

Eddie, The 25 Year Reunion

Chapter Seven Life at the Service Station

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Saturday morning, Eddie, Kathy, and Milana drive into Eddie's Service Station, getting an early start setting up for today's concert. Already in the service station back yard, Mark and Bobby B. are just finishing up setting up a stage they built made with materials from Eddie's and Mark's storage yard. With quite a short notice, Mark and his former construction assistant got the project knocked out in no time.

By 10:30 a.m., the entire band has arrived, and is setting up their equipment. Impressed by the stage provided for them, the girl's energy level rises, knowing that today will be one of the high points of their year.

Wanting to hear Milana and the G-Strings perform in an informal setting, Darryl Stone, along with his wife, Angela Meadows arrive early. While the band is setting up, Darryl walks over and mentions to Roberta, "congratulations! That was a really awesome performance yesterday." Not knowing who she is talking to, Roberta replies, "thank you. We practiced a whole lot, and really tried hard to win."

Seeing that Roberta has a lot of work to do, Darryl asks, "do you need any help setting up?" Feeling that she is under time pressure as she is attaching the pedal to her bass drum, Roberta replies, "sure, if you'd like. You can go inside, and get my cymbals. They're in a round black cymbal case." Darryl replies, "you got it," and heads inside.

Returning with the cymbal case, as Roberta is setting up, Darryl sets up Roberta's cymbals. Seeing that Darryl actually knows which cymbal goes where, Roberta asks, "do you play?" Darryl replies, "yeah. I do mostly studio work these days, but I've gone out on tour with a few bands," which is the understatement of the day. Turning around as she is speaking with Milana, Angela tells Roberta, "he's being modest," and

proceeds to tell Roberta all the groups Darryl has played with. Needless to say, Roberta is immediately impressed. Roberta and Darryl talk shop as the band sets up for today's performance.

Darryl casually offers to Roberta, "by the way, your drum set is a little out of tune. Do you mind if I tune it?" Roberta replies, "Mr. Sharpe, the music teacher at school, tuned it once. But, my floor tom doesn't sound too good. It has way too much ring and sustain. And, there's like no punch to it anymore." Darryl confidently replies, "no problem. We can fix that if you want." With nothing to lose, Roberta tells Darryl, "sure. If you can fix it, that would make me really, really happy."

Taking the drum key, Darryl proceeds to remove the batter heads¹ from all three toms. Across stage, with a worried look, Yasmine whispers to Milana, "that guy is taking Roberta's drum set all apart." Knowing Darryl for years, Milana replies, "that's okay. He knows what he's doing." Yasmine, now seeing Roberta's drum set in pieces, still has her doubts.

With the batter heads removed, Darryl adjusts the resonant heads², telling Roberta, "the first thing we want to do is set the tension rods³ for the resonant heads. The resonant head primarily determines the tone and the timbre of the drum. I'm going to adjust the resonant heads to the natural resonance of each drum, then work from there. Once we find the natural resonance, we can increase the tension, if need be, to get a higher pitch." Roberta asks, "can you decrease the tension on the head below the natural resonance?" Darryl replies, "not really. The drum will end up sounding kind of dead. If you want a deeper tone, you can get the heavier, two-ply batter heads, or buy a larger drum."

Once he completes the procedure on the floor tom, as he is working, Darryl tells Roberta, "it's really important to get the tension of each tension rod equal. That will get rid of any undesirable overtones." Darryl then lightly taps the resonant head near each tension rod, showing Roberta how to make the required adjustments. Realizing Darryl knows what he is doing, Roberta tells him, "wow! I can definitely hear the difference near each tension rod." Darryl replies, "our goal is to get the drum head sounding the same at all five tension rods."

¹ Batter Head: The side of the drum that is struck.

² Resonant Head: The bottom head of the drum, which is not struck.

³ Tension Rod: Screws holding the hoop against the drum shell, creating tension on the drum head.

Moving on, Darryl reinstalls the batter heads, roughly setting the tension of each tension rod. While he is working, Darryl informs Roberta, “the batter head primarily determines the attack and decay characteristics of the drum. That was half the problem with your floor tom. You can also modify the attack and decay with studio rings, or, with the built-in head dampener that your kit has.” Roberta replies, “I have studio rings at home. Otherwise, it gets kind of loud.” Darryl replies, “good. The really nice thing about the studio rings is they quicken the decay, but don’t appreciably change the tone of the drum.”

Once all three batter heads are reinstalled, Darryl mentions to Roberta, “since you have twelve-inch, fourteen-inch, and sixteen inch toms, we’re going to tune your set to perfect fourths, and see how that sounds. We’ll start with your problem child, the floor tom.” Giving the clear impression that he knows Milana, Darryl yells out, “hey! Keyboard girl! Give me a C2!” Milana obliges, smiling as Yasmine still looks extremely worried that Roberta’s drum set was in pieces right before their concert. Darryl quickly gets the job done, moving on to the other two toms, tuning them to F2 and A2. Darryl then tunes the snare and bass drum, which is a relatively easy task compared with tuning the toms.

During the tuning session, Roberta asks Darryl, “is the right hand and right foot primary for timing, or is it the left?” Darryl explains, “definitely your right. The right hand and right foot are controlled by the left side of your brain, which is your analytical side. Your left brain is your clock. That leaves your right brain to give a more artistic impression to your work.” Roberta informs Darryl, “Mr. Sharpe says that, since I’m left handed, I should have my drum set up in a mirror image, like with my snare drum and my high hat on the right side instead of the left.” Darryl bluntly replies, “that’s nonsense. Don’t listen to him. Whether you’re left handed or right handed, the right hand and foot are your primary timing.”

Looking up as he is tuning the bass drum, Darryl asks Roberta, “what other kind of nonsense do they teach you over at that school?” Roberta thinks for a moment, and explains, “well, I’m not really sure. I quit the band at the beginning of the Fall semester. But, one thing Mr. Sharpe kept telling me is that I need to follow the music closer.” Darryl replies, “that’s good in the classroom, but remember this. When it comes to music, an A in the classroom is an F on the stage.” Roberta thinks for a moment, and replies, “yeah. Got it.”

Darryl takes a seat on the drum throne and, giving Roberta some good advice that she will not hear in a classroom, explains, “there’s only five skills a drummer really needs to be an awesome drummer; timing,

rhythm, expression, depth, and clarity. Timing and rhythm are your left brain. Expression, depth, and clarity are your right brain.” Roberta repeats, “timing, rhythm, expression, depth, and clarity. Got it.”

As he is tuning Roberta’s snare drum, Darryl then lets Roberta in on a secret, telling her, “you know, when I was in college, I had my own band. For my music classes, I was primarily enrolled in what they call ‘self study classes’, where I was graded on my public performances rather than all that nonsense that goes on in the classroom. My band played at graduation, faculty Christmas parties, frat parties, and other events. Did they ever get the school’s band to work those gigs? No. Not when I was there. The only thing the school’s band was good for is playing all that mechanical stuff out on the football field at halftime. What they played is not artistic at all. A marching band sounds so mechanical that it can be replaced with a machine and no one listening would know the difference.” Fully comprehending Darryl’s point, Roberta replies, “yeah. Marching bands. There’s not much you can do with 2/2 timing. Got it.”

Thinking back to the prior school year, Roberta explains, “last year, when Mr. Spaulding was the band director, we had one song that was 9/8 timing. But, there was no drum score to it, so I had to come up with something myself. So, I played 9/8 with my right side, and alternated between 4/4 and 5/4 with my left side.” Wanting Darryl’s expert advice, Roberta then asks, “is there a better way to do that? Or, was I totally wrong?” Quite impressed, Darryl looks up, and replies, “there’s not a whole lot of drummers out there who can do that. That’s pretty impressive. You did right.”

Roberta asks Darryl, “what’s the hardest thing you ever played on the drums?” Darryl thinks for a moment, and explains, “I once worked a piece with 4/4 timing and 6/8 timing simultaneously.” Roberta comments, “wow! That must have been hard. When was that?” Darryl tells Roberta, “a few years ago. I was doing some studio work. The piece called for 6/8 timing. But, the band manager wanted a slower tempo. So, I played a slower tempo. Then, the band manager told me the tempo was too slow. After a few iterations of his nonsense, I wanted to hand him the drum sticks and show me exactly what he wants. But, on the next take, I played 4/4 and 6/8 simultaneously. After the number, he yelled out, ‘that’s it!’ I should have charged him extra for that. But, I’m sure that, to this day, anyone playing that piece on the drums can’t figure out the timing.”

Darryl stands, and announces, “well, it’s all tuned up.” Now that the job is completed, Darryl could take a seat on the drum throne, and play a quick energetic solo. Instead, he tells Roberta, “go ahead, and see how

that sounds.” Roberta takes a seat, cranking out the beat to a song running through her head that no one around her knows but her. A few measures into the song, Roberta abruptly stops, announcing, “okay. Is this really my drum set?” Darryl asks, “does it sound okay?” Nearly in tears, Roberta quietly cries out, “this is what I always wanted it to sound like. It like sounds so great!”

Now having her drums sounding the way she always wanted, Roberta takes a short break to compose herself. Darryl takes a seat on the throne, cranking out a beat that catches the attention of everyone around. Anyone in the area immediately stops what they’re doing, watching as Darryl gives Roberta’s newly-tuned drum set a test drive.

On the other side of the stage, Yasmine whispers to Milana, “that really does sound a lot better.” Milana replies, “yeah. It sounds a whole lot better now to me, too.” Svetlana agrees, stating, “yeah, really. That guy really knows what he is doing.” Milana replies, “yeah. Unlike Mr. Sharpe.” With a quick comeback, Svetlana blurts out, “you mean Mr. Dull.” Yasmine replies, “I don’t know. Maybe it’s Mr. Flat.” Milana, the mechanic’s daughter who has also seen a bit of construction in her life, chimes in again, stating, “maybe that wrecking ball, Mr. Sharpe, poked a hole in the tire, and now he’s Mr. Flat.” The girls have a good laugh, relieving a bit of performance anxiety that may be brewing.

Behind the girls, a voice is heard announcing in a dry tone, “good morning, ladies.” Milana turns around, sarcastically asking, “what are you doing here?” Mr. Sharpe replies, “I thought I’d come out to hear you guys play this morning.” Yasmine informs Mr. Sharpe, “in case you haven’t noticed, we’re girls, not guys.” Playing the bass line from *The Joker*, a song by the Steve Miller Band, Yasmine sends a message that flies clear over the head of Mr. Sharpe. Wanting to get rid of the unwanted guest quickly, Milana tells Mr. Sharpe, “well, I hope you enjoy the show.” Milana, Yasmine, and Svetlana get back to their own conversation, fully convinced that Mr. Sharpe heard them butchering his name a moment earlier. But, they do not care in the least, for they all have left the middle school band.

In a desperate attempt to gain the attention he thinks he deserves, Mr. Sharpe walks over to the drums, where Roberta is again seated at the throne. Mr. Sharpe tells Roberta, “that sounded really good.” Roberta replies, “I know! Thank you. The drums sound a whole lot better now that they’re in tune.” Darryl interjects, telling Roberta, “whoever tuned your kit before had no idea what they were doing.” Darryl, however, does not know that Mr. Sharpe, standing right next to him, is the one who last tuned Roberta’s drums.

Trying to discover why the long-haired hippie thinks Roberta's drums were tuned incorrectly, Mr. Sharpe asks, "what's wrong with the way it was tuned?" Darryl bluntly replies, "the resonant heads on all three toms were tuned to the same note. You just can't do that. The batter heads were so out of tune with each other that it sounded like drums from three different drum kits. And, none of the tension rods were set correctly, so there were horrible overtones." Darryl could go on, but he made his point. And, Darryl's point went straight through to Mr. Sharpe's heart, who thinks he tuned Roberta's drum set just fine at the beginning of the school year.

Somewhat ignoring Mr. Sharpe, wanting to give Roberta some encouragement, Darryl tells her, "you know, there are people out there who read music, press keys or valves on their instrument in the order they see on the page, and out comes a melody. The same is true for the drums, or any instrument for that matter. They like to call themselves musicians. But, honestly, they're not. The true musicians are like you guys, who can instinctively play an instrument with minimal instruction. If last night was any indication, you guys are going to have a great show today." Looking out at the lawn, Roberta replies, "I really hope we do. There are a lot of people here. I really don't want to disappoint them." Darryl replies, "you won't. You're what, thirteen or fourteen?" Roberta replies, "fourteen." Darryl informs Roberta, "trust me. You're the best fourteen-year-old drummer I've ever heard. You're far better than you think you are." Gaining some confidence, Roberta smiles, and replies, "thank you so much."

Giving Roberta more encouragement and confidence, Darryl tells her, "think about this. You guys are up here performing. They're out there watching. That should tell you a lot." Roberta smiles, replying with a long, drawn out, "yeah! Got it!" Darryl then steps away, knowing that the concert will start in a few minutes and Roberta needs to get ready.

