dark. Now, she was alarmed.

He spent several days in his wood shop. The kids were having a blast playing with a large

table-sized wood-carved hockey game he had assembled, using plans from a magazine he read. He had been a faithful subscriber to *Arizona Highways* and other landscaping magazines since the early 70's, blindly implementing their gardening tips, which included a flawed theory about weeding, which was "to dig up the root".

This influenced Joe to put so many holes in his backyard that his digging did more harm than good, and he actually started to breed more weeds. As one looked past his weed-covered yard just beyond the in-ground pool, he could be seen testing his newly crafted lock box.

He brought it inside his sliding back door and grabbed his car keys and lured his son and his eldest daughter away from the hockey game they were enjoying, his daughter yelling triumphantly when she had scored. He asked them to please get the keys out.

He dropped the keys inside the wooden box and held a prideful grin behind his otherwise plain smile.

So, Jacquie and his son took turns trying to break in. They couldn't open the box or access the keys, which were visible through small holes, but his son asked sarcastically, "If we picked it up and smashed it, it might work."

Joe smiled bigger. "You're right. Do it."

His son and Jacquie exchange *No Way* looks.

Then Jacquie picked it up and dropped it, exclaiming, "Sorry!"

"No, that was exactly what I wanted you to do," Joe explained. "Now, Cor, you do it. Try to open it like that."

A shrug of his shoulders later, his son did. Smash!

The box wobbled like a giant lego block, the keys intact.

Then, Joe used one of two keys custom made for the box and opened it gently, making Jacquie and his son howl in awe.

“Dad, that is cool! What’s it for?” she asked.

“They asked me to make it at work.”

“What like, people arrested for traffic violations?” his son asked. “No, cops,” he replied.

“What?” they both asked, shocked. “Cops stealing car keys?” Joe nodded.

The next day, the department’s engineers examined the wooden box and were in awe.

“Joe, you should be get a pay bonus for this. This is remarkable. Genius.”

A short time later, the officers who were stealing the keys quietly requested transfers. One quit.

The box was used until the building precinct for Team 2 was closed.

Chapter 36

July 1985

The Parella house's backyard pool was busy as Huey Lewis and The News' *Power of Love* boomed out of the speaker system.

June was sunbathing in the middle of the pool, surrounded by finely trimmed desert plants and a half-finished walkway around the cool- deck and dirt up to the fence.

Joe was enjoying his day off, lounging in his decade-old leather 'dad' chair, his feet perched on the worn ottoman. His son walked into the house and by him, his tiny head buried in an oversized Cubs hat, darting for the kitchen, out of breath but smiling, his baseball glove worn from use and his baseball tightly held in the glove. His daughters were playing dueling record players in their rooms, their doors closed over but not shut, such that the sound

created a lively, warm environment he seemed to bask in. Cabinet door swing open, close, water on, off, guzzle, outlet of air, and off his son went back outside to continue playing ball.

As Joe dangled the cable TV remote control in his hand, a news story caught his eye and gave him an idea. George Kalil was being interviewed about his company, Kalil Bottling, sponsoring the trading cards printed up and handed out to the community, with the faces of the university's athletes on them. Football coach Larry Smith appeared, offering his endorsement, given his team's meteoric rise in the polls and talk of a bowl-caliber team for the coming season. Lute Olson also appeared, offering his support.

It gave Joe an idea.

Joe went into the room where he knew the department had stored many boxes of trading cards, and spent his shift pouring

through them, wrapping rubber bands around them as team packs.

He then loaded five large boxes into the trunk of his squad car, putting a few packs in his pocket.

He visited his mail box where a contact list of Pascua-Yaqui leaders was waiting for him. He started making calls from a small

office phone used by many cops. They wandered in and out as he talked, some waving hello at him as he began the tedious task of reestablishing communication lines long since maimed by greed and war.

“This is Joe Parella of the Tucson Police Department. I’m looking for Cecelia Valencia.”

A woman, about 40, answered, and was more pleasant than he was expecting. “Yes, this is Cecelia Valencia. Are you my new contact for the police department?”

“Yes. I’d like to come down and meet with you personally, and introduce myself to your staff, if that’s okay.?”

Cecelia was slightly taken aback. She was not used to cops being so gentle.

“Yes, when would you like to come?” she asked.

“About five minutes. I’m up the street from you off Prince Road.”

Joe Parella had a civilian button-up plaid shirt on when he walked onto the reservation for the first time, alone. He had his badge and his gun in plain sight on his shoulder harness and clipped to his waist, per department regulations.

As he walked around the dirt lot, he saw the problems. Junked cars littered the area. The homes looked abandoned. The defeat of the 1880’s was still alive, despite a member of the United Nations, the U.S. Government

recognizing the Pascua-Yaquis as a sovereign internal nation in 1979. Sadly, at that time, they still could not self-regulate membership.

The land had access to all the same sanitary resources the rest of the State had, including clean water and electricity, but there seemed to be a determination to avoid the “white world”.

Joe walked into the main administration building and found Cecelia sitting at her desk, typing. She paused as she put his face and the voice she heard on the phone together.

“Officer Parella?” she asked, as he gave her a big smile, and shook her hand. “Where’s your uniform?”

“I have one in the car, but I didn’t want to attract attention yet. And please, call me Joe. Nice to meet you. Do you mind if I take a

look around before I start knocking on doors?”

“Yes, and, hold on...” Joe heard footsteps and the same door he just walked in through opened again. It was the chief and the council.

For the next few hours, Joe sat and listened to them describe the crisis. Yes, they had internal problems, but what they really wanted was to solve the Tribe’s battles with rampant health problems. Diabetes was claiming more lives than war had, and those deaths were creating an orphan problem.

“I told the chief of police and the mayor that we need the money generated from the casino business to solve these problems, and they

said that we were not stable enough as a society to allow that,” the chief said.

Joe's prayer in 1971 to work with the indigent on an Indian reservation, once considered to be comparable to working on a family-safe dude ranch in Gallup, New Mexico, had come to pass. God had used ten years in the Metro Division as an undercover narcotics agent and other training to prepare him for this.

The next evening, Joe's shift started. He had a list of warrants he was assigned to serve, and he told his Sergeant that he would add units once he knew what he needed. He reasoned that brute force wasn't working, and he had a hunch about using the trading cards he had amassed to win over the kids.

He sat in his squad car, parked right on the invisible border of the small reservation, and prayed. *Lord, please guide me, keep me safe, keep them safe and work a miracle so that this ends peacefully, and everyone can get what they want. I pray for my kids, my wife, and especially my son, who is going through*

a rough time. I pray for those who aren't being nice to my family too. Amen.

As he sat there, he felt his police career experiences, and for that matter, all of his experiences coming in handy right now, as he embarked in what would be the most memorable and sacrificial event in his life outside being a dad, whereby he would become not just a civil servant, but an icon.

Chapter 37

January 1986

Old Pascua Village.

He was passed over for promotion several times since 1973. Affirmative Action and his religion worked against him. Brown-skinned officers were favored, and the Gay and Lesbian lobbyists were pushing for Tucson to be qualified as “progressive” to gain publicity and grant money.

It wasn't fair, and he knew it, and he had been told that other agencies would love to have him. *No, he was too close to his pension.* He'd weather the storm. Black and Asian cops played the race card and threatened to sue the city if they weren't promoted. So they were promoted.

Joe didn't want to get a promotion that way, so he wasn't.

Richard Miranda was. Not because he was a better cop, but because he was brown-skinned. He was Hispanic in a town controlled by the descendants of the reign of Spain.

Over time, he would become a good chief and a respectable city manger, but that was 20 years away.

Today, the city faced a very real problem. The drug business had taken root in Old Pascua Village, and it was causing the Tribe to murder each other. The few cops who made up the Tribe's police had no power to enforce its authority. They had only been a recognized nation since 1979. They were the last of the last among the Indian Tribes to find their place in the land they had been defeated on by several militaries.

First Columbus, then Napoleon, then the Dutch, then the Spanish Armada, and then

the Civil War. And then it got worse from there.

President Lincoln had included his will for the Indian Tribes in the Reconstruction Act of 1867, to let them be a nation with international borders acknowledged by U.S. forces.

But that vision was never completed. New presidents came and went, and the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 inspiring European immigrants and latter generation Americans to push west to the Pacific Ocean, the very waters that were once shallow enough for the first Indian ancestors to commute from India. Columbus was half- right. DNA tests would confirm that over time.

Joe had always felt a calling by God to minister to the Indians. He just didn't account for how God trains his servants. First, he became a good beat patrol cop. Then, a stunningly effective narcotics agent.

Then, a diplomat, as he worked the precinct front desk for years, with a delightful personality and sense of humor no other officer could match.

He would direct traffic as if every intersection he was stationed at would pass the Presidential convoy. He treated every citizen at every call with respect until they gave him a reason not to. His legal testimony was crisp and reliable to the point where prosecutors and judges didn't even read other witness's statements, they just read Joe's. Defense attorneys would see officer Parella appear in court in uniform or a suit and would immediately urge their client to plea bargain.

He walked in truth, and that evoked an equal amount of respect, fear and love. Those who walked in truth were his friends, and those who needed a lie here and there dreaded seeing him in a courtroom.

He was the epitome of what it meant to be a cop in the 1980s and the department used him to teach classes, all without promoting him. They could, so they did.

Today he would step into his calling. President Lincoln had given an order. There was unfinished business at hand.

As Joe opened his door to get out, his uniform fresh from the dryer at home, he heard a voice call to him from over his left shoulder, getting him to look out beyond the open door.

“Joe,” he heard. He looked harder and finally saw a man who looked a lot like actor Kevin Costner wearing a western suit.

“Joe!” the voice repeated. Joe stared at him as the man said, “Bear down,” and then faded away.

In *How The West Was Won*, a love story amidst an epic about the railroad expansion

forcing Tribes off their land had romanticized the political horror of the true story of the wild west.

Here and now, Joe had a chance to put right what had once gone wrong. Armed with his police regulation tool belt and a stack of UA trading cards, he got out of his car to serve the first of about fifty citations to local residents.

His squad consisted of five cops in three patrol cars. They canvassed the neighborhood in their patrol cars as he walked it on

foot with his partner, Ken Sokolowski, who stood about 18 inches taller than Joe. Ken took a position on the sidewalk next to the car as Joe went to the front door.

He walked up to the first door, which had its screen door closed, revealing the sounds of the house. He knocked gently on side of the door. “Police department.” At first, there was

no response. Then, a little boy of about 4 years of age appeared in the door. A woman, about 20, appeared next.

“Can I help you?” she asked, a beat later her face revealed fear of the uniform.

“Yes, ma’am, sorry to bother you. I’m here to serve this warrant. It’s for an abandoned vehicle, but, I peeked into your yard and didn’t see anything.”

“We had it *towed*.” she said, “I still have the receipt from the tow truck. I tried to ask the cop who gave me the ticket how to file it, but he wouldn’t tell me.”

“Okay. Can I see it?” he asked, respect pouring through his voice. The woman didn’t disclose that the cop who issued the previous ticket had sexually harassed her. She had many reasons to fear Tucson cops.

About ten seconds later, she appeared with a mountain of forms and opened her screen

door to hand them to Joe. The little boy pointed to Joe's holstered gun, curious.

"No, don't touch that, nino! He'll shoot you with it!" she said.

"No I won't," Joe objected, "No, don't tell him that ma'am. Hey, you like the Wildcats?"

The boy lit up with a smile. Joe pulled a pack of Wildcat basketball cards out of his pocket and asked his mother, "Can I give him these?"

"Yeah, sure," she responded, surprised, yet still cautious, waiting for something dark to happen.

Joe handed the cards to the boy, then resuming his business with the woman. "This is the form you want. Take this to motor vehicle as soon as you can and this will all go away."

Joe handed her the form she needed. “The rest is for your records.”

“And that’s it?” she asked, surprised.

“Yip. I’ll follow up on this in about a week or so to see if it cleared. Beyond that, this matter is closed. If you get any other calls or have any other officers come by, show ‘em this, and tell ‘em it’s processing. And if that’s not enough, here’s my card,” Joe said, giving her his card.

She looked like she had just won the lottery. She shed a few happy tears. “This is has been a pain in the you-know-what for years. My grandfather owned that car and he died and we just now got it towed. Thank you!”

Joe left that home not realizing that his simple acts of kindness and courtesy were undoing several hundred years of wounds due to war and neglect.

He visited every house, finding most people home. By the end of the day, he had given out hundreds of trading cards. Toward the end of his shift, he saw a man perched outside of a house, leaning on an old motorcycle, glaring at him. Joe would see him again. The young man was about 21, whose street name was Chile Verde. He was a small-time heroin dealer who saw Joe as a threat to business.

Joe had worked in narcotics long enough to know what he needed for a team that just did narcotics sweeps, but this was a new challenge. There were human shields everywhere. He had missed the horrors of Vietnam, yet a real, turbulent land war awaited him now. It was a similar battle, now on U.S. soil.

His tactics were working. The leadership wanted him to get to know the people and try to win their trust. They liked the Wildcats. They liked his personality. He was

charming and funny, and had a track record for eating drug dealers alive.

When he returned to the precinct, a few of his colleagues were surprised to see him looking as clean cut as if coming in from his day-off. He walked into the mail room and saw he had nothing in his box, and made a bee-line for the shower.

One officer, a Caucasian officer of medium build named Rick Yant, who had just returned from leave due to life-threatening injuries incurred at Old Pascua Village, stopped him to ask him how it went.

“Joe! Hey, you going out there soon?”

“Just spent all day and all night out there. Now I’m going home to my family. Wife’s gotta dinner waiting. Lasagna!”

“You look like you just got here,” he objected.

“Trust me, I stink. I just served over fifty subpoenas,” Joe replied, as Rick followed him into the locker room.

“No way.” *Yes indeed* and Joe showed him his file, full of the copies.

“May I ask how many guys you got on your team and what weapons you used?”

Joe smiled as he took his uniform off, revealing his sweat-soaked t-shirt. “Sure. Five of us right now. We just started. Today.”

Joe pulled out a pack of Wildcat cards and tossed it on a chair near Rick. “I just went out and was nice to people. They were nice back.”

A few cops came over and peeked their ears around the locker room to hear this story.

“Are there any of those left?” one cop asked, getting what Joe did. “If this will work with Team 2, this *has* to work with Team 4.”

“Yeah, but that one is for my son. He loves the Wildcats. They’re in the storage room. B, I think.”

“I’ll find ‘em. Thanks Joe!” he said, returning to his own locker.

A few days later, the University of Arizona’s deputy athletic director, Rocky LaRose fielded several calls from TPD officers requesting more trading cards.

Realizing what he had inspired, Joe took the remaining cards he had, along with three other uniformed cops who had volunteered to join his team, and walked them into McKale Center.

His fellow cops teased him that he’d be the first cop to earn a promotion to Sergeant using baseball cards, “Hi, I’m Joe Parella. Is there any way we can get a player or coach to sign a few?”

Eddie Smith, Pete Williams, Steve Kerr, Michael Tait and Morgan Taylor, Brock Brunkhorst all made their way into the locker room where a table with several boxes of their trading cards filled the room. Ken Bermeister and Jim Rosborough weaved through the offices and as players came in, and shouted, “Sign the cards with your face on ‘em!”

There was a certain joy the players took in signing them, as the assistant coaches and Lute Olson talked about the upcoming season. The players’ giddiness could be heard throughout the halls, which made the coaches smile.

“Someday these could be valuable,” the assistant coaches said to each other.

“Someday, they *will* be,” Lute said, without any doubt in his voice. *Did everyone forget Long Beach State and Iowa already? We’re new to Tucson, not to basketball. I was*

Nike's first celebrity endorsement, not that anyone remembers that...

The next day, Joe came back with his team, which had been dubbed by department veterans, The Untouchables, to collect the boxes. In Los Angeles, producer Art Linson had just signed Kevin Costner to portray Elliot Ness in a feature film version of the 1950s TV series.

Rocky LaRose led Joe and the other 3 cops, this time two of the four wearing plain clothes, to the locker room where the boxes were, this time, signed.

Joe was taken aback.

“How many are signed?”

“All of them,” Jim Rosborough said, peeking his head out of his office. “When we heard of the response of the community, I not only ordered the players sign ‘em all, but we put in another order for more from

the company that paid for them.” At Kalil Bottling, George Kalil was thrilled when he got a call from Rocky LaRose. His ad promotion had exceeded all expectations.

Joe’s smile was electric and contagious. There was something about moral victories. “Thank you. Tell the players thanks, from us.”

“You can tell ‘em yourselves,” Jim replied, leading them onto the court. Joe got goosebumps.

Lute Olson ran his players through a vigorous practice, and saw the men in police uniforms holding the boxes of cards they had finished signing the day before. He blew his whistle, and stopped practice for a brief moment. The players turned to see them men holding the boxes of cards they had signed and each group of men exchanged smiles.

“Thank you!” the cops said, almost in unison. Lute held up a hand to wave and shouted, “You’re welcome!”

Jim almost interrupted the practice, but realized Lute was keeping them going, despite a good public relations moment.

Joe and the team didn’t hesitate, they turned and walked out, with their newfound, city-changing treasure in hand.

Who knew?

Chapter 38

Joe looked at another part of his life, in 1985, when he saw his son's experience in the Boy Scouts, Troop 725. He saw his coworker Rick Hartigan witnessing these same acts being confessed by the adult victims who used to be kids he knew, including the sexual harassment of his own daughter, and he did nothing. Rick wrote a letter of complaint that was ignored by Fred Allison.

“Why didn't he do anything?” Joe asked Jesus, regarding Rick.

“Fear,” the Lord replied. “He feared anything that might cause him to lose his pension or lose social standing in the eyes of his peers. And he got it in his mind that Fred Allison held greater power than he really did, which was next to none. He was a facade.”

Joe was then reminded of Edmund Burke's quote, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

Fred Allison was a former cop who finished his life as the political representative for the Tucson Catholic Diocese. When the American Catholic Church needed to comment to the media regarding the events that took place in Tucson, Fred is the one who spoke.

Joe glanced around for him in hell, but didn't see him at first.

"He'll be there soon," Jesus said, with disappointment in his voice. "I am saddened when I nurture a soul from conception, provide him with enough love to make his own choice for Me, and they don't. Of the many who do, it still hurts."

Joe looked once more to see if he could recognize anyone else there. Sadly he did.

With his vastly-improved vision, he saw his mother, and several of his childhood friends.

Chapter 39

1986

The basin of the Grand Canyon.

Joe saw himself laying on his sleeping bag at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, looking up in the early hours of the morning, a trip that was both the first and last time he hiked with his son, as part of a group of Boy Scouts, one of whose tantrum almost cost them their lives.

Joe watched his son grow away from little league sports, and had shared so many stories about his own experience in the Boy Scouts, his son was interested. Joe's controlling temper had alienated him in the woodshed, yelling at him every time his hands didn't make the wood do exactly what he envisioned, and this might be his last chance to really spend quality time with him before he lost him to his teenage years.

He had coached him in soccer and watched him develop as a solid pitcher before his little league baseball coach stifled his son's requests to pitch or play a position other than right field.

The fact is Joe had sent his son to learn from some of the best players the UA Wildcats ever had, and the coach was jealous that his son was really that good. Stage fright crippled him at the plate, whereas during practice, his son had the hitting power of Hank Greenburg. His son would describe classmates purposely playing beanball, and would later learn than one boy in particular was a homosexual with a fetish for his son.

Not healthy.

But baseball had been a disappointment.

A few of the boys got the majority of the playing time. In hindsight, when his son's coach, a Tucson firefighter named Jesus "Chuy" Pesqueira offered to trade him to

Benji Sander's team, he should have taken it. Benji was an acclaimed photographer for the *Star* and whose own son would go on to be drafted by the Toronto Blue Jays and spend the majority of his career coaching in the Colorado Rockies minor league system.

The Sanders were a nice family. It would have been a good fit. But there were just a few games left, and, it seemed wrong to quit now. To quit seemed to equate to failure, and neither Joe nor his son wanted to give the Pesqueiras the satisfaction. Chuy was a fireman, so he and Joe crossed paths often.

The bigotry of Spanish superiority, known as brown-supremacy, was articulated by Chuy's refusal to let Joe's son play.

The only Caucasian players who were allowed to play more than the mandated-two-innings in the field and one at-bat were close friends of Chuy's son Jimmy, who

seemed to manipulate his father's role as the coach to his every advantage.

Chuy and his other sons, all older than Jimmy, had spent time playing community college baseball, which to a team of 12-year olds, was undistinguishable from professional baseball.

Joe still took his son to ballgames, but after three years of bad experiences, it was time for a new hobby.

The Boy Scouts were a great fit until Joe realized he had to deal with one of the most legalistic cops the city ever employed. Rick Hartigan had three kids as well, and whenever the Parellas and Hartigans and the Kennedys got together, it was a recipe for misunderstandings. Most of their extended families lived elsewhere,

so the cops only socialized with each other.

There was little to no alcohol around, so when classmates of Joe's kids would ask them if "they liked to party", images of their swimming pool, family-friendly music and endless buffet of soft drinks and June's lasagna came to mind, not the hard liquor, cocaine and marijuana their classmates were exposed to.

As the kids got older, relationships became more complicated. Away from school, they were like family to each other.

When they were *at* school, the Kenneys kids acted like they didn't know anyone else, with one exception.

Their eldest boy, Morgan, had a crush on Jeni. Or Jacquie. Or Jeni. Or Kim, Rick's oldest. Kim would go on to mother several children, but not with Morgan.

Morgan had all the resources to be a leader and a gentleman, but instead spent his energies belittling his younger brother, who

was just as much left without a father when a brain aneurism claimed him before Reagan took office.

Joe would often to have intervene when the families got together, separating his hyper-competitive son from the bigger kids, and the bigger brothers from each other.

Rick was an outdoors fanatic, a self-proclaimed naturalist. He nurtured Morgan's natural interest in hunting and fishing, and Joe liked the idea of a calm day at a lake, fishing and relaxing apart from the hostility his job offered.

So, in 1986, Joe enlisted his son into the Boy Scouts.

By 1987, his son quit, calling it one of the most painful experiences of his life. Rick had tried to put together a joint Boy Scout-and-family vacation at the Grand Canyon, not realizing just how bad that idea was.

Twenty boys of very eccentric backgrounds and physical needs, including one extremely abrasive boy who required crutches, made the long drive north from Tucson to Williams, Arizona.

Rick's daughters and a girlfriend all experimented with power by way of flirtation amidst two dozen teenage boys, meanwhile Rick's outdoor family fantasy didn't account for the ambiance of a school dance without chaperones.

Look but don't touch. Chew but don't swallow.

It was August, and it was one of the hottest summers of record for the 20th century.

Now, in training for the hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, the troop had organized mini hikes and overnight trips. It was during these types of trips most boys become lifelong friends. In Joe's son's case, the exact opposite happened.

First and foremost, the hike should never have happened. At 108- degrees, the park rangers refused to issue a hiking permit to Scout Master Rick and his band of 15 able-bodied scouts, unless he agreed to sign a waiver.

Further, Rick brought two teenage girls on the trip, his 13-year old daughter, and her 13-year old friend. Both went out of their way to flirt with the older scouts (mainly Morgan Kennedy, who ignored them) and taunted Joe's son.

To add insult to injury, the 1986 NCAA baseball World Series was going on, and the Wildcats would win it all. All forms of technology were banned. Except for the radios in the Scoutmaster's RV.

The older scouts, known as Leadership Core, were skilled at hiking and hunting, but when it came to their social skills, they caused more harm than good.

One boy, Phillip, was the epitome of a tall nerd, straight out of the cast of the recently-released cult classic film *Revenge of The Nerds*. But somebody forgot to tell him. Then there was Morgan, and a new arrival from Kentucky, Sean, a gentle blond-haired scout who Joe's son looked up to and counted as a friend.

The other scouts were a who's who of annoying geeks, but it's safe to say in hindsight that's puberty for you.

Because of the way Joe's son's body processed stress given Tourette's Syndrome, Joe found himself in the unlikely position of taking a pillow out to the middle of the forest and hold it like a boxing bag so his son could unleash some stress.

After Rick's daughter and her friend had their way taunting the boys in a way comparable to an evil Smurfette, and the fact that he couldn't watch the Wildcats on such

a historic occasion, add nerdy bully Phillip and an inaccurate map of the hiking trail; some of the boys had overpacked their gear.

One stubborn geek was determined to bring a full bottle of pancake syrup in a pack that was already 15-pounds over weight in the off chance that they encountered a kitchen on the trail. (Though illustrations in the Scout manual showed cartoons of boys flipping pancakes over a fire, the manual didn't explain how to create a controlled fire hot enough to make them correctly, assuming all other ideal cooking elements were available. These boys could barely pack water bottles that didn't leak.)

The 12-year old kept muttering something about body weight- and-pack ratios, but after Scout Master Rick removed the bottle of syrup from his pack three times, and he was told that if it happened again, he'd be removed from the hike and his fee forfeited.

And just for kicks, a boy among them named Billy Kinn demanded to ride a helicopter back up after the sun had set during the hike down.

“What should I have done?” Joe asked Jesus.

“What you did was quite heroic,” the Lord replied.

Joe found himself held hostage by a worthless map and a 13-year old boy who was determined to throw a tantrum at the bottom of the world’s biggest pot hole.

Joe and his son had packed their telescoping fishing rods, with the idea that once they reached the Colorado River, they might toss their lines in the Colorado River and enjoy a Kodak moment.

By the time they got to the camp, they accidentally walked into a late night religious service being held by some kind of

adult camp retreat, and Joe found himself trying to help eight boys set up their tents without enough food for dinner or light.

And, even though the sun had set many hours before, the temperature was still in the mid 90s.

It didn't help that as their group stumbled upon the campsite Rick had reserved for them, Billy Kinn threw a tantrum that unless he received a hot meal as his grandmother would otherwise prepare, he would vomit.

His acting was pretty bad, and he failed to vomit.

The next morning, which came upon them within a couple of hours, Joe found himself irked and determined to escape from the Grand Canyon. He showed extraordinary grace to the boys, especially Billy Kinn, whom he briefly considered drowning in the river.

They passed by it as if it were just another rock on the trail, and by the time the trail tilted from down to flat to up, they knew they were close.

A few hours into their trek upward, Rick and his group made up of the older boys had caught up to them and witnessed the shocking tantrum Billy was throwing, refusing to even walk.

Even if Joe wanted to call for help, cell phones were eight years away.

Billy forced Joe to use Army techniques, which included physically throwing Billy down the trail, indirectly carrying him every 50 feet. Naturally, when Joe took those extreme measures, another hiker came along having witnessed it, and threatened to report Joe for abusing a Boy Scout.

By the time the guy found park rangers and reported it, the rangers awaited the Scout

Master and his group at the trail's South Rim entrance.

Meanwhile, Billy put all their lives in danger, as they were running out of water with a few miles left to the nearest water fountain. They had all packed enough to reach the top with water to spare, had they kept a proper pace. But they couldn't, waiting for Billy Kinn.

Rick and his scouts caught up to Joe and Billy was faking hyperventilation. Rick told Joe to lead the rest of the boys out, and Morgan volunteered to stay behind with Rick.

Instead of the victory moment most marathon runners get to experience when finishing a hike of the Grand Canyon, these boys seemed more like survivors from a plane crash.

Joe's son and a couple of others were the first ones up and were greeted by Rick's

wife and girls in their Range Rover. Joe's son explained what happened to Billy and Rick's wife immediately called the ranger station to let them know what had happened. Joe also made it clear that the map he had been issued was incredibly flawed. The rangers couldn't explain how this version of the hiking map had made it into their hands, but the rangers tried to make-good by refunding the hiking fee.

When the rangers learned that both the Scout Master and the man suspected of abusing Billy on the trail were police officers, they dismissed the man who witnessed Billy being forcibly walked and let him know that they would handle it from there.

Meanwhile, near the bottom of the canyon, Rick pulled out a professional medical kit that paramedics used to gauge breathing and heart rates. He hooked it on Billy, who was doing a better job of acting, and after taking

several readings, he called Billy's bluff.
"Billy, you're faking it."

Morgan didn't hesitate, "Is it okay if I go ahead and let uncle Joe know what's going on?" Rick nodded.

Atop the South Rim trail, Joe saw Morgan's flash light and was able to read "S - O - S". Joe looked at his son and Rick's wife and said, "Son, something's wrong. Stay here with Judy."

Joe's son pulled out his camera and snapped as many pictures as he could, considering, despite his exhaustion, he had the best view of God's creation he had ever seen.

Morgan asked Joe where he needed him most. Joe thought about it briefly, and said, "Come with me in case we need to carry someone up."

By the time Morgan and Joe reached Rick and Billy, Rick had sat down on a rock and couldn't walk.

"Time to go Billy," Rick ordered, the patience gone from his voice. "Get your pack on."

Billy ensued another tantrum. "Billy, if you don't put your pack on and walk, I'm leaving you here and driving back to Tucson without you."

Billy miraculously found the strength to put on his pack and walk slowly up the trail, being yelled at by Morgan like a drill instructor.

Neither Rick nor Joe rebuked Morgan. Billy had exhausted the patience of all.

Then, Rick got a look in his eye that was unnerving to both men. "Joe, I can't move my legs."

At that moment, on that day, Joe was the living incarnate of All Things Bear Down. He put his strong hands on Rick's waist and said, "Rick, I got you."

He then carried his brother in arms up the rest of the way, into the arms of the park ranger emergency crew.

Both men collapsed as they reached the top.

Over the next few hours, the Boy Scout Troop 725 sat at a table of the South Rim's lone restaurant, and slowly counted their spare change as a waitress asked them what they'd like to order.

A half a sandwich cut into 22 pieces, please.

That's all they could afford.

Joe didn't think twice about this. He pulled out his credit card and handed it to the waiter, "Sir, this should cover us. Boys, order what you want." He smiled at his son. "How you doin'?"

Joe's son smiled back, "Better," he replied. The blisters on his hands and feet still hurting, but the joy of having survived this horrific hike of the Grand Canyon began to sink in. They had earned that damn T-shirt.

They all exited the gift shop wearing their T-shirts, *I hiked the Grand Canyon*, with pride.

Love you dad.

It was the last hike they would ever do together. It was also the last time Joe's son ever went camping until he got married in 2002.

Billy Kinn's parents were told of the liability of the incident and quietly agreed that no legal action would be taken against them on the condition that Billy was expelled from the troop.

The boy who couldn't walk but who made the camp ambiance unbearable for Joe's son also left the troop. Though his parents said it

was because of all the surgeries on his legs, Joe knew the truth.

His son had been the punching bag for the disabled boy and Phillip, and when his son realized he didn't have to attend the troop gathering, that he had been accepted and was growing from the teachings of Jujitsu at the Ott YMCA, they realized that his time as a member of Troop 725 had run its course.

It wasn't without its high points.

The previous year, Joe and his son got their first taste of what operating Disneyland might be like when Troop 725 was tasked with presenting the State-wide festival, a cross between a large scale camping trip and an Olympic games among all the Boy Scout troops in Arizona.

Rick had made the announcement that they needed event ideas, ideas for games, ideas for everything.

Joe and his son brainstormed. It was really the first time his son showed a talent for creativity that wasn't an imitation of things he saw on TV.

Joe's son had sat in his room and written down a dozen ideas for games and then pitched them to his dad. "Wow! You came up with that? That would make a great police training exercise, much less a Boy Scout Game," he said.

The Troop agreed and after the first two days of competition, Rick bragged to his Troop that all he heard from fellow Scout Masters was that this was the best event they ever had.

Mere flattery? Maybe. These people were not afraid to find flaw in something, so the likelihood that they sincerely had a great time was high.

From then on, Joe and his son talked at length about life, deep, spiritually-rich talks. They had never been closer.

Joe had taught his son how to lead, and on one of the overnight training hikes, found himself alone at a campfire, inside the psyche of Rick Hartigan. Most cops disdained him. He behaved in a self-centered manner, which didn't fit the heart that most cops required to survive.

In order to overcome the evil and chaos that typically led to the dialing of 911, cops needed to submit to a code of honor that was on par with the Marine Corp, which is why most departments required military service from their new recruits. They needed to back each other up on every call no matter what. The standing unwritten rule was to obey the most recent direct order by your commanding officer, whether it makes sense to you or not.

Few cops felt that Rick cared about anyone but himself. What's more is that he seemed to delight in going to court to testify against traffic defendants. Joe hated going to court unless he absolutely had to or he was studying the legal process, which deeply fascinated him. He had tinkered with the idea of becoming a Judge or a teacher.

A couple verses in the Bible seemed to describe Rick best, he was a man who strained at gnats, yet swallowed camels (Matthew 23:24) and Matthew 20:25 which says, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."

Rick had talked a big game as if he had served in the military, and spoke of a college experience during which his father took his car away when he met his future wife. He spoke to her in very demeaning ways, which Joe didn't agree with. Joe had since learned that respect for women was found in

Genesis, reiterated by Christ in His teachings on divorce and reiterated again by Paul in several of the Epistles in case anyone missed it.

Rick shared his heart with Joe.

“I don’t like the way the department is going,” Joe said, staring into the fire.

“I don’t either,” Rick replied. “Joe, can I ask you something?”

“Sure.”

Rick cleared his throat and asked, “I know what the people at work say about me. I have ears. Do you think they’re right?”

Yes, it was wrong for you to condone the kid with crutches and your leadership core’s ongoing man-handling of my son. And could please stop bragging about military service? I served. You didn’t.

“Nah,” Joe said, “take it from the source. We’ve had guys arrested in front of the precinct for selling heroin. They steal from each other. They mired the toilet seats with dung because they think it’s funny. And now...I fear for the future of the department. The Gays are taking it over. It’s gonna hurt the city.”

Rick agreed. “I agree. Thank you. Something else I’ve been meaning to ask. What exactly is Cory’s medical condition?”

