

Eddie, The 25 Year Reunion

Chapter Ten Post-Reunion Clean Up

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Monday, after the reunion, Eddie walks over to Lynn's Photography Studio, hoping that Lynn has the time to show him the photos from the reunion. Eddie walks in and takes a seat. Hearing the door chime and seeing Eddie walk in, Lynn excitedly yells out to Eddie, "hey! Come on back! You have to see the photos of the reunion!" Eddie is glad to hear that Lynn has the time to show him her work.

Eddie walks back with Lynn, asking her, "so, how does your new digital camera work?" Lynn replies, "it's good. But, the resolution is nowhere as good as film. But, the flip side is that I got a few hundred photos. And, if all you're doing is looking through them on a computer screen, the resolution is just fine." Eddie is now wondering whether Kathy's new laptop computer can be used to view the photographs.

Sitting at her new computer desk, Lynn brings up the digital photos of the reunion, telling Eddie, "I've been so busy going through these on my computer, that I haven't even developed my film yet." Eddie tells Lynn, "you'll get to it." Lynn replies, "Penny will probably develop them when she gets in. And, after she sees these photos, she's going to want a digital camera too."

Lynn shows Eddie the photos, one by one, which takes the good part of the morning. At the moment, Eddie is most interested in making sure he, Mark, and Braden have an airtight alibi. Lynn and Eddie point out a few interesting shots to each other, including one that inadvertently has Jimmy O'Brien in the background holding, not one, but two alcoholic drinks in his hand.

Eddie tells Lynn, "Kathy bought a laptop computer a while ago. Is there anyway we can see these on her computer?" Lynn replies, "sure. I can make a disc for you before you leave. All you have to do is put it in

the CD drive, and you can see the photographs.” Not quite the master of modern technology, Eddie replies, “I’m sure Kathy can figure it out.” Lynn assures Eddie, “I’m sure she can. If she can’t, Eddie, Junior or Milana can bring up the photos.”

Lynn and Eddie go through a few more photographs. Eddie notices that the photos seem to be in chronological order, with photographs of the day at the beach being all at the end. Knowing that Lynn took a photograph of the tribe in the morning of the reunion, Eddie asks, “where’s the one of me and the guys?” Lynn replies, “that was a portrait shot. I took that with my film camera. I used my digital camera mostly for candid shots.”

Right before Eddie leaves, Lynn makes him a disc containing the reunion photos. The good news is that, from what Eddie saw on Lynn’s computer, there is no evidence that Eddie, Mark, or Braden ever left the building during the reunion. There is substantial evidence, however, that Jimmy O’Brien and Todd McCutchen disappeared sometime around lunch, as neither appeared in any photographs taken after lunch was served.

With another potential mess on her and the tribe’s plate, Paula drives into Vinnie’s Body Shop, where she intends to have Vinnie repair the damage caused by Jimmy O’Brien’s nasty deed. Hoping that Vinnie has time in his schedule to fit her in, Paula takes a seat in the waiting area.

Seeing that Paula had walked in over the surveillance video feed installed by Braden a few years ago, Vinnie walks into the front office, exclaiming, “hey! It’s the Jeep girl! How have you been?” Paula replies, “great! And how are you, Vinnie?” Vinnie informs Paula, “retirement is great! I come in, tell the guys what they need to work on, and I tinker around on whatever I want to do.” Vinnie, not technically retired, still runs the shop, but primarily performs management duties these days.

After catching up, Vinnie asks Paula, “so, what can I do for the Jeep girl today?” Paula tells Vinnie, “I want you to paint the words, ‘Official Vehicle’ on the fenders over my rear tires. Can you do that?” Vinnie replies, “I don’t see why not. Let’s go out and take a look at it.” Vinnie and Paula head outside to take a look at Paula’s Jeep.

Showing Vinnie what she wants, pointing to the rear fender, Paula explains, “on the fender, over the tire, I want it to read ‘Official Vehicle’. And, I want the State seal between the words ‘Official’ and ‘Vehicle’.” Examining Paula’s Jeep, Vinnie comments, “that should be no problem at all. I can get a few of these scratches out while I’m at it. But, yeah. I

can definitely do this.” Paula is relieved to hear that Vinnie can remove the scratches, especially the one O’Brien is responsible for, while he’s at it. But, Vinnie is known for his top-notch work.

