

I WANT MY MTV BACK

RUSSELL COREY

A NOVEL

**FROM THE AUTHOR OF
A UNIVERSE APART**

I WANT MY MTV

History 1983-84

a novel

RUSSELL COREY

ALSO BY RUSSELL COREY

A UNIVERSE APART

VACATION HOME

BOSS OF ME

MAN CAVE

ZOOBOTIC

eRay

Copyright © 2018 by Russell Corey

Twitter: @RussCorey

YouTube: Rusbuc1985

YouTube: Russell Corey

Email: Russ.Corey@yahoo.com

*For my dear friends, who I love
more than they will ever know*

Ted
Scott
Chris
Connie
Mike
Robert
Chris
Cherie
Nikki
Todd
Paula
Pam
Kim
Carla
Kellie
Jenny
Jackie
Eric
James
John
Staci
Tom
Tommy
Scott
Mike
Cole
Daniel
Pat

*I check my look in the mirror
I want to change my clothes, my hair, my face*

*Bruce Springsteen
Dancing in the Dark
Released May 3, 1984*

Your first entries are all much too brief. You need to be more descriptive and less dependent on cool. For example, write *nightmarish video game* or *bone-tickling TV comedy show*, instead of "cool game" or "cool show." In future entries, I'm going to take a point off every time you use cool as an adjective, unless it's used in describing a climate or temperature.

You also need to incorporate more quotes. I want you to listen, remember and think about what people are saying to you.

Are you really writing everyday? C-

THURSDAY - FEBRUARY 24, 1983

What's the point in keeping this useless journal? Since we're moving tomorrow, I'll never have to hand it in to Ms. Mason again, and I doubt my new English teacher will take it for extra credit.

I should just toss it with the rest of my old tattered and battered school notebooks. "Tattered and battered." Is that good description, Ms. Mason?

Hey, Ms. Mason, I hate to break it to you, but the last four weeks of this journal are bogus! I scribbled all four weeks in the cafeteria during lunch. I remember, in my panic to beat the fifth period bell, how cool it would be to write what I really felt and not worry about your stupid grade.

Ms. Mason told us to write our journals like we were writing a letter to a close friend. Yeah, right, I always felt like I was writing a letter to Mom, instead. How could I be honest when I knew Ms. Mason was gonna read and grade what I had to say?

I declare from now on, this journal is going to be about my new life in Trappers Run. That's where

we're moving to in the morning.

Last time we were there hunting for a house to rent, I saw a fine-looking girl ride by on a ten-speed. As she passed by, we made eye contact. That's when I caught a glimpse of those blue eyes that went perfectly with her flowing brown hair. I think she smiled at me. I smiled back regardless. However, she went by so fast, I'm not sure if she saw it. I was hoping she would come back around, but she only went by once.

I hope she's not older than I am. If she was riding a bike, then she must not be sixteen yet. After we finish moving in, I'll scope the new neighborhood and try and find out which house she lives in. I wish I was sixteen and could drive around the neighborhood and meet her that way. Why couldn't Pete be the younger brother?

Since Pete is a senior and I'm only a freshman, he gets to stay in Fayetteville and finish the school year with Ryan's family. I wish I could stay with Jim's family.

Moving from Ft. Bragg doesn't bother me at all. I'm glad Dad's getting out of the Army, and we can finally live in one place for a while. But the idea of staying behind and not having to live with Mom and Dad is pretty cool. Pete's so lucky.

Mom, in our nightly argument during dinner, tried to convince me that their decision to move during the school year was made in my best interest.

Here's her quote for you, Ms. Mason: "This way you can meet some friends before school ends and you won't have to spend the summer in front of the Atari again."

This is the most I've ever written in an entry. And I haven't even said two words about Reagan. I think I'll stop here and list my goals for real. Not the fake ones for Ms. Mason, either; like I really care about dressing out for gym.

These are my real goals for Trappers Run:

1. Get to know the brunette
2. Get laid
3. Get friends

4. Get a job
5. Get weights or a Soloflex and work out
6. Get good grades, in case I go to college

Jim just called. I'm going over to his house and Mom and Dad are letting me stay over until 9 p.m. I told Jim about my journal and his reaction was typical: "Man, why are you gonna keep a diary? That's stupid."

This is not a diary! Jim said I wouldn't keep it for very long. Just to prove him wrong, I'm going to keep this journal for a year.

I wonder if it was a mistake telling him? I don't think it was. I doubt Jim will come sixty miles just to sneak a peak at my journal. When he does visit, I'll hide it until after he leaves.

Now that I can start fresh again, I'm not gonna make any more friends like Jim. I'm gonna act cool from the very first second we move into Trappers Run. Everyone thought I was a jerk, because I hung out with Jim and goofed around in class. Why does

everyone have to be so damn serious now?

When my hair's cool, I think I'm better looking than most of the guys at school. However, no girls took me seriously, because of my suckie rep and bad hair days.

I'll have a shower to myself in Trappers Run, so I can shower before school and style my hair every day. I hate when I have to shower at night and sleep on my hair. My hair sticks up all day after that no matter how hard I comb it down.

I better quit writing now, because Dad's yelling that he's ready to take me over to Jim's. All my Dungeons and Dragons stuff is packed up, so we have to play with Jim's dice and figures. Maybe Jim and I can play D&D over the phone like they do chess.

SATURDAY - FEBRUARY 26, 1983

I can't believe how cool my first day in Trappers Run was. I never have days this good, but yesterday was the coolest non-birthday day of my life. I can't

remember a better one. Well, maybe a Christmas or two, but that's different.

The moving day started early and the morning was full of the yelling and complaining that normally accompanies our family whenever we have to do something complicated together, like yard work or getting dressed up for church.

I was hoping all the moving would be done in a day, but even with Dad packing the U-haul to the max, we were gonna have to make two trips.

Since Dad's back was so sore after the first trip, he wanted to rest it for the night and make the second trip the next morning.

Half of everything we owned in the world was gonna be in the new house, so Mom wanted someone to stay there overnight to keep an eye on it.

All morning, it went back and forth, who was going to stay behind, but in the end, I won out over Pete.

Since Pete is bigger than I am, he had to return to Fayetteville and help move the rest of the stuff with

Mom and Dad. Pete maybe bigger, but he's not stronger. However, since I was gonna get to stay at the new house in Trappers Run by myself, I kept my mouth shut.

Mom thought I was too young to be left alone overnight. I kept saying, "I'm fourteen, and you still don't trust me." She would reply, "That's right, I don't." She finally gave in, after I promised her I'd stay inside the house and make sure the doors were locked, until they returned.

While Dad backed the truck down the driveway at the new house, I decided to take one last walk through the new house while it was still clean and uncluttered. I always like to walk around a new house when it's empty and the walls are bare. I like to imagine it will always be that neat, but I know our family will mess it up with all our crap. We always do.

I heard a familiar sound outside after Dad parked the moving van. Someone was pounding a basketball on the pavement outside. I looked out the curtainless

window of my new room and saw these two dudes dribbling a basketball down the street. One white, one black.

They stopped on the sidewalk in front of our house and passed the ball back and forth while watching Dad and Pete open up the back door to the moving van.

Mom saw the two guys, too, and got suspicious. She told me to go outside and sit by the truck and make sure they didn't steal anything off the U-haul while we were moving stuff inside.

I tried to make it look like I wasn't watching the two guys by getting chairs and boxes ready in the back of the truck for Dad and Pete to carry in. All they were doing was goofing around with a basketball, anyway. Mom gets a little paranoid sometimes.

Even when they did catch me staring at them, I just nodded "what's up" and they both nodded back. That was a cool sign.

About a minute later, the white guy tried a pass

behind his back and lost control of the ball. It rolled down our driveway and got wedged under the U-haul. They were both big enough to beat me in a fight, so I wanted to make sure our first meeting was cool.

As they slowly made their way down our driveway, I got down on my hands and knees and crawled under the moving van to retrieve the basketball for them. I grabbed it and crawled out. The two guys were at the back of the U-haul waiting for me. I tossed the white guy the ball and the black guy reached down, grabbed my hand and pulled me to my feet. Almost immediately, I knew I'd done the right thing.

"Thanks, man. You moving in?"

"Yeah."

"You got any sisters?"

They seemed disappointed when I told them I didn't have any sisters. They weren't too impressed with Pete. If it had been Pete watching the truck when the ball rolled under, Pete would have made

them get it and then said something stupid like, "You boys need to play ball somewhere else." Then we would have two guys hate us, before we even finished moving in. Typical Pete.

Instead, I was cool with them and they started to help us carry stuff in. Mom still wanted me to make sure they didn't steal anything. By then, I knew they wouldn't.

In between carrying stuff in, we asked each other the usual first questions: name, age, grade, favorite rock group. And we gave each other the usual first answers. Even though we each had a different favorite rock group, I could tell we were gonna be friends. Sometimes you can just tell in the first few minutes.

John, the white guy, has long brown hair feathered back on the sides and parted in the middle. He looks kinda like a country boy, because he was wearing cut-offs. Mom gave him a lecture about wearing shorts in February. Thanks, Mom.

John is a year older than I am, but we'll be in the

same grade because he got held back last year.

John's also got real muscles. I thought I was getting big doing fifty push ups and sit ups every morning, but John looks like a real weight lifter when he flexes, which he did every time he lifted something heavy, and each trip he'd make sure to find a heavier box than the one he took before. Pretty soon, John was helping Dad with the sofa and heavy furniture, and Pete and I were just holding doors. John said he liked helping people move, because he's never been able to move himself. He's lived in the same house all his life.

Dave's also stronger than I am, but he doesn't have John's muscles. Dave's sixteen and a junior. He's got a license, but his mom only lets him drive the station wagon to his basketball practices and games.

I told Dave and John that I would be watching the house tonight and invited them to come over and hang out with me when my parents and Pete left. Mom said she didn't want anyone coming over, but this was after I invited Dave and John. I didn't tell

her they accepted my invitation.

John and Dave thought Pete was stuck up and kinda nerdy. I stood up for Pete, like I always do. I told them he was just worried about graduating and getting ready for N. C. State. They weren't impressed.

What did impress them was a box of liquor bottles, which were waiting to be moved back into the liquor cabinet. John heard the bottles clanking together when he carried the box in. They joked about getting drunk, but I didn't think they were serious. The only time I've had a drink was at Thanksgiving, and that was just barely a sip of wine in paper cup from Dad.

After we unloaded the truck, Dad ordered Domino's pizza for everyone. Dave, John and I decided to eat out in the empty U-haul. Just to be nice, I invited Pete to join us. Pete declined and just ate with Mom and Dad. I knew then for sure, that John and Dave would be only my friends, and I wouldn't have to share them with Pete.

When Dave and John finished eating, they pretended to go home for the night, so Mom wouldn't get suspicious. They only went home to get permission to spend the night and get their sleeping bags and stuff. They came back when they saw the station wagon and U-haul pulling out of the driveway.

The first thing they asked about was the liquor. We were off to such a good start, and I hated the idea of ruining it by being uncool. John wanted to drink the Jack Daniel's, but the seal on it wasn't broken yet. So, I got an opened bottle of Old Grand-Dad whiskey that was at the top of the box. It was the fullest bottle that was already opened, and I didn't think anyone would notice three quick sips gone.

John took the first swig; Dave, the second; I, the third. It felt like someone lit a match inside of my mouth as the Old Grand-Dad hit the back of my throat, but I kept a straight face. After the first round, I decided to go for another one. John took two swigs this time, so Dave and I had to take two, too.

John poured some water in the bottle, so it looked like no whiskey was gone and stuck the bottle back in the box and covered it up. We hooked up the Atari to the TV and played Combat and Asteroids. I'm better than John and Dave.

The games were getting kinda boring and John asked me if he could take another drink. We all ended up taking another swig. By then, I didn't think Mom and Dad would notice any liquor missing, because of the move and stuff. So, I said we could drink about a quarter of the bottle.

John mentioned that you could mix the Old Grand-Dad with Coke, and it wouldn't be so strong. He also said there was a convenient store we could walk to and buy the Coke.