Joe tried to sum it up. “We think it came through my dad. Tourettes is a nervous system disorder that makes him twitch uncontrollably, even under medication. He doesn’t know he’s doing it. His brain will take sounds and repeat them, often under his breath, for hours until his muscles are too tired to move. It calms down when he sleeps. He was diagnosed at 6, but by then, a lot of the damage had been done.”

Rick hung his head, ashamed of himself, his family, their friends and the Catholic school that had marked him. He immediately put the pieces together. “He’s repeating everything everyone else is saying subconsciously and we’re punishing him for it.”

Matthew 18:6 says, “If anyone causes one of these little ones-- those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

Rick knew that verse and decided from then on he would treat Joe’s son with a lot more patience. Unfortunately, few of the others in their circle of friends did.

Joe shared in Rick’s conviction, “He got most of his profanity from words I use. I’ve been praying that God cleans my mouth.”

To Rick's credit, he was a brilliant scholar and cited Isaiah 6:5 like a gunslinger, "Woe to me,' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.'"

Back at Old Pascua Village, Joe went door to door informing people that they needed to get their junked cars off their lots. Some said they would, some argued with him, and some were afraid that the drugs they stashed in them would be discovered.

He visited Richey Elementary, to the shock of the drug dealers who had staked out the school's parking lot as their own private outdoor mall.

Parents and kids had become afraid to walk to school.

A few junked cars stood nearby, blocking at least one entrance and having jagged edges that kids would get hurt playing on.

Joe pulled up to three junked vehicles one day and went through the motions. First, a bright orange sticker.

When he returned the next day, he noticed it had been removed.

He began searching the vehicle. A middle-aged man with bad teeth and long, graying black hair approached him holding a beer can, “Hey, what are you doing? That’s my car. Stay out of it.”

“License and registration, please,” Joe asked, playing the scenario by the book.

The man was speechless. “Are you crazy, man?” he asked, his body language acknowledging that all three of the cars were mere shells.

“There are no tags on this vehicle. I need to see proof that this is your car, besides your word?”

The man didn’t have it.

“Okay. Then go back your house and stay there.”

“Stay away from my car!” the man yelled as he walked back toward his house, grumbling. “Don’t you got more important things to do?”

“Nope. Now go back to your house or I’m gonna have you arrested,” Joe said, filling out his report and grabbing his body radio. He called in a code that meant he wanted a tow truck. Two of his partnering squad cars pulled up, making the man think twice about getting physical with Joe.

A few minutes later, a tow truck appeared, and the man tried to come out and start a riot over it. “This cop is towing my car!” he shouted to a few neighbors who did make their way toward the three junked vehicles.

“Show me proof of ownership!” Joe said, louder than he was planning to.

The man went into his house and brought back two car titles. “Here! No you get this (expletive) truck off my car!”

Joe compared the VIN numbers on the titles to the numbers on all three vehicles. They were very rusted but visible. The man had presented a State ID that confirmed that he was the man whose name was on the titles.

“Well,” Joe said as the tow truck driver waited for Joe to finish, “Based on these titles, these two cars belong to this man, but *this* one doesn’t.”

Joe ran the VIN. It had been reported stolen in 1978.

The cars were all towed and the man was arrested. It was a funny sight to some of the neighbors who watched all three junked cars and the man who owned them taken away.

A woman who lived nearby said to Joe, “You know who he is?”

Joe shook his head no. “His son is Chile Verde. He’s a heroin dealer here. They used these cars to keep their dope in.”

A few days later, Joe and his partners pulled up alongside another abandoned car, this one on a lot right next to Richey Elementary.

He got out and gave orders, “You guys take care of these and I’m gonna go do a Walk Through.”

He walked into the school and saw the children scurrying around the halls. “Hi Joe!” the principal said, lighting up with a big smile. She was a short, older woman with more charisma than Ronald Reagan.

“Hey! How are you?” he asked, handing out basketball cards to any kids who approached him to say hi. Many kids wanted to appear cool, so they would call him by his first name.

“Hey Joe!” He would always smile back and wave.

“You being good?” he would ask.

“Uh-huh, well, sometimes,” a boy replied. “I got an A on my math test!”

“Hey, all right!” he responded with great enthusiasm. “Just for that, take one. Only kids who get As on math tests get one.”

Another boy poked his head into the cluster of people and shouted, “Can I have one? I got a B!”

The boy corrected him, “No, he said only kids who get As on math tests get cards!”

Joe’s response was lightening fast. “Well, what do I get for Bs? How about the football team?”

He handed the other boy a stack of cards. A teacher weaved her way through the flock of

kids and stepped passed Joe into an office area, saying, “And what do you say, kids?”

“Thank you!” they cheered, heading to their cafeteria.

Joe then turned to the principal and asked, “You need anything?”

She paused to think about it. “No, but, Ramon might have something for you. He’s right there, walking by -- Ramon!”

The janitor heard them and stepped into the office area. “Yes?”

The principal explained, “You said if Officer Joe came by, you had something you wanted to ask him.”

“Oh, yes. I called the police about this and nobody would do anything about it. There’s a couple junked cars on the playground put there by some bad guys. Nobody will tow ‘em.”

Joe nodded. “Show me.”

Joe walked out with Ramon to see the problem. The cars had been manually wedged into a property line so that drug smugglers could use them to stash stuff in the cars.

“I’ll take care it,” Joe said. “This is easy. Gotta make a call.” Just then, Joe heard on his radio that his team got assigned a call in the Pascua-Yaqui neighborhood, a domestic disturbance.

As he walked out toward his car, he saw Chile Verde and two cohorts standing next to the patrol car, looking like they were ready to fight.

It was a moment straight out of Tombstone lore, but Joe was alone. He radioed for back up as he walked toward his car.

Officer Michael Conto was a tall, muscular young cop heard the call after clearing a call

near Oracle Road. Even though he was reasonably close to where Joe was, he knew seconds were precious. He had just been beaten up by some Pascua-Yaquis recently and knew the dangers all too well. He immediately blared his sirens and zoomed to what he thought would be a life-saving rescue of Joe. He

called to Joe on the radio, but Joe was unable to answer, staring down three drug dealers who wanted to kill him.

“Ready to die, cop?” Chile taunted. Joe took a defensive position straight out of a martial arts movie and as each of the young men took swings at him, he mercilessly used one man’s body against the other as dead-weight weapons. It was his life or theirs and considering he had a wife and three kids at home, he chose his.

These three men had been the terror of Old Pascua Village, intimidating the Elementary school staff and residents alike.

Joe's fighting techniques, ranging from the Army, to wrestling, to all the advanced martial arts moves that cops were trained in at the Academy were more than enough.

Michael called to Joe on the radio and then out the window as he pulled up in his squad car.

Engaged in hand-to-hand combat, didn't answer.

Michael feared the worst. After about 45 seconds, it was all over.

Michael's heart pounded as he found Joe, leaning his knee into the third of three young men, laying in pools of their own blood, hand cuffed and face-down, as Joe himself had only minor scratches, bearing a grin of victory on his jaw.

As police escorts and paramedics worked together to secure the criminals into ambulances, Joe got a judge on the radio and asked for a warrant to have the junked cars towed.

The next morning, news of this made its way to CBS affiliate KOLD's and NBC affiliate KVOA's news desks. They sent crews out to capture The Untouchables in action.

Richey Elementary had been exorcised of the threat of drug dealers.

For now.

By 1994, the laws regarding the disposal of disabled vehicles were changed. By 2008, many Old Pascua Village elders who refused to adopt change died. Young families who had become fed up with waiting for the elders or the newly-formed national government to allocate the casino revenues to benefit Tribal needs ceased waiting for the pile of dirt that 785 West Grant Road was

built on to be paved or landscaped, and most of them moved to the far southwest side.

Chapter 40

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a speech in Washington, D.C. that changed the world. He spoke of a dream of ethnic equality. The leaders of the city of Tucson were listening and decided to empower their two most television-worthy strongholds, the University of Arizona athletic department and the city's police department.

The college sports programs had gained a reputation for excellence on the west coast for several decades, and had developed a rich history dating back to 1881.

Chapter 41

January 1881

Caucasian militaries, from Spain, France, Norway, the British, and the latest, the United States Army, had taken turns using their guns to evict Tribes descended from the same Hebrew Tribes migrated post-Flood from Egypt, east through modern day Asia and across the swampland as the modern day Pacific Ocean receded.

A few lonely acres that were mapped by Army soldiers under the authority derived from the Monroe Doctrine became an unwanted deed at a poker game in.

C.C Stephens was a thin man wearing a business suit as he entered a surprisingly-upscale tavern of this railroad mining town. The street was jammed equally with horse-

drawn wagons and the most recent addition to the road, motorcars.

Coming off of one of the worst days of his career, and his life for that matter, he had just been cited by the local newspapers as the man who lost the bid for the next big state money maker, a mental hospital.

He needed a drink, and an answer to prayer. He was regarded as a failure by the state press. People were describing this as a failure on par with Steward's Folly. Newspapers bearing the headlines of his failure littered the streets of what would become the north central side of downtown Tucson.

The crumpled deed sat atop of a small stack of otherwise modest mining claims, just another chip on a table amidst a night of gambling among the wealthy of Tucson. Stephens ordered himself a shot of whiskey, took a long look at his reflection in the bar's

mirror, and then turned around to let his eyes fixate on the room behind him.

He heard noise and saw commotion. He might have left right after slamming back his drink, had it not been for the words he heard from behind the bar.

“Who’s gonna pay for those?” the barkeeper asked of men seated at a particular table being served shot glasses by a Chinese waiter. Stephens’ head turned side-to-side until he realized a shotgun was being pointed over his shoulder at the men. He leaned slightly away from the gun as he realized what was happening.

Not another Tombstone, he thought to himself.

After a long staring contest, one of the men exchanged glances with his fellow poker players and then took a couple claims off the top stack of the table and put them on the

waiter's tray, offering a confirming glance to the barkeeper.

The gun rescinded for the moment and the piano player broke out in a Chinese song.

Stephens turned back to the bar and found himself fixated on the claim papers. He read the one on top. An Angel whispered to him, "That one."

He asked the barkeeper how much it was worth, and after reading it, they concluded it was valued at a few hundred dollars. The barkeeper seemed delighted that for the price of whiskey, he could move forward on plans to grow his bar into a fine dining restaurant, similar to one he worked at back east.

Stephens countered, "Would you consider donating it?"

"What for?"

Stephens explained to the saloon owner who he was, the hospital bid gone-wrong, and his idea for a formal college for mining and agriculture.

The next morning, the saloon owner took a wagon ride to the location of the deed, and saw the remnants of squatters, but not much else.

With great excitement, Stephens thundered away, “Can you imagine? A place where citizens of this great nation can come to learn about all the latest innovations in regards to mining and agriculture. And kids. A place where the children can go to school as well! Think of it! They have private schools back east, and I hear the President is thinking of installing a new cabinet, a Board of Education!”

“I admire your enthusiasm, but...” the saloon owner replied, shaking his head.

“Can you imagine? A university dedicated to educating people for the future of our nation. Agriculture, mining, transportation, and who knows, maybe one day, flight! Can you *imagine* that?”

“No,” the saloon owner answered, “but, I believe you can. I’ll think about it.”

Chapter 42

Ten years later, contractors broke ground to build the “Main Campus”. Its first semester of classes welcomed 32 students.

Over time the structure would be called Old Main.

Students thrived in the enthusiasm of what was still very much the spirit of the wild west, and the thriving dirt race tracks on the far east side of town, nicknamed “Speedway”. The students had claimed a small mountain near campus with a giant letter-A visible from the sky, and the young state acknowledged it as “A Mountain”.

Chapter 43

October 1926

Racing had become big business in Tucson. And for that matter, there was little else to do to get your mind off schoolwork.

This was a generation that was born to be wild.

Three football players, hot off their first win of the season, raced down a long stretch of desert, side by side, with seemingly no finish line to declare a winner. A dust storm formed behind them as they streaked across the grainy sand.

The boys laughed as their Model-T bumped and spun crazily through bushes and rock piles. They bounced loosely in the seats, given that seat belts would not be installed in most cars for another 20 years. John “Button” Salmon was in the front passenger seat as his teammate drove, and his

roommate sat in the back, howling to the sound of the Arizona sunset.

A girl full of beautiful girls raced alongside them, the smiles of youthful sexual energy flying about 80 miles-an hour without a care in the world.

John stuck his head out the window and screamed, “Whoo-hoo! I love Arizona!!!” The sound of his enthusiasm was echoed by the car full of girls adding their own cheers. These were the roaring 20s of the wild west.

John was the smallest of the three, stocky team captain who had played quarterback for the Bobcats, the team’s mascot. His mouth almost never stopped talking. He talked fast. On the field, he willed his teams to win.

“Gonna get a score, here, now boys. Run your routes and I’ll put the ball in your hands. Bear-Down-now,” he would say as

the huddle would break toward the line of scrimmage.

On the baseball field, he would kneel just outside the dugout as his teammates batted, rattling off endless chatter to the irritation of his opponents, using the same figures of speech, “Dig deep, now, batter. Bear-down-now.” When he said the words Bear-Down, he said them as one-word, and his enthusiasm became contagious with the fans.

Once at a baseball game, an alumni visiting with his family leaned against a fence to ask his younger brother, waiting in the on- deck circle, what Button was chattering.

“Bear, Down,” he annunciated. “It means to dig deep within yourself and pour yourself out, to give everything you’ve got,” he answered, adding, “the Bible says that love knows no greater act than to lay down your life for your friends. That’s what Bear Down

means; an act of personal sacrifice, but kind of modern-way of saying it. I'm modern. I like modern," he said with the slight raise of the eye-brows.

The sound of the bat hitting the ball prompted the player to turn his face toward the game excitedly, and cheer on his teammate, taking his own place at the plate.

The boys drove the car until it sped over a ravine and spun, bouncing three times before landing awkwardly up-side down. The driver looked around the car and didn't see anyone else in it. He scrambled to get out. He saw one of his friends stumbling to his feet, with a dozed look on his face.

"Where's Button?" he asked, with shock in his voice.

The two would discover Button unconscious, pinned under the weight of the car, bloodied and appearing to be dead.

One of the cars they were racing, a car full of girls, pulled up next to them, and each girl immediately ran to look for the boys, calling out to them by name.

It took time to transport Button to a nearby military base where doctors tried to save him. It was determined his spinal cord had been severed and the loss of blood was reducing his chances of survival by the hour.

He managed to live about two more weeks, during which time his head coach and father-away-from home, James Fred “Pop” McKale, came to visit him everyday. On the Friday before the Bobcats were to face New Mexico State, Pop saw Button for the last time. A priest had administered the Last Rites.

Pop had considered lying to John, telling him he was going to be alright, but he couldn't. Swallowing hard, he asked him,

“Anything you want me to pass on to the team?”

John struggled to breath, and his capacity for speech had diminished. He knew he had only hours to live, if not minutes. His anger at himself for being so reckless, for what he considered abandoning his team, and his family, pierced through his pain, and what was left of the strength of his body. He said, “Come closer.” Pop sat on a bed side stool, and slid close enough to John to put his face inches away from John’s.

Instead of hearing a faint voice, he felt a surge of power come through his mouth as John gave one last order as the team’s captain. Without a shred of weakness in his tone he ordered, “Tell the team...tell them to bear down.” Pop McKale boarded the team bus and traveled to New Mexico to play the Aggies.

Just before the game, the players each perched on one knee, and Pop told them team what had happened, and shared his last words with them.

He then adjusted his cap, turned and walked out the locker room door toward the field. Each player fastened their helmets and followed.

The news of John Salmon was on the mouths of most of the fans, and as the team took the field, they all stood and gave a welcoming ovation.

The Aggies were heavy favorites to win this game, but the emotions of the Bobcats were so intense, Arizona went on to win 7-6. It was noted by one of the members of the press, a sports writer from the Los Angeles Times named Bill Henry wrote, “The Arizona men showed the fight of wildcats and displayed before the public gaze a couple of little shrimps who defied all

attempts of the Tigers to stop them.” After the newspaper made its way through the UA student body and faculty, they voted to adopt the “Wildcats” as their mascot, upgraded from the “Bobcats”.

Chapter 44

1956

Jack Lee was just hired to be the next head of the music department. University officials were so proud of their recent expansions of the campus, that instead of taking him on the usual campus tour by golf cart, they decided to take him by plane.

While flying over the city, Lee was inspired by the stories of the Bear Down tradition, especially the one about the kids who died in a car accident. He moved into his new office and began writing a song which he would title, “Bear Down, Arizona.”

About a month after he wrote it, he gathered an orchestra made up of hand-picked students, and invited the President, Chancellor and his secretary to listen to the first rendition. Outside his own mind, no one had ever heard it before in its entirety.

As they walked into the rehearsal room, he and his orchestra were in position to begin. The three guests did not have an opportunity to sit down as they stood and listened to the band play the song together for the first time.

As the melody of the song played out, the President was ready to clap his approval, but his secretary instinctively knew the song wasn't over, and reached gently over wearing white-gloves, and stopped him from clapping. Before the president could react, he heard the explosive bellow of the first chorus line played of "Bear Down, Arizona."

By the time Lee was finished, the two men stood there, as if a hurricane had blown through the room, and the secretary's face was covered in silent tears. She clapped wildly.

“How soon can you have that ready to be played in a marching band?” the Chancellor asked.

In 1960, the promoters of the new professional football league’s world championship were so impressed by the UA marching band, they invited them to perform at halftime of the first ever “super bowl”.

Chapter 45

August 28, 1963

“..they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The racial divides of brown supremacy that the Spanish Empire, known for its deadly Armada, spread throughout the world for centuries embedded themselves deep into the culture of the western states. Without Spanish ships carrying africans over to the New World, the slave trade might never have been the economic force used to build the Americas on.

Hindsight.

The problem was so primal that when T.U.S.D. considered curriculum about Spain's role in slave import, the wars that resulted

in the Louisiana Purchase, and the racism that had become tradition in Tucson, it rejected it for inclusion in Social Studies and History programs.

Once the kids knew the truth, there would be race riots, Board members feared. In some regards, they were wise in their decision-making. Indeed, Tucson wasn't ready to repent from its sin of brown supremacy. Not all of the younger generations of Spanish descendants were racist. But enough were that it was an undeniable problem.

And, many of those who supported brown-supremacy were in power. They sat on Boards and Councils. Of those who subconscious lived with or benefited from brown-supremacy, they acknowledged it existed, but failed to see it as a crisis, just as their counterparts whom Dr. King spoke to in his famous speeches had done. They share common hearts with the Pharisee in the

parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

Jesus said. “To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to Heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14)

Still, many Latinos put their faith in their lineage. Jesus cast judgement on that as well. “And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.” (Matthew 3:9)

As the tape-delay of the King Speech continued into post-event news coverage, President Richard Harvell sat in the faculty lounge and watched it along with his staff.

“We need to do something,” he said, wringing his hands in partial frustration. “

He stated importance of landing a coach to campaign as the face of the city.

“We’ve had migration increase our GDP, the city manager tells me they are now recruiting cops nationally, and it sounds like the Pacific Coast League will include a Tucson franchise. But nothing has really caught fire.”

Not yet.

Chapter 46

1968

It appeared that the UA football program would answer the city's prayers for national respect. Though Fred Enke had led the basketball and baseball team to league championships, it was the emergence of the color television era that had put programs like John Wooden's UCLA teams on the international sports map.

The Arizona football team was 8-1 heading into a fated game versus Arizona State, both teams being courted by the Sun Bowl.

Dan Mudra leaned back in his chair while on the phone with a Sun Bowl official, and overplayed his hand. He smirked as he said, "Take us now or don't take us at all and we'll shop for other bowls." A week later, the Wildcats were shocked by Arizona State,

30-7. Realizing how close ASU had come to going to its own bowl game that year, school officials became determined to never let it happen again. Their efforts over the next two years led to the 1972 debut of the Fiesta Bowl.

In 1972, Fred Snowden became the first black coach of an NCAA Division I team when he accepted the head coaching job at Arizona which opened the newly minted McKale Center.

A thousand miles away, in Long Beach, California, Lute sat his kitchen table and read about it in the newspaper. His wife Bobbi made breakfast for the family. After he read the headline out loud to her, she remarked, “Next time you take a recruiting trip out there, you should visit, say hi. It’s history.” Lute nodded to her and kept reading to the sound of his kids munching on apple pancakes.

Chapter 47

Spring 1972

Months had passed since he had visited Bob Gilmartin in Tucson and given his notice at the New Providence Police Department. They hadn't hired him yet, but, now that he had two kids, Jacquie and Jeni, he didn't want to take any chances. He was self-aware that his decisions now effect many other people.

It was a late fall in their small two-bedroom apartment when June worked this in over breakfast, "I'm pregnant."

Jenny Parella loved babysitting the girls. She didn't know about the baby yet. Her husband worked long hours managing men and machines as the government's highway

contracts kept him busy doing patchwork for a nation now insistent on having paved roads from coast to coast.

The Supreme Court's decision *Roe Vs. Wade* was on the news almost every night, and while having a casual married/date night, June and Joe munched on burgers, accompanied by the usual sounds of gas, and discussed whether or not June would abort their would- be third child.

Joe was dead-set against it, and June was willing to incur the labor one more time, come what may. Her generation had been raised to play the role of baby machines, sexual objects with a knack for the janitorial arts, and in that regard, she was holding her own.

She had experienced heart break at the hands of her dad's business partners while growing up, being sexually assaulted until her father learned of it and with great

restraint talked himself out of murdering the man. Her older brothers were self-centered, belligerent hecklers, one who expected life to come his way, given his father's political position in New York, and the other who casually went into teaching. June's closest relationship was with her older sister, who had married a lawyer out of etiquette, not love.

June yearned for freedom, but could not find her way out of Bellmore, New York. She got as far as a neighboring Army base before dating the guy she'd go west with and raise a family. Her only job came when Joe's father used his mafia influence to get a local bank to train her as a teller. While Joe was finishing up his military duty, June learned that her parents were selling their house and moving to Wisconsin. She had a choice, go with them or find a place of her own.

She and Joe had dated enough that it was time for their parents to formally meet. She

watched her father field the phone call that became the families blessing.

George Sr. picked up his phone and called Bill Slade, “George Parella for Bill Slade. Mr. Slade, my son would like permission to court your daughter. It is my understanding that your daughter needs a place to stay while my son finishes his time in the Army. I want to invite you to my home, or we’ll come to you, to discuss the matter. We have met your daughter and are very impressed by her.”

On the other end of the phone, the tall New York executive smiled and replied in his own deep voice, “Yes, Mr. Parella. Why don’t you come over and bring your family and we’ll talk over dinner.”

From that moment on, the covering of God was with Joe and June.

She was allowed to stay with the Parellas, “renting” a spare bedroom once occupied by Joe’s older sister, also recently wed. Their time of courtship had been capped by the planning of a formal wedding, and both sets of parents laid down the law regarding conjugal visits to the Army barracks or anywhere else.

After Joe’s last day of Army duty came and went, and their wedding day approached, Jenny had playfully given all the “rent” money back to June as a gift. They just wanted to see if she could survive their family.

One Sunday afternoon, Jenny was making spaghetti with a sauce that was passed down from when Italy was known as Rome. “June, would you like to have my recipe?” June did not know that she had been accepted into the family. June got so good at making that marinara sauce that whenever Joe took left overs to work, the cops who ran the pro shop

would barter with him for replacement gear and uniforms.

The fact is, Jenny knew the Parellas weren't easy people to find harmony with. They were rarely, if ever happy. They laughed at other people's misfortunes. They pursued the things of the world and no matter how much they bought or ate or consumed, it was never enough to be content just being still. Peace eluded the Parella farm.

Instead it was filled with cigarette smoke and the gripes of Shirley, George's wife. Her solo griping later become a choir when her daughters were old enough to complain.

Jenny often had to cook extensive meals for peculiar men who would visit, bringing with them an odd collection of new small appliances and money. June did not know that news of her arrival into the family made it into Mario Puzo's notes for *The Godfather*. "Kay", later played by actress

Diane Keaton, wasn't a WASP on accident. She was based on June Slade.

One of the downsides of making money with the mafia is that you're always self-aware someone with the authority to take away whatever you have stolen is watching you. Jenny knew this. She watched to see how June would react to the oddities of mob life. They were subtle evils. After being married for a year, June finally had to ask Jenny to stop giving her appliances. She realized they were stolen and did not want to be a part of that. Jenny respected her wishes.

George's wife Shirley was indulging herself so much in the dark side of what money could buy, she had become unbearable, later the inspiration for Fredo's wife. June made the best of it but would soon find out just how dark her sister in law was.

After June gave birth to their only son in late August, 1973, Joe listened in

disappointment and shock as his sister in law ruined the breaking of the news over the phone to his brother. She was so bitter over never having a son herself, bearing four daughters, she rebuked their son's birth and declared in a hurt, loud, angry voice that should would never acknowledge or accept Joe's son as a Parella.

She denied Christ until brain cancer claimed her in 2010.

Then one day, he went to the mail box and pulled out an envelope from the Tucson Police Department, inviting him to report to their academy in February, 1973.

Tucson.

As Joe read and reread this letter, it was like he was walking on sunshine.

Since arriving in Tucson, whenever this John Denver song came on, Joe got this look on his face, as if Mr. Denver had him in

mind when he wrote it. Though this song was not played at his funeral, he always played it when working in the yard or relaxing in the pool.

Rocky Mountain High's lyrics include:

“He was born in the summer of his 27th year going home to a place he'd never been before. He left yesterday behind him, some say he was born again, some say he'd found the key to every door....”

It was impossible to imagine his cross-country drive from New Jersey to Arizona without hearing this song in the background.

Joe was able to secure a mortgage and buy a new family-sized station wagon. His parents were both happy for him, but also disappointed to see him go.

Joe was more determined to succeed to spite them, specifically to spite his father's refusal

to finance his dreams in 1968, than delighted that God had opened a door for him to live his life out west and fulfill his Calling. From Joe's perspective, his father had disappointed him for the last time.

Instead of Joe seeking God's face in Arizona, he sought to vilify George Sr.'s decision by getting what he wanted on his own.

"Your father was very proud of you," Christ said. Joe's memory was a little different. "See it from My point of view." Without saying it out loud, Joe realized that he refused to submit to the authorities in his life, and would not honor his father and mother, with respect to their flaws.

In time, when he had the same struggles with his own kids, specifically his son, the Word would be true again. *God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

On his last day as a resident of New Jersey, Joe put their last few items into the station wagon. The girls were loaded up, saying goodbye to their grandmother, whom they affectionately called, “Nanny.” June was buckled into the passenger seat, starting to show her four-months of pregnancy with their third and final baby. As Joe poked his head into the car window, he said, “Gonna go say goodbye to Pop-pop,” he said, nerves filling his voice. (Pop-pop was George Sr.’s grandfather nick name.)

As Joe walked in, George Sr. had locked the door to his room. Joe tried to open it, quickly feeling the doorknob locked. Joe knocked, “Pop, we’re going now. Come shake my hand.”

There was silence.

Joe insisted, “Come out, the car’s running. Junie and the girls are waiting. I want to shake your hand before I go.”

“Leave me alone,” George said, barely audible, but enough for Joe to understand his meaning. George blew his nose into a handkerchief.

Joe’s adrenaline began to flow. He grabbed the doorknob even tighter and shook it, as if that would help. He knew if he forced the door open, it would likely become violent. He pleaded with his father to open the door, his temper escalating to a point even his wife had never seen before. By the time he got behind the wheel of the car, unable to feel the arms of his mother hug him goodbye, wiping tears from her eyes, her youngest son leaving home with his own family, the adrenaline from twenty-nine years of emotional hurt propelled him across America’s freeways in twenty-four hours without a hint of fatigue.

“You defied his authority, yet you believed you were entitled to his blessing,” the Lord said. “You wanted everything your way, and

when they were old enough to start wanting things, your kids did as you did, tantrums and all.”

Joe both relived the emotion of the moment as he watched the wall, and listened as the Lord taught him about how our viewpoints change with authority. Joe had only gone to Tucson to escape the no he got from his father in New Jersey, and because someone in Arizona had told him yes, they would give him what he wanted.

But at a price.

By 1981, Joe sat in a waiting room at the police department’s psychiatric division and waited for the doctor to see him. He had seen the darkest sides of Tucson and they had taken their toll on him.

He had recently graduated from the Catholic deacon program sanctioned by Saint Francis De Sales and had sought the guidance of a widower named Matty Ricculia. Matty was

an older gentleman from New York who had married an immigrant woman whose daughter was a classmate of his own daughters. Matty spoke plainly about life and Luke 12:25, *Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?* Joe delighted in his company and his wisdom. He needed a father figure and Matty fit the role with no strings attached.

Indeed, worrying had given him an ulcer. It had threatened his marriage and now threatened his job.

Matty died in his sleep in early 1984, just a few months after his father George died. Though a part of him mourned his father's death, a part of him, greater than he would admit openly, denounced his father with an emphatic *good, considering all the pain you caused me...*

Meanwhile, he had his own family to take care of.

About that time, Joe had taken all the classes the police academy offered and was eager to be done with school. He was called into his Captain's office one day and told, "We have a problem. The transcription department can't read your reports."

He was ordered to take a writing class, and the department would compensate him. Since he had already exhausted all the courses available at the police academy, the timing for him to return to school was good. A Pell grant covered his tuition. He learned quickly how to navigate the registration process and acquired an advisor. He quickly declared himself as a political science major. He was officially a Wildcat.

About that time, he visited another psychiatrist who suggested a form of therapy that proved to be dangerous and almost killed Joe.

Transcendental meditation.

Joe had successfully fallen into a deep enough sleep to leave his body and fly around, using only his spirit. He tried to get June to do it too, but she resisted.

One day, she came into their room to see him laying at the foot of their bed, in the fetal position, crying.

Dumbfounded, she asked what was wrong, and whether she should call 911.

“No,” Joe finally responded. “I was flying around, but when I tried to get back into my body, I couldn’t get back in.”

The anger and unforgiveness that had been in the house for so many years had become a comfortable home for some demons who sought to destroy the Parellas from the inside out.

When *Poltergeist* debuted that year, it struck a nerve. It was only because Joe had previously received Christ as his Savior that

the Lord commanded the demons back off, and allowed Joe to re-enter his body.

Short of that, he would have gone into a coma, and his condition been relegated as a stress-induced heart attack, and his kids would have lost their father.

Spiritually, the Catholic church Joe had chosen for his family to attend was a hornet's nest for sexual assaults against children, all of which would become headline news by 1999.

It did not teach the Gospel as was being preached fervently by Protestant church leaders in the area, under the denominations of Lutheran, Methodist, Assembly of God-Foursquare and a growing off-shoot of the AG-F, known simply as Calvary Chapel. Over time, the kids hated going, causing an argument every Sunday morning between Joe and his kids.

Meanwhile, June's flair for cutting the family's hair became so notable that when June enrolled in beauty school to legally work as a beautician, she befriended a "born-again" Christian named Mary, a single mom who was being courted by another born-again Believer named Joe Micoletti.

They were another Italian family, and Joe had taken the stance, articulated by Robert De Niro's character in *The Godfather Part II*, that Italians should stick together and watch out for each other.

The two Joes got along famously, to the delight of June and Mary, and went bicycling together often, engaging in long metaphysical discussions.

The Pentecostal teachings of the Bible placed great emphasis on spiritual warfare. The usually-invisible Angels and demons played an active role in daily human life, and Joe Micoletti explained that he believed

in the power of prayer to mobilize God's supernatural forces on behalf of human freewill.

It was a belief that Joe Parella did not wholeheartedly agree with because he struggled to understand God's grace, given the darkness he witnessed on the job. How could evil be allowed to mutilate the innocent without rebuke?

Like Allied soldiers witnessing the horrors of Hitler's regime first-hand, Joe had seen Death and Evil in action, attacking not just adults, but their children. How does God intervene if the mortal police do not? Would He?

Joe welcomed the theological perspective of his new riding companion, as the two often did mini-marathon rides through the Saguaro National Monument's eastern bike trail, and theology never provoked defensiveness. They believed in varying

sides of the same God. Both agreed Jesus was their personal Lord and Savior.

Joe's family had attended Saint Francis De Sales Catholic Church since its 2nd year being open, in 1975. He loved the works-based approach to Christianity and cliqued with the Italian priests who served there at that time. He didn't notice until much later than the majority of those he thought he had left behind in New Jersey were buying homes in the Regina Cleri neighborhood, making Tucson their retirement home.

Joe Bonanno himself owned a home in Fort Lowell Park, on what was then the city's east side.

He pursued becoming a Deacon and graduated from their formal program, which he served faithfully until 1989, when he had to face the reality that their senior priest, Bob Tamminga, was showing unusual favor to their coarse and unphotogenic youth

group leader Marian Gilbert, and Joe's kids were repulsed from attending church events because of these people.

Though there was some speculation that the priest and the youth pastor had shared a sexual relationship, nothing was ever formally declared or denied.

In early February 1991, when Detective Jim Gerrettie coordinated the funeral plans with June, one of the reasons the Mass was moved from Saint Francis De Sales to the Downtown Cathedral was Joe's dying request that he not be remembered in the same place where Marian Gilbert had abused his family.

He often told the story of how he met with a priest regarding Marian's verbal abuses toward kids (not just his). When the priest referred to her as an (expletive-expletive), he realized he needed to consider switching churches. She was not of God and the senior

leadership was standing behind her. It was an eerie echo of the film *The Omen*.

After spending 15 years serving that church, his kids hated attending it. Why?

Marian Gilbert.

Another deacon whom Joe served on the police force with, Dennis Scalpone said he would deliver the message to her himself.