Vinnie asks, “when do you want me to get started?” Paula replies, “any time will be good. But, really, the sooner the better.” With not much on his plate, Vinnie graciously tells Paula, “I can start today, if you want.” Paula replies, “that would be great! I can get a ride home with Eddie. It looks like he’s closing up anyway.”

Paula asks, “do we need any paperwork?” Vinnie replies, “no. You’re the Jeep girl, and you’re Italian. You get the red carpet treatment around here.” Paula tells Vinnie, “thank you so much, Vinnie. You’re the best. And, I’ll pay you in cash. So, yeah, we can skip all the paperwork.” Vinnie replies, “no problem. I’ll be doing the work myself. I’ll start cleaning up the fender today, and get started with the painting first thing in the morning. It will be ready in two or three days. I’ll let you know.” Paula again thanks Vinnie, and heads across the street to Eddie’s Service Station.

Paula walks into Eddie’s office. Eddie asks Paula, “what’s up?” Paula explains, “Vinnie is going to start on my Jeep tomorrow. I’m having him paint the words ‘Official Vehicle’ on the rear fenders over the tires.” Eddie replies, “that should look really good.” Paula then asks, “can you give me a ride home?” Eddie replies, “of course!” Eddie and Paula head out, cleaning up another potential problem arising from the events at the reunion.

Three days later, as expected, Vinnie has Paula’s Jeep completed. Paula catches a ride with Eddie on his way to work to pick up her Jeep. After Eddie drops off Paula at Vinnie’s Body Shop, Eddie drives across the street to open up for the day. Open up, however, is a vague term. Today, the plan is for Eddie to help Eddie, Jr. finish the second Porsche 914 electric conversion.

Waiting for Eddie, Jr. to arrive, Eddie takes a little time to straighten up the shop. Paula drives up, wanting to fill her tank while she is on this side of town. Eddie and Paula talk at the pumps, admiring Vinnie’s work.

Not a minute goes by before Todd McCutchen rolls into the service station. Seeing who is behind the wheel, Eddie tells Paula, “ut oh. Here comes trouble.” Paula replies, “not him. I can only imagine what this is going to be about.” Eddie whispers to Paula, “it’s probably about the scratch in your Jeep that’s just not there.” Catching Eddie’s drift, Paula asks, “there was a scratch on my Jeep?” Eddie confidently replies, “exactly. I don’t see any scratches on your Jeep.”

McCutchen gets out of his vehicle, screaming, “what did you do to me?” Eddie calmly replies, “what are you talking about, junior?” McCutchen screams out, “somehow, you got me and Jimmy O’Brien to Key West! I want to know what’s going on here!” Sounding a bit like a police officer, Eddie tells McCutchen, “okay. Let’s back up here a minute, junior. Why don’t you just calm down, and take it from the top. You can start by defining ‘somehow.’”

McCutchen calms down a slight bit, and explains, “after Jimmy O’Brien keyed that Jeep, you, that Mark guy, and Officer Braden somehow brought us to Key West. I don’t know how you guys did it.” Eddie replies, inquiring, “so, O’Brien keyed Paula’s Jeep? Really, McCutchen? Show me where. I want to see this.” Paula comments, “yeah. So do I.”

Walking over to Paula’s Jeep with Eddie and Paula, McCutchen acts like he is about to let the hammer down. Taking a look at the left fender, McCutchen surprisingly cannot find any damage. Going around to the right side of Paula’s Jeep, McCutchen, likewise, cannot find any damage. Eddie sarcastically tells McCutchen, “well?” Getting agitated, McCutchen angrily grumbles, “it was here! I know it was! I saw him do it!” Paula comments, “maybe it was someone else’s Jeep that he keyed.” McCutchen exclaims, “no! It was this one! I know it! I was there!” Eddie suggests to McCutchen, “either call the police, junior, and report me, or get out of here.”