All the way to the store, Dave kept asking me if I was buzzing. I finally said, "A little bit." I really was buzzing, because when we saw the brunette, Brandi, (what a name!) and another shorter blonde girl, Kristy, walking in front of us, I called out for them to wait up. As we got closer, I noticed that Kristy was

also fine, but I still like Brandi better.

Dave and John were gonna kill me, because they didn't really know Brandi and Kristy that well. Not well enough to go shouting out their names. Normally, I would never do that, but this time it was different. I just felt it was the right thing to do.

Brandi and Kristy waited and we caught up to them. Brandi remembered me from when we were looking at the house, and she saw us moving in today. Brandi's a little older by a few months, but that's cool, because we're still both in the ninth grade.

They were going to the store to get some gum, so we all started walking again together as a group.

I told Brandi and Kristy about the party and invited them over. Brandi wanted to come, but Kristy was hesitant, because they had to go home soon. However, after I begged them, they decided they could join the party for a little while.

Jo-Boy's Convenient is small, but cool. They had Gorf there, but it was out of order. Jo-Boy's used to be a 7-11, John told me. They even had Slurpee

machines, but they call them Jo-Swishes.

Dave and John went over to the magazine rack to read Hot Rod and Road & Track. I made the mistake of saying this black car in Hot Rod looked cool. John got mad, because it was a Ford. He's a Chevy man and hates Fords. I don't know anything about cars, but John said he'd teach me.

I got the Coke and was going to pay for it with the twenty-dollar bill Mom gave me for an emergency. After I picked up the Coke, I joined Brandi and Kristy in the candy aisle.

I used to think the candy section was the coolest place in the world, and right there I had twenty bucks to buy as much candy as I wanted. Kit Kats, Wacky Wafers, Reese's Cups, Twixs, Baby Ruths, SweeTarts, Rollos. But I didn't.

Brandi was thinking about stealing a pack of strawberry Bubble Yum, but the redneck cashier was suspicious and kept asking her questions.

"Can I help you find something?"

"Whatcha looking for?"

I just went ahead and bought it for her along with the Coke.

After Jo-Boy's, we went back to my house to party.

I've written more than yesterday and I've still got stuff to write. This journal is hard work, but I'm doing it. Fuck you, Jim! I haven't even said a word about my last night at his house.

Compared to Trappers Run, it was boring as hell! All we did was play Coleco Donkey Kong all night. I wanted to sneak one of his father's beers out of the fridge, but Jim was too much of a pussy to do it. There were only three beers left, and he was sure his dad would notice one missing. I didn't care if his dad noticed, because I would have been long gone. Jim would have ratted me out. Just like when his mom found the Playboys.

Back at the new house, John poured everyone a mix of Coke and Old Grand-Dad in the paper cups Mom brought for lunch.

I looked for the moving box with the glasses in it, but I guess we left that box behind.

Since we didn't have the cable on yet and couldn't watch MTV, I unpacked my stereo. Unfortunately, Dad didn't think my records and tapes were important enough to take in the first load.

John said he had a cool ZZ Top record at his house. John went to go get the record and Dave followed him, leaving me alone with Kristy and Brandi.

Brandi went to the bathroom, and when she came back she sat on the floor between my legs. She asked me to give her a massage. I'd never given anyone a massage before. It just seems like a lot of rubbing, so that's what I did. I started rubbing Brandi's neck, as we talked about MTV.

Brandi and her friends are part of a Duran Duran network. Whenever MTV plays a Duran Duran video, all the girls call each other up and spread the word so they can all tune in.

I'm glad they have MTV here. I can't wait to watch

it again. My cousins in Boston don't have it. It sucks when we go up to visit them, because no one has MTV. Once, we went to see my Grandfather's retired friends in New Hampshire. They had MTV, but Mom wouldn't let us watch it. We had to enjoy the outside! They lived on a big green hill with blueberry bushes.

I can't believe I'm writing about damn New Hampshire when Brandi just sat in between my legs!

My fingers left her neck and traveled to her shoulders. When Brandi snuggled herself back, all the way to my lap, I took that as a good sign and that I was doing something right.

My hands traveled from her soft shoulders to behind her long brown hair and rubbed her back. Her bra strap was kind of an awkward road hazard, but it gave me direction on where to go next.

Slowly, I slid my hands around her sides and right there, just under her arms, I started to feel it. TIT!

I retreated to her back, so she wouldn't think I was trying to take advantage of her. I was getting ready

to move forward again, when Brandi changed the subject from MTV to a tour of the new house.

Kristy was cool just trying to tune her favorite radio station in, so we left her in the cardboard box-filled family room.

I guess I was still getting used to girls taking me seriously, so like a dork, I started giving Brandi a real tour of the house.

"This is gonna be my brother Pete's room. This is the bathroom. This is the hall closet where we're gonna keep the towels in."

When we got to my parents' room, Brandi started to lean on me. I locked my hands around her waist. We stared in each other's eyes and smiled. Then we leaned our heads forward and started to kiss. She put her tongue in my mouth first, and then I did the same to her.

It felt weird as hell, but I liked it. I opened my eyes and saw us in my parents' mirror. I kept swishing my tongue around in her mouth, wrapping it around her tongue again and again.

I wondered if I was doing it right and how long I should keep doing it. I also wondered what everyone would say if they saw me right then.

Before it could go any further, I heard John and Dave come back in the house. We just stopped. Brandi and I separated and smiled at each other. No words were needed and none were said.

John and Dave were staring at us when we walked back in the family room. Kristy and Brandi went outside to talk for a minute.

John was already cranking his ZZ Top record at full blast. It was really too loud for my speakers and the sound was distorted. The first song he played was "Gimme All Your Loving."

Dave and John wanted to know what had happened while they were gone. Even with the taste of Brandi's strawberry Bubble Yum kiss fresh in my mouth, I said, "Nothing."

Kristy and Brandi came back in, but only to say they had to go home. That sucked. They had a nine o'clock curfew. I kidded them about that, even

though I never get to stay out late, either. Except for the last night at Jim's.

I didn't kiss Brandi goodbye, but as we hugged I could feel her tits press against my chest. I took that as a good sign. But a kiss would have been a better one. Maybe she just didn't want to do it in front everybody. I can understand that.

After they left, I told John and Dave what really happened. They couldn't believe it. I had gone further in one day with Brandi than they had their whole lives living in Trappers Run.

I felt so damn good that we drank the rest of the Coke and Old Grand-Dad and jammed to ZZ Top. At midnight, we walked around the neighborhood and tried to see if we could catch Brandi undressing for bed, but all the lights were out at her house.

We then walked to some tennis courts and threw a tennis ball around that someone had hit over the fence and forgotten about. It was so cool to be fucking around after midnight with no one bothering us.

We all slept in different rooms. I couldn't stop thinking that I should have tried to go further with Brandi during our kiss. I could have gotten her ass or tits easy, if I had thought of it. Next time. Who knows where this is going to go. I wonder if we'll get married someday?

Dave threw up in Pete's room. He cleaned it up, but it left a stain. It's not real dark, but you can tell it's there. I put a box over it, but I know Pete will see it and complain. Oh, well. I'm not worried.

John and Dave left early this morning, so Mom and Dad wouldn't catch them here. They said they would come by later. I put the empty Old Grand-Dad bottle in a paper bag and threw it down the sewer drain in the side of the street. If Mom or Dad ever asks about the missing bottle, I'll say I don't know what they're talking about and then suggest maybe it got lost in the move.

The house looks okay, except for the puke stain, but there's nothing I can do about that, so I just started writing this new entry.

Who do I know?

1. Brandi - fine, Frenched, felt side of tits
2. Kristy - nice ass
3. John - cool guy, Chevy man and ZZ Top fan
4. Dave - cool guy, plays basketball, threw up

I can hear Mom and Dad pulling up. There's the car doors opening and slamming. They're walking up the steps. The lock is turning. The door has opened.

If yesterday was one of the best days of my life, then today is one of the worst. Mom found Dave's puke stain, and Dad wanted to know why the Old Grand-Dad was missing. Instead of outright lying, which I knew I'd never get away with, I tried to get by with a half lie and kill two birds with one stone.

I told them that I had found the bottles while looking for the Atari and thought the Old Grand-Dad would taste like the wine they let Pete and I have at Thanksgiving. I said it burned my mouth and

I dropped the bottle and it broke. I cleaned it up, but it left the stain.

I just stood there waiting for their reaction and hoping to God they wouldn't ask to see the broken bottle.

They lectured me on drinking, "You're just too young." I kept repeating how much I hated the taste of it and didn't want to try it again. Mom asked if John or Dave had anything to do with it. I said no.

I had to vacuum the stain for ten minutes to get all the broken glass out. I told Mom I was done twice, but she kept me vacuuming until she was sure no one would get a glass splinter from the bottle that never broke.

The weirdest part was that they didn't yell or hit me. We still had to move the rest of the stuff in, so I guess they didn't want to mess with it. Maybe, they honestly believed I was telling the truth.

John and Dave didn't show up until Mom and Dad left to take the U-haul back. I showed them how I wanted to set my room up. The box of Star Wars

and Battlestar Galactica toys was right in the middle of the room and they teased me about that. I joked, as I shoved the box in the closet, "I haven't played with this stuff in weeks."

John asked if he could have the X-wing. He wanted to use it for target practice with his shotgun.

I didn't want to see it blown up, but it had a broken wing from when Pete dropped it from a tree and was missing so many parts anyway, that it hardly seemed worth saving.

Pete kept bugging me that Mom and Dad didn't want people in the house while they were gone and kept going on about the stain in his room. I told him to shut up.

I snuck out the back door with John and Dave. I didn't tell Pete where we were going, because I didn't give a shit. He'd never let me blow up that X-wing, anyway.

John lives right outside of Trappers Run in a trailer. His parents are divorced. He lives with his Mom, who works at a restaurant. John said he'd take

us there sometime and get us free food.

I'd never seen a gun in real life, unless it was a cop's or MP's. I didn't even want to touch it at first. I was afraid it would accidentally go off and kill someone, just like you hear about in the news.

John's room is covered with big banners he won at the North Carolina State Fair. Most of them are rock groups and one's a Confederate flag. I only knew about a few of the rock banners. I pretended to be an Ozzy fan, even though all I know about him is that he bit off a bat's head and Pete hates him.

After a quick drink of Mountain Dew, we ventured out into the forest with the shotgun and X-wing. We walked far enough away to make sure no one would be too close and call the cops or "Johnny Law" as John likes to call them. John set the X-wing up on a stump, and Dave and I stayed way back.

I pretended to be the voice of Luke Skywalker going in to blow up the Death Star, but this time Luke lost.

The blast from the gun was ten times louder than I

expected. White plastic was scattered all over the pine straw as the X-wing was blown to pieces.

John and Dave wanted to blow more stuff up. I told them the rest of it belonged to Pete. They called bullshit, but I kept to my story.

On the way back, we took a detour in the woods to a pond they call Rush Lake. I tried to explain that it was only a pond, but they insisted it was a lake. I let it go.

It's called Rush Lake after the family that owns most of the land in Trappers Run including the pond. They're pretty rich. They built a small one-room beer shack on the bank of the pond with a little pier going out to the middle.

John and Dave go swimming there when no one's around. One time last summer, the beer shack was left unlocked, and the refrigerator was stocked with beer.

John and Dave stole a case and drank most of it in the woods. The rest got too warm, because they couldn't take it home. The Rushes learned to keep the

beer shack locked after that. It was locked when we checked it today.

We went back to John's house to put the gun away and get our plan together for tonight.

I wanted to go by Brandi's house and see what she was doing. John and Dave were reluctant, because they had never gone there before. I led the way and knocked on Brandi's door as John and Dave kinda hung back in her drive way.

Brandi's dad answered the door. He didn't look too happy to see us. He said that Brandi went to the mall with Kristy. We decided that's what we'd do.

We went to my house to get a ride from my parents, but they weren't home yet. Pete was pissed that I had left. I told him to shut up, and we left to go to Dave's house.

