

VCR CIA

by Katie Norton

When VCRs were invented in the 1970s, the first big user segment was people who wanted to watch porno films in the comfort of their own home. Troy and Lynn's upstairs neighbor, James, an enlisted man in the Navy stationed at Pearl Harbor, had a vast porn collection, both VCR tapes and magazines. The magazines were nothing like Playboy. These were on cheap paper, crudely stapled together, badly printed. The girls featured in them were pitiful and no airbrushing hid the genital warts, bruises and needle tracks.

Troy borrowed a few of the magazines just to show Lynn mainly because they were so bizarre. He was not interested in porn. Troy had the face of a movie star with the body of a pro athlete and he was constantly being hit on by women of all sorts, including women who looked as good as he did. Troy had access to the real thing anytime he wanted it, so he had no interest in looking at *pictures* of naked women.

James loaned Troy a few porno movies to try out on the new VCR, which Lynn watched out of curiosity, never having seen one before. They featured less than gorgeous actors and not much by way of plot, *i.e.*: Doorbell rings, pizza delivery. Lady answers the door, invites deliveryman in, puts the pizza on the counter. They rip off their clothes and have sex on the living room sofa. The end.

One of Troy's friends named Jeff, whose life should have turned out better than it did, except that Jeff's father was a CIA agent whose brain was snapped by the LSD experiments in the 1960s, decided to go into the porno movie business for himself. Jeff talked Troy into being the cameraman. With Jeff's new video camera that he stole from a tourist, he and Troy cruised the clubs of Waikiki in the late afternoons (while Lynn was at work as a secretary downtown, earning an honest buck) and propositioned women into becoming porno actresses in their home made movies. Jeff, who was tall and nice looking and apparently hung like a horse, although Lynn never saw this for herself, was going to act in the movies,

while Troy would operate the camera. The plan was to sell the movies and get rich.

Alas, the plan failed. They had no trouble picking up women sipping vodka collins drinks garnished with orange slices and maraschino cherries, that being one of the most popular drinks of the time, in the deep afternoon shadows of the poolside cocktail lounges. But Troy said he felt like a pervert filming his friend fucking them. He quickly bowed out of the project. Jeff had no clue how to do film editing, marketing or distribution. A grandiose scheme that went awry.

After this, Jeff got himself a Pontiac station wagon and a generic workingman's uniform and clipboard. He would take the Pontiac out to the suburban neighborhood of Hawaii Kai during the day when 99% of the occupants were at work miles away in downtown Honolulu. Jeff would proceed to burglarize as many homes as he could, casually appearing to be a termite inspector or some such.

Jeff's other scam was to walk down the street in Waikiki trying the handles on every parked car to see if anybody left their car unlocked with something worth stealing inside. Jeff looked like an Ivy-league WASP, but had the heart of a thief.

Jeff's girlfriend was one of the most beautiful girls Lynn had ever seen, a Korean named Sally. You just wanted to stare at her, she was so pretty. Sally was pregnant with Jeff's child and she had a job at Liberty House Department Store, where the poor thing had to stand on her feet all day. Sally lived with her parents. Lynn asked her what they thought of Jeff, and Sally just shrugged. Lynn never did see their baby because Jeff, fearing that the cops were hot on his trail from all the burglaries, up and split for Alaska and Sally retreated to the bosom of her Korean family. Jeff gave the Pontiac to Troy when he left.

Lynn couldn't imagine that Jeff did very well in Alaska, as he was the type of bullshit artist who would get the shit beat out of him by the manly men up there. Lynn would have liked to see how their child turned out. Sally always said, "Hapas are the most beautiful."

Jeff's father looked like a conservative retired army colonel. Retired military guys were a dime-a-dozen in Honolulu. Jeff's father had the erect posture, brush cut hair, neatly pressed khaki pants. But when he opened his mouth, he was a raving, babbling lunatic, spewing nonsense. He called himself Merlin and he had a younger girlfriend, a crazy hippie-intellectual chick from LA, named Anita. She said she was a screenwriter who was going to tell Merlin's story. Merlin claimed to have been a CIA officer (he still looked the part) and that the CIA had performed LSD experiments on him back in the early 60s. The listener had to fish out this information and slowly reach this conclusion amid his torrent of crazy talk. The CIA had snapped his mind, warped his brain.

Merlin and Anita were quasi-homeless, living in a weird warehouse building full of artists in Kaimuki. It was not a legal residential building, but was a place where the artists created art and hid from the authorities. Anita shepherded Merlin around town, while he ranted about the CIA to anyone who would listen. It was stuff that was too crazy to be made up and so Lynn believed him. Merlin died of a fast-growing cancer before she could find out more. Years later Lynn read a series of articles about CIA experiments in the 1960s. The CIA had clandestinely dosed their own agents with very high doses of LSD, as an experiment to see how much they could handle, if for example, they were captured by the commies and drugged, except the CIA didn't tell the people they were dosing. The poor saps thought they were going nuts for no reason.