Just to aggravate McCutchen, Paula comments, “he must have been taking too much of that psycho Chubin.” Eddie replies, “yeah. I’d say. And, right now, he’s having a delayed reaction.” Paula suggests, “maybe they have some anti psycho Chubin down at the sanitarium on Central Avenue.” Hearing Paula and Eddie’s conversation, McCutchen exclaims, “I’m calling the police!” Eddie calmly replies, “go ahead, junior. Waiting.”

While McCutchen is making the call, Paula whispers to Eddie, “I’m going to hang around and see how this plays out.” Eddie replies, “with any luck, Erika is on duty today. If Bobby B. was working today, he’d know if she was. But, I’m not technically open today. We’re just getting the second 914 completed for the Winter. For some reason, Eddie, Junior doesn’t want to drive the Dune Buggy to the University in the Winter.” Having her own Dune Buggy, Paula replies, “I can totally get that.”

Just then, Eddie, Jr. drives up in his Dune Buggy. While they are waiting on the police to arrive, Eddie and Eddie, Jr. push the 914 into an open service bay. Eddie informs Eddie, Jr. about McCutchen, and that

the police are on their way. Just like Eddie, Eddie, Jr. is looking forward to some free entertainment.

The police arrive and, as was hoped for, Officer Erika Bradshaw is on duty today. Already aware of the situation with Paula's Jeep and McCutchen being transported to Key West, Officer Bradshaw is wondering how McCutchen is going to present his complaint today. Getting out of her car, Officer Bradshaw is promptly greeted by McCutchen.

Getting down to business, Officer Bradshaw asks McCutchen, "are you the one who called us, sir?" McCutchen replies, "yeah. That was me. We got a really big problem here." Officer Bradshaw replies, "really? What exactly would that be?" McCutchen explains to Officer Bradshaw, "at the twenty-five-year reunion, me and a guy I met there, Jimmy O'Brien, somehow ended up in Key West. Eddie, that Mark guy, and Officer Braden somehow brought us there." Attempting to clear up some ambiguities, Officer Bradshaw replies, "Eddie, Mark, and Officer Braden were at the reunion the whole time. Please explain to me how did they managed to bring you to Key West?" McCutchen replies, "I don't know." Officer Bradshaw replies, "it's at least a four or five-hour round trip flight to Key West from here. That would be problem number one."

Standing around listening to McCutchen's complaint, Eddie tells Officer Bradshaw, "McCrutchen, here, also claims O'Brien keyed Paula's Jeep." Officer Bradshaw replies, "well, let's go and take a look at Paula's Jeep." Paula smiles, telling Officer Bradshaw, "be my guest." Walking around Paula's Jeep and not seeing any damage, Officer Bradshaw asks, "where exactly did O'Brien key this Jeep?" McCutchen replies, "they must have fixed it!" Officer Bradshaw replies, "nothing on this Jeep appears to be recently repainted. That would be problem number two."

Seeing that he is getting nowhere, McCutchen tells Officer Bradshaw, "and, another thing. That Mark guy said he injected me and Jimmy O'Brien with something called psycho Chubin. And, after he injected us, we ended up in Key West. And also, Eddie has something called a gyrophone in the filing cabinet in his office. He said he keeps it locked up in there." Officer Bradshaw repeats, "psycho Chubin and a gyrophone. Yeah. That's problem number three and problem number four. A gyrophone sounds like something out of a science fiction movie. And, psycho Chubin. There's no such thing as psycho Chubin." McCutchen exclaims, "yes, there is!" Erika calmly informs McCutchen, "there's a pharmacy down the road. Why don't you go and ask the pharmacist whether or not there's a such drug called psycho Chubin?"

Now even more ticked off, McCutchen replies, exclaiming, "I'm going to do that!"

