

In Search of My True Self vol. II

Summer 1993, the power and rein of "David the mad" reached it's zenith During the last two years the sense of awe, respect, and fear David's power invoked had subtly begun to weaken. We'd seen the true face of this creature reveal itself; Immoral? yes! Despotic? yes! Murderous? Absolutely! But essentially a fool, "The Emperor indeed wore no clothes." In the intervening time I'd grown immeasurably, my exposure to the "Real-world," hardened me in ways that I couldn't fathom, and quite honestly, I was years away from understanding the detriment of this era and how it suppressed my growth as a person. I stood upon the very cusp of darkness, the Devil's imps began to slip their chains.

We learned our lessons well in order to succeed in this game, to excel, one needed to cultivate a certain measure of deliberate ruthlessness. I'd sat inside "Crack-Dens," or on the block, day-in and day-out for almost two years. Intensely studying the behaviors and idiosyncrasies of those in the pantheon above me. Until, I was every bit as refined in the street-life, and as much without shame as they were. No words can adequately describe the sublime pleasure I derived from transforming powder cocaine into crack, then reaping the immense profit that accompanied that dark alchemy. I was seventeen when I was taught this skill by a twenty-six year old "Wild Bill." It happened one Friday night, as the crush of people clamoring for crack cocaine reached overwhelming proportions.

By this time I'd been accepted as a minor retainer, someone who didn't cause trouble, a neighborhood kid, just another outcast abandoned by society, ripe for exploitation.

As the finite supply of the drug was rapidly sold-off, the continued demand was relentless. I was sitting in a out-of-the-way corner inside Bill's "Dope-Trap," watching the transactions, bantering with several of his thralls, when Bill came out of the kitchen he'd converted into a crack-lab. His eyes rounded the room before landing upon me. "Your good with numbers Opallo, come here and help me," he said. I stood up and tentatively followed him into the kitchen, immediately my nose was assaulted by a strong, acrid, earthy-smell that I knew by now to be the odor of cooked cocaine. On every counter or surface not apart of the stove itself, there were pyrex cooking dishes or gallon sized glass jars for shaping the cooling crack. Bill again asked me, "you can count and understand measurements right?" I answered "yes," and he immediately began to give me instructions.

I commenced following the orders being rattled off, still somewhat hesitant but I didn't have the time to be afraid. I only knew that I didn't want to mess-up, failure would have likely earned me a beating, but I was more concerned with being banished if found to be deficient. In retrospect, I was very eager to please, here was someone, whom by every measure of "our" sub-culture was popular and successful, someone to emulate; because whatever else he may have been, he never once rebuffed me or treated me unkindly. Later, as we grew closer I learned that Bill was as much an outcast as the rest of us, in some ways even more so. His childhood had been spent in various foster homes, a ward of the state and by the time he'd turned eighteen, he'd come to depend on himself, once I'd gotten to know him, my respect for him grew. The foster home he'd been discharged from was a

private residence in our neighborhood, so having spent the last several years before discharge there, and having absolutely no-where else to go, he just hung-out with the closest thing he did have to a family, which happened to be David and his brothers, then later it was myself and a few others.

From this point on, the allure of easy wealth began to undermine any thoughts of positive ambition or vocation. I had lost my bearings, the arrow of my moral compass spun wildly. I still had great love for school and education, but throughout the course of the next school year, my attempts to maintain attendance failed. I decided on earning my **GED**, in order to march at graduation with my class. Since by this point I'd missed far too many classes and lacked the credits needed to earn my highschool diploma, Thus I continued the architectural design of my future's destruction; myoptically disregarding any consideration of alternative realities, my attitude displayed my ignorance, my youthful belief that "I" was somehow invulnerable to the hazards of this life. This lack of foresight was compounded by the fact that I'd become a heavy marijuana smoker, an adequate description of words escapes the smoke appetite that was consuming me.

Somehow, I was able to conceal my behavior from my parents, as outwardly I was still the same person. Eventhough I'd saved twenty thousand dollars from sophomore to senior year, I remained respectful and they gladly afforded me all the freedom I desired. (I should point out that they had no idea I'd saved the money, and with the exception of my rash purchase of a crappy, five-

hundred dollar car without their permission, I aroused no suspicions). As a matter of truth, I held Summer or part-time jobs, every year from age's fourteen to nineteen, so my having pocket-money was never an issue. It wasn't until the extent of my graduation decisions became known that my parents became concerned, then angry, and finally combative. By then however, it was far too late! After the full graduation debacle became known, I decided it was time to moveout and into an apartment with my close friend "FastBlack," so one afternoon when no one was home, Fast and I packed my belongings, and thus began the tempestuous Summer of 1993.

King David, lost the control of his keys to power, Fear, and sole access to distribution amounts of cocaine. With the latter, his income and resources began to be seriously effected, but this was a dilemma of his own making. For years he'd grown wealthy by selling low quality, high priced product, this caused his subjects to first resent him and later hate him. I'd learned from observation and listening to the hustlers on the block; that when you participated in such high-risk endeavors, where one's greatest assets were constantly at risk, "Both Life and Liberty," then one's greatest loyalty is to one's own PROFIT. You'd be foolish to allow anyone to puaperize you! When new purer sources started to make themselves available, fear was overwhelmed by Greed. By this time a number of people who were subordinate to David had saved large amounts of their own money and were more than eager to access these new outlets.

The result of which was * Violence. *

In the beginning, David and his more loyal minions would catch individual violaters who'd gone into business for themselves, his justice would be swift and brutal, with beatings, robbings, and occasional shootings "non-lethal." But the deluge of pure product sent the streets into a frenzy, creating a cycle that fed itself. David's product wouldn't sell, the users rejected it out of hand and began to derogatorily refer to it as that "David-Shit," this forced the hustlers to use the new outlets, which provoked the wrath of David.

After several individuals I knew casually were hurt badly, and in the case of one killed. The situation became grievous, and opposition formed, and the streets broke out into open rebellion. The gangsta's declared that the streets had no "King." It would be survival of the fittest, the choice became simple, "Eat or get Eaten," or "be Shark or Sushi," as I remember a jester like crack-head named "Shampoo" saying. He was part street philosopher, part fool, but he the uncanny habit of being correctly prescient in his observations, and thus became my tutor, advisor, and confidant. More than once did his words or advice shield me from one danger or another.

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