

**Throw
that
bottle
and let
me shoot
at it.**

**Half truths, and shoddy
lies. Number III**

BD Williams

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For info or to order a copy write to tierra_14@hotmail.com

One of them package deals

If you've never been to Montgomery, Alabama don't go. Stay clear. Unless you like strip malls and rapped culture. The parking lots are large and vacant. Fast food cups and plastic grocery bags, blown by the wind, are the modern day tumble weed. This is a ghost town of 300,000 people.

Lets drop in on booth inside a well known restaurant that sells fried chicken sandwiches. The restaurant sits in one of these strip malls. A man and a woman sit across from each other . the man appears to be older than the woman. He looks down fixed on the meal he is eating. The lady with dyed blonde hair cropped short, sprayed, and teased on the top—she does all the talking. The man only voices an occasional “hum” or “uh hu” the conversation goes like this.

The lady goes, “You know Mister Peterson don't you?”

The old man takes a bite of his chicken.

Then she goes, “He's that college professor that you see everyday riding his bike down the street in front of your house. He never wears a helmet. Just cuts in and out of traffic.”

The old man goes, “Uh hu,” and takes a sip of his drink.

“I asked him why don't he wear a helmet? He said he ain't worn one in the 50 years he's been riding a bike and he ain't gonna' start now. He rides that bike everyday. We went out to dinner one time with Margie and the rest of her family—their all good people—I tell you that professor never learned how to sit still. He's always moving doing something running or riding that bike. I guess he must get a lot of exercise that way cause he eats more food than anyone I know. Margie and them took us to that buffet up the street—two sides two times, two entrées, double the bread everyone ate, if anyone else ate as much as he did they'd pop!”

The old man just goes, “Hum,” and wiped his mouth after another bite of his sandwich.

“I just don't understand him. Me and Pop go on trips down to the Caribbean, and the Margie asked us if we wanted to go with them, Pop told them that we would and I let

him know that we had already taken that trip and there was no way I was going to do the same trip again. It was one of them package deals from the agency."

Outside blue haired women line up at the drive thru in their SUVs. There's a parking lot big enough for their families, and friends of the families, you'd think maybe even the professor could find a space to squeeze his bike into, out there in the vacant parking lot.

Dead dogs and possums

He started walking down the train tracks. It had been raining. 3 P.M. on a Sunday afternoon. A fine mist drowns the air. He is sick. The kind of sick that you get from the emptying of bottles. The burning of cigarettes. The kind of sickness that follows when all of your stuff—clothes, books, radio, and the like—you find outside your house, strewn across the porch and out into the yard. The kind of sickness that says to the cops “no he does not live here.” The type of sickness that only a bottle of Ten High, two packs of smokes and some loud music seem the ease. It’s the kind of sickness that leads your body and your mind out to the train tracks—wet—walking past the dead dogs and possums.

The crest of the mountain began to trouble. The ground broke apart into gravel, sending loud stones tumbling down the mountain side. Slowly from the top of the mountain a figure began to emerge. Not a small figure by any means, but a colossal figure made of rock surrounded in flames. Five hundred feet of rock, a riot of red and black. The creature was having a bad day. It was now starting to rain on the creature, water forth from the mountain. But that's not what this was, a storm. No, this was a carwash, an all-weather carwash located in the middle of paradise.

This carwash is a little different, other than the fact that it is unique, and that it is located in the heart of paradise, at this carwash you don't have to get out of our car, but then you don't have to let our car in most carwashes do you? Then you may ask, "What's the big fella's deal?"

Let me explain.

The Carwash de Paradise is a full detail shop—the kind where you would normally sit outside while your car is taken through the cleaner. But at this carwash you can ride through the actual car washing mechanism, what's so great about that? Well the fact that you can escape from any number of useless locations to get in the car with you for

In a roadside bathroom

"There's got to be something I can do," he thought as he stood in front of the urinal. "There's no way I can keep track of all these policy numbers and prospects. One after the other. I can't write them all down. Maybe if I got a tape recorder I could just say it all and it'd be alright. I'd have it. No more swerving into the other lane when I'm driving and trying to find a piece of paper laying in the floor. Is it worth it? The risk. That's the only time I can think. When I'm driving. That's when they come to me."

