

TRUER WORDS WERE *NEVER...*

(A Movie adapted from the book)

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TRUER WORDS WERE *NEVER...* Scenes

THERE'S ONLY ONE DONALD

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THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

THE HARDEST THING YOU'LL EVER LEARN

LUCKIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD

LAUGHING

I'M GOING QUACKY

WINNING TICKET

ODE TO FIFI

MOMMY'S JINA

DON'T TELL THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BLUEJAY STORIES

GO KNOW

SECRETS, WHO NEEDS 'EM

DISGUSTING ANIMA

THE ANSWER

THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT TISIDNEY

THERE'S ONLY ONE DONALD

EXT: Beautiful spring day: Duck pond: SIDNEY and his four-and-a-half year old son, Lewis getting into car: Lewis is excited: 1

LEWIS

Are those ducks really like Donald Duck,
SIDNEY?

SIDNEY

They don't speak English as well as
(Smiles.)
Donald does, but they're definitely related,
Lewis. But don't tell anyone, that's a secret.

Arriving at duck pond Lewis eyes gleamed as thousands of ducks swam peacefully in the pond. 2

LEWIS

(Screams with delight.)

There they are, I can't wait to play with
them and feed them, Dad.

SIDNEY

Here's a couple of slices of white bread.
When they come up to you, break off a little
piece and throw it to them.

LEWIS

(Scampers off to the pond.)

Great, Daddy!

SIDNEY

meets a neighbor and starts talking, disregarding Lewis: 3

Suddenly, the peace and serenity of the normally tranquil duck pond was destroyed as SIDNEY hears a chorus of angry quacks. 4

Turning to see what caused all the tumult, I spotted nine million crazed ducks in pursuit of my dear little boy who was still holding the bread in his hand and running for dear life. 5

SIDNEY

(Shouting.)

Throw the bread! Throw the bread.

Luckily, he threw all the bread and so the ducks forgot about eating him and ate the white bread instead. 6

LEWIS

(Tears in eyes. Whimpers.)

I forgot, Dad. I want to go home, he
And you're wrong, SIDNEY, they're not like
Donald Duck at all.

WHERE'S THE TV?

CUT: Coming home late from a night out, LESLIE and SIDNEY casually got undressed and into bed. Wanting to watch the eleven o'clock news, SIDNEY went to turn the T.V. on, but was amazed to find it wasn't there. 7

SIDNEY

(Annoyed.)

Where's the T.V., Leslie,? Where's the
T.V?

LESLIE

(Belligerent.)

What are you asking SIDNEY for? You
shut it off last night, didn't you?

SIDNEY

I shut it off?! You shut it off!

After arguing for about an hour as to who shut the T.V. off, they look at each other and realized they were robbed. 8

LESLIE

I don't believe...

LESLIE and SIDNEY

WE WERE ROBBED!

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

CUT: 1975, Lewis is 5 years old: WE see THEM move from Manhattan to a lily-white suburban community in New Jersey.. 9

One day during the spring, LEWIS comes home from school, crying hysterically. 10

SIDNEY

(Concerned, puts Lewis on knee.)

What's the matter, Choppy?

LEWIS

There was this little cute black boy that came to School for the first day, and on

WE see what is being described: 11

the way home, all the kids made a circle around him and started calling him names and laughing at him. He was really crying, Daddy, he was really crying.

LEWIS cried as if the entire world had beseeched him. 12

SIDNEY

Well, why are you crying?

LEWIS

I couldn't leave him all alone, could I

WE see what is being described: 13

Daddy? So, I got in the circle, held his hand and said I would be his friend. If I was black or purple and, had lots of pimples,

(Cries.)

would you still love SIDNEY, SIDNEY?

SIDNEY

I'll love you forever, no matter how many

(HUGS Lewis.)

pimples you get. I'm very proud of you Lewis, very proud.

14

THE HARDEST THING YOU'LL EVER LEARN

INT: ALL finish Sunday breakfast: Six year-old LEWIS, yellow shorts and a shirt to match: It triggers SIDNEY into whistling a song HE had always loved; "The Yellow submarine," Halfway through it, HE is dismayed to see LEWIS crying like there was no tomorrow. 15

SIDNEY

What's the matter? You don't like the song, what's wrong?

LEWIS

Oh, I like the song, SIDNEY, it's just that I don't know how to....

SIDNEY

You don't know how to do what?

LEWIS

(Sobs.)

I don't know how to whistle, I don't know how to whistle.

SIDNEY

Oh, whistling is one of the hardest things you'll ever learn. "It takes many years of practice, but I promise, if you keep trying, sooner or later you'll whistle even better than Daddy.

LEWIS

Teach me how to whistle, will you Dad? I want to whistle just like you.

SIDNEY

Remember, it's one of the hardest things you'll ever learn, but if you keep trying, one day, Bingo!

LEWIS

I know Dad, I know it's very hard, but if you

don't teach SIDNEY right now, I'll probably be too old to learn."

SIDNEY

Okay Choppy, the first thing you do is put your lips together like this and you blow kind of softly.

LEWIS

Wait a minute Dad, birds don't have lips and they whistle, don't they?

SIDNEY

Don't be such a wise-guy and do what I say.

Lewis tries and tries, but to no avail. After perhaps twenty minutes of utter futility, LEWIS says: 16

LEWIS

I'm going to ride my bike with my friends, Dad. See ya.

SIDNEY Cont'd)

(Lewis preparing to scoot away.)

17

Don't forget, it's one of the hardest things you'll ever learn.

LEWIS

(Sighs.)

18

I know Dad, I'll practice every day, I

(Riding off.)

19

promise.

SIDNEY (VO)

For the next two or three months I made sure not to whistle in his presence and he made sure not to mention it. Soon, it appeared that whistling had become a thing of the past, until one morning, as I was driving my family to visit my parents, when, much to my delight, I suddenly heard whistling emanate from the back of the car. Delighted, I turned to see my proud son

whistling his little head off. But, not only was he able to do so by blowing out, he was able to whistle by inhaling.

SIDNEY

Lewis, how did you ever learn to whistle like that?

LEWIS

Oh, whistling like that is one of the hardest things you'll ever learn, Dad. But if you practice everyday, I promise, sooner or later you'll get it and you'll whistle even better than me.

SIDNEY

Promise?

LEWIS

Promise, Dad, if I can do it, I'm sure, with a little luck, you'll get it too."

LUCKIEST GIRL in the WORLD

INT: Bathroom, shower: Daughter CARIE, six years old, drying her hair. 20

SIDNEY

Did Daddy ever show you how he can make his neck grow?

CARIE

Oh, show me Daddy, please show me.

SIDNEY, lowers his shoulders and slowly raises HIS neck and its appears to grow, and finally he raises it and it appears to grow six inches. CARIE sees SIDNEY'S neck grow, she laughs so hard that she pees. Realizing that she had peed in front of her father, she became so embarrassed that she cries.

SIDNEY

(Hugging Carie.)

What are you crying about, sweetheart? Why you're the luckiest little girl in the whole

21

world.

