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CALL ME TENNESSEE

Introduction

When I sat down to record my life's tale, I was unsure of the consequences of telling the whole saga. It was only after I sat down and read it, did I realize that I was gaining something else by unveiling to the rest of the world my rather bleak past. I gained a sense of freedom that I had not felt in years, and the anxiety I had been covering up for most of my life seemed to slowly disappear.

This being said, I have decided to air my dirty laundry, despite the almost certain drama that will occur as a result. I realized I spent most of my life running from my greatest fear. I had never feared death: in fact I often looked forward to it in a strange, masochistic way. Despite not having many worldly possessions, I never feared losing them all or never having anything anymore. I had been running away not from my past, nor the present.

I feared life. I feared caring for anything. I feared others being dependent on me for anything. In my mind, fear is the mother of all fuck ups, so if I had nothing or nobody to live for, if I had nothing

to lose, I could be fearless. But being fearless always left me with a guilty conscience. I had a guilty conscience for having nothing to lose. I knew I must be missing something.

It took me a while to figure out that Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll, weren't the answers. I thought maybe the answer to life was more of a spiritual thing. That led me to a mental breakdown, so I retreated to the hardcore lifestyle to which I had grown accustomed. I did that just in time to find that all of the people who I had known were either dead or married. The ones that died were always rather tragic deaths, and those who had married appeared to be have lost their minds.

This just led to me wishing for my own demise, and that is where I appeared to be stranded. Then it seemed to hit me one day while telling a portion of my tale to some random person, it wasn't that I had no fear. I had plenty of fear for life. Now I'm not afraid of life anymore. Thanks for helping me figure that out.

Don't think I've gone soft, because I'm still going to go down in a hail of bullets, with my mouth full of gin and a Molotov cocktail in my hand.

Chapter 1

A Family in Turmoil

To call my birth a mistake would be a lie. In truth, my birth was an act of desperation on my mother's part to keep a failed marriage together. Well, her plan backfired. Three months after my birth, she was put on a plane with two screaming kids and no return ticket bound for Memphis. Yes, she was told that this was only supposed to be a temporary thing, while my father tied up some loose ends. Twenty years later, he died holding the frayed strands.

Needless to say, being the only kid on the block without a father was kind of rough. In the 1980s, unlike today, there actually was a stigma attached to divorce. At the time, things were still reminiscent of the 40s or 50s; it just wasn't done, especially in the South.

From my earliest memories, I recall having to listen to arguments over the phone that resulted in a boy being told, "Your father doesn't want to

talk to you: if he did, he would send us money.” It was always about money. Yeah, you could say me and my brother were pawns in a game of checkers, if you asked us. Why checkers, not chess? Because chess has some sense of plan or strategy, while checkers makes no sense. Checkers is just a mess of equally worthless pieces running all willy-nilly at each other across the board.

My brother was roughly three by the time he became aware that he would probably never see his father again. He’s insisted on blaming me for this in his own mind, which is reflected in his actions. I was born just to keep mom and dad together, and so it was my fault when it failed. I recall, one time I had just fallen asleep, and my brother found a big belt. I woke up with blood running down my face. Several stitches later, I was home, but forever sleeping with one eye open.

Not to say that we only hated each other. We used to have some good, old-fashioned fun, back when kids used to do that sort of thing. There was this grocery store that we frequented, and they had

all these gum ball machines. It shouldn't have mattered what the store had, since we were broke, but, while playing with the machine, I discovered that if I pushed here and pulled up there, all the gum balls would come spilling out! He'd be ready to grab up all the gum balls he could get, and I'd help before a worker at the grocery would come try to stop us. So yes, we had some fun. And we fought. We're brothers, that's what we do.

Now, since discipline was somewhat of a concern to my mother, and she was more into shrill screaming and bitter guilt-trips kind, she saw fit to force my grandfather into the mix, for the old-fashioned kind of laying down the law. Her parents, Lenny and Adele, were wonderful people, and they had Nickelodeon back when we only had that black and white television that picked up five channels.

I would often fake falling asleep on their couch to avoid having to go home and sleep in the roach-infested apartment in which we lived. My brother and I had this wonderful game we used to play: after bombing the house for bugs, we would

race to the bathroom and see who could count the most roaches in the bathtub.

