

The "Crush"

"The usual," I replied, when Kurt answered the phone and asked me what the nature of the evening would be. Kurt knew very well that this would be the case and that I was asking only as a formality. For the "crush" had come to be a weekend event that not only provided a means to relinquish all of our childhood animosities, but also a source of unrevealing excitement as danger, violence, skill and destruction were sure to ensue. Within seven minutes I was upon his doorstep and without a knock I was in and waiting. Kurt came up the steps that led to his room, and with a consensual nod of heads, we were out the door and on our way. Kurt was one of four children living with his mother. Being a child raised minus a father, he was, as myself, able to call the shots. He was relatively short, even scrawny, by comparison to the rest of the Heebs, but his power of persuasion was certainly domineering. When provoked, his temper and ear-shattering voice, most vividly and frequently exhibited towards his mother, served to enhance his utilization of intimidation. There was never any doubt as to who could make the final decisions when they arose, however, Kurt looked up to me, and the mutual respect that flourished, in most instances, prevailed.

This Friday night would be like all others, I thought, as we made our way toward the stores. Just me, Kurt, Greg, John and whatever alcoholic beverages we could acquire. Our plans seemed inevitable. Four misfits among a retirement-home-like-town, and seemingly nothing "cooler" to do. Having walked for several minutes, Kurt glanced up at me and laughed. "How much dough you got?" This was only humorous because it carried with it the implication that he had none. In most cases, it was likely that I had as much. Greg, who became Mr. Moneybags over a prolonged period of household work and seclusion, usually paid the tab for our weekend extravaganzas. On this particular night, I had ten. Having iterated this to Kurt, we returned our attention to the road ahead, smiling at the potential with which the night entailed. The rhetoric which prevailed throughout the remainder of the trip consisted of creative schemes for getting around lax family curfews, and with what, where, and with how much to get "wasted."

The clock read ten after eight when Greg came be-boppin' along in his usual manner. Dressed in his predictable attire, jeans and t-shirt, Greg looked like your everyday, home-grown American couch potato. He was a chunky kid with the mental capacity of an Apple computer. Always agreeable, and humorously witty, he provided the framework which would allow our plans to be successfully executed. His casual "Dudes, what up?" always served to affirm his pleasant demeanor, as did his "you got it figured out yet?" his obvious conjurement of a plan. On this particular night, when he approached the bench with which Kurt and I rested, the Greg we knew, came to light.

John, on the other hand, was either ridiculously late, or negligent to show up at all. It was a peculiar characteristic, but nonetheless, it was John. He never seemed to show a flagrant ounce of concern for anybody. He hung with us, we loved him, at times feared him, enjoyed his company, but for Christ sake, never understood why he rarely

showed up. After waiting for an hour and twenty minutes, the usual call was made to his house with the response from his mother that she really had no clue as to his whereabouts. It was a response that could have been ensured had the call been mistakenly made to any of our homes. Kurt's return from the phone booth was accompanied by a frustrated, "guess what?," and with this, Greg and I took to our feet to join him on his way towards the Poney Keg's rear.

I was, as was always, the one elected to ask the incoming patrons to purchase the beer. It needn't be beer however, any alcoholic beverage would do. For it wasn't taste that made the occasion what it came to be, but instead the disobedience to the established authorities around us, accompanied by the intrigue with the feelings of intoxication. The consumption of alcohol by three juveniles not only fronted the challenge of finding a secluded location wherein which we could drink, but also the challenge of returning home through an obstacle course of bored small town policeman who had become accustomed to our repetitive weekend ventures.

The passage of an hour, and a dozen or more refusals, was always followed by a conspirator who was more than willing to contribute to our delinquency, so long as it was promised that his appearance would be forgotten. Once confirmed, we would break into groups of two. This time it was two and one. Two to lead the way and check the coast and one to carry the brew. Being fond of the attention for bravery, and the least leery of another minor misdemeanor, I was glad to be the carrier. A one-hundred-percent success rating in this beginning step of the weekend ritual also carried weight. Our problems never really began until we formed what would most accurately be described as a discordant band of drunk bandits overcome with the temptation for vandalism and chaos in an environment of serenity after the neighborhood curfew.