He found Marian, who looked like Saturday Night Live actor Tim Kazurinsky, in her office and he delivered the message. *Joe Parella's funeral would be held at the Downtown Cathedral. You're not welcome there. Got it?*

She choked on it. At first she dismissed it. She wallowed in the political support of priest Bob Tamminga. But when the city named a street after Joe, and Bob retired from the priesthood, pulling the plug on her political support, she lashed out by sexually

harassing Rick Hartigan's daughter Heather, another Tucson cop who struggled with her first marriage.

There were other factors of course, as Jim Gerrettie reasoned that in order for all the people who wanted to attend to be able to, they needed more space.

As for their ongoing membership in the Catholic church, only Jacquie managed to undergo the formal "Confirmation" process, which the protestants termed getting "saved", though they meant different types of membership.

Catholic "confirmation" meant a lifetime membership into the Vatican's international membership, which did not directly include Salvation, short of an implied one, but the demands for money and loyalty outweighed the benefits.

Over time, most of those who attended Tucson Catholic Diocese locations found

other houses of worship, or stopped going to any church at all.

The Catholic priests and nuns had successfully defamed the Name of the Lord, at least in Tucson. In 2009, Bishop Manuel Moreno died and was cast into hell.

Joe often took his toddler-aged son with him on voluntary trips to area assisted living homes where he would administer Catholic Holy Communion to anyone who wanted it.

It was on those visits where Joe's son first connected the border of Heaven and hell. These people were going to one or the other within months. That thought would return to him twenty years later when he gave his own life to Christ.

At one point in the late 1970s, two priests, named Tetta and Todd, had this dark conversation in their Rectory on Kolb Boulevard on Tucson's east side.

“I just (expletive) one of the Kennedy kids,” he said, matter-of- fact, in a way one might otherwise presume he was confessing. The body language of both men suggested otherwise, “Her husband just died. She went back to school?” Todd nodded that he understood which family Tetta meant.

“Which one?” Todd replied, as if interrogating him. “They have 3.”

“Yes, I know who you mean. Harry told me about her. Hot for 14.”

“You get a look at little Joey P, in Kindergarten?”

Both men talked about sexual assaults like they were hobbies. Tetta smiled, but was warned to stay away from Joey.

“His dad is a cop. Narcotics. You touch him and he’ll probably kill you. No jury would convict a cop if a priest harms one of his kids.”

In 1999, many of the students who were sexually assaulted by those priests came forward. To this day, the mother of the Kennedy's eldest daughter's did not believe her claim, *or chose not to*. Margaret Kennedy was a self-centered woman who had an affair with an eccentric vagabond for the next 20 years in lei of second marriage.

The two priests were later defrocked, and a few more were relocated to other parishes, some in different parts of the world. None were prosecuted for their crimes.

Joe and Joe would talk about their families as they rode. The younger Joe M then saw Joe P come to a complete stop at a stop sign in a residential neighborhood, something he would have never done on his own. "I stop. I know not everyone does. I follow the rules. I wear a helmet. You wanna know why? I'm a cop. If I don't respect the law, who will? Leading by example."

At the Tucson Police Department in 1973, the Metro Division was the Nixon Administration's answer to the drug problem America was facing dating back to the repealing of Prohibition.

It was an elite force of cops recruited from many State agencies to help battle the marketing efforts of opium and cocaine exports coming into the U.S. from Central and South America. Brazil and Venezuela grew rich off their exports of cocaine, and it changed America, destroying it from within.

Before the FDA approved uses for opium in regulated medicines, overwhelming amounts of the crop were hauled by drug runners across the border and distributed by "drug dealers".

The argument was centuries-old and the legal stance could be found in the 10th and 14th Amendments. It had been one of the issues fought over in the Civil War. Did the

federal government have the right to tell any State that they could not broker in involuntary labor, also known as slavery?

Could the government tell the States that they could not possess or regulate liquor? The 2nd Amendment protected the right to bear “arms”, interpreted as “guns”, though when that law was conceived, men fought primarily with muskets and rifles.

Now the weapons of the 20th century were being used domestically to fight for the right to broker narcotics. Pharmacies were full of regulated sedatives. Opium was coming into the U.S. legally, and companies like Kimberly-Clark, Bristol-Meyers and Upjohn had made fortunes on them. Many a cough allergy had been remedied with over-the-counter drinks that included small doses of alcohol.

But when the casualties of this war started to cost the taxpayers more than voters were

comfortable with, when drug addiction proved to destroy families, when rehabilitation became big business, the States realized they needed to do something.

They told the federal government to buzz of in 1933, and now, there was a need.

The drug culture being glamorized by films made by Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda and others was claiming a generation of youth at an epidemic rate.

Joe was one of a dozen men chosen for this cutting edge team, in league with their professional ancestors “assigned by the Treasury Department” from the Prohibition era, known the to the world through television as *The Untouchables*.

As a farewell gift, his street patrol team broke into his car, (gently), and stuffed it with toilet paper, painting his station wagon’s back windshield with the White-Out with the word “Narc”. It was hazing

from his brothers in arms, and he laughed all the way home, after digging a few rolls of toilet paper out of the driver's seat. He would be back at this precinct in a few years to reclaim his sanity, and it was nice to know he would be welcome.

June laughed too when she saw it, enjoying the free toilet paper.

“As cops, we are twice as accountable as a citizen, so when we break the law, we will be punished twice as much. Murder, theft, speeding tickets, J-walking, anything,” the instructor said as he began their 2-week training.

As Joe and other cops underwent countless scenario drills, they were taught how to act. They needed to fit into the world of the criminals, to be in their world, but not of their world. They needed to protect themselves by becoming someone else. They were issued alternate identities

complete with spouses and life stories, which they got to help write.

It was difficult, and not every cop retained their sanity. Many got caught up in the art of playing the bad guy, to the point where they lost touch with reality and were arrested themselves. Evidence was constantly mettled with, marriages were endangered by the temptation of sex, and their lives were threatened daily.

Joe was a gifted actor, to the point where after surviving several terrifying close calls with sting operations whereby he soiled his pants with a shotgun in his face, the most terrifying came in 1979, that signaled the end of his tenure in Metro.

He had been credited with arresting hundreds of drug dealers. Prisons were full because of him. His testimony became the cornerstone of many careers of prosecutors and judges who used his reports and court

testimony to build their cases and issue their sentences.

He told the truth without fear of any drug lord or gang leader and managed to go home and tuck his kids into bed, and spend coveted quality time with his wife. Most men spent their weekends in pursuit of wild and crazy breaks from the monotony of their day jobs. His tempo was the opposite, undergoing so much stress on the job that his most precious time were the quiet moments he spent with his loud Italian family. They lived for fart jokes. They loved to laugh and would go to great lengths to invent anything to laugh at.

Joe's gifts as an engineer and his love of the arts translated into hand drawings of his own yard and how he envisioned it. He still played a guitar, as well as he did when he was a childless newlywed in New Jersey, learning about husbandry and fatherhood from Ted Willadsen and his wife Carol, from

whom June learned a lot as well. It was while spending time with them that he listened to another couple, traveling missionaries who had just returned from Gallup, New Mexico, and he was sold on the idea of ministering to the Indians there. A letter he wrote to the Bishop of the mission was not received well, but as he learned how to be a leader of this elite precursor to the Drug Enforcement Agency, it was in the back of his mind.

One day in the late 70s, he and June pulled into an east side Circle K, and some of the people whose gang he had infiltrated pulled up near to his car, and saw him with June. Joe's facial hair and clothes were covered in formal ware, and the gang members became instantly suspicious.

Joe looked at them, and back at June and told her with the utmost seriousness, "Stay in the car and don't say anything."

He then turned and walked and talked to them in a way she had never seen or heard him to do before. That wasn't Joe. He had invented a separate person, and parked this other man's unmarked police car on their driveway, purposefully facing out in case he had to speed off quickly. Thank God, that never happened, but it almost did.

Joe approached his 'friends' and explained that he was with his mistress and asked them not to tell his 'old lady', who was really another undercover agent with Metro. June was scared, but played it cool.

He got back into the car and drove home using a route that allowed him to see whether or not he was being followed. As he parked his car, and got into the house unseen, he was able to peek out his front window, and sure enough, the car had followed him to his neighborhood, slowly creeping by his home. He had managed to

park in the back ally where they could not see his car.

His kids poked their heads around him and wanted to see what was going on, but June ordered them sternly to get away from the window.

He turned to June and said, “I’m getting out of this.”

In briefing, Richard Miranda, who had just heard that he was being promoted, also learned Joe was leaving Metro. Before he could ask him why, he saw him sitting at the front desk of the precinct, the most undesirable post by most cops. There was little to no action there, and one had to be a people-person to survive it.

It was perfect for Joe. He used that job to get his psyche realigned. Most cops lost their grip with reality, or the capacity to filter all the parasites and darkness that came with the drug trade.

Joe's neighbors on Tucson's newly built East 42nd Street were suspicious of him, assuming he was a drug dealer.

After leaving the division, still wearing his hippy beard, he approached one of the more concerned citizens while he was doing yard work. "Hi, I'm Joe Parella. We live a few doors down. I wanted to introduce myself and ask you. Do you like cops?"

"I like what cops do," the man answered smugly.

"Good. Because I'm one of 'em. To catch the bad guys, we have to look and act like them." The neighbor was both relieved and humiliated. He had called TPD many times and complained that the city was allowing a drug importer to live in his neighborhood untouched.

Moron.

Joe and June had to deal with deeper problems. George was showing signs of severe health problems and his brother George Jr. had asked him to consider moving back to New Jersey to help him with the business. The fact was, George Jr. had raised four daughters who were not equipped to run the business. They tried, but lost more business than they gained.

Joe and June were also exhausted by the brown supremacy of the city. When they first moved in, June could not get the power company to turn on the house electricity until she introduced herself over the phone as “Wife of Officer Jose Pare-ya,” the Spanish pronunciation of her Italian surname. They were tired of the gossip about her scuzzy-looking narcotics cop husband, who was in plain clothes, was as conservative a Catholic Army veteran any of them would ever meet.

They missed the social lives they used to have and felt like they lived in another country. They put the house on the market and had talks with George and Jenny about moving to Hollywood, Florida.

After a few day there, they realized how much they liked Tucson, and took the house off the market. Then Joe realized he liked a neighborhood south of his 42nd Street home, and cited one with a fireplace just built on East Watson Driver a mile away. He did sell his home, but bought another within walking distance.

He spent the next 20 years there.

George asked Joe if he would return to New Jersey.

“I’m happy where I am, pop,” Joe replied as the two men had a man-to-man talk.

George was disappointed, but let it go. “I want you to come visit us, more,” George

said, trying to articulate his feelings. Words did not come easy to him.

By 1981, Joe took his wife's advice and went back to his hometown one more time and saw familiar faces, some frozen in time, some looking decades older. His girlfriend before meeting June had married another, and he gained some perspective about just how far he'd come. He also took a short but meaningful walk with his dad before George Sr. died.

“You're doing good. Good cop, good marriage. Junie's a good woman. The kids are wonderful. Jenny loves 'em,” George said,

despite his bones causing him so much pain, he can barely walk, much less look up at Joe.

“I wish we had talked like this before,” Joe said.

“Yeah. Well, we’re here now,” the old man replied.

Joe M was floored by Joe P’s story and put his helmet on. “Do you believe in God?” Joe M asked him, as they continued to ride together.

“Oh yes,” Joe replied, sharing yet another story that took place in Heaven, or somewhere very close to it.

Joe described a recurring dream he had where he was walking up a spiral staircase into Heaven, behind a beautiful woman, presumably an Angel, who was leading another up the spiral staircase. She looked at him and said, “Go back down, and read the Book of Acts.”

“At first, I didn’t,” Joe recalled, capturing Joe Micolleti’s attention, “but then I had the dream again. And this time, she asked me how my life was going and we chatted about some things going on at the time, between

Junie and me and the kids, and work, and she asked me again, did you read the Book of Acts?”

“I grinned and said no, which she seemed to already know, and she answered me with a firm authority, ‘Read. The Book. Of Acts’.”

“I woke up and found my Bible and began to read. Now I read it everyday. It gives me strength.”

Wow, Joe M thought, of all the fake, melodramatic testimonies he had ever heard from men who asked people for money, this was authentic.

They leaned to turn into another residential neighborhood where a vicious dog seemed to appear out of nowhere, and its angry bark aimed at their feet.

Joe M swerved a little to avoid the dog, but Joe P didn’t. He pulled his water bottle from its carrier in between his knees and with the

dexterity of a gunfighter riding a horse, he fired a stream of water that landed on the dog right between the eyes.

Joe P's cop-thinking was set in motion. Why was that dog loose?

He backtracked toward the dog, not something this animal was used to humans doing; most kids ran in terror of this dog. He managed to follow it back to a house where the dog seemed to settle down.

Joe M said, "What are you going to do?"

Joe P had dug his badge out of his bike pouch, fastened under his seat and with it in hand, stood at the front door and rang the bell.

It took a few rings, but the homeowner and dog's master, came to a side door and asked what Joe wanted.

"Is this your dog?" Joe asked.

“Yeah,” the man answered, offense building in his tone.

“We’ll he just chased us up the street and I followed him back here. He got out.”

“What’s it to you?” the man protested. “Now get off my property before I kick your (expletive).”

Joe lifted his badge. “You see this?” The sun reflected off it and hit the man squarely in the eyes.

The man shriveled back and half-apologetically took his dog behind a gate, and then retreated back inside. “Oh no, you show me the dog’s current tags,” Joe said, having slipped into cop mode. He stood at the guy’s door and knocked, “I can have a squad car here in five minutes.”

An elderly woman came out and apologized for her boyfriend’s behavior. “What do you need officer?”

Joe explained the situation and asked to see proof of the dog's current tags. "The dog's not wearing any tags. If you don't want animal control to impound it, keep it inside. And if I ever have to come back here again, I'm arresting you both for disorderly conduct, and assault."

The woman was now frightened and shouted a rebuke back into her house where the man was still muttering and the dog was still barking. "You be quiet! You wanna go to jail over this?"

As Joe and Joe continued riding, Joe P recalled a similar story of using his badge to hold a thoughtless citizen accountable.

On a drive up Mount Lemon, a tailgater would not back off. After about ten miles of this obnoxious driver moving to within a foot of his tail lights, Joe had told his eldest daughter to pull his badge out of a duffle bag and place it face-out in the rear window.

Within about eight seconds, that driver retreated until he was invisible in Joe's rear-view mirror.

Joe M exploded in laughter. "You're making me want to be a cop."

Joe P replied, "Well, I'll tell you. You got all the ingredients. Character, heart, and your physically fit. But you have three strikes against you. You're white, you're male and you're a Christian."

In 1992, Elaine Hedke had been appointed police chief for the city of Tucson, with the help of lobbyists of the Gay and Lesbian community. They hated the Christian men, and that wasn't a misunderstanding, that was a statement openly articulated in briefings and on-the-job conversations by lesbian cops. The fact that the Christian or Catholic male officers would not openly condone homosexuality on the force created a political divide that resulted in a dark time

for the city. Elaine Hedke would be subject of a vote of no-confidence by her peers in November 1993 causing her to be replaced, but the city's police department would continue a steady decline from the Ronstadt era.

They arrived at the public restroom of the Saguaro National Monument East's Tourism Center. It was a picturesque day.

Chapter 48

1973

After 18 weeks of the Academy, Joe had been graduated to the rank of Officer of the Tucson Police Department.

His wife had just given birth to their third of three kids, and named him Joseph Cory. Since they were expecting a girl, his first and only son was a complete and total surprise. The doctors of Tucson Medical Center were politically powerful, so when their negligence proved to have almost killed June in the labor process, no lawyer would take the case. June was promptly diagnosed with a deliver-related infection and had to have a hysterectomy as a result.

The doctors made sure their errors were covered up by making sure their nurses destroyed June's file. Years later, as a cop,

Joe would investigate it himself and learned there was conscious and willful action taken by those doctors to cover up their mistakes. They almost killed his wife and refused to be held accountable.

By 2008, the last of those doctors died, and only 2 of the eight on-call doctors delivering babies that day, on August 24, 1973, went to Heaven.

Meanwhile, Joe was given the same type of inter-department menu that all cops were shown. Where did he want to work?

His rookie year was one of trials, errors and triumphs. He worked alongside Bob Gilmartin for much of it, until Bob applied to work for the State Police after an investigation of a cattle ranch went awry.

After Bob transferred, the two men saw little of each other.

Joe's closest partners were Jim Gerretti, his brother Jack Gerretti, Rick Yant, Henry Leyva, Steve Goldman, Francis Karn and Danny Sharp.

Like a fraternity, cops initiated their own, especially the Metro Team, a prelude of the squad Joe would be asked to assemble ten years later.

His brothers in arms described it like this.

1974.

On his last night in uniform, several officers made sure to detain him in the station for a while before letting him go home in his car which had been parked at the curb in front of the main station. While he was otherwise distracted, some officers moved his car into the visitors' parking lot on the north side of the building and proceeded to stuff the interior with crumpled newspaper. I mean, it was crammed with paper. Then some wag

took liquid White-Out and painted 'NARC' on the windows.

Then, when all was finished, they let Joe leave. He walked out to where his car had been and noticed that it was no longer there. Then he noticed that it was in the visitors' lot. Remember, it was dark out. When he went to the car and saw the papers inside and the window decorations, he absolutely cracked up. I think I remember that we had brought down the ID tech with his camera and he took some pictures. What a riot!

Joe took it all with great humor and we had a wonderful memory of him.

Paul T. Ferrer

Tucson Police Department, Retired

Joe and I attended the Tucson police academy together. I remember we use to car pool together with Francis (Fran) Karn, of course I looked up to both of them as they were laterals with police experience and I

was brand new just coming out of the Air Force.

During the academy we use to have study sessions usually on Thursdays as the weekly test was given on Fridays, the study sessions included Henry Leyva, Fran Karn, Jimmy Gerrette, your dad and myself.

After graduating from the academy we went into the training squads called Force 4 (11:30 a.m. - 7:30 pm) & Force 5 (6:00pm - 2:00 a.m.).

Of course with your dad's prior experience he wasn't in the training squads very long and was given the assignment of working in Sgt. Bruggeman's squad which was a relief squad (B & D sector relief on graveyards).

When I completed the training squad thing I was also assigned to the same squad which had your dad and Fran Karn working as a 2 man unit in David 2 (referencing a black

neighborhood) and I was a single in David 4.

I remember one Sunday morning about 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. your dad and Fran got into a foot chase with some black guy by the name of Johnson and your dad ran him down - they recovered a roll of heroin packets (30).

Your dad was always in good physical condition even though back then we all smoked. Later on your dad got transferred to narcotics and we lost contact. Several years later I had developed a position in Team 3 formerly known as Baker sector and now known as Midtown, as a criminal intelligence officer. The position was for reviewing all crimes in the sector, then putting together crime patterns and communicating with the detectives and street officers.

After a good result, the position was developed throughout Tucson and your dad

became the person in Adam sector, Team 2, or what became known as Northwest division.

During that time your dad and I talked a lot and he developed a neighborhood program with the Yaqui Indian village which located in the vicinity of Oracle & Grant (S.W. quad).

It just so happened back in 1975 I had got myself into a bad situation in Yaqui village and got my butt kicked and my weapon stolen, of course later on I would get into more trouble and would be issued a criminal protection order by the court keeping me out of Yaqui village.

Your dad did more good for those people, at first when he started the program I had bad thoughts but as I matured I looked up to your dad for doing something positive for the community. Your dad was a special person which I hope you have become.

*Rick Yant,
Tucson Police Department, Retired*

*I got to tell ya, your dad was one of a kind,
great guy, the best. I am not just saying that,
I really mean it.*

*I will always have a very fond memory and a
place in my heart for Joe. I was a 21 year
old rookie cop in 1985, I was a big guy and
full of piss and vinegar but I was little out of
control/miss directed (according to your dad
:-), and he was right.*

*At about that time the Yaqui Village went to
hell. It is the old reservation and we had
series of murders in there and they kept
attacking police officers and in one case a
officer was almost killed.*

*The department decided enough was enough
and they put your dad in charge of cleaning*

house/kicking ass and taking names in the old Yaqui

reservations. A bunch of us young and reckless cops filled with piss and vinegar were assigned to Joe and we spent the next year cleaning out all the drugs and criminals out of the area.

Your dad kept us all in check and he ran a tight ship. Your dad was just the right touch of hard nose, old fashion, take care of business type of cop, but he was also a caring and compassionate person when he was dealing with people. He treated everyone with respect and dignity, until they proved they did not deserve it. Joe was so widely respected that the old Yaqui elders would always call on Joe to try to work out problems and issues in the neighborhood.

They would even invite Joe to the Indian ceremonies. I remember one time seeing Joe out there in full police uniform, wearing a

Yaqui head dress and waiving a fan, doing some type of Indian dance with a big group, good god it was funny. But the real bad guys truly feared your father.

Joe did not take any (expletive) from anyone and he knew how to take care of business.

I remember this one time Joe was jacking up three of the local heroin dealers and a dealer that went by the name of Chile Verde took a swing/punch at Joe and the others joined in.

By the time I jumped out of my police car and rushed over there the three dealers were all laid out in pools of their own blood, and your dad was just smiling, not even out of breath.

All three drug dealers had busted open heads and one had a broken arm (in fact it was Chile Verde with the broken arm). Your dad was fair but very firm. I learned so much from your dad and he was like a

mentor and teacher to me. Joe taught me how to be a good cop and a good person.

I was shocked when I found out about your fathers illness and I was even more shocked when it took him so quick. I never had a chance to say thank you and goodbye. Joe was and is sorely missed and he will always be remembered by all those that he touched. My police career ended 3 years ago with a serious injury and I was laid up for two years and had 7 surgeries back to back. I have gone back

to work in another career field but I take the life lessons and teachings of your father with me in all that I do and how I treat people. I am so sorry that your father was taken from you, I believe you could have learned so much from him, but you got the best jeans running in your veins so I am sure you have turned into a good man. I hope this helps and is what you were looking for. I have a lifetime of stories and memories of your

father and they are all good. Take care and be the man your father wanted you to be.

God bless...

Michael Conto

*US Department of Homeland Security
Counter Terrorism/Security Manager*

Cory, I remember your father very fondly. We were not close friends but we were definitely acquaintances and co-workers. Joe was well known in the Department and very popular. It is very common to hear people say nice things about people when they are gone, but in Joe's case, people said good things about him long before anyone knew he was ill. Joe always had a smile for me and he made everyone he met feel like they were his friend. I also remember Joe being an avid cyclist. I envied his athleticism.

He worked very hard in an area of town we called Yaqui village. This was a part of town south of Grant Road and west of Oracle Road. The Yaqui are a Native American tribe indigenous to northern Mexico, but without a homeland in the U.S.

As such, they did not receive the benefits that many other tribes got from the government and so they were very poor and tended to reside together in this area. This was a tough area and not one that you would want to go into after dark by yourself. Civil unrest was common. Joe took this area on as a project.

He had the perfect personality to gain the trust of these people. He was a problem solver and respected people regardless of their social economic status. As a result, Joe was extremely successful in improving police-community relations and reducing crime. Joe was not just a police officer, Joe

was a peace officer in the full sense of the word.

Joe was truly a great guy and definitely one of a kind. I am sorry you did not have more time with him. Those of us who knew him will never forget him.

Best wishes,

Steve Morrison

Tucson Police Department, Retired

Cory,

I worked with your Dad for several years although not much directly. We were in the same squad in 1973 or 1974 very briefly but the police department was a lot smaller then so we all knew each other. One night we were working side by side beats in one man units in Baker Sector (midtown). We met for coffee at Dunkin' Donuts at Speedway and Sawtelle I think around 9 P.M. In those days

we didn't have walkie talkies only the radios that were hard wired in the car so we would check out at a location for which the police dispatcher had the phone number. If they needed us the dispatcher would call the restaurant and tell them to tell us to go to our car.

This night, Joe and I were having coffee when we were told to go to our cars for a call. The call was a family fight involving a knife (hardly anyone used a gun back then) and it was a long ways away so Code 3 was authorized. Again, something that rarely happened.

Joe and I took off Code 3 one behind the other. We both turned east on Speedway then south on Country Club. I was in the lead but was not familiar with where we were going so I turned East on Broadway. Your Dad continued north on Country Club. (I should have been following him since he knew where he was going). In my haste to catch

up to him I was going way too fast when I tried to turn south on Alvernon (again running lights and siren). I was so excited to be running Code 3 I spun out in the intersection, jumped the curb and stalled my squad car.

By the time I got to the call your Dad had the perp in cuffs and was loading him into the car. I will never forget that night.

Mostly what I remember about your Dad was his sense of humor. He was always laughing and having fun. He was well recognized for his work with the local Native Americans. He had a reputation for being a very good street cop. I always enjoyed being around him.

Our lives took different paths as I became a detective early in my career and Joe stayed on the street. I can say very honestly I never heard anyone say anything negative about

Joe. He was a good guy and well liked. I wish I had known him better.

Hope this brings a smile to your face.

Skip Woodward TPD 1972-2007

Hi Cory,

I'm Rich Harper, a retired Captain with the Tucson Police Department. Back in the early 70's, when I was a young rookie officer I worked with your dad. We had overlapping shifts, but different days off from work.

First let me say that your dad was one brave guy. I remember he was involved in the arrest of an armed robber at the hotel at Oracle and Main.

He was fun loving and always, always had a smile on his face. I remember a few times, racing him in our patrol cars, down Oracle to see who could get back to the station first,

we just had a lot of fun, and he was a hard worker, no-nonsense while we were on shift.

Shortly after that he went to Narcotics and I would see him from time to time and we would chat about work. Something your dad told me once, was, "hey if you see me hanging out now and you are on duty, don't acknowledge me unless I talk to you first." This was so a uniform guy wouldn't blow his undercover work. And sure enough I saw him while I was doing a bar check, and he didn't even look at me, and from the guys he had at his table, no doubt he was working a drug caper.

I was taken by surprise when I heard Joe was sick and very sad, when your pop passed. I know he was very close with Jimmy Gerettie, and as you know, those who wear the blue never forget one another.

I think of your dad all the time, I just remember his strong face and that big smile.

In any case, I learned a lot from your dad that I used in my 34 years of law enforcement and I will never be able to thank him enough, at least until I see him again. I also vaguely remember you dad introducing me to your family at a restaurant but that was long ago.

Well, I wish I could tell you more, but it has been many years. I hope these short notes will help you to know a little more about your dad. Take care of yourself, your dad was a good guy, and brave, someone you can be proud of.

Sincerely,

Rich Harper

Tucson Police Department, Retired

Cory, I didn't know your dad well, but I remember him well. He was special! I worked the west side with him for a few

months when I was brand new...I loved his manner with people...no brag, no attitude, just caring and an attitude of service.

He was kind to me also - not the usual attitude towards female officers we endured back then in 1984-85!

I remember that he was able to gain the Pascua Yaqui Indian Villagers' confidence and make it much safer for all of us TPD officers to go into their village!

He was a real sweetheart of an Officer. When he died, the whole department was saddened - you could feel it, and see it, in everyone's faces...God must have needed him Home more than we needed him here.

He was a great example to me of how to treat people - even the ones we had to arrest.

I am reminded of him every time I ride my bike through Civano, a housing development near my neighborhood on the SE side of

*Tucson. I see the street sign with his name
on it and thank God for men like Joe
Parella!*

Blessings to you and your family,

Peggy Tate TPD, retired

Chapter 49

March 14, 1997

7:42 left, Vs. South Alabama, down By 10.

The vultures had already gathered. Alabama, twice.

Auburn.

UTEP.

East Tennessee State. Santa Clara.

Miami of Ohio. Kansas.

“The next time the devil reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future.” - author unknown

Kentucky was the defending national champion and UCLA won it in 1995. Bobbi was so fed-up with the stress that came from this, that Lute had traded his usual optimism for reaching the Final Four for two cruise tickets where he and Bobbi would take time

away from basketball and rethink their lives. He spent a lifetime loving basketball, but he loved Bobbi more.

The stress of trying to win, not just for his players, but for a whole city, was costing him his sanity and as far-fetched as an outsider might believe, his marriage. Though most men from his generation presumed that their wives would never leave, his Master's Degree had taught him to expect the unexpected and try to act accordingly.

Years after Bill McCartney resigned as he two-time defending national champion of the Colorado Buffalos football team, to spend more time with his family, Lute took note, and perhaps a beat too late for Bobbi's tastes.

Coach McCartney had saved his marriage from his job and then went on to teach other

men had to attempt to the same thing by forming Promise Keepers.

Once again his team faced the early death sentence of a first- round loss to South Alabama. Such losses cost many a great coach their job.

The players huddled in the :30 Time-Out as if they hadn't even started playing yet.

South Alabama's annoying clock-eating strategy was working, and if the 'Cats didn't do something, and *fast*, Arizona would have to endure yet another painful first-round loss coupled with nine more months of taunting.

Miles Simon, the team captain in the absence of a scholarship- senior, locked eyes with his teammates, "Yo, we all here?"

Several nods confirmed they were. Jim Rosborough spoke to Lute in the huddle like the closest presidential aide, and spoke over the crowd noise, "We need to put more

pressure on the ball. We need to take their game away and reclaim the clock.”

Without missing a beat, Lute issued a team-wide executive order, “Put pressure on the ball. Force them to bring it up court.”

Jim looked at Jason Terry, the team’s steals leader, and said, “You have 1 foul, which means you got four to give. Don’t let them get past mid court, y’ understand?”

Jason Terry nodded and they heard the horn order them back onto the court. “Cats!” they shouted, breaking the huddle. Jason Lee and Jason Stewart looked on from the bench, and exchanged prayerful glances with each other. In the stands, Bobbi clutched her hands together and prepared herself for the worst. The game clock was like an hourglass, and right now, it glared at her family like a pending death sentence. Up in the press box, Greg Hanson was halfway

done with his article on his laptop, calling for Lute's retirement.

Somewhere in Heaven, Survivor's *Eye of The Tiger* cued up.

The TV announcers debated the momentum of the game as the sideline referee prepared to give the ball to South Alabama. "I still feel the momentum of this game is with Arizona," the announcer said to the regional CBS audience.

After the ball was inbounded, Jason Terry poked aggressively at it and caught the South Alabama player by surprise.

Two points. Another turn-over. Two more points. Four-straight turn-overs. Tie-game. And then, with another three-point play, South Alabama fell into the Bonus. South Alabama thought it had the game won.

Lute's insistence on his team's free throw shooting over the years had paid dividends in regards to close and come-from-behind wins. His decision to use video to produce free-throw, defense and ball- handling tutorials on VHS had planted seeds among the very players he now coached, saving thousands of hours of practice time. The result, Arizona was the top free-throw shooting team in the conference, if not the country. Freshman Mike Bibby sank free throws as if he were playing in a pickup game at Scottsdale Park.

Arizona stopped taking quick shots and attacked the rim, causing South Alabama's boastful front court to foul out with 1-minute left, the 'Cats winning by 8.

Hansen was silent during the post-game press conference, forced to tune out the noise of the next round of games as he gutted his original article.

It was still early. Lute was well aware that Greg had given the suggestion for Lute's replacement, even after the 1994 team made it to the Final Four, and truth be told, the 1996 Wildcat team was better than the national champion. They had simply lost a close game to Kansas in the Sweet 16 twelve months before.

Instead of feeding on the faith of Cubs-fan-like optimists, Lute had contritely issued a pre-season disclaimer for this squad, "This team will be great *next* year."

In the next game, Arizona dispatched the College of Charleston, dominating the game from the first-possession. The rest of the college basketball world was getting to know who Mike Bibby and Michael Dickerson were, and that Arizona's front court was truly a 3-player arsenal that many NBA teams would have loved to have.

The media had also spread the rumor of A.J. Bramlett having gained some much-needed confidence by shattering a backboard in their final practice before the tourney. It gave the entire team new confidence after season-ending losses to Stanford and Cal had dropped them from a two-seed to a four-seed.

Next was the game the 'Cats were not supposed to be in, much less win.

Kansas. Now, the 1997 Kansas Jayhawks were the best team in the country.

The problem is the tournament is not designed to showcase the best talent. It's not a talent show. If it was, then yes, the 1997 Jayhawks deserved their overall number-1 ranking.

They had won the tournament in 1958, 1988 and would win it all again in 2008.

The Jayhawks played a sloppy first half and trailed by one point against a hungry and focused Arizona team, which Lute commented to CBS Sports, “Well, we just played our worst half of the season and we’re up by one, so that must be a good sign.” The main advantage that Arizona had was its attitude.

David and Goliath, but as Lute would challenge during press conferences, “Who’s David and who’s Goliath?” It wasn’t like Arizona was a program new to the college basketball world anymore. They had been to two Final Fours in the last ten years. If winning was a numbers game, they were due.

Kansas played as though they were entitled to win based on their record alone. Sure, they had all the weapons to win, but they still had to play the game.

A fearless Arizona team took a 10-point lead with under 2-minutes to go and withstood a furious rally by the Jayhawks that fell 3 points short.

The 3-point win they had over a similar Wildcat team 12 months earlier, a team that was in most ways superior to this one, was avenged.

It was the last game of the night, as Pat O'Brien, looking like he had just been hit by a truck, signed off for CBS Sports reiterating the final score, "Arizona 85, Kansas 82."

Most Kansas fans tuning in late to see the score, or unable to see the scores until the next morning thought their first-glance at it was a typo.

Back in Tucson, the city had become alive with buzz. *The Elite Eight? Really? This team? This year? We thought Coach said...next year?*

Lute and Bobbi went back to their hotel and made the most enjoyable phone call they had to make in years.

“Hi, uh...I need to cancel my reservations or post-pone my departure date until after...I don’t know, the second week of April?” Lute said into the phone, awaiting the call center rep’s response. “Yes, Olson. Lute. Yes. Oh, you saw that huh? Well thank you. We’ll do our best....”

