Corkscrewing, Pt. II.

by Smiley McGrouchpants, Jr-Esq-III

Yeah, o.k., Ben, if that's your name, sure I'm into Scorsese, I guess, I taped *After Hours* during one of those "free preview" weekends, typed a label for the VHS tape with the running time and rating and year and title like I did for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Back to the Future* and *Gandhi* (which I never really watched, all the way through) like the little nerd I was . . . yeah, me and my "O-Week hookup," Kathy, saw *Goodfellas* the first week of school, she's still my friend, no regrets there, either way, can't say the same for *you*, supposed to last only the first week of school, anyway, and here you are, two weeks-or-so into Winter Quarter, and you're *still* together . . . she's glaring at you from elsewhere in the laundry room. I just came down to do my laundry, and get sucked into this shit . . . sure, *I'll* save your ass. I'm sure it's not due to unresolved boundary-loss issues emanating from your well-off and indulgent family, which don't *travel* well, up-to-and-including your losing your virginity in an eighth-grade ménage-à-trois involving your older-brother's friend and his wife, during which "*he* had a good time," nothing to break you in like "desultory" fucking, maybe he wanted to make you *bisexual*, like him, so he wouldn't have to deal with being *gay*, which would be difficult, anyway, during the mid-to-late 80's . . . sure, how am I supposed to *know* any of this shit? Or even *guess* at it? Yeah, I like Martin Scorsese's pictures . . . You *got* me, there!

So, you "*know* we'll be 'close'?" Well, just put your hand on my knee, alone in my room, perv, unasked-and-unflirted for, go get a *date*, you coward, you limp-dicked male bitch . . . but, of *course*, it's through so many guises, not least of all fatherly concern, which is sorely *lacking* in my life, yup, I had to grab the reins when I was six years old, jump between him and his poor-match of a wife when he said he was going to "fucking kill" her . . . well, then he went to the couch, it was almost trite, "duh, the kids are there, I guess I should calm

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down . . . " Way it was in my house. "Not in front of the children" only ever occurs to *adults* . . . yeah, it's pretty taxing raising three kids while you're growing yourself. Sure. Why not. Take the reins.

I never told you where my nickname came from, to begin with. Mr. Price — in one of the boldest movies I've ever seen a teacher even do — dropped it on me, in the middle of class (there was already a kid named Keith Tobin, whom everyone called "Tobes") so that it'd be deployed with a jarring burst of laughter and recognition, making me instantly "identifiable" rather than a loner, odd man out, most kids did the whole K-12 route at our private school or showed up at 9th grade, there was a big influx then you could hide yourself in . . . Two of the three of us who showed up, out-of-step, in 8th grade, didn't come back. He nodded his head to me, briefly, as we all exited the class, a nod of approval and endorsement, a way of saying *You're safe, now*, as though I had a life preserver to float with, and never mentioned it again . . . Of course, I *had* to start a year early, since, even though I had been getting *nineties* in public-school 7th grade, and I was in *Level 5* all year, the accelerated program they bothered to break us out into, that's *ignorable* . . . the dad I had, just looked at me, in front of other adults at the preliminary interview, and said "Well, if you can come up with a *reason* . . . " See aforementioned. Let *alone* the resulting missteps Mr. Price helped with, and/or not being able to finish junior-high with my public-school friends . . . Where to start? Like I *can't* tell when I'm not being listened to, anyway. Part of the reason I couldn't *wait* to be fully grown all through my childhood, since "Don't hurt *our* feelings!" took precedence over anything like logic, long-term thinking, or non-selfserving "love" . . . oh, you spoiled brat, you find my high-school nickname patronizingly funny? Revive it. After all — and you can't stop mouthing off about it — we all know how "liberal" you are . . . Right. *Not* "unfeeling"! I get it.

Good thing the car broke down, on our way to St. Louis, your home turf. Don't know what you were *really* planning on pulling, down

there, but it was kinda weird how, as my anxiety about being away from Chicago only increased the further we got, the crescendo almost seemed to bring *about* the collapse of whatever-it-was in the engine that made us pull over to the side of the road. What a relief! Maybe even *enough* of my own Karma's still with me, not eroded by other persons. As if.

Congratulations! You graduated Phi Beta Kappa. Now you get granddaddy's promised trust fund (I'd have to guess . . . Why else even *bother* telling me, "granddaddy didn't like it" when you changed your last name to "Rape"?). Glad we saw all those indie movies, all but *vocating*, together, just so your could make a "Sex Ed" video where your spread yous rectum wide. Glad I don't get those years back, and am left in the lurch. Glad I can't *sue* you, for even a portion of that Trust Fund . . . Can I?

THE END