He zipped up his pants and stepped from the urinal to the sink. "I suppose it really doesn't matter how or where I get the data recorded just as long as I get it done."

It was that easy. A decision was made. He reached over and tore off a piece of brown paper towel from the dispenser on the wall. Dried his hands, looked in the mirror, rubbed the damp paper towel over his teeth, smiled, and checked his sometimes bleeding gums. He then spit in the sink and tossed the damp, wadded-up, paper towel in the direction of the trash. It missed and fell into the corner behind the trashcan.

Irreconcilable Doubt and Shamefulness make a guest appearance in the middle of a fantasy story about mountains coming alive, and a topless carwash in the heart of paradise—as imagined on the highway leaving Las Vegas.

The crest of the mountain began to tremble. The ground broke apart into gravel, sending boulders tumbling down the mountain side. Slowly from the top of the mountain a figure began to emerge. Not a small figure by any means, but a colossal figure made of rock surrounded in flames. Fire, brimstone, all manner of hell, a riot of rock and heat. The creator was having a bad day. It was now seen by everyone as the creature came forth from the mountain. No! That's not what this story is about. No this story is about a carwash, an all topless carwash located in the middle of paradise!

This carwash is a little different, other than the fact that it is topless, and that it is located in the heart of paradise, at this carwash you don't have to get out of our car, but then you don't have to do that at most carwashes do you? Then you may ask, "What's the big fuckn' deal?"

Let me explain.

The Carwash de Paradisio is a full detail shop—the kind where you would normally sit outside while your car is taken through the cleaner. But at this carwash you can ride through the actual car washing mechanism, what's so great about that? Well the fact that you can chose from any number of topless beauties to get in the car with you for

a ride of soul replenishing or spiritual rapping, depending on how you look at it. This is the special no-holds barred wax and polish.

Now welcome my special guests; Irreconcilable Doubt and Shamefulness.

"What's the point in this? You shouldn't talk like that.

This type of stuff makes you sound sick and stupid. But this does fit right in with your track record. These are your stats. This is what you are batting."

Alright since baseball has been alluded to, I'm sure your familiar with the story of the old ballplayer who is called up from the minors for a chance at the big league. It's his last chance at it. But first or last he's got a shot at it, and what does he do? Think, he pulls himself up through all this shit. All the loses. All the booze. His lady is far away. All he has got is himself. He's got to push on. It's strength. Endurance. It's drive. He's always had it in him. He can't let himself get into a slump. He's got to go full speed.

"What's your point? What could this possibly have to do with something as stupid as a carwash/whorehouse? That you can't give up? Well let me tell you something... this is forced. You have no point here. You are trying for something that's not there."

Right you've heard it before. It's the fuckn' truth. What else do you propose? Laying down and taking it up the rear from everyone from Bellingham to Orlando? The bum to the rich? Is that it? Give up? Is that what you want?!

A steady line of traffic moves across the desert on the outskirts of Las Vegas. Of all the cars that roll down the highway, in one car is a family of 3. In that car, the youngest is the son. He's 10. his teachers said that since he can't spell then he'll most likely fail in higher grades of school. Did none of the teachers try to teach him or was it that he just couldn't learn? He didn't know and now all the weight of not being able to tell the difference between desert and dessert pressed on him. As he stared out the window at the desert or is it dessert, his concern for this lack of spelling didn't last for

long because rocks began to tumble from the side of a mountain. At first his mother and father didn't notice the rocks. It was the shaking of the road in front of them, that his mother and father thought was an earthquake, that caught their attention. But not the boy. No he saw the top of the mountain give way. That's what was causing the shaking. It wasn't an earthquake, something was happening to the mountain.

That's all over now.

