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An excerpt from

NEW MONEY

By

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## 0. IN RETROSPECT

Every collision offers a catalog of loud noises with which a collider becomes intimately and eternally acquainted. Thus, I have an ear tuned not only for the roar of a live moose skidding down Californian asphalt, but also the screeching of keratin and bone tissue on chrome and the percussions of a Beats Pill XL by Dre in the throes of a braking Mini Cooper. I insist it was these sounds, not the dying moose, nor the fractal wildfires, that made me shake all summer. Nai and Harvey “don’t get where [I’m] coming from,” but they were in the backseat, so what do they know.

There are few axioms I can explicate now, after the fact: I was in love with Nai, Nai was in love with life, and Harvey was high, we were all high. The hope was to drive from San Diego to Sunnyvale, where we would acquire a high grade information product and the capital to travel to rising Asia, where we would monetize the aforementioned commodity via extortion and use our winnings to purchase a variety of goods from unregulated bazaars to export back into the United States and retail at a formidable markup. This plan was not initially clear to us.

It should be noted that Nai, Harvey and I are moderate folks from moderate wealth.

### 1. In The Loving Providence of The Queen of Tejano

We had to stop the Mini Cooper after a few hours on the 5 because I wanted to have enough time to puinsai Tara in Santa Cruz before the Seed Round so I was driving at the tempo of the Selena we were blasting and I hit a Moose. We fled the borrowed Mini Cooper and saw the Moose was still very much alive and in pain. Nai and Harvey could tell because they were high on LSD and could telepathically empathize with the Moose's nervous system. I could tell because the Moose was screaming and spazzing the fuck out. I was also on LSD, but less, because I was driving.

Nai approached the Moose and I followed close behind. Nai descended into a split and guided the Moose's head into her lap. I worried about a potential moosebite, though Nai has always been invincible to me. Nai tore back the Moose's jaw and I put our last A215 on its tongue. She wanted to give it a Klonopin, too, but I told her "meese don't do benzos." (I wanted to keep the Klonopin so that when we got to Silicon Valley to return the Mini Cooper, Startup Skip could keep calling me King Klon.) She asked me if she could take some of the Klonopin herself and psychically tranquilize the deer. I thought about saying no, but she paid for gas. We bestrode the Mini Cooper, again. I reached for the Centrum Daily Multivitamin Gummies container and saw CHP in the rear windshield. My forearms began to shiver. I knew these were essential tremors and not chills, because I was wearing my Floyd Mayweather "The Money Team" leather jacket. I quivered the last of the Klonopin into Nai's palms and told her to "swallow, now!" She did. I would feign the noble "NA, now!" and tell Skip I was abdicating my throne.

A beaky Officer sidled the passenger window and said "Boo!" I tried to act scared, but it was October and I was weary of acting scared. "¿Como va? ¿Que tal, ese?" he joked, head wry to the wounded Moose. I felt that things were not good.

“Sorry paragraph, no habla,” I said. My wrists drummed calypso on the steering wheel.

“¿Como paso esto? With la huge fucking alce!” With the English words, he clenched the tips of his his right talon, as if presenting me a very pretty flower.

“No habla,” I said.

“I know,” he laughed, “that’s por que I’m speaking Espanol.”

“No,” I said, “I speak English. Not Spanish.” The Officer laughed forreal this time. I deep exhaled. Harvey, who ingested a whole blotter of my ZhiZhong Needlepoint, reciprocated a chuckle. I could hear his stomach turn inside out, synchronous with the rotting Moose’s gut.

“Oh, well, what are you then?”

“Asian, Polyne-- and Caucasian.” The bidi bidis bombing through the auxiliary cable into Harvey’s Beats Pill XL by Dre said otherwise. Perhaps it was also unusual that no one was riding shotgun. The Officer was not having it. “White,” I clarified, “mostly white.”

“Mulatto? We’re all some version of someone else.” His comment made absolutely no sense but with it he quashed the profiling. “You were driving too fast.” He knew I knew he could not know this for a fact, so he let me choose between Speeding in Excess and Assault with a Deadly Weapon. “If you were driving slower, it would have died on the spot.”

“Really?” I said, “I didn’t even know there were meese in California. Is there an appointed person, doctor, or service for these meese sorts of things?” I figured that the Moose would be refurbished and roaming the 5 in a matter of moons.