Mr. Sharpe, however, does not step away, but rather asks Roberta, "who was that guy?" Roberta replies, "Darryl Stone." Not liking that Darryl criticized his drum tuning abilities, Mr. Sharpe answers, "what? Is he supposed to be some hot shot drummer or something?" Roberta, now knowing who Darryl Stone is, replies, "he sounded really great to me, don't you think?" Mr. Sharpe coldly comments, "well, it's all a matter of perception." Ignoring the middle school band instructor who ran off the better members of the band, Roberta cranks out an energetic drum beat, hitting the crash cymbal quite hard a few times, fully intending to run off Mr. Sharpe. Not wanting to have a conversation with a 120-decibel crash cymbal sounding in his ears, Mr. Sharpe walks away.

A few minutes later, Angela Meadows stands on stage, announcing, “thank you all for coming out this morning. Milana and the G-Strings have a really great show planned for you today. And, there’s pizza and drinks in the office for those of you who haven’t had lunch yet. So, without further ado, let me introduce the band. On the keyboard, please welcome Milana Bogenskaya.” Cheers and clapping are heard, as Milana waves to the audience. Angela continues, “on guitar, Svetlana Pushkin, who I also hear is a great track and field athlete.” The crowd again cheers, as Svetlana waves to the crowd. Angela announces, “on bass, Yasmine Gretzky.” Yasmine’s newly found fan club, a bunch of guys from her class, can be heard cheering quite loudly. Angela then announces, “and, on drums, Roberta Osborne.” Roberta waves to the audience, receiving a warm welcome. Seeing the band ready to play, Angela then announces, “ladies, and gentlemen, please welcome Milana and the G-Strings!” The crowd cheers as Angela walks offstage, and the group begins their first number, *Kiss Me*, originally done by the group Sixpence None the Richer.

Angela takes a seat next to Darryl, who managed to get a seat up front since they arrived early. Truth is, Darryl wanted to hear the drummer, Roberta, up close. So do Mr. and Mrs. Osborne, who are also seated up front. And, the middle school band director, Mr. Sharpe, who forgot to bring his own seating, is standing in the back, commiserating with himself about how he lost so much talent in the band this year.

Inside, Kathy and Paula, hearing the music begin, grab another slice of pizza and head outside. Paula mentions to Kathy, “check it out, girl! This place is packed!” Trying to eat and talk at the same time, Kathy replies, “good. They should have won last night. This turnout beats first place in a stupid talent contest any day.” Kathy and Paula take a seat in their chairs, strategically placed on the marble portal just outside the rear door to the service station office.

During the second number, *Breathe Again*, originally done by Toni Braxton, Braden, wearing his police uniform today, walks up to Eddie, mentioning, “there’s a whole lot of people here. I wasn’t expecting this many.” Eddie replies, “me either, bro. But, I’m happy for Lana. She’s as good behind that keyboard as we were on the track.” Braden whispers to Eddie, “from what I’m hearing right now, those girls are better than the band over at the University.” Eddie informs Braden, “they were originally going to practice one or two numbers for the talent contest yesterday. Then, they found out that they work really well together. So, they met three or four times a week and jammed. And, the good news is they’ll all be together for four years in high school.”

An hour into the show, Svetlana announces, "I hope everyone enjoyed those sets. We are going to take a quick break, and get a slice of pizza. We'll be back on in ten or fifteen minutes and play a few more songs for you." As the girls walk off stage, the crowd cheers, also taking a break to stretch or walk around.

On her way into the service station where the pizza is, Milana asks her mother, "is there any pizza left without plumbing washers on it?" Kathy replies, "there is. And, there's a whole pizza left with fungus on it." Walking through the door, Yasmine bluntly asks Milana, "what in the world were you talking about back there, girl? Plumbing washers and fungus?" Milana replies, "oh, that. Sliced black olives are plumbing washers, and mushrooms are fungus." Yasmine recalls, "yeah. That's right. Mushrooms are fungus. I remember that from science class now." Roberta comments, "that makes a lot of sense. It just sounds so weird." Milana then informs her group, "nothing around my house is normal."

Over pizza, Milana tells her group, "when I was a kid, I asked my mom, 'what are we having for dinner?' And, so she said, 'plants and animals.' And I told her, 'mom! I am not eating plants and animals for dinner! No way!' So, she told me, 'okay. How does chicken and broccoli sound?' And, so I told her, 'a whole lot better.' I thought she went off the deep end or something, wanting to feed me plants and animals for dinner." Yasmine informs Milana, "duh! A chicken is an animal and broccoli is a plant." Milana replies, "I know that. But, when you're four years old, eating plants and animals just sounds like yuk."

Back outside, as the band is taking a break, walking over to Darryl, Mrs. Osborne, who saw him working on Roberta's drums earlier, tells him, "thank you for whatever you did to Roberta's drum set. It certainly sounds a lot better now. Even I can hear the difference." Darryl replies, "it was a bit out of tune. So, I tuned it up."

After formal introductions, Darryl tells Mrs. Osborne, "you know, your daughter is far better on the drums than anyone thinks she is." Mrs. Osborne informs Darryl, "we've been trying to find someone to give her formal lessons, but the instructors all want to take her back a few steps and start again with the basics. They all say she developed a lot of bad habits, and she needs to break them." Darryl replies, "that's nonsense. Roberta is a natural-born drummer. Her timing is perfect. She's got the rudiments down. The two solos she had this morning were awesome. And, her speed is great. She should be teaching them." With a sigh of relief, Mrs. Osborne confides, "that makes me feel a whole lot better."

Darryl then offers, "if you want, I can give Roberta a few lessons, and help her get to the next level. She obviously learns very quickly. No

one taught her to play that way. She learned it by herself.” Learning that Darryl is a world-class drummer, Mrs. Osborne replies, “if you could do that, I would really, really appreciate that. I’m sure Roberta really would too.” Darryl replies, “no problem. I’d be glad to help her out.” Mrs. Osborne then asks the inevitable, “I hate to ask, but how much do you charge for lessons?” Darryl explains, “for someone like Roberta, I wouldn’t charge anything. It would be my pleasure. I see it more as helping out a fellow musician.”

Rudely interrupting and ineptly joining the conversation that he was eavesdropping on, Mr. Sharpe interjects, informing Mrs. Osborne, “if Roberta would come back to the school band, we can give her drum lessons.” Recognizing Mr. Sharpe from an encounter earlier today, Darryl asks, “and, who are you?” Mr. Sharpe proudly announces, “I’m Steve Sharpe. I’m the music teacher over at the middle school.” Getting the 411 from Roberta earlier regarding the middle school music teacher, Darryl instructs Mr. Sharpe, “why don’t you go back to your middle school, stand in front of your classroom, and count to four. When you’re done, count to four again. And, wave your hands in the air while you’re at it. If you haven’t noticed, Roberta’s skill level is far beyond anything you can teach her. So is the rest of this band.” Mrs. Osborne, who knows that Mr. Sharpe is the only reason that Roberta quit the school band, is secretly happy that Darryl put him in his place.

But, Mr. Sharpe doesn’t like the place Darryl put him in. Now hot under the collar, grabbing Darryl by the shirt, Mr. Sharpe yells out, “I have half a mind to break your neck!” Reaching for Darryl’s neck, Mr. Sharpe fully intends to make good on his threat. But Darryl, in far better physical shape than Mr. Sharpe ever expected, hurls Mr. Sharpe straight into the brick wall. Landing on the ground, Mr. Sharpe slowly stands up, fully intending to finish Darryl off.

Interrupting Mr. Sharpe’s plans, approaching from behind, Bobby B. grabs Darryl’s assailant, throwing him over his shoulders, telling Braden, “it looks like it’s time for us to take out the trash.” Braden tells Bobby B., “I agree. Follow me.” Catching onto the situation, Erika, also in uniform today, rushes over to join Bobby B. and Braden. Braden, and the rest of the crew, walks through the rear door of the service station, through the office, and to the front of the building.

Sitting close to the action is Mr. George Frazier, seated with his wife, Dawn, and Athena and her husband, Mike. Hardly recognized by the audience today, Mr. Frazier has been observing the audience, noting that not much has changed since his days of working in the public school system.

Seeing a small tear fall from Mr. Frazier's eye, Athena asks, "are you okay, George?" Having a flashback, the emotional Mr. Frazier replies, "I'm fine. What you're watching right now is exactly what went on when I coached track at Northside High School. A fight breaks out. Braden, Bobby B., or one of the guys step in, break it up, and restore order. Some things never change." Dawn adds, "I remember George telling me about those stories." Showing more emotion, Mr. Frazier reveals, "what I'll never understand is how this group of men and women have stuck together so tightly over the years. It's just amazing. And, they're, by far, the best group of athletes I've ever coached." Coaching alongside Mr. Frazier for over two decades, Athena replies, "I can't say I disagree with you, George."

Inside, Milana, Svetlana, Roberta, and Yasmine, enjoying a slice of pizza, walk to the front window, wondering what's up with the music teacher they dislike so much. Milana tells her band members, "that big guy is Bobby B. He's our bouncer. Officer Braden and Officer Bradshaw are our security team." Yasmine replies, "and, they're all doing a great job of taking care of that pint-sized twirp!" Roberta observes, mentioning, "wow! Our own security team. We've hit the big time!" Knowing Bobby B. well, Milana announces, "here it comes! Watch this. Bobby B. is going to slam him to the ground." The band watches closely as Bobby B. prepares to forcefully dispose of the unwanted middle school music teacher.

Out front, Bobby B. slams Mr. Sharpe onto the ground, as Braden asks, "what was all that shit back there?" Mr. Sharpe exclaims, "I'm going to have someone arrested!" Braden firmly replies, "the only one around here that I see who's gonna get their ass arrested is your flimsy ass. Now, I'm gonna ask you one more time. What was all that shit back there?" Straightening his clothing as he stands up, stating his case, Mr. Sharpe yells out, "that guy back there insulted me!" Braden bluntly replies, "so what. There ain't no law against that. You got ugly shoes, junior. There. Go ahead and have me arrested." Strengthening his case, Mr. Sharpe yells out, "and, then he threw me against the wall!" Erika replies, "yeah. I saw that. He threw you against the wall after you grabbed his shirt and started to choke him. The last time I checked, that's called assault followed by justifiable self defense."

Erika informs Mr. Sharpe, "I suggest, sir, that you get in your car and go home. If I see you around here again, I'll personally arrest you, and put you in jail." Braden adds, "and, today's Saturday. Your flimsy ass is gonna be sitting in that jail cell until Monday, 'cause there ain't no judge that's gonna come in on the weekend and set your bail." Realizing he is in a no-win situation, Mr. Sharpe relents, stating, "okay. Okay. I'm out of here." Braden replies, "good. At least your ass has got

some sense.” Bobby B. tells Braden, “you’re right, bro. His ass is where all his sense is. There certainly ain’t any sense in his head.” Seeing the sheer size of Bobby B., Mr. Sharpe decides another confrontation is simply not worth it. He would lose anyway.

Back on stage after the brief intermission, Svetlana announces, “if anyone missed what happened a few minutes ago, the guy who was carried out of here was Mr. Sharpe, our former music teacher at the middle school. So, we’ve decided to dedicate our next number to Mr. Sharpe.” Walking up to the microphone, adding her two cents, Roberta explains, “what you’re about to hear is how they teach us to play music in band class at the middle school. Please feel free to laugh as much as you want.”

The band begins to play the popular middle school band piece, *Seventy Six Trombones*, intentionally slightly out of rhythm, and with a few deliberate wrong notes thrown in here and there. Replacing the classical lyrics with those made up by Eddie when he was in high school, Svetlana belts out the words,

Seventy six trombones sold for scrap metal,
A hundred and ten clarinets for firewood,
A truck load of tubas make the plumbing for my house,
And a trumpet, an air horn for my car.

Adding their own butchered lyrics to those composed by Eddie many years ago, the band’s performance becomes an instant hit with the fans, sans one. Hanging out in the parking lot, Mr. Sharpe, who clearly heard the announcement and is now hearing the composition, is now more ticked off than ever.

Sitting with Paula, Kathy whispers to her, “I can’t believe they’re actually doing this!” Paula reminds Kathy, “they’re not doing anything different than we did when we were their age, girl.” Kathy asks, “what are you talking about?” Paula reminds Kathy, “I distinctly remember a certain person sitting in Mr. Crum’s office, giving him a lecture on the proper use of English. And, let’s see. What else? Who was that who told Mr. Crum that they were going to have their father shove barbed wire up his constipated ass? And, I distinctly remember a few fragile and delicate flowers wedging a certain high school principal’s VW Beetle between two trees. And, let’s see. What group of four girls carried Mr. Crum out of the arena that day?” Kathy laughs, and abruptly interrupts, telling Paula, “okay! Got it! I guess the apple didn’t fall far from the tree.” Paula informs Kathy, “you ain’t seen nothing yet, girl. Just wait until your wild child is in high school.” Kathy is silenced, knowing that Paula is spot on.