CARIE

(Crying even more.)

22

Why am I so lucky?"

SIDNEY

Because most people say they laughed so hard, that they peed in their pants, but you were actually lucky enough to laugh so hard that you did. If I was you, I'd tell all my friends how lucky you are.

CARIE

(Kisses SIDNEY.)

23

You're my favorite SIDNEY in the whole world and would you please make your neck grow again.

SIDNEY stretches makes neck grow and CARIE laughs even harder.

24

LAUGHING

SIDNEY (VO)

Being a Daddy has always been the most rewarding experience of my life, and being some sort of frustrated comedian, I've strived teaching my children the importance of laughter. When my daughter Carie was two years old, not only did she understand English, she spoke it beautifully. Despite her verbal prowess, she was so skinny that her diaper was always falling off, because it was just too big for her; thus everything she deposited in it, would fall out. One day, I decided it was time for a laugh. As Carie and I walked to her room, I pointed to all the small brown pellets that appeared to be scattered everywhere.

SIDNEY

(Stoops and picked up a little brown pellet.)

What's that? Sure looks like doody to me.

(Smells it.)

Sure smells like doody to me,

(CARIE cringes as I taste it.)

Oh, my God, it is doody. Here Carie, since you made it, I only think it's fair you taste it too. Come on, open that mouth of yours!

Carie looks at SIDNEY and is horrified and starts to scamper all over the house. 25

SIDNEY finally catches her, grabs her and makes her open her mouth. 26

CARIE

Please Daddy, I don't want to.

SIDNEY

Taste it! If I tasted it, YOU have to taste it!

CARIE

(Having tasted it. Smiles.)

27

It's an M & M SIDNEY,"

SIDNEY

What did you think it was, doody?

I'M GOING QUACKY

SIDNEY (VO)

When we moved from Manhattan to the suburbs, I suddenly found myself becoming enthralled with nature. The trees never looked more beautiful, and I found myself staring at the squirrels, raccoons, skunks and all the other wild creatures that I had the fortune to observe on my own property. Having been raised in the Bronx, I felt I was blessed to have the privilege to observe Mother Nature's children from my own back yard. During the summer, I felt even more blessed when we awoke one summery

morning to spot two ducks swimming in our pool. At first I was euphoric, but soon as they pooped in my clean pool, suddenly I wasn't that euphoric.

SIDNEY

(Shouting.)

Lewis!" Would you please get those damn ducks out of the pool?!

LEWIS

(Ala Tarzan.)

Sure Dad. AAAAA!

Eleven years old, flexing scrawny muscles. belly-whops into pool.

28

SIDNEY

Those disillusioned quackers must have been petrified, because they just they flew off into the horizon. Anyway, good work Lew. That'll teach those ducks they can't poop in our pool.

LEWIS

(Smiles.)

Any time you need SIDNEY Dad, just call.

29

The following morning. SIDNEY is dismayed seeing the two ducks swimming and pooping in his pool. SIDNEY screams LEWIS and once again LEWIS flexes his muscles, repeats Tarzan's mantra and dives into the pool and once those two ducks take off like a shot out of hell.

30

CUT: Seven days in-a-row and then years on end , those two rotten ducks appear every morning. Frustrated, as a last resort, SIDNEY calls the nature center and asks for help.

31

SIDNEY

(On phone.)

Are you saying that if I catch them you'll transport those miserable ducks up state for \$50? LEWIS!

32

LEWIS comes scampering in: 33

LEWIS

You rang, master

SIDNEY

Lewis, I just spoke to the nature center and they said if you catch those rotten ducks, they'll transport them up state and I figure, what-the-heck, for \$50 it'll be worth it.

LEWIS, runs and gets a net, jumps in the pool and captures the ducks, by immediately throwing a net over them. 34

LEWIS

Wow much do you thinks it's worth, risking my life to capture those deadly ducks, Dad?

SIDNEY

How does twenty bucks sound?

CUT: Having captured them, LEWIS put them in a cardboard box: 35

THEY drive them to the nature center: 36

SIDNEY (Cont'd)

I hope I'll never see those ducks again!

CLERK

You won't, I promise, now where the \$50?

Writes and give check: 37

SIDNEY

Here, good riddance and goodbye.

Driving home: 38

CUT: Beautiful summer day: SIDNEY talking to myself, walking on property: 39

SIDNEY

I can't tell you how wonderful it felt not having to awaken every morning to those two unwanted guests. For the rest of the summer, I convinced myself everyday that I couldn't have spent fifty dollars any wiser. The following summer, much to my chagrin, they were back, pooping and prancing around as if they were paying the mortgage. There was no way I was going to spend another fifty to get rid of them, no way. I just did my impersonation of Tarzan and screamed and splashed water and eventually they would fly away, but they would return the following morning as if I never screamed at all, and then a miracle; in addition to those two misbegotten son-of-a-ducks, there was now seven little ducklings swimming around as if they owned the place. If they all made in my pool at the same time, I was certain that the Board of Health would condemn it and what

(Screams.)

would the neighbors think? Lewis, get those rotten ducks out of there before I get a shotgun!

Without bothering to flex his muscles, Lewis threw the net and managed to snare all the ducklings as their frightened parents flew away. 40

LEWIS

(Smiling.)

They're not ducks, they're chickens.

(Male duck dive bombs him.)

I can't believe it Dad, they're attacking ME.

The mother duck swooped down on him. He raced into the garage with the little ducklings and prayed for survival. 41

SIDNEY

(Outraged.)

Hello, nature center? I gave you \$50 to send a couple of lunatic ducks up state, and they're back! Are you saying that if I could capture them they would gladly transport them up state for a seventy-five dollar donation... No thanks, I think I might just have them for dinner. That's right, for dinner!

WINNING TICKET

SIDNEY, SONNIE and her husband EDDIE are in Yonkers Raceway:

42

SIDNEY

Wow, to celebrate my eighteenth birthday, I can't believe that you took me to Yonkers Raceway! Am I excited because it's first time I ever gone to the track. Sand since, I didn't know anything about horses, I guess you'll have to pick them, Sonnie because I don't want to lose.

SONNIE

If you insist.

EDDIE

I hate to tell you this, Sidney, but we always lose.

SIDNEY

What should I bet on, Eddie?

EDDIE

I don't what to bet on either. I'm just your brother-in-law. Ask your sister.

SONNIE

Since I'm your older sister, I got a great idea. Let's bet the one horse in the first race, the two horse in the second race and so on.

EDDIE

Since none of are real horseplayers, I think we should all pool our money and do what my beloved wife Sonnie says.

SIDNEY

Since you're the prettiest, Sonnie, why don't you hold the tickets for good luck?"

SIDNEY

We lost the first six races, Sonnie.

SONNIE

We only need one big winner, Sidney.

EDDIE

It's the seventh race and number seven is fifty-to-one. Sidney, take our six dollars, kiss it and go make the bet.

SIDNEY kisses the six dollars and buys tickets: 43

SIDNEY

(Gives tickets.)

Here, you kiss them for good luck, Sonnie.