Running amuck was my own way of escaping the miseries of the cold winters and hot summers in Memphis. I was the black sheep of the family, you could say. I was a five year-old kid cursing like a sailor and fighting to stay up to watch Carson's monologue before I went to bed. This made me come across as kind of strange. I had seven cousins at the time, and, by far, I was the most eccentric of the lot. I learned very young that the rules didn't apply to me. This was not because I was spoiled, but the punishment handed out by the law wasn't anything worse than what I was used to.

Now my grandparents were wonderful people, and normally I was on my best attempt at behavior around them, for they gave me a pretty stable home, when I was lucky enough to be there. When I wasn't in that happy place, I spent most of my early years living in my own imaginary world, to get away from the now medically-diagnosed mad hysteria of my mother. That imaginary world, from

which I was convinced that I had been switched at birth, I wanted to stay in. Let's face it, my world sucked, but in the fantasies of my own mind, anything was possible.

Since my mother often worked, we had baby sitters, and they preferred to lock us in a closet, rather than keep an eye on us. I recall one lady in particular: she was a fat, black woman that liked to smoke and steal clothes from mother's closet. Well, because of her hefty disposition, she was no match for the wriggling speed of my brother and mine's scrawny little asses: we were able to elude her and raise a little hell. For example, while my brother ran left, I would go right with crayons, markers, and my head to redecorate the walls.

We were such horrid little shits that she left within ten minutes of her arrival. She would come back, though. Even though she would leave us unattended for absurd amounts of time, we would always tell my mother that she just left.

I recall running up and down the bowling alley on league night, as the babysitter at the alley

could not stop me from being a walking tornado. Yeah, I was that kid.

I was always a little hyper, so outside was where I wanted to be. Hell, anybody would rather be anywhere other than in that nasty apartment that reminds you of just how hard life was. I recall one winter, when I awoke in the middle of the evening to relieve myself. To my surprise, the water in the toilet was frozen solid. Let's just say, that winter the three of us became very close.

After we got out of that hellhole, life eased up a little when we moved into a house that a nice lady had offered us at a very low price. This was good, because mom never had any money. Still doesn't. But for the first time, I had my own room, a backyard, and other kids in the neighborhood to play with!

Or so I thought. Soon, I discovered that since my father didn't live with us, none of the kids in the neighborhood would even consider playing with me. This made me kind of bitter, as it seemed my only friend was a mean, old afghan hound with

dreadlocks that would have made most hippies proud.

Now Sidney was a violent dog, who taught me the important life lessons of marking your territory and how to protect yourself. He wasn't one to bow to any human authority, and so neither was I. We would play sweet games together, like the "let his crazy ass loose to chase all the kids on the block, and I pretend to try to catch him" game. Soon people learned that I was not to be messed with.

I would play in the back yard to the point that I was more comfortable playing fetch with the dog and talking to myself than dealing with people. The rest of my days were joy-filled with the endless task of procuring food and the occasional toy from whatever store we happened to be shopping in at the time. Let's just say, that I was less concerned with putting things in the basket than under my shirt.

Sidney was truly the only one I considered to be family. I had cousins, aunts, uncles, a mom, a dad I barely remembered, even a brother, but no family. I did my best to get along with my cousins

at dinner on Friday nights at my grandparents' house, but I was blamed for everything to the point that I was convinced the "D" in my middle name stood for "Damn it!"

I remember the first conversation I had with my father, but not much of it. I didn't know if I should be excited, or mad, or what. I recall asking him what he looked like. He told me he looked like the mailman.

Interesting point, the mailman that came to our house was black. Now if being poor and Jewish wasn't hard enough, now I was black, too.

It was assumed by most in the family that I would probably be in jail or dead before the age of 15. I figured it would happen by 30, so I guess life is just full of surprises. I'm not really sure which one of us wanted that to come true more. For the most part, my cousins were smart, well-mannered, and embarrassed at the very sight of me. I knew from early on that I was going to do something great, just to spite them all.

My mother tried to bring some men around to help influence my brother and I. Most of them meant well enough. They tried their best. They'd talk to us, play with my brother and me, teach us things. One guy named Irwin was nice enough to let me pump gas for his car. Once. See, on accident, I left the pump in the car when we drove off. Good thing was, Irwin was completely insane, so it made for quite a laugh as we sped off into the night.

My mother loved Irwin, like that, but she was afraid of the fact that he liked to drink. And do drugs. Especially the kind that used sharp objects to help set the mood. Oh, and guns. Especially AK-47s, which he took to Cordova, before anybody lived there, and fired off at construction sites. Irwin had a lot of money and no qualms about using it to have a good time, all legal issues being irrelevant to him. He loved my mother like my father never did. But that didn't happen, and she was probably the only thing that slowed him down from his eventual overdose.