Now I have a real job. I sell jewelry. I can afford this nice apartment. Corner inside—have a look. I chose the thick creamy, white, carpet because it gives you the feeling, excuse me, but please remove your shoes, yes, thank you. I do not like my carpet mired with outside dirt and flattened with imprints of shoes, that would destroy the softer feeling the of carpet with it's creamy, yet fluffy whiteness. It's as though you are walking on the clouds. For the walls I have chosen the same creamy white—you know—so that you feel surrounded—sea-tasty. Here, look here, what do you think of the grey couch and Lay-Z-boy. Story? Oh yes—to come home after a days work, leap the clouds and then just stop the storm, high above the world. True pleasure.

Can I get a drink?

But I insist, after all you are in the home of the worlds most famous bartender.

What? No, no, of course you know that already? Don't Saboteur the Worlds Most Known Bartender! Why I have invented many of your most common and famous cocktails.

What? What about the jewelry store? That is my supper. This is my home. Here in the clouds I am the worlds greatest bartender! Alright, lets see for you... vodka on the rocks! You look like a vodka drinker. Here you are.

What? No this is the most fine vodka money can buy.

He didn't have a gun

He said, "Are you gonna' do anything with yourself or we gonna' have ta' shoot you?"

I stood stock still. I couldn't think of anything to say. No witty comments. No words to stop him. Nothing to knock him off balance. I was dumbfounded. I could think of nothing.

I raised my head and looked him in the eyes. "Shoot me," I said.

He didn't like that, and he didn't have a gun.

The make-believe Bartender

It was a horrible sight, the kitchen counter that is, after the fight—a broken bottle of whiskey, Prozac, and Zoloft scattered all over the floor. Oh, there were a loving bunch—my parents, but the swirling oblivion of my formative years, yes I was carried away, I indulged in, well shall I say, some of the virtues of hedonism, if you can call them such—virtues. Oh, I drank barrels of beer in my time. Explored a vast multitude of women and girls. I must say that I was always a bit fond of amphetamines. A drastic downfall for most, but one from which I was able to recover quite well. Mix in a few portions of LSD, just enough to make you see the world different... if you want to explore—that's not what I want to talk about. I spent a few years in this state of personal decimation, a state I have dearly loved.

That's all over now.

Now I have a real job. I sell jewelry. I can afford this nice apartment. Come inside—have a look. I chose the thick creamy, white, carpet because it gives you the feeling, excuse me, but please remover your shoes, yes, thank you. I do not like my carpet mired with outside funk and flattened with imprints of shoes, that would disrupt the entire feeling the of carpet, with it's creamy, yet fluffy whiteness. It's as though you are walking on the clouds. For the walls I have chosen the same creamy white—you know—so that you feel surrounded—heavenly. Here, look here, what do you think of the grey couch and Lay-Z-boy. Stormy? Oh yes—to come home after a days work into the clouds and then rest atop the storm, high above the world. True pleasure.

Care for a drink?

But I insist, after all you are in the home of the worlds most famous bartender.

What? No, no, of coarse you knew that already? Dan Salvinko: the Worlds Most Known Bartender! Why I have invented many of your most common and famous cocktails.

What? What about the jewelry store? That is my support. This is my house. Here in the clouds I am the worlds greatest bartender! Alright, lets see for you... vodka on the rocks! You look like a vodka drinker. Here you are

What?! No this is the most fine vodka money can buy.

What?! Excuse me, but this is vodka! It came from this bottle. It is not tap water!

I'm sorry, but you must go now. No! You cannot have the bottle!

No I do not suppose flower will keep in this. It is the most fine vodka money can buy!

Wait, wait, try this, a bourbon and coke.

No! Take it damned it! Drink the fucking drink! I am Dan Salvinko: the Worlds Most Know Bartender!

What?—To hell with you! Leave my house this moment! I see you are a peon! You are not worth the sweet sweat of a frogs ass!

Leave! Damned you! Leave this house this instant!

How?!... How did you get in my home?! Leave! Leave this home to me!