SONNIE kisses. Tickets: 44

The race, neck and neck and number seven wins by a nose: 45

SIDNEY, SONNIE and EDDIE jump for joy: 46

SIDNEY, SONNIE and EDDIE

(Screaming.)

We won, we won!

Just as SONNIE proudly displays the winning ticket, a pigeon pooped right on it. 47

SONNIE

(Beaming, offering the winning ticket.)

48

Here! Since I picked the winner, the least you can do is collect the money, Sidney.

ODE TO FIFI**SIDNEY****(Aside.)****49**

Instead of dedicating his life to his children, like most normal people do, my best friend Bernie, dedicated his life to his French poodle, whom, he called Fifi. Like Mary and her little lamb, everywhere Bernie went, Fifi was sure to follow.

BERNIE

How much is two and two, Fifi?

FIFI

Arf, arf, arf, arf!

BERNIE

Now roll over and play dead.

FIFI rolls over and plays dead.**50****BERNIE**

There isn't a trick in the world that my beloved Fifi can't do.

SIDNEY**(Aside.)**

He's probably right, but I still hate that dog, because every fifteen minutes that mutt has to pee. That's right, like clock work, that dog pees four times an hour, and I figured it out, if that dog was up fifteen hours, that's sixty times a day, over three thousand times a year. Disgusting, you know what I mean? Absolutely revolting.

(To Bernie., moaning.)

You have to be crazy. Every week, every week, we can't have a descent conversation without being interrupted by this leaking mutt!

SIDNEY**(Aside.)**

Despite it all, we still manage to remain friends for the next fourteen years.

BERNIE

Listen buddy, mother took ill and would you take care of Fifi for a couple of days? I'd sure appreciate it.

SIDNEY

Sure, Bernie, what are best friends for? But don't expect me to walk her every fifteen minutes, like you do. I'll put some paper in a box in the garage and that's where she's going to stay, because I have to go to work and I'm sure if I let her stay in the house, she'll pee all over everything and you know how crazy my wife Leslie would get.

BERNIE**(Hugs SIDNEY.)**

I really appreciate this Buddy. I'll be back before you know it. Now take good care of my baby,. Come on Fifi, one last time. How much is two and nine?

51**FIFI barks eleven times:****52****BERNIE (Cont'd)**

Be back in a flash. She's a regular Einstein, isn't she?

53**SIDNEY**

At first, I didn't bring her into the garage. Like a fool, I brought her into my sterile house and my children, including my wife immediately started playing with her.

CARIE rolls a ball and Fifi fetches it. LESLIE claps her hands and Fifi does a somersault.

54

SIDNEY

Ya know honey, that's the one trick that Bernie taught Fifi which I admire. Simply because I was always to chicken to do a somersault when I dived, and here this little mutt with some kind of urinary problem had the *chutzpah* to do it at will. Now, I didn't tell you this, but when Fifi pees, she howls. Where she got that I'll never know. All I know is she howls.

LEWIS

Really, Daddy?

SIDNEY

Morning, noon or night, she howls. That's why the whole neighborhood knows when she pees. That night, every time she howled, one of my brilliant children would come running into my bedroom smiling and say,

CARIE

She peed, right Daddy?

SIDNEY

Yeah, she peed! Now go to sleep! It's one o'clock in the morning! It's third night, and with all that howling going on, I think I'm going to lose my mind, Leslie. It's every time Fifi howls, all the dogs in the neighborhood begin howling in response. I'm having nightmares that werewolves are inhabiting our abode. It's three o'clock in the morning and I've had it. If I muzzled her, it wouldn't stop her from peeing, but it sure would stop that howling and maybe I'll get a good nights rest.

LESLIE

(Afraid he'll do something rash.)

What are you going to do?

SIDNEY

(Heading for the garage.)

You'll see,"

**LESLIE, LEWIS and CARIE rubbing the sleep from their eyes, follow
SIDNEY. When THEY enter the garage, there was Fifi all sprawled out.**

55

CARIE

(Cries.)

There's something wrong with her

LEWIS

(Scared.)

She looks like she's dying, Daddy!.

LESLIE

What could it be?

SIDNEY

(Shouts.)

How the hell do I know? I just got here,
remember?! I just figured it out, damnit!
Because raccoons had broken into the garage
to get at the garbage, inadvertently, I put
some rat poison down and I just realized that
dumb leaking mutt must have eaten some. I
knew I had to make Fifi throw-up to get rid
of the poison or she would die.
Go get some salt! She must have eaten
some of that rat poison I put down.

LEWIS races to get the salt as LESLIE and CARIE whimper.

56

LESLIE

What are you going to tell Bernie if she
dies?

CARIE

Oh, Daddy, even though she pees all the

time, I really love Fifi, don't you?

LEWIS

Here's the salt Dad. Do your duty, no pun intended

SIDNEY opens Fifi's moth and pours lots of salt into it. They wait apprehensively. 57

CARIE

Think she's gonna throw up, Daddy? I sure hope so.

Fifi closed her eyes and starts foaming at the mouth. 58

CARIE (Cont'd)

(Crying.) 59

She's gonna die, Daddy, she's gonna die.

LEWIS

In every Frankenstein movie, whenever they foam at the mouth they die. So be prepared.

Fifi howled as she pee one last time, then rolls over and dies. 60

SIDNEY

Can you believe it? Without my best friend Bernie asking her to play dead, what the hell does that mutt do...?

ALL

She dies.

CARIE

(With tears.)

What are we going to tell Uncle Bernie, Daddy?

LEWIS

All he had was Fifi, Dad. He doesn't have a wife and kids like you.

SIDNEY.

I got an idea. We'll just have to go and buy him another Fifi.

LESLIE

But he'll know," he'll definitely know.

SIDNEY

Oh, yeah, well, we'll just have to see about that, won't we?

The following morning SIDNEY goes to a kennel and buys a poodle that looks exactly like Fifi: 61

Bernie returns and immediately claps his hands, and on cue, the dog jumps right into his arms. Anxious to take his beloved Fifi home, he thanks ALL for taking such good care of his beloved and quickly departed. About an hour later, he calls and sounds quite distressed. 62

SIDNEY

Bernie...? What's the matter?

BERNIE

Oh, there's nothing the matter. I just called to ask how you did it?

SIDNEY

Did what?

BERNIE

I don't believe it, but Fifi hasn't peed for an hour.

SIDNEY

You're kidding. We both know that's impossible.

BERNIE

(Remorseful.)

She also doesn't roll over and play dead anymore.

SIDNEY

I hate to say this but she is getting on in age.

BERNIE

Aren't we all, partner, aren't we all.

SIDNEY

Which do you prefer? Her peeing four times
an hour or rolling over and playing dead

BERNIE

I guess you're right buddy, I guess you're
right.

SIDNEY

Darn tootin' I'm right. We playing cards
Friday night?

BERNIE

Don't I always play?

SIDNEY

See ya Friday Paly, see ya Friday.