Angered, yet trying to remain calm, McCutchen asks Officer Bradshaw, "can't you do anything about this?" Officer Bradshaw replies, "let's take a close look at this. Problem number one. Eddie, Mark, and Officer Braden were at the reunion the whole time. They couldn't have possibly have traveled to Key West and returned to the reunion in the time frame you are talking about. Problem number two. There is no visible damage on Paula's Jeep anywhere. Problem number three. There's no such thing as a gyrophone. Problem number four. As I said, there is no drug called psycho Chubin. And, problem number five, by the way, is James O'Brien reported his van stolen. It was recovered from MacArthur Airport just a few hours ago. Someone is going to have to explain to me how it got there. And, right now, I have absolutely no evidence that any crime has been committed. So, I suggest that you do this. Go down to your nearest precinct, and file an official written complaint. Once the complaint is filed, an investigation will begin." With hopes of putting Eddie, Mark, and Braden behind bars, McCutchen smugly replies, "I think I'm going to do that right now!" Taking Officer Bradshaw's advice, McCutchen leaves, heading straight to the precinct office.

Once McCutchen is gone, Erika tells Eddie and Paula, "I'd really love to be the officer investigating McCutchen's complaint." Eddie replies, "yeah. I can see how that is going to go down. And, Lynn has a few hundred photos of the reunion, and they show that me, Mark, and Braden were there from beginning to end." Erika asks, "really? She got them developed already?" Eddie replies, "she used her new digital camera. She can probably make you a disc with all the photos on it." Erika replies, "wow! I might stop over there before I get back on the road. I can surprise Bobby with it."

As Erika heads out, Eddie tells Paula, "this is getting better all the time." Paula replies, "I can see that. And, I'm not so upset anymore that O'Brien keyed my Jeep. I kind of like the 'Official Vehicle' lettering Vinnie did, especially with the State seal between the words." Eddie comments, "it looks really great. You should try it out sometime." Paula asks, "try it out?" Eddie replies, "yeah. Drive on a beach sometime that you're not supposed to be on, like on the North shore." Paula smiles, replying, "we've already done that a few times. I can drive on any beach I want. No one ever stops us. And, I can park anywhere I want too. I never get ticketed." Eddie informs Paula, "believe it or not, I can do the same with my tow truck. But, it's not like I really want to drive that thing around all the time."

After an interesting morning, Paula heads out. Eddie gets to work with Eddie, Jr., putting the finishing touches on Eddie, Jr.'s Porsche 914 electric conversion. And McCutchen, taking Officer Bradshaw's advice, arrives at the precinct, filling out a complaint against Eddie, Mark, and Officer Braden.

Three weeks after the reunion, early one morning, Police Chief Richard Hayes drives into Eddie's Service Station. Seeing Chief Hayes drive up, Eddie suspects he already knows why Richard is visiting the station today. So does Bobby B., who was previously informed by Erika that O'Brien's van has been recovered from MacArthur Airport.

Walking up, Chief Richard Hayes announces, "what's up?" Eddie replies, "what's up?" Richard shakes his head, and replies, "you're really not going to believe this one. This shit gets better all the time." Eddie exclaims, "wow! That bad?" Richard replies, "no. Worse." Eddie asks, "what? Did Mr. Crum escape from jail again?" Richard replies, "no. From what I hear, he'll be sitting in solitary confinement for a few weeks to teach him a lesson." So will these Andrew Goldstein and Charles Black characters." Richard then tells Eddie and Bobby B., "let's go into the office and have a seat."

Richard helps himself to a bagel and a cup of coffee as he explains, "this James O'Brien character and Todd McCutchen have filed an official complaint against you, Mark, and Officer Braden." Eddie looks at Bobby B., then asks Richard, "what did I do this time? Wait! Don't tell me. I got this one figured out already! I distinctly remember both of them coming into the station during this past year, and I refused to fill their tanks because I was technically closed." Richard laughs, replying, "I wish it was that simple, but it's not." Eddie, of course, knows exactly what O'Brien's and McCutchen's complaint is.

Looking through his notebook, Richard explains, "get this. This O'Brien character and this Todd McCutchen claim that you, Mark, and Officer Braden injected him with some drug called psycho Chubin at the reunion. He claims you guys somehow transported him and this McCutchen character to a beach in Key West, and left them there." Eddie looks up, telling Richard, "wow! That's right! I can't believe McCutchen actually went through with that! Erika was here about two weeks ago when McCutchen showed up. She told him to file a complaint. But, I haven't heard from O'Brien. I got to hear the rest of this."