A full belly and a trembling heart

To sit down with a belly full of pasta and a cup of wine well within reach of your right hand and flipping the channels of the television in-between sips of wine and have all the intention in the world of sitting down and writing a whole book and all you can get out are sentences strung together by "and" and you carry-on with the idea that you can make something of the thoughts and actions that have occurred or have yet to occur in your life... to do this and get it right? I'm not sure of the odds, and I remember where there is no fear the odds don't matter.

I pour my wine into a plastic cup from—I don't know where it's from, but it says, in faded and chipped red paint, Coca Cola. I don't know if that has any importance. Nor do I know if my sitting the cup inside of my shoe—like a coaster for the carpeted floor of my friends living room—it's not as important as the favor of letting me use the floor—he has been letting me sleep here while I get my act together. I've been watching Comedy Central—looking for sleep—can't find it. I don't know if that has anything to do with the fact that my woman was supposed to call me tonight. She didn't.

I keep saying "I don't know" I keep talking like I'm not sure of what is going on—there is some strange doubt here. I musn't care too much cause I don't look back at what I'm writing until a commercial break comes on Comedy Central. It's not going together—I'm not sure what's going on.

I walk outside to have a smoke and I see a car in the neighbors driveway. Standing outside the car is a commercial—two girls in gym clothes posed in front of the grill of the car. They could be the sales pitch for any number of things.

I've got my last bit of wine in a faded plastic cup.

Denny Wayne and the Hometown Boys

"How was she?" she demanded. "Like an old goat in heat? Or a young whore in bed?"

I calmly asked, "Are you coming over tonight?"

"I want you to tell me about that girl who was over there last night," she wasn't going to let this one drop.

"Come on," I said in my girlfriend voice, "I've got a couple of TV dinners we can heat up."

"That's just like you," she was fuming, "I don't want a goddamned TV dinner I want..."

"Did you hear that?"

"What?!" she said building up from the 'A' and letting it snap on the 'T' carrying all the emotion of 100's of days and nights of indecision and... that 'T' always felt like a knife to me.

—click—

I took a deep breath, walked to the bathroom, and looked at myself in the mirror.

I've gotten thin, my hair's too long, my glasses are all busted up from a fight I got involved in after an Auburn and Georgia State football game. Auburn had kicked the Georgia Dawgs ass. My friend Denny Wayne had some buddies from his home town had come down for the game. We'd been getting drunk all day before we snuck into Jordan-Hare Stadium to see the last half of the game.

We'd been walking around the tents, traps, tables, SUVs, and Winnebagos, that had all parked, and been setup to tailgate. Some of these people leave all their booze and food unattended when the game starts. It's really nice of the people who come to the game, to leave us all the leftover food and booze to have while they're at the game. (This Thank You is for them.)

Well after about an hour of drinking the donated booze we were good and drunk. We made it in the game in time to see Auburn win. Then it was time to head to a bar. So we turned back towards town. On the way to the bar one of Denny Wayne's home town buddies pulled out his nuts and started flashing people on the street. I thought it was funny. We kept walking. Next thing I know I'm dying of thirst. I can't make it anymore. I say to Denny Wayne "the vultures are circling"

"you're a puss hold on we're almost there." He said

We made it to the bar, and for some reason that was unknown to me at the time, we were standing outside of it and not going in. No sooner than I thought that I looked to my left and saw one of Denny Wayne's Hometown Boys, the one with his nuts out, this time he's got a pocket flashlight, and he's holding his nuts in front of it so that they are glowing red. Yes. Holly shit, he had a glowing red nut sack. The streets were packed with people leaving the game. I'm thirsty. Then out of nowhere comes some fat guy, and punches the Hometown Boy, with the glowing red nut sack, square in the nose.

I remember him saying "you don't do that with women around." I suppose you're only supposed to whip your nuts out in a room full of guys, or maybe punching strangers on the street is more appropriate.