The team got back to McKale Center and collected itself. They had a week before their next game. Before leaving his hotel room, Michael Dickerson was on the phone with his dad.

“No, dad. Just get tickets for Indianapolis. I got a feeling about this one.”

Back at McKale Center, in their locker room, Jason Terry sat and prayed with self-appointed team chaplain Jason Stewart, as A.J. Bramlett and Michael Dickerson prayed

on their knees alongside him. A reporter from the *Daily Wildcat* had wrapped up an interview with Jim Rosborough and saw them as he walked out, seeing Terry say repeat the words as Jason Stewart led him in a declaration of Salvation.

The student journalist was himself a member of Campus Crusade, though the University openly discouraged the open demonstrations of faith on campus. Lute allowed Jason, a future minister, to pray for his teammates and lead the team prayer at-will, sometimes at the risk of making the team late for games.

Mike Bibby looked on, all too familiar with the ambiance, as Jason had helped him face his demons regarding his dad, a selfish alumni of the John Wooden-era UCLA Bruins and a man who chose the NBA lifestyle over his kids. Henry Bibby was now the coach of USC, and their game versus the Trojans in L.A. was marred by

pre- game media sensationalism over their strained relationship. To add injury to insult, the embarrassing game-ending antics by Trojan forward David Crouse resulted in Darnell Harris getting called for a technical foul, sealing the win for the Trojans, whose season would end in a first-round loss to Illinois.

Jason Stewart was one of the team's three secret weapons. They had a prayer warrior, they had a walk-on senior in Jason Lee who had rescued them from early season close games, and Josh Pastner, who served as more of a coach than a roommate. Pastner had out- coached some legendary coaches in girls leagues and asked Lute for a job as a team manager years before.

Lute wasn't one to turn any eager and determined young person away, and offered him a walk-on position on the practice team to learn how to coach. Josh would describe perfect free throws to his roommates in such

vivid detail that Bibby would literally learn to make them in his sleep.

Over time, UA fans caught on to his role and would describe the summary of a game based on whether or not Josh Pastner got a lot of playing time. Several fans would bear signs at games that said, “You tell ‘em Josh!”

Coach Olson would jest to the media that his prize freshman, Mike Bibby, must have had ice water in his veins. No, just a really grounded roommate who would go on to coach the Memphis Tigers to the same tournament fifteen years later.

The game versus Providence proved to be the character-maker, at least in the eyes of the national media. As the game went into overtime, the Pirates picked fist fights with Arizona’s front court players and Arizona’s players did not back down. Eugene Edgeron was seen exchanging gang-like

trash talk with the entire Pirate bench before being restrained by a referee.

Though no technical fouls were assessed, the Wildcats managed to escape with a 90-89 OT win. In the locker room, A.J. Bramlett looked like he had been a boxing match.

They were now in the Final Four, and instead of being called Cinderella, they were outcasts. The national media refuse to give them their due.

They didn't deserve to be there.

On Saturday night, Arizona regrouped from an early first-half deficit to defeat Dean Smith's North Carolina Tar Heels in what would be his last game. Arizona would face the winner of Kentucky- Minnesota.

About three hours later, the Monday night match up was announced: it would be a prize fight of Wildcats.

Jim Click walked through the arena in Indianapolis and saw the sea of fans from Minnesota, Kentucky, North Carolina, and of course the small band of UA boosters who could afford to make the trip.

There were a few Wildcats who resided in Indianapolis who made their presence know with signs and T-shirts. As Jim made his way to the press area, he saw Greg Hansen talking to Kevin McCabe and approached him from behind.

“Hi guys,” he said amicably, but Kevin knew better. Jim had a look in his eyes that was all-business.

Kevin turned around and smiled at Jim, still enamored at the fact that he got to travel to the Final Four, and now a championship game, due to his press assignment to cover the Wildcats. He was all smiles. “Hi Jim, Kevin McCabe,” he said, extending his hand as if the two were meeting for the first time.

Jim shook his hand, and leaned in to whisper something into Kevin's ear.

Kevin gave Jim an agreeing smirk and glanced at Greg. "You got it. I gotta go meet some people and I'll be back in about a half-hour."

"Yeah, all right," Jim said so fast one could not tell he was a native of Oklahoma. "I need to talk to you about something," he said, focused on Greg.

"I want to know something. What's your beef with Lute?"

"Why do you want to know?" Greg asked.

"You know...I met with some friends of mine, the kind of friends you don't want as enemies. And they're getting pretty tired of you saying mean things about Lute."

Greg usually rolled his eyes to most rebukes. He'd survived several editors and publishers. But now, given Jim had emerged

as one of the wealthiest men in the state, he found his inner fear of God and just listened.

“Where’s this going?”

“You’re digging your own grave. And not just your career.”

Greg didn’t call Jim’s bluff by asking him to spell out what he was saying. Jim had done enough business in Tucson to know one had to get along with the mafia, and Lute had earned their love. Their kids attended his camps. His track record boasted of the very definition of respect. Joe Bonanno wore his A-cap proudly around town, as did other members of the family who considered Tucson their home.

The success the program had flirted with under Fred Snowden had come to pass, and here they were, on the eve of the national championship game, Jim delivered a message that basically saved Greg’s life.

“I’m not telling you how to do your job. You’re a good writer when you want to be. Let this be what it’s gonna be. And I got a good feeling about tonight. If they don’t win, try to be positive.”

Somehow, Greg heard the underlaying message. *Say nice things about Lute even if you have to fake it.*

For once, Greg Hansen was optimistic and found himself defending the very coach and players he once openly crucified. The consensus on the press box was that Arizona would lose, it was just a matter of time. To that effect, he enjoyed writing about something so contrary to the anticipated outcome. But now, they were running out of opponents.

When Arizona had fallen behind by 11 in the first four minutes of their game against North Carolina, even he went back to

writing the same story he had been writing about Lute since 1985.

Lute called a time out.

“So, you wanna go home? The tougher team is going to win this. Is that us or them?” His players needed no more motivation. During that time-out, in the stands was the iconic Ooh Aah Man, Joe Cavaleri. He stood up, wearing his Ooh Aah Man superhero costume, and began doing a spell-out, which Wildcat fans caught sight of and imitated. Without 2 minutes, the arena became McKale Center. The players emerged from the time out hearing that familiar sound, that Ooh-Aah had sparked the crowd.

Arizona made it a close-score at halftime and by the time the game was in its closing seconds, Arizona had a comfortable 8-point lead, finishing with at 66-58 win.

Minnesota lost to defending national champion Kentucky in the following game,

so the city and nation held its breath as both teams of Wildcats faced each other on Monday Night.

The experience was surreal for Arizona fans in Tucson. Nothing this exciting had happened in Tucson since...Old Tucson Studios won its contract with Michael Landon Productions.

As the tip-off passed, the teams looked a lot more equal than the media had given Arizona any credit for.

By the time regulation time ended, the score tied, Kentucky's players were all hunched over, gasping for air. Lute's players were ready to play another 20 minutes.

They would only need 5.

Kentucky failed to make its free throws, despite many opportunities. Arizona drained all but one of theirs.

84-79, and upon request from that day on, any Tucsonan could tell you the score of that game on-demand, if asked, “What was the score to the Wildcat’s national championship game against Kentucky?”

As CBS Sports and ESPN broadcast the breaking news of “Simon says, championship. A milestone victory for Arizona,” as Bennet Davidson mussed Lute’s hair in front of a global audience, not everyone shared in their joy.

One could almost hear the cuing of Aretha Franklin’s *Respect* as Arizona fans around the world began to celebrate like it was the end of a long, bloody war. Only the streets of major cities like New York on V-E Day had known such public displays of joy. People took to the streets and danced in them.

In Kansas, the response was bitter sweet. Their great team had been beaten a week earlier by this great team.

At the home of Ed O'Bannon, the big screen TV that light up his living room, visible from the street, flickered off, as the Arizona team he had cursed was now crowned with the highest honor in college basketball.

Tracey Augmon and Greg Anthony watched the game as well from their respective homes, hosting industry colleagues and family as they watched their words that Arizona would never win it all become as rebuked as when Satan taunted Jesus at the Mount of Olives.

Just as Christ had uttered, "It is accomplished," on the Cross, the Wildcats, as of Easter, 1997, were National Champions. Kentucky had been crowned the year before, and would be crowned again the

year after, but this moment, this one right now, belonged the Wildcats of Arizona.

A few minutes before air, David Letterman and his crew had watched the game and worked in a joke that opened the routine, minutes following the game. “How about those Wildcats!” he said, getting almost no response from the New York crowd who had been standing in line during the game, and therefore didn’t know the result of the game.

He repeated it, and this time, sign-cues light up for “applause” alerted the audience as to what the show wanted them to do. A production crew member quickly used a large Dry erase board to write, “AZ 84 - KY 79, Final”. The audience erupted.

In Tucson, the celebration was city-wide and well underway.

Lute Olson never won another national title. He came close in 2001, the year Bobbi went Home, but lost to Duke in the finale.

But it didn't matter.

After March 31, 1997, a new era in Arizona history had begun.

Lute's mind was spinning so fast, he could barely comprehend that he had just done it. He didn't have to offer any explanations for losing this time. Nothing. He had not gotten this far before.

Bobbi stood in her usual spot near the curtain that separated the media from the crowd, guarded by police and arena security. This time she wiped away tears of joy.

As the questions started, time stood still. "Your team just won the national championship. How do you feel, Lute?" one reporter belted off, just to get the question on the record.

Another reporter answered for him, with a sincere bellow, "Way to go Lute!" Laughter

vented the positive tension in the media room.

Another reporter, offering a long look at Greg Hansen, who himself remained silent, asked, “Do you think this will finally take the monkey off your back?”

Usually, nice guys finished last.

Not today.

Lute answered question after question, into the night, each one reminding him of the miracle he had just been a part of. As his watch revealed the time, nearing 2 a.m., he looked up at Bobbi and asked, “Will you wait one more second, dear?”

Bobbi’s fired back, “I’ve waited forty-five years for you. I’m surely not going to stop now.”

Chapter 50

April 7, 1997

Before the 1990's, the Kentucky Wildcats had celebrated titles in 1948, 1949, 1951, 1958 and 1978, and then again in 1996 and 1998. They would again in 2012. They were comparable to the New York Yankees in regards to championships-won in their division, and also shared records for the most post season losses.

Any team that has won that much is hard to feel sorry for.

But in 1997, this was the year in which life in Tucson would change forever. Would the community in Lexington be effected as much by their men's basketball team winning it all?

Doubtful. History tells us they rolled their eyes and changed the channel to watch NASCAR.

Back on Tucson's 4th Avenue, clueless barflies and UA students celebrated alongside die hard fans, a celebration that poured into the streets and resulted in rioting. A few police cars were flipped over, and a few people got hurt.

Jay Leno's producers had been tracking the game and noted one unique detail, that no team had ever beaten 3 number-1 seeds since post-season play began. Lute was booked for an appearance two nights later, and Warner Brothers, New Line Cinema, Universal Studios, Disney and Paramount all called the UA to inquire about the film rights.

Not interested and we're unwilling to give anyone an exclusive, thanks, was the answer they got. They all balked.

Joe's son was staving off homelessness after his film career was stalled, given the nightmare experience of working with the most corrupt movie industry folks in the state.

His film, which starred the 1985 NBA Draft's number-two pick, Wayman Tisdale, was financed by the inheritance from Jenny's passing, ruined by a Mesa, Arizona man whose obsession with *Miami Vice* prevented the film from achieving the same goals as *Clerks*, *El Mariachi*, or *The Brother's McMullen*.

It remained un-viewable in a cardboard box, holding what would become *Witness Protection*. That film remained a hostage until winning several legal battles and viewing a video copy of his raw footage on Oct 1, 2002. Without a college degree, he was under employed and sentenced to day-labor jobs.

Adding insult to injury, Joe's son had managed to get the screenplay into Spike Lee's hands, who declined "to make the Jackie Robinson story." A few months later, Joe's son found a job reviewing films for a Christian radio station and saw Lute appear in a cameo in what Spike Lee did to his script, in *He Got Game*.

So much for Miramax or New Line putting Cory Parella on the front page of the Accent Section of the *Arizona Daily Star*, which had quietly been his idol for years. So much for avoiding the manic- depressant, low-income apartment dwellings his classmates seemed to populate by 1993, as high school became a distant memory.

He found himself waking up in the exact place he had promised himself he would avoid, unable to leave the very place he spent his last few years trying to get away from. Was it Joe's fault?

The problems he had at Pima Community College might have been averted had Joe lived. Either way, Joe looked at Jesus and said, “This is the day. I want this day.”

The Lord replied, “He needs to learn to seek Me just as you did, and when He does that, He will get what he wants. Marriage, children, and a certain amount of fame. Just enough to boast in Me, not in the worthless glory of Hollywood and the facades worshipped by his hometown. He must learn that no prophet has honor in his hometown. Not Me, not you, not anyone.”

“I made him stumble,” Joe said in a moment of enlightenment. “I let my sins become his sins.” Though no tears came to his eyes, he found a point of contriteness. “I fell in love with the sound of my own name, with people’s approval.”

Jesus looked across the Kingdom with a look that seemed to relate to Joe on personal

level. “Be warned, when men speak well of you. One week they’ll hail you as their hero, the next week they’ll crucify you.”

Joe looked at his own life and realized the choice he made that cost him his life at 46. “I cared too much what other people thought. It only matters what You think.”

Jesus gave Joe a stern look, as if ordering him to forgive himself, “Your sin is paid for. There is only grace, there is only love, there is only mercy and believe Me, it is enough. Your sins are gone, without a trace.”

Joe wasn’t able to see this, but as Jesus spoke, His Words ricocheted to Earth and found a songwriter named Matt West who was struggling with a cancer diagnosis himself.

“How do I get there?” Joe asked, to which Jesus replied, “You travel at the speed of thought. And you now have My mind, the mind of Christ. You can do as I do, anything.

Your coin has unlimited buying power and it never expires.”

The night before his son watched Arizona beat Kentucky in overtime, he had a dream that he was standing in a familiar section, about midway up the stands, near the 35-yard line of Arizona Stadium. Joe didn’t want to frighten his son, so he took on the appearance of actor Al Pacino. In a voice straight out of *Any Given Sunday*, he told his son in December, 1996, “The Wildcats are gonna win it all this year.” He added, “Finish your film and the rest will come to you. He is God. Show Him your humility, and He will lay the world at your feet.” Over time, Joe’s son would learn that humility was not a form of self-loathing or depreciation, but simply a state of agreement with God.

As his son made his way from the east side house where he’d found a room to rent, onto the city bus, and into the crowd flowing

toward Arizona Stadium, Joe walked with him and enjoyed the euphoria.

Everyone was high-fiving each other, cheering nonstop, buying anything bearing the 'Cats name, colors or word. It was a day of celebration, much like the Catholic Church once envisioned Easter to be embraced by the Celts a thousand years before.

The troops had gone to war and won.

The average person over the age of six walked with a 'we bad' attitude just for wearing their shirt.

The racial divides among the ethnic groups and economic classes took a day off.

The King and Queen of college basketball were coming home and their subjects filled the stadium built for the football team.

The traffic on the streets was a blend of an L.A. freeway during rush hour and the

ambiance of the Disneyland Main Street Parade.

Cameras, both still and video, took pictures nonstop.

Tucson experienced what it had never had before. The city had an orgasm.

On the field at Arizona Stadium, radio personalities made lewd and dumb comments on the stadium's public address system, to bide the time as cheerleaders and KRQ promotional actor Dancin' Dave pranced around a make-shift stage facing the crowd on the stadium's west side.

Joe sat with his son, whose was otherwise alone, and smiled with him. His son tried to enjoy it, embracing the reality of the win. In sports, this is what it felt like to win a Super Bowl.

Joe looked at his son and wanted to hug him. He remembered the last time the city saw a

procession of cars this long. It was his funeral. In late February of 1991, Joe's soul had whisked seamlessly over his funeral. The line of cars extended from Stone Avenue where the wake began at the Catholic Cathedral, past Houghton Road to the cemetery where his body was laid to rest.

A rainbow was visible in a blue, cloudless sky, directly overhead as his family walked outside the get into the limousine. As the casket was prepared to be laid to rest, a black butterfly, which symbolized being born again, perched on top of his casket.

Nearly everyone who had ever known him was there. The Pascua-Yaquis stood afar, neighbors who had moved years before attended, his closest friends wept. His daughters and sons classmates attended. The city had lost one of its patriarchs.

Four months before, he had ridden in the Tucson Mountain Bike Race.

Joe said to him, “I’m alive. But you’re only going to see me again, or God for that matter, if you do something. Go back to church.” Then Joe laid his hand on his son’s upper back and showed him the Plan.

His son would find his way back to a church, differently from the one he attended as a boy, different from the place Joe had worshipped and served as a deacon, where he would again find the love and acceptance he never seemed to have among the Catholic cop families he spent his childhood with.

Chapter 51

The Olsons had done their best to make their entire city part of their family. And they had done it. 58,000 people chanted “U of A” for an hour and a half, a moment straight out of the Book of Acts (Acts 19:28), until finally, the classic cars carried in the triumphant warriors, who had yet to shower after the plane ride back from Indiana.

The clip of Lute Olson telling the critics and cynics of college basketball to take a hike had been run and rerun on ESPN for a couple days now. “There were some people who said we didn’t belong here...but I’ll tell you, this is *one tough group of ‘Cats.*”

As the parade of cars carried the players through the stadium’s track, Bobbi glanced up at Lute and said, “Enjoy it.”

She wanted him to retire right now, but knew he would not. He wanted this to be the

first of 23 national championship victory parades. If he had his way, he'd then leave Arizona, go to NAU and do this all over again.

Kidding.

Oh, what a joyful day. Even Greg Hansen seemed pleased...with himself. Bobbi had seen the headline that day and rolled her eyes. "Greg Hansen Believes," it said. *'In what?'* she thought. *Oh well, not even that man could ruin this day.* It was the first time she felt like she had earned this right alongside him. So many apple pancakes...

The cars paused long enough to let the players and coaches out where they were greeted by thousands of fans and a platform perched on by the university's top officials. One by one, they were congratulated.

Junior player Michael Dickerson flat out told the critics to go to hell. 58,000 people agreed with him and cheered. Mike Bibby

tried to echo that statement but quickly learned comedic timing was a gift he hadn't yet mastered.

An unknown voice then grabbed the mic and eloquently thanked the city for all its support. The communal response from 200 yards away was, "Who is *that*?" Future Memphis Tigers Head Coach Josh Pastner politely handed the mic to the next player and they all thanked the crowd for their support.

No fellas, *thank you*.

And by the way, that team that was inaccurately marked as being a 5th- placed team in the Pac-10 (tied for 3rd, morons), was now an AP consensus #1, picked by the same east coast sports writing voters to repeat as champions next year.

Jason Lee would be graduated, but all the rest barring injuries, were returning. The UA marketing department had one of its most

profitable years ever, as its players and coaches were being sought out by global interests.

Assistant coach Phil Johnson took over the head coaching position at San Jose State in 1998, Jessie Evans was hired by Louisiana-Lafayette, and Jim Rosborough stayed until Lute took him up on his exit strategy plan, marred by bad timing.

A few other staff left too, but when the 1997-98 season came around, there was a sense of vengeance when the ‘Cats raised their national championship banner during the pre-game ceremony of Pac-10 play versus UCLA.

During the Jim Harrick era, especially 1996 when the Bruins won the national title, many of the Bruins players, specifically Ed and Chris O’Bannon had made such taunting comments to the media and the crowd, they had become villains in Tucson. When

Harrick was forced to resign after the NCAA discovered scandals, the hate toward UCLA and specific players seemed justified.

Regardless, Lute had taken the wisdom of his coaching mentors and applied them, creating winning programs at three different division one colleges. The small side street that separated McKale Center from a parking garage was renamed National Championship Drive because of Lute and Bobbi, and there was talk of naming the court after the Olsons.

Chapter 52

01-01-2001

Give Me Jesus

In the morning, when I rise...give me Jesus

You can have all this world,

But give me Jesus

When I am alone...give me Jesus

Give me Jesus,

When I come to die...give me Jesus

You can have all this world,

But give me Jesus.

- Fernando Ortega

The Olson Home.

Bobbi Olson was going Home today. It was almost New Year's Day. Her family knew it. She had been in and out of consciousness for weeks. The family has customize their house so she could die at home and not in the hospital.

Paul Weitman's home was nearby and he let Lute vent some stress in a weight room while they all waited for Bobbi's body to shut down.

Lute had climbed into the large medical bed with her and held her tight, quietly whispering to her, "Bobbi, it's okay to let go. Don't fight it. Just let go. I'll miss you. Let go."

Just outside their bedroom, she was surrounded by their enormous family and friends. One lone reporter was permitted to call and leave messages with their grandson, Matt, which is how the newsrooms around the city got their updates on Bobbi.

As her family kept homage with her bedside, and watched her struggle to breath, the State of Arizona waited along with him.

They had prayed the Lord's Prayer together a few days before, but now, as she lay speechless, it was just a matter of time.

Behind her closed eyes, Bobbi saw her father in law, Albert. And smiled. She felt herself being freed from the body that she felt so much agony in, and watched as Lute and the rest of her family got farther and farther away.

Her senses were instantly restored, and she had a greater sense of where she was. The Light of Jesus was right in front of her. She felt herself walking fast, then running into His arms.

She let out a laugh that she hadn't made since she was a girl. She buried her face in his chest, and then looked up to see family and a few others she began to recognize.

The place looked like a garden, but more colorful. Creatures not seen on Earth dwelled here like it was an interactive zoo, all serving a purpose in serving someone.

Angels chaperoned humans, like royalty and their courts. “Right here waiting for you,” Jesus said to her.

“Hi Bobbi,” Albert said, looking much younger to her given he was only 47 when he died. He didn’t say anything else. He just hugged her. Then, he let her go, for all of God’s children experience the Judgment seat, even those who were as beloved as Bobbi.

Back on Earth, Lute went dumb, which is a normal stage of mourning. Though the University gave him an indefinite amount of time to mourn that translated into a few weeks, he would need years.

Bobbi’s funeral was a State event. Attendees included every player, coach, family member and friend the Olsons ever had who were still alive and capable of attending.

Bobbie wasn’t able to be at Bobbi’s bedside when she died, and was herself a wreck. She

did her best to show strength, but she was empty that day.

As Steve Kerr and dozens of other players got up and made grand speeches about Bobbi, there was one man who was effected more than anybody outside her immediate family.

I was assigned to cover the 'Cats for how many years? How could I have missed how special it was?

I was such a dumb kid.

God, thank you for my wife...God, I'm going to take You more seriously from now on. Everything I am and have comes from you and someday, this is gonna be me.

It had never occurred to Kevin McCabe before this day that it was through his eyes and ears and storytelling that most people had a chance to get to know Bobbi. Only the people in this room had met her and spent

time with her. Anyone else relied on him and the other reporters.

Greg Hansen had written something that had moved Lute, and he sat quietly in the back, off duty.

Kevin looked around and became instantly self-conscious. Blink, he was the anchor for KOLD CBS Sports, Tucson. Blink, he was traveling with this team. Blink, he got married. Blink, he had kids. Blink, he knew Bobbi, one of the most sincerely beautiful treasures he had ever known, much less considered a work colleague, considering his job was to report on what happened with the Olsons.

Blink, cancer had taken her.

What could he do about it?

He felt convicted by his residency in a fool's paradise. He had taken every day for granted.

No more.

As he listened to each player declare themselves Bobbi's favorite, his mind went to what people might say about him when he was gone, and what his kids would say.

Was I good a husband? What kind of a father am I?

He wanted to ask his wife, who shed tears and let her make up

run, not that she needed any, *Am I a good husband? How can I be a better one?*

He teared up. He tried to hide them behind his glasses, but after a few moments, he flooded his sockets and had to remove them and wipe them off.

He hadn't been an ardent reader of the Bible up until now. But suddenly he felt compelled to reach in front of him where a Bible, one of men, was tucked in the seat rack in front of him. His lonely hands braved any kind of judgment and grabbed at it.

Got it. Wow, why was that so hard? To pick up a Bible in church? To flip through it and find the verse he had once memorized.

Ephesians 5:25. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church...

Was I?

Hell no. Not no, but hell no. But I would. I will. I do know.

I get it. I get it! You hear me God!

I'm shouting in my head, and it came out in an odd sounding cough.

I want this Bible. I don't want to ever put it down. I wonder how much it is. I'll buy it right now. I'll buy one for everyone here.

In fact, I got something to say. Husbands! Love your wives! Love 'em as Christ loved the Church, before she's gone. Before you can't.

Kevin looked at Lute. He looked pale.

God, hear me. Comfort Lute. Forgive me for not being the husband and father I could be

and should be, the one they deserve. Kevin looked to his other side where he saw other people pulling out tissues and openly crying.

He held the Bible in his hand as if it was hand crafted to his grip. He wasn't letting go of it.

I need to change my priorities. I am done being a fool. And if I am a fool, I'm going to be a fool for You!

Bobbi's death bore a harvest of many enlightened souls who came to realize that the only relationship that mattered on Earth was knowing Jesus before they didn't have the right under free will to choose.

In Bobbi's last months, before she lost the capacity to speak, she asked all of those near her if they knew Jesus as their Savior. And, in a message from on High, Bobbi asked Lute to try to salvage his relationship with Greg Hansen.

And Lute did try, emerging from a man to man talk about their body language and respective roles, in a guy-hug, a truce of sorts. But it didn't last, and not because Lute wasn't sincere.

Greg Hansen did respect Lute to a point, he just couldn't be honest with himself.

No matter how many nice words Greg managed to write about Bobbi or the legacy Lute would leave behind after reading his autobiography, Greg just couldn't accept the fact that Lute did would not negotiate with prima donnas, whether players or journalists. Greg's peers would often refer to him as the most self-centered editorialist in his beat, a man whose duplicity was paramount in his boasting about how easy his job was considering the money the *Star* paid him, and how the world would be a better place if Lute Olson left Tucson.

And though Lute did have emotions regarding what Greg published, it did not matter what Greg thought. It only mattered what God thought.

Chapter 53

“Wanna see what happened to them?” Jesus asked Joe, referring to most of the people he attended the Catholic church with. Jesus motioned to where one could see them burning in hell. Joe couldn’t handle looking at the for very long, but sure enough, it was them.

“No one gets away with anything. To escape man’s justice when living is pointless compared to the eternal fire that never goes out.”

In a flash, Joe suddenly recalled Matthew 10:28, which says, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Joe looked around Zion and saw a familiar face wave at him. It was his first flight

instructor, flying without his plane. God, Joe thought, he made it. He flashed that his instructor hadn't died in a crash, but from natural causes. He taught Joe how to keep his cool under pressure, something that saved his life and the lives of other many times as a cop.

In the early 1980s, he was asked to fly the police chopper that provided light and aerial support to ground patrols. Joe loved to fly and his favorite thing to do was fly over to his east side home and say hello, hovering about 300-feet over his pool.

To his kids, it was like getting a visit from Han Solo. His son would imagine the Millennium Falcon weaving through an Arizona sunset to its hovering point over his backyard.

Neighbors always asked his mother after the fly-by what had happened and were amused or jealous that Joe would do such a thing.

The focus that made Joe a good pilot also helped him when he led ground patrols amidst Tucson's biker population.

Whether during his time in Metro (narcotics) or as a street patrol officer, he often had to deal with bars like the Green Turtle, the Bird Cage (not affiliated with the businesses in Prescott or Tombstone), and The Bashful Bandit. These were havens for drug dealers and their biker clients and business partners, and considered welcome stops for the Hell's Angels.

On the front door of the Bashful Bandit, there was a bumper sticker that greeted visitors for decades that read, "Don't Trust The Police". And, considering some undercover cops slipped into the life they were trained to fit into, many broke the public's trust by selling drugs right outside the police precinct's front door or becoming involved with attractive drug addicted women.

Whether it was dealing with hostile speeders or unruly drunks at family parties, Joe was known to keep his cool.

At one call in 1980, he was asked to lead a team of patrolmen to Tucson's Randolph Park where a biker gang, made of up of young families, called 911 when threatened by a rival biker gang seeing the children as a vulnerability.

Joe noted the body count. The cops were outnumbered 50 to 1. He prayed for the Spirit to guide him as he got out of the car, and heard the muttering over the radio. "Don't go, Joe. Just let 'em fight it out."

He saw children, and thought of his own kids, what he would want if he was one of them. They called the police and asked for help.

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of

these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Joe treated it like any other call. He was approached by the man who called 911. He had a scratchy smoker’s voice.

“I called,” the man said emphatically.

Joe played it cool. “Okay. I’m officer Parella. What can I do for you?”

The man explained the problem. They just wanted to have lunch, to picnic. This other biker gang was making threats.

This could have easily turned into a riot. Children could have been killed.

“Who threatened you? Can you point him out to me?” Joe asked, sounding firm, and reasonable.

Two couples pointed out the ringleader and confirmed what he said, and Joe saw the man’s face twitch from guilt to challenge.

He was a kid, maybe 20 years old, whose bluff was about to be called.

“I’ll kill them if they mess with our kids,” the man who called for help said.

Joe laid down the law. “I heard you. Please don’t do that,” Joe said, in response to implied vigilantism. “We’ll handle this. And if we need to, we’ll call every cop in the city to come take care of this. First, let me go to talk to him. You stay here.”

Joe and another cop approached the young man who leaned against his bike.

“You got a problem?”

The young man cursed Joe out, so there was really no need to ask him anything else.

Joe paused and replied, “You man enough to look me in the eyes?” Joe asked, removing his shades.

The young man postured himself to stand up to Joe, and given Joe was just under 6-feet tall, the young man was still about four inches shorter. A few of his fellow gang members were taller, but they all slunk back against their bikes as the cops took control of the

scene, three patrolmen standing such that an invisible border was asserted between the groups and one officer who redirected traffic.

The young man removed his glasses and tried to stare Joe down.

Joe asked him coolly, “Do you admit to threatening these people?”

“Yeah, and I’ll do the same to you, cop!” he said, but his fellow bikers were growing less confident as they heard the sounds of the police chopper overhead. “I ain’t afraid of you,” the short biker added.

“Let me make this clear,” Joe said, “you are not permitted to speak to them again, and *this* is an unlawful gathering. You just admitted to threatened women and children. I can arrest you right now. You want that?”

Joe turned and looked into the eyes of the other men on bikes. In a calm, but firm voice, he asked the other young men, “Do *you*?” The biggest of the young bikers shook his head no.

These were kids. Dangerous, but young. They had never seen war, though they had tried to dress for it.

“I’m gonna give you two minutes to get back on your bikes and ride outta here. Anyone of you still here, I’m gonna arrest you.” Without waiting for a response, Joe turned and went back to his squad car. The older boys noticed how professional he was, how he went back to the squad car and

seemed to give an update, without losing his cool. It was unnerving to them.

“Dude, I’m getting the (expletive) out of here,” the biggest biker said and one by one, the leader found himself alone. The short leader shouted something inaudible toward the cops and the picnicking families, over the sound of his revved bike and drove off, extending his middle finger to the cops.

Joe cleared the call and saw tears of joy in the eyes of the women of the biker club that broke out its meal. “Thank you!”

“You are the toughest cop I have ever met,” the man who called for help said. Joe thanked them and wished them a nice day.

At debriefing, all the other cops were retelling the story as if Joe had engaged in a scenario similar to a gunfighter’s duel, so when he came out of the restroom and sat down to partake in debriefing, he was not expecting the honorable hazing he got.

“Hey, officer Serpico? We heard about what you did at Randolph Park...”

In 1974, shortly after a drug bust, the Metro team decided to celebrate privately after an awards banquet in honor of removing thousands of pounds of heroin from the street. Joe and his team walked into a local hotel restaurant located up the street from a movie theater playing the 1973 film *Serpico* starring Al Pacino.

Joe looked very much like Al Pacino, and the cops were all dressed in tuxedos and badges, having come straight from the department event. It was a busy Friday night, and they knew as time dragged on, it would get harder to find a table.

The hostess was gracious, suggesting that they had a 45-minute wait, so Joe asked to be placed on the waiting list. “Your name?” she asked.

With a straight face, flanked by a team of cops who also had poker faces, he replied, “Serpico, S-e-r-p-i-c-o, Frank Serpico.”

It took about four seconds before the hostess registered the name. The TV ads for the film had been all over Tucson television for the last six months. She excused herself and found a manager.

Within two minutes, the manager opened up a private banquet room where they served the cops like royalty.

They left an enormous tip and each cop told that story with a laugh for the rest of their lives.

There were many nights when Joe did not come home, but he always tried to shield his family from his daily showdowns with death.

In once instance, he was in the back seat of a car driven by drug addicts and dealers, and

an unmarked narcotics car carrying three cops with shotguns kept up with the suspect's car on the I-10 highway near the Nogales interchange with I-19.

The drug dealer in the passenger seat wielded his shotgun back at Joe, whose kids had just turned 6, 5 and 2, and shouted, "If you are a (expletive) cop, I'm gonna blow your (expletive) brains out!"

Joe was panicking on the inside, but he knew his ability to act

like a bad guy would save his life and keep his wife from becoming a widow that night. He would later discover that he had soiled himself.

The narc car was able to force the drug dealer into a ditch, and Joe was able to convince the drug dealers that he would use the shotgun to shoot at the 'other car'.

By the time the suspects were in hand cuffs, and the cops collected themselves in the company of an ambulance and uniformed patrol cars, the lead narc who was holding a shot gun on the unmarked police car asked Joe, “What were you thinking?”

“I was in bad guy mode,” Joe replied, “But I knew if we could get them off the highway, we could make the bust. What were you going to if he shot you?”