Dave's mom ended up driving us to the mall. She asked about my family. I told her about my Dad who was a lawyer in the Army and how he just got out of the service and about Pete going to N.C. State next year.

Dave's mom seemed impressed when I told her that. She told Dave that he should start thinking about college. Dave kept saying that he was gonna be a basketball star. He wasn't serious though. Later, I asked Dave if he was good enough, and he said, "Man, I can't even make the high school cut."

Dave's mom said basketball was fine, but he needed a backup. John kept siding with Dave's mom, just to piss Dave off. I could tell by the way Dave's mom ignored John's comments, that she didn't like John joking like that. I don't think she likes John too much. Doesn't anyone like us?

Dave's mom dropped us off in front of the mall, and we said we'd call when we wanted to be picked up. It's a cool mall. Not as big as the one in Fayetteville, but they have a Record Bar and a cool arcade, Time Out.

We went to the Record Bar first. John showed me the ZZ Top section. I thought they were a new band, but they've got a ton of old albums out. I checked out the ABC section. I like their videos on MTV, but

never could find any of their albums at the Army PX.

They had Lexicon of Love and that has "Shoot that Poison Arrow" and "Look of Love." So I bought it with some of the emergency money mom gave me. I think she forget she gave it to me. I hope so anyway.

I have to make a list of my record collection sometime.

We never found Brandi and Kristy. I was really looking forward to seeing Brandi again. I don't know if I love her, but I think about her all the time.

Dave told me that two years ago there were five arcades in town, but Time Out is the last one left. I loaned John and Dave some quarters so they could play Stargate. They had Space Invaders there. It was cool to play that antique, but I quit with one man left, because Punch-Out got free.

I remember the first time I played Space Invaders at Pizza Hut. The first four times we went, I couldn't play, because all the GIs were hogging it. Then one night, unbelievably, Pete and I were the only ones who wanted to play. Mom gave us quarters for the

jukebox, but instead, Pete and I used them to play Space Invaders. When Mom didn't hear her Fleetwood Mac songs, she knew we weren't putting the quarters in the jukebox and she stopped giving us any more.

I beat the hell out of Pete. Neither of us got past the first board, but I got down to six aliens left. Pete was too scared to come out from behind the shields to do any good. He would always panic when the shields disappeared, because he let the aliens get too close.

Dad got mad at us for playing Space Invaders, because he just bought us the Atari. He couldn't understand why we had to spend money to play video games when we could play the Atari at home for free. Because those games sucked, Dad, that's why!

Time Out also had Joust, Pole Position and Battlezone, which are my best games. They should make a movie about Joust. John knew some of the other older kids there. They all had leather jackets

and smoked.

John and Dave borrowed three dollars each and finally, when all of my emergency money was gone, we called Dave's mom to come pick us up. So far, it had been a good day. It was about eight o'clock when I got home, and that's when things started to suck.

Mom and Dad both started to yell at me for staying out so late and for not saying where I was. I'm sure Pete told them everything.

Mom asked me how I bought the record and I was forced to tell her I used the emergency money. Then, she asked for the change, and I had to tell her I spent the rest of it on food. I didn't dare tell her John, Dave and I spent it all on video games.

Mom and Dad grounded me for the rest of the weekend, which was really only Sunday and said not to leave without saying where I was going ever again.

I was cool with my punishment, because I had pretty much gotten away with the other stuff. Besides, I needed time to straighten out my room

and get ready for school on Monday.

So their punishment backfired on them. In fact, I'm glad I'm grounded, because I never would have written a journal entry this long if I could watch MTV or go out.

Ms. Mason would die if she saw how long this entry is. It's longer than the whole journal put together. I bet this is the longest thing I've ever written.

Thinking back, today wasn't so bad. It could have been a lot worse. Really, the worst part was that at the Record Bar I saw on the album charts that Michael Jackson's Thriller knocked Men at Work's Business as Usual out of the number one spot.

Business as Usual will be back at number one next week. I know it.

Who listens to Michael Jackson anyway?

I hope I have a class with Brandi on Monday.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1983

Well, I served my time. I spent most of it setting up my room and listening to old records. All four speakers are in opposite corners and aimed at the middle of my room. When I sit on the edge of my bed and play The Wall, it's awesome. If only it didn't skip during "Comfortably Numb."

I need new clothes. I'll see what everyone else is wearing tomorrow and go shopping later. I want Mom to just give me the money and let me get my own clothes, but Dad said no.

I need posters, too. The only one I have worth saving is the Boris painting of the woman warrior on the red dragon. John said if I paid for the games at the state fair this year, he'd try and win some rock banners for me. A Men at Work banner or British flag would be killer.

I'm gonna wear my good jeans and my Who Final Farewell Tour '82 baseball shirt tomorrow. I hope everyone assumes I went to the concert, and I won't have to tell them I bought it at a store in Boston.

I'm meeting Dave at the corner at seven o'clock to catch the bus. I wish like hell I didn't have to ride the bus. Usually, I ride near the front. Dave said he rides near the back. I hope the back seat kids are cool. The back seat kids were real assholes in Fayetteville. You may be a nerd for sitting in the front seats, but you're sure as shit a lot safer.

RECORD LIST

1. ABC - Lexicon of Love
2. STRAY CATS - Built for Speed
3. DEF LEPPARD - Pyromania
4. MEN AT WORK - Business As Usual
5. PAUL McCARTNEY - Tug of War
6. PINK FLOYD - The Wall
7. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
8. K-TEL - Disco Dynamite
9. VILLAGE PEOPLE - Village People
10. KISS-Destroyer (birthday gift from Tim Cobb)
11. WINGS - Greatest hits
12. GREASE (Christmas gift from Aunt Lydia)

13. STAR WARS (Birthday gift from Mom)
14. CAPTAIN AND TENILLE - Muskrat Love (gift from Aunt Lydia)
15. THE WHO - Who's Next (Pete's, but he doesn't know I have it)
16. THE DOORS - The Doors (Dad's, but I get to keep it)
17. ELTON JOHN - YELLOW BRICK ROAD (Dad's)
18. THE BEATLES - Sgt. Pepper (Mom's)

SINGLES

1. DON'T YOU WANT ME - Human League
2. BETTY DAVIS EYES - Kim Carnes
3. ABRACADABRA - Steve Miller
4. POP MUSIK - M
4. PAC MAN FEVER - Buckner and Garcia
5. FUNKY TOWN - Lips Inc.
6. YMCA - Village People
7. IN THE NAVY - Village People
8. STAR WARS (DISCO VERSION) - Meco

I wonder if I'll keep writing this journal once I start school again. I never did this much writing in my life. When I have homework to do, I may not have this much spare time to write. There's no way I can use this journal for extra credit now. Not with us drinking and shit in it. Maybe if I copied it and left out all the good stuff.

It's midnight and I want to go to sleep, but I'm too excited about school. I hope I can see Brandi on the bus. I miss her.

So far, I'd say I'm cool. I hope I can keep it up.

MONDAY - FEBRUARY 28, 1983

To me it was my first day of school at Cary High, but to everyone else that has been there, it was just another suckie day at school.

I'm so grateful to know Dave, John, Brandi and Kristy. Unlike the other times when I moved and didn't know anybody, I could always turn to the person sitting next to me in class and ask if they knew any of my friends. Even if they didn't know

them personally, they usually had heard of them and treated me a little nicer.

It certainly made riding the bus cooler. I sat with Dave in the fourth seat from the back. I used to sit in the fourth from the front.

Brandi and Kristy don't ride the bus in the morning. They ride with Brandi's older sister, Carrie. She's a senior and pretty popular from what Dave says. Dave pointed her out when he was showing me where my classes were. I don't think Carrie is as cute as Brandi, but she seems like the kinda girl that's had sex. Not really a slut, but more mature, like a college girl.

I only saw Brandi in the halls once. She didn't have time to talk. I guess she doesn't want to go with me or anything. She would have made time then. I don't know.

I got to hang out with John at the smoking court. It was weird seeing him smoke. He has to be careful, because only juniors and seniors can smoke. I didn't make a big deal out of it. John says he only smokes a

couple of cigarettes a day and only to relax. I looked out for teachers for him, so he wouldn't get suspended.

I met some of his older friends at the smoking court. They dug my Who shirt, but were disappointed when I told them I didn't go to the concert. I should have lied.

No one I know is in my classes. They are all average classes and seem okay.

I ate lunch by myself. I was supposed to meet Dave and John and sneak off to the mall, but I didn't want to risk it on my first day of school. On the bus home, I just told Dave that I had to go to the front office at lunch to get some paperwork straightened out.

I have a ton of reading, and all I've been doing since I got home is eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, watching MTV and writing this journal entry.

At the top of the hour, Mark Goodman said they were gonna play Men At Work, but I've been

watching for forty minutes and they haven't played any Men at Work videos. I hope it's "Be Good Johnny."

They just played "Who Can It Be Now?" Great, like I haven't seen that video a hundred times.

I better start on my homework now, because the last MASH is on tonight. I never really watched MASH before, but since this is the last one, I want to be able to say I saw it. It's history.

FRIDAY - MARCH 4, 1983

Just finished reading all of my journal entries. It's been a few days since I've entered a new one. It's weird reading them. I feel important, like some famous person.

I ripped out the fake entries for Ms. Mason. Now, it starts with the night before we moved to Trappers Run. It's funny reading the fake ones. I even used different types of pens and pencils to make it look like there were written on different days. All that's left is Ms. Mason's last grade, and I would have

ripped that out, too, but there was real writing on the back of the page. I can't believe I got a C- for that crap. I thought for sure I'd get an F.

I wish I could use my journal for extra credit, because I'm not doing that well in English. Why couldn't Shakespeare write like a normal person?

At night when I'm trying to go to sleep, I can hear Mom and Dad argue that maybe I should have stayed and finished the year with Pete. I hate to tell them that I wasn't doing so well with Ms. Mason, either.

It was funny reading about Jim. He wrote me a letter and I haven't written him back. I haven't really had time. I haven't even had time to write in my journal. I'll try and recap what's been going on.

I guess I should start with Brandi and that day. Oh, that day.

Brandi told Dave, John and me to come by the house where she was babysitting at. Kristy was also there and we were all watching MTV with the little kid and talking about the party we had when I first

moved in to Trappers Run.

Then Brandi said she wanted to talk to me alone for a minute. Brandi handed the little kid over to Kristy, and we went to the parents' room and sat on their bed. I was sort of disappointed when Brandi started telling me about some junior that she liked, but that he didn't like her back.

I told Brandi she was really good-looking and that any guy that didn't like her was crazy. She gave me a hug for being "so sweet." Then she started laughing and pulled open a drawer in the nightstand by the bed to show me where the parents of the kid kept their condoms.

Then things got kinda serious as I rubbed her legs. She was wearing white shorts and her bare legs were still tan. She let me go higher and higher. I laid down next to her and we started to French.

I was much cooler than before, and I remembered to feel her up this time. She was grabbing my ass as I worked my hand to the front of her shorts and eased it in slowly. I was waiting for Brandi to pull my hand

out, but she never did. I slipped my hand under the elastic of her panties and felt her bush. Again, I waited for her to yank my hand out, but she didn't. It's funny how you just know how to do this stuff.

Then Kristy started banging on the door and yelling that Mrs. Anderson was home. Through the window, I saw Dave and John running through the backyard and leaping over the fence. Brandi yelled at me to run out the back, too. She had to put the condoms away and make the bed back up, so I didn't really get to say good-bye.

I dashed out the sliding glass door Kristy had opened for me and ran through the backyard of another home to get to a safe street. Dave and John were already there catching their breath.

They knew something had happened with Brandi, but I wasn't going to tell them. They saw that my zipper was undone, but I said, "I don't kiss and tell."

John said he knew we did it. I should have said that we didn't, but I just smiled and kept silent. I made them swear not to tell anyone about what

happened, and they gave me their word they wouldn't.

The next day it was all over school that I did it with Brandi. This is where things went bad. Brandi was pissed as hell. She even cried because some girl said she was a slut. I even heard the junior she liked and his friends were gonna kick my ass. Luckily, I was new, so the junior and his buddies didn't know what I looked like.