Not liking in the least that his skill as a music teacher is being insulted by four teenagers, Mr. Sharpe rushes back into the venue, headed straight toward the stage. Quickly intercepted by Braden as he gets one foot on the stage, Mr. Sharpe is quickly put into an arm lock, screaming, “let me go! You’re hurting me!” Braden replies, “shut your ass up. I ain’t begun to hurt your fat ass yet.” Catching the attention of all around, Mr. Sharpe yells and screams as Braden drags him toward the service station rear entrance.

Just finishing their rendition of *Seventy Six Trombones*, Milana, wanting to give Mr. Sharpe a farewell he’ll always remember, whispers to each band member, “that goodbye song.” Giving her the thumbs up, each band member gives the go ahead that they can play that song. Milana announces, “from the chorus,” prompting the band to start the chorus of *Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye*, a song by the group Steam that is often performed by the winning high school or collegiate sports team’s band as the losers depart. The whole band joins in singing, quickly accompanied by many of the middle school kids attending today’s concert.

In the office, Braden is joined by Erika, who saw Mr. Sharpe’s temper tantrum. Erika asks Braden, “now what do we got?” Braden replies, “it looks like to me that this guy was gonna walk up onto that stage, and do something.” Erika tells Mr. Sharpe, “I’m going to tell him to release you. Then, I am going to ask you a few questions. Am I understood?” Mr. Sharpe yells out, “those kids out there insulted me!” Braden tells Mr. Sharpe, “you’d better shut up or I’m gonna put your scrawny ass in handcuffs.” Mr. Sharpe quiets down, deciding for the moment to be a more reasonable person.

Erika instructs Braden, “okay. Release him.” Braden releases Mr. Sharpe, who suddenly turns around and punches Braden in the mid section. Erika quickly grabs Mr. Sharpe, cuffs him, and announces, “Steven Sharpe, you are under arrest for assaulting an officer of the law.” Erika and Braden escort Mr. Sharpe outside, where Erika radios for the uniform officers to come and take him away. As they await the uniform officer’s arrival, Erika reads Mr. Sharpe his rights. Unfortunately, for Mr. Sharpe, the charges of assaulting an officer are far more serious than the charges of disorderly conduct, which he might have gotten out of, if he had not struck Braden.

The uniform officer arrives, already informed of the situation by the dispatcher. Officer Kenneth Wilson walks up, asking Erika, “what do we got here?” Trying another angle, Mr. Sharpe exclaims, “I demand to be let go! These pretend officers put me in handcuffs!” As Erika steps aside informing Officer Wilson of the situation, Braden tells Mr. Sharpe,

exclaiming, “what are you talking about, junior? Officer Erika Bradshaw arrested your ass at the corner of Assault and Battery. And, now your ass is gonna be spending the night downtown at the corner of Jail and Bird.” Mr. Sharpe utters a bunch of nonsense, none of which is understandable by any of the officers. Ignoring Mr. Sharpe’s nonsensical babbling, Officer Wilson takes custody of Mr. Sharpe, placing him in the cage of his patrol car.

A little further into the afternoon, Kathy asks Braden, “hey. Can you still sing *Jungle Boogie*?” Braden confidently replies, “yeah! Get down with the boogie! I still got the dance steps down, too!” Kathy explains, “the girls can play *Jungle Boogie*, but they just can’t sing it.” Kathy then asks, “do you want to get on stage and sing it?” Braden energetically replies, “yeah! I’ll do that if they want me to!” Kathy replies, “awesome! Go inside and practice your dance steps, and I’ll pass Lana a note.” Braden heads inside, as Kathy writes a note that she’ll pass on to Milana between sets.

Two sets later, nearing the end of the show, Milana announces, “our next song is from the 1970s. It’s called *Jungle Boogie*, by the group Kool and the Gang. Some of you may remember it. We will be playing the music. Singing *Jungle Boogie* for us will be Mr. Axel Braden, who is one of the police officers who were nice enough to get rid of Mr. Sharpe for us.” During a mixture of the crowd cheering in anticipation of the song and laughing at Milana’s treatment of Mr. Sharpe, Braden walks up to the stage, and is fitted with a wireless microphone by Svetlana.

The band begins to play and, without missing a beat, Braden begins, singing, “Get down, get down. Get down, get down.” With not enough space on stage, Braden realizes he can move about, and moves off stage onto the grass, dancing as he sings.

Many of the adults, who remember the song when they were in high school, stand and dance to the beat. The teenagers are surprised to see their parents dance, proving that, perhaps, their parents were not born yesterday. The tribe joins in, remembering the dance steps to *Jungle Boogie* quite well.

As the afternoon comes to a close, Kathy whispers to Eddie, “Lana’s going to sleep for twelve hours tonight. Look at her. She’s all wiped out.” Eddie whispers back, “they all look wiped out. This is the first time they’ve done this together.” Kathy whispers, “somehow, I don’t think it’s the last.” Eddie asks, “Lana’s not playing the organ tomorrow in church, is she?” Kathy replies, “no. Dr. Erlanger is.” Eddie replies, “good. We’ll let Lana sleep in if she wants.” Kathy confidently informs Eddie, “oh, she’ll sleep in. She’ll wake up at noon, looking for left over pizza.”

Eddie replies, “that sounds exactly like someone else I know.” Kathy smiles, catching Eddie’s drift.

Finishing their last number, Milana and the G-Strings receive a standing ovation from their audience. The girls take a bow, grateful that their show went really well. While everyone comes up to meet the band, Kathy sits back, realizing that Milana is on the stage what she and Eddie once were on the track.

Eddie’s service station, when not hosting concerts, is not so busy these days. Recently, Eddie has been spending more time with his family and friends rather than fixing cars. This leaves some suspecting people with the notion that Eddie’s Service Station may be a front for something else. Among those still believing that Eddie is up to something that is not quite legal are Todd McCutchen, who periodically drives in and attempts to buy gas and, for some strange reason, Jimmy O’Brien. If anything, Eddie’s Service Station is a front for time travel, but who, in their right mind, would ever believe that.

As Eddie and Bobby B. are continuing to get two Porsche 914s ready for an electric conversion, Police Chief Richard Hayes drives into the station in a patrol car. Seeing Chief Hayes behind the wheel, Eddie walks out of the garage, and yells out, “hey, Richard! Are you back on the road again?” Getting out of the car, Richard replies, “not exactly. But, there are days when I wish I was back on patrol. Sitting in an office all day occasionally gets to me.” Chief Hayes, who was promoted to the position of police chief from police captain several years ago, still gets out of the office every chance he gets.

Walking up, Richard asks Eddie, “what are you working on?” Eddie explains, “Eddie, Jr. is going to convert these 914s to electric vehicles. So, I’m upgrading the brakes to stop the vehicle better. The batteries add a little extra weight.” Richard replies, “wow! Where does he get the parts for that?” Eddie replies, “mail order. There’s a supply shop out on the West coast that manufactures the motors and controllers.” What Eddie does not tell Richard is that the parts for the conversion are obtained from several years into the future.

Richard then informs Eddie, “we got a big problem. Come into the office with me.” Richard then yells out, “hey! Bobby B., come here for a second! You got to hear this too!” Walking into the office, Eddie asks the expected, “what’s the problem?” Bobby B. walks over, asking, “what’s up?” As Richard takes a seat, Eddie can tell that Richard does not have good news.

With a drop in his countenance, Richard explains, “last night, we got the word that this Maurice Crum character broke out of jail, along with two others.” Eddie shakes his head, and replies, “shit. That’s all we need. He’s going to drive that piece of shit VW Beetle in here and want me to get it working again after it’s been sitting in the weather for fifteen years.” Richard laughs, and replies, “that thing has probably rusted away to nothing by now.”

As he gets a cup of coffee and a bagel, Richard informs Eddie, “his VW Beetle would be the least of your problems. When these characters break out of jail, they usually remember only one thing, and that is who put them there. So, my concern is that this character is going to show up here, at your service station, sometime.” Bobby B. comments, “it’s been fifteen years. I wonder if I’d even recognize him.” Richard replies, “that’s definitely a problem. When someone’s in a penitentiary for fifteen years, it adds about thirty years to their appearance. A lot more for a character like Maurice Crum. He’s been spending the last fifteen years on his knees, cleaning toilets.” Bobby B. sarcastically comments, “at least he found something he’s competent at.”

Eddie asks, “how did he break out of jail? I mean, like, Crum really isn’t exactly that smart.” Richard explains, “from what I hear, Crum wasn’t working alone. He had two accomplices. Crum, and these other two characters, just disappeared one day. We still don’t have the details of how he broke out, but one of the prisoners that went missing broke out once before. I’m still waiting to find out more myself.” Eddie comments, “maybe Braden can find out something, but his father retired a few years ago.” Richard replies, “the APB just came out this morning. I headed right over here. You guys are among the first to know.”

After a fifteen-minute conversation, as Richard begins to leave, Richard warns Eddie and Bobby B., “remember, escaped convicts are considered armed and dangerous until proven otherwise. Protect yourself in any way you can. And, if they’re planning to show up, they usually do fairly quickly.” Eddie replies, “got it.” Bobby B., who will likely find out more from Erika later, gives Richard a thumbs up, and replies, “we’ll be on the lookout.” Richard, missing stopping by the service station a few times a week, heads out. And Eddie, making sure that his gun is fully loaded and accessible, prepares for Mr. Crum well ahead of time.

Maurice Crum is not the only person out of jail. Frank Hamilton, whose picture of him and his daughter, Margo, breaking into Lynn’s Photography Studio is still plastered on the billboard in front of Eddie’s Service Station, has been let out on bail. Mr. Hamilton, who has only heard of the billboard, has decided to take a look at it first hand.

Driving into Eddie's Service Station one day, Frank Hamilton sits in his automobile, staring at the billboard as his blood pressure rises to astronomical levels. Planning both his offense and defense, Mr. Hamilton rehearses in his mind his strategy for his imminent confrontation with Eddie. With any luck, Mr. Hamilton's encounter with Eddie will not end with Mr. Hamilton having a stroke.

Inside the service station, Eddie tells Bobby B., "look what just rolled in." Looking out of the service bay where he is doing a brake job on his Dune Buggy, Bobby B. replies, "it looks like he's admiring himself on the billboard." Without missing a beat, Eddie tells Bobby B., "he should be. The picture came out pretty good, if you ask me."

Knowing that a legal confrontation is directly ahead, Eddie calls John Davies, explaining that an impending encounter with Mr. Hamilton is on the way. Not wanting to miss out on the action, Mr. Davies rushes over to Eddie's Service Station, if only to get a tank of gas. Over the years, Mr. Davies has enjoyed certain comical legal confrontations, such as the trial of Mr. Crum, the instance when Chuckie sued Eddie, and, more recently, Eddie and Kathy's IRS audit.

Getting out of his car, Mr. Hamilton walks slowly in a dignified manner toward the open bay where Eddie is intentionally ignoring him. Announcing his entrance, Mr. Hamilton yells out to Eddie, "may I have a word with you." Hearing Mr. Hamilton's angry tone, Eddie yells back, "we're closed. Come back when we're open." Mr. Hamilton, however, is not about to turn around and come back at another time. But, Eddie already knew that. Eddie is merely delaying Mr. Hamilton until Mr. Davies arrives.

Walking up to Eddie, Mr. Hamilton demands, "I want that billboard removed, and I want it removed now." Taking his time to respond, Eddie replies, "so what? I want that billboard to remain just as it is. And, so does Lynn. So, it looks like we're at an impasse. So, you can go home now." Mr. Hamilton, believing that he has a basis for his complaint, exclaims, "I demand that you take that billboard down immediately!" Again, taking his time, Eddie calmly replies, "point noted. So sad, too bad. It's staying right where it is." Recalling Eddie's not so businesslike attitude when dealing with business matters from many years ago, Mr. Hamilton concedes, and asks Eddie, "can we go in the office and talk about this?" Eddie cordially replies, "after you," as the two adversaries walk toward the office.

With perfect timing, Mr. Davies drives into the service station, seeing Eddie and Mr. Hamilton walking through the service area to the office. But, his law office is a mere one mile away. Fully knowing what is going

on, Bobby B., with a silly grin, catches the eye of Mr. Davies, and points toward the office. Mr. Davies walks into the office as Eddie takes a seat behind his desk.

Restating his case, Mr. Hamilton insists, "I want that billboard removed and, trust me, I will stop at nothing to force you to remove it." Eddie informs Mr. Hamilton, "this is Mr. John Davies. He represents me. You can file your complaint with him." Blind sided by Eddie's response, Mr. Hamilton is both flustered and relieved, for dealing with an attorney sounds far better to Mr. Hamilton than dealing with Eddie.

Mr. Davies asks Mr. Hamilton, "what seems to be the problem with the billboard?" Mr. Hamilton explains, "I want the billboard outside removed, and I want it removed immediately. And, if it is not removed, I am prepared to file a lawsuit against Eddie for libel, slander, and defamation of character. And, for the record, I will not be taking 'no' for an answer." Eddie tells Mr. Davies, "I already told him no. So, I think we're kind of stuck." Also knowing that Mr. Hamilton hates the phrase, Mr. Davies replies, "got it."