MOMMY'S JINA

LESLIE and her best friend Sharon board a very crowded bus with our four-year
63

old Lewis and his best friend Jonas, Sharon's son. Moments later, Jonas, who was
much taller than Lewis suddenly blurted,

JONAS

I'm much taller than you, 'cause I come up to
my Mommy's belly button.

LEWIS

(Shouting.)

Oh yeah, I can reach my Mommy's jina and

(Pointing.)

this is her Jina..

64

65

LESLIE

Although its not the stop we're supposed to
get off..

SHARON

Lets get off!

DON'T TELL ME THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BLUE JAY STORIES

EXT: A beautiful summer day: LESLIE and SIDNEY are busy playing in the backyard. SIDNEY is planting flowers and LESLIE is picking up some twigs that have fallen after the rain. Suddenly, a crazed Blue Jay swoops down on LESLIE and using it's deadly beak, stabs her in the back. Frightened and in pain, LESLIE screams: 66

LESLIE

(Cries.)

Help, I've just been stabbed!

SIDNEY rushes over and is taken aback when HE sees the blood ooze through her blouse. 67

SIDNEY

What happened?.

LESLIE

I don't know, but I think a Blue Jay just attacked me and flew away. There, there it is.

SIDNEY

You must have come pretty close to it's nest. It was probably trying to protect it's chicks, and I hate to say this but you're really bleeding.

LESLIE

(Cries.)

What happens if I get rabies? And it's killing me, I think I'm going to faint.

LESLIES faints in SIDNEY'Smy arms. Panicked, HE struggle to put her in the car and racing to the emergency room at the near by hospital, HE goes through three red lights, when a police car pulls SIDNEY over. 68

POLICEMAN

Okay, wise guy, what's the big rush Gimme your drivers license and registration, Buster.

SIDNEY

My wife was just stabbed and I'm rushing her to the hospital..

Without bothering to ask how she was stabbed, seeing my wife sprawled out in the back of the car with blood on her blouse, he announced, 69

POLICEMAN

All right, follow me!

With sirens blasting, they go through four red lights and arrive at the emergency ward in three minutes. THEY rush into the hospital and return with numerous attendants, who put LESLIE on a stretcher and wheel her away. 70

POLICEMAN

(Smirks.)

So, you want to tell me how it happened?"he
Want to make a statement before I book
you? 71

SIDNEY

Book me? And, what-do-you-mean, I want
to make a statement?

POLICEMAN

Hey, I've been involved in a million family squabbles. Sometimes they hit and some time they...

SIDNEY

Hey wait a minute! Are you accusing me of
stabbing my wife?

POLICEMAN

You got it Buster.

With that, the attending intern appeared. 72

Before SIDNEY could open my mouth, the cop intercedes. 73

POLICEMAN

(Cocky.)

What happened Doc

INTERN

It appears the poor woman received a very severe puncture wound.

POLICEMAN

(Puts handcuffs of Sidney.)

How big do you think the knife was?

74

INTER

Oh, it wasn't a knife. I believe, she said it was some kind of crazed Blue Jay that attacked her.

POLICEMAN

Why the hell didn't you tell me it was a Blue Jay?

SIDNEY

(Smiles.)

Because you never asked

POLICEMAN

Wait until the guys at the station hear this, they'll never believe it, never.

GO KNOW

SIDNEY walking and talking to self:

75

SIDNEY

(Recalling.)

When I was eleven years old, the general consensus was, Mickey, Willie and the Duke were the three greatest center fielders in the game. They were good all right, but secretly, I knew my father was better all-around because, besides being able to hit, run, throw and steal bases, he knew just

about everything.

FATHER

Pick a card. Look at it and put it anywhere in the deck!

SIDNEY

Then he'd shuffle the cards and say,

FATHER

Ten of hearts.

SIDNEY

Or whatever. He was always right. Playing checkers, he could get a king in six moves, check mate in seven moves. Even though he was starting to gray at the temples and Mickey, Willie and the Duke had retired he still won every game we played. When I graduated high-school, I was certain that I was supposed to be elated, because all of my friends were jumping for joy as they sent their tasseled hats soaring into the air, but at that particular moment in time, I noticed for the first time, that my Dad was slipping. He had continued to applaud a good ten seconds after all the other parents had stopped. It suddenly became apparent, that my Dad was losing his timing, which I had always thought was one of his greatest assets. He was always right there, but there was no doubt about it, my father was starting to erode. When I turned forty-five, a miracle occurred. For some unbeknownst reason, I noticed some of his old sparkle was back. Granted he wasn't the best center fielder any more, but glimpses of his old brilliance and timing made a most welcome appearance. I told him about my son Lewis, who had just graduated high-school and who was of the opinion that I knew nothing, for he had become the absolute authority on anything that concerned world affairs. Dad seemed to

know exactly what I was going through, I mean exactly. What a guy, come back player of the year. Hey Pop, want to have a catch? There's a few things I'd like to ask you. Thanks Dad, I knew I could count on you.

SECRETS, WHO NEEDS 'EM?

SIDNEY babbling:

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SIDNEY

It is widely accepted, that all inventions are a result of man's needs. Galileo wanted to take a peek at the moon, so he invented the telescope, Edison wanted to read a dirty book when his mother went to sleep, so he invented electricity, Einstein always wanted to have a few aunts and uncles so he invented 'Relativity\' Salk, who had a kind heart, felt sorry for those kids, so he invented the vaccine, but who the hell invented the secret and why? Who needs it? Secrets are such a drag. They have to weigh fourteen tons. Unlike the Mets or the big bang, I can't find a thing about that initial secret, not a damn thing, nothing, 'nada,' 'gornisht.' In addition to malevolence and lust, there are still a few theoreticians that say it was probably a result of shame, greed or something. Who the hell knows, I don't, do you? Personally I don't believe them, not one. As far as I'm concerned, far too little has been made of the first secret. Nobody seems to give a damn, including my mother and your aunt Bertha. As far as I'm concerned, it probably had to do with something that wasn't *kosher*. According to my mother, it always does. I still remember when I secretly went with my friend Bruno to a Chinese restaurant and ate my first spare rib. Of course I couldn't tell my mother I ate something *unkosher*, I couldn't break her heart. I guess that's the thanks you get for being one of the *Chosen*; pure unadulterated guilt, and if we're the *Chosen*, how come the Arabs got the oil and they circumcise us and not them? A long time ago, I once had this friend that told me this story, 5,000 years ago, just before the father of our people,

Abraham, checked into his favorite oasis, when there wasn't a moon to be found and it was very dark, he inadvertently mistook a spare rib for a piece of '*flanken*.' Sure, it tasted delicious and sure he savored every morsel, but could he tell his mother, could he tell his best friend Moses, who literally thought the world of him? I'm asking you. The man walked across the burning sands of Ur and didn't say a word, not a peep. That was a pretty good story, but personally I have my own ideas, I think it was one of those Cro-Magnons, who awoke one glorious morning to discover his best friend's hairy mate, thanks to good old evolution, she had suddenly become hairless. It was the first time he ever saw a pair of "*knockers*," that didn't look like coconuts. The man, or ape, or whatever you want to call him, went out of his mind, not only did he become fascinated, he became horny, and since there was no soap to take a shower with, you remember what you did in the shower when you were sixteen, he found himself coveting his neighbor, and you remember what the Bible says about coveting, I mean the man was absolutely drooling about his best friend's hairless wife. That, in my estimation was probably the first secret. Not that spare rib bit my friend told me about, and by the way, we're no longer friends. You know why? He moved to Tennessee thirteen years ago.