Richard goes on to explain, "both of these characters were at your twenty-five year reunion." Eddie interrupts, and informs Richard, "yeah. I saw them. O'Brien was drunk, as usual. But, what I couldn't figure out

is why McCrutchen was at our reunion. He didn't even go to our high school." Now recalling the past, Richard raises his finger in the air and, shaking it, replies, "that's right! That character went to Centerville, if I remember correctly." But, Eddie's high school years were 25 years ago. It's hard for Chief Hayes to remember the details of every case over his long career. Eddie replies, "yeah. He went to Centerville. I have no idea why he showed up at our reunion." Bobby B. interjects, "he obviously came just to cause trouble. Trouble follows him everywhere."

Richard continues, explaining, "in the complaint, as I said, both of these characters claim Mark injected them with this psycho Chubin stuff, whatever that is. And, everyone landed at this beach in Key West. They claim you guys walked them down the beach, and told them to sit in the sand. And, the next thing they knew, you guys were gone." Eddie informs Richard, "it couldn't have been me. My time machine was home at the time. And, why would I transport them to Key West when I can transport them to Siberia?" Offering a possible explanation, Bobby B. asks, "does Mark have a time machine?" Eddie replies, "now that I think about it, yeah. He does. He has a newer model, with a much more reliable Johnson Rod." Richard laughs, and replies, "now, that would definitely explain everything."

Reviewing his notes, Richard, not acting serious at all, informs Eddie, "there's a new twist to the plot. This McCutchen character claims you have something called a gyrophone, whatever that is." Eddie explains, "yeah. A gyrophone. When McCrutchen audited my tax returns, he wanted to know why I need such high-security filing cabinets in my office. I told him it's where I keep my service records, which I do. It has the records for the county vehicles and performance enhancements for the officers' personal cars, including yours. And, it's also where I keep the lists of my stock suggestions, but I didn't tell him that. So, I told McCrutchen it's where I lock up my gyrophone." Strongly suspecting there is no such thing, Richard laughs, and asks, "what's this about a gyrophone, anyway?" Eddie replies, "there' no such thing. I just made it up back then, just to mess with him." Sounding a bit like Eddie, Richard replies, "got it."

Presenting another problem, Richard informs Eddie, "another thing. In his complaint, this O'Brien character claims that he keyed Paula's Jeep, and you guys transporting them to Key West was a payback for O'Brien keying the Jeep. O'Brien claims he offered to pay for the damage, but Mark refused." Eddie replies, "Paula was in to get gas the other day. There's not a scratch on her Jeep. And, besides, if someone did key her Jeep, with that paint job, it would be over at Vinnie's Body Shop for weeks to clean it up. And, not only that, I'm going to take a wild guess and say that Paula would be really ticked off." Richard

agrees, stating, “her Jeep is some really nice artwork. Vinnie did a really great job on that.”

Further explaining O’Brien’s complaint, Richard continues, “according to the official complaint, after you, Mark, and Officer Braden left them in Key West, it took them three days to get a flight back home. When they returned, they had the taxi driver drive them to the event center where the reunion was held. They found this McCutchen character’s vehicle, but O’Brien’s van, or whatever it is, was missing.” Eddie postulates, “let me guess. O’Brien’s rust bucket was impounded and sent to the auto crusher. No, wait! It was in the parking lot, but it rusted away to nothing and the rust dust blew away while he was in Key West.” Richard laughs, and replies, “not exactly. This O’Brien character’s van was found over at MacArthur airport. It was improperly parked, so the airport was going to have it impounded. According to protocol, the airport notified the county over there to check if the vehicle had any wants. This O’Brien character reported his car stolen, so the county notified him where and when it was found, and it was returned to him once he paid the impound fee.”

Sitting back, Eddie announces, “this one sounds pretty cut and dry to me. O’Brien and McCutchen were at the reunion. They got drunk, left at halftime, and drove to the airport. Then, they hopped on a flight to Key West, sobered up, and wondered how they got there. But, if I had to take a wild guess, I’d say they took some other drug along with the alcohol, which is why they can’t remember what actually happened, and clearly remember what didn’t happen.” Richard agrees, replying, “that’s what I was thinking. But, I tell you. You can’t even begin to make this stuff up.”