Mr. Davies explains to Mr. Hamilton, "let's take a look at this from a legal standpoint. First of all, you have no case against Eddie for slander. Slander requires a verbal transgression, specifically one that has an intent to cause willful harm to an individual through the promulgation of inaccurate or distorted information. As far as I know, you have absolutely no basis for that complaint. If you do, feel free to file your complaint with the court. Please be informed, however, that any false or frivolous complaint will result in a countersuit. Secondly, photographic evidence of a crime, whether published on a billboard, newspaper, magazine, or the like, cannot be construed as libel, since the photographs depict an actual event or events that occurred. If, however, the negative was modified in such a way to make it appear that you were present during the burglary when, in fact, you were not, you would have a case. And thirdly, a photograph will never be construed by the court as defamation of character, since a photograph records what actually transpired in time, and can only reveal one's character, not defame it or otherwise misrepresent it."

Knowing he is in hot water, Mr. Hamilton exclaims, "I have to stand trial for this! And, let me remind you, I am innocent until proven guilty! I'll never get a fair trial with that billboard out there!" Trying to calm Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Davies informs him, "the fairness of your trial should not be an issue at all. I am very confident that the judge will oblige in moving your trial to another district. In fact, I'll even appear at your arraignment to support the recommendation."

Maintaining his ground, Mr. Hamilton insists, "I still want that billboard removed! I have to live in this community!" Eddie calmly replies, "so, move somewhere else." Attempting to defuse the situation, Mr. Davies informs Mr. Hamilton, "look. It is what it is. If you have a complaint, file it with the court. But, I can assure you, you will get nowhere. What is depicted on the billboard is protected by the constitution. It's called free speech."

In an accusatory tone, Mr. Hamilton asks Eddie, "and, just how did you happen to show up at your service station that night, anyway?" Eddie explains, "you must have tripped the proximity sensor wire along my wall. And, the camera behind the station caught you. So, I called Braden, and we rushed over here." With a pause in the conversation, Eddie adds, "you know, Frankie, there's only one place in this town more secure than my service station. That's Braden's home. Just try breaking in there sometime. See how far you get." Mr. Hamilton still cannot figure out how he got caught red handed. But, that would be his problem.

Perceiving Mr. Hamilton's malice, Eddie reconsiders, suggesting to Mr. Hamilton, "you know what? Sure. I'll take it down. I'll just replace it with one of the other photographs I have." Not realizing there is more evidence against him and perturbed that Eddie called him "Frankie", Mr. Hamilton exclaims, "what? You have more photographs of me?" Eddie replies, "yeah. Thirty-four more. I took a whole roll of thirty-six photos of you and your daughter, Margo, breaking into Lynn's studio. The photos are in the hands of the police. I'm sure Chief Hayes will blow them all up to twenty by thirty-inch poster size for the jury to see."

Realizing that he is out of hot water and now in boiling water, Mr. Hamilton exclaims, "I demand to see these photographs!" Putting up no resistance to Mr. Hamilton's request, Eddie replies, "sure. No problem, junior." After all, Mr. Hamilton and his attorney will eventually obtain all the evidence against him, including copies of the photographs. But, Eddie's forthrightness in handing over the evidence causes Mr. Hamilton even more anxiety.

Eddie walks over to his locked filing cabinet, dials in the combination, and retrieves an envelope containing all 36 photographs that he took from the roof of the service station the night of the break in. Tossing the envelope to Mr. Hamilton, Eddie tells him, "keep them, junior. They're yours." Eddie doesn't care. The original negatives and prints are safely stored in the police department's evidence room. And, Lynn has copies of the negatives at her studio.

Thumbing through the photographs, Mr. Hamilton begins to sweat. One photo, in particular, caught Mr. Hamilton smiling when Margo passed the goods out the window. Seeing the indisputable evidence against him, Mr. Hamilton quickly realizes that, regardless of where his trial is held, he will be facing serious jail time. In an instant, Mr. Hamilton concludes that his complaint against Eddie is the least of his worries. Now contemplating making himself scarce and moving to an island in the Carribean, as did Dr. Paxton, the former distance coach at the University, Mr. Hamilton has bigger fish to fry.

Mr. Davies advises Mr. Hamilton, “look, Frank. This really doesn’t look too good for you. You’re wasting your time here. I suggest you leave Eddie alone, and work with your attorney for a plea bargain. Then, when you get out of prison, move somewhere else and start all over.” Mr. Hamilton stands, slaps the envelope of photos into his hand a few times, and replies, “yeah. Thanks for the advice.” Heading to the door, Mr. Hamilton has nothing more to say.

Once Mr. Hamilton drives away, Eddie tells Mr. Davies, “I think I ruined his day.” Mr. Davies reminds Eddie, “when I first saw those photos, I told you this case will never go to trial. Hamilton and his daughter, Margo, have absolutely no defense. The photos clearly show Hamilton taking possession of the stolen goods as his daughter passed them to him through the window, and carrying them away, only to return and take possession of more stolen goods. And, everything he took possession of, as seen in the photographs, was found in the trunk of his car.” Mr. Davies then asks Eddie, “let me ask you this. What would you do if you were on the jury?” Eddie replies, “put him away.” Mr. Davies tells Eddie, “exactly. As I said, any attorney taking this case before a jury is crazy. His best chance is a plea bargain.”

Eddie suggests, “maybe Frankie can hire that attorney, Lou Pohl, who McCrutchens’ father used to get McCrutchens on the track team.” Mr. Davies replies, “that’s not likely to happen. Mr. Pohl disappeared many years ago. I doubt that he’s even still alive.” Eddie replies, asking, “really? What happened?” Mr. Davies explains, “let’s just say he went up against the wrong family. That particular family prefers to do business their own way.” Eddie fully understands Mr. Davies drift.

Recalling Mr. Crum’s trial, Eddie sits back and tells Mr. Davies, “you know, he could always claim that he was sleepwalking.” Mr. Davies laughs, replying, “honestly, that would be his best defense. If he makes enough ridiculous claims like that, the judge might just deem him mentally incompetent to stand trial. But, the flip side of that is he’ll end up in a mental institution where they’ll incessantly evaluate him. He

won't be able to fake it forever." Eddie replies, "well, at least he's gone for now."

Eddie tells Mr. Davies, "thanks for coming by. I really appreciate it." Mr. Davies replies, "no problem. I'm glad I could help." Mr. Davies gets a tank of gas, and heads back to his office. Eddie heads back to the shop, filling Bobby B. in on today's entertainment. And, the billboard will remain as it is, at least for a while.

Again, getting out of the office for an hour or so one Monday morning, Police Chief Richard Hayes drives into Eddie's service station. Seeing Richard drive up, Eddie yells out, "hey Richard, what's up?" Richard replies, "what's up?" Eddie and Bobby B. take a break, and sit down in the office with Richard, where Eddie hands Richard a copy of his stock market investment advice for this upcoming month.

Grabbing a cup of coffee and a bagel, Richard announces, "one reason for me stopping by today is I have some news. They finally released the details on how this Maurice Crum character broke out of prison." Bobby B. smiles, interjecting, "this should be really interesting." Richard continues, "I just found this out. Erika doesn't know about it yet. But, anyway, the reason it took so long to find out the details is because these medical clowns down at the prison acted a little bit on the stupid side." Eddie asks, "they acted a little bit on the stupid side?" Richard replies, "yes. You'll understand in a moment." Eddie laughs, stating, "I can't wait to hear this."

Richard explains, "so, get this. This Maurice Crum character has been having seizures for a half a year. Every time he has one of these so-called seizures, the guards would take him to the prison infirmary. This Crum character would flail and thrash like crazy, so bad that the prison guards couldn't handle him. So, some of the prisoners would step in and help the guards, two guys in particular. They would help the guards bring Crum to the infirmary. After a while, the guards got a little bit on the slack side, and escorted the prisoners as they helped Crum to the infirmary. While the doctor and the staff was attending to Crum, the two prisoners appeared to be very helpful, making sure he didn't fall off the examination table. Once this Crum recovered from his seizure, the medical staff would call a guard to escort the three of them back to the day room. According to the prison records, these two prisoners who were helping the guards and medical staff were on track for an early release. Their behavior was impeccable."

Bobby B. comments, "I wonder why Mr. Crum started having seizures." Richard replies, "he didn't. He faked them. It was all an act."

They had this well planned out.” Eddie stares out the window in amazement, knowing he is about to hear an interesting story.

Continuing the story, Richard explains, “so, over a period of a few months or so, these two characters took Crum to the infirmary without incident. The guards and medical staff began to trust them. Big mistake. When they were attending to Crum, they were all figuring out an escape plan. They had about fifteen minutes while Crum was being treated to figure out their plan of escape. They injected this Crum with some drug, and the so-called seizures stopped. And, after a while, these characters finally figured out a pretty good plan of escape, if you ask me.” Eddie comments, “wow! I didn’t think Crum was that smart.”

Richard explains, “so, get this. Follow me here. On one occasion, the injection didn’t help Crum’s seizure, and Crum complained of a really massive headache, and said he was losing his vision⁴. So, an ambulance was called. But, because of the seizure, they didn’t cuff him. The two prisoners waited for the ambulance to arrive, convincing the doctor that they wanted to make sure their buddy, Maurice Crum, was going to be okay. So, get this. When the ambulance arrived and, right after the paramedics wheeled Crum out the door on the Gurney, one of the two characters hit the doctor with a fire extinguisher, and knocked him out. Then, they beat the other two attendants. Then, they rushed outside, and hijacked the ambulance. They were long gone before anyone figured out what happened.” Eddie exclaims, “wow! Mr. Crum, the jail breaker! They should send him to detention.”

Richard then asks Eddie and Bobby B., “do you guys want to take a wild guess who Crum’s two accomplices were?” Eddie laughs, and replies, “why does the Chuckie come to mind?” Richard nods, and reveals, “you got it. Charles Black and Andrew Goldstein. Those two characters were in for heroin trafficking and other charges.” Bobby B. comments, “no wonder we haven’t seen them in a while.”

Thinking about the situation, Eddie asks Richard, “I wonder how they all ended up in the same prison.” Richard explains, “we’re talking about repeat offenders here. And, we’re not talking parking violators. They usually get sent to the closest high security prison in the area, providing there is an opening. I guess these characters down at the prison were way overconfident in their security measures. So, as I said, they acted a little bit on the stupid side. In this case, they were outsmarted by the prisoners.”

⁴ “Massive headache” + loss of vision = possible stroke.

Somewhat disgusted, Eddie comments, stating, “so, we got three problems out there, not one.” Richard replies, “it would seem that way. We don’t even know if they’re in the area.” Eddie suggests, “if they were really smart, they’d move to the Carribean, like Dr. Paxton did.” Richard informs Eddie and Bobby B., “they’re not likely to make it out of the country. Security is a lot better today than it was 25 years ago when Paxton left. By the way, we’ve never found Paxton.” Bobby B. comments, “it would be nice if Crum and those other two would disappear forever.” Richard replies, “if I had my way, I’d give them all a one-way ticket on a plane to Europe, with a quarter tank of gas.” Eddie comments, “or, better yet, draft them and send them to the front lines.”

Richard laughs hysterically, prompting Eddie to ask, “what’s so funny?” Richard asks Eddie, “did I ever tell you how my brother got out of the draft?” Eddie replies, “no. Can’t say I’ve heard that one.” Expecting to hear how Richard’s brother moved to Canada, Eddie listens as Richard explains, “listen to this. My younger brother, Scott, didn’t want to go to war.” Bobby B. interjects, “this guy, Michael Davis, who lived around the corner from me in high school, moved to Canada to avoid the draft.” Richard comments, “a lot of guys did that back then. But, trust me, there was a much better way to get out of the draft.”

Richard then explains, “so, get this. The day before the physical exam for the Army, Scott lifted weights for four or five hours, to the point that he could barely move. I mean, like, my brother was so sore, he couldn’t walk up the stairs to get to his bedroom. The next day, on the way to the physical, he snatched a bottle of whiskey from my parent’s bar, and took it with him. Right before walking into the exam, Scott takes a shot or two of whiskey right out of the bottle. So, the army doctors take a vial of his blood, which is going to show alcohol, but that’s a moot point. His liver enzymes were so far off the charts from all the weightlifting he did the previous day, it looked like his liver was on its last leg. So, with alcohol in the bloodstream, alcohol on the breath, liver enzymes way off the charts, it looks like the guy is a raging alcoholic. Trust me. The army doesn’t want that problem. So, he failed the physical and got out of the draft.”

Eddie looks at Bobby B., then at Richard, and laughs and comments, “wow! That was pretty slick. I can’t believe that worked!” Richard replies, “not a lot of people knew about that angle. So, the army never caught on. And, even if they did, it’s not like they’re going to call you back for another physical.”

Walking into the office next is Athena Leighton, announcing, “it sounds like I’m late for the party!” Richard tells Athena, “I was just telling Eddie and Bobby B. how my brother, Scott, got out of draft.”

Athena replies, “really? What method did he use?” Richard reexplains Scott’s esoteric method of draft evasion, which comes as no surprise to Athena, as she has heard of Scott’s approach before.