In no time flat Denny Wayne jumps on the fat guys back and starts punching. I wanted another drink, but it looked like we were going to have to deal with this first. So in order to help facilitate the process I jumped in and got a few shots in on the fat ass. I was pulled back by some tall guy who let me go when I punched him in the jaw. Then it calmed down, but my glasses had fallen off. Shit.

Denny Wayne pointed to them laying on the sidewalk. I went to get them and then the fat ass got another jolt of "I'm a dumb ass" jumps up, stomps on them, and grinded them into the sidewalk.

I stopped and stood there looking at him as Denny Wayne and the Hometown Boys tried to push his fat ass through the sidewalk. Seconds later it was over. I picked up my broken glasses and we went into the bar for a drink.

I needed a shave too, but had no razors. I walked back to the kitchen. I figured I'd count my supplies for this evening, four cigarettes, one bottle of beer. Not much in that department. I opened the freezer, one TV dinner.

Boys

Hardwood stumps and beer cans

In the lowlands of Alabama, the swamps, many of them have been pumped dry or are being pumped dry today. You can see it all along I-85 right outside of Montgomery. There's a town about 45 minutes north east of Montgomery it's named Opelika, which in some native American language means "Big Swamp". But there's no big swamp to be seen. Where is it? Most people only think of the swamp as being down around the Gulf Coast, Mobile, and Louisiana, but it goes on over into Georgia and Mississippi. Most people don't even care. They pump it dry to plant crops, which isn't quite as bad as draining it for housing.

I imagine this land used to be covered with trees—large grey moss hanging from the branches. Then there's the humidity, it's the humidity that connects you with this place. 90-100 degrees, hot and sticky. You move slow. 1st gear. Cruise control. There's not much to hurry for and plus it's too hot.

Scattered everywhere are large tracks of missing trees, a now diseased landscape that at one time was forests and times before that a jungle. Not an African jungle. Not a South American jungle, but a Southeastern pre-Confederacy, pre-United States jungle, with bears, alligators, panthers, all sorts of crazies, crawlers, and scarries. Stumps and muddy roads cross the once floor of the forest, or jungle, but it can't kill the ghost.

A lonely figure walks down one of the muddy, pot-holed, roads. He's got his blue jeans rolled-up, the soles of his boots grinding against the red gravel of the road as he sidesteps mud puddles, he walks on, and reaches in the smoke pocket of his shirt and takes out a bag of shelled and salted peanuts, he throws a few of them in his mouth, chews them up, and then takes a pull from his Pepsi. He spits a piece of peanut out at one of the mud puddles, and keeps walking on down the road, the sound of his boots grinding and slapping against the dirt road.

For miles all around him there's nothing save for a few gnarled trees with dead vines and moss hanging from the branches. Some old hardwood stumps, and beer cans. It's nice and humid, like in a greenhouse, it's right after a good midday rain.

What the hell is with the umbrellas?

People were exiting and entering the movie theater, and I was steadily approaching a group of tables with umbrellas on top of them. It was cloudy out, and being that umbrellas really are only of any use if either the sun is shining or if it's raining, they were closed. They sat there still and grey. I paid them no attention, but as I passed one of them I somehow stepped in such a way so that one of them struck me in the arm. I was in plain view of a crowd of people when this happened and I felt a little foolish. I mean who in the fuck walks into a closed umbrella sitting on top of a table? Me. So I laughed at myself to ease the foolishness—I accepted the badge and wore it with pride as I walked my foolish ass into the book store.

I paced back and forth pulling a book here and there from the shelves. In no particular order and reading the first paragraphs of each. Then I put them back on the shelf and find another. I did this to about 30 or so books until I felt like I had a decent amount of opening paragraphs for the time being—besides I had to go to the bathroom—there's nothing like a book store to make you have to whiz. But I wasn't ready to go so I paced some more. I started looking at graphic novels and books of photography. Titties and demons. Rock stars and bass masters. Poetry and design books. The longer I was in there the more frantic my pacing became and the more I had to whiz. I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay and read all the middle paragraphs out of the books. I was being greedy and wasteful. Like I was on some sort of destructive binge. I wanted to eat the centers first. I wanted to eat only the crust on some. Some I only wanted to molest and then leave wasted in the trash... I was going crazy—I had to piss so damned bad—I couldn't take it—I wanted to taste the best of them all—I was going to piss my pants if I didn't make it to the bathroom—there were so many women in there—that didn't help my state of mind—I didn't want to leave—all these books—all these women—good God I have to piss—aaahhh!