“They’re gonna have to kill it, nigga,” scoffed Harvey, who had taken about 450 more micrograms than the wiki recommended and was staring at what may or may not have been hallucinated wildfires and checking his pockets for his keys, which were almost not there.

“Sorry, he’s autistic,” I said. “No good for conversation.”

“Autistic? I’ve heard that one before.” The Officer retracted his talon and fingered the 9 millimeter on his waist. “But he’s right, we’ll have to kill it.”

The Officer, oblivious to the fizzing A215, led us to flank the Moose once more. “CHP just pulled .357s off our carry,” he lamented. “We’re gonna unload into this fucker.” We danced behind the Officer. He drew his gun. He shot the Moose twice in the heart and once in the head, gut, and groin crevasse, respectfully (sic). He shot the Moose and it did not bleed nor cry nor die, but Harvey was experiencing audiogastric synaesthesia, so he vomited.

“Baby Selena is dead, too,” yelled Nai, who had sublinguated Grateful Dead Family fluff. “Be with her, Bullwinkle!” She whispered to me that the Moose was “unconscious from the teleKlons” and the “bullets could not be felt.” Bidi bidi bom bom.

“You wanna shot, honey?” The Officer winked in a way that was not intended to be sexual, but I wanted to tell him it was inappropriate. He stretched Nai’s palm around the grip and squeezed it in place. Nails chipped and trembling, Nai shot the Moose in the Moosehead. The lecherous Officer reached for Nai’s wrist. “Leave one for your buddy.” Nai nodded, handed off the gun and dissolved into the evergreen fog. Harvey, who was paranoid from the lab grade LSD, tried to blast the A215 froth, but he missed and blew an antler into smithereens. The Officer and I dodged the shrapnel, but could not avoid the flurry of fur. Harvey fled to the car. The Officer confided that my “friends are really something.”

“They went to private school,” I smiled. That was a shiny time.

The Officer procured a Remington 870 from the trunk of his vehicle.

“Then I’m glad we saved the best for you, Goku.”

I declined. If the Officer were to later find himself in a sticky situation, he would have no hot firearms. Plus, the Moose was dead and I thought maybe Harvey was dying, too. The Officer did not kapeesh and got severely butthurt. He had me sign a Notice to Appear before he left.

Though I knew the infraction would be a top shelf pain in the ass, I was most worried that Tara would find my dawdling unsexy. I considered omitting Santa Cruz altogether when Nai materialized out of the mist and scabbled the asphalt. With broad strokes, she licked A215 off the Moose's tongue. Like always, she swallowed delicately. Nai kissed the Moose gently on its Moosehead and crawled back into the car.

"Jeeeesus Christ, girl!" Harvey, who was tripping, sang, "What are people gonna think, when you show up to one of several coastal towns with all of Pfizer's fruit in your veins?"

"Cherry, Harvey! And good call Nai, good all around mis amores," I commended all of my friends. Tara was buzzing in my phone. She engorged me and my abdomen.

"What's bail?" Harvey, stoned, inquired. The tumescence below did not take kindly to the timbre of his voice. I clawed at my pocket.

"Eleven-sixty, but I get three hundred back if I pay by the end of the week."

"Damn, **LA** is nuts, but at least we can spend that rebate on gas." We were in San Luis Obispo, but Harvey was very high on My Very Potent LSD, so I did not bother correcting his geography nor his economics.

"Shikata ga nai!" Nai shouted and slammed her door. It cannot be helped.

"Shyoo ga nai, fuckin' **LA**," I shook with disdain. I looked at my torso and was disappointed to find there was no moose blood on my jacket.

“**LA** is the worst, but let’s buy cigarettes here, they’re so cheap,” Nai digressed. “Don’t worry about Tara, you said yourself she’s a total sub. Plus she’s still with Teddy.”

“Isn’t he gay?” I asked.

“Yeah, but who cares about those two? Our love is all of God’s money.” The leather upholstery waxed warm under my ass. “You won’t even be thinking of her in a couple of hours.”

“Not so, Adam would write a novel for any of the lips that let him in,” warned Harvey, “he’ll probably write one for the fucking Moose.”