Athena then explains, “I had a really good friend who got out of the draft using a similar scheme. And, it actually worked!” Wanting to hear another story, Bobby B. smiles, and tells Athena, “out with it!” Eddie tells Bobby B., “that sounded like something Barbara would say.”

Without further ado, Athena explains, “my friend, Peter Greenspan, really didn’t want to get drafted into the military. It’s not that he was a pacifist or anything like that, but rather more like, well, how do I say this? He was afraid of guns.” Richard comments, “that would be a good reason to draft him. He needs to overcome his fears.” Eddie replies, “exactly. That’s what Mr. Frazier always said. You must attack the challenges you face with no fear.”

Athena continues, explaining, “so, Peter came up with a plan. A few days before the physical, Peter started to prick his forearm with a needle, giving the outward impression that he is a heroin addict. He had a good set of tracks on his forearm ready to go for the doctors to see. Right before the exam, Peter drank several cups of coffee and took some caffeine pills to get his blood pressure up and to give the distinct impression that his nerves are shot. He let the doctors come to their own conclusion, which, I might add, they did. He failed the physical and got out of the draft.”

Richard laughs, and comments, “you can be sure the army doesn’t want that problem either.” Eddie comments, “seriously. You definitely don’t want that guy on the other end of a weapon.” Richard, who has seen a few things in his lifetime, replies, “if a heroin addict had a weapon, he’d use it inside of eight hours. And, it’s no secret why.”

Driving up next is Mark. Making his entrance known, Mark announces, “trouble across the street at twelve o’clock.” Eddie replies, “it’s only 11:30, bro.” Looking out the window, Bobby B. laughs, exclaiming, “this is going to be fun!” Across the street, Todd McCutchen, who is well aware of Eddie’s meeting on the first Monday of the month when he hands out his stock advice, just pulled into the parking lot of Vinnie’s Body Shop.

Looking out the window, Eddie announces, “I’ll take care of this.” Picking up the phone, Eddie calls Vinnie, who will be glad to dispose of McCutchen in an esoteric manner.

Vinnie answers the phone, and Eddie tells him, “hey Vinnie. What are you up to?” Those sitting around in the office can only hear one side of the conversation, so they will have to fill in the blanks in their minds, which will not be too hard. Eddie gets around to informing Vinnie, “hey. Do you remember that McCrutchen guy, who was stalking me from your parking lot?” Vinnie talks for a moment, and Eddie replies, “well, he’s back.” With Vinnie now doing a lot of talking, it’s anyone’s guess what Vinnie is saying.

Eddie tells Vinnie, “hold on for a second.” Eddie asks Richard, “hey, Richard! Can anyone impound a car to the county impound lot? Or, do you have to call an authorized towing company?” Richard informs Eddie, “as long as the proper warning sign is in place, in this State, any towing company or individual can drop a vehicle off at the impound lot over on Sunrise. The lot is run by a private company, so they also take private impounds. All they have to do is leave a towing ticket with the vehicle.” Eddie replies, “got it,” and relays the information to Vinnie. Vinnie and Eddie talk for a minute longer, then Eddie ends the conversation, telling Vinnie, “we’ll be watching.”

Eddie informs those sitting in his office, “Vinnie is going to take care of McCrutchen. This should be really good.” Positioning their chairs to get a good look out the window, everyone wonders what Eddie means when he said, “this should be really good.” Bobby B. opens the door, allowing the group to hear what transpires across the street.

Over at Vinnie’s Body Shop, driving a tow truck from the rear of the body shop, Vinnie backs up to McCutchen’s car, blocking him in. Walking out of the office, Anthony, Luigi, and Mario join Vinnie. Not being able to leave, McCutchen abruptly gets out of his car, exclaiming, “what’s going on here?” Sternly looking at McCutchen, Vinnie replies, “what does it look like is going on? I’m impounding this piece of shit. It’s illegally parked.”

Vinnie tells Anthony, “Anthony, fill out the tow ticket and damage report.” Noting the vehicle make, model, and tag number on the ticket, Anthony also makes a note on the service ticket, “Vehicle has recent extensive rear-end damage.” Meanwhile, seeing his bleak future, McCutchen is arguing with Vinnie, who lends him a deaf ear.

Getting into the tow truck, Mario backs up, smashing into the rear of McCutchen’s car, then moves forward a bit. While Luigi hooks up McCutchen’s vehicle, McCutchen exclaims, “hey! He just smashed into my car!” Anthony hands Vinnie the tow ticket, who tells McCutchen, “there must be some mistake. It says right here on the service ticket that there was extensive damage to the rear end of this vehicle. Why

else would your car be at a body shop?" McCutchen exclaims, "there was no damage to my car! He smashed into my car! I saw it!"

Wanting to settle the issue, Vinnie asks Luigi, "Luigi, did you see any damage on this car before we hooked it up?" Luigi replies, "yeah, boss. It looks to me like this car was in an accident." Turning to Anthony, Vinnie asks, "Anthony, what did you see?" Anthony replies, "this car looks like it got rear ended, boss. I thought he wanted us to fix it." Vinnie tells McCutchen, "it looks like everyone saw the same thing. You must have forgotten that you got in an accident. Maybe you should see a neurologist." Anthony tells Vinnie, "I agree, boss. He must have gotten some brain damage in the accident." McCutchen strongly suspects he is being messed with. He would be correct.

With McCutchen's car ready to be towed away, Mario walks up, asking, "what do you want me to do with it, boss?" Vinnie replies, "take it to the impound lot over on Sunrise Highway." McCutchen exclaims, "no! Stop! I want my car back!" Vinnie calmly informs him, "you'll get it back, after you pay my towing fee and the storage fee at the impound lot." Hoping to get out of the situation, McCutchen begs, "I'll just leave! Just let me have my car back!"

With a puzzled look, Vinnie looks at Anthony, and calmly asks him, "Anthony, how much work did we do, getting this car ready to be towed?" Anthony replies, "a lot, boss. We could have been spending our time working back in the shop." Vinnie replies, "that's what I thought." Asking the same question, Vinnie asks Luigi, "how much time did we spend out here?" Luigi replies, "too much, boss. We could have been making money inside." Turning toward McCutchen, Vinnie tells him, "well, it looks like we have a lot of time wrapped up in towing your piece of shit. Give me a hundred dollars cash and I might ask Mario to unhook it." Trying to gain the upper hand, McCutchen yells out, "I'm calling the police!" Already having the upper hand, Vinnie replies, "go ahead. Be my guest."

Hearing from across the street McCutchen's threat to call the police, Richard announces, "let me go across the street and take care of this." Richard gets up and walks over to Vinnie's Body Shop, wondering how McCutchen is going to present his complaint.

Walking up and seeing a dispute, Richard asks Vinnie, "what's going on here?" McCutchen exclaims, "they're stealing my car!" Richard sternly informs McCutchen, "I'll get to you in a moment. In the mean time, sir, I suggest you calm down."

Vinnie explains to Richard, “this clown has been parking in my parking lot watching what goes on across the street. We’ve caught him here a few times already. The last time I caught him here, I told him I was going to impound his car. So, he’s back, and I’m impounding his car.” Anthony informs Richard, “the last time he was here, he said he wanted to sell his car for scrap metal. This guy is a real pain in the ass.” Vinnie interjects, “and, then he changed his mind, and decided not to sell it to us.” With his understanding of Eddie’s IRS audit, Richard replies, “if he was doing any legitimate surveillance work, he could have come up with a better story than that.”

Hearing the conversation between Richard and the body shop men, McCutchen exclaims, “they’re making all that up!” Pointing to a sign that states *Unauthorized or Illegally Parked Cars will be Towed at the Owner’s Expense*, Richard asks McCutchen, “do you see that sign on the wall over there?” McCutchen replies, “yeah! But, they smashed into my car!” Vinnie interrupts, handing Richard the tow ticket, calmly telling Richard, “Anthony inspected the vehicle before we hooked it up. It looks like Anthony saw some damage.” Suspecting he knows exactly how the damage got there, Richard nods his head, but doesn’t seem to care. Richard figures that, if McCutchen wants to report damage to his vehicle, he can do that later. Richard also knows McCutchen’s case will go nowhere.

Vinnie’s Body Shop, like Eddie’s Service Station, services the county vehicles. Richard knows Vinnie very well, but McCutchen does not know that, nor does Richard let on that he and Vinnie are good friends. What else McCutchen does not know is that Richard does not appreciate McCutchen’s accomplice, Brad Evans, taking photographs of him when he is doing business at Eddie’s Service Station. And, what else McCutchen does not know is that Richard currently has him under investigation.

Wanting to defuse the situation as fast as possible, Richard calls Vinnie and McCutchen aside, explaining, “this is a simple matter of impounding a vehicle which, according to the owner of the property, has no business being on the property in the first place. Once the vehicle is hooked up to a wrecker, the law recognizes that impound fees have accumulated. The law requires those fees to be paid before the vehicle is released to the owner.”

Turning toward McCutchen, Richard informs him, “I suggest you pay this gentleman his fee to unhook your vehicle, otherwise it looks like it’s off to the impound lot.” McCutchen exclaims, “he wanted a hundred dollars cash! I don’t have that!” Recalling one of Mr. Zunde’s favorite phrases, Richard tells McCutchen, “that would be your problem, not

mine.” Sensing an impasse, Vinnie tells McCutchen, “you can pick your car up at the impound lot on Sunrise Highway. Have a nice day.” Pointing to the entrance to the body shop, Vinnie yells out to Mario, “take it away!” Mario drives away, with McCutchen running after the tow truck.

Across the street, Mark exclaims, “wow! Look at McCutchen run!” McCutchen jogs for a few steps, then starts walking. Eddie quickly replies, “well, that didn’t last too long. He must be out of shape.” Mark informs Eddie, “he never was in shape.” Eddie replies, “my mistake, bro. Got it.”

Back at the body shop, Vinnie tells Richard, “thanks for setting that guy straight.” Richard replies, “no problem. By the way, you might want to put up a *No Trespassing* sign on your building next to the other sign. Then, you can have him arrested for trespassing if he ever returns.” Vinnie replies, “that’s a good idea. I’ll have one of the guys make one up back in the shop.” Painting a *No Trespassing* sign on a piece of sheet metal is simple for Vinnie’s men.

Vinnie, Anthony, and Luigi head inside, as Richard heads back to Eddie’s Service Station. McCutchen walks down the street, looking for a pay phone to call someone to pick him up, as he left his cell phone in his car. Unfortunately, for McCutchen, since the advent of cell phones, pay phones are becoming difficult to find.

One by one, Eddie’s friends who get his monthly stock advice come into the service station. Occasionally, Eddie looks across the street, seeing no further signs of McCutchen. Fortunately, that problem has been taken care of.

Before he leaves, Richard announces to those still present, “by the way, I may be moving again.” Eddie asks, “to where?” Richard explains, “Officer Braden mentioned something about a house coming up for sale in his neighborhood. I’m going to take a look at it this weekend.” Eddie replies, “that’s a great neighborhood. Two acre lots, in town, and really quiet. And, it’s a mile closer to the precinct. You can’t ask for better.” Eddie then asks, “what are you going to do with your house on Alicia Drive?” Richard replies, “I’m going to move Sandy’s parents into it. They need a little more help these days, and they’ll be a lot closer. It will be a lot easier on us.” Eddie replies, “that makes a lot of sense.” Now lunchtime, the group heads out to the pizzeria for lunch.

Opening up at the service station on a Thursday morning, Eddie asks Bobby B., “are you looking forward to the reunion?” Bobby B. replies, “I think so. The twenty-year reunion was kind of quiet compared to the

ten-year reunion. And, there were a whole lot less people there too.” Not wanting to go to the dance, Eddie suggests, “I think we should all hit the beach again the day after.” Bobby B. replies, “I’m with you on that, bro. The only place I can dance is in a shot-put circle.”

Coming around from the rear of the service station is Eddie’s counterpart. Seeing Eddie, his counterpart points to the office and, entering in, locks the door. Eddie asks his counterpart, “what’s up?” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “get Bobby B. This is important.” Eddie replies, “ut oh.” Opening the door to the service area, Eddie yells out to Bobby B., “hey! Close the doors and get in here.” Eddie and his counterpart then move into the back office where they cannot be seen.

Bobby B. walks in and, seeing Eddie and his counterpart, asks, “what’s up?” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “we got a really big problem.” Seeing the look on Eddie’s counterpart’s face, Eddie asks, “what’s going on?” Eddie’s counterpart explains, “I came here from this coming Saturday. Mr. Crum showed up at the service station along with the Chuckie and Goldshit. Mr. Crum told me, ‘you’re coming with us.’” Eddie replies, asking, “did you kick his ass?” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “no. Goldshit had a gun.”

Now knowing that the situation is much more serious than he originally anticipated, Eddie, asks, “okay. What’s up?” Eddie’s counterpart explains, “Bobby B. came into the service area from the office, which Goldshit wasn’t expecting. So, Goldshit turned, and shot at Bobby B., and hit him in the thigh. Right now, Bobby B. is in surgery. So, we got to stop this somehow.” Eddie replies, “got it.”