DISGUSTING ANIMAL

SIDNEY

(Aside.)

77

In between innings, I smiled as I looked at my wife Leslie, who was snuggled next to me, reading. Having survived the trials and tribulations of out-and-out warfare; twenty-four years of marriage, I was happy for that moment of tranquility and trust we had finally come to share. It was wonderful and I was thankful. To compound that moment of momentary bliss, when Strawberry homered to lead off the sixth inning and tie the score, I was ever more grateful.

SIDNEY (Cont'd)

(Shout.s)

78

Praise the Lord!

LESLIE

(Outraged.)

Praise the Lord my ass! You did it again, you disgusting animal! You did it again and I hate you!

SIDNEY

(Surprised and offended.)

I did what again?

LESLIE

(Thoroughly annoyed.)

You know what you did you pig! You passed
(Sobs, holding her nose.)
wind! I can't take it anymore. Why don't
you go to the bathroom? you, you.

With her demeanor suddenly changing from victim to murderer, she pinched
79

her adorable nose and gasped as she opened her unwilling mouth to breathe. Known to use one syllable words when frustrated, my wife's a regular Tallulah, she continued her assault:
You, you foul...!

SIDNEY**(Shouting.)**

...Foul? It was fair by a mile, look at *the instant replay* You didn't even see it. You

(Moans.)

were too busy reading. How can you call it foul?

VO

Leslie had that undeniable look of contempt, or was it pity? I can never tell the difference with her anyway, what disturbed me most was I didn't know who she was feeling sorry for, me or herself.

SIDNEY

Look at the replay. Ya see, they blew another call.

VO

When she giggled in response, it was really a smirk, but I didn't know it. Interpreting her giggle to be some kind of a hint of forgiveness, Sidney nonchalantly touched her ninth rib, which he knew to be her funny bone. Like Old Faithful, she unwillingly laughed. Knowing how important laughter is to a healthy relationship; twenty four-years, remember? He tickled her ninth rib even harder. Seeing her filled with the ever-so necessity of merriment, rocking from side to side in the very bed where we have shared a thousand and one nights of such memorable pleasures, sadly I realized that she was still unaware how much she needed me. Just as he sensed an unborn fart hastily signaling, '*ready or not,*' hoping to delay the inevitable, he squeezed with all his might. Sidney promised and for some reason he went at her funny bone with both hands. Inadvertently, he touched her fifth rib, which always turns her giggles into unadulterated

guffaws. She started laughing uncontrollably. His dear wife never seemed happier, for she was guffawing like she never guffawed before, as my stomach grumbled in pain, I squeezed even harder.

LESLIE

(Fighting tears of laughter.)

Why so pensive?

80

VO

She asked, fighting back her tears of laughter, which were of my doing, whether she chose to admit it or not. Suddenly, in the midst of her uncontrollable hysteria, she let fly a double flutter blast, which in his dictionary means two minuscule pea farts in rapid succession.

Unbeknownst, as a result of the Yankee bean soup I had for lunch, at the exact moment of my beloved's flutter blast, uncontrollably, one of my silent but deadly ones had come to fruition. The kind that have been known to make a certain individual call me a disgusting animal. After sticking my head under the covers, Sidney surfaced gasping and said,

SIDNEY

"What did you have for lunch, Yankee bean soup? I've never smelled anything so

(Holding nose and gagging.)

revolting in my life. Why don't you go to the bathroom, you, you disgusting animal.

81

LESLIE

Oh, stop it honey. You know mine don't smell like yours.

SIDNEY (VO)

She was right of course, her farts never smell, simply because she doesn't have a rotten stomach like me, and since she wasn't aware of my timely contribution, I thought it was the perfect time to bring her down to

where the rest of us disgusting animals resided.

SIDNEY

Oh, yeah, you think yours don't smell as bad as mine? Well put your head under the covers and take a deep breath.

With that, LESLIE confidently sticks her head under the covers and takes an 81 extra long deep breath, where as you know, we have shared more than one memorable occasion. I know I repeated myself, but certain things are important. With the 82 sweet smell of revenge spread across her beautiful face, she grinned as she resurface.

LESLIE

I think it smells rather wonderful, don't you?

SIDNEY

I agreed, what else could I do? I wanted to see the end of the Met game before she started calling me all those names.

THE ANSWER

SIDNEY

(Babbling.)

83

At the tender age of almost two, compared to all my friends who were still saying goo-goo and gaga, I could talk up a storm, but being the kind of guy I was, I refused to embarrass them or their mothers. I soon stopped trying to prove my verbal prowess, even to my own mother, because every time I opened my mouth to ask something, she was there stuffing it feverishly, while mumbling something about me never going hungry like she and her parents had in the old country. Soon, I came to realize that incessant yearning I had for *'The Answer'* was getting me no where, except, save for my diapers, my body was beginning to resemble Mookie, my second favorite teddy bear. Unfortunately, I still had this question that kept gnawing at me, as I grew and grew,

much to the delight of my mother, who's right arm had become quite muscular from lifting the fork as she kept on feeding me. When my two best friends started calling me *Blimpy* and *Chubs*, I gave all my Captain Marvel comic books to my cousin Murray, who was my hero, for he was the starting quarterback on his high school football team, and I began hounding him for '*The Answer*.' All he'd do was step into the pocket, take three steps and throw me a perfect spiral. Needless to say, he never gave me '*The Answer*,' either. Go know, I should have kept all those comic books, they're worth a fortune today. In my dauntless pursuit of '*The Answer*,' I drove Murray and anyone else I could corner, crazy. "*What's 'The Answer?'* I'd eagerly ask and each and every one of them would respond, "*What's 'The Answer? You expect me to tell you 'The Answer?'* Find out yourself, like everybody does," they screamed defiantly. Not even my own mother would tell me. I was sure somebody in the Bronx had to know '*The Answer*,' but obviously, the limited audience I had to contend with didn't have the vaguest idea, because they all began to avoid me like the plague. Even the school crossing guard turned away whenever he saw me coming and needless to say I was almost hit by a passing Chevy more times than I care to remember. Relentless in my pursuit, I traveled as far as Nepal and I can't tell you how excited I was when I came face-to-face with the all-knowing, Dahli Lama himself. Not known to waste time, I immediately grasped his cold, spindly hand and filled with the elation of anticipation, I sang, "*Hello Dahli, well hello Dahli,*" would you please tell me '*The Answer?*'" He wiped his bony hands on his dark gray dress, then looked in my eyes with his all-knowing