“I would have blown him away and we woulda crashed.”

By the grace of God, none of that happened.

One night in 1978, Joe was called to a bar called The Boat where a man high on PCP was lashing out at people with a knife and tried to rob the place. Joe wrestled him for what felt like an hour (two and a half minutes in real time), and finally, the man fell on his own knife. He didn’t die, but his blood drenched Joe’s clothes.

Upon arriving home at 3 a.m., June woke up just enough to see Joe covered in blood and began to panic. Exhausted, all he could manage was, “It’s not mine.”

Sometime during 1979, Joe was called to the Green Turtle where he answered a call about a man beating up a woman. After an attempt to eject him from the bar, he found himself on the bottom of a wrestling fight, whereby the man’s gun was aimed at his face.

This man’s drug dealing and addiction threatened Joe’s family that night. But, Joe had been trained by the Army and the police department, and that training included the hand-to-hand combat strategy of placing a finger or thumb in the the cock pin of a gun to prevent it from firing.

Joe managed to get his thumb between the cock and the pistol shaft, and after a few seconds, his fellow officers were able to wrestle the man away from Joe and beat

him, and they all yelled at the man, who was high on PCP, “Let...go...of the gun!” He finally dropped the gun.

In 1979, Joe had successfully infiltrated a drug gang that did business out of The Bashful Bandit and he had enough evidence to put the place out of business. It was then that he got his first formal visit from the FBI.

Four agents were in a conference room when he was summoned, along with his partner, and the two hair-looking men listened to the suits talk.

“Officer Parella, we want to congratulate you on your success in the war on drugs. The President sends his regards,” the agent said. Joe was waiting for “but”.

“But...we need you to back off The Bashful Bandit.” After an awkward moment and the sound of phones ringing in other offices, Joe asked why.

“Okay. Can I ask why?” he asked in a calm voice.

The agent replied calmly, “We’re building a case against the Hell’s Angels. Your work to this point is being used and we thank you. Now, find other cases to solve.”

In the locker room, Joe shaved his beard off and was approached by his Captain. “Joe.” His Captain used a urinal nearby.

“I’m sick of beards.”

“Really?” his Captain asked. “You look good in ‘em. Not everyone does.”

“My neighbors think I’m a bad guy.” The Captain finished his business and in his own way, gave Joe a verbal pat on the back.

“About those guys, that was a just a formality. Keep doing what you’re doing.”

“We were done anyway.”

“I know. They aren’t. They’re going after them.” Joe nodded. “I understand.”

“Y’ok?” the Captain asked.

“Yeah, I’m going home. My wife has dinner going and I’m dying to spend time with my family.”

“What’s for dinner?”

“I don’t know,” Joe replied. “I think it’s cheese enchiladas.”

The Captain groaned slightly. “Are those the ones we ate at the last party you threw? Wow. Yeah, Get home. Night.”

As Bobbi Olson was the first lady of college basketball, June was the first lady of the Tucson Police Department. Her hostessing was on par with luxury hotels in Europe, on a very small budget.

She was never afraid to get her hands dirty, and food followed her fingers’ every order.

The only flaw she had was that she cooked meat to her personal taste, which meant her family never ate a properly cooked steak for twenty years. She overcooked all meat.

Her son was 29 and engaged to be married before he ever tasted a properly cooked steak.

But her authentic Italian marinara sauce was potent enough to command the respect of any of Joe's coworkers who were brave enough to trade for his left overs. Having been trained by Jenny to cook for family and guests and at every meal, June overcooked portions, resulting in a personal war with obesity she did not inherit. One of her daughters did, and family meal time became a blessing and a curse. The Parellas loved to eat and looked forward to the laughter of meal time, salted with displays of raw emotion. The mere question, "How was your day?" was a loaded one. Sometimes the answer was "nothing", and sometimes,

triumphs and tragedies alike awaited Joe and June.

After the diagnosis of his son's nervous disorder and the TPD psychiatric department's referral to a family therapist, Joe found himself undergoing lengthy personal and joint-family counseling sessions.

He learned how important a date day with his kids were. Movies and minor league baseball games were cheap, and he was urged by the psychiatrists, the more active you are with your family, the more you will survive the transition from the stress of your job. Or, it will kill you.

Certain movies became life events that marked his kids' lives. His son was a *Star Wars* addict. His daughters loved *Grease*, musical comedies and James Bond. And though Joe was a be-bop Rock N Roll guitarist himself, he couldn't stand early 80s

hard rock or its pop sibling, soft rock. He had been to too many domestic violence calls where this music was blaring, and the drugs-and-alcohol life it sang about seemed to be the cause of a lot of broken homes.

Still, he tolerated his daughter's obsession with Boy George and Duran Duran, and watched in amusement as his wife embraced Jazzercise as Paramount Pictures marketed its films with emphasis on selling musical soundtracks, having learned from the shocking success of *American Graffiti* and *Star Wars*. The princes of Hollywood breathed a vision of *Dancing In The Sheets* into the decade, and the 1980s took on a spiritual ambiance all its own, the 1970s now feeling lightyears away.

Suddenly these things weren't just meaningless movies and songs. They were personal, just as Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers were to him in his youth.

Joe spent time learning the power of computers and the emergence of Apple. He was deeply fascinated with the space program and spent time building rockets with his son. Whenever work didn't preempt his time, he attended every game, play, practice and rehearsal. He delighted in fatherhood. He also dove deeper into his commitment to June.

He shed the skin of the role of husband as it was taught to his generation in the late 1950s and implored her to go to college along with him. She appeased him for a while, but eventually took a detour at beauty school, attending the Allure College of Beauty. What started as a hobby had attracted so many in-house clients that a salon owner complained about her when one of her clients stopped coming back.

The city's licensing division learned of this and ordered June to get licensed or face a fine. Like Joe was forced to return to college

to sharpen his writing skills, June was forced to get certified in cosmetology.

There, she met some lifelong friends including the Micolettis.

Chapter 54

1982

Michael Landon Productions.

Old Tucson Studios.

Southwest Tucson.

Off duty uniformed jobs weren't always fun. Most of the jobs Joe was assigned to involved directing traffic or Old Tucson Studios. Michael Landon Productions was a busy company during that time, and Joe got to meet his TV hero, Little Joe from *Bonanza*.

Joe walked into the mens room one day while Michael Landon happened to be standing at a urinal and stood alongside him and did his business.

“How’s it going?” Michael asked him. Joe knew not to talk to the cast or producers unless spoken to, or unless the job required it.

“Good. I like watching the process,” he said, an echo of Wyatt Earp talking to actor Tom Mix.

As the two men turned and made their way to the sink to rinse their hands, Michael couldn’t help but notice how photogenic Joe was.

“What set are you supposed to be on?”

Joe quickly corrected him, “Yours. I’m a cop,” he answered, pointing to his badge. “This is *real*,” he added, pointing to his tool belt which included his gun.

Michael was impressed, “You *outta* be an actor. You look the part. It pays better. You know who I am *right*?”

“Bonanza. I grew up watching you. It was my favorite show,”

Joe said, his sincerity tickling Michael’s ego.

“Oh, yeah? What if I gave you a part? Would you be willing to let casting take some pictures of you?”

When Joe walked out, talking with Michael, his fellow officers noticed and wondered what they could possibly be talking about. Merlin Olson, standing next to a camera operator, talking about football, noticed Joe had a unique piece to his uniform that set him apart from the other cops: a small Christian Cross that was pinned just below his shoulder.

“I’ll make the arrangements, if you can head over there before they close tonight, after you get off?” Michael asked. The cops were amazed because the body language was such that it looked like Michael Landon was trying to sell Joe something.

Michael turned and half ran into a craft-service female assistant, and baring her a smile, tapped her backside pretentiously, and made his way to the front of the sound stage.

The familiar cast of actors seen in the Ingles home were front and center, along with a little boy sitting behind his father, the director, Leo Penn. The little boy was Sean Penn.

As Joe explained to the cops what they talked about, they all howled in disbelief and tried to say that they too were going to be movie stars.

A lighting technician shouted to Michael that he wasn't ready yet, which made all the kids groan due to the endless waiting. Melissa Gilbert had an ongoing game of rummy going on with her cast mates.

Merlin Olson walked over to Joe and asked him who he was and about the Cross on his uniform.

“I remember you from your playing days,”
Joe said.

Merlin replied, “What church do you go to?”

He befriended Merlin Olson, a fellow Catholic, and in the height of ratings success of *Father Murphy*, Joe got free tickets to everything from Old Tucson’s amusement rides to Wildcat events.

During one chance-visit to use a restroom in a convenience store near 4th Avenue and Speedway, Joe found himself standing in line in front of Ivan Lesnik, one of Larry Smith’s recruits from Hawaii. Ivan had recently been on TV protesting how the NCAA was penalizing the football program over the Tony Mason scandal, years after the fact. The two struck up a quick friendship, and Joe’s electric personality was contagious. Ivan was so flattered by a cop gushing over him, he invited him to visit and watch practices. Of course, Joe did, bringing

his son and daughters with him as time permitted.

Over the next few months, Joe saw Ivan on campus and at

practices often enough to invite the young defensive linemen and future doctor over for dinner. Initially, Ivan and his shy girlfriend Michelle would visit, and over time, they married and raised a family of their own, in Hawaii and then San Diego. The Lesniks still sent holiday cards after Joe died.

Ivan would often invited Joe to connect with him and his girlfriend after football games to eat and have fellowship. It was there Joe and his son would stand with their newly minted UA trading cards and ask the players to sign them.

Tom Tunncliffe. Brad Anderson. Vance Johnson. Ricky Hunley. Joe Tofflemire.

In February 1982, Joe worked an Arizona Ice Cats game at Tucson Community Center that would change his life.

Though generally in strong shape for a man in his mid-30s, Joe's knees had given him problems since his days in the Army, forced to wear boots that were poorly designed.

A fight broke out amidst some drunken hockey fans, and responding to an unusual call from arena officials, Joe found himself being thrust down a steep stairwell, his gun remaining holstered and silent, falling several flights of stairs in the process. The men who were fighting the police were contained after several minutes and a dozen cops restraining them. Joe was helped to his feet by some orderly hockey fans and when he reported to his commanders, he told them something he didn't typically say: I need an ambulance.

Weeks after arthroscopic knee surgery, Joe was offered several types of therapy. Swimming, running or bicycling. He opted for bicycling.

His first ride on a bike was about as clumsy as could be. The bikes he had purchase for the family to use years before, stored in a tin shed in his side yard, had not endured the weather and sounded like the chains that bound Marley and Marley in *A Christmas Carol*, when he tried to untangle the metal frames.

He finally managed to inflate one bike's tires enough to ride it, and tried riding to the end of the block, which was about 200 feet.

He walked the bike back to the house, drenched in sweat and guzzled several large cups of water.

He then went a little further each time he rode.

At first it was funny to hear how far he made it, as the family made dinnertime chatter. Soccer had been adopted as the family sport, given the Police Athletic League had sponsored Joe's little league team, based on a family psychiatrist's recommendation for him to spend time with his son. The PAL Roadrunners won most of their games for several years.

That year, Italy upset Brazil in the World Cup. He had taken the family to see a local screening of Sylvester Stallone in *Victory*, and his son had become a fan of Pele, and therefor cheered for Brazil, overnight. Of course, Italy won and the event was bittersweet, his son in tears.

In his second year of coaching, his son's 9-year olds were the

best in their league, but an administrative gaff occurred whereby Joe did not file an

additional form to declare his team's intentions to compete in the post-season.

The league president was a soccer enthusiast named Dennis Archer, whose kids were about the same age as Joe's and whose son Gary attended the same school as Joe's son. They didn't get along.

When Dennis saw his son's team get dismantled by Joe's during the regular season, and he realized Joe had failed to file the form in time, mostly because he was unaware of it, Dennis refused to let Joe's team compete, and the Police Athletic League Roadrunners missed the post-season all together. That event affected many families. With life phases ranging from divorces to psychological development at stake, one of the few positive programs that the team had going for it was sabotaged by a selfish, ambitious, undertalented, overweight man, all in an effort to glory his own son and team.

When the team of 9-year olds and their parents were told the news of the disqualification, they mourned.

Dennis went on to try to make a living in the sport, running leagues and getting into the facility rental business. His coaching efforts at Secrist Middle School resulted in an 0-11 season for the 1985-86 Scorpions. Joe's son tried to imitate the sports coverage done by the *Star*, on a smaller level writing for the school's tabloid, and in a season-ending editorial, he cited the team's refusal to play as a team.

This news coverage was part of the reason why the coach was not asked to return, and he then had a brief stint coaching the freshman team at nearby Santa Rita High School in 1987, achieving about the same results.

It was a sport the Parellas found joy in, but Joe and his son lost general interest after that

fiasco, taking up baseball and basketball, and his son's personal choice, jujitsu, after identifying with *The Karate Kid*.

As Joe managed to balance his work and family life, finding solace in working the city desk, a job most cops considered beneath them, Joe had enough action in Metro to last him three lifetimes and bathed in the sanctity of being the face of the department. He also got to study. He was officially a junior at the University of Arizona.

He tried to apply the same problem-solving techniques he learned on the job, called to countless domestic violence and alcohol-related crime scenes, and he tried to reserve his emotions on loving his wife and kids. But when the social pressures that mounted against his son became overwhelming, he recruited wisdom from some of his workmates, who happened to be licensed

martial arts teachers at a program offered by the Ott YMCA.

By a twist of fate, the same style of martial arts taught there was the basis for Robert Michael Kamen's 1982 screenplay that became *The Karate Kid*. Joe watched his son grow in confidence and learn how to handle himself amidst bullies, many of whom were the adults Joe had to deal with on nightly 911 calls.

Joe's son's ongoing refusal to bow to the peer pressures of his classmates led to formal martial arts training as a means of survival at Secrist and Santa Rita. It was not until after the 1999 Columbine tragedy that the majority of the events considered so common would be re-categorized as grounds for suspension, expulsion or arrest, given the No Tolerance policies passed by the Board of Education.

Even with the support of additional teachers and tutors for his kids and himself (willing himself through the anti-God ambiance of the faculty of the University of Arizona), job and family stress were taking their toll on Joe's health.

Joe had been advised by the department psychiatrist to find a physical activity to help decompress the horrors he faced in narcotics, and try to resume "civilian" life after the years he spent mingling with drug dealers.

He found it. He bicycled to work and back every day. Sony had just come out with a device called a Walkman, and he made tapes for himself to cycle along to.

America by Neil Diamond, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Weber, were among his favorites. He had been a part of a successful cover band for east coast be-pop musicians, so Chuck Berry, the Drifters, Bill

Hailey and the Comets and Richie Valens filled his ears on his way to work.

He bought a special pair of pants just for cyclers, and laughed his head off when this gear was debut in 1988 as spandex, minus the groin guard. Soon, his son was joining him on long, marathon rides.

Chapter 55

November 1986

On the same day as the 1986 Arizona-Arizona State football rivalry game, known as the Territorial Cup, a.k.a. the Duel in The Desert, some idiot schedule the El Tour De Tucson. It was a 112- mile single lap around the city, complete with community volunteers and police-patrolled street barriers. Joe and his son trained to ride it together.

They got a slow start when his son's hands fell to the cold, but they soon caught up with the flow of riders. After four-and-a-half hours, his son had become exhausted and, though he never showed his fatigue on the soccer field, he admitted wanting to stop short of the 75-mile mark, just three-fourths of the length of the race.

At this exact moment, at Arizona Stadium, the Wildcats had taken a slim lead against ASU. Sun Devil quarterback Jeff Vanrapphorst led his offensive into the Wildcat red zone and prepared to take a shot into the end zone.

“Dad, I don’t think I can go on,” I said to him. “I’m sorry.”

Instead of getting mad, Joe realized his son didn’t make such a statement lightly. They did, after all, survive the Grand Canyon.

“Okay,” Joe replied. “When we get to the next rest stop, I’ll go get the truck and come back for you.”

As the two made a dangerous turn on south-bound Oracle Road, an old gray sedan caught his son’s eye as a volunteer perched his car had the game blaring on his radio, screamed hysterically in echo of what the game’s color announcer had just stated.

...Quarterback back to pass, here comes the pressure...he fires into the far side of the end zone -- caught by Cecil! ...inside the goal line! Chuck Cecil has just intercepted the ball for Arizona! To the twenty, the forty, the fifty, thirty, ten, five....TOUCHDOWN ARIZONA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The sound of the crowd cheering on the Wildcats was audible from space.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhuuuuuuhhhhhh aaaaaaaahhhhhhhh !!!!!!!” the man screamed as they sped past him, distracting Joe’s son from his fear of this busy, uncertain street.

“Chuck Cecil just intercepted a pass in the end zone and ran it back a hundred and ten yards for a touchdown!!! Touchdown Arizona!!!!!!”

Joe and his son looked at each other, as if God Himself reached down and gave them strength.

They both switched gears as they crossed the 75-mile mark and pushed passed it, adrenalin flowing. As more cars we passed confirmed what they heard while zooming by at 20-something miles per hour, they both shouted in victory.

Joe's son didn't remember how long it took us to cross the finish line, but he later recalled not being last but more than two-hundred riders.

As father and son found their truck in the parking lot, Joe's son asked him, "Dad, can I give you my bike and get in the truck?"

"Absolutely," Joe replied, beaming with pride. They had in fact finished it. Joe's son fell asleep about eight-seconds after climbing into the truck's passenger seat.

That moment when they cradled victory in their outstretched hands with balled fists wrapped in sweaty bicycling gloves, the finish line approaching somewhere in this

distance, was the father-son snapshot one would want on a film poster.

That was Joe and his son, frozen in time.

Chapter 56

By 1986, Joe was offered early retirement. Ted Turner's cable television products had expanded to offer a channel called CNN which scrolled the stock market updates every few seconds. One no longer had to wait for the daily distribution of the newspaper to see them.

“I Called you into part-time ministry,” Jesus said. Despite the setbacks of TV religious scandals of the 1980s, evangelism was about to hit a stride not seen since the 1930s. A whole wave of media-savvy Bible teachers, some good, some not, would transform the paragon of music, television and film. Activists would target the heads of media conglomerates with prayer instead of protests. The results were a conscious in Hollywood that would lead to films being made that

otherwise would not have, including *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of The Rings*.

“I Called you to be a part of that, but you only saw the past, and part of what was in front of you,” Jesus said. “I operate in the future.”

Joe declined the offer of early retirement, though it would have propelled his Call into ministry, what he had set out to do from the beginning. Instead, he monitored the inheritance received from deceased parents, that is, the kids’ grandparents had died, except for his mother, who would die in 1995. The energetic young pioneer with the heart of a Wildcat was slowing down and becoming set in his ways, rather than usable by God. Joe was now the stubborn father who would not grant his son’s requests. He coveted time spent in his custom made wood shop, and his days of being the doting little

league dad and baseball mentor were increasingly distant.

Joe did get a glimpse of the movie making and writing career that awaited his son.

Based on a basic understanding of animation, his son borrowed some Super 8 camera equipment and invented characters that were easy to draw. He animated *Joe Blow and The New Crew*, a modern version of the *Peanuts* gang, shortly before the *Rugrats* debuted. The *Simpsons* was in development at Fox, after producers used *The Tracey Ulman Show* to test market it.

Joe then watched in amazement as his son wrote to George Lucas and suggested that Episode VII feature time travel. Lucasfilm promptly responded with a No-Unsolicited Submissions letter. But, the boy showed his courage. He watched him move away from the wrestling and baseball team after dealing with some unfriendly teammates and find his

niche among the drama club, following in his older sister's footsteps.

By 1987, Joe's reputation with his kids' high school was legendary. He had been on the team that not only dealt with a hideous drug trafficking problem during the late 70s and early 80s, but he helped track down the importers and helped the D.A. build the case that put dozens of people in prison.

So, by the time his kids attended Santa Rita High School, their administrators knew all too well who Joe Parella was. Instead of walking the campus with the pomp of a security guard with a hero complex, he was just dad, more interested in his kids academics and future campus life at the University of Arizona.

When he met Jacquie's drama teacher, and she learned he was not only a cop, but the cop responsible for...*wow, really? that was you? Wow.*

Joe was tapped to help out with set building for their upcoming plays.

The school had elected to perform *Oklahoma* and *Ms. Liberty* in successive years, which his daughter Jacquie would have minor, and then lead roles in. Truth be told, she was electric. Sadly she would let some teenage fool calling her fat stumble her for the next twenty years, but for that season of high school performing arts, Jacquie was Meryl Streep.

Jeni found her niche performing the most important job behind the scenes, the spotlight.

As Jacquie soaked up her parents praise on the way home from opening night, Jeni reminded her on cue, “If it wasn’t for me, nobody would be able to *see* you.” It took years for Jacquie to be able to look back and laugh at that.

In 1989, it was Joe's son's turn. It turns out he had his father's looks, combined with his mothers, and by 1992 was being compared by Laff's Comedy Cafe guest host and KRQ on air talent Jimmy Kimmel as one of the most good-looking aspiring comics he'd ever seen. "Imagine if Tom Cruise and Richard Gere had a baby."

Joe watched his son perform scenes from *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* but died before he could witness him play Tybalt a year later.

Joe had read his son's work, using an old typewriter they had bought from a yard sale to crank out romance novels identical to what June kept stocked in the house.

He watched his son ponder adapting Stephen King's *The Stand* into a film, and listened to him describe how *Star Wars* had changed the world, an ideology that would later

become its own course at the University of Southern California.

After reading about George Lucas' THX development, he watched in amazement as his son used an old 70s hi-fi stereo system to give their living room hard-wired surround sound when they wanted to watch a movie. He had passed his engineering talent onto his kids.

He also watched his son's grades suffer from the school's lack of support of the arts, and history would record that Santa Rita High School principal Patricia Hale had two loves, the marching band and her career. Every other facet of the school suffered.

By 1990, the Santa Rita baseball team had been acknowledged as a breeding ground for college and professional prospects. Unfortunately, that gave those boys an ego, which clashed with the Shakespeare Rapier and Dagger team, literally.

Joe listened in amusement as his son took a chance to confide how his day had gone, usually resulting in Joe yelling at him for sharing a conflict Joe couldn't solve. When his son was sure he had a happy ending, he shared, and in this case, the ending was kind of funny.

“We were just outside the stage door, which is next to the baseball field. A few players from the baseball team walked over with their bats and tried to challenge us to a duel. We were holding broadswords and rapiers. They tried to take swipes at us and within a few seconds we disarmed them and scared them. They actually *ran* off. It was so funny. We told Miss Bowland,” who was their teacher, “so we didn't get in trouble and we haven't seen 'em since.”

Joe watched his son blossom into a man.

His proudest moment as a father came when he heard over a third-party phone call, how a

teacher recalled an event when his son had saved a classmate's life.

During 1987, one of his son's classmates had engaged in statutory rape. The boy and girl lived next door to each other in a nearby neighborhood and when the 13-year old girl asked the boy to leave, he refused until she let him have his way with her.

Joe had heard rumblings from his son describe what happened, and even followed up to see whether or not a complaint had been filed with detectives. Sure enough, there had been a restraining order filed against the Honeycutts of Eastview Street, requiring their son not communicate with the girl at all. Embarrassed and intimidated, the girl refused to testify and the boy admitted his actions to his parents but denied them to the police, the District Attorney's office could not prosecute the case.

But the toll the incident took on her family led to her parents divorcing, and she transferred to a different high school the following year. She and Joe's son were like siblings, but in regards to the crime itself, there was nothing he could do.

Police respond to calls about crimes past and present. Joe knew the statutory rape process all too well. It was long, emotional and the law required victims retell their stories repeatedly to ensure their attackers received the maximum penalties possible. In that regard, it was a double-edged sword. But the bottom line was, the problem wasn't the attack itself, that was a symptom.

The problem was poor parenting. The boy's father was one of the many men Joe looked on with disgust. Alcohol played an active role in their home, and a general disrespect of women was a symptom of deeper problems. The boy was a product of his parents' problems, but his sins were his own.

Not only did he commit rape, but he bragged about how much he enjoyed “getting some pussy,” to the cackling reactions of his neighborhood cohorts. They all delighted in these boasts as if they were normal.

It wasn’t just one lone incident, it was the symptom of the cancer of bad fruit that generation would produce. By 2007, sexual assault crimes would add photo and video-enabled cell phones to record the humiliation and even broadcast it. Victims were committing suicide.

There was no sign of remorse. And if someone did object to the evil they witnessed, the Honeycutt boy would raise his fists, or in this case, a cowardly foot to the back.

One morning at the school bus stop, inspired by the *Karate Kid*, Joe’s son went to the bus stop with the intention of confronting the boy, who had been bragging of his sexual

escapades among the spoiled Caucasian teenage brats who lived in the East Creek Street neighborhood of south Tucson.

Joe's son stood at the bus stop, talking with another boy about the problem. Yes, there was bragging. Yes, the crime had been committed, and yes, the boy was proud of it. Joe's son made the error of vigilantism, trying to enforce with his own hands what the police would not seem to do. The fact is the girls' parents declined to prosecute. The physical evidence matched the profile for rape, and the attacker lacked an alibi.

Joe's son had stood with his back to the walking path where the Honeycutt boy approached the school bus stop and felt something shove him about six foot forward, almost knocking him over. It was the Honeycutt boy kicking him from behind.

The Honeycutt boy wanted someone to tell him he had been pardoned. Joe's son saw a

boy who wanted to be relieved of the consequences, without any sign of remorse. They exchanged punches until the bus arrived.

The bus driver did nothing when he saw them fighting. The old, legally blind man seemed more concerned about keeping his schedule than the fact that two bloodied teenagers just boarded his bus.

Once at school, Joe's son went to the nurse's office and reported what had happened. A cop came to survey the problem and the Honeycutt boy denied his crime yet again.

Both boys were sentenced to a week of on-campus suspension.

Joe was later dismayed to learn that a witness to those events delivered his newspaper and had mentored his son in baseball, having played a couple seasons for the Santa Rita Eagles.

The next time Joe heard about the incident, he was told by his wife that his son had received in-house suspension for getting into a fist-fight, and this seemed to make the problem worse.

Though during that week of on-campus suspension, his son discovered the craft of animation, the boy who had forced himself on the girl seemed to believe he was justified.

The girl's emotional state tumbled to the point where she socialized with kids who did drugs and drank, supervised by their parents or not.

“You helped him cope with what he couldn't control by sharing your heart,” the Lord said to Joe.

Joe watched the memory of his words to his son. “There is evil in the world. But you have a choice to do good. God gave us that

choice. And in the end, let Him deal with the evil.”

Joe described being called to dozens of domestic violence calls every night, where men and women would plead with the cops to force their spouses to love and respect them. Joe would paraphrase, “We’re not marriage counselors. We don’t do that. You want us to take him, or her, to jail, we’ll take ‘em to jail. We can’t stay here and force people to be nice to each other.”

As his son learned to accept that his friend would not press charges further, he had a choice, to tune out the arrogant post-crime comments the boy would make, much like the convicted accomplices did in *The Accused*, or wait on the Lord for resolution.

Those boys so deserved customized concussions, Joe’s son would say to himself. One was said to be related to the founding family of Knott’s Berry Farm, but that was

later proven to be the lie of a teenager whose last name happened to be Knott.

The girl had become pregnant by the boy and miscarried the baby at full-term. A few weeks later, the boy forced his way into her bus seat on the ride home and asked her if he could get her pregnant again.

Evil.

In late 1989, during a driving education course, Joe's son sat next to his friend, and she gave him a note that contained startling news.

*I went with Paul to some strange house
where we all took pills, a lot of pills...do you
think I might overdose?*

Joe's son didn't treat it like a joke as teacher Craig Westfall tried to mellow out his post-lunch students and get class started. They were a rowdy group, just the kind of kids

most people wouldn't want behind the wheel.

He scribbled back,

How many did you take? How long ago?

Do you feel oozy, heart pounding, anything?

Passing notes,

A lot, like a dozen.

About a half-hour ago.

Paul took some too, but maybe his body isn't reacting to it...

Joe's son looked back at her and said emphatically, "You need to get to a doctor, fast!"

The urgency of the situation was lost in this room, and later, paramedics would confirm that she was minutes away from dying.

Joe's son knew exactly what to do. Take the note to the guy in charge. When his friend

refused to get up, he got up and rushed to the teacher's desk and demanded, "Mr. Westfall, you need to read this right now!"

She bolted out the door behind them both, running down the hall. Joe's son ran after her, leaving the note behind.

About fifteen seconds later, Joe's son heard his teacher running behind him, holding the note, waving him on, "Nurse's office!"

"Yes!" Joe's son replied, in mid-stride, catching up to the girl. Her adrenaline had run its course and she was fading fast.

"Okay," she said, falling to one knee, "I'll go."

"You go on your own or I'm going pick you up and carry you," Joe son's said over her. She nodded again, she'll go.

They were a few steps away from the Nurse's office when Craig Westfall hailed another teacher and the adults took the girl

in, a moment later echoed in 2000's *Almost Famous* when Penny Lane has her stomach pumped.

Joe got to hear the story in detail as Craig Westfall called his son at home and thanked him for saving the girl's life.

Life father like son. Joe indeed had never been prouder of his son.

"She was seconds away from overdosing," the teacher said.

The boy who raped her was never prosecuted. He graduated from Santa Rita in 1990, a member of a class considered by the community as the worst, most violent and foul-mouthed class the community ever produced. On the night of its gradation, one members made such offensive comments to the Principal, Pat Hale threatened to cancel graduation ceremonies for 1991.

Most of those boys left the high school and took jobs within the community, living out their lives. A couple died by 2010, leaving behind families of their own. They learned the hard way that the warning label on cigarette packs wasn't a marketing ploy.

The boy who had delivered his newspaper had a younger brother who seemed to delight in the evil these boys did. He failed to graduate with his class, but was passed by 1991.

The girl made choices to overcome the trauma, and after graduating from a different high school, left Tucson.

On one occasion prior to leaving the city, she encountered her attacker while leaving a voting poll. He asked to see her again. She was outraged but did not yell at him. "Will you ever take responsibility for ruining that part of my life?" she asked him.

He lowered his eyes and they never saw each other again.

In the Bible it says, “When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, “I cannot watch the boy die.” And as she sat there, she began to sob. God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from Heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.” (Genesis 21:15-19).

God knows how to comfort those who have been abused by the world.

Joe watched his son embrace the power of journalism, and then film. They spoke of ways of changing the world for the better, and when possible, putting right things that once went wrong.

They watched *Quantum Leap* together and had deep theological talks over long chess matches until cancer slowly eroded at Joe's capacity to stay awake.

Chapter 57

Even when Joe was dead wrong, the discovery of his error seemed to be narrated by God's sense of humor.

One day in 1989, his son complained that the professional grade bicycle that he had been riding, a hand-me-down from the slightly newer professional grade bicycle Joe rode to work and back each day, needed new tubes. The fact is his son's classmates had taken turns vandalizing it to the point where he could ride the bike to school, but wound up walking it home. It became easier not to ride it at all.

Joe told his son to report the problem to school officials, which he did.

They did not act, citing that when school ended, their responsibility for the students ended, and without a confession or

surveillance video, there was little they could, or rather, would do.

The staff of Secrist Middle School's 1985-86 faculty was notoriously lazy. During that year, two students died in avoidable accidents and one teacher killed himself.

Joe rebuked his son repeatedly. "Sunday," Joe declared emphatically, "we'll sit together on the back porch with a few bike repair kits and one by one patch every hole."

"You addressed the symptom, but not the problem," Jesus said to Joe, who was feeling convicted of parental missteps after seeing this era from Heaven's point of view.

"You needed to pray for your son. You didn't."

What started out as a disciplinary action became a nice father-son day. It took eight hours, and June ordered pizza for dinner.

But as the sun was setting, a gorgeous light show in the western sky, the bicycle was now repaired and ready to ride. Joe's son took it out for a test spin. All systems were functional. He beamed, having fixed his bike and pleased his father.

As the three ate pizza, Joe lectured, "I told you, there's nothing wrong with those tubes."

Suddenly they heard a gunshot. It sounded like someone had fired a rifle over the fence into the backyard. They both ran to investigate. Then the sound gave way to evidence. The bike toppled over and clunked to the ground. The tubes had both exploded. June laughed out loud.

"Dad," his son said humbly, "I think I need new tubes."

Jesus said, "He got his driver's license two months later and never rode that bike again."

“Is he gonna be okay?” Joe asked the Lord.

“Yes, but...” Jesus replied, he showed him the future, and all the trials and snares that awaited his son that might have been avoided had he guided him according to the Word. He saw his son unable to focus enough to survive his freshman year, and the same snares that almost knocked Joe out of school years before repulsed his son as well. Jesus pointed to an era in 2011 when Joe’s son, wearing a Sun

Devil cap and gown, finally did graduate from college. He showed him his failed film career amidst a global economy in chaos, but the face of his wife, and his kids, Joe’s grand kids.

“You spent a lifetime planning for yesterday, overcompensating for your own wounds, and wound up creating new ones for all of your kids. You could not silence the negativity of your cousin Donna or your

sister in law, Shirley, who will both spend eternity apart from Me if they do not received Me into their hearts. You could not own a nice enough home to silence their criticism, nor speak eloquently enough to rebuke their accusations of you being a *stupid loser*,” Jesus said, the words themselves turning to black dust as they exited His mouth, the Lord spitting them like comets into hell.

“Lies do not live here. Their sins are their own. You are blessed because you received Me.”

Jesus showed Joe the moment Joe first declared Christ, singing along to the self-adjusted lyrics of Jesus Christ Super Star.

“Now...” Jesus said, changing the subject. “You want to see your estate?”

Treasure in Heaven.

Joe was still emotionally hung on the last few moments. “Why did their opinion of you mean so much?”

“I figured if I could get someone who didn’t like me to say something nice about me, then maybe it would be that much more true,” Joe replied.