Eddie asks, “what else happened?” Eddie’s counterpart explains, “after Goldshit got the shot off, I rushed him and disarmed him. Crum panicked, and he ran back into the car, and Chuckie drove away.” Eddie asks, “what about Goldshit? Did he get away?” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “he’s barely alive. You don’t even want to know.”

Knowing that Crum’s activity must be stopped, Eddie tells his counterpart, “give us the logistics.” Eddie’s counterpart explains, “Crum, Goldshit, and the Chuckie showed up in a black limo. It’s probably stolen. He drove up in front and parked near the pumps. Crum got out of the car along with Goldshit. I was near the door to the first bay, in the same place I kicked the shit out of Goldshit years ago. I was changing the oil in Kathy’s Dune Buggy. Crum yelled out, ‘you’re coming with us.’ That’s when Bobby B. came out of the office. Goldshit panicked, and turned, and shot Bobby B. I rushed Goldshit, and kicked his ass, which took all of twenty seconds. Then, I called 911.”

Eddie asks, “what’s the best way to stop this?” Eddie’s counterpart explains, “at the time, the door to the middle service bay was closed, and the door to the first and third service bays were open. The best way that I can see to handle this is to have the guys hide out in the middle service bay and, when Crum and Goldshit enter the first service bay, come up from behind and disarm Goldshit once they step inside. And, just to be safe, it would probably be good for Bobby B. to not enter the service area.”

Eddie asks his counterpart, “what time was this?” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “it was right about 9:00 a.m. Me and Bobby B. were.” Before Eddie’s counterpart could finish his reply, Eddie interrupts, finishing his counterpart’s statement, “changing the oil in everyone’s Dune Buggies before we head down to the beach after lunch.” Now ticked off, Bobby B. exclaims, “I can’t believe this! They ruined our beach trip!” Eddie assures Bobby B., “no, bro. They won’t. We’ll figure out a way to get to the beach anyway.”

Eddie, Bobby B., and Eddie’s counterpart then walk into the service area, where Eddie’s counterpart explains in detail what happened. Figuring out the logistics in detail of how to solve the problem, Eddie and Bobby B. think they have it all figured out. Eddie and his counterpart go over the logistics one more time, making sure Eddie understands.

Before Eddie’s counterpart leaves, Eddie asks, “so, what happened to Goldshit?” Now a bit more relaxed, Eddie’s counterpart explains, “I slammed his head against the concrete wall really hard. His skull cracked. I heard it and felt it. He passed out.” Eddie replies, “he could have, at least, stayed awake until the police arrived to arrest him.” Eddie’s counterpart replies, “the paramedic said he probably won’t make it.” Bobby B. comments, “shame on him, checking out of this world so he won’t get arrested.”

Eddie’s counterpart then heads back to his time and place, where he will go to the hospital and check on Bobby B. In their present time, Eddie and Bobby B. move a few more items in the service area, preparing for Saturday morning.

Saturday arrives, and Eddie nervously drives into the service station. Bobby B. arrives next, parking his Dune Buggy in the parking area on the right side of the station. Eddie and Bobby B. open the garage doors to the first and third service bays, getting ready for today’s reunion with three of their least favorite people. Arriving next is Kathy in her Volkswagen Bus, along with Braden, Mark, Johnson, Mitchell, and Erika. Across the street at Vinnie’s Body Shop, and out of the way, are Paula,

Amber, Barbara, and Wendy, along with the vehicles that will get an oil change later this morning.

With the whole group now present, everyone heads to the back office, where Braden, who formulated the plan, replies, “does anybody got any questions?” Mark replies, “yeah. Who’s kicking whose ass?” Eddie replies, “sorry, bro. No ass kicking today. We still want to hit the beach.” But, Mark already knew that. The group discusses the plan, making sure everyone is confident in playing their part.

With fifteen minutes before Mr. Crum and his entourage is expected to arrive, everyone gets into position. Braden and Erika stand armed behind the garage door to the second bay, down low behind a few 55-gallon drums, ready to take Mr. Crum or Andy Goldstein out of commission if necessary. Mark, Johnson, and Mitchell stand behind the garage door to the second bay adjacent to the third bay, waiting for the action to begin. Eddie begins changing the oil in Kathy’s Dune Buggy, which his counterpart informed him he was doing at the time. Kathy and Bobby B. are in the office, ready to alert the guys should they see a limousine approach from around the corner.

During the wait, Mitchell comments to Johnson, “I could have run a 5K in the time we’ve been waiting.” Hearing Mitchell’s comment, Braden whispers back, “and, Chuckie’s fat ass could have run 100 meters in the time we’ve been waiting.” Just then, knocking on the glass between the office and the service area, Kathy signals to the group that the limousine is right around the corner. Braden alerts everyone, “everybody get ready. This shit’s about to come down!” Now on high alert, everyone is ready for the action to begin.

As expected, the limousine pulls up to the pumps, making it appear as if it is there on legitimate business. Knowing he is protected, Eddie continues working, as not to alert the perpetrators that he suspects anything. Getting out of the limousine, Mr. Crum approaches Eddie, yelling out, “Edward Bogenskaya, you’re coming with us.” Eddie slowly turns around, seeing Andy Goldstein having a gun pointed at him.

Catching a glimpse of Mr. Crum and Goldstein entering the first service bay, Mark, Johnson, and Mitchell run out of the door to the third bay, quickly rushing Mr. Crum and Goldstein. Goldstein, seeing the group approaching, turns and begins to aim his gun. Now a sixth-level black belt, Mitchell suddenly approaches, and kicks the weapon out of Goldstein’s hand before Goldstein could aim. Braden and Eddie quickly detain Mr. Crum and Goldstein, holding them in a tight arm lock. Walking out of the office, Bobby B. announces, “well, well. What do we

have here?" Eddie replies, "it looks like it's time to take out the trash, bro."

Meanwhile, Erika cautiously approaches the limousine with her gun drawn, announcing, "you, out of the car, now! And, keep your hands where I can see them!" Chuckie gets out of the limousine, putting his hands over his head. It's clear that Chuckie knows exactly where to put his hands, for he has been arrested on more than one occasion. Erika cuffs Chuckie, and escorts him inside, joining the rest of the crew. Eddie closes the bay doors, announcing, "now, the party begins."

Kathy waves to Paula, signaling that it is safe to come across the street. Three Dune Buggies and a Volkswagen Bus drive from across the street, ready for the oil changing party to begin. But, before the oil changing party begins, some business must be attended to.

With the three perpetrators lined up and in arm locks, Braden asks Eddie, "what do you want me to do with their asses?" Holding true to his desire to deal with certain problems in an esoteric manner, Eddie takes a pneumatic grinding wheel, engages the tool and, holding it up to Mr. Crum's face, tells Braden, "I don't know, bro. Maybe we turn them into compost." For effect, Eddie waves the tool back and forth less than an inch from Mr. Crum's face. A dire look of fright is expressed by Mr. Crum, who would rather be back in prison at the moment.

Already knowing the plan, Mark laughs, and announces, "let's put them in Eddie's time machine, and transport them to Hawaii." Chuckie screams out, "noooo! Not this shit again!" Eddie holds the pneumatic grinding wheel in front of Chuckie's face, and tells him, "why not, junior? It's better than having an argument with this tool, don't you think? And, trust me, junior, the tool will win. It did the last time I used it." Eddie engages the tool and, for effect, waves it back and forth in front of Chuckie's face, a gesture he learned from Angelo many years ago.

Goldstein screams out, "this shit ain't happening, man. Yeah, yeah. Where am I? I mean like, what's going on here, man?" Mark tells Goldstein, "you died in a gun fight, junior. The Chuckie put a bullet in your head." Goldstein exclaims, "no! I mean, like, yeah. If I died, I would have remembered it! Yeah, yeah." Braden interjects, "what are you talking about, junior? You couldn't remember shit when you were alive. How is your ass gonna remember shit when you're dead?"

Kathy boldly announces, "enough! Silence! You three idioten have infiltrated the Nation of Luschka. Entering the civilization of Luschka is no trivial matter. This breach cannot go unpunished." Kathy turns to Paula, asking, "what shall we do with these three idioten, Star-Läufer?"

Mr. Crum exclaims, “let us go! What is going on here? I demand an explanation!” Kathy sternly looks at Mr. Crum, telling him, “do you dare to speak in place of the Star-Läufer?” Struggling to get away, Mr. Crum demands, “let me go!” Kathy calmly replies, “shut up, you little shit. Otherwise, I’ll have you disintegrated. Or, perhaps worse. I could install a nerve replicator in your brain.” Paula tells Kathy, “that would presuppose that this one actually had a brain.” Trying not to break into laughter, Kathy turns around for a moment.

Kathy again turns to Paula, asking, “so, what shall we do with these three idioten, Star-Läufer?” Remembering how Kathy’s counterpart in the red universe once dealt with Chuckie and Haynes many years ago, Paula replies, “I was thinking of a nerve replicator or a brain scrambler. But, now that I both have seen and hear their arrogance, I am considering transportation to a distant desolate location. They must be disposed of.”

Mr. Crum exclaims, “what’s all this about some Nation of Lushka? I demand an answer!” Ignoring Mr. Crum, Paula replies to Kathy, “the arrogance of that one is bothering me.” Wanting to mess with Mr. Crum, Kathy asks Paula, “may I educate this inferior biological unit of the ways of the Nation of Lushka, Star-Läufer?” Wanting to hear what Kathy has to say, Paula replies, “most certainly. Perhaps it will get them out of our hair for good.” The guys stand back, enjoying the comical way in which Kathy and Paula deal with their adversaries.

With Chuckie and Goldstein carefully listening, Kathy tells Mr. Crum, “it should have been evident to you, you moronically moronic moron, that when we were in high school, we were different than the other students. We ran faster. We were more intelligent. We outsmarted you all the time. We are not from here. We are from the ancient civilization of Lushka. And, if you haven’t noticed by now, we have powers far beyond your comprehension. The petty rules of your civilization do not apply to us. When you infiltrate our nation, there is a very high price to pay. Just ask the Chuckie, here. The Chuckie is so stupid, he keeps paying the price.”

Chuckie exclaims, “see! I knew it! Eddie has a time machine!” Kathy calmly replies, “that is correct, you biological hazardous waste dump. Eddie does have a time machine. Eddie also has a gyrophone, which can implant or modify memories in your head.” Chuckie cries out, “I knew it! Stop them! Stop them!” Kathy calmly replies, “there is no stopping the Nation of Lushka. We will rise again. And, when we do, we will make slaves out of you idioten.”

Mostly focusing his attention toward Chuckie, Mr. Crum exclaims, “they’re making it up! Don’t listen to them.” Kathy laughs, and reminds Mr. Crum, “we’re making it up? Really? Think back, you Lilliputian, to Fall Semester when Eddie was a senior in high school.” Pointing to Goldstein, Kathy continues, “and you, you little moronic dipshit, ran into Crum’s office, yelling that Eddie was kicking the shit out of Charles.” Again, addressing Mr. Crum, Kathy explains, “at that time, Eddie was sitting in your office. Or, was he? Which was it?” Mr. Crum exclaims, “Eddie was in my office! I saw him myself!” Kathy asks Goldstein, “which was it?” Goldstein exclaims, “no, no! That’s not how it went down! Eddie told me to go inside and get Mr. Crum! Yeah, yeah! I saw it! I was there!” Kathy calmly announces, “both of you idioten are correct. The citizens of the Nation of Lushka have mastered the art of bilocation, which means we can be in two places at once, should the Star-Läufer approve of such measures. The Star-Läufer can also decree that a transgressor be transported to a remote place, such as Hawaii, should the circumstances warrant. Isn’t that right, Chuckie?” Silenced by Kathy’s remarks, a frightful look of fear comes across Chuckie’s face.

Kathy then points to Chuckie, and reminds him, “and you, you little moronic toxic waste dump, think back fifteen years, when you lived across the street from Braden. Do you not remember when three of me, Eddie, Paula, and Mark showed up in your front yard?” Paula interjects, “if he remembers correctly, I told him that he will glow orange in the middle of the night and croak like a frog when he talks.” Chuckie screams out, “I knew it! I’m not crazy! Someone, stop them!” Kathy calmly informs Chuckie, “the rise of the Nation of Lushka cannot be stopped. You have tried and failed many times.”

Mr. Crum yells out, “this is a bunch of nonsense! You can’t be in two places at once!” Paula laughs, telling Mr. Crum, “if you have a better explanation, I’d love to hear it.” Kathy whispers something to Paula, and waits around for ten minutes. During the long and silent wait, Paula firmly instructs any of the infiltrators of the Nation of Lushka to be silent while Kathy whispers her plan to the other members of the tribe. Kathy then leaves the service station through the back entrance.

At the portal, Kathy instructs the portal to take her back fifteen minutes in time, a time roughly right before Mr. Crum disputed that the members of the Nation of Lushka have mastered the art of bilocation. Standing in the office where she cannot be seen, Kathy listens to her counterpart lecture Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldstein, waiting for the precise moment to walk in.