John and Dave said if any one jumped me and there was more than one guy, they would jump in. It is kinda their fault the whole thing started by telling people something they shouldn't have, but it's still cool as hell to have friends that will watch your back.

Kristy called me at home after school to tell me Brandi was "ill" with me. I told her that I didn't tell anyone and that it must have been Dave or John who assumed something happened.

I told her that I was really sorry. Kristy asked if anything did happen, and I said no. My honesty paid off, and Kristy said she would have her older brother

talk the juniors out of kicking my ass. I guess that junior must have liked Brandi after all.

The other day in English, we talked about the irony of Caesar turning down the crown. I guess what is ironic about all this is that I probably could have slept with Brandi, if I had never let the lie get out that I did. Now, she won't even talk to me. It's almost funny watching her look the other way when I see her in the halls.

I had my first smoke when I found out the junior wanted to kick my ass. I took a drag from one of John's cigs. I wanted everyone at the smoking court to know I wasn't a kid or anything. John says I don't inhale. I think I do, because I can exhale smoke out of my nose.

I'm up to two cigs a day. I just buy a few off John after school. I have one after I get home with John and then one at night before Dad gets home. Mom found a couple of butts out back, but she thought that they were from the people that lived here before. I'm more careful now and chew a ton of Dentyne.

I used to hate people who smoke, but I think it's okay now. Jim would never believe I smoke.

I like the new me. Even though I was gonna get beat up, I liked being in the middle of all that gossip. I feel like one of the popular kids. A lot of people know my name, and I have a reputation of doing it with Brandi.

I skipped English class again today. This is the second time, and it's one of the reasons I'm doing so bad in there. English is right after lunch, and I usually sneak off to the mall with Dave and John.

Today, the shop teacher was watching the trail we normally sneak back on. We had to sneak around to the rear of the school, and it made us late. Instead of coming into class five minutes after the tardy bell, I just skipped the whole class.

John wrote a note saying I had a doctor's appointment again. He copies Mom's handwriting from a letter she wrote to me while I was at scout camp. The writing looks exactly the same.

Pete was dumb not to come here. Seniors get to go

off campus to eat lunch, but Pete would probably still eat in the cafeteria and play Gamma World with Ryan and the rest of his nerd friends. Pete hates people like me, and that's why I can't tell him half the things I do or he'd rat me out to Mom and Dad. What a dick!

I better start reading Act II of Julius Caesar, because we have a test Monday. I better start now. I'll start now. Now! NOW! NOW!!!!

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 9, 1983

I've got two new friends that are girls in Trappers Run and if John and I play our cards right, we could both have girlfriends.

Candi Sullivan and Laura Brock ride the bus in the seat in front of John. They have to ride the bus now, because their brother, Terry, wrecked his car. Terry just car pools with some other seniors, but Candi and Laura got stuck on the bus with us.

Candi and Laura are both sophomores, but they still talk to us freshman. Candi knew John from

when they had English together last year. John said he didn't remember Candi too well, because she just moved here last year, plus he skipped English a lot.

Anyway, the whole thing started when Candi wanted to bum a cigarette off John. John didn't want to get busted while on the bus, so he said he'd get off at her stop and give it to her there. I wanted to get to know Laura better, so I got off with them, too. Dave had basketball practice, so he just went home to get ready for that.

At first, when Candi and Laura said they were sisters, I didn't believe them. I mean, they didn't look a thing alike. Candi is tall and pale with short, black hair. However, Laura has perfectly permed sandy blonde hair and these gorgeous hazel eyes. It'd be like saying Pat Benatar and Farrah Fawcett were sisters.

I felt pretty bad because they were stepsisters. I didn't even believe that until we got to their house and I saw their pictures hanging side by side on the wall. I'm so stupid sometimes!

John gave Candi a couple of cigarettes, but none to Laura, because she hates smoking. Then Candi and Laura went inside to turn on their favorite soap, General Hospital. Laura stretched out on the couch, but Candi came back out on the front porch and watched it through the window with John and me.

Candi said they weren't allowed to have guys in the house or really outside the house while their parents weren't home. But as long as John and I promised to leave before their parents got home, we could stay.

John was rocking with Candi on the front porch swing, and I balanced my butt on the porch rail and pretended to watch the soap. I was really checking out Laura's legs dangling off the couch.

John kept giving me these "get lost" looks when Candi was looking the other way at the TV. I wanted to stay and get to know Laura better, so I just ignored him.

During commercials, Laura would step outside and we'd talk, but as soon as the soap came back on,

she dashed back to the couch.

The phone rang during one commercial, and Laura answered it. It was Brandi. They're part of the Duran Duran hotline. Laura switched to MTV to watch "Rio." Candi abandoned John and me on the porch to go drool over Simon and the boys on MTV. She came back out after Laura made her turn it back to the soap. Laura likes General Hospital better than Duran Duran.

Candi had to put out her cigarette when the bus dropped off her little brother, Scottie. He's in Kindergarten and hates school already. I hate to tell him he's got twelve more years to go and it doesn't get any better. No more nap time, either.

John kept smoking, even though Scottie said he was gonna tell. John told Scottie that he couldn't do anything about it and kept saying to him, "Beam me up, Scottie."

Scottie kept bugging Candi and Laura to turn over to He-Man, even though He-Man didn't come on until General Hospital was over. What a dumb show.

It seems all these cartoons today are just 30-minute commercials for stupid Transformers and G.I. Joe toys. And not the cool big G.I. Joe's Pete and I had, but little wimps about the size of Star Wars figures. Whatever happened to Speedy and the Chopper Bunch?

After the soap, He-Man was turned on, and Laura came out to hang with us. She started running her fingers through my hair and telling me how I should let it get really long. I said I would.

John kept making jokes about other things getting longer, too. For a guy who says he's always cool, John can be pretty uncool sometimes. He kept asking Laura if she wanted a smoke, even though she said that she didn't smoke about five times. When I promised to quit smoking, Laura gave me a hug. I'd rather get a hug than cancer.

Laura asked me what happened that day with Brandi. I said that was between me and Brandi, but I also said that I didn't like Brandi and never really liked her to begin with. I wanted to make sure that

Laura knew that I was free and totally uncommitted.

The only real problem I have with Candi and Laura, outside of them watching soaps religiously, is their musical taste. Duran Duran is all right. I won't admit it to anyone, but I think their songs are cool, and they have fine women in their videos.

But when I was complaining about Michael Jackson beating Men At Work, Candi and Laura both bragged they had two copies of Thriller. Laura has the album and Candi the tape.

Walking back home, John kept asking me what I thought about Candi. I could tell by the way he asked it, that he really liked her.

John started singing the song "I Want Candy." I tried to explain that a girl sang that song about a guy. John said before Bow Wow Wow sang it, it was a guy singing about a girl. I guess he's right, because I never met a guy named Candy before.

I flunked Monday's Julius Caesar test. So, instead of seeing if Dave was back from basketball practice, I thought it best to just go home and start on my

homework.

I read for an hour and then had dinner. It's weird not having to listen to Pete's big mouth while I eat. I like it.

After supper, I watched some MTV. They played another version of a cool song that I saw the other day. The first "Der Kamisar" was in German by this geek Falco. All he did was run in place in front of police cars. I thought the song was cool, but the video sucked.

Tonight, I saw the English version of "Der Kamisar" done by After The Fire. This video had women, bars and spiders.

I wonder what Laura thinks of me. Maybe I shouldn't have gotten so mad about Michael Jackson. I should have been cooler like John and just not given a damn. I'm so stupid sometimes.

I'll start studying again after this video.

THURSDAY - MARCH 10, 1983

John was gonna give me a pack of Marlboros not to get off with Candi and Laura today. He's gonna ask Candi to go with him and wanted to do it alone.

Since I'm keeping my promise to Laura and don't smoke anymore, I stayed away for free.

I wanted to see Laura again, but I've got a test in Algebra and a World Civ. quiz tomorrow, so I guess I'll just study and watch some MTV.

John just called. He's officially going with Candi now. He kept going on and on about her. How fine she was. How much he loved her.

Finally, I lied and said Dad needed to use the phone, so I could start studying again.

I wonder if Laura would go with me?

FRIDAY - MARCH 11, 1983

I've got Who Are You blasting at eight on my stereo. I guess Dad will be in here to tell me to turn it in down. Screw them! Make me come home like a baby. Fuck You!!!!!!

Dad just came in and told me to turn it down, and if I turn it past five again he's going to take my stereo away. I'd like to see you try! The volume dial is between five and six.

John, Dave and I got off with Candi and Laura today. John and Candi went behind the house to smoke a cigarette and suck face. Dave and I sat on the front porch while Laura watched General Hospital inside.

Scottie came home and started to whine about He-man again. Kids are so stupid today! I tried to explain to Scottie that He-man would never start until after General Hospital was over. All I got in return was Scottie taking a couple of swings at me with his Smurf lunch box.

Dave carried Scottie out on the front yard and gave the crying brat an airplane spin to shut him up, but Scottie liked it so much he kept bugging Dave to do it again and again. Finally, He-man came on and Scottie went in and left us alone. What ever happened to Fat Albert?

Laura sat with me on the swing, and now I was giving Dave the "get lost" look. Didn't work. Dave kept asking me why I was making faces. He knew damn well why, but I let it drop.

I tried in vain to convince Laura how bad Michael Jackson was. Laura wouldn't listen. She played PYT on her boombox just to piss me off. I started to leave, but only walked off to the driveway. Dave took my seat on the swing before I could get back.

Laura exchanged notes with Brandi in the halls about me today. Laura told me Brandi wrote that she never really liked me either and that we never even kissed! Dave stood up for me, saying he was there at the house when we did.

John and Candi came out from behind the house and were gonna walk up to Jo-Boy's to pick up some more Marlboros. Dave said he'd go with them. I don't think John wanted him to, but I sure did.

Now I was alone with Laura, except that He-man was over, and Scottie came running out with his He-man toys to bug us. Man, that kid is hyper. Too

many Fruit Roll-Ups. At least he was polite enough to share a cherry roll-up with me and Laura.

I tried to tell Scottie about cool cartoons, like Hong Kong Phooey and Speed Racer, but Scottie kept singing the Transformers commercial song. He hasn't even seen Star Wars. He wasn't even born when it came out. Laura never saw Star Wars, but she's seen The Empire Strikes Back. How can you watch Empire, if you never saw Star Wars? Revenge of the Jedi is coming out soon. I can't wait.

I asked Laura if she wanted to go for a walk to get away from Scottie. She couldn't because she had to watch Scottie until her parents came home.

We just listened to Thriller and tried to ignore Scottie until I had to go home for dinner.

Mom wasn't gonna let me back out after dinner. "It's too dark," she said. Finally, after I begged some more, she let me stay out until 8 p.m. A whole damn hour, thanks Mom.

I ran back to Laura's house, so I wouldn't lose any time. I met her parents. Her dad was a lieutenant on

a sub and now works at the nuclear plant. I told him about my West Point dad. Navy guys really hate Army guys, but he said they should get together for the Army-Navy football game this year. Laura's mom works for the phone company.

I acted really polite, and I think I made a good impression. I also met her older brother, Terry. He had cool clothes and a cool haircut. Why can't my brother look cool? Terry even gets to smoke in front of his parents.

Terry didn't stay long. He was going out with his friends. Why can't I go out with my friends on Friday night?

I'm not sure who's part of which family. I think I know, but I don't want to say anything stupid again, so I don't say anything at all. I'm not used to hanging out with divorced families.

After Terry left, Laura and I watched Wheel of Fortune with Scottie and her parents. John, Dave and Candi were out walking when I got there. They were probably smoking Marlboros somewhere.

At 7:45 p.m., I called Mom to see if I could stay out another hour. I told her I was just watching Wheel of Fortune with Laura's family. Mom said I could come home and watch TV with them. Man, I hate it when Mom says something like that. She just doesn't get it.