“A lie the Enemy told you early in your life. I alone tell you who you are. You are a man who served as a father, a husband, a friend, a servant to his community, many who never knew your name, and a servant to the expansion of My kingdom, which means most of all.”

Jesus lifted up Joe’s life and seemed to edit all the moments of personal sacrifice together until they formed one coin. It was clear this coin was the basis for money on Earth, as it is in Heaven.

“How much is it worth?” Joe asked, now almost afraid to know the answer. His fear

quickly faded when the Lord asked him what he thought it should be worth.

Joe looked around and saw the portal of the Kingdom, which was circular like a funnel, the funnel extending down to the Earth, and beyond, to the vast arena built to be a prison for the fallen angels, twice the size of the Earth, where a population accumulated of more than 89% of souls born since the Resurrection now live in misery forever.

Looking up, he saw Heaven, and a smile pierced his lips as he saw old friends, family, including his biological father and uncle, and people he had arrested who had all accepted Christ as their Savior before taking their last breath.

“I don’t know...” Joe said, then calculating what this coin might be worth considering its inscription:

God’s Property, by the Blood of Jesus, Book of Life citizen #5,956,767,434,785,457.

Joe looked at the Throne and started connecting the dots. He was bought by the Blood. He shared the Throne of Christ with Jesus. This Kingdom was his.

“This has absolute power,” Joe said, accepting that it was just currency, it bore the Authority of the King, and it was forever a part of his Heavenly body, set on his chest where his heart was, like a crest.

“Now, it shall be worth double,” Jesus said, and took Joe to a higher level where those who had sacrificed for others and sought the Kingdom by sincerely loving others were.

On arrival to that upper level, he noticed there were even more levels.

“Can I go up there?”

Jesus replied, “Once you realize that your comparison to other people on Earth resulted in your bitterness, and cost you that part of the Kingdom, you will find yourself there.”

Joe knew exactly what Jesus was talking about. Promotions not granted, for whatever reason. Cruel words that pierced his heart, some from his own mouth, words born from wounds inflicted by those whose interest were selfish or defensive.

Instead of asking God to give him a new vision for his life, or help edit the old one that led him to Tucson, that made him one of the best cops the nation ever had, instead of continuing to seek the face of the Father for ongoing refinement in the form of Christ, Joe settled for a custom-made, self-justifying refinement of himself.

On Earth, self-made men are adored. In Heaven, it costs them treasure.

“Who’s at the top, if there is one?” Joe asked.

Jesus smiled. “See for yourself.” Joe’s eyes seem to clear even more, and he saw many millions of faces ‘tied for first’, tied as being

the closest to God, given their willingness to surrender on Earth, not to man's control, but to God alone, crying out "Abba Father!" as Paul had described in his notes that wound up in the New Testament.

Joe still had a full conscious memory of his whole life, and he asked Jesus, "Is there any more, to my judgment, I mean?"

"You are not alone, and you are not dead. You are alive. There is no death here. You are immortal. And yes, you can visit your family and friends on Earth. But hear me this: free will must be adhered to. If you visit them, be warned that they do not see you as you were. That man is dead. You are alive now, a citizen in the Kingdom forever. I'm returning very soon."

And at that, Jesus flew to another portal where He greeted another soul entering His presence.

At Joe's funeral, he placed a rainbow in a sky on a day when

there had been no rain. He placed a black butterfly on his coffin, amidst the sorry.

How did he tell his widow and kids he was...better than okay? That his soul was not confined to his coffin, that his life was not a memory in the past but an ongoing story that had simply turned a chapter?

All because Jesus elected to go to the Cross and had Risen. By the same power, he was alive too!

How did he tell them that?

He would try to orchestrate events that would move them all closer to God.

He watched, almost bored, as his wife dated and after several odd men, remarried a man whose heart for God was underdeveloped. They would legally separate in the early part of the next century. His married friends

would try to support June for the years that followed, but the moment she started dating again, some rebuked her as if she was cheating on Joe and she lost friends.

Apparently ten years was the quota for mourning, not three.

But his kids would go very different and extreme directions. Only two of them would marry and have kids of their own.

The Lord spoke to Joe's concerns, "They have a relationship with Me, like you, that is between them and I. There are no mediaries."

Well, that was that. Pretty much all the aspects of Catholicism, except what he gleaned from Joe Micoletti about Protestantism, were inaccurate or flat out wrong.

Joe took another long look at his new Heavenly body and realized he could run

fast again. He also realized that as his free will formed a thought, it had the power to take physical form.

As he raced through Heaven, he realized his lungs did not get tired, but with each breath, he felt more and more empowered.

He saw all the other creations that other people had made, like he was doing now, and how the Father seemed to interweave them like a gigantic quilt, comparable to a jungle, minus the restraints of the Earth.

“Which day can I spend with them?” Joe asked.

Ever present, the Lord answered him, “One day with one of them. I recommend one or more of your kids. Your marriage is over.”

Chapter 58

Joe sat across from a bald guidance counselor and heard words that would make anyone in the education profession twenty years later cringe. Joe looked respectable, but in New jersey in 1962, a dark-haired Italian was presumed to be geared for a life of manual labor.

“Joe, have you considered a tech school?”

“I want to study engineering,” he replied.

His counselor paused and shook his head chuckling, not even looking up at Joe. “With your test scores, you’ll never be anything more than a mechanic. You’re just not smart enough.”

In 1987, Joe stood on front of the family fireplace, posing with his mother for a picture. He wore his dark blue cap and

gown, and smiled as wide as his jaw would allow. He had graduated, and proven his high school guidance counselor to be an ignorant near- sighted liar.

Chapter 59

August 28, 1963

Anaheim, California.

Lute has come home from one of his part time jobs. Bobbi is dealing with tantrums, housecleaning and watching the Martin Luther King speech on TV.

“How was your dad?”

“Good. An old lady almost got us killed on the highway, but I’m fine,” he replied all in one breath, guzzling a tall glass of water. “I feel like Bob Newhart on this job.”

“What happened?” Bobbi asked, seeking any adult conversation as her kids argue over a toy.

“Kids!” Lute barked in his dad-voice, then lowering his cup slightly, and told the story.

“We’re on the highway. You know how there are no stop signs on California highways?”

“Yeah?” she replied, waiting for the punchline.

“A lady to today swore she saw one. She jammed in the brakes in the middle of the freeway. Thank God it wasn’t rush hour.”

“Oh noooo!” Bobbi replied, laughing with his pain. He chuckled too, easier given he made it home alive. Bobbi had been reading the Want Ads and had circled a few.

“Whatcha got?” Lute asked, seeing the newspaper folded over in her hand.

“Milk man?” He just looked back at her. No.

“Taxi driver? You’re driving now?” Same look, his eyes lowering slightly.

“Texaco needs a fuel truck driver. Summers only. We could make it work.”

“You’re really struggling here aren’t you?”
he said.

“It’s okay. Sometimes I imagine life without kids, but, then I’d probably be dreaming about life with kids. So, here we are.”

Lute smiled at her. Pregnant with their fifth, she still looked radiant. “How do I apply for that Texaco one?”

“Call the number.”

Later that evening, Lute came home with a look of relief. As he walked in the door, Bobbi was opening the bills. “How’d it go?”

“Good. I told them I had a Master’s Degree in Educational Psychology and they hired me on the spot. I even got this hat.”

Lute was officially a Texaco truck driver.

Bobbi flirted with him, giving him raised eyebrows, “Can I ride along with you?”

“No, but that’s a good idea. Kids! Everyone get in the car. Anyone want ice cream?”
There was joy in the Olson home.

Chapter 60

November 22, 1963

Bobbi sat in her living room and watched in tearful horror as the news of President Kennedy's death swept through the neighborhood as they were headed out for a game.

Joe Parella watched from his barracks in Germany as Walter Cronkite declares that President Kennedy is dead.

Lute stood in his locker room, and asked if any of the players had anything to say. They all looked grim, but knew life and the game, so to speak, goes on.

“Um, considering the circumstances, I want to invite anyone to say anything they want,” Lute said, reiterating his initial invitation.

A couple of the boys shed silent tears. That night, they won.

Chapter 61

1969

NASA put a man on the moon. The Mets won the World Series to the irritation of Cubs and Orioles fans. The National Organization of Women had become a political power. The war in Vietnam had inspired the conservative voters who had voted for Richard Nixon twice to march against him in the streets.

And Lute Olson was fed up being a high school locker room monitor and working several jobs. His teaching credentials qualified him for any faculty in the country, and his basketball teams were the pride of Anaheim. He had become a familiar face to Jerry Tarkanian and John Wooden, who

were the most prestigious coaches of their generation.

As he complained about his job, he mowed the lawn. Bobbi held their youngest, praying for the day for potty training to end. She still thanked God for disposable diapers. As it was, she aged 10 years in the learning curve of changing her kids in and out of seasonal clothing, something the move west had helped remedy. They no longer saw as many brutal winters.

But somehow, it seemed, as happy as she was to be a wife and mother, it wasn't enough. She wanted more, and so did he.

"Sounds like it's time for a change," she uttered, not sure where in his tantrum she was interrupting.

"What would you think about me applying as an assistant coach

at a junior college? Roy Stevens said he'd give me a referral."

"I don't care where you coach. I just want you happy," Bobbi said. "Now stop griping and mow the lawn."

Chapter 62

1970

Fred Snowden had been hired to take over the Arizona Wildcats, the first black coach in division I history.

Lute was on his way to a high school basketball event where he was scouting players in Phoenix, and the drive to Tucson was worth it. He had witnessed the greatness of Jackie Robinson from a distance, and seen what the words of Martin Luther King had done to his players over the last decade, so if history was happening this close to his own life, he was determined to reach out his hand and try to touch it.

After all, touching history was like touching the hand of God.

He parked his new station wagon on the dirt lot in front of McKale Center and walked inside. He found a young woman who would later work for him, Katherine “Rocky” LaRose. She was a beautiful blonde woman, about five-feet tall, and she carried herself like a relaxed executive.

“Hello, ma’am,” he opened, his 6’4” frame immediately engaging the woman, “I’m looking for coach Snowden. I’m the new head coach at Long Beach City College,” he said, pointing to his coach’s sweater, fresh out of the box, “and I wanted to meet him and congratulate him.”

“How thoughtful of you,” she replied. “I hope you didn’t come all the way from California just to meet him,” she said, almost apologetically, “He isn’t here right now.”

Lute offered his patented smile and said, “No, I was going to Phoenix anyway for a

tournament and thought I'd just stop in and get lucky."

Rocky showed him around McKale Center. Lute was impressed.

Chapter 63

1979

Lute was irked. Ron Lester was a better player than Magic Johnson. The media was determined to get a national championship game between Magic and Larry Bird and the officials seemed to make sure that it happened.

Two points.

Lute did not know he was at a crossroads. He had built the program up from nothing, and had even helped give a small shoe company called Nike its first major sports campaign, posing with one of his Long Beach State players Leonard Gray.

Now, his seniors were graduating and...Bobbi was one the phone with one of the kids.

“Yes, I agree, it was a bad call,” she said.

“Yes, I’ll be sure to tell him. I love you too dear. Sleep? Yeah, right. No, well. I’ll try. B-bye.” Bobbi hung up the hotel phone. “Your son thinks you should ask USC if they still want you.”

Lute stared at the ceiling. The TV was on, but it was just ambiance. She laid back and took his hand and prayed aloud, “Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name...”

At some point, Lute did fall asleep. He had a dream in which he saw two doors, the stars of space surrounding each door. One door was open, and it was of the fans at Iowa screaming his name, “Lute! Lute! Lute! Lute! Lute!” He looked sharp in his suit, and paced the coach’s lines like a military commander, willing his troops on.

His point of view seemed to pull back, as if on a camera set on a a dolly, and that door

closed. The other door opened. He heard a distant sound, similar but different.

“U of A! U of A! U of A! U of A! U of A! U of A! U of A! U of A!” The chanting was louder. He saw empty McKale, just as he had seen it when he walked with Rocky LaRose. But when he saw each side of it, he heard sounds from the future.

At a small area on the court, he saw a 3-point arc appear and from the broadcaster’s booth a man in a police uniform shouted into the public address mic,
“Steeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeve
Keeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeerrrrrr!” to which the crowd echoed.

Who?

He saw a group of little boys playing basketball together. Each wore a number and a name. He couldn’t see them all, but he tried. Elliot. Lofton. Tolbert. Muehlebach.

Buechler. Kerr. Cook. Williams. Smith.
Stoudemire. Reeves...hundreds of boys.

One called to him, “Coach!” Lute took a moment to let his eyes find the boy calling to him. “Coach!”

“You coming to Tucson? We really need you,” the boy said. He turned slightly. The name Simon is on his jersey.

A woman walked behind a toddler whose jersey read Bibby. “My husband abandoned us. Someday, my son will need a teacher. Please. Come.”

George Kalil and Paul Weitman sat in the first seats of mid court and pleaded with him, “Lute, we’re ready to be part of your life.”

“Tucson needs you,” George added.

Jim and Bobbie Stehbans sat on the bench where assistant coaches sit. “Where you go, we go,” Bobbie said.

“That’s right,” Bobbie added.

Jim Rosborough stood next to Lute, which Lute discovered as Jim spoke, “We built this program together. And we rallied the city around it. We can do it again. We’re rock stars.”

Lute is overwhelmed by this and nods. *Yes, I will go...but...is this real?*

Chapter 64

1979

In New Jersey, two government agents visited the Parella farm. They politely knocked on the door and asked to speak to George Parella. Jenny answered the door. They were not cops, and only identified themselves as government agents.

“The United State government is interested in buying your home.”

At first, they declined. And every few months, they received a notice in the mail or a knock at the door, offering the same thing. After Joe’s death in 1991, Jenny’s heart was broken. Her husband had been gone since 1981, and her live-in grandkids were spoiled pains in the neck. She agreed to sell the farm, executable upon the liquidation of her

estate, which her son George Jr. was the trustee of.

What she never knew was as part of the Rico Act, J. Edgar Hoover had ordered that all known organized crime associates' homes be bought for the purpose of leveling them. Hoover wanted no signs of ongoing prosperity after that generation of criminals died.

Her estate included small inheritances allotted to all of her grandkids. Most used their money to make short-lived investments. Joe's son used his to finance his professional film debut. It starred Wayman Tisdale.

Chapter 65

In November, 1996, Lute Olson contritely told the press that this Wildcat squad would be great next year. His recruiting strategies had been the subject of the strongest criticism.

First he was a genius for rewarding the hard-working Steve Kerr.

Then he was an overpaid coach who lost to UNLV at the buzzer. Then he watched as his team sleepwalked through three consecutive early-round exists. He wondered what his team might have been like had he chose to recruit Steve Nash instead of Sean Rooks. But, that's recruiting. He had been a few beats away from landing Isiah Thomas, and did manage to get Tom Tolbert to choose Arizona over UNLV, a twist of fate that bore consequences that Tark was yet to forgive.

The fact is, the 1996 Wildcats were one of the best teams he ever coached. The best team he ever coached was his lone season with the 1973 Long Beach State 49ers. Considering the success he had at Iowa and Arizona after that, that was saying a lot. And, had a scandalous manipulation by Long Beach State's officials not been learned by Bobbi, sitting quietly behind two officials confessing to their crimes at a home game, Lute might not have left. He was very comfortable in Southern California.

But, as fate would have it, Jerry Tarkanian's blind eye toward NCAA regulations had resulted in sanctions on a program that Lute would be forced to suffer from had he decided to stay. Instead, he left after a single glorious season and rebuilt Iowa's program. Then in 1982, he was approached by a friend-of-a-friend to talk to Cedric Dempsey about a coaching vacancy at Arizona.

Lute was taken aback by the phone call, but before he could hear the invitation to come to Arizona, he didn't realize that Bobbi had already spent hours on the phone with several UA boosters and agreed to visit Tucson. She was packing.

"I guess we'll see you soon," Lute said, hanging up the phone.

From the moment they got off the plane in Tucson, they felt the heat. They saw people from Iowa and were greeted by a reporter from the *Daily Wildcat*. Before he knew it, Lute was seriously thinking about accepting it. He remembered seeing McKale Center ten years before and the idea of building up another program excited him.

The courtship of the Wildcat boosters and the optimism in Bobbi's eyes delighted him, as they were ushered from place to place, seeing the town that college football and an Air Force base built.

While Bobbi was shopping with Bobbie, and falling in love with the weather, Lute was processing the logistics. He would need to make this a recruiting hub, a place that would immediately excite kids to want to come here.

Before agreeing to anything, he went through McKale Center in detail and told Cedric what he needed...and wanted.

A new public address system would have to be installed and more.

If Arizona was going to become a power in the west, they had to upgrade everything. Everything they had was frozen in time from when Fred Snowden went from hope to nope.

Color television and pop culture were not letting the present stay present for very long. Fashions and family roles that had held for hundreds of years were being challenged.

President Regan's own kids were among the rowdiest of the nation's youth, and Lute maintained an awareness of that fact in dealing with his players. He had seen how poorly teams had produced when coaches taught the game without discipline or overemphasized obedience without a fundamental understanding of the game, and he had opted for something in the middle. In the Bible it says, "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3)

In his own home, Lute always ruled with an intended balance of firmness and compassion. Obviously the tired coach wasn't the most compassionate father. His kids loved having a coach for a dad, but they all knew the tough-love dad who awaited any prima donna players dad was recruiting. Lute commanded respect the same way cops enforce the law. First, you ask for it. Then

you insist on it. And if necessary, you force it. Even under extreme conditions, Lute never cursed in public, if at all, a gift from the Lord. Behind closed doors, he and Bobbi argued passionately, his wife almost always winning.

They would engage in a verbal food fight, exchanging variations of the word bologna at each other until they cooled off. More often, they had disputes in silence. Her sarcasm would force him to lower his guard, and remember he was arguing with a woman who loved him so much, she would give her life for him and the kids if she had to.

This strength in their marriage transferred itself onto the court and into locker rooms as a measurement for the law of Olson's teams. It was his way or none, with a court of appeals at Bobbi Olson's breakfast table.

The teacher and coach would lay down the laws of the classroom, some to the shock of

players used to Jerry Tarkanian's quasi-professional team set up at Long Beach State in 1971.

“You are here to earn a degree,” Lute stated to a room full of shocked upperclassmen. “If your grades are not high enough, you will not play.”

This was night and day from the way Jerry Tarkanian ran his program, and it forced Lute to have to recruit more players when a few left the program.

When he recruited players for his first season at Arizona, the response was more receptive because his reputation for excellence had been percolating all decade long.

Coach has been where you've been.

Coach knows how to win.

Coach has a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology.

Coach has worked his backside off to be here.

Coach provides all the tools to succeed at this level that most programs do not offer, that one really needs to succeed in pro ball.

By the time it came for them to fly home, he realized that Bobbi wanted to stay. As they leaned back into their seats, someone from Iowa recognized them and asked Bobbi, “You’re the Olsons! Are you taking the coaching job at Arizona?”

“Yes he is!” Bobbi exclaimed, before Lute had a chance to answer. He sat back and asked himself if he should correct his wife.

No. Bobbi was right. This was right. He wasn’t sure how he knew it was the right thing to do, but in his mind, he was trying to put together his farewell speech to the program in Iowa City. Most coaches loved the destination, basking in glory’s past. He wasn’t there yet. He wasn’t ready to retire.

He loved developing kids. He *loved* it. He loved seeing them rise to the occasion and meet or exceed their potential. This was really the major difference between Jerry Tarkanian and Lute Olson, a sort of spiritual arch-rival in college sports. Tark was a man who loved to win. Olson was a man who loved to teach kids through winning.

By April 1983 it was official. The Olsons were moving back to the west.

At a high school basketball tournament in Phoenix, Lute saw a friend who was trying to climb the ranks of assistant coaching, as he tried to do before being hired at Long Beach City College 15 years before.

Coach Ricky Birdsong was the most talented assistant coach and the most charismatic recruiter he had ever met. He was like a young Sydney Poitier. Ricky had made Eastern Illinois into a conference competitor, but the fact was, the Ohio Valley

Conference wasn't ready to hire a black head coach yet.

Lute approached Ricky outside the mens room of the tournament. They said hello and exchanged handshakes. "I hear congratulations are in order," Ricky said.

"I could use you on my staff," Lute said plainly, as high school senior Kevin Johnson made a shot that made the the crowd howl. It took four seconds for Ricky to accept the job.

The two men together to the airport to pick up a Texas recruit named Pete Williams. As the car kicked up dirt on its way from the airport to the campus, Pete did a 360-with his head and said, "Looks like we're on a mission to resurrect Arizona basketball."

In mid March of 1985, Joe and June spent the day camping with their kids at Mount Lemmon. On the freeway back, they did not notice the Olsons driving up the exact

opposite direction, the Arizona sunset brewing over head.

KNST Sports Radio had the pre-selection show on and they stood looking over the Tucson valley, awaiting the fate of his 20-11 Wildcat team. The NCAA had recently expanded the field to include 64 teams, and there was talk about adding a league tournament to the Pac-10. Either way, they held hands and nervously awaited their fate.

Had it really been less than 24 months since he left Iowa?

Joe hung on every word as his kids fell asleep in the back of their station wagon, their car making it way back to East Watson Drive. Most TVs in the city were tuned into ESPN or KOLD-CBS Sports affiliate where Kevin McCabe reviewed his notes before going on the air for the post-selection show local coverage.

The news hit the Associate Press wire at about 6:42 Pacific Standard Time. Arizona got a 10-seed and would face Alabama. The city smiled.

Lute had created a program that fulfilled its promise, “You’d better get your tickets now, because you won’t be able to later.”

By 1988, Joe and June sat in their seats and watched Arizona dismantle Oregon State. When the teams were announced, the crowd began chanting, “Lute! Lute! Lute! Lute!”, which to a visitor who had never heard this, sounded like booing.

“Sound like they are booing him,” June said.

“No, they’re saying Lute! Lute Lute!” Joe explained.

By the time they got home, Joe’s son asked if he had purchased season’s tickets for next year, as was the plan.

“I *couldn't*. They're sold out. Indefinitely. Apparently they're gonna have a lottery system from now on. And even then, the prices are so high, we'd be better off watching the games at home.”

It was surreal to see the local music video *Wild About The Cats* on MTV, produced and written by Harvey Mason Jr., then a bench player.

The 1989 season was one of excitement and heartbreak. Arizona would have likely won its first national championship that year had it not been for poor ball management in the last two-minutes against UNLV's best team ever.

The 1990 and 1991 season were just as disappointing, given that Arizona fans were now used to winning seasons. *What? Lose to anyone other than UCLA or Duke?* And even then people wondered ‘*Why, God why?*’

Inferior teams scouted Sean Rooks and Ed Stokes to the point where if the UA guards had off-games, they could silence the Wildcats.

Lute saw it coming and tried to push his big men to dig deeper than their natural talent would carry them. He failed to inspire them, and at home, Bobbi dealt with them by making them apple pancakes and listening to them. Some had fathers, and most had mothers whom they missed. Bobbi filled the void with laughter and compassion.

Her shopping buddy and closest friend since taking the job at Iowa was Bobbie Stehbans. Bobbie was slightly shorter than Bobbi and a little louder. Her husband was a child psychiatrist on staff at the University of Iowa, and the mutual love of grooming kids kept them in constant conversation.

Bobbi poured through countless clothing racks, buying some,

while trying on almost everything, and venting her life to Bobbie and any retail clerks nearby.

“Aha! Yes! Still fits!” she exclaimed in the fitting room of Ross: Dress For Less.

She stood in front of her mirror, just as Bobbie did in the fitting room next to hers, and wished she was 10 years younger and 20- pounds thinner. All women did. The fact is she looked good for a woman who gave birth to five kids and still helped raise a dozen scholarship players every year.

“You suck,” Bobbie joked back. “I wish I had your hips.”

“I wish I had your hair,” Bobbi countered.

“Oh no you don’t. You, you could still pass for Vivian Leigh.”

“Thank you. You know she’s dead, right?” Bobbi teased back.

A pager went off. It was Bobbi's. "Is that you?" Bobbie asked.

Bobbi looked. Vicki. "Vicki," Bobbi replied, swapping out another pair of pants.

"Should we go?" Bobbie asked.

"No. It doesn't look important."

A hispanic-looking woman tried to open Bobbi's door and noticed it was occupied, claiming another room.

"I'm in here!" The woman offered an almost inaudible apology, and the sound of the door clicking shut seemed to give Bobbi a dark feeling in her gut.

"You gonna buy anything?" Bobbie asked.

Bobbi had put her jeans back on and opened her door. To her shock, there was a reporter from the Tucson Citizen standing there.

As she and Bobbie tried to check out, the reporter asked her, "Mrs. Olson, I'm a

reporter with the Tucson Citizen. Arizona may be under investigation for a violation by one of its players.”

“I’m buying clothes,” Bobbi said in lei of *take a hike*.

The reporter rephrased the question, but suddenly the store manager, who had walked over to help with the register, was staring at the reporter. “Damon Stoudemire accepted a plane ticket from a sports agent.”

“You need to verify your facts. Damon wouldn’t be a part of anything that violated NCAA regulations. Now, would you please show some tact and call my husband’s office for your precious quote?”

“Mrs. Olson,” the manager asked, “Is this man bothering you?” He quickly realized the interview was over. “I’m a shopper too.” “Sir, leave before I have you arrested,” the manager said.

The hispanic-looking woman who tapped on Bobbi's dressing room door pushed her cart into the reporter. "Oh, so sorry." She winked at Bobbi and moved on.

At home, Bobbi opened the door to her daughters firing away with phone messages, both verbal and on Post-Its. They carried their laundry out, having used her washer-dryer while she was out.

Vicki wanted to talk. Something troubling. Reporters from every news agency in the country calling for a quote about Damon Stoudemire.

She and Bobbie set their bags down on her bed and unplugged her phone, carrying the receiver into the bathroom where she parked herself on the porcelain and buried her face in her hands.

Her other phone rang, and Bobbie asked her if she wanted her to get it.

“Let the machine get it.” She finally got the nerve to plug the phone back in called Lute on his car phone, expecting to leave a message.

“Hi honey, what’s up?” he sounded tired but delighted to hear from her.

“Phone’s ringing off the hook. Bobbie and I just got back from the mall where a reporter from the Citizen started asking me questions.”

“What did you tell him?” Lute asked, already in damage-control mode.

“That Damon robs banks, what do you think? I told him to call you. And then the manager threatened him and some lady ran over him with her cart. That part was actually pretty funny.”

Lute chuckled. He assumed this conversation made sense to someone, but it

didn't to him. "So...what are you doing now?"

"Well, I was going to make dinner, but now...where are you? There was a knock at the door. "Hold on," she said, pushing her head around a wall to see the front door. Damon Stoudemire had cupped his hands around his eyes to peek into her window, wearing his backpack.

"He's here, gotta go."

"Who?" Lute asked, navigating Campbell Avenue on his way back to McKale Center.

"Damon."

Chapter 66

Bobbi made apple pancakes with the dexterity of a sushi chef. The boys who sat at her table were hypnotized by the process.

“So what happened?” she asked, sounding like a defense attorney.

He explained that an agent had offered his father a plane ticket and the NCAA had ruled it a violation.

As she served him the pancakes, his mind cleared. Peace reigned in her kitchen, not the NCAA and not the accusers fishing for program-destroying headlines.

At the offices of the Arizona Daily Star, Greg Hansen sat at his monitor and did searches for related news entries on the AP wire service.

Charles Durrenberger leaned over and saw what he was doing, and asked, “Find your evidence?”

Greg’s eyes didn’t move from his screen. It had to be here. Lute had spent too much time in the company of Jerry Tarkanian. He was due for a humbling. Charles settled back into his own chair and tuned Greg out until he heard an unnerving sound followed by an unsettling sight.

“Yes!” Greg Hansen yelled, getting up, printing his screen and marching into his editor’s office. Charles watched in horror as Greg interrupted a meeting, closed the door, and instead of being thrown out of the office, he walked back out to his work station, with the editing staff following him out the door with approval.

The next day, Bobbi went outside to get her newspaper and unfolded it to see the headline: an accusation of sexual assault by

a UA coed against Khalid Reeves, dating back to 1991, was now front page news, accusing Lute of vacationing during the two-month off season.

Her first reaction was to hide the paper but she knew the minute he got up and turned on the TV, he would see it on ESPN.

He had worked 283 consecutive days in 1990 without a day off, and some days, without sleep, and he was accused of living like a playboy while his players partied on the UA campus. The story was a flagrant exaggeration of the facts.

In the Bible, James 1:20 says, “the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.” Lute found himself summoning the *Star* staff to his office.

The editors responsible for the story and their lawyers did show up.

Lute seethed and pointed to his wall calendar. After a decade of taking grief from these men, he lashed out, showing his temper and using his dad voice with members of the associated press. The fact is, they sat there and took their lashing because they knew they were due.

“Can everyone see this? I have worked 283 consecutive days, serving the people of the State of Arizona, coaching, recruiting,” he yelled, pausing to regain his composure.

His anger flashed again. “This story is inexcusable. Khalid was never charged and the girl later dropped it. She admitted she was as much as at fault as he was.”

Lute tried to calm down again, but then exclaimed with as much righteous indignation as one could muster, “I want you to know I

will never talk to Greg Hansen again in my life.”

The *Star* staff didn't breath. They were wrong, liable and in the lion's den.

From then on, an assistant assigned to gather quotes sat in for Greg Hansen at press conferences.

Chapter 67

The 1995-6 Wildcats were arguable the best Wildcat team Lute ever assembled. Some would argue the 1997 team was, but a national championship did not qualify any team as being the “greatest” ever.

Their season ended when Kansas won by three points in Denver on March 22.

The 2005 Wildcats were more talented than the 2001 squad, but were sabotaged by four no-call flagrant fouls in the last 2 minutes of the Elite Eight game.

In the locker room, Lute lashed out, to the surprise of Jim Rosborough and Josh Pastner. “That was the worst play calling I’ve ever seen in my forty years as a head coach!” The referees and media heard him go off for about fifteen minutes before he gathered himself. Bobbi wasn’t there. He

had no filter. He had put up with the schemes of Jerry Tarkanian, the vengeful Bobby Knight, and the shameless Jim Harrick.

Yeah, he was mad and he believed he had earned the right to vent.

It took a long hot shower and a few attempts at sleep to realize what he was most angry at.

The next morning, he sat at brunch with George Kalil and Paul Weitman. “You know what really disturbs me? Our seniors will never get a chance to experience the Final Four. They worked hard and earned it.”

The 1989 squad was better than the Michigan team that won it all, but couldn’t push past UNLV.

The 1994 squad was also better than the 1997 team, but injuries to three of its starters

reduced their expected point production by thirty- percent, resulting in a Razorback win.

Chapter 68

September 1996

Had Bobbi reinforced Lute's policies of self-discipline while they ate her pancakes, Arizona might have seen more national championships sooner. The talent was there. The will by the players to develop it was not.

In 1993, Lute saw his recruiting choices backfire, as future NBA MVP Steve Nash had slipped through his radar and led Santa Clara to upset his top-10-ranked team in the first round. ASU fans were elated and the local press, especially Greg Hansen, never let him forget about it.

In 1994, there was a brief oasis from the criticism, as President Bill Clinton rooted for his Arkansas Razorbacks against one of Arizona's best guard-led teams. 1995 was a

rerun of 1993, as Arizona lost by 9 to Miami of Ohio.

At home, the stress was overwhelming Bobbi. Lute wanted to win so badly, he was becoming self-conscious.

Their kids were grown, so they argued openly in the living room instead of going to the bedroom. “So, what are you going to do?” Bobbi asked, playing psychologist to the man with a degree in educational psychology, “Sit around and mope until next season?”

‘Yes,’ he thought, ‘ten minutes to mope. And then, I have more kids to recruit, for your information. Was he really arguing with his biggest fan?’ he said in his mind, behind a world-class poker face.

“I just want to sit here and collect myself, and then, I have to make some calls,” Lute found himself saying to the TV, his wife

putting the breakfast dishes away. *The Golf Channel* was on.

The phone rang. She reluctantly answered it. She quietly hoped it was a telemarketer. No such luck.

“Yes, hold on, I’ll see if he’s here.” She muted the phone. “It’s Kentucky again.”

They never quit, Lute thought, getting a laugh out of the irony. “Are you here?” she asked him. He shook his head no.

Bobbi ended the call politely and watched him limp into the back of the house where they had converted one of the kid’s rooms into an office.

He spent the next hour making calls to recruits, and then, went for a jog.

Bobbi had poured herself some wine.

One Tucson’s east side, Joe sat with his son at the home of one of his son’s closest high

school friends, and said to him, “This year’s team is going to win the national championship, *this* season.”

His son seemed to echo that thought, watching the Wildcats defeat a preseason favorite, North Carolina, by 20 in a the NIT in New York. “This is the best team in the country,” his son said aloud to no one as his roommates walked in the door, oblivious to the game.

At McKale Center, expectations were low. Junior team captain Miles Simon was academically suspended, an untested freshman named Mike Bibby was the star of the Red-Blue game, but, the season was still too new to buy any of the wait-’til-next-year hype. The Cats had come within 3-points of Kansas, which had come within 3 of the national runner-up, Syracuse. The seniors were gone, and the only academically qualified senior was a walk-on practice player named Jason Lee.

At home, the Olsons were struggling. The 1994 Final Four appearance had relieved a lot of the stress mounting from several consecutive first-round losses in the playoffs, but.

Each season seemed to have a weird reason for its sudden end. Any given team they faced seemed to be the dark horse of the tourney.

The taunts of the media had calmed a little, or Lute had grown a thicker skin. Either way, the problem wasn't political anymore. It was personal.