His good friend David, who would stop by unannounced just to hangout, was also a cool cat, still is. He was talented, played piano, and the best part of all was he had a motorcycle. One time, he stopped by on his cruiser when I was home alone. He smiled at me, I looked at the bike, and that's all that needed saying. That's right, ladies and gents, we went for a joy ride. Upon our triumphant return two hours later, I saw my mother on the phone with the cops, convinced I had run away. We both couldn't be that lucky.

This final story I will relay from my earliest of memories was of a Tuesday morning. I was sitting down at the table eating a bowl of Franken Berry cereal, and my brother decided he wanted some. I remembered the time he hit me in the face with the belt, and said, "Okay, let me get the milk."

I got the milk out of the fridge, and it somehow managed to fling itself all over his head and the floor, in a karmic act of revenge. Revenge, it's not just for dinner anymore.

That's when mom came out, yelling and screaming that she was never going to buy milk again, because we were both sons of bitches, and we didn't have any more food stamps left. I had never realized how poor we were until the next day, when I looked in the fridge and saw a box of baking soda and a bottle of ketchup. The pantry held a packet of Kool-Aid and a bag of Fritos.

Mom said, "That's all we have until next Friday when I get paid." Actually, wait, I didn't do her justice. You need to understand how she is. So that's when mom said, "THAT'S ALL WE HAVE UNTIL NEXT FRIDAY WHEN I GET PAID."

For the next five days, I remember rationing out how many Fritos I could have, counting them over and over again, like Scrooge McDuck did with all of his gold. The funny thing about poverty is that once you have your food and shelter, you feel like the richest man alive. True, I never really wore new clothes (most of them were my brother's or charity donations from my mother's friends). I never really

asked questions where my clothes came from; I was just thankful for the shoes that didn't hurt.

This isn't to say that my mother was a bad person, or that she didn't love us. Rather that she had a very hard time supporting us at time when President Reagan wasn't out to help feed the poor. He was on a mission to put an end to communism.

You see, my mother believed in President Reagan, because he was the governor of California while she lived there. I suppose she felt like they had a connection which she had to hold onto. She constantly sent him letters, asking for help in receiving the child support payments that never came. It was lost on her that Reagan was into self-reliance, and she was asking him for more food stamps.

Life wasn't easy, but for the most part, I had a good childhood. I didn't have much, but I had a good imagination to keep me occupied. At the age of six, my brother was given the opportunity to visit our father, while I was left at home to deal with my mother, who at this point began to lose most of her

sanity. Her oldest son was gone, and she was slowly starting to blame me for all the problems in her life, whether she knew it or not.

Soon after my brother's return, he picked up even more hatred for me, for causing the separation. I was a kid; I didn't do anything to cause two adults to divorce. But that was the only reason I was made, in their eyes. I felt that I had been exiled from my own family. I still feel that way. At this point, I felt alone and realized I could do nothing right, so I might as well raise some hell or die trying. Why not?

Nobody would notice.

Chapter 2

My Early Education

Due to certain elements beyond my control, namely being cruelly both Jewish and poor, my brother and I were enrolled at the Jewish school. Most people would say, “This would give these two unprivileged youths a chance at success in the world!” It wasn’t easy for me to blend in there. The stigma attached to couples that divorced was similar to leprosy: people were afraid of you, like divorce was some kind of contagious disease.

I recall in kindergarten, getting into a fight with another boy; the other boy had started it, but I was the one placed in detention. Later, I realized his father had donated a large sum to have the computer lab updated. I struggled to understand the concept of nap time or recess: I figured if I was tired, I would sleep; if I wanted to play I would play: who’s a teacher to tell me what to do?

Around this time I began watching movies, all kinds, good, bad, stupid, whatever was on TV.

By now, I've made it through every Netflix on-demand movie there is. My love of movies, when combined with my imagination, led me to pretend I was these random characters, to the point that I would be in class and refuse to answer the teacher at roll-call, unless my name for the day was called. Needless to say, this didn't go over too well with the authorities.

A little later during recess, I discovered that while no one was watching, I could just walk on home. After doing so for about a week straight, a teacher asked when I was going to stop getting in trouble and attend her class later that day. That's when I realized nobody really missed me. To keep things under the radar, I began making random appearances in her class. But I found out I was right: what with my insubordination in all the other classes, the teachers weren't sad that I wasn't around.