Just as I was leaving at 7:55 p.m., John, Candi and Dave showed back up. All I could do was say goodbye. Scottie even made fun of me for having to go home. He said we both had the same bedtime. Everyone thought that was so damn funny.

I was ten minutes late getting home and got yelled at for that. Pete was home for the weekend and kept siding with Mom and Dad. I yelled at him to shut up and told him how much I liked it while he was gone. That's when I got sent to my room. Just like Joanie on Happy Days, what a joke!

I have my stereo at six now!

Not only is Laura a year older than I am and John is already going with Candi, now Laura has to see me get called home like a little boy hearing his Mom ringing the dinner bell.

My stereo is at seven!

FRIDAY - MARCH 12, 1983

The coach just benched Dave because he committed his second foul, and it's still the first quarter. Dave's team is down by three. I hope Dave doesn't foul out, because he's scored all of his team's six points.

I brought my journal with me, because I get real bored with sports, but I'd go anywhere to get out of the house.

I played city rec basketball one year. The only reason I played was so that Mom and Dad would buy me a pair of Nikes. That was the only way they would buy me Nikes, if it was for an organized sport.

Leather bruins with a dark blue stripe were the Nikes I wanted, but Mom and Dad weren't gonna pay twenty-two dollars for a pair of sneakers.

Instead, I'd have to settle for a pair of canvas Nikes with a light blue stripe.

SUNDAY - MARCH 13, 1983

Went bowling with John, Candi, Dave, Laura, Terry, and Scottie. Terry drove us in the station wagon and we all pretended it was a family trip.

Dave, Scottie and I rode in the very back and were the bratty kids, although Scottie didn't have to pretend. Terry was the grandfather and he kept pointing out phony family landmarks in town.

"Behind that school there, your grandmother and I got stoned out of our gourds and led the cops on a three state chase. Yep, those were the good 'ole days. Back then a nickel bag really was only a nickel."

John and Candi were the parents. They were in the middle of a divorce and were fighting over custody of us kids, except no one wanted me. Laura wouldn't play along, so we made her the mean sister everyone hates.

They had Zaxxon at the bowling alley. All these years, and I still can't play that game. The 3-D always messes me up. I don't know why I thought I could play it now.

I don't know about my relationship with Laura. She lets me hold her hand sometimes and gives me hugs when I come and go, but she won't kiss me. John and Candi are always kissing and stuff, and I just seemed to be spinning my wheels.

I finally got to see Laura's room. Her parents were home, so we couldn't do anything. Not that Laura would let me anyway.

Laura had all these posters of Chippendale dancers. She even had a Menudo poster. I said I wouldn't go back in her room unless she took them down. Laura said good and left them up.

When I got home I got yelled at. Dad had yard work for me and was pissed that I wasn't around to do it. Also, I got yelled at for riding with Terry. I'm not supposed to ride with "any kids" without their permission. Yeah, right.

Paul McCartney is gonna be interviewed on MTV tonight. Maybe he can explain why he's going down hill. He's my favorite Beatle and Wings Greatest Hits was the first album I ever bought, but every time

they play "The Girl is Mine" on the radio I have to turn the dial and think, "What went wrong? Why does a former Beatle have to play with Michael Jackson?" Stevie Wonder was cool on Ebony and Ivory, but Michael Jackson? Maybe Paul needed the money or something.

Paul needs another cool song like "Coming Up." That's my favorite Paul song. Unfortunately, I only have half of it on tape. Pete taped it off Casey Kasem, and I tried to make a copy of it, but I pressed record on the wrong tape recorder and instead of recording on the blank tape with Pete's recorder, I recorded over the first part of Coming Up on Dad's recorder.

Pete yelled at me for erasing his song, and Dad yelled at me for taking his tape recorder without permission. Mom yelled at me for getting everybody yelling on a day when there was no yelling.

No one yells at me when I'm with my friends. No wonder I hate coming home.

THURSDAY - MARCH 17, 1983

It's easier to write than talk. My throat is killing me. Mom's been feeding me chicken soup all morning. She's all right sometimes. I think I have strep or mono, but Mom says it's just a sore throat.

When I was a kid, I used to play sick, but it didn't really work out all that well. Even though I got to watch cartoons in the morning, pretty soon all that was on TV after the cartoons ended was news, game shows, and soap operas.

Later, when all my friends came home from school, Mom wouldn't let me go out to play with them. I tried to tell Mom that I was feeling better and that fresh air would be good for me. She didn't think so. Sometimes, I'd go to school sick just so I could go out and play when I got home.

I'm wrapped in a blanket on the couch and watching MTV and writing in my journal. Mom thinks I'm studying, because I wrote HISTORY on the front of my journal cover.

So far, I've seen two new videos. One was the Flock of Seagulls' "Wishing." The lead singer's new

hairstyle is very cool. He really looks like a bird now.

The other video, "Electric Avenue," was by this reggae dude. It's a weird video with motorcycles and school kids. In one scene the singer steps on the floor, and it's water. He just falls in and washes up on a beach.

Dave just came by, but I'm still sick. I told him to say, "Hi," to everyone. I called Laura just to say I was sick and that was the only reason I couldn't see her today. I wanted to talk about other things, but it still hurts to talk and Candi was expecting a call from John.

FRIDAY - MARCH 18, 1983

Not that sick anymore, but I decided to stay home again. This way I won't have to take the Julius Caesar test until Monday. I need the weekend to study.

Dad says I'm sick, because all I wear outside is my Members Only jacket. He wants me to look like an Eskimo. I don't think so, Dad.

MTV played another new video tonight, "Good

Night Saigon" by Billy Joel. It had all these pictures of guys in Vietnam. I called Dad in to watch it. I asked if he knew any of the guys. He watched about half of it, then told me to start studying and left the room.

SATURDAY - MARCH 19, 1983

How funny that last night I was too sick to go see my friends, yet today, I'm well enough to cut the grass. I guess Moms are the only ones who know when fresh air is good for you.

I remember when Pete was the only one allowed to cut the grass. I used to say I could do it, but Dad insisted it was too dangerous. I thought it would be so cool to cut the grass. I was so stupid!

Once I finish, I get to go to Dave's last basketball game. I miss Laura. I wanted to see her today, but she was babysitting and wouldn't let me come over.

Dave just dropped me off from his game. They lost by three. Dave has to go to his coach's house for a steak barbecue. Laura's still babysitting, and John is

with Candi. I've got nothing to do. I should study, but I don't want to. I'll see what's on MTV.

SUNDAY - MARCH 20, 1983

I'm at the Bobby Jones auto park. Mom and Dad are looking for a new car. They did this last week after church and I was bored as hell. This week, I remembered to bring my journal.

I called dibs on the station wagon if they buy a new car. Pete says he'll get the 'ole wagon. I keep reminding Pete that he's seventeen and only has a learner's permit. I said I'd have my license before him. That always pisses Pete off. He's seventeen and doesn't have a license. What a waste.

John has been teaching me about cars in the magazines at Jo-Boy's. Dad wants a Honda. John thinks Hondas are foreign pieces of shit. John only likes American muscle cars. John says America doesn't make muscle cars anymore, because Jimmy Carter made them install catalytic converters, which take away all the power for better gas mileage.

While Mom and Dad are looking at Hondas, I've decided to walk over to the Porsche showroom. I'm writing this entry while sitting in a \$48,345 Porsche 928S. I keep waiting for a salesman to ask me to get out, but no one has said anything. Maybe they think my Dad is rich, and if they piss me off, I'll tell my millionaire father not to buy a Porsche, because they were rude to me.

Dad says we can't afford a Porsche. The 944 I like only costs \$24,654. That's the cheapest one, but Dad claims, "There are no cheap Porsches."

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 23, 1983

Where should I start? I'm sitting in after-school detention. I've been sentenced here for a week. I'm grounded at home for two weeks. I can't watch MTV for one week. This sucks!

At least today I remembered to bring my journal.

THURSDAY - MARCH 24, 1983

Day three of hell. I guess I should write what happened.

Monday morning, I go to the attendance office to turn in my note for being sick. Since it was my third note, Mrs. Potts was required to call home and verify it.

At first, everything was cool. Mrs. Potts just asked Mom if I was sick on Thursday and Friday, but leave it to Mom to start a conversation with her.

Mom tells Mrs. Potts how I haven't been sick since I was a little kid. Then Mrs. Potts informs her that I missed two classes already, because I had doctor's appointments.

The conversation halts. Mrs. Potts sets the phone down on the counter, slides open a file drawer, and with her boney fingers yanks out the notes John faked for me. Word for word she reads them over the phone to Mom. I thought about making a break for it, but really, where was I gonna go?

I didn't rat out Dave or John. I said I just snuck off to the mall alone, because I didn't like the cafeteria

food. Now, Mom makes my lunch instead of giving me money. I also said I forged the notes myself. That's what got me into the most trouble.

I flunked another Julius Caesar test in English. I haven't been to Laura's house in a week. This is gonna kill our relationship for sure. I have no idea what's on MTV now.

At least I can listen to the radio, if I don't play it too loud. The suckie part is, on Casey Kasem's countdown, Billie Jean is #1 and Beat It is #15.

I can't even watch the Adam Ant concert on MTV!

FRIDAY - MARCH 25, 1983

Day four of Hell. I've only got today and Monday left in detention, then one more week of being grounded at home.

The dumb-ass detention warden just asked me why I'm taking notes in a History notebook while reading Julius Caesar. I told him that I forgot my English notebook and would transfer the notes tonight. I asked if I could be excused to get my

English notebook from my locker. He said no.

We have our final Julius Caesar test next Friday in English.

SUNDAY - MARCH 27, 1983

More car shopping after church, but we're at a boring Oldsmobile dealership. No Porsches. At least I'm out of the house.

Pete tape-recorded the Adam Ant concert. The sound's distorted because the volume was too loud. You can also hear Dad saying, "This is crap-ola! Where's the Eagles? Hotel California!" Pete only made it worse trying to make him shut up. "SHUSHHHH! QUIET! Mom, make Dad stop!" Then Mom joins in. "Come on, quiet now! Pete's taping the TV."

They completely ruined "Goody Two Shoes!"

MONDAY - MARCH 28, 1983

The last day of detention. I'll say this, I've done more studying in this last week in detention, than in the month we've lived here.

One more week at home, and I'm free. I'm not gonna do anything wrong for a while. I'm so tired of getting yelled at and being grounded. It's just not worth it.

I can start watching MTV again tomorrow.

TUESDAY - MARCH 29 1983

Watched MTV all day! I've seen the new Madness video, "Our House." It's better than "One Step Beyond." A great one from the Kinks is out, "Come Dancing." I usually don't like dancing, but this was cool dancing, not like Michael Jackson.

David Bowie has a new video, "Let's Dance." Most kids at school never really heard Bowie before. I've listened to Pete's Bowie records for years. "Changes" is my favorite Bowie song.

Bowie scared me the first time I saw him on Saturday Night Live. He was wearing a dress and all

punked out. He had these other two punkers with him, one in red and the other in black. They scared me, too. I was only a kid and not used to seeing shit like that.

MTV started playing Beat It. It's so dumb. The first part is cool with these gang members getting ready for a rumble. Then girly Michael Jackson comes dancing into the rumble and gets all these hardcore gang members dancing along with him. Maybe cops and prison guards should take dancing lessons, instead of carrying guns.

There's a rumor that Eddie Van Halen played guitar on it. He's not in the video, so I think it's bull. I hope it is anyway.

There's a new Culture Club video. I flicked the channels on that one.

Also Duran Duran has a new one, "Save a Prayer." It's a slow song and a good one to listen to while grounded.

Mom was outside and I called Laura to tell her about "Save a Prayer." I told her Duran Duran put

out a slow song, because another group, Kajagoogoo, has this slow song, "Too Shy," that girls love and Duran Duran didn't want to be less wimpy than another band.

Mom came back in, so I had to hang up.

THURSDAY - MARCH 31, 1983

Not much going on. Three more days of being grounded. I'm doing better in school. English is the only class I'm in danger of flunking. I'm pretty sure I'll be able to pull my grade up to a D by the end of the year. I may even pass the Julius Caesar final.