Kathy hears Mr. Crum exclaim, “this is a bunch of nonsense! You can’t be in two places at once!” Walking in from the office, Kathy

proclaims, “does this idioten dare to question the powers of the Nation of Lushka?” Seeing both Kathy and her counterpart, Mr. Crum exclaims, “what? What’s going on here? How did? What? I don’t believe this!” Meanwhile, Chuckie, with nothing to say, cries himself a river. Goldstein exclaims, “this shit ain’t happening! Yeah! This shit can’t be happening.” Paula sternly looks at the three seriously frightened morons, asking, “if you have a better explanation, I’d love to hear it.” Kathy, along with her counterpart, respond, “waiting,” and innuendo with which Mr. Crum is all familiar.

Kathy informs Mr. Crum and his accomplices, “I sincerely hope that you are now fully convinced that we are of the Nation of Lushka. As I have mentioned, we have powers far beyond your comprehension. Now, the Star-Läufer is going to decide what to do with you three idioten.” Kathy’s counterpart, who came from the future, leaves, heading back to the portal.

Continuing in the slightly altered time line, Eddie whispers to Mark, “I can’t wait to hear this shit when it comes back from Richard.” Mark laughs, and replies, “seriously, bro. This shit’s crazy!” And, Chuckie always claimed that Eddie has a time machine. Now, he finds out it is true. Perhaps Chuckie now thinks he’s not as crazy as everyone made him out to be. And, Mr. Crum now seriously doubts his own sanity. And Goldstein, always with some drug in his system, will never be able to discern reality from the altered reality he lives in.

Not wanting to hear more from Kathy, Mr. Crum again exclaims, “let me go!” Towering over Mr. Crum, Kathy sternly informs him, “shut up, you Lilliputian. If you haven’t noticed by now, your petty rules do not apply to citizens of the Nation of Lushka. So, shut up before I have a brain scrambler inserted into your brain.” Hearing Mr. Crum’s tone, Paula announces, “I have both heard and seen the arrogance in his attitude, and have made my decision.” Kathy asks, “what is your decision, Star-Läufer?” Paula coldly decrees, “ship them off to Siberia. Get them out of my presence. They bother me.” Hearing Paula’s decree, Kathy again turns around, trying to hide her laughter. And, a few feet away, Braden cannot believe Kathy and Paula’s handling of the situation.

Kathy whispers to Eddie, “work them over good. I’ve had enough of that old Crum.” Eddie replies, “got it.” Kathy whispers, “and, I don’t care if that old Crum and those two other pieces of shit ever come back. Just get rid of them.” With significantly more than a whisper, Eddie replies, “you got it, boss,” leaving great uncertainty in the minds of Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldstein what Eddie and Kathy’s conversation was about.

Mark takes custody of Chuckie from Erika. Eddie, Braden, and Mark then escort Goldstein, Mr. Crum, and Chuckie to the rear door of the service station, and out into the back yard. Eddie tells Chuckie, “we’re taking a trip in my time machine, junior. I got a new Johnson Rod for it, and it’s working better than ever. And, if you ever get back from Siberia, I want you to call the police and tell them all about it.” Perceiving what is about to happen, Chuckie sobs, exclaiming, “not this again! Not the time machine! Noooo. Please, just let me go.” Mark tells Chuckie, “shut up, junior. And, grow up.” Mr. Crum confidently reassures Chuckie, “there’s no such thing as a time machine. They’re making it up.”

Entering the portal behind the service station, Eddie announces, “Siberia, today, outside of a small village.” Immediately arriving at the outskirts of a small village in Siberia with the others, Braden announces, “you three assholes should have brought a jacket. Your asses are gonna be here for a really long time, and it’s cold out here.” Mark tells Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldstein, “what Braden meant to say is ‘you’re gonna freeze your asses off.’” Eddie comments, “the Chuckie’s ass three times the size of Crum’s and Goldshit’s ass. It will take a whole lot longer to freeze that fat piece of shit off.” Mark laughs, and comments, “I guess there is a benefit of being the fattest guy in town.”

Mark silently points out a large tree near a stand of Leyland Cypress to Eddie and Braden, indicating the location of the portal. Escorting Chuckie, Mr. Crum, and Goldstein down what appears to be an infrequently traveled snow-covered road, Braden asks, “what are we gonna do with their asses?” Eddie replies, “feed them to the hungry Polar Bears.” Pointing to a lake across the roadway, Mark suggests, “there’s a pond. Maybe we should throw them onto the ice, and see if it breaks. Then, we can see if they can swim.” Eddie comments, “let’s throw the little Chuckie in first. He weighs the most. He can break the ice.” Chuckie exclaims, “noooo! Not this again!” Braden tells Chuckie, “if I remember, junior, I caught your ass in my pool once. I thought your ass likes to swim.” Mark reminds Braden, “when he got thrown in the county pool, his ass couldn’t swim then either.”

Eddie points to the lake, announcing, “let’s take them over to the lake. I got some business to take care of.” Escorting the three clowns over to the lake, Mark and Braden seriously wonder who Eddie is going to toss into the half-frozen lake first. Approaching the lake, Braden comments, “this is gonna be fun. I ain’t had no fun like this in a long time.” In response, Mr. Crum brashly tells Braden, “I’m going to have your heads for this! Just you wait.” Mark sarcastically replies, “waiting.” Braden asks Mr. Crum, “how’s your flimsy ass gonna do anything when you’re lying dead on the bottom of a frozen lake? All your ass is gonna

be doing on the bottom of that lake is getting eaten by catfish and some slimy eel.” Eddie and Mark laugh, but Chuckie and Goldstein look very worried.

Arriving at the lake, Eddie releases Mr. Crum firmly telling him, “okay, Crum. Here we are. I am going to ask you a few questions. If you answer incorrectly, we’re tossing the little Chuckie into the lake first. He’ll break the ice for the rest of you. Then, for the next wrong answer, we’re chucking Goldshit into the lake. And, if you see either of those two clowns in the lake, Crum, mark my word. You’re going for a swim too.” Recalling when Mr. Crum entered the red zone and got hit by a discus thrown by Kathy, Eddie adds, “and, Crum, by the way, where you’re standing is far worse than standing in the red zone. So, watch out.” Not catching Eddie’s innuendo, Mr. Crum exclaims, “I demand to know what’s going on here, Edward Bogenskaya!” Faking disgust, Eddie tells Braden, “forget the whole thing. I haven’t even started yet, and he’s acting like an asshole. I don’t have time to deal with this kind of shit. Throw Crum in the lake.” Reconsidering his immediate destiny, Mr. Crum exclaims, “okay, okay! What do you want to know? I’ll answer your questions!” After all, answering a few questions might just be a little easier than being thrown in a half-frozen lake.

Eddie asks Mr. Crum, “why did you try so hard to get me, Mark, and Braden kicked off the track team when we were in high school? And, Crum, if I detect any bullshit, the Chuckie, here, is going for a swim.” Mr. Crum answers, “I was just trying to make some money on the side. I was working for my uncle. You know that! You were at my trial!” Eddie replies, “good. We’re making some progress. But, why me, Mark, and Braden? Why not Mitchell, Johnson, or Bobby B.?” Mr. Crum exclaims, “because you guys always won! My uncle couldn’t make any money when you three guys showed up!” In response, Braden whispers to Mark, “we ought to just throw their asses in the lake right now.”

With his second question, Eddie asks Mr. Crum, “now, tell me, why you were always after Mr. Frazier? And, don’t give me any bullshit. I know all about the shitty review you gave Mr. Frazier at the end of my freshman year in high school. And, I also know that Noreen overturned the review you gave Mr. Frazier, and gave him a promotion.” Shaking his head, Mr. Crum pauses, causing Eddie to motion to Mark to throw Chuckie into the lake. Mark shoves Chuckie toward the lake, causing Chuckie to panic. Realizing his bleak future, Chuckie yells out to Mr. Crum, “tell him! Tell him! It’s cold out here! That water is probably freezing! And, I can’t swim!” Braden tells Chuckie, “so what? Now’s your chance to learn.” Braden would like nothing more than to throw Chuckie in the lake, but Chuckie will likely die of hypothermia, and Braden

doesn't really want murder charges brought against him. But, Chuckie does not know that and he is too stupid to figure it out.

Eddie tells Mr. Crum, "waiting," a phrase Mr. Crum full and well knows the meaning of and its associated sarcastic undertone. Mr. Crum explains, "Frazier won all the time! I couldn't control him! My uncle told me I had to get things under control at my school, even if I had to fire Frazier! I had no choice, Edward Bogenskaya! I had no other choice!" Somewhat disgusted with Mr. Crum, Braden comments to Mark, "it sounds like to me that I have no choice but to kick his flimsy ass." Eddie responds to Mr. Crum's nonsense, asking him, "really, Crum? That's your answer? Your uncle?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "he had something over my head!" Braden interjects, asking, "really? Just what kind of shit did his fat ass have over your puny little head?" Mr. Crum yells out, "he said he would turn me in for dealing drugs if I didn't cooperate!" Mark comments, "wow! What a nice uncle. Criminals turning on criminals. Imagine that."

Trying to defuse the situation, Goldstein exclaims, "hey! Just let the Crumster alone! Yeah, yeah. He didn't do nothing to you." Braden tells Goldstein, "now, it sounds like it's time for me to bust up your jaw again." Admonishing Braden, Goldstein yells out, "shut up, or I'll kick your ass!" Braden replies, "go for it. Waiting." Braden puts Goldstein in an arm bar, forcefully shoving him onto the ice. Quite the surprise to everyone, the ice does not break. As Goldstein picks himself up, Eddie tells Braden, "I told you, bro. You need to throw the little Chuckie in first." Chuckie, anything but little, will likely go right through the ice.

Again turning his attention to Mr. Crum, Eddie asks, "question number three, Crum. Why were you always after Kathy and Paula?" Mr. Crum replies, "I can't tell you that." Not playing games, Eddie tells Mark, "throw the little Chuckie in the lake." Mark firmly shoves Chuckie toward the edge of the lake. Tripping over his own two feet, Chuckie catches himself, but one of his feet lands on the ice, breaking it. Backing away from the water, Chuckie yells out, "that shit's cold!" Braden informs Chuckie, "when has your ass ever seen ice that ain't cold? What's the matter with you?" Mark nonchalantly comments, "he was born."

Eddie tells Mr. Crum, "okay. Let's try this again. And, just to clarify things, Crum, you're next. The Chuckie, here, was kind of nice to break the ice for you, no pun intended. Now, why were you always after Kathy and Paula? And, remember, if I detect any bullshit, Crum, you're going for a swim." Clearly understanding that Eddie means business, Mr. Crum exclaims, "I couldn't stand them! When they started running track, all the schools were looking at us! My uncle told me to 'get rid of them!'"

Finished with his questions, Eddie, using Mr. Crum's own words, announces, "let's get rid of them."

Braden announces, "we ain't done yet." Eddie asks Braden, "what's up, bro?" Braden replies, "I got a question for his fat ass." Eddie instructs Braden, "go for it, bro." Turning to Mr. Crum, Eddie reminds him, "and, Crum, if I detect any bullshit, remember, you're going for a swim."

Braden asks Mr. Crum, "I wanna know why your flimsy ass was always trying to suspend my ass and sending me to detention for breaking up fights." Mr. Crum responds, "you were supposed to find a teacher! That was the rules!" Eddie comments, "it looks like Crum, here, wants to go for a swim." Being pushed closer to the water, Mr. Crum exclaims, "okay, okay! I told you! My uncle wanted you guys off the track! I had to do what I can! I had no other choice!" Mark tells Braden, "forget it, bro. You're talking to a rotted turnip." Braden replies, "I see that. Paula was right. He ain't got no brain inside that empty skull. None of them do."

Still not understanding the dire predicament he is in, Mr. Crum exclaims, "I demand to know what is going on here, Edward Bogenskaya!" Answering Mr. Crum, Mark comically replies, albeit with a serious tone, "you all died in a gun fight." Mr. Crum exclaims, "we have not! Where are you taking us?" Recalling his high school years, Eddie replies, "you're right, Crum. Kathy threw a discus at you, and you're unconscious. You're dreaming the whole thing." Mr. Crum again demands, "stop with the funny stuff, already! I demand to know where are we going!" Going along with the script, Braden tells Mr. Crum, "didn't you hear Eddie? You're unconscious. Your fat ass is on its way to the hospital. Your ass shouldn't be talking when you're unconscious."

Not getting answers, Mr. Crum exclaims, "Edward Bogenskaya, you just wait! I'll have your head for this!" Braden interjects, and exclaims, "wait for what? What's your ass gonna do? Call the police on Eddie? I wanna be there when that goes down! They're gonna put all three of your flimsy asses back in prison! And who's gonna believe all the shit you're gonna tell them about how you got here? Ain't no one gonna listen to that bullshit. They're just gonna lock your asses up at that crazy house over on Central Avenue." Recalling an incident from the past, Eddie tells Braden, "they'll probably tell Crum that he's full of more shit than an overfed elephant," a phrase once used by Mr. Zunde regarding Mr. Crum.