steel-gray eyes, shook his head in disgust, turned away like all the rest had and didn't say a word. Sure with the clouds and all it was the most beautiful mountain I ever saw, but let me tell you, after standing on that beautiful mountain and staring at his baldhead for two weeks, besides being disappointed, I was nauseous. Dress or no dress, he was just like all rest. He stopped talking to me the minute I asked him for *'The Answer.'* Tired and weary, I have come to the conclusion that *'The Answer'* is not love. What the world needs is a *matzo brie*. They'd love it, because deep down in their hearts they know. What else is there? They're not stupid, they know that even though Moses gave us the Ten Commandments, five thousand years ago, man still sins against man. Lincoln freed the slaves and yet, who is not a slave? The world joined forces and defeated Hitler and yet who does not feel persecuted? In the past, our beloved President Reagan, insuring America's just place in heaven, personally place *'The Lord's Prayer'* in all of our nuclear warheads. You think the highways and the subways are crowded? Wait until you get to heaven. You won't believe the tumult and chaos, when four billion people, pushing and shoving, try to squeeze through the pearly gates at the same time, each one in a cold sweat, trying to convince themselves that they really belong in heaven, *"I fought for my country didn't I?" "Where are all the sinners?"* a thundering voice asks and once again there is no answer. Pacing nervously on a distant cloud, miraculously, St. Peter appears. Cupping his angelic hands, he announces, *"Because of the enormous demands on reservations, I'm sorry to inform you, but we're out towels and soap. In other words, there's no room left in heaven."* Angry, and alarmed the people raise their

rifles and shout, "*Is this the reward we get for doing all that killing you've asked of us?*"

Now, remember when I mentioned that *matzo brie* and you laughed. Well, let me tell you Buster, nobody ever dropped an Atom bomb or fired a gun while eating a *matzo brie*.

"*It makes sense,*" you say, good, you're finally catching on, but I see you're totally not convinced. All right, try this, Miss America runs up and kisses you liked you've never been kissed before. I mean I'm talking about a real '*Frenchie*.' Then, with her hungry eyes, she looks into your hungry eyes and she says she wants to make mad, passionate love to you. At that particular moment in time, although it's totally not unexpected, your *schmeckle* lets you know that your M16 is not '*The Answer*.' Now look who's asking who for '*The Answer?*' Still remember what I told you about that '*matzo brie?*' Good, I'm glad somebody's listening. Sure I'll tell you how to make it. Just take your time mister, I know you're in a rush, but these things take time. Now, you take two eggs and you scramble them in a mixing bowl. Then you take three slightly salted matzo and you run them quickly under water. Then you crumble them in the eggs and you stir. With your left hand you pour a little peanut oil in a warmed frying pan, you dump the whole thing in and you stir for about two or three minutes. I don't believe it, but look who's back, Miss America and look how she's looking at you. What are you some kind of Romeo, mister? Hurry, now you want me to hurry? What's the rush? Somebody might think you never ate a '*matzo brie*' before... Oh, you love it, well I'm not surprised. That was about ten years ago. Then much to my dismay, I read somewhere, that the late Golda meir shared a *matzo brie* with the also late President Lyndon Johnson the day before he sent a half-a-million of our boys to Viet Nam. Well, there goes another

one of my brilliant theories. It's not the first time they've been shot down, you know. Yeah, I'm still searching for *'The Answer.'* What are you gonna do? I know, I know, some people never seem to learn, only this time, I'm not going to act like some beguiled, unsophisticated *schmuck* and spend a fortune traveling, all over the world. Screw the Dahli Lama, TranSINDental meditation, Weight Watchers, Zen, Silva Mind Control, The Forum, EST and West. This time I'm going to ask my wife and kids. They seem to know everything, anyway. Sitting around the dinner table that night, I waited 'til they finished dessert, I didn't want to ruin their appetite, then I popped the question. *"Does anyone really know 'The Answer?'"* They all looked at me, shaking their heads like that Dahli Lama had, and then with their outrage becoming quite evident, shouted encores, *"'The Answer to what?'"* *"'The Answer' to what this whole damn thing is bout,"* I responded in my shot-down voice. *"You said it was a matzo brie,"* my adorable twelve year old daughter thoughtfully reminded me.

Back to reality:

85

SIDNEY

I'm sorry sweetheart, but unfortunately I just found out I was wrong.

LESLIE

(Angry.)

You mean to tell me we didn't have to eat all those 'matzo braes?

LEWIS

(Growls, pushing his plate away disgustedly.)

86

As far as I'm concerned, I knew you were wrong all the time, but you wouldn't listen.

CARIE

I'm sorry Daddy, but I really hate 'matzo bries' too.

SIDNEY

Yeah, it must be a good twelve years since we all shared a 'matzo brie.' My wife doesn't even buy eggs anymore. She says, too much cholesterol can kill you. My son is busy working for the President and my daughter tells me she's really in love this me And Daddy, you're right. I'm still looking for 'The Answer,' only this time, I'm certain that I'm very close, because I can almost taste it. I've eliminated everything but a stuffed cabbage.

THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT TIME**SIDNEY**

(Babbling.)

87

Last night I had the most startling dream. After waiting almost 2,000 years for HIM to show up, you'll never guess where I saw Jesus Christ. Not on PBS mind you, but on Johnny Carson's farewell show. Now, even though Carson had interviewed just about everybody that was anybody, personally I think Jesus should have come when Paar had the show, he was much more sensitive. I guess when it comes to show biz, you never know. Anyway, when the big man made his unannounced appearance, Ed McMahon was just finishing an Alpo commercial. Always trying to be funny, an astounded, trembling, Buddy Hacket offered his pudgy hand and said, "*Vous machst du, , Jesus, how are you?*"

"My hands are a little tired, but all things considered, I'm fine."

When McMahon spotted Carson crossing himself feverishly, with both hands no less, he must have thought it was some kind of signal, because he got down on his knees and decided it was time to confess. I never knew he was so kinky. Soon as Hackett got into the act, they all stopped, because they knew they both had something in common, they both were Jewish. Funny, the head of Catholicism was Jewish. Somehow it never made sense to me either. Unbeknownst, the whole country, or at least all the Gentiles were on their knees, smiling and praying euphorically.

With the cameras recording this momentous occasion, that disrespectful, no good dog kept on ravishing his Alpo. Needless to say, the sponsors were delighted.

Wearing a loud plaid blazer, the ever hip Doc Severensen placed a mute on his trusty horn, bowed and began to blow, *"Joshua fit the battle of Jericho,"* which for some reason brought a tear to Christ's eyes after which, HE responded by applauding. With that, the entire country rose and also applauded. At that moment, Doc thought he was in heaven because, not even Jolson, Sinatra or Louis Armstrong ever received such a round of applause from the MAN himself.

"Don't tell me the show's over?" J.C. asked rather disappointed.

"Not yet," Buddy smiled, *"I haven't done my bit about the Chinese restaurant yet."*

By this time, Johnny, a man known for his composure was trying to sip a glass of water as casually as his quivering hands would allow.

"How shall I address you Lord?" Carson asked spilling the water as he crossed himself six quick times, trying to score points by ingratiating

himself.