FRIDAY - APRIL 1 1983

Just the weekend to go! Not much going on. I think I passed the Julius Caesar final. I'll see Monday.

MONDAY - APRIL 4 1983

I'm free! I still have to go to school, but after that I'm free!

N.C. STATE WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP!!!!!!

I finally got to see Laura after school. I thought she'd let me kiss her, but all I got to do was hold her legs while she watched General Hospital. At least she lets me come in the house when her parents aren't home.

Dave smokes now. I kinda wish he wouldn't. I haven't smoked since I met Laura. She's proud of me.

Scottie snuck up on John and Candi while they were making out in Candi's bedroom. Scottie said he was gonna tell. What a brat.

Laura's mom invited me to stay for dinner, but mom wouldn't let me. I didn't want to get into a fight about it and get grounded again, so I just came home. Besides, Mom and Dad were gonna let me watch the N.C. State game at Dave's and I needed to study, anyway.

Sports are all right if it's a team you like. Too bad North Carolina doesn't have a pro team like the Boston Celtics.

John was gonna come over to Dave's to watch the game, but he decided to stay with Candi and watch it

at her house. Big surprise.

The whole championship came down to a last-second shot that Lorenzo Charles dunked as the buzzer rang. The Cardiac Pack did it! Coach Valvano lives in Cary. I've never seen him, but Dave and John have.

I can't wait to brag about N.C. State to my Yankee Uncles.

Dave wanted to go to Raleigh and see the crowds and bonfires. His mom wouldn't let him. I knew without asking that mom wouldn't let me go.

Pete's so lucky. He's gonna go to a national champion college. I'll just be going in the tenth grade.

Other good things are that I got a D on my Julius Caesar exam and the weekend concert on MTV is going to be Men at Work!

FRIDAY - APRIL 8, 1983

More great news! John is getting a car! Bad news, it doesn't run and he won't be sixteen until May. It is something to look forward to.

It's a 1969 Camaro, and John's Dad is towing it up early so John can try and get it running before his birthday.

John said the Camaro was a muscle car. I asked if it was fast. John said it would be, when he "gets it right."

It's gonna be a cool summer.

SATURDAY - APRIL 9 1983

Just got back from inspecting John's Camaro. Dave thinks it's a "ugly gray piece of shit." Dave didn't say that around John, though.

Right now, all we can do is wash the Camaro and sit in it. We can't even listen to the radio, because it doesn't have a battery. It only has an eight-track anyway. Dad's stereo can record on eight-track, so I told John I'd make him some cool cruising tapes.

John says the gray is just a coat of primer for the paint. John knows the Camaro looks kinda bad right now, but as John says, "It has potential." John already gave the Camaro a name. Candi, of course.

I'm getting ready for the Men at Work concert on MTV. Mom took me to the mall to buy some tapes. I've got the tape recorder right up to the speaker and have done several tests with the volume, to make sure the sound's not distorted. I told Pete and Dad to shut up while the concert is on.

Nina Blackwood is playing Def Leppard's "Photograph." I want MTV to play the new Men at Work video "Overkill." I can't wait to get the new album. I'm sure it will knock off Thriller.

Now Nina is playing "Cut's Like a Knife." I hate the song but the girl that dives in the empty pool is hot!

The concert has started, and the tape is rolling!

SUNDAY - APRIL 10 1983

Looking at cars with Mom and Dad. I saw the 1983 Camaros. They don't look anything like John's. I told Dad he needed to buy a new Camaro. He didn't think so.

I don't know what to do about Laura. I just don't

know. I think she likes me, but I don't know. I'm starting to think about Brandi more. The next time a Duran Duran video comes on, I'll call Brandi and let her know. Who knows, it may lead to a make up.

WEDNESDAY - APRIL 13 1983

"Girls on Film" came on after school and I called Brandi. She said she knew and couldn't talk, because she had company over. God, I'm so stupid! STUPID!

FRIDAY - APRIL 15 1983

John put his mom's battery in the Camaro. We listened to the radio and played an Eagles eight-track tape I borrowed from Dad. John's mom came out when she heard "Hotel California." She yelled at John to put her battery back, but made him wait until after "Hotel California" finished playing.

We washed the car again. It's nice to have John away from Candi. He spends so much time with her that Dave and I never see him much outside of school. At least not alone.

John's dad is coming up from Wilmington with more parts tomorrow. They should get it running by the end of the weekend.

It's got a V-8 engine, which John says is the best engine. John showed me how to tell how many cylinders are in a car by counting the number of spark plug wires.

I looked at our station wagon engine, and it was a V-8 too! I got yelled at for popping up the hood without permission.

John said a V-8 in a station wagon didn't mean shit, because it has to haul families around. Whereas a V-8 in a Camaro could "kick ass," because it only has to "haul around the driver and his lady."

SATURDAY - APRIL 16 1983

Got yelled at for drinking Pete's Wolfpack Championship Coke. He was saving it as a souvenir. I had to walk to Jo-Boy's and buy him another six-pack. What's the big deal if it's opened? Why waste the Coke? Who knows? Who cares?

Men at Work's "Overkill" is #19 on the countdown. Michael Jackson look out.

SUNDAY - APRIL 17, 1983

John's dad couldn't get the Camaro started. At least it has a battery now. We're not supposed to listen to the radio yet, because it might drain the battery before the car is running. John's dad told John not to try and fix anything during the week. I think John screwed something up that wasn't screwed up. John's dad wanted to tow the Camaro back to Wilmington, but John wouldn't let him.

We washed and vacuumed the Camaro again. Dave complained that he was tired of washing the "jalopy." Because of that, John said I could "ride shotgun" first, after Candi, of course.

I didn't know what "riding shotgun" meant and declined the offer. Hell, I thought it had something to do with John's gun. John explained it just means riding in the front passenger seat.

He said it goes back to the old west when

stagecoach drivers would have a cowboy sit next to them with a shotgun, in case they ran into Indians.

John's mom and dad got into an argument while I was crouched down and cleaning the dead bugs off the front grill.

I guess they didn't see me before they decided to go at it. She said he wasn't trying to fix the Camaro, that he just wanted a reason to come back and see her. John's dad said that was "bullshit." I see where John gets his eloquence.

FRIDAY - APRIL 22, 1983

Been a few days, but I'm back. Still seeing Laura after school, but I don't know why. It's real boring. Except for yesterday.

She got a letter in the mail from a sailor. He is an older guy, who turns nineteen this summer. In the pictures he sent from Japan, he had a moustache.

Laura read the letter twice, then she started to write him back. I asked if he was her boyfriend. She said no, just a guy she knows. Then I got to thinking,

maybe I'm just a guy she knows, and she never gets this excited over me. It got me bummed out.

John Glenn announced he's running for President. He is gonna beat the hell out of Reagan. At first, I though Glenn was the first man on the moon, but he was just the first to orbit the Earth. That's more than Reagan did. Pete says all Reagan ever did during the World War II was act in "How To" films.

Pete said they found Hitler's diary. I wonder what people will think when they find my journal?

SATURDAY - APRIL 23, 1983

John's dad got the Camaro running! John is allowed to drive it in the driveway, but that's it. John's Dad taught John how to drive when he was fourteen. I got to ride shotgun in the driveway first, after Candi, of course.

All we have to do is wait three more weeks, and we won't have to stop at the end of the driveway and back up. We can keep on going!

The other cool news is that "Come On Eileen"

knocked Billie Jean out of the #1 spot in the countdown. I never thought that would happen. I wish "Overkill" had done it as pay back for Business as Usual, but "Overkill" is only #15.

SATURDAY - APRIL 24, 1983

Mom said I couldn't ride with John without permission. I told Mom that I quizzed John on the written driver's test, and he got all the questions right. She didn't care.

John said we could car pool when he gets his license. It would be Laura, John, Candi, Dave, and me. I don't care what Mom says.

We were gonna wash the Camaro again, but it rained.

SATURDAY - APRIL 30, 1983

I'm listening to Men at Work's new album Cargo! Man, it's great! As good as Business as Usual. Maybe better! The best songs are "Overkill," "Dr. Heckyll & Mr. Jive" and "It's a Mistake." They all could go #1.

"It's a Mistake" is about nuclear war. I hope Reagan listens to it.

I hope one of them can knock off "Beat It," which knocked off "Come on Eileen" after only one week. Dexy's new video, "Celtic Soul Brothers," isn't quite as catchy as "Come on Eileen."

FRIDAY - MAY 6, 1983

I've decided to put my cards on the table with Laura. We're either a couple or we're not. I asked Candi if I should ask Laura to go with me. She said, "Why not?" I would rather she said, "Yes, she always tells me she wants to go with you."

Tomorrow will be the day I ask Laura.

The Hitler diaries are fake. The handwriting didn't match.

FRIDAY - MAY 7, 1983

I have to wait to ask Laura to go with me. Dad has Pete and me reseeding the lawn. I hate yard work!

We're having lunch now. I asked Pete how to ask

Laura to go with me. He was no help at all. He kept teasing me about it. I swore I was gonna kick his ass, but Dad told us both to shut up and get back to work.

I never had a girl say yes when I asked her to go with me. I guess I do it wrong. One girl asked back, "Go where?"

Dad's yelling for me to go back out and help Pete with the lawn.

Just heard this on the radio outside doing yard work and ran in to write it down. Cargo is #11 and climbing!

SATURDAY - MAY 14, 1983

Haven't felt much like writing. Laura said I was "really sweet," and she liked me "as a friend," but she couldn't go with me. I didn't cry or anything. At least, I know where I stand with her. She still flirts with me, but it's different. She acts like nothing ever happened.

John is almost always with Candi now. Lucky

bastard. Once he gets his license, we'll never see him. John said he wouldn't ditch us when he starts driving. Yeah, right, what the hell are you doing now? I wish Dave had a car or could use the station wagon more.

Dad's gonna take me over to John's party in a few minutes.

I got John a license plate custom airbrushed at Logo Joe's at the mall. It says Candi & John. I also made a copy of Cargo on eight-track for cruising.

Cargo is already #4, and the best part is Business as Usual is still #7. Two albums in the top ten at the same time. Men at Work really are the Australian Beatles.

FRIDAY - MAY 15, 1983

Sitting in another car lot. Why can't they find a car! Got to see the Porsches again. Dad said he knew a guy when we were stationed in Germany who had two daughters, one named Porsche and the other named Mercedes. Mom said he did not. You can't tell

with his dumb stories.

John's party was cool. As usual, I had to go home before everyone else. John screwed the Candi & John plate to the front of the Camaro before I left and said he'd never take it off.

I got along with Laura fine. She even let me lick some frosting off her finger.

John's going for his license tomorrow.

MONDAY - MAY 16, 1983

John got his license after school today. He took Dave and me for a quick spin then dropped us off to pick up Candi. We'll never see John again.

I just watched Michael Jackson do the stupidest dance move. He walked backwards sliding his feet. What an idiot!

Got some bad news at school. Mrs. Cox informed me that I'm responsible for everything on the final English exam. She said we would review it all in class and that she would keep in mind that I moved here late. I studied Anne Frank and some of the other

stuff in Fayetteville, but still, it's unfair. I told Mom and Dad I couldn't pass it. They said I better. I tried to explain that just because they say I "better pass it," doesn't mean I will.

MTV's playing the new Pink Floyd video, "Not Now Johnny." It's not as good as The Wall, but it's way better than most of the crap on MTV like Kajagoogoo and Falco.

FRIDAY - MAY 20, 1983

After school, I went by Mrs. Cox's class and asked for some old tests from when I wasn't here. She went through her files and pulled several out for me. I sat at my desk looking through the old tests and asking Mrs. Cox questions as she took down the dorky Shakespeare bulletin board.

Mrs. Cox let me stay for an hour before she said she had to go home. I asked if I could come back tomorrow after school and study some more in her class.

"I don't see the point. You have the tests. Can't you

study at home?"

"I like being able to ask you questions."

"Okay, but try and do your reading at home and have your questions prepared when you come in tomorrow."