Richard then asks, “what’s all this about psycho Chubin? Where have I heard that before?” Eddie sits back, and explains, “this goes way back to high school. When me and Mark were in health class in ninth grade, Mr. Zunde, who was our health teacher back then, was telling us all about hallucinogenic drugs. So, he was talking about marijuana, LSD, and psilocybin. Mark didn’t know how to spell psilocybin, so I spelled it out for him. Mark told me that he was never going to remember that for the test. So, I told Mark to do a word association thing, using our crazy gym teacher’s name, who was Mr. Chubin. So, I told Mark, ‘psilocybin sounds like psycho Chubin. So, remember it that way, psilocybin - psycho Chubin.’ So, when we got the test, there was a question that asked, ‘List three hallucinogenic drugs.’ So, Mark wrote marijuana, LSD, and psycho Chubin. Mr. Zunde thought that was really funny. So did Mr. Frazier, who saw Mark’s test.” Richard laughs, and replies, “I remember that now! You’ve told me about that once before a long time ago.” Eddie adds, “whenever we see anyone acting a on the weird side,

we all say something like, 'he's been taking too much of that psycho Chubin.' Someone must have said that to O'Brien or McCrutchen during the reunion, and they incorporated it into their trip, no pun intended." Richard nods his head, replying, "that makes a lot more sense than the story those two characters concocted up."

Eddie then asks, "so, what's going to happen with O'Brien and McCrutchen?" Richard replies, "I'm not exactly sure yet. After taking the complaint, the officer in charge had the case brought to my desk. Knowing these character's history, I instructed the officer to have O'Brien and McCutchen voluntarily submit to a drug test, or they'll be charged with filing a false police report. We're awaiting the results of the drug test now."

Eddie informs Richard, "you know, Lynn must have taken hundreds of photos at the reunion. She brought her new digital camera along with her film camera. Lynn showed the photos to me the day after the reunion weekend on her computer. I'm in a lot of the pictures, from beginning to end. So are the rest of the guys. She even has a picture of me leaving the reunion with Kathy in my MGB." Richard informs Eddie, "I've heard about these new digital cameras. I was thinking about picking up one or two for the department." Eddie replies, "the nice thing about the digital cameras is that they put a time stamp on the image. Lynn can show you the pics if you want. Me, Mark, and Braden were all there for the whole reunion. And, Lynn has photos of us all at the beach on Sunday."

Lynn, who still develops film for the police department, has her studio that she has rented from Eddie for the last fifteen years next to Eddie's Service Station. Richard, and the police department, have a great working relationship with Lynn as well.

Thinking about the new technology, Richard tells Eddie, "I might just head next door and talk to Lynn after I leave here, and take a look at those photos." Eddie replies, "get Lynn to show you her new digital camera while you're there. I'm sure she'd be glad to make a disc with the photos on it for you. She made one for me and Kathy. Kathy has the disc at home." Richard replies, "if there is a time stamp on those photographs and you guys are in them, now I'm thinking I'll have the investigating officer charge these two characters with filing a false police report, period. At minimum, it will get these clowns out of our hair." Eddie asks, "can't you just write them off as crazy people?" Richard replies, "these days, it's a lot harder to write someone off as a

10-73¹. Everyone is more sensitive now. It's not like in the old days. Back then, we can ship the psychos off to the crazy house over there on Central Avenue, and let them deal with them."

Now interested in seeing the newer digital technology, Richard tells Eddie and Bobby B., "I'm going to head over and see if Lynn is available." Eddie tells Richard, "you can leave your car here, if you want. Don't worry. We won't plant any psycho Chubin in your car while you're gone." Richard laughs, telling Eddie, "now, I'm really wanting to have the officer in charge of the investigation to tell this McCutchen character and this O'Brien character that their drug tests came back positive for psycho Chubin. It would be interesting to see their reaction." Eddie laughs, telling Richard, "let me know how that goes!" Richard heads next door to Lynn's Photography Studio, and will quickly learn that Eddie, Mark, and Braden were at the reunion from beginning to end. Richard will also learn that O'Brien and McCutchen disappeared sometime after lunch, and never returned.

¹ 10-73. A mental patient or crazy person.