Upon arrival at one of our local hot-spots, situated upon a hill that sat to the side of a lightly traveled road, the three of us initiated the rounds of shot-gunning wherein the timing of one's beer-chug brought with it the merits of seniority. One after another we speared our cans with our pocket knives and sucked upon the holes as we rose the cans over head and pulled the tabs. A race to the finish as we progressively became less coordinated and reckless. Our concern for silence transformed into roaring laughter and drunken splendor. Cans were no longer piled into the empty cartons so as to cover our tracks but instead were chucked into the woods and smacked with sticks. Slung in the manner of baseballs, we participated in a sportsman-like fashion until our motor skills prohibited its continuation. We wrestled, we made fun of each other's parents, we urinated in empty beer cans before punting them off the hill, and we enjoyed every minute of it.

When there was no more alcohol to consume, we'd begin to discuss the journey home. We spoke of precautions and concerns before departing from the hill. The only problem was, however, that once we hit the street that would lead us through the town of Greenhills, all concern for good behavior was quickly overridden by enticing prospects for mischief. This particular Friday night adventure not only followed this distinct predictable format, but also came to serve as a landmark event in the time of our youths

as a result of its magnitude. A landmark in unsurpassed, senseless destruction.

Our heads raised high, our hands swinging so, we walked gallantly down Springdale Road and onto Damon which would lead into the heart of Greenhills. Beyond the eleven o'clock curfew, we were not deterred from utilizing the middle of the street as our path. Belching and laughing, we began to voice a wide range of exciting, criminalistic options to fill the time before returning home. Having conned our mothers into believing that each of us was staying at one of the other's house, fullknowing that their time was too precious to inquire, we had 'till morning to terrorize the neighborhood. Upon reaching the local shopping center, we gathered in one of the two existing hallways that lay out of sight from the main roads, passing both in front, and behind, of the upper and lower plazas. Spread apart, the three of us urinated our names upon the graffiti cluttered walls. We then sat and decided, upon Kurt's request, to take a covert journey through the neighborhood to spy on a number of young girls whose houses had come to be well documented locations for thrill on most fair-weather weekend nights. Allowing no more than a few minutes to pass, we quickly jumped to our feet, gouging and flustering about in each other's faces. Checking first to see if the streets were clear, we hurled ourselves into the darkness that surrounded the oasis of light beneath the store's awning. In a reckless, discordant fashion, we heralded onward toward the first house along the route of perversion, stopping only once momentarily to arm ourselves with thick steel laden support rods that were conscienciously layed aside the garage wall of an unsuspecting neighbor. Now, ready for all which the remainder of the night had to deliver, feelings of immortality and indestructability slowly overcame our perceptions as we marched more and more flamboyantly along our route. One by one we became more liberal with our rods as each of us sought to make the greatest impression, through destruction, in its use. As the clashes grew fiercer, and our reveling laughter and hollers conspired, an aura of chaotic recklessness transpired. I can vividly remember thinking that if we made it home alive, we would be lucky to say the least. It was more than apparent that the alcohol we consumed was spiraling headily throughout our bloodstreams. Kurt's sudden divergence from the group, to the rear of a nearest house, was all to familiar an event. It went without saying that catastrophe was on the horizon. Willingly, we followed in ad-hoc fashion as we twirled our rods with vengeance and determination.

An exhilarating crash, accompanied by the sounds of faltering glass, prevailed. A horrifying scream ensued. An act which would be hard to surpass in its gripping severity quickly transpired. Kurt had heaved a brick through the bay window in the rear of the house, which 'till then, lay quietly illuminated by the full moon which hovered above in the late night sky. With conviction, we jolted and squirmed with uncoordinated rapidity away from our positions behind the house. Kurt led the way as we administered to his path. All laughter dissipated as uncertainty consumed us. Admittedly, I was impressed by Kurt's seemingly fearless act, however, I knew that I could and would do better in the "crush." It was always my intention to be the one in the spotlight, and for this and its consequent benefits, such as being the topic of discussion among the town deviants, I would surley find a way to prevail. For the moment I was happy to be a follower and to wait for the onset of fatigue. This would lead Kurt in finding us a place to hide until the

inevitable commotion of police cars and sirens diminished.

Twenty to thirty minutes had passed before the three of us found comfort in relinquishing our position beneath an old, rusted camper. Having whispered among ourselves, and joked about the fear with which Kurt's act surely brought about, we expeditiously planned a route that would lead us to the opposite side of Greenhills. The exception being Greg, we forfeited our rods in order to ensure efficiency in our escape. Greg was not stupid, he was just too damn consumed with animosity and fear to realize he hadn't dropped it.