I wanted to say, "Chill-out, bitch. I'm only trying to pass your fucking exam. If you'd just grade me on only the shit I was here for, I wouldn't take another damn second of your precious fucking time!"

Instead, I just said, "Okay, thank you."

The whole thing is Dad's idea. He said it's crucial for Mrs. Cox to see I'm making an effort. Maybe if I'm borderline flunking, she'll pass me, because she'll see me working so hard. Dad keeps saying I better be borderline C or B. They just don't get it.

John's Camaro conked out at Jo-Boy's. We put three dollars worth of gas in the Camaro, but it still wouldn't start. We had to push it back to John's house. As we pushed it down the street, cruisers would speed by and blow their horn.

John still hasn't driven the Camaro to school. Poor

guy.

WEDNESDAY - MAY 25, 1983

Return of the Jedi came out today. It used to be called Revenge of the Jedi, but they changed the name, because a Jedi doesn't seek revenge.

Mom and Dad said I couldn't see Jedi until after I take my last exam, which is English, thank God. More time to study. I didn't fight about having to wait for Jedi, because the lines are way too long, anyway. I still acted hurt to make them feel a little guilty.

Some of the cruisers at the smoking court were giving John a hard time about the Camaro conking out at Jo-Boy's. Especially, the Ford guys who drive Mustangs. John got right in the face of one of the shit-talkers and said, "I'd rather push a Chevy than drive a Ford." For a second, I thought they were gonna fight, but the shit-talker smiled and said, "I'd rather just drive a Ford and not have to push a Chevy."

Mrs. Cox was actually nice to me today. She was cleaning out her desk after school and found a Rubik's Cube that fell behind a drawer. She took it away from a kid during class a few years ago, and she let me have it today, since that kid graduated last year.

His name must have been Alan, because there was a piece of masking tape with "Alan" written on it stuck on the side. I think it's a good sign that Mrs. Cox is starting to like me.

When I was waiting for Mom to pick me up, I solved the white and blue sides on the Rubik's Cube, but I still can't solve the whole thing without taking it apart and putting it back together.

MONDAY - MAY 30, 1983

Starting finals. God be with me.

Pete called me right after he saw Jedi with Ryan. He told me all the secrets, but only after I asked him to.

John's dad got the Camaro started on Saturday.

John's supposed to be driving everyone to school today, but it's getting late and I haven't seen him.

Mom's yelling at me, because the bus just drove by and I wouldn't go running after it. John, where are you?

Just called John's house, and no one is home. I hope he didn't break down again. Mom is going to drive me to school in five minutes. Damnit, John!

I hear the Camaro rumbling around the block. It's loud.

My World Civilization final was fine. I wish all exams could be multiple choice. Algebra was okay.

For speech class I've been practicing for my debate with Robert Johnson all night. My British accent is perfect. Mom keeps yelling at me to quit jumping around, but I've got to get my air guitar to "Rock The Casbah" down for our mock broadcast of MTV.

Robert bet me twenty bucks I wouldn't shave the sides of my head like the Clash lead singer. I don't know. He's going to give himself tattoos just like a

Stray Cat. I want to look cool, too, but magic marker washes off with soap and water. Hair, however, takes a lot longer to grow back.

Dad let me use his recorder to tape the moon landing guitar riff off MTV for the opening of the speech class MTV broadcast. I'm gonna get an A easy. Miss Hawkins showed us the ABC News broadcast final tape her class did last year and it was so boring! Our MTV video is going to be so much cooler.

While we were in the TV room in the library and Miss Hawkins was getting last year's ABC News video ready, we got to watch a little bit of the real MTV to get ready. We said it was research.

It was so cool to watch MTV at school.

I stole an article about the US Festival from the newspaper in the library. I told Mom if there was an US Festival next year, I was going, even if I have to skip school and hitchhike to California to be there. She said good. I should really go and see what she says then.

There's supposed to be 500,000 people at the US Festival. Pete says the US Festival is not as important as Woodstock, because its got no theme. It's got the Clash, though, and they're political. The Clash wanted the other bands to give a portion of their salary to charity. The other bands told the Clash to mind their own business.

If Van Halen got \$1.5 million, then Men at Work should get at least \$1 million.

\$1.5 million for one concert. I should learn how to play guitar.

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 1, 1983

Mom and Dad want to kill me. I shaved the sides of my head.

I wasn't gonna do it, but Robert brought the shaver and the twenty bucks. When we were in the bathroom, Robert slicked back his hair, put on a t-shirt with the sleeves cut off and gave himself some magic marker tattoos up and down his arms to look like a Stray Cat.

Everyone in the bathroom was talking about how cool Robert looked and kept asking me if I was gonna shave my sides. I kept saying no. I felt I was letting everyone down by not shaving my head.

Finally, I said yes and told Robert to shave my sides of my head and give me the twenty bucks, before I changed my mind.

The hair will grow back over the summer and I could use the money. I wore Dad's old camo clothes, and the potheads in the class brought the guitars.

Everyone said I looked just like a member of the Clash. More than Robert looked like a Stray Cat, anyway.

During the videotaped debate, I think I proved English rock and roll was better than American roll and roll. I pointed out that the Stray Cats had to go to England to hit it big, and then come back to America.

He brought up Culture Club and Duran Duran. I tried talking about The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who and Led Zeppelin. Robert kept bringing up Van Halen, Journey and .38 Special. Most people

thought Robert won, but that's because no one was gonna say British Rock was better.

They played the MTV speech project videotape during all the lunch periods in the cafeteria. The part that gets the most applause is when I toss off my Army hat at the beginning of the "Rock The Casbah" video, and you can see my shaved sides.

Pretty soon, kids I didn't even know were coming up in the halls and telling me how cool it was. A few also asked me what it was like to have sex with Brandi.

The only thing else that comes close to my shaved head on the whole MTV show is at the end Elden Truesdale does Michael Jackson singing "Beat It." He does the moonwalk and everyone loves that. I still say it looks stupid. It's true about Eddie Van Halen playing guitar on "Beat It." He even did it for free! People are always disappointing me.

I got an A on the speech project, and that gave me a B for the semester, which is my best grade, so far.

Mom and Dad don't care. All they care about is

that I've ruined my hair. Dad said I'd have to shave the top of my head before I go to church or Boston.

FRIDAY - JUNE 3, 1983

Just got out of my English final and am sitting in front of the school waiting for Mom to pick me up. I brought my journal to mark the end of my freshman year as it happened. It's finally over.

I was the last one to turn in my exam and leave the classroom. I wanted Mrs. Cox to know I took my time and didn't rush it.

John drove again today, but he already left with Candi. I wish John could have driven the whole year. At least there's next year. I wish I could drive.

They played the MTV final project video again today. I asked Mrs. Cox if she had seen it. She did, but didn't like it. She also thinks I've ruined my hair. Dad's taking me for a haircut on Sunday. At least I get to wear it punked out to see Jedi tomorrow.

Overall, I'd say the school year sucked. Except for speech.

I can see Mom is waiting at the stoplight in front of the school. I'll be in the car in a couple of minutes.

Mom makes me wear my Red Sox hat when I'm with her. She hates being seen with me and my punk cut. I can't say I'm thrilled about being seen with her, either.

Laura hates my punk cut, too. Who cares what she thinks? The light turned green, and Mom is on her way.

SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER!!!!!!

SATURDAY - JUNE 4, 1983

I'm looking out my window and waiting for John to show up. We're going to see the afternoon show of Jedi.

I remember the first time I saw Star Wars in 1977. I didn't know what I was even going to see. Dad took Pete and me. Mom had us both dressed up in warm-up suits. Mine was red and Pete's was blue.

I also remember we left for the movie right after dinner. We always went to the movies right after

dinner. That way Dad wouldn't have to buy us popcorn, because we just ate.

Star Wars was the greatest movie I ever saw. It's still my favorite. Only The Empire Strikes Back, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Jaws, The Road Warrior and Blade Runner come close.

Pete and I rode our bikes to see The Empire Strikes Back in 1980. We used the change from our tickets to share a small popcorn.

By then we each had our own empire of Star Wars toys. When we stayed at the beach house in Cape Cod with our Yankee cousins we had killer set-ups and wars all over the house. Aunt Lydia and Mom got mad, because they kept stepping on our hidden bases with bare feet. I lost a Jawa somewhere in the beach house back yard. I bet it's still there, hidden under a bush somewhere.

I don't want anything from Jedi, except to see it. I used to think when I got older, I'd get a job, just so I could buy Star Wars toys and cards.

Come on, John. Where are you?

I've seen Star Wars three times in the theaters and Empire four times. I don't know how many times I've seen Star Wars on HBO, at least fifteen or so. Plus I saw the Star Wars Holiday Special they had on TV. Mom said it would be on every year, like Frosty the Snowman. I'm always happy when Mom is wrong, but that time I wish she was right, because I haven't seen that Star Wars special since.

There are supposed to be nine Star Wars movies total. Dad said one day, I'll be taking my own kids to see Star Wars movies and then they will be bugging to buy them all the toys from the movie. Guess what, Dad? I'd buy them the toys they want without a big deal, because I'd understand.

I called John and no one was home. He drove Candi, Dave and me to the mall last night, so I know the Camaro is running.

It's so cool cruising. The fastest we've been so far is 70 mph. John would have gone faster, but he doesn't want to get busted on his first week of driving. One ticket, and his mom is gonna take the

car away.

I can hear the Camaro around the block. May the Force not let the movie be sold out.

SUNDAY - JUNE 5, 1983

What a great day yesterday was. Jedi was awesome! Not as good as Star Wars or Empire, but still great! I went over Star Wars and Empire with Candi. She never saw either one. Dave and John helped me. I was surprised they remembered as much as they did. Candi's favorite movie is Grease.

At the movie theater, John parked next to a red 1984 Corvette. John couldn't believe it. He'd only seen the '84 'Vette in magazine ads. I wonder why they put '84s out while it's still 1983?

Candi left us at the Corvette to get our tickets and place in line. Candi hates it when John gets so excited about cars. I think she is just jealous.

I don't know much about cars, but this 'Vette was sweet. It had pop up headlights, and John said the dash lights up like a spaceship. John said it costs

about \$20,000. That's almost as much as the Porsche I like. John said Porsches were foreign pieces of shit. I still like them.

We looked at the 'Vette for a good ten minutes and then sat in line with Candi. I tried to explain to Candi that cars to us were like soap operas to her. She didn't care.

We got good seats in the middle of the theater. John wanted to sit in the front row, but Candi wouldn't let him. I broke my twenty and bought a big bucket of hot buttered popcorn and let everyone share.

John and Dave's favorite scene was with the speeder bikes in the forest. I think it's dumb to go a hundred miles an hour through a thick forest. Why didn't they just fly above the trees? It would have been a lot safer.

My favorite scene was with Princess Leia in her metal bikini. I wonder if they will come out with an action figure of that. When I was a kid, Princess Leia was dressed head to toe in white, but now she's

practically naked. Kids are so spoiled today.

I kinda wish I never asked Pete what the secrets to Jedi were. It kinda ruined the movie knowing how it was going to end.

After the movie, we went to McDonald's. For the first time, I got to try Chicken McNuggets. Mom and Dad won't let me get them. Dad says they're junk. I got all four sauces: honey, hot mustard, barbecue and sweet and sour. I like McNuggets, but I wish they gave you more.

We went back to Trappers Run, and everyone got their bathing suits on to go swimming at Rush Lake. Laura and Terry went with us. I told them they missed Jedi and seeing a 1984 Corvette. They didn't seem to care.

I bummed a cigarette off Dave. Laura kept splashing me to put it out. As I tried to keep dry from her splashing, I checked the beer shack door, and it was unlocked. I hid inside and locked the door. Once inside, I opened the fridge door, and sure enough there was beer in there.

John and Dave were knocking on the door, and their eyes lit up when I turned around and held up a six-pack of Coors. Too bad there was only one six-pack in there. At least there was a beer for everyone.

After our beers, I raced Terry across the pond and back. I was scared at first, because Terry said he was on a swim team when he was a kid. I kicked his ass! Not even close. I would have joined our swim team in Fayetteville, but you had to wear those tight weenie bikini Speedo trunks. No, thank you.