I felt rather uncomfortable there for many reasons, but the most obvious was my lack of school supplies. This one time there was a math

competition where two lines were formed, and both students were asked a multiplication question. For my part, I was quicker with the answers, but my reluctance to use paper and pencil was a problem for the teacher. The finals came around, and it was me versus the girl whose grandfather owned most of the city. Not only was I disqualified for not using pencil and paper to show my work, but I got placed into the resource classes to boot.

I learned very young to never let anybody know just how smart you, for they will use it against you. I recall being upset with the school for not letting me participate in recess one day, so like most children I threw a tantrum. Well, the school called in most of the maintenance staff to hold me down, five grown men versus a kid. The difference between them and me was that I was fearless and had nothing to lose, and I won that battle, hands down.

The administration had enough of me, and so about this time it was decided that I would be better suited for public school. People paid their

money for their kids to have a nice place to send their little shits to look good and be better than those who couldn't afford it, not to get harassed by a charity case like me. Understand, public school was something new to me: it was hard enough fitting in at my old school for being poor and not having a father, what was this going to be like?

It was awkward being the only person I knew at the school, but what the heck? Things might be different! My optimism lasted all of ten minutes. As the teacher called the roll, she got to my name and started to struggle, so I corrected her. She looked up at me and said, "You killed Jesus, so sit down and shut up." It would be years before I even met a guy named Jesus, so this tormented me to no end.

I was confronted by a bully, who said, "You killed Jesus!" I responded by saying, "If I killed your god, guess what I could do to you?!" Then I kicked him in the groin and punched him in the nose. I then got to meet the principal, who informed me that I was in big trouble, and that I could get a

paddle or be sent home. I opted for the paddle, but soon realized the error of my ways.

A few more fights, and I was placed in the special kids class, with the idea that more attention from teachers would lead to less fights. They didn't realize that I had no respect for any of my teachers, because they kept telling me to read instead of actually teaching me. They tried to get me to learn from a book, instead of telling me anything useful. They had this "magic star" system, which never interested me.

One morning before school started, I got into a fight, and the principal informed me I was to wait inside the office every morning until class started. Soon, I caught the attention of the lady who ran the book store. She asked me if I wanted to do something instead of sitting there like a bump on a log. I figured, what the heck, and manned up. I did odd jobs for her, and I impressed her by using my mad math skills to make change without using the calculator she gave me.

I began to behave myself a bit, not for them, but just not to be bothered. Fights still occurred, but so did people calling me fat and making fun of my hand-me-downs. I got my lunch through the free lunch program at the school, but I got most of my food from the younger kids. I wasn't a bully so much as a bodyguard, and this was protection money, not tribute. To say I was bully would be a bit harsh, considering I was constantly verbally assaulted for my weight. Before you think I'm just making stuff up or exaggerating, by high school I weighed over three hundred pounds. That kind of fat doesn't happen overnight. Most women can only manage the freshman fifteen, and the overachievers the freshman fifty.

It wasn't really a cake walk making friends: I wasn't allowed to play with the whites, because I was Jewish; I couldn't play with the blacks, because I looked white; the Jews wouldn't play with me, because I was poor. Soon after, I realized the only way I would make it was with respect, so rather than studying, I chose to fight for my respect.

Winning and losing had nothing to do with it; it wasn't personal, just for respect. Needless to say, my fighting didn't stop at school: it took place everywhere, from Boy Scouts to synagogues.

I didn't enjoy hurting people, I just enjoyed letting them know I could. It got to the point where I realized I had nothing to lose by acting out and nothing to gain by playing it straight. I must say, however, no matter how bad the fights were, weapons like guns and knives were never thought of: we settled it with our fists.

As far as school work, it got done. I would race the class to see who could finish assignments first, and most of the time I won. Homework was done if there was nothing on TV, or if it was raining, or my grandfather would force me to do it before he took me out to dinner. I never gained much from homework; I always thought it was useless, just like class work. In fact, to this day I believe I learned more watching TV and movies than I ever picked up in any class, no matter what the topic was.

My experiences in life made it so that there were no expectations for me to meet, and most people figured that I'd drop out or work in some factory screwing the caps on bottles. My brother was still at the Jewish school and wasn't much help when it came to anything really, except he could cook a mean dinner. I once took an IQ test, and I took my time to make sure I missed everything. I was told a pidgin had a high learning potential than me, and with that I was forced in to resource classes again and told to visit a doctor in order to help out with my psyche.

