

I am standing along the top of a rocky cliff, looking down upon the ocean. Along the coastline I see a couple playing in the water. They are young, perhaps each 17 years. They are in love, probably the first time that they have been in love. Oh, sure they may have had crushes before, but this time is for real; they can feel it. they play a while in the waves, and laugh with each other. These days should last forever. After a while they go back onto the shore and lie in each others arms. They wisper sweet nothings in each others ears. They lie ther for an hour, then get up and go to where Jons car is parked, a mile and a half or so from the beach. It is a red '64 VW microbus. Jon just had it painted, the original job was getting to be preatty worn. The engine is still working as good as ever. A VW is a good car to have. Jon bought his car for \$1575.00 from a man named Winston, three and a half months ago. Winston wanted to buy a new car; a toyota compact. That's not the reason he sold the microbus though. It had too many memories, he would rather forget. He got it spanking new in the summer of '64 and decided to travel the country with his friends Paul and Juan. They left from Boston, where they had all been going to school. Actually Paul had graduated the previous spring, while Juan and Winston were still both still Juniors. The three of them set out for the west coast, mostly just to get away from where they were. They left at the beginning of July. They were somewhere in the middle of Kansas on July 4; Some little town with a population of 200 or some such absurd number. No fireworks of parades here. They went to the local liquor store and got a case of Budweiser, and got good and drunk to celebrate the 188th aniversary of the signing of the declaration of independence. Paul and Winston were sitting out in the middle of field which was somewhere indefinately between plantings at about three oclock that morning (Juan having passed

out in the back of the VW microbus), just about finishing the second case. They went back later that night and pounded on the doors of the local liquor store until the owner finally let them in to buy another case of Budweiser. The local liquor store closed promptly every night at 10:30, as it was one of those kind of towns. Winston and Paul didn't get there until 10:40, but they were willing to keep pounding on the doors until they came a tumblin' down, or as actually happened the owner let them in. In this field at three o'clock they heard noises that city slickers like themselves had never noticed before. The sounds of the crickets, and the owls, and a coyote howling at the moon, and the wind whistling, and a lot of things they couldn't identify, which scared them more than they liked. After a while they got bored and went back to the car. Before they left Paul dropped a cigarette butt in the field, which smoldered for a while and about the time of sunrise caught the weeds around it on fire. The fire spread and led to the biggest fire in Grass Creek in fourteen years. Neither Paul nor Winston ever found out about the fire, as they left town in the night. However, while leafing through some old papers in 1971, for his graduate study, Juan noticed a small article on the fire, and by chance it connected in his brain that he was there on that night. It didn't really stay in Juan's mind very long though, as he had a lot of work to get done before his thesis would be ready.

The group got to L.A. three days later, along with a couple of hitchhikers they picked up along the way. One of the hitchhikers was a woman named Pam Greenlee. She was going to visit a friend, Jannette, who was going through the summer session at UCLA. She had the summer off, so she figured she might as well take off. California seemed like a sort of Mecca to her. Jannette committed suicide years later to get out of a miserably unhappy marriage.

Jannette was married in 1970 to Horace Brigmann. Horace was the owner of a successful hardware store. However, less than a year after their marriage Horace's store was severely damaged by a flood in the Colorado river, caused by a dam breaking. His insurance was not nearly adequate to cover the damage and after a number of small misfortunes he was forced to sell the store. It was around this time that Horace started to drink heavily. It was also around this time that their son Jimmy Brigmann was born. His birth didn't help anything any. Horace hadn't really wanted a son yet, and he felt inadequate to support his son, having lost his store. He let out his frustration on Jannette, by beating her. At first he just slapped her occasionally. But it grew continually worse, until Jannette's eventual tragic suicide.

After Jannette's death, the court ruled Horace incompetent as a parent. After going through several foster homes, Jimmy was adopted by Fred and Cheri Schmidt. The Schmidt's were unable to have children due to an accident that Cheri was in as a young child which did irreparable damage to her ovaries. Jimmy was two and a half years old at the time of his adoption.