Eddie and the guys escort Mr. Crum and his two cohorts toward the village. During the trek, Braden tells Mr. Crum, "I didn't like your attitude back there. We're gonna have to get something straight. Your

job is to get your ass kicked and my job is to kick it.” Mr. Crum angrily responds, “Axel Braden, I’m going to have your head for this!” Braden informs Mr. Crum, “stay in your lane, junior. If you step out of your lane, I might just run your fat ass over like I did to Jimmy O’Brien that day on the track.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “I knew that was intentional! I knew it!” Braden calmly replies, “shut your ass up. I make the rules around here. And, it wasn’t intentional. If you want to know what intentional is, keep talking. I’ll show your ass what intentional is.” Mr. Crum quiets down, realizing that any further antagonizing of Braden will get him nowhere.

As Eddie and his crew are escorting the three jail breakers towards the village, suddenly appearing out of nowhere, Kathy yells out, “hey! Bring those three idioten here!” Mark smiles, knowing there is a new flavor of free entertainment ahead. Not quite as happy as Mark, an angry Mr. Crum exclaims, “what? What’s going on here? How did she get here?” Mark reminds Mr. Crum, “I told you. You’re unconscious, junior.” Disputing Mark, Chuckie exclaims, “no! We’re not! Don’t listen to him.” Mark replies, “fine. You’re not. Have it your way, junior. Then, you explain how Kathy got here. I’m sick of doing your thinking for you.”

Once they all meet, Mr. Crum asks Kathy, “where did you come from?” Kathy bluntly replies, “shut up, you piece of shit. I told you. I am from the Nation of Lushka. We have powers far beyond your comprehension.” Referring to Mr. Crum, Kathy instructs Eddie, “turn that one around.” Eddie obliges, turning Mr. Crum’s backside toward Kathy. Reminded of all the problems Mr. Crum gave her while she was in high school, Kathy gives Mr. Crum a hard and swift kick in his rear end. Mr. Crum screams out in pain, as Braden informs him, “it looks like to me you just got your ass kicked!” Kathy delivers a few more swift kicks to Mr. Crum’s rear end, hopefully ensuring that Mr. Crum never returns to bother her in the future.

Kathy whispers to Eddie, “stay right here for a few minutes.” After whispering something to Mark and Braden, Kathy instructs Eddie, referring to Mr. Crum, “turn that one back around.” Kathy slowly steps backward, as she announces, “good bye.” Stepping back into her portal, Kathy disappears right before the eyes of Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldshit. Chuckie rubs his eyes, wondering how Kathy just disappeared. Mr. Crum is speechless only because he is whimpering in pain. And Goldstein, the idiot that he is, exclaims, “that shit didn’t happen! Yeah! I saw it! That didn’t happen! Yeah!” With his sore buttocks, Mr. Crum is sure to disagree.

Mark asks the detainees, “do you guys have any more questions?” Still in pain, Mr. Crum exclaims, “where did she go? She just

disappeared!” Mark returns the volley, asking, “where did who go?” Mr. Crum exclaims, “Kathy! She just disappeared into thin air!” Mark replies, “really? People just don’t disappear into thin air, Crum. The stress must be getting to you.”

From a few feet away, an announcement is heard, “am I right in hearing that someone just disappeared?” Mr. Crum violently turns around, seeing Paula standing where Kathy was only a moment ago. Paula then instructs Mark, “turn that one around.” Mark turns Chuckie around, holding him in a headlock as Paula proceeds to pummel Chuckie’s rear end with her foot. Chuckie screams out, “someone, stop her!” Playing dumb, Mark asks Chuckie, “stop who, junior?” Mr. Crum, struggling to get away, exclaims, “Edward Bogenskaya, you’re not going to get away with this!”

After whispering something to Eddie, Paula instructs Mark, “you can turn that one back around now.” As did Kathy, Paula slowly steps backward, as she likewise announces, “good bye.” Stepping back into her portal, Paula disappears right before the eyes of Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldshit.

Chuckie exclaims, “I saw it! She just disappeared!” Mark asks Chuckie, “who just disappeared? What are you talking about, junior?” Chuckie exclaims, “that girl, Paula! She was just here!” Mark tells Chuckie, “no, she wasn’t junior. I told you. People just don’t just appear and disappear.” Goldstein, who has been mesmerized the whole time, exclaims, “yeah, yeah! I saw it! She’s gone! Yeah! I mean, like, I saw it. This ain’t happening!” Braden informs Goldstein, “you ain’t seen shit, junior. Your ass just got a bad case of brain freeze standing out here in the cold. You should have brought a jacket.” Eddie and Mark laugh, as the group escorts their three adversaries to the village.

Approaching a quaint downtown area, Eddie mentions to Mark and Braden, “well, here we are, at the concentration camp.” Mark tells Mr. Crum, “good luck getting home, junior. I hope you bought a return ticket.” The guys would address Chuckie and Goldstein, but they are way too out of it to understand what has just transpired. Overheard by Mr. Crum, Eddie then comments to Mark and Braden, “it looks like the Star-Läufer picked a really nice location to dump these clowns off.”

Arriving at the edge of the village, Eddie points in the direction from which they came and, releasing the three escaped convicts, Eddie, Mark, and Braden sprint back to the portal. Not even having a remote chance of catching the three former track stars, Mr. Crum, Chuckie, and Goldstein, not wanting to be left behind, chase after Eddie and his wrecking crew.

During the chase, Mr. Crum, now in his seventies, unfortunately slips on the snow after twenty feet of world-class waddling, and falls to the ground. Now with a badly sprained knee, Mr. Crum cannot stand without the assistance of Chuckie and Goldstein. Unfortunately, Chuckie, after Paula pummeled his rear end, is not of much help. With no other choice in the matter, Mr. Crum, and his two accomplices, slowly head back into the village, seeking help. With any luck, they might find someone who speaks English.

Arriving back at their time and place, Eddie announces, “well, let’s get some oil changed.” On the way back into the service station, Braden exclaims, “I can’t believe that shit! Now, how are their dumb shit asses ever gonna get home?” Sounding a bit like Dr. Zunde, Mark replies, “that would be their problem, not ours.” Eddie comments, “if they do come home, they’re going back to jail. They might as well stay in Siberia.” Braden replies, “that’s a good point. If they had a half a brain in their head, their asses would stay in Siberia.” Mark nonchalantly comments, “they don’t have a whole brain between them.” Braden replies, “you got that right!”

While Eddie and Bobby B. are changing oil, Erika takes a clean paper towel, picks up the gun, and tosses it into the open window of the limousine. Erika then calls the police department, informing them that there is an abandoned vehicle at Eddie’s Service Station blocking the pumps, and that Eddie wants the vehicle impounded.

Arriving at the scene is Officer Kenneth Wilson, who meets with Erika. Erika informs Officer Wilson, “we were all headed to the beach today, and Eddie and Bobby are changing our oil before we head out. There’s an abandoned limousine sitting at the pumps, and Eddie wanted it towed. So, run a 10-29⁵ before you impound it. And, by the way, there’s a gun sitting on the front seat.” Now alarmed, Officer Wilson replies, “let’s take a look.” Seeing the gun, Officer Wilson asks Erika, “do we know how long the vehicle has been here?” Erika replies, “no. But, the engine is still a little warm. They couldn’t have gone too far. It’s not like they could have made it to Siberia.”

While Officer Wilson is running the 10-29, Bobby B. asks, “I wonder how those three clowns are going to get home.” Eddie replies, “their first problem is finding someone who speaks English.” Bobby B. laughs, and replies, “it’s going to be a long, long time.” Finished changing the oil in Paula’s Dune Buggy, Bobby B. drives it out of the service bay, announcing, “next!”

⁵ 10-29: Wanted or stolen vehicle.

Meanwhile, Officer Wilson advises Erika, “the limo was reported stolen three days ago. We’ll have it impounded to our lot, see if we can lift any prints, and trace the gun.” Already knowing the story, Erika replies, asking, “I wonder why they pulled it in here.” Officer Wilson replies, “from the looks of things, they expected to get gas. But, who knows where they are now. And, it looks like I’ll be 10-7⁶ until the wrecker gets here.” After all, Officer Wilson can’t exactly leave a stolen vehicle unattended that had a gun in the front seat, especially since the engine is warm and the driver is nowhere to be found.

Finishing with today’s work, Eddie announces, “well, let’s all head home, pick up the kids, and hit the beach!” Kathy asks, “aren’t we getting pizza first?” Paula exclaims, “of course, girl!” Kathy then announces, “see you all at the pizzeria!” Everyone heads out, and will meet up in a short while.

Eddie’s Service Station is occasionally a busy place, but most of the time it’s because Eddie, Bobby B., or Eddie, Jr. are working on their own projects. Today, Eddie, Jr. is putting the finishing touches on Hunter Braden’s electric Porsche 914 conversion. Hunter, who will be attending the University in the Autumn, running track, can’t wait to get his new vehicle. With no statistics on an electric 914 conversion, Eddie, Jr. also can’t wait to see how the vehicle performs.

Eddie asks Eddie, Jr., “how does the alignment look?” Eddie Jr. replies, “I’m glad we put in the 25 millimeter torsion bars. The stock 17 millimeter bar wouldn’t have carried the load very well.” Eddie informs Eddie, Jr., “Kurt knows what he is doing.” Eddie then asks, “are you ready to take it up to the high school?” Eddie Jr., replies, “yeah. I’m ready. Let’s go.” Eddie and Eddie Jr. drive over to the high school, where Eddie, Jr. will discover the zero to sixty time of the Electric Porsche 914.

At the high school, Eddie stands at one end of the parking lot with a radar gun borrowed from the police department in one hand, and his stopwatch in the other. Waiting for the radar gun to register motion, Eddie wonders how quickly Eddie’s electric conversion will make it to 60 miles per hour. Truth be told, Eddie does not think Eddie, Jr.’s. electric conversion will outperform Kathy’s Porsche 914.

As Eddie Jr. floors the fly-by-wire accelerator, Eddie starts his stopwatch. With 60 miles per hour registering far quicker than

⁶ 10-7: Out of service.

expected on the radar, Eddie stops his stopwatch. Looking at his stopwatch, Eddie is certain that something is wrong.

Not sure of the accuracy of the radar equipment, Eddie asks Eddie, Jr., “did you hit sixty?” Eddie Jr. exclaims, “yeah! This thing kicks ass!” Eddie tells Eddie, Jr., “I clocked you at 3.2 seconds!” Eddie, Jr., with his own stopwatch, informs his dad, “I got 3.3 seconds, but I kind of had to keep my eyes on the road.”

Eddie tells Eddie, Jr., “let’s try it again.” Eddie Jr. smiles, and replies, “sure!” The second and third attempts going from a standstill to 60 miles per hour all yield 3.2 seconds. Convinced that the 914 performs far better than expected, Eddie and Eddie, Jr. head back to the service station where they will tell Hunter to come and pick up his car.

An hour later, Hunter and Braden arrive at the service station. Hunter and Braden look over the finished product. If he had his way, Hunter would get in the car and drive away immediately. But, Eddie has a few things to explain to Hunter about the vehicle.

Eddie explains to Braden and Hunter, “the old engine compartment is now filled with batteries, along with half the rear trunk. The rest of the rear trunk houses the electric motors and control circuitry. The frame has been significantly reinforced and stiffened to prevent damage to the electrical circuitry in the event of a collision. The front trunk has not been modified. The tachometer now measures the RPM of the wheels. And, we added instrumentation to indicate the left motor and right motor temperature. And, there are gauges to show the drive train battery voltage, and the 12-volt accessory battery voltage. Keep an eye on them. And, the charging cable is in the front trunk.”

Hunter asks, “how far will it go on a charge?” Proud of his engineering skills, Eddie, Jr. replies, “it will go about 200 miles on a charge. But, expect a little less in the Winter, and a little more in the Summer.” Hunter then asks the big question, “how fast will it go zero to sixty in?” Eddie smiles, and asks Eddie, Jr., “do you want to tell him, or should I?” Eddie Jr., replies, “I’ll tell him.” Eddie whispers to Braden, “listen to this.” Eddie, Jr. reveals to Hunter, “we clocked it from zero to sixty at 3.2 seconds.” All excited, Hunter exclaims, “what? Are you shittin’ me? Are you for real?” Eddie, Jr. replies, “seriously, bro. We just timed it an hour ago.” Braden exclaims, “that’s some kick ass power under that hood!” Braden then tells Hunter, “I’d better not catch your ass drag racing!” With the fear of potentially being grounded, Hunter replies, “you won’t have to worry about that.”

Braden tells Eddie, "you guys got this conversion done really quick." Eddie replies, "Eddie, Junior did most of the work. He moved really fast on this. It's Eddie's law at work." Braden asks, "what's Eddie's law?" Eddie explains, "it's like this, bro. Figure out how long it's going to take you to do something, multiply by the first digit of your age, and that's how long it will really take." Braden thinks for a moment, and replies, "no wonder I can't get shit done anymore!" Eddie replies, "yeah, bro. Me too."

Hunter, after receiving instruction on the details of his new car, drives off with Eddie, Jr. Eddie and Braden head out to the pizzeria for lunch, wondering who else will join them.