"Put that fucking rod down, Greg. What the hell do ya' wanna' do, get us in trouble?"

Kurt looked at me in response, and with a mutual glare, we both laughed. Pulling a pocket knife from my rear pocket, I slit the nearest tire then passed it to my fellow conspirators. Leaving one wheel intact, we moved onward. Keeping within arm's length of the house's rears, we moved speechlessly in a cautious, linear formation behind Kurt.

"What time do you think it is," Kurt asked?

I quickly climbed above the basement window of the nearest house and looked into the kitchen.

"Two thirty," I replied as the blue digital display read across a microwave that set upon the far corner of the room. "We need to get something going, this town is dead."

"Lets get back to your house, Kurt, before we get arrested."

"Shut-up, Greg. We ain't gettin' in shit. You always wanna' bail out before we do some real shit, and watch, tommorrow you'll be actin' like you had something to do with it."

This was a common characteristic prevalent to Greg and it always had a way of pissing me off. Kurt and I knew however that it was his plan formulations and logic that would always provide the most sensible escapes when our irrationality and/or otherwise incoherent reasoning got us in a mess. We also knew that Greg was our friend and that his mere company made our expeditions more fun. Reaching the crest of the wooden area that lay surrounding the outer parameters of Greenhills, we sat and rested in order to regain the safer condition of sobriety in order to gear up for the coming "crush." Great skill and coordination among the group was essential if we were to make it home safely and without arrest or bodily harm. Glancing back and forth among ourselves we grumbled and joked about the calamity we would surely impose on the people whose houses and property unfortunately happened to be situated along the "crush's" route.

After several minutes of calm, and patient glares in a the myraid of potential directions in which to launch our attack, we came together in a small huddle, with Kurt ready and determined to devise the coming scheme.

"I got the route. Stay on my ass, and no mention of names. I'm Doug, you're Pat, and Bob, your Charlie."

"Fuck you," I replied.

Without a moment to waste, the train of horrific vandalism was on. Adrenalyn raced as the sprint began. Rage was on the forefront of our intentions. Every rock, stick, every fucking thing that was not tied down, was overturned. Glass shattered, bricks chipped, and metal rang as the deflections of jolted objects sprang from one surface to another. Startled voices and screams floated in jeopardy through the unsuspecting night air. Between the three of us, every house on the route, including their surrounding neighbors, was up and turning with a ferocity unrevealed by the aftermath of the severest of sunamis. Determined, we were, to show all in our path our disapproval for the town's stagnant milieu. Three devils determined to make an eventless evening of silence and serenity witness the fear of God. Windshields, windows, lamps and their posts, were to see the turmoil of our restless ambitions. As the trail of destruction lengthened, the lighted path of awakened victims was fattening, probably resultant of fearful neighbors coming to console friends. As we approached the shopping center again, this time from its eastern end, I broke out a pack of matches. First the two dumpsters which lay side by side behind the bank, then the one behind Never-Ons.

"You crazy fucker," Kurt sneered.

Greg just looked stunned as he had fallen in third amongst the train.

A bottle through the Ponykeg window, and then a divergence from the ordinary route as I led the way to the railroad car, filled with newspapers to be recycled behind the town's Catholic school. It was that time of the year for its monthly paper drive. It'll be an ash drive I thought as I snickered at my compatriots and hurled a half packet of lit matches into its opening.

As the fury and delight, which this new element of fire in our routine delivered, took effect, we were ghastly intrigued. We became enthused with our behavior. The nearby echoing of sirens from both police cars and fire engines only served to encourage our group's undisciplined demeanor. However, it was time for the return to Kurt's back yard, where we would climb the fence to the roof of his garage which would serve as the oasis of security we were all longing for. Silently, we layed side by side and glared into the night's star speckled sky and listened with pleasure as the sounds of chaos and disorder ensued. Another successful "crush" which was sure to leave a trail of rumors and fears only to be matched in their magnitude by our satisfaction with which the event's publication in the local police blotter would bring.

I was so

†† □ ††† □ □ † □ □ □ ††† † □ □ ††† □ ††††††††††††††† □ □ † □ □ ††††††††††††††† □ !? 慷 □ 澹

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXX

Times New Roman