At graduation, I was forced to carry the American flag for the ceremony in full Boy Scout uniform. There was one slight problem: as I was preparing to bring the flag in, I discovered my zipper was broke. Unsure of how to cover it up or to limit my embarrassment, I simply tucked my shirt in and pulled it through my fly. I know, it looked as stupid as it sounds, but it made sense at the time. There are still people to this day upset with me for disrespecting the flag. I meant no disrespect, but I

was a kid trying to avoid embarrassment the only way I knew: through a little humor.

I learned that when some people don't get a joke, they believe you have issues and need to be placed on medication, in order to control your bizarre behavior. I made my way through my elementary school with one thought: just get out of this place. It smelled funny, and anywhere has got to be better.

One thing that does stick out was a fight I had at the end of third grade, with a kid by the name of Clarence. Normally this would not bother me, except that over the summer, he jumped into one of his neighbor's pool. Unfortunately for him, the pool had no water in it, and he died. After this, I made it a point to be civil towards those I was accustomed to fighting. My disrespect for teachers grew, though, as they refused to answer my questions that had good points, but they thought were incoherent.

Around the age of 8, I got to meet my father for the first time, when me and my brother flew to California. I was unsure of many things, but I soon

learned that most of the things my mother told me weren't exactly true, but rather slightly exaggerated. When I got back to Memphis from the summer away, I realized how much life sucked in Memphis and how much cooler my life would be in California, living with my father.

I started acting out in strange ways, like sleeping under my bed with the hopes that people would think I ran a way in the middle of the night. One replaying memory in my mind was when my brother and I pissed off the woman we called mom, and she threw a package of frozen hotdogs at us. Luckily, my cat-like reflexes kicked in, and I dodged the flying dogs, but the window wasn't nearly as lucky. Of course, since it was my mom, me and my brother were blamed for physically forcing her to throw the damn hotdogs at us.

I hate to make it seem like I was physically abused growing up. In truth, I was abused, but it was mostly the psychological abuse Jewish mothers are so good at. The grandparents were cool. When I misbehaved too badly, I was forced to ride with my

grandfather on his sales calls through a bunch of one-horse towns in Mississippi and Arkansas. Talk about a boring trip: the most fun I had was collecting rocks, while he was inside playing gin in exchange for sales. Now on the weekends, my grandparents and I would sit around and play cards; at one point I won my grandfather's car, but since I wasn't 12 yet, I let him keep it.

I remember hearing the stories of my grandparents and their parents regarding the race riots and the strike that brought the great Martin Luther King, Jr. to Memphis, only to meet his demise. I can tell you that my grandparents had nothing but respect for African-Americans, at time when whites would not hire a Jew or pay a black a decent wage. They would often hire blacks over whites, with the full knowledge that the white supremacists would go after their business. At a time when many Jews only hired family, my grandparents would hire blacks and paid them more than their own family members, because they felt they needed it more.

These were the values I understood and came to believe in, despite the racism inherent in the city of Memphis. You can say I grew up in Memphis at a unique time, when the first black mayor came to power, and the great white flight took place. As an outsider, I understood what was going on, what went on, and what was never talked about.

Chapter 3

Mental Evaluations

Before I enrage people by stating my unique stance on mental health, I will tell you this much: I believe in the words of Jimmy Buffett, that “If we weren’t all crazy, we would go insane.” Being labeled ADD and ADHD ahead of the modern craze, I was given a couple drugs with conflicting effects, so I can speak with authority to mental health problems in the world. The way I see it, I’m the only sane person on the planet: everybody else is as loony as a fruit cake.

That being said, I was considered a trouble maker, a class clown, a bully, an outsider, call me what you will. I never held a grudge; a fight was a fight, and it ended when it ended. In class, I dreamt of the days gone by that we heard about in history, when men were men, and pride was something to die for. Now grade school fights, bad combinations of behavior-controlling drugs, and the trip to visit my father in California at the age of 8 did little but

confuse me as to what the point was of modern times. Were men supposed to be men? Were they supposed to be chicken shits that picked little pellets out of bowls and shat all over themselves? I was all confused, and I wasn't the only one.

The family began going to counseling at a local center, but I acted out when I figured out that the councilors predetermined that my mother was all-knowing and truthful in describing me as the source of all the problems in the family. I was pissed off, rightfully so, but my attitude led to more doctors, more pills, and eventually I was placed in a mental facility.