"My friends call me J. C. and I don't know why you keep crossing yourself, but I wish you'd stop, it's very annoying, and besides, you're staining a lovely suit, Armani?"

"Thanks for the compliment, J. C. and if I'm not being to inquisitive," Johnny said, "What took you so long?"

"If it was up to me, I would've come when the Mets won the Series in '69. I tried, I swear to my father, I tried, but he wouldn't let me. Believe me, I bugged him everyday but he wouldn't listen.

Since he made that mistake with the giraffes, I hate to say it, but sometimes he can be such a drag. He's so stubborn."

"You mean, God's stubborn?" Buddy asked, "I didn't know my wife was actually related."

"I've been bugging him to let me come back and, straighten out things for years and you ask me if HE'S stubborn?"

"Why wouldn't HE let you comeback?" Ed asked, as he readied himself for the Roto Rooter promo.

"He was annoyed that I got so much publicity the last time I was here. He keeps reminding me that HE made the whole world in six days, but people still make a bigger deal about me. If I didn't know better, I'd say my father is a little jealous and I wish you'd all stop crossing yourself. It's terribly annoying and what does it mean?"

"We were taught to cross ourselves ev'rytime we mention your name," Johnny found himself apologizing.

"I don't know who's brilliant idea it was, but do me a favor and forget it... If you were nailed by a Honda as you crossed 57th Street, would you like to see your mother make the sign of a Honda ev'rytime you visited her? Now cut it out.

"He told you it was annoying, didn't he?" Buddy cackled.

"Wait a second wise guy, how do we know there's really a God?" Carson quipped, smiling.

"Take it from me," Jesus added remorsefully, "the man's a regular tyrant."

"I'm sorry to interrupt Your Highness," Ed winced, "But we have to break for a commercial.

"In those days, there was no commercials, no William Morris, I had to do it all myself," Christ confided.

"What about all those Apostles that helped you?" Severensen asked.

"What's Apostles?" Jesus asked.

"You know, Peter, Paul, Mathew and...?"

"...I must have met thousands of people in those days. Who can remember all their names? I was so busy."

"You were busy spreading the gospel, weren't you?" Ed asked confidently.

"What kind of gospel? I was busy trying to make a living. There was no T.V., no Sunday Times, The Enquirer, nothing. I ran very fast and I had to yell, 'Get your sandals! The sand is too hot! In those days, sand was sand. It was murder, it was everywhere, up your nose, in your eyes, and everything you ate tasted from sand. Pheh! You can close your eyes and you can shut your mouth, but the sand still burns your feet.'"

"I thought you made furniture, I didn't know you made sandals," Carson responded.

"What else could I make? I was trying to save their soles," Jesus smiled. There was no foot powder, no ointments, what else could I do but make sandals. And they all thought I was the son of God. Was I flattered."

"We're all God's children, aren't we?" Hacket asked hopefully.

"I suppose, if you really want to get technical about it," Jesus professed. "And even though it's written in Abie's good book, that I was a carpenter, as you know I was a pretty good sandal maker, but as far as my mother Mary was concerned, it never happened. Nothing ever happened, nothing."

"They say you're a maven when it comes to plagues," Hacket chided.

"Plagues? You got the wrong guy that was Moses. The closest I ever came to a plague was my friend Hymie, who always bragged how he could beat me in everything, in front of my father no less. One day. He must have been bugged about something. I think he made too many stripes on the zebras, anyway, something was really ticking him off because, he gave Hymie the first cold in history. When that braggart sneezed for the first time,

keeping their distance, everyone thought it odd but cute, except his wife Becky, who wasn't too thrilled about being the first recipient of the first major blooze in history. She thought it was disgusting. Then, like the good father, Hymie was, after his children had finished

dessert, he shared his new found spritz-fall, by sneezing on each and everyone of them.

Before you knew it, the whole world was sneezing and there was no Kleenex, not even a hanky, so stop blaming the plague. Poor Hymie died because, he blew his brains out."

"Talking about dying," Doc pleaded. "There's this terrible disease called AIDS that's threatening to destroy all of mankind. Please help and give us the cure; the answer to this dreadful disease," Ed pleaded.

"Don't you remember what happened the last time I tried to give you the answer?"

"Take a chance," Buddy hinted. "What the heck, they say you only live once."

"Ever consider sardines?"

"Skinless or boneless?" Hacket asked, smiling.

"There are more sardines in the ocean than all the people in the world," Jesus said.

"Are you saying that sardines can put an end to AIDS?" Doc asked, fondling his horn.

"Did you ever see a sardine with AIDS? Forget about that. How do you get AIDS? You fool around, right? If you open a can of sardines, spritz a little lemon on, cut a slice of Bermuda onion, put it on a piece of pumpernickel covered with plenty of slightly salted butter and don't forget the coffee; I'd bet, not only you, but half of Africa would forget about doing it in a minute. And even if you didn't, with that breath your girl wouldn't get near you, and if they don't et near you, how can you get AIDS? Next!"

"Can you tell us about your mother, Mary?"

"I guess you can say my mother almost started divorce. She wanted to get paid for doing it. She was sick and tired of looking at the stars. She had a million ideas. She wanted more out of life than taking off her clothes when my father was in the mood and she was sick-and-tired of doing the laundry in the Nile. Those crocodiles were driving her crazy. Besides, she wanted time-and-a-half for doing it on the holidays, not that there were so many in those days. You see, the Rabbis had a good thing, that's why they wanted to get rid of her; she wanted to unionize all the wives."

"Are you saying in those days Rabbis were union busters?"

"Stop trying to put words in my mouth, please. As far as they were concerned, they thought they were just good businessmen. Except for SIDNEY, they were the only Rabbis around."

"I forgot you were a Rabbi," Johnny said as he needlessly crossed himself again.

"Well don't forget," Hacket added. "Once a Jew, always, and I thought the good Rabbi asked you not to cross yourself? Don't you remember what happened to his friend, Hymie

"Please forgive Buddy, It won't happen again," Johnny promised sarcastically.

Coming to the defense of his beloved friend, McMahon interrupted, *"I have total recall, Lord and I don't mean to be disrespectful, but I don't remember reading about Hymie in the Bible."*

"You know why?" Jesus asked sadly, "Because Abie hated Hymie with a passion. Now, who do you think really wrote the Bible, Abie?"

"You mean Abraham, don't you?" Johnny quipped confidently.

"Not Abraham, Abie Shwartz. He hated Hymie almost as much as my father did, and besides, he was the only one that was able to write. So, to get even with Hymie, Abie decided to write his own bible, and on spite he left out Hymie's blooze completely. Not even a word, mind you. But I want to tell you something else. Even though most people trusted him, I never did. Personally I always thought he was a little prejudice, because Hymie's was a pinch shorter than the rest of us."

"Could it be that Hymie is the cause of all the prejudicial conflicts that confront man today?" Buddy said, smiling.

"I never thought of it like that. My father says the main problem is there are too many religions. Somebody made a very big mistake and that's why he sent me back. He wants me to put an end to it once and for all."