He wasn't satisfied with going the distance. He wasn't interested anymore in being the underdog. Arizona was now a national power, a perennial top10 team, and to a new generation of now-high school- aged kids, as much a preseason contender as UCLA, Duke, Kentucky, North Carolina or UConn. He had been able to take two different

programs to the Promised Land of college basketball, the Final Four, but he hadn't been able to deliver them to the final round, and the Enemy was taunting him from within.

Lute Olson couldn't win the big game.

He could and he would, he just hadn't done it yet. In sports, timing is everything.

Larry Smith really wanted to be the hero that Dick Vermeil had been hailed as at UCLA and Philadelphia, and would again do in Saint Louis. Unfortunately, he took all the talent the NFL would want and sentenced them to the bench during his tenure as the UA football coach, accepting payments from boosters and parents in exchange for their kids to have playing time. The result was mediocre records of 5-6, 6-5 and 8-3-1 before capping his time in Tucson at 9-3, defeating North Carolina in the Aloha Bowl.

Neither the UA nor the *Star* would cover Smith's tactics. The Tony Mason scandal had already cost the UA bowl eligibility, and the *Star* received too much from Wildcat-related advertising to put their profits in jeopardy.

Tucson had long since been divided by ethnic tensions, known as brown-supremacy, derived from unresolved bitterness in how the Mexican-American War of 1848 ended with the annexation of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

Many Spanish nationals would often prophesy that the Spanish Armada would someday reclaim the region again, that the eastern U.S. government based in Washington would be forced to retreat, as if the war hadn't ended, and as if the Reconstruction Act of 1867 executed by the Lincoln Administration didn't apply to Spanish-speaking, brown-skinned people west of Kansas.

Every other ethnic group took grief from the Spanish. Even C.S. Lewis noticed and made the Spanish Armada the villains of the Chronicles of Narnia. The stereotypes were all too close to home. Wife-abusers, quick tempers, arrogant regardless of education, and in lei of achievement in any community program sanctioned by German, Italian, Greek, French, Irish or British descent was discouraged, whereas integrating with Spanish-led ‘tribes’ (without calling them gangs), was okay.

Women who had children outside of the race were outcast, identical to the customs of the Amish.

All of this received a gut-check when fans packed McKale Center and cheered on the Wildcats, first during the Fred Snowden era, and now again during the Lute Olson era. Olson’s teams were diverse in terms of ethnicity, and aside rumors and false accusations, Olson didn’t have a racist bone

in his body. His white hair was a biological trait, not an indication of his ethnic background. Sure, he was stoic to the camera, but once he picked up a basketball, his slap- stick sense of humor and deep sense of purpose to teach and live a life worth imitating came out in spades.

Tucson fell in love with his style, and his wife.

It was hard not to like the Olsons, unless you were Greg Hansen or his son Ben, a sports statistician and blogger, who adopted the sins of his father.

So, as Lute wrote out his lineup card for the opening game of league play in January 1997, he had to accept early on that he was trying to compete for next year.

In the Arizona locker room, the players had different plans. Mike Bibby was struggling to come to terms with the media's portrayal of his relationship with his father. Henry

Bibby chose the NBA lifestyle of post game womanizing and on-court favoritism, having been a part of championship teams, but never himself having been an All Star in pro ball. He was named an All-American during his senior season playing for John Wooden.

Now, he was the coach of the USC Trojans. As his son Mike set the scoring record for Arizona high school basketball, his ex-wife Virginia hoped Mike's success would somehow humble Henry to opening his heart to his son. It didn't. And the media made it worse.

Jason Stewart knew this, and preparing himself for a career in ministry, coming from a family of born-again Christians, he walked by Mike on his way to his locker and patted him on the shoulder. "Who's ready to pray?" he belted aloud, with the fear of the separation of church and state found nowhere in his voice. Mike glanced at a photo

in his locker of a young woman whom had he met on campus, whom he would go on to have four kids with.

One by one, the guys gathered around to pray together.

“Speed it up, will you, Jason?” Lute said as he scoured his playbook before tip-off. “We almost missed the bus last time.”

Jason nodded and gave a half-chuckle, and the players formed a circle of bodies gathered in prayer.

Most teams pray. Or, many players on most teams pray. Of them, most pray to Jesus. There is no proven evidence that God ever favors one team over another, but the Word does say that God hates haughty hearts and boastful mouths.

Most teams that walk with swagger and play so well in their own minds-eyes that they fall into the deception that all they need to

do to win is show up on time, those teams tend to fall short of expectations.

The song “Eye of The Tiger” by Survivor, speaks to this, when a competitor trades their passion for glory.

The 1988 Wildcats never acted boastfully, achieving many firsts of the program including the first time a televised Arizona team was

nationally recognized as being number one. Sure, the UA had top- ranked golf, track and field and gymnastics teams, but given that few TV networks broadcasted their sports, much less during prime time, it seemed like Wildcat fans went from the euphoria of being the celebrated underdog, to becoming as obnoxious as Dallas Cowboy or Oakland Raiders fans had become during the 1990s. *We’re great and you stink. Ha!*

When players and coaches start believing their own headlines, failure is inevitable.

This is the main reason why Arizona's playoff teams lost first and second-round games from 1989-1993, 1995 and then again in 1999-2000. Lute the teacher battled Lute the basketball coach as the prima donna factor of the NBA had essentially corrupted college basketball. Teenage boys demanded to be paid millions of dollars for their ability to play basketball a few degrees better than those who were merely modestly talented players.

In Tucson, the Wildcats had finally achieved the subconscious respect of east coast sports writers. They were perennial number-one teams on paper. But Lute's attempt to get players like Tom Tolbert, Sean Rooks and Andre Iguodala to play up to their potential failed miserably. They all had immense talent, but no self-discipline to get better. It would prevent them all from being as exalted as Irving "Magic" Johnson.

Meanwhile, players like Steve Kerr did meet their potential, arguably exceeding it, and the city of Chicago erected a statue in his image wearing a Bulls uniform.

After watching Steve Kerr win his first NBA Championship with the Bulls, Bobbi and Lute smiled at the screen together, and the phone rang.

Bobbi answered it. “Oh, hi!” She didn’t tell Lute who it was. “Yes, we’re watching. It’s really loud there. Congratulations! What? Oh, uh, yes, yes, I’d be happy to, the next time you’re town. Oh...okay, I’ll guess I’ll get started.” She actually hung up without saying goodbye. Lute gave her a look that presumed to ask who that was.

“Steve Kerr is coming right over to celebrate and he wants me to make him pancakes.”

On the TV, Michael Jordan was being interviewed, and he said the often-mocked

response when asked what he was gonna do next, “I’m going to Disneyland!”

Disneyland, Bobbi’s apple pancakes...hmm...

Chapter 69

01-01-2001, Earth Time

Bobbi was half-expecting Judgment of some kind, but saw Jesus go off, and Albert walked with her. She looked down. The ground felt like Earth's, but cleaner, *pure*.

She asked Albert, "What now?"

She touched her chest and found her crest, as Albert had, as everyone seemed to have and giggled as Angels bowed at her as they passed each other.

"Where are we?" she asked, feeling the answers within, as if spoken to her by Christ, and repeated by Albert.

"Zion. It's enormous, and you're going to find that any question you ask will be answered by our Father regardless of what I say, or anyone else here."

Bobbi is overwhelmed by a sense of familiarity with each and every face.

“Did I know them?”

“Everyone’s familiar here,” he answered.

Bobbi’s eyes took in Heaven’s upper levels, and she looked around, realizing she was in an upper level, but not the highest.

“Woow...I was always afraid of heights. Now...what is up there?”

A woman who looked younger than Bobbi seemed to walk into her line of vision and answer her. “That’s the level of self-sacrifice. Those who gave up things to serve others for God, risking all with no fear of man.”

Bobbi motioned with her hand, trying to say the woman’s name, but she didn’t know it. “I don’t know your name...I feel like I should...”

“Else,” she replied, which sounded like ‘Elsa’. “I was married to Johan Guttenberg.”

Bobbi’s jaw dropped. “He did the first printing press. The Bible!”

The two ladies squealed in pleasure of meeting each other. Else wasn’t there by accident.

“I’m here to give you a tour of the higher levels.” Albert looked down, slightly disappointed, but understanding what was happening. Bobbi also noticed just how much like his father Lute looked at the same age.

“Pardon me for saying this, but, just now, the way you looked, your son did that. That face. I miss that face...” she said, smiling at Albert.

Albert grinned back, knowing what was coming. “Go on with Elsa.”

“Aren’t you coming?” Bobbi asked.

“I’m wait here. Wait for Lute.”

“Well, he might be a while,” Bobbi replied.

“He can’t come with us,” Elsa said.

“Why not?” Bobbi asked. “Isn’t this Heaven?”

“Bobbi, come with me, and I’ll explain it all,” Elsa said.

Elsa began to soar, in a place where bodies can fly, unrestricted by the physics of Earth, but Bobbi wasn’t able to go very high.

“Wait, why can’t I?”

Jesus appeared in her line of vision.

“Do I do something wrong?” she asked, realizing that Jesus was there and He was clearly making a point.

“That level is for those who used their talents for My glory, without fear of men. For what it’s worth, some of My own first disciples haven’t made it up there yet either.

You got off to a slow start raising your family on little money. But as soon as Lute got a job at Long Beach State, you had a choice. You could use your position to minister or be comfortable. You didn't like being unpopular. So you chose to be more relaxed."

Jesus showed her a moment from her funeral, where all the former players and recruits spoke so highly of her.

"You were given much, so much more was expected. Those who are up there have sacrificed beyond their comfort zones. They didn't necessarily die for their faith, but they shared about Me whenever they got the chance, relentlessly. You were reminded. The hat."

Before Bobbi could ask, she knew. The hat. She had been traveling with Lute to India where she found a woman selling hats. It occurred to her that she had a very blessed

life. They had money. Their kids were doing well on their own, and Lute's coaching career was better than most in the world. But she wanted to remember how good she had it, so she overpaid for a hat.

Jesus pulled that hat from behind his back. "It was a badge of honor and and reminder. After learning that you were dying, how many people did you tell about Me?"

Bobbi realized she had only told a few. "Oh, wow," she said, nodding. "I get it. Because of all the success we had, I was supposed to use what I had to tell the world all about You, all about the power of Your blood all the more."

Jesus added, "Many young men, who now tells stories about you and your apple pancakes to their own children and grandchildren, sat at your table and hung on your every word. The way you listened won their love and respect. But, the fact that you

should have held them accountable to the purpose to which they were called, and you chose instead to treat them as children, that cost them, and you, and the world.”

Jesus showed her His plan for the lives of two players in particular. “Do you remember this?”

Sean Rooks and Tom Tolbert sat at her table, during separate years.

Jesus showed her a moment during the regular season when Lute was at odds with both players. Bobbi watched this memory that was not familiar to her.

“Mrs. O, these are amazing.”

“Thank you, there’s plenty. Now, listen up. Do you know why my husband recruited you? Because he saw potential in you. But you’re playing like you pooped your pants. You ignore all the wisdom the coaches try to instill in you. You think your raw,

underdeveloped talent is going to be enough? I've had a lot of world-caliber players sit where you sit and eat my pancakes. And the ones that did really well played with more heart than you do. Right now, you're about average. Sure, you'll probably get drafted, but, nowhere near the top and you won't play for a playoff team. You want that?"

Both players responded with dropped-jaw shock and shook their heads no.

"But I never said that," she replied to the Lord.

"I know. Let me show you what would have happened if you did." Jesus showed Bobbi the 1989 Arizona Wildcats winning the first of 13 consecutive national championships.

Tom Tolbert was selected 1st overall in the NBA Draft and played on five different NBA championship teams. Sean Rooks eclipsed that success by winning four

consecutive NBA MVP awards and becoming the head coach of the two-time World Champion Los Angeles Clippers.

“The potential was there. Lute was right. But. A good parent rebukes the son he loves. Those boys were never rebuked by someone they loved and the price they paid was enormous.”

She swallowed some regret and asked, “What can I do now? I mean, I’m here.”

Jesus smiled at her, “Join your friends. And yes, your ex-husband Lute will be there a little longer. The rest of your relatives are not ready to say goodbye yet. And the city still needs him.”

As Bobbi and Elsa flew up, she called down to Albert, “Aren’t you coming?” He shook his head no and waved to her.

“He can’t. He doesn’t agree with the Lord’s requirement to be up here. He himself died

before satisfying his Calling, therefor he disagrees with the Father's requirement of using more of your ministry to glorify Him when you're given more. The Word says, 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.'" (Luke 12:48).

Bobbi was fascinated by this, but then it hit her, "Free will. *We must accept God's authority, but we don't have to agree with Him.* Meanwhile, we're allowed up here and he's not."

Bobbi and Elsa made their way toward a part of Heaven that seemed more spread out, and less populated. Bobbi caught the eye of a man who was making furniture with a futuristic-looking table saw. He looked very familiar. Yes, she knew him. Elsa was gawking at the craft machine.

“I met you once in a grocery store. You were a student, older, you had kids. You were in a police uniform.”

Joe lifted his head to see Bobbi and smiled.
“Bobbi Olson. Hi. Joe Parella.”

Bobbi then turned to see another man standing there helping him, a man who introduced himself as Fred. He was a Pascua-Yaqui man.

“This is Fred. We were just talking about the Pascua-Yaquis. You like my machine? I designed in,” Joe said to Elsa with a smug smile on his face.

“I like it a lot,” she replied. “What are you making?” “Swords,” Joe replied.

“Your ex-husband’s work with the basketball team helped our village a lot,” Fred said to Bobbi. “Thank you for your role in that. Because of Joe, I left a life of dealing drugs and accepted Jesus as my Savior in

jail. Then, after a life in ministry, I died and here I am. We were just discussing the sadness that most of my Tribe did not make it to Heaven.”

“I’m sorry,” she replied.

Jesus appeared. “We need more,” he said to Joe, who dutifully returned to his work.

“What are the swords for?” Bobbi asked. Joe replied, “War. He’s coming back. And when He does, we’ll all be with Him, and these are the swords we’re gonna use.”

Bobbi saw the stockpile of weaponry and was amazed at how the swords were carved, then made, customized for the person to whom they would be issued.

“Do I get one?” Bobbi asked.

“Yes,” Jesus replied. “You made hers yet?”

“Yes,” Joe replied, pulling the one made just for her out of the stack.

Bobbi took it in hand and discovered placed on her new Heavenly clothes that was a perfectly custom-made sheath.

“How do I look?” she asked?

“Sharp,” Joe quipped.

Her eyes found Jesus, but her question was aimed at Fred, “What did he mean about the work we did that helped the Tribe?”

Jesus explained, “I came up to share this with you. Sit.”

She did, as did Elsa. Joe and Fred kept working. The machine was relatively quiet.

“The trading cards that were published by the university and your friends in the business community were used by Joe and other cops to hand out to the kids in the Pascua-Yaqui community during an era when the Whites, and the cops, of any race, weren’t trusted. Just as Lute let Me work my miraculous power through you and him in

rebuilding the basketball programs at Iowa and Arizona, Joe let Me use him the same way in the most neglected and frustrated part of the city in 1985.”

Bobbi looked into the horizon where she saw the events of the past, just over Joe’s shoulder. She smiled. “Wow. Our pleasure. I remember the morning he had those pictures taken...and I did think The Brain Trust was kind of a lame title...”

They all laughed. “It worked,” Joe said.

Bobbi remained concerned. “I’m concerned about him. Are you guys ever concerned about what’s gonna happen with your families and friends from now on?”

Jesus answered, “Absolutely. However. How did you feel when you did everything you could to recruit a player, many from the time they could barely walk, knowing the purpose and plan for the life, only to see them completely reject you?”

“Well, when you put it that way,” Bobbi replied.

“Or to be put on trial because you put God’s Word on paper...” Elsa added. “The world is confused by the truth even though it sets us free.”

Just then, a man ascended from a lower level and stood next to the machine. Bobbi immediately knew he was related to Joe, and noticed Joe’s father and uncle passing by on their way to somewhere else.

“Joe,” she said, “I think there’s someone here to see you.”

“Before you talk to him, I need to talk to him,” George Parella said.

While she was still speaking, Bobbi could hear Albert calling to her. “It’s your mother. And some other people. They want to see you!”

“Can’t they come up?” Albert shrugged with a half-smile. “Is Lute here yet?”

“No!” Albert replied. Bobbi smiled, taking a good look at the man who stood next to Joe’s machine, like a father awaiting his child’s attention.

“I’ll be back.”

Joe smiled at her and then looked up to see Gregario Parello staring at him with a curious smile. Joe turned off the machine.

“Not like anybody gets cut here, but, couldn’t hurt...” he said, his humor as sharp as ever.

“Are we related?”

Gregario replied, “Your father was my grandson.” Joe felt another release from within, and realized that he wasn’t done receiving his Heavenly treasure.

“Oklahoma! Choctaws!” Joe extended his hand to Gregario, only to be embraced with

a warm fatherly hug, and spoke with an eloquence that could only be categorized as an advanced form of language that only existed in Heaven, but was instantly understood by those he talked to.

“I’ll tag along,” George said, walking with them.

“One of your heart’s desires was for the respect of your family. You got as much as you were going to get,” Gregario said, walking Joe through an adjacent field that resembled 1820’s Oklahoma. “Your desire for your wife to be okay and your kids to know you loved them and to have full lives is honored through your devotion to God. The one desire you lacked was to know where you came from, your family’s history. My story.”

“First, a little ambiance,” Gregario said, waving his hand, and summoning a chorus of what sounded like the soundtrack to

Dances With Wolves. “You didn’t live to see the film, so, here. A little background.”

Gregario places his hand on Joe’s head and in an instant, Joe saw the film *Dances With Wolves*.

“Wow...” Joe replied, smiling like he had just had a large shot of caffeine.

“Good movie. A made up story. My story is real. It was 1822, and like you at 18, I was sick of being at home. Napoleon had really left Europe in ruins. A little man with a big ego. The fishing industry was dying, and some in the boating industry were making money by taking people to the colonies in America. Most countries had a stake there, but Italy didn’t yet. We all thought it was just a matter of time and it was an exciting idea, to be given a new country to settle and get rich. That was the story they sold us. It was enough to get me on a boat. So, there I was falling in love with the ocean. It took a few months, but I was surrounded by men

and women who wanted to the same things I did, and some had kids, and some wanted to get married. I was in a sense, an eligible bachelor among eligible bachelors. I almost got married before I got off the boat. Well, when we finally arrived in what is known today as Virginia, a group of us journeyed together and made our way to Oklahoma where I tried to be fit in among the Choctaws. A lot like when you left New Jersey for Tucson. Although, back then, I didn't have relatives calling me on the phone asking me when I was coming back. Anyway, their women were beautiful and their men were wise and proud. I fell in love with their culture and did my best to speak the language. My first son was born deaf. Another was mute. In my ignorance I blamed my wife. At the time, it was common to have more than one wife, so I took my wife's sisters as well. Each one had sons and daughters, and all the boys were either deaf or mute. One of my wives had a

son with another man, one from their own ancestry, and he could both hear and speak, so they determined the problem was with me. Your son, Tourettes. It's a genetic reciprocal. The Lord's way of fixing it."

Joe listened silently, hanging on every word. "We were going to stay, expecting big changes to come to that territory.

Unfortunately, the Civil War reached us in the west and we were met with three forces we could not negotiate with. One was a Confederate regiment who warned us that the rail road was bringing war to the land and that we weren't safe. A time later, some Union soldiers came across our camp and shared the same thing. And if that wasn't enough, we were threatened by rival nations. It didn't help that I wasn't

Choctaw. My wives, my kids, were all in danger. So, I did the only thing I could to protect them. I brought them back to Italy with me and we settled in a town that was

later named after me. Since I've always been bad with words, I misspelled it. My last name is Parello. Yours is Parella."

Joe let out a deep chuckle. "That's funny. Interesting, but funny."

Gregario smiled, "Yeah...then, I followed the news of the Civil War and tried to back as soon as it was all over. And that's when we caught a boat to Ellis Island. I think you know the rest."

"Wooow. Thank you for telling me."

"No, Joe, thank you for fulfilling your Calling," Gregario said. Joe is taken aback.

"But I didn't. At least I don't think I did."

Gregario looks back and forth at the picturesque sunset bleeding over the wheat field, and replied, "Oh, that's right. You thought you were supposed to get promoted to Sargent or Captain and then maybe chief or major or king or something...well, at the

risk of inflating your ego, the city of Tucson named a street after you in 1998, and not because you looked like Al Pacino in a police uniform. Your service to the Pascua-Yaquis. The hand of God was with you. Did it ever occur to you why?"

Joe was speechless and but his eyes flared at the question. "No, why?"

"Do you know where the Pascua-Yaquis, and all the nations called Indians for that matter, came from? They are descendants from the lost tribes of Israel, after the Flood described in Genesis. The water didn't recede overnight, it took years, *decades* in some spots. They migrated. They missed out on thousands of years of what we now know as the Bible's Old Testament and New Testament, and it wasn't until the missionaries came over that they learned about Jesus. Their souls were allotted the same grace as the dead of Israel who had been awaiting in captivity since the Flood,

until the Resurrection, when they all got to come here once and for all. *Your* role was to carry out the last executive order that the Father issued through His king, also known as President Abraham Lincoln, to deliver these children of Israel to their Promised Land. America. They've been fighting to reclaim a land they already own, as American citizens, free from the tyrannies that devastated Europe for several thousand years. Presidents after Lincoln didn't follow in his footsteps. They didn't share his ideals. But that's why we remember him and not them. You carried out an executive order that started with me, and you have earned your reward in full. Many of them still kick against the goads, but *you*, you pointed them in the right direction. You told 'em to stop quarreling, get organized, use the universities, and stay away from drugs. Those who listened to you and followed your wisdom prospered. Those who didn't...didn't."

Joe was in awe, and took a moment to process the truth. “I’ll be darned.”

“No, you are blessed,” Gregario replied, winking at him. “And the casinos will come to nothing.”

Joe looked back at Earth and saw them.

“The very people you

worked with elected a young woman as their chairman. But greed and pride countered with a hostile takeover led by an overweight bully whose days are coming to an end.”

“Who?” Joe asked.

“Just like their ancestors. Self-centered and vengeful. At least the woman had the heart to lead. Kind of like my daughters.”

“Did my work come to nothing?” Joe asked, contritely.

“No. History will remember you, your son will make sure of that. Your story will be

told alongside another man who also did God's work. A teacher who used basketball to nurture kids and made boys into men."

"Lute Olson," Joe realized. "That's why Bobbi was here. Wow. All I did was use the trading cards," Joe said.

"Brilliant," Gregario replied. "Most guys in your position would have used shotguns."

As the two men took in the ambiance, Joe said, "That music is really pretty."

"Yeah," Gregario replied. "Hey, you wanna go play football?"

Joe was a little surprised. "Sure."

Gregario leaps up and flies, which Joe realizes he can do also, and they both go to a Heavenly arena where he sees most of his family in the stands.

"Um, I got something to say," George said, locking eyes with Joe.

As George spoke, he seemed to cause their environment to change, this time to the farm he owned toward the end of his life, away from which his son angrily drove decades before.

“I’m sorry. You did good, providing for your family and being a cop. I am sorry my daughter in law and the other mouths cursed you the way they did. You deserved more respect. I wanted to give you something I should have given you a long time ago. My blessing.”

Joe smiled. “Do you remember this?”, George asked. “We took a short walk just before I passed over? You weren’t sure I made it.”

Joe nodded. “Yeah.”

George was no longer suffering from Osteoporosis, and he was able to look up at his son without wincing in pain. “I just wanted to say you are a father, a good

husband, a good son and a good man. And to hell with what the others said. You're immortal now, justified by the Blood of the King."

Joe faced a choice. He could let go of his anger right now, or hold onto it. If he held onto it, he would not be able to access the highest places in Heaven. "I choose freedom," and that, he hugged his Earthly father, who hugged him back, long overdue.

Joe sees a crowd that appear to be the same faces he would see at

family parties and reunions hosted at the farm he grew up on. "Do they want to play?" Joe asked, as they landed on the field.

"Maybe. But this is *your* game. I heard you were one heck of a tailback. And what was that song you sang before every Wildcat game?"

Joe stood still and let Angels put football pads and a uniform on him, amused by this and how much the crowd seem to hang on his answer.

“Really, you want *me* to sing?”

“Yes!” The crowd responded.

“Bear Down...Arizona,” he sang, weak at first, then with confidence, Bear down red and blue...bear down Arizona...”

The crowd seemed to join right in, “hit ‘em hard, let ‘em know who’s who...bear down, Arizona, bear down, red and blue...fight, fight, Wildcats fight, Arizona, bear down...”

“Not bad, freshman!” John Salmon teased, appearing behind Joe. Button extended his hand and shared a solid hand shake with Joe. “Way to bear down, with the Pascua-Yaquis. The way you took those drug dealers down and saved that school for those kids. That’s

what I call a Wildcat. Now, you ready to play some football?”

As the crowd chanted “U of A!” over and over, on Earth, Joe’s prayers for his team to appear in a Rose Bowl had manifested into exactly that back on Earth.

They were up late in the 4th quarter against Michigan. In Tucson, like they had experienced in Easter of 1997, the city was ready to relive its orgasm.

Chapter 70

August 2007

Lute had been asked, if not pleaded with by his staff to implement an exit strategy and opted not to. Somehow, he would make it work.

Time only moved forward.

Arizona basketball would have one more national title. John Wooden had eleven, right?

He still loved to teach.

He missed Bobbi so much it hurt.

They had the conversation many times over the years. Lute, plan an exit strategy. You will eventually die.

Jim Rosborough had been Lute's right hand man, his right arm, his most trusted assistant coach, his vice president, his secretary of

state. Bobbi was his secret weapon in recruiting and inspiring the players, but “Roz” was his voice of accountability when he could not be there. They built not one but two programs together. They could predict each other’s moves. Pilot and wingman. Together, they were winners.

The 2006 Wildcats had been edged by Villanova and embarrassed by a mediocre Purdue team in 2007. Alumni like Steve Kerr, now the General Manager of the Phoenix Suns, were disgusted

with the Wildcat team they witnessed. And they weren’t afraid to let Lute know.

Jim’s kids needed him both as a father and a volleyball coach more than the Wildcats did. He had spent years advising Lute to come up with an exit strategy and ease his way out of the role of head coach.

Neither man saw this coming.

Lute was struggling. He didn't have Bobbi.

Quietly, being the runner up of the 2001 national championship season, losing to Duke, was a godsend, an act of mercy. Had they won it all, it would have been hollow without her.

Lute was in his doctor's office for his annual physical, talking to him about his life.

"How's your wife?" his doctor asked.

"Can I tell you something...private?"

"The minute you enter my office, confidentially is legally binding," his doctor replied.

"I talk to her when there's nobody home. We have conversations."

"With who?"

"Bobbi," he answered in a low voice. Lute looked like he was about to cry.

“When you talk to Bobbi, she talks back?”
Lute nodded. “I know it sounds crazy.”

“Not at all,” he replied. “What does she say?”

“She tells me she’s all right, and that we’ll see each other again soon. That she’s not my wife anymore, and to live my life without her.”

Lute began to weep just as he had done while sharing with his 2001 team that Bobbi was dying and he wasn’t ready to let her go.

“I don’t know how to live my life without her,” he cried.

Lute Olson did not drink often. And when he did, he didn’t drink much.

Early in his career, he and Bobbi had been invited, along with a few other coaches and their wives, to a dinner hosted by John Wooden and his wife, and when the waiter asked all the couples if they would like to

order from the wine list, Coach Wooden answered for the group, “No, we won’t having any wine.” Every wine list folder snapped shut.

That night, he drank enough to fall into a deep sleep. He dreamed of Bobbi.

He was sitting with her on their couch, but in a place he recognized as Heaven, just looking at her. She looked like she did when she was still a young mother.

“I don’t know how to live my life without you,” he confessed.

She offered a thin smile back, but as she opened her mouth to speak, a Voice not her own replied to him. “Everything you loved about me,” she said, as the Holy Spirit emerged from her soul and materialized as the Lord embracing Lute like a Father embracing His son, “came from Me.”

Feeling God hug him caused a rush of memories, meeting Bobbi, falling in love, having five kids, both of them learning life together. He saw his teams win, lose, laugh, and cry. He saw his kids grow up and take their places in society.

He saw Bobbi sitting in a tour jeep in 1990 Kunming, China, where she sighted an old woman wearing a raggedy hat, worth maybe 20-cents. He saw her look upon that woman with a wave of compassion that Lute felt for the first time as if he was inside her soul with her.

Wow, her compassion had *power*. It was the same power Christ had when the Lord had compassion for people and healed them.

That day, Bobbi was self-aware of God's partnership his her life, and wanted to declare to her Heavenly Father how grateful she was. She knew this woman would never enjoy the amenities she lived with every day

as an American citizen, much less a celebrity.

Yet in Heaven, someday, she would meet her again, on much more equal footing. She reached into her purse, and insisted to offer the woman \$10 American Dollars for it. She wore that hat like it was the crown of a queen.

That day it certainly became one, a crown for the First Lady of American Sports.

Lute felt a jolt he hadn't felt before, and when he woke up, he felt a buzz. At first, he figured it was the alcohol.

Instead of having a heart attack, fatal or otherwise, the Lord had spared him with such a mild stroke, that it would take weeks of analysis to figure it out.

Then Lute got a phone call that shocked him. He had committed severe NCAA

violations. The program would be investigated. Sanctions were probable.

Did this guy have the right phone number?

He was the coach who followed every NCAA regulation during an era when almost every other coach didn't. Jim Rosborough confronted privately him on a golf course.

“Lute, something’s wrong. Will you go see your doctor and get checked out, for us? For me? Your family, if not for your yourself?” Roz asked, pleading with him. Lute swung his club. His hands wouldn’t cooperate.

Okay, something was wrong.

He met with his kids told them over dinner that he learned that he had a stroke, but none of the doctors were sure of quite when. He was now on medication, but...and, yes, he should have retired a littler earlier.

Whoops.

As Lute and Jim Rosborough sat across front of each other, Lute needed help. His body never really finished mourning Bobbi. As much as he loved coaching and wanted to finish his life with his first love, the court, the stroke had reminded him that he had his limits. The stress of their lives had manifested itself into Bobbi's ovaries and caused her cancer. Doctors could debate cancer causes all the want. She was mom to all and she exceeded her quota of stress.

Now, he had suffered a stroke under the same circumstances. Yes, all those things were true on the surface. He drank more than he had ever before to numb the pain. But that wasn't him anymore, if it ever was.

To add insult to injury, the news headlines about the fundraising scandal had repulsed any of the film studios from making the long-awaited movie about his life or the Wildcats. And this time, Greg Hansen was not the assassin.

He hadn't finished mourning Bobbi. As the lawyers and courts mopped the blood off their public images, Lute called on his closest adviser, his consigliere, Roz.

"I need you to take an administrative role, off the court. You'll get the same pay, but I need you here in the office, doing a lot of what I usually do."

Lute was asking Roz for help. The exit strategy he had been putting off for years was upon him and he was starting to accept that he needed help. All of his most trustworthy confidants had told him the same thing.

In this era of pressure for teenage players to turn pro, this program needed a bad-cop, a firm father figure more than ever.

Coach Olson could still show his players proper defensive posture and how to make a correct pass, or how to overcome a full-court press, but his days of telling Andre

Iguodala to stop complaining loud enough to evoke the fear of God into his practices had come to an end.

Andre didn't hear Coach Olson at first and when other players reiterated the Coach's bark, "He said, stop your bitchin'," his teammates said to him. Andre was adamant that Lute had used profanity with him, something it was otherwise presumed Lute never did.

Lute Olson was not choosing to delegate, he was forced to.

Roz didn't hear his friend's humility, perhaps because the stroke had rendered Lute's legendary discernment of tone and body language to be tone-deaf and blunt.

This was the same coach who had recently challenged Salim Stoudemire to cut the mood swings every time his shots didn't

immediately fall, or he could find another team.

Now, Lute was bearing his soul. Please help me Roz. I can't do everything I used to do before. My doctor told me so.

Roz had spent 30 years as the Eddie Van Halen of well, Van Halen, the rock of the coaching staff. He was the rock of a program that made stars out of children. He was in all ways a "rock star".

But he couldn't hear any of that after dealing with Lute's latest recruiting weapon, Miles Simon. Though Miles had been the Final Four MVP in 1997 and become a star in Italy after playing a whopping 6 minutes for the Orlando Magic in 1999 and spent a pre-season with the Seattle Sonics, his coaching methods made Roz cringe.

Nonetheless, Lute was right, he was an effective recruiter. What 16-year old or 18-year-old kid wouldn't be fascinated by the

sales pitch of a man who had not only been there and done that, but had done so recently? Kids could still watch the replays of his games on iTunes.

Roz remembered when Miles couldn't pass his tests in 1996. And he knew his brother in law's drug problems had been international news headlines. Was Lute actually going to side with Miles Simon over him?

For Lute, he saw it as a need he asked Roz to fill. *You've been my friend for 30 years. Please.* Had Lute actually said those words, their friendship would have continued. But he didn't.

Roz wouldn't hear of it. He felt like he was being passed over for a promotion. Without a word, he left. Lute was hurt, but had endured so much, and was still taking medication. He was bankrupt of the energy to chase him down the hall and talk it out some more.

The two didn't talk again.

One day soon after, while playing golf, Roz saw a familiar face and offered a smile, a wave and a hello. Greg Hansen emerged from the golf cart.

“Aren't you supposed to be in practice?” he asked, shocked to see Roz on the course at this particular time.

“Not anymore.” The two became good friends.

Chapter 71

2008

Lute met his third and final wife Kelly, who was a teacher, like him, half his age and one-third his height.

She looked a lot like actress Kim Basinger. Harmony returned to his life.