Alright. This is getting crazy go piss. I do. It gets done.

Then I'm back to looking at compilation books with erotic themes. Porn fetish but with an intellectual twist. I'm still going crazy over the women. I'm obsessing. I've got to get out of here. I do. I get out.

Outside the sky is darker than before. There are people exiting the movie theater. I see them yawning and stretching as they ride down the escalator. I turn my eyes from them to face the direction I'm walking it's then that I'm slammed in the shoulder by something. I turn and look, the umbrella is finishing up a half spin. I swear I saw a smile coming from it. I didn't feel like a fool. I stared at it. what the hell is up with the umbrella? Why is it out to get me? I contemplated knocking it over. But I declined under the weight of it's ridiculousness of its intimidation and seeming bullying of me. The bastard. I will have my day I will come back. On a day with no purpose in its life it takes to picking on the average passer by. You fucking terrorist! I felt like screaming. But, fuck, that would get peoples attention. They would stop and look at me. I would feel like a fool. So I turned and walked away.

One for the ghosts

She is leaning against the refrigerator, a bottle of Kahlua in one hand, she takes a pull of the bottle, looks at me and says, "I guess what I want is to date someone famous."

I stagger while trying to stand still. I have a problem with that, standing still, always have, but this time it was more of a stagger. Caused by the booze I'm sure. I catch myself on the kitchen counter; saying some sort of thank you to the ghosts for the fact that I would be laying on the floor had the people who built the house not placed the counter at such a location where I might manage to catch myself.

And so I compose myself and look in what I think is her general direction and with all the dignity that I can muster at 3 A.M. in the morning, in some strange house, talking to some girl whose name I have not even thought to ask, I look and say, "I'm famous baby."

She hands me the Kahlua and I take a nice long swallow.

Till the money ran out

When the money runs out it'll all come to a halt. It's Gods way of stopping you before you go too far with the frivolous spending, and step into the nastiness of the soul that's sure to follow. That is how I see money becoming your downfall.

I came down to the coffee shop with the above thought in my head. I carried it safely past the rose-peddle moaning of Morrissey pushing from the speakers, I carried it down here in a packet of tea that I took from my kitchen. I don't have the money for coffee shop tea, but I am still able to afford the small luxury of a quarter for a cup of hot water. Anything to get me out of the house.

The tea I cannot do without. Without the tea I cannot sleep. For me the tea is rest. The tea is comfortable and warm. So in with the tea I carried the thought of money, a thought that causes you to tremble, because you're standing on the verge of debt, which is always closer to a life on the street, pimping your pride for a quarter, a smoke, or a pack of crackers. This is a train of thought that sits a man ill-at-ease. This is a thought that removes sleep, but the tea takes that away.

The tea is not a cure all, it's only a thin soup of flowers and bark. It doesn't fill your stomach, but it rests your shoulders and your mind. It lets you slow down. I'm hyper I have ADHD, at times I make people nervous. They say, "Can't you sit still?" or, "What are you on?"

"Nothing," I tell them. "It's only that the rest of the world is slow," which may or may not be true. These things depend entirely on who you are and how you look at them. But thinking like that puts your head in the clouds. It fills you full of air. It is no good.

If it is true or if it is not true, neither is anywhere near as important as keeping your hands to the wheel, the file to the lock, you know "your nose to the grind". It is perseverance, concentration, faith, trust, love, and work work work. Nothing gets done without work.

Work is the something that I haven't been doing much of lately. That is, till the money ran out. Now work is all I have. I have to work or I'll go crazy. I have to look at myself. I have to examine the world again.

The money is gone and things seem to be heading back to normal.