"What type of mistake are you talking About, J.C.?" asked Johnny.

"I told you how annoyed my father was

when he heard about all the PR I received the last time I was here. Well, it seems my old man has had it up to here. He wants SIDNEY to tell everyone that HE never intended there to be Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Nudists, Schmudists, only Jewish."

"Are you saying we all have to become Jewish?" Ed asked with apparent disdain.

"According to my father, you do, Buster."

"Even the Pope?" asked an incredulous Johnny.

"I believe he's means all his children, and once he makes up his mind. Remember what happened to Hymie?"

"I guess that means everyone has to start eating chopped liver," Buddy said hopefully. Why should

"I should be the only one walking around with heartburn?" Jesus smiled.

"I hate chopped liver," Doc moaned.

"I'm sure they'll all have to be circumcised too," Hacket said grinning. "If you all do it at the same time, I'm sure I can get you guys a good deal."

"Say it isn't so," Doc said fighting back the tears.

"It's not such a big deal. Ask Buddy," Jesus sympathetically responded, "The whole thing takes less than a minute."

"Don't believe him," Buddy said, holding his crotch.

"Maybe we could plant a few trees in Israel instead?" prayed Johnny.

"Trees are in addition," laughed Buddy.

"If you don't mind, I'd like to change the subject, and is it true what they say about your immaculate conception?" Doc whimpered as he held himself.

"You mean that story about how I was born? My mother Mary, who had so much pride, was so embarrassed because my

father, Joseph made her live in a stable. She had these two girl friends, Rebecca and Sylvia who refused to come and visit her because one was allergic to hay and the other to horses. When she would go to the synagogue, she swore that it never happened and they held their noses and laughed at her. One day, she was so annoyed at my father for making her live in that stable, that she told Abie, who she knew was a 'blabbermouth, a yenta' and asked him if he could keep a secret? Then she proceeded to assure Abie that she did the whole pregnancy bit by herself, just to embarrass my father. Abie, who had some gift for words in those days, laughed and immediately called it 'The Immaculate Conception.' And without even bothering to confirm it with my father, wrote it in his bible."

"Are you saying we shouldn't take the Bible literally?"

"Just Abie's bible," Jesus added, "I'm afraid I must be going."

As Christ began to depart, Doc started to play 'The Tonight Show's' theme song.

"How can you leave?" pleaded Carson.

"What about the famine in Somalia and Ethiopia?"

"Tell them to eat something."

As the good Rabbi began to depart, Carson made one last desperate plea, "It would take us a life-time to tell you about all our problems."

"I just don't have the time," Jesus apologized.

"I'd like to ask you for a personal favor," McMahan asked.

"me too," Buddy pleaded, "You see, I have this mother in-law..."

"Don't you remember how he 'hocked' me the last time I tried to do something for you guys? I'm really sorry, but I have to go... Hey, don't look so disappointed. There's

always the next time, right?" Jesus winked.

HE WHO LAUGHS LAST...

SIDNEY

Even though I love my brother more than anything, I still call him "*My favorite lunatic*," because since the day he was born, he always did everything not only in excess, but, with great bravado. He laughed more and cried more and took more and gave more than anybody I ever met, and what a pair of "*guillones*," he had. There wasn't anything he couldn't do and wouldn't do for a laugh, like, the time he rented a helicopter and took me to Atlantic City. How two poor kids from the Bronx, who used to be on Home Relief no less, were flying as high as Rockefeller himself. We laughed all the way. My brother had just made a lot of money from his business and he felt like sharing it with *moi*. Despite each of us having a wife and two kids, we loved to pal-around with each other more than anything else, because, one of us always made sure that we'd find something to laugh about. We had to, it was the law.

LENNY and SIDNEY the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City:

At black jack table:

When we got to Atlantic City, I think we went to The Taj, or one of those new hotels, any way, we walk into the casino and immediately find a \$100 table empty. Just the way we like it; Head-to-head. Lenny was a big roller. Me, a hundred a card was more than enough. After about three hours, together, we were up about fifteen grand and we decide we'd like to eat lunch, so Lenny tells the dealer we'd like to be comped for lunch at their very best restaurant. The dealer says he has to ask the pit boss, who, because he'd just come on the floor and wasn't aware how much money Lenny was betting, looks at us in our Met's sweat shirts and tells the

dealer to tell us that they can only comp us in the coffee shop. Even though he was annoyed at how cheap they were treating us, Lenny smiled, as he reminded the pit-boss, that he was sure the big boys that were watching from above, must be aware that collectively, we must have gone through two or three hundred grand the past couple of hours and you haven't got the good sense to comp us anywhere we want to eat? *'Good luck,'* he wishes the pit-boss. He then asks the dealer for two, five-dollar chips. And then we laugh as Lenny announces, last hand, five dollars, and then my good man, please cash us in. Not only was the dealer frustrated, because Lenny must have given him a hundred dollars in tips.

Whenever Lenny won a big hand, he toss the dealer either a five or ten dollar chip.

And the pit boss became paranoid because, he was sure the big boys saw the whole thing through the mirrored ceiling were gonna call him an idiot for making such a big deal about lunch. Counting each and every hundred-dollar bill, Lenny announces, "\$13,000, not bad, and we haven't even eaten lunch yet, mister. How much did you take them for?

"Two grand," I said. *"I believe we should say thank you, Lenny."*

"Thank you Lenny," Lenny said laughing.

Departing we headed for their best restaurant. *"Why not?"* we giggled like the cat that just ate the canary.

"It's on them ain't it?"

"It soitenly is mister," Lenny roared, *"It most soitenly is. We got'em for fifteen grand!"*

We ordered a bottle of their most expensive red wine, a Caesar salad and King Crab legs, which came with the most delicious sauce. We ate like two little piggies. When the waitress appeared with the check,

she asked me if I would like to sign for the check and I said *"No, but my brother will, since I'm older."*

"My pleasure, but just remember old timer, you're paying for dinner." Lenny said as he looked at me, winked and laughed. *"May I borrow your pen, good looking, unless you'd like to treat us for lunch?"* he laughed.

The young waitress joined him and so did I, because I thought it was hysterical that he would actually sign for our lunch. He wasn't a guest at the hotel. He signed "Bruno Bank. Room 1224."

"It was delicious," he said, leaving a twenty-dollar tip in cash for the grateful waitress.

"I enjoyed it tremendously," I added as we departed. Outside we laughed even more.

"How much was that check?" I asked.

"Ninety four bucks and it feels good, doesn't it?"

"Delicious. Now I see why Jessie James had such a good time. You're a 'gonnif' just like him," I said.

"And you're my accomplice. The next nun I see pass, I'm gonna give her a C note and tell her to give it to a poor family. He who laughs lasts," Lenny smiled, devilishly, *"Laughs."*

"I suppose you should tell her to thank that pit boss!" I said, *"Fair's fair."*

"I suppose I should," he concurred as we laughed and ran back to the car. *"Where do you want to go for dinner tonight?"* he asked, *"Some place expensive, I hope."*

There was only one Lenny, my brother.

The End