It was all fun and games in the group therapy sessions. I had yet to hit puberty, and the teenagers in the room were struggling with sex, drugs, and other mental issues. Like the kids who were cutting themselves, or the guy who was Jonesing for a fix. I was the one who would call people out and mention that they were retarded, or offering the crack-head the idea to turn prostitute for \$5 a lay.

Everyone else in there, excluding the staff, knew I didn't belong. I was just a kid with serious problems, not crazy. I didn't roll my shit into little balls and laugh at them. I remember nothing good of this place. They asked me to share my feelings, but then said I was irrational and bizarre.

Now after spending the better half of two years in and out of this facility, I emerged a drugged-up zombie. No feelings, drooling at the mouth for my next dose of lithium and Prozac, and the four other drugs I was on. I was put in that white room you so often hear about, but probably never seen. I can tell you that I would often use the corner to relieve myself, so they would be forced to sanitize the room, which meant they couldn't put me back in the room for a couple of days.

I spent most of my days and nights staring at the walls, trying to plan my escape. In my time in restraints, I managed to slip out of the four on my hands and ankles, but that damn belt just wouldn't have any of it. I spent years under the notion that I was ill because my family said so, and to this day I

believe they still think I'm nuts. What was so bizarre about a boy at age 12 or 13 running away from home, or camping in the storage shed, because he didn't want or need his parents to teach him how to live like they did? I did my best to fit in, but never did. Throughout all the counseling and what not, I learned that there are screwed up people in this world, and in their view I was one of them.

My own faults were there. I screwed up, but still, I couldn't have been this first kid kicked out of Boy Scouts for lack of a proper family name. I worked hard at recalling all the details of my life, before trying to take it at the age 13. I went for the gold a couple of times before it was cool, or a way for whiny kids to seek attention. Somehow, I felt my mother would find a way to benefit from all the attention, and like hell I was going to let her get the last word in. All else being equal, if I had the means, I would have offed myself many times over.

Instead, I knew my only chance to keep any of my sanity was to get out, and knowing that I would never be declared sane by the doctors, I had

to find another way. I said to myself, “Let’s go for the one thing that they would never expect,” so I yelled rape. At first, I just yelled that I was getting beaten, and that led to some rather sensitive questions. But I saw that just getting hurt by the people there wasn’t going to cut it.

But then the woman questioning me asked if I was abused sexually. I was silent for a minute, and then I went for the waterworks, followed by the silent nod. For someone of my stature, at the time my actions and attention to detail was just unheard of. Nowadays, kids come equipped with scripts to handle this situation, but I had to wing it. I alleged that a staff member tried to rape me, and within twelve hours, I was home in my own bed.

What a whirlwind that was. I was still playing a saved video game in my head. I was forced into more psycho drama, but it was different this time: I was the one with the power. I learned their tricks and picked up a few of my own along the way, at least enough to fake it. It took me a while to come clean, but when I did nobody ever

questioned my sanity again. I did what I did to survive. I'm a Mother Fucking Survivalist™! Yeah, people got hurt, but I survived, and that's really all that counted.

I was sent to a school for retards and rich drug-addicts who had issues. I proved myself not mentally retarded, but I was extremely socially unacceptable. Despite being obese, smelling really bad, and have the luck of extremely bad timing when telling jokes, I made a few friends. It was only through exercising all my power and determination was I able to get out of that damn place. I knew I had to separate myself from that kid who ate his brownies with the plastic wrapper still on.

You read that right. I asked why he did it like that once. "So that it lasts longer." Now I asked myself, how the Hell did I get here, and then I realized every stunt that I pulled, all the things I was doing to be cool really weren't working. I really didn't have any friends, and I was stuck in this school for retards.

I recall transferring to another city school mid-year. When I got there, the rumors circulated that I was a pyromaniac. Now I was still big on defending my honor, and ass-kicking was still served on the menu. I walked out of an art class on my first day, and had I not held my book up fast enough, my nose might have been broken. Had I not used my book as a hammer before pushing some wanna be gangsta into a locker, I would have had a rather rough time at my new school.

My second day, some kid walks up to me at lunch and says, “You think your hot shit, don’t you?” and spit on my lunch. So I got up, threw the lunch in his face, and just then I was restrained by one of the monitors in the lunch room, who pulled me to the side of the cafeteria. Which also happened to have a pile of 2x4s lying around.

(end excerpt)