When Jesus stood next to Bobbi and saw Lute and Kelly together on their third date, Bobbi let out a laugh, “If I wasn’t with you Lord, I might be jealous.”

On a pleasant morning in November 2009, Lute got up and got dressed. The night before would have been Midnight Madness, but he just couldn’t do it anymore.

He was shaving when he got a call from his doctor. “Hi, Lute, it’s me.”

“Yeah?” Lute replied, quickly wiping shaving cream from his face with a towel. Great timing, Doc.

“I...I got the test results back. You might want to sit down.”

He explained that they finally got the medicine right and his stroke therapy was underway, but, if he didn’t cut off the source of his stress, the next stroke would kill him.

Lute knew what he was saying. He’d been living alone for the last year, tucked away in a small apartment as he tried to regroup from the Greek tragedy that was his second marriage. His second wife Christine was not evil, she misunderstood boundaries. She didn’t grasp that HIPPA did not regard spousal privilege as an exception and when Lute asked his doctor to tell no one, including Christine, she pulled a stunt that was deemed criminal by a Tucson judge. Like a scene straight out of the Godfather,

Christine took a bullet-hole filled target she made at a shooting range and used her status as Mrs. Olson II to place the large paper on the office chair Lute's doctor.

What was the doctor to do? Violate HIPPA or offend Christine Torretti? There was more to it, as Christine wanted to be the star of their public life, while a lobbyist for the Hillary Clinton-era Democrats. Her financial supporters were all semi-retired mafia. She was introduced to Lute by June Dempsey, wife of Cedric. June was born, raised and died a mafia princess. When Christine became offended by the therapy lock-out, she asked those who could orchestrate an assassination to do so, and told Lute that when they had enough alcohol. The result was Lute's first divorce and a permanent protection order against Christine. He spent more than one-third of his autobiography actuating how he met and courted her. She couldn't just vanish from his life.

Lute now needed to do what he should have done a few years ago. He called Jim Livengood. It was surreal.

“Hi, Jim. Lute.” *There was no easy way to say this...*

The prophecy by Tucson Citizen writer Corky Simpson had made in 1996 that Lute would not be the head coach at Arizona forever had come to pass.

ESPN reported the story first, setting it up with a newsreel of Lute’s 1997 title and the stats that followed. To say them all as one word seemed to have the rhythm of a rap song. “Four Final Fours, One National Title.”

He had been inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2002, but now, it was all over. And the program that was once the rock of the Pac-10 was now as vulnerable as the great and powerful Oz when Toto discovered the man behind the curtain.

There was no one recruiting, and those Lute had recruited into a class ranked number-one by ESPN just a few months before had elected to turn pro and bypass college all together.

And, in reality, he might be in breach of contract for quitting on the eve of the start of the season.

He did not want to alarm people about his condition, but by not- telling them what happened, he involuntarily created a media firestorm that was so messy, even Greg Hansen was slow to criticize it.

How could a stroke be his or anyone's fault? Sure, stress could be blamed for some of it, but the truth was, he wasn't ready to leave basketball.

In his mind's eye, the hoop still called to him like a faithful dog, seeking his master's attention and maybe a belly rub.

And there was one more loose end to tie up, or rather, break off.

He had to break up with his true love aside Bobbi, *coaching* the greatest game God ever inspired. When Lute stood in that coach's box, Bobbi was still behind him in the stands, in spirit.

Sure, he would still be a high-profile celebrity in the community, but now, he had joined a fraternity of retired coaches that saw their careers frozen in time. He could no longer add any more wins to his record, or any more championships to his resume.

My God, what he'd give for one more shot in March...

Matt Redman sang a song called *Heart of Worship*, about which Matt asked God to forgive him for making his talents out to be more than gifts from God used to serve others.

Matt had been inspired to write the song when the pastor of his church noticed people only came for the music. He had asked Matt to invent a way to worship without music for a while, to get the point across. And Matt did, for months. Then, the song hit him and became an infectious hit among protestant churches around the world after 1992.

*When the music fades
All is stripped away
And I simply come Longing just to bring
Something that's of worth That will bless
your heart*

*I'll bring you more than a song For a song
in itself
Is not what you have required You search
much deeper within Through the way things
appear You're looking into my heart*

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship And
it's all about you
It's all about you, Jesus*

*I'm sorry Lord for the things I've made it
When it's all about you*

It's all about you, Jesus

*King of endless worth
No one could express
How much you deserve Though I'm weak
and poor All I have is yours*

Every single breath

*I'll bring You more than a song For a song
in itself*

*Is not what You have required You search
much deeper within Through the way things
appear You're looking into my heart*

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship And
it's all about You,*

It's all about You, Jesus

*I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
And it's all about You,*

It's all about You, Jesus

Chapter 72

2010

In January, Joe's son stood over his grave, this time with his grandson, Joshua and the man who had been his son's Best Man. John Ottinger was a veteran from the U.S. Air Force who served during Desert Storm and was stationed at Davis-Monthan upon the war's end. The Washington-native was a pentecostal youth pastor, serving with his wife at a local church where he met Joe's son in 1998. He later served TPD as a Community Service Officer.

As the three of them stood over the grave marker, John had heard the stories about Joe and his surviving fellow officers. Now, seeing the grave for himself, it got personal.

He dug into his pocket, and dug out his own badge, and laid it on the grave marker. Joe's

son was video recording this for future use in developing the story as a film.

John suddenly saluted Joe. He then turned to the camera and said, “He gave his life.”

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.” - John 15:13

Chapter 73

In the years that followed Joe's crossing over, Tucson's police underwent many changes that he would not have liked. Its first female police chief was appointed and last less than one year after a decade of lobbying to make her Chief.

The officer-to-civilian ratio spiraled out of control, making some major metropolitans, like New York and Miami, statistically safer to live.

Land developers expanded the suburbs on all sides and the malls, after battling the consumer online buying habits for a decade, finally adapted to a 21st century model, staving off bankruptcy.

The University of Arizona saw many of its planned expansions fulfilled, aided by large

donations by famous alumni like Lute's own student, Richard Jefferson.

Lute became all about charity work and hired himself out as a guest speaker. For a man who had struggled with stage fright all his life, he seemed like a few dance lessons away from *Dancing With The Stars*.

He still loved working with kids, and his sense of humor was sharper than ever, now that he did not have the pressure of being the head coach anywhere. His counsel was taken seriously when the new athletic director hired two new head coaches, one for basketball and one for baseball. After a windy debacle during the 2011 football season in Colorado resulted in an embarrassing loss to the nation's worst defense, head football coach Mike Stoops was fired at midseason.

Lute's assistant coaches guided his 2009 team to the tournament one more time, before they were blown out of the Sweet 16.

Errors in judgment ranging from acknowledging Kevin O'Neil as the next head coach to signing some letters written by an ambitious sports promoter resulted in the 2009 season's wins being vacated and the University imposing sanctions on itself.

Considering Lute's record and health problems, officials agreed that the spirit of the law had been enforced and no other actions were taken.

Sean Miller was hired from Xavier to pick up a program that Lute left with an impeccable brand name. Recruiting for the 2012-13 season was not nearly as hard as it was for the 1983-84 season. Miller would lead the Wildcats for 10 years and reach the Elite Eight twice. He was let go after the FBI recorded him and one of his assistant

coaches on the phone discussing payment for players. In 2021, Jedd Fisch and Tommy Lloyd were hired to take over the football and men's basketball programs. Some said the spirit of Larry Smith, alongside a young-grandpa-era Lute Olson had returned to Tucson.

Now Lute got to see his family and friends more.

Enough time had passed that he was back to being the man who Bobbi had five kids with, and Kelly seemed a good fit. The Olsons continued to prosper, most of them outside the world of basketball.

The casinos operated by the Pascua-Yaquis filed for bankruptcy by 2021, and remerged with new ownership structure. The tribe learned it was a good owner but a remedial operator when it comes to casinos.

Those among Tribal leadership who knew Joe had died or were in prison, and of those

who died, only a few made it to Heaven. They were taught about God, believing in a form of godliness, but denying its power.

Most thought that their ties to the Tribe would due enough to get to the afterlife, but found out the hard way that they were wrong.

June remarried in 1994 but filed for divorce 15 years later. Ironically, just before June had remarried, her closest married friends rebuked her as if she was committing adultery on Joe.

Her son wrote a novel about all these things and after they read it, some of those people contacted her and apologized for their behavior. Some of them could not because they died.

Many of Joe's colleagues of the 1980s Untouchables had died as well. Jim Gerrettie died of cancer in 2013. He got to read an early draft of this novel before he passed.

Bob Gilmartin retired from the Arizona State Police and had served in the National Guard during Desert Storm. He went on to do Christian radio and served as a technical adviser for the film adaptation of the novel.

Richard Miranda became the chief of police and then the Tucson city Manager. One night, Joe appeared to him in a dream.

Richard felt guilty that Joe never got promoted. Joe smiled in such a way that he communicated to Richard that it was over and done with, but he had a special message, just for him.

“They need a leader. Lead,” Joe said. “The department is separated by ethnicity. Unite them. You are one of them. They will listen to your rebuke of brown supremacy.”

Richard moved to Texas where he served slightly longer in government before retiring. An Arizona journalist commented in an editorial about Richard Miranda’s

manipulation of government benefits and Equal Opportunity Employment, “You collected three pensions and left. Thanks for nothing.”

Joe’s family slowly picked up the pieces and one by one finished college. Jacquie married at age 52 and adopted her husband’s teenage kids. She worked for 30 years for three different for profit and non profit companies and Christian ministries, semi-retiring to Colorado Springs.

Joe’s daughter Jeni had a daughter, Ashlie, and survived a turbulent first marriage. Her second marriage ended after ten years and she became a step mother to her ex-husband’s two teenagers. Heredity osteoporosis too its toll and she lived quiet life in southern Colorado.

Rick Hartigan committed himself to helping June maintain their home in the months that followed Joe’s death. Then she sold the

house and the Hartigans saw less and less of the Parellas. The Hartigans retired to Vail where Rick volunteered for the National Forrest Service's fire department. When he was quoted by regional news about fire related weather events, he came across like the Muppets' Sam The Eagle until he lost interest.

Craig Adair became a contractor, and after years in other states, he returned to Tucson, with his wife and teenage son. The *Star* had done a story on him doing a business venture with his son in 2011. After reading portions of *The Faithful*, he turned away from accountability and has the police flashlight to this day.

Jimmy Pesqueira went on to be the vice president of South Mountain Little League in Phoenix, Arizona. His father Chuy retired from the fire department after a quarter-century.

Jimmy never played intercollegiate or professional baseball. He did explore filmmaking, co-producing a 2010 documentary about his father and uncle's careers as firemen who were called to cover the deadly 1970 Pioneer fire.

Many classmates who Joe's kids attended schools with had died as well, some making it to Heaven because they did what is stated in Romans 10:9. Many did not because they did not consider it important. Realizing they couldn't take legal action, most posted laments on social networks, dismissing it until Joe's son ran for public office in Colorado in 2022. Then they realized, oh no, we're about to be made infamous by someone with a reputable story.

Most of Joe's coworkers did not accept Christ and despite serving their communities, joined his sister in law in hell.

Joe M and his family endured wounds at the hands of pentecostal extremists, but continued to serve God faithfully until well into the first quarter of the 21st century.

Kevin McCabe prospered more as an ad salesman than he did as a broadcaster, the two worlds merging with the invention of the podcast. He used his platform to talk to about his faith whenever he could. His screenplay about the life of Steve Kerr never saw the light of day in studio development.

Greg Hansen and the majority of the writers of what was once the Arizona Daily Star were dissolved by their parent company shortly after *The Faithful* debuted in 2011. Though still available in paper form, the Arizona Daily Star was reduced to a web site, Tucson.com, by 2021. Most of its staff were disbanded, forced to find other jobs.

Jim Rosborough went where he was needed the most, coaching his daughter's volleyball

team and a much-needed retirement, if one could call it that. He reconciled his bumpy exit from Arizona basketball in 2008 and re-emerged at Pima Community College where he led the women's volleyball team to a national championship.

The Lord kept extending Lute days. Then after the film version of *The Faithful* won 10 Academy Awards of 11 nominations, he died in his sleep.

His book became the source of more adaptations, and the Pac-12 Network expanded its productions to include dramatic productions. It was obvious that every program had stories to tell and it was just a matter of mining them. Sports fans devoured them.

Rick Hartigan accepted Christ in a hospital bed after suffering a near-fatal heart attack. He had always thought he was saved, but, after reading *The Faithful*, he let a born-

again Christian lead him through a prayer of Salvation. His family became aware of this and did likewise.

Jim Click Jr. continued to be a philanthropist and saw his empire grow. After the release of *The Faithful*, he became more reclusive, even though now the public who once thought he was a greedy opportunist now knew he not only had an enormous heart for God, he had vowed to be God's financial instrument on Earth. His family prospered in various ventures, mostly nonprofit.

I never played a minute for Coach Olson. I never enrolled at the University of Arizona as a student, declined for GPA reasons when I tried to attend its Graduate college. I finished my academic career with 3 masters in film editing, business management and psychology, substance abuse and addiction recovery.

And up to the completion of this book I never volunteered for any work associated with the athletic program or its basketball team.

My understanding of the game of basketball came from watching Coach Olson's video tutorials, and of course, watching thousands of hours of his team's game films, live and recorded. In 1992, I was good enough to play at the community college level, but as fate would have it, the 1992-93 season, the usually inept Pima Aztecs were for a brief time nationally ranked.

In 1995, I got to play pickup games with some of the players from that team at the high school gym in Marana, Arizona. I learned that I fit in. That was enough for me. I enjoyed playing the game, but my gift is wielding words. Storytelling.

That said, this story is not about basketball. It's about character.

It's about all the virtues most people call good persevering through the trials of life and the distractions posed by evil.

It tells the story of two men who barely met, twice by my count, who served the same community in different yet miraculous ways, and made Tucson a better place.

This is not a chronological history of Lute Olson's life or the athletic program of the University of Arizona. It is an historical fiction novel about two men who served the community of Tucson from 1972-2009 and beyond, respectively.

All accounts described herein are true, based on interviews with living persons whenever possible. The views presented are those of the author, with respect to the input gathered from multiple sources.

When names are used, historical fiction does not require permissions to be secured as

long as the laws regarding context are abided.

Names of the victims were changed or mentioned anonymously, especially in regards to the sexual assaults against children propagated by employees of the Tucson Catholic Diocese.

All others used are the real names of the persons discussed. No one likes reading about themselves in a light different from their own self-image or memory.

But as one judge phrased it, if permission were required to publicly discuss unflattering facts or points of view, there would be no news.

Public figures are implied exceptions to the Fourth Amendment, and ever person identified in *The Faithful* by their real name was done under the protection of those exceptions.

In regards to certain people like former Tucson cop Sam Elrey, the author was the victim of a false witness, and I believe the stress this created in my family contributed to my father's fatal cancer, along with the ingestion of weed killers, and of course his own hereditary conditions.

Others mentioned are public record and therefore exceptions as well.

As for the purpose of this fiction in the telling the story of Tucson's history, fiction is the last court of appeals in a world otherwise void of justice. Future generations deserve to know the truth and find freedom in it.

Though this story is not about me, I found myself facing demon after demon of Tucson's past as I researched it for the better part of 20 years, as I completed this novel in 2013, released in 2023.

The Olsons did not call Tucson their home until 1983, and by that time, Joe Parella had been patrolling the streets in a squad car or as an undercover narcotics cop for 10 years.

My dad did have brief encounters with Bobbi Olson, which I refer to in this story. Based on interviews with Coach Olson, he did not recall meeting my dad. I vividly remember my dad describing the Coach's office and the UA locker room, and places in McKale's Center not accessible to the general public during that time, so I am sure that they did meet.

Coach Olson was very transparent and instrumental in the writing of this novel, knowing it was being developed at the same time as a film, miniseries, or something of that nature.

The film industry is in great transition as of 2024. The wrongs of yesterday can be mended by the successes of tomorrow.

A friend once observed that whenever the Wildcats were on TV, my father was still alive.

After spending years working at Universal Studios, I learned that Tucson was a town that was an offspring of a crowded Universal City, where Old Tucson Studios was built to make a few early westerns in lieu of filming in Los Angeles during an era when the Russians and Asian countries could not get enough westerns.

Foreign audiences have long since had their fill, and now make and export more of their films to the U.S. than we send them.

The last day I spent in Tucson as a resident was July 31, 2000.

I was then considered a “baby” Christian, having spent about three years at a church called Grace To The Nations, one I would consider as a borderline cult.

Lute and his family would attend Catalina Foothills Church, which shared much of the same ideology. Its leadership had formed close bonds with Coach Olson, which Winston Maddox Jr boasted of. His store, Gospel Supplies suffered severe losses during the downloading transition, and when Coach Olson retired and then died in 2020, the Maddox family's ventures ran out of momentum.

Nonetheless, I learned to read a Bible and befriended a few people during my final days there who embodied what some people might consider family.

My own biological family had been scattered by the waves of life spanning the ocean of time in the years that followed my dad's death in 1991. He was 46.

As I later read Coach Olson's book and interviewed him, I would learn that he lost his dad at the same age I lost mine, both

men dying in their mid-40s, and it was clear that *The Faithful* struck a nerve.

This explained to me, if not to both of us, how a stranger to his family and team could *get* him. I understood him, and I may be the one historian who can claim that I knew Coach Olson best.

My mother was devastated by the loss of my dad, who left behind three grown children, yet a lot of unfinished business.

I had always vowed to somehow tie up those loose ends. Using every resource at my disposal, employing every gift God has blessed me with, this is that.

His official cause of death was symptoms related to lymphoma cancer.

In dealing with my own life issues, I found out how much stress factors into causing cancer. In my opinion, stress is the leading cause.

Debate away, I believe my dad's cancer was the result of internalized stress.

The more I read Coach Olson's account of his wife's battle with ovarian cancer, I would say the same conclusion is true.

Every insult the media, led by career critic Greg Hansen ever slung at Lute hit Bobbi too.

Every cruel, ignorant blog, every rumor, every jealous or hurtful stab hit not only Coach Olson, but his family. Yes, they accumulated thick skins, but the cancer wasn't caused by a poor diet or lack of exercise.

Winning, in spirit and in statistics, has a price.

In 2003, I introduced my newlywed wife to March Madness from our tiny apartment in Woodland Hills, California. We had been married for about six months. She watched

me as I tuned into each game and hung on every play, my emotions determined by the score at the end of the game.

It was a religious experience, and still is. She knew about the existence of March Madness, but had never really given it much thought beyond that.

When I explained to her about Bracketville, and how the Wildcats had won a national championship in 1997, and how it changed the landscape of the city, she immediately noticed how my voice dropped and tears flowed when I brought up my dad, the ultimate Wildcat, and the strongest man I ever knew. His strengths were as spiritual as they were physical.

We had our first born son in 2005. Joshua. He graduated from high school with honors in 2023.

By 2008, my son wanted to know why I got so excited and serious when the Wildcats

were on. We had relocated to Colorado during that time, and as I stood in front of the TV during the entire game as if watching from the sidelines, looking as stressed out and focused on the game as any coach would be, my wife observed, “When the Wildcats are on, your dad is still alive.”

My wife was right.

I hated Tucson. Part of me still does. I struggle when faced with brown-supremacy. The smell of desert bloom reminds me of the ill- fated hikes with the Boy Scouts.

When I meet someone with a connection to the city, and they asked me if I missed it, I would always reply, “I lived there for 26 years. All the best parts of the city can be seen on ESPN.”

That was true until Lute Olson was forced to retire as a result of health problems incurred from mourning the loss of his first wife.

Mourning had taken its toll, and caused his second marriage to end

badly. His third marriage would go very well, with respect to the fact that Lute was a different man during all three life phases.

Either way, my connection to my hometown was all but gone, and it seemed like his biggest critics, the sports writers of the *Arizona Daily Star*, specifically a bitter journalist named Greg Hansen, couldn't forget about him fast enough.

Since I was a teenager rooting on the 1988 Wildcats, I had determined in my heart that someday I would use the cinema gifts God had given to me and make the official movie about the Wildcats. At first, it was a story all its own, and my dad's story was separate.

As I started writing "Bear Down" separately from "Peace Man", I realized I was writing the same exact story from two slightly different point of views. In 2006, director

Clint Eastwood actually did that, covering World War II from the American perspective and the Japanese perspective, at the same time. Well, I'm not Clint Eastwood and I wanted this to be great. So, this single story received my best effort.

Both men were built tough, and came from traumatic childhoods.

Both men never really had good relationships with their fathers.

Both men married women were were exceptional. Bobbi is often referred to here as the First Lady of College Basketball, and perhaps of “basketball”, period. My mother was considered by many to be the First Lady of the Tucson Police Department. Anyone who has ever married a cop knows how hard it is. She did it for 24 years.

My father was never told the truth that he was the result of an adultery between his mother and his uncle. I got the truth from

my uncle just before he died, along with confirmations about the Parella family's work for the real life *Godfather*, something I later learned my dad actually bragged about among his coworkers at the Tucson Police Department.

Lute came from a long line of hard working Nordic nobility, and my dad came from the Italian immigration romanticized in *The Godfather*.

Both men applied what they learned during the 1960s and 70s, respectively, and when history seemed to open up, just after the 1986 tax cuts passed by the Reagan Administration, Tucson found itself in the middle of an unexpected spiritual war whereby drug importers were losing ground to the micro-economics resulting from sports marketing.

People could afford to spend money on entertainment for a time, and instead of

buying more drugs, they were choosing to spend it on healthier things, like attending Wildcat games.

For that brief era, gang members had a choice. Jobs were plentiful. Drugs were uncool. The Wildcats were cool. And Joe Parella had been to Tucson Police what Wyatt Earp had been to Dodge City and Tombstone.

The more I read Coach Olson's autobiography and compared it to my dad's life, I saw more and more similarities.

Coach Olson's on-court success gave him an increasingly wider platform to reach out to kids, whether through camps, or just going the extra mile for any kids he recruited or saw through to graduation.

Joe did the same thing, making headlines as a crime fighter, and then being the cop who visited schools to discuss the risks of drug abuse.

Both men's success resulted in the same inexplicable responses from their industry colleagues that almost every other successful person has endured. Envy, gossip, political manipulation, and accusations concerning every single move they made, no matter how normal or seemingly harmless.

Greg Hansen, and his Arizona Daily Star colleagues, David Fitzsimmons and Jack McGruder, took turns taking cheap shots at the Olsons, which seemed to stimulate readership as much as objective journalism might have.

For Joe, every drug bust or political victory, especially the ones that happened at the Old Pascua Village in 1989, resulted in him being denied formal promotions. His willingness to do the work of a Sergeant without a formal promotion or increase in pay also played a role.

The city was determined to hang on to a culture that had been in power since 1960, and “new” was “dangerous”. Those in power in Tucson since that era needed to die before a crosstown freeway system would become a reality.

What progress that was intended to be afforded by way of

Affirmative Action proved counter productive in Tucson.

The most qualified officers were held back from command posts, while in a town of predominantly Spanish populace, especially in positions of power, nonCaucasian officers were shown favor in every aspect of city government. Many policies were indoctrinated at closed-door liquor parties.

There were places in the country where Affirmative Action was not only still needed, but a godsend, but Tucson was not one of them.

As I read about all the backstabbing that happened to Coach Olson during his formative years in the coaching profession, I wanted to reach out Darth Vader-style and strangle some people.

In the same manner, it seemed that when I did reach out to people who knew my dad, there was an identical reaction; those who loved him were quick to offer stories about him, and those who felt inferior to him would acknowledge what an amazing, nice man he was, and then ignore the phone when I tried to follow up.

When I examined the story that I had, I was certain of two things. One, no one would watch a film that bragged about these men; Coach Olson would be against it. Sure, it feels good to hear fans cheer, “Lute! Lute! Lute!” at a basketball game, but for an entire film? Awkward. It’s not in his DNA. Though Greg Hansen and his son Ben, also a sportswriter, want the world to know that

Lute is a petty, imperialistic tyrant, after many interviews, I found that nothing could be further from the truth.

Biblical humility is defined as being in agreement with God. In this context, I wrote this novel about a Robert Luther Olson who epitomized humility.

So what beef did Hansen have with Lute? I'm not sure even Hansen knows. When I found the dynamics of the characters in Amadeus to be comparable to Lute and Greg, Lute sheepishly denied being labeled a genius, but agreed that Greg did seem motivated by jealousy, and the genius hated by the moderate-talent wasn't far from the mark.

Hansen had played pro baseball before turning to journalism. Lute is a Hall of Fame coach. Greg would fire questions at Lute during press conferences that rubbed Lute the wrong way and Lute fired back.

Lute wouldn't become defensive when he was being attacked. It was when Greg attacked his family that Lute would exercise his authority. Whether someone attacked the program, a specific player or his work ethic, Lute always wanted to do the right thing.

Even though no reporter likes to be disrespected during interviews, one man close to this story confided to me that Greg Hansen was the single most self-centered person he had ever met. No one said that about Lute, not even Jerry Tarkanian.

But this story is not about Greg Hansen.

I faced this challenge early on, how to unite these two men's stories.

My dad's story was more about his faith than his role as a husband, father and cop. What united these men more than anything else?

I asked the Lord how to write this. He showed me how their lives looked from the Best Seat In The House, so to speak, from Zion, in Heaven.

And even though Tucson sports fans like to use the term, “Wildcat Faithful”, this is not about sports fans being faithful to a bunch of college kids or the University of Arizona, or any of the political forces in the Old Pueblo.

This is the story of a faithful God, the resurrected and glorified Christ Jesus, who worked through these two men to lead Tucson into the 21st century, and help prepare it His return, whether that happens within days of this book’s release, or another thousand years from now.

Now, I need to address a topic that terrifies State agencies like the University of Arizona.

I know some of my readers are nonChristians.

In fact, the UA licensing department declared a divorce from this project early on in the process when I explained in detail the story I had planned to tell.

Their error.

The Lord showed me how to tell this story, from His perspective, to an audience who loves the Wildcats, and who have a connection to civil servants, that focuses on their eternal destination, and *why* they got there.

Neither Joe Parella nor Bobbi Olson got to Heaven apart from having receiving Jesus as their personal Savior.

This story is told from that point of view.

As for personal squabbles over power and glory, God tells us that He shares His glory with no man. (Isaiah 42:8)

But make no mistake, the Bible assures us that there will be a day when every sin

described herein will be held accountable,
and every good deed will be rewarded.

It's hard to write that in the present-tense,
because in the midst of the human condition,
we can still feel the pain.

Graduating from Santa Rita High School in
1991 was hard for me on many levels.

One, my dad died. Two, I was under
extraordinary pressure from my mother to
get married or else.

And three, the drug-infested trailer parks
and aging apartment communities that
surrounded Southeast Tucson had taken its
toll, and its alumni can be seen dropping
dead of heart failure on the Facebook page
labelled "Dedicated To The Fallen Eagles of
Santa Rita High School".

You will read that the day my dad was
pronounced dead, a selfish classmate
challenged me to a fight on the bus, which I

only rode to avert the house of tears I was leaving behind.

You will read about an east side neighborhood where Joe raised his family filled with violent, self-entitled kids who contributed to the stress that caused the cancer that claimed him.

In short, my high school was a suburban hell reigned by the demons of racism, with predominantly Spanish lineage.

Watching the Wildcats gave our family hope. Seeing them win made us feel like winners.

The Bible says it best, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.” (John 1:5)

Getting to know some of the players and coaches made us feel special.

The Wildcats fought our battles for us, as described in 1 Samuel 17:4-8:

A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp...

...Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.”

If you haven't figured out yet that this isn't a story about the Arizona Wildcats, (but does include it), then know this.

This story is not about the University of Arizona Wildcats.

It's the story of the reconciling power of Christ in the company of All Things 'Bear Down'.

My dad was eaten alive by his stress and failure to forgive wrongs committed against

him and his family, and own the sins he committed against others.

He passed over to Heaven not because of his service as a cop, but because the blood of Jesus has the power to cleanse all sins, and is licensed by God to do so for anyone who accepted Him as Savior (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Coach Olson took ten years longer than the UA was willing to allow to mourn the loss of his wife, and he understood that the unwritten laws of the sports world do not consider hard work enough collateral for fair play-calling, hence, the UA has at least two fewer National Championship banners hanging from the rafters at McKale Center than it does now.

Despite winning the title in 1997, the morons of the east coast media still consider Lute as the coach who couldn't win the big game.

Even though he did win the ‘big game’.

Red Sox fans can relate to this. Even though the Sox owned the Yankees in World Series wins during the early 21st century, most drunken Yankee fans will still taunt them, “1918!”

As for those who love God, and Lute, and who are excited to read about history from a supernatural point of view, I promise, what you read is as close to accurate as what could be verified.

For months of personal interviews, Lute offered as much detail that wasn’t found in his book as I could conjure to ask for, and more. So, what new stuff did I find out?

The biggest surprises for me included just how heroic Jim Click was during the Olson era.

Before interviewing him, I thought Jim Jr. was a greedy stuffed shirt whose auto

dealerships acted like merciless parasites on Tucson-area auto buyers.

It surprised me to learn how deeply he held his relationship with Jesus.

He used business tools, whether money or advertising campaigns, as tools to strengthen relationships.

He flagrantly admitted to having produced some of the most irritating TV commercials in the history of local advertising.

But, they did translate into sales and those sales were used to donate more charitable giving than any other entity in the city's history.

He was expected to fail during his formative years, even labeled within his father's company as one of the worst salesmen, but worked his way up to the success most Tucsonans him for, from the late 1970s to present.

He admitted that the life ministry of keeping his sales managers in line was a never ending battle, but in the end, he served God and tried to be a light for those who worked with him to do the same. I read his personal testimony, which he provided as a free download from his web site, and I was impressed. Two words: humble beginnings.

He found himself to be an awkward business affiliate with the UA, given how much he saw God working through Lute, and how reluctant the UA was willing to endorse that. He knew *he* needed to get behind it and did.

So, pardon the lousy commercials. They were a means to an end. Crummy salesmen or managers? Yip, noted; a work in-progress.

Another surprise I found was that despite my dad giving his life so that the Pascua-Yaquis could enter the casino business, their political infighting was still so bad twenty

years after my dad's last dealings with them, no amount of money seemed to be enough to solve their problems.

A visit in early 2013 to the same ground he once walked in 1989 yielded disappointing results. No amount of money seemed to rescue the Tribe from decades of infighting, and despite their health facilities, financed by their hotels and casinos, their battle with diabetes remains a losing one. They now have very nice facilities that few Tribe members use because few leave their homes. Or maintain their yards.

A newer neighborhood on the far southwest side made up of young Pascua-Yaqui families of mixed lineage showed signs of change, and its ambiance was as nice as any suburb offered to the city's east and north side residents. A lack of leadership and a shared vision for the future remained the roots of all their problems.

One more surprise that became a running joke throughout the story was that Lute never stopped getting offers to coach elsewhere, especially Kentucky. Coach Olson acknowledges two of them. Truth be told, after 1973, his phone never stopped ringing. And he almost built his program at USC.

The fact that his lone national title win came against the Kentucky Wildcats was in reality, God's humor.

As Tucson media figures and fans pounded Lute for every first-round loss after 1985, criticized anything he did that they didn't understand, like his deals with Nike that led to the overall expansion of college basketball as we know it today, he was constantly being offered other head coaching jobs by big-name schools.

And in case you missed it, Tucson was lucky to have the first celebrity endorsement Nike ever had.

Coach Olson's photo with Long Beach State player Leonard Grey hangs in Nike's corporate offices like a Rembrandt painting. Yes, before Air Jordan, there was Air Lute.

Tucson almost lost Lute not a few times, but hundreds.

Beyond that, I wrote this for my own grandkids.

They deserve to know why there is a street sign named after my father, Joe Parella, on the Southeast side of Tucson, in the Civano neighborhood, a few miles east of where he spent the last 17 years of his life, on East Watson Drive, and why he fell in love with the University of Bear Down.

Cory Parella

May 11, 2023

The End.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cory Parella was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona in 1973. He earned multiple college degrees from Arizona State University and UNLV before running for the House of Representatives in Colorado in 2022. He is currently running for Colorado Senate in 2024 and the White House in 2028.

He is a dad of three high school honor students, and he still follows the Wildcats past and present. He graduated from Santa Rita High school in 1991, Secrist Middle School in 1987, Dunham Elementary in 1984 and attended Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School from 1976 - 1982.

The Tucson Catholic Diocese was among those rebuked by the Vatican when called out for sex crimes against children during his time of attendance. Films “Spotlight” and “Two Popes” talk about those stories. The priests and staff in charge of OMOS from 1976-82

have since died. The events described in this novel are true.

Historical fiction does not require permission to use real names, images or likenesses of anyone described in the context of truthful storytelling. I had trustworthy friends during my formative years, but unfortunately most of the neighborhood kids were real bastards. Their parents were addicts and schemers, our own family accountant serving prison time for fraud.

As an early edition circulated in 2010, the PY Tribe was formally asked for input and gave a divided answer: Yes and No. After ultimately offering no usable input for historical accuracy, tribal elders contested the accuracy of events as described here - except on Facebook where numerous trolls posted ethnic slurs, saying “We don’t need no white savior,” later self-deleted. Though Joe’s police record was destroyed in 2001 in accordance with department policy, officers who served alongside him gave written, eyewitness

accounts verifying the miracle surrounding getting the PY families to surrender heroin while gaining the support of Indian Affairs to equip the Tribe with self-sufficiency. Today instead of poverty being the most critical tribal concern, it is diabetes. The casinos proved so profitable, Tribal families didn't need to work, so they opted not to. Their far-west side neighborhoods look as well maintained as the far east side of Tucson as described in this novel, and the greatest causes of death are linked to obesity.

Other editions will follow as I get closer to the White House.

- Cory Parella