When it got dark, I went home and had dinner with Mom and Dad. Then went back to Laura's with Dave and hung out on her porch, until I had to come home at nine p.m. Mom and Dad said we could talk about a later curfew after I find out my grades.

Right now, I'm in the car with Mom and Dad on the way to Pete's graduation. Dad took me for my haircut. It sucked getting the top shaved off. I look like I'm in boot camp. I don't plan on getting my hair cut until 1984.

We just drove into Fayetteville. I asked if we could

go by Jim's house. Mom and Dad said we didn't have time. I don't really want to see Jim. I only asked, because I knew they would say no. Besides, I never wrote him back, so I'm sure he's mad at me.

I wish I was graduating and getting out of high school.

John is gonna pick me up tomorrow and we're gonna check out our grades posted outside our classrooms. I like how they're in code, so no one can tell what you made, but you can see how many F's and A's were given out. John had trouble in English, too. He had Mrs. Milford and hates John.

On our way back home with Pete. Too tired to write. Nothing to say, anyway. At least, I can listen to Pete's records again.

MONDAY - JUNE 6, 1983

I fucking flunked English! FUCK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SATURDAY - JULY 30, 1983

I've decided to keep writing this journal. I'll be trapped in the car with Mom, Dad and Pete for two days, and I need something to keep me sane. Especially, when Mom finds some dumb station playing country or EZ listening music. I hate that! Why can't they just turn the station when I ask?

Next year, I'm bringing a Walkman. Dad won't buy me one, because he says I'll go deaf. At least, if I go deaf, I won't have to listen to Lionel Richie singing "Dancing on the Ceiling" anymore.

We're still in North Carolina. Mom says we're about an hour away from the Virginia border.

This is where I would make up weeks for Ms. Mason. I guess I should start with English.

ENGLISH: I tried to think of a good way to tell Mom and Dad that I flunked English. I couldn't. So, I just told them after dinner.

"I flunked English."

Understandably, they were pissed.

"I thought you studied!"

"No more MTV!"

"Are you sure you flunked?"

"That's just wonderful!"

"God dammit!"

"You're not staying back a year. You're going to summer school."

I stayed in my room all night, laying face down on my bed, wishing I could go back in time and study harder. I always knew Mrs. Cox hated me.

Mom was in the kitchen calling all our relatives in Boston and pushing the vacation plans back, because her "favorite son flunked English" and would have to make it up in summer school. I didn't even turn the stereo on. I wanted to hear every word she said.

The only bright spot was that John flunked English, too and we'd be able to car pool to summer school together. There are no buses for summer school, and it costs a lot of money to enroll. I told Mom it was kind of like college, because you had to pay for it. She didn't think that was funny.

My F gave Pete enough ammunition for the whole

summer. "Summer School Fool" was his favorite saying. Every time he opened his big mouth, I hit him, or brought up his learner's permit. He's reading a stupid Dr. Who book now and has no idea I'm writing about him.

John was late picking me up on the first day of school. Mom said that if it happened again, she would drive me in the mornings.

A day of summer school is like a week of regular school, and if you miss three days, you might as well drop out.

John made up for being late by speeding. We got to Athens High School just as the bell rang. I was hoping John and I could be together to help each other out, but we had different classes, just like in regular school. I was in average English. John, basic English.

The only seats left in my class were in the front row. It was the first time I ever sat in the front. They seemed to be the safest seats, anyway. Most of the kids in the class were big time freakers.

We just crossed into Virginia.

Our teacher, Ms. Whitney, was good-looking, tall and thin, and that made sitting in the front not such a bad deal after all.

Besides, being the best-looking teacher I've ever had, Ms. Whitney was also the best teacher I've ever had, period. The thing I like about her was her fairness. Her motto was: "If you are cool to me, then I'll be cool to you." And because she was fair to us, no one ever gave her any trouble. Except for a few times, but that can only be expected with a class full of kids that flunked English.

Ms. Whitney told us we weren't stupid. Just that somehow we got off on the wrong track during the school year, and we would not be in summer school if we didn't want to make up for it. It was nice to hear someone say I wasn't stupid for once.

The first day, Ms. Whitney played a cool trick on the class. She said we had no time to waste, and we were gonna get started right away. Everyone had to take out a piece of paper to write interpretations of a

British poem. The poem was on tape and recited to music. Everyone moaned at having to hear the poem and going to work right away.

Since I was up front, I could read what was written on the tape. I smiled at Ms. Whitney, but didn't say anything out loud after I saw what tape it was.

Ms. Whitney pressed play and everyone looked up in disbelief as the first notes of "Stairway to Heaven" filled the classroom. Kids were singing to themselves and playing air guitar. Even the dumbest looking freaker in the back row was writing at the end of the song.

Ms. Whitney said there wasn't one correct interpretation. She just wanted to see what we thought. She also wanted us to write down what grade we wanted at the end of summer school.

I wrote a few lines about a girl buying drugs. Pete told me that's what the beginning was about. It was hard trying to understand the other lines. A lot of nature stuff about trees and brooks. I said the piper

was God. Everyone else seemed to think the piper was the Devil.

There is a part about changing the path you're on. I said that meant we could change our lives, if we wanted to. I used summer school as an example.

I wrote at the bottom that I never got good grades, but I would try hard to earn a C.

We got to listen to "Rock and Roll" and "Black Dog" while Ms. Whitney handed out our textbooks, but after that the music stopped, and the hard work began. It was funny, though, because whenever we'd be doing some intensive studying, someone in the class would always ask, "Can't we just listen to some Zeppelin, instead?"

Everyone thought Ms. Whitney used to be a hippie. She said she was too young to enjoy the 60s. She wouldn't say whether she partied or not. She said that it was not important and none of our business.

I got an A on my Stairway paper and Ms. Whitney said that I could do better than the C that I had

hoped to earn in class.

We're stopping for lunch at McDonald's. I just asked if I could have McNuggets.

"You don't want that crap."

Okay, I guess I don't.

Back on I-95. I had a Quarter-pounder with cheese.

John was late again the second day, and Mom drove me the rest of the mornings. I complained a little bit, but really it was for the best. I still got to ride home with John after school, so it didn't seem like a bad deal. Actually, don't tell Mom, but I'm glad it worked out that way.

Just got into another fight over the radio. Country music sucks!

To wrap up summer school, Mom made me study every day after school. She didn't have to force me. I would have done it anyway, because I didn't want to disappoint Ms. Whitney. I wish she taught at Cary High instead of Athens High. I also wanted to prove that Mrs. Cox was a bad teacher and show everyone I

wasn't dumb!

I wanted an A, but had to settle with a B. I guess I'm just not gifted and talented. Mom and Dad were happy with the B, but not overjoyed. "Why couldn't you have done that during the year?"

JOHN: I'm worried about him. After the second week of summer school, he dropped out. That means he flunks two years in a row. I know John's not an intellectual, but he's not dumb. He got a job working at Food Crown with Dave as baggers.

He's using the money to fix up the Camaro. One of the first things he bought was a Jensen stereo. I kinda miss the old eight-track, but the new Jensen really cranks, and we can play all our tapes on it.

We found a cheap way of getting gas. There are a lot of bulldozers in the back of Trappers Run where they are building new houses. At night, we go back there and siphon a full tank when the Camaro gets low.

What time and money John doesn't spend on the

Camaro, he spends on Candi. John said he screwed Candi last week in the back of the Camaro. It's weird riding in the back now, like it's the scene of the crime.

I went with John to buy the condoms at the beginning of summer. I gave him 25 cents for one. I keep mine in my wallet, in case of an emergency. It's still there.

DAVE: He didn't flunk anything, so he got to enjoy his summer. He spends most of his time at Food Crown, working. I wish I could work with them, but I'm only fourteen.

When Dave's not working, we go swimming at Rush Lake or play basketball with some of Dave's B-ball friends. I still can't shoot, but I'm becoming a good rebounder.

Sometimes, Dave or John will steal some beer from work. They throw a 12-pack in a marked trash bag with the other garbage, and at night we snag the marked bag out of the dumpster behind Food Crown. We normally drink in the woods or at Rush

Lake, if no one is around.

John has a few beer connections, but why pay for it or bother a beer connection, when you can get it for free yourself?

SEX: I met a girl in summer school, Ashley Soggins. Ashley sat in the desk behind me, and all summer she would slide her fingers through the back of my hair to see how it was growing back.

Ashley was okay looking, but wore too much mascara. Ashley was into drugs and kinda on the weird side. During our first lunch together, she pulled up her sleeve and showed me where she tried to scratch her old boyfriend's name into her arm with a razor. The J got infected and left a scar. Ashley made me guess his name. I got it on the second try. His name was John. He's in jail now.

Ashley asked me to get high with her and some other freakers after school once, but I told her I couldn't, because my mom was coming to pick me up. She never asked me again.

At the end of summer school, she hugged me and kissed me on the cheek. She gave me her phone number, but I don't know. She lives in Raleigh, and I don't want a long distance relationship. Maybe, I should take what I can get. The last girl I kissed was Brandi.

LAURA: I keep thinking that she's going to be the one, but we're still just friends.

CANDY: Loves John. What else is new?

I'm in the hotel. I'm glad I'm writing again. I like being back. Watching PRIVATE LESSONS on HBO. Every time there's nudity, Dad says to turn it. Pete flicks the channels, but always turns back to HBO.

I wish I was the kid in the movie, and my rich dad hired a sexy chick to be my chauffeur. BODY HEAT comes on later, and the guide says it has nudity and adult situations. I want to watch it, but Dad says we have to go to bed early.

MTV: The biggest thing this summer is The Police. It seems like "Every Breath You Take" has been #1 forever. The rest of Synchronicity is also kicking ass. Pete bought the album the week it came out. It's one of the few bands Pete likes that everyone else likes, too. That's a first.

Unfortunately, Flashdance crap is just as hot. I hate dance stuff! Except for the "Safety Dance." It's a dumb video, but I like it, anyway. Men at Work, Men Without Hats. I guess Men Without Work will be next.

Saw the video for "It's a Mistake." Men at Work need more women in their videos. Cargo is dropping in the charts. It never made it to #1.

Dad just made us turn out the lights. No Body Heat. Goodnight.

SUNDAY - JULY 31, 1983

Driving through New York now. Saw the Twin Towers off in the distance. Too far away to see if King Kong was jumping between them.

My hair is growing back. It's beginning to touch my ears again. At least Grampa won't try and take me for a haircut this year. I miss everyone in Trappers Run already. It hasn't even been a day.

How do I feel? Right now, I feel okay. After I flunked, though, I felt totally alone. In my head, I could hear every bad thing ever said about me. The B in summer school helped me feel better, but still, it was my first F.

I'm lonely. I want a girlfriend. I could try for Ashley when I get back from Boston, but I don't know. Laura would be nice. Brandi would have been nice. She broke up with that junior she liked. I guess she doesn't like him anymore. John's lucky he has a good relationship with Candi.

I haven't had a cig in two days. Maybe, I'll quit again.

Finally, a good station. They're playing "King of

Pain." The problem with finding a good station on the road is it only lasts for about a half hour until it starts to get static. Mom tries to tune it in better, but always ends up turning to another station. Most of the time the new station sucks. I'll tell her to find a rock and roll station, but then Dad complains about all the noise from the channel switching.

"Just leave it alone or turn it off!"

We're in Massachusetts.

I'm in Nana's house. It's weird being back. It's like we never left, but it's been a year. I'm in the bedroom I share with Pete. The old black and white TV is still working. It still only picks up three channels, so I'll be MTVless for two weeks. I'll try and survive.

It's funny when Dad yells at me and then Nana yells at Dad to be quiet. He got mad, because I spilt a Coke. I like how grandparents don't yell at you for something like that. Nana was proud that I got a B in summer school. Thank God for grandparents.

MONDAY - AUGUST 1, 1983

I'm watching Benny Hill with Pete. They just showed some tit. "It's funny how British TV shows have nudity on regular TV and never make a big deal about it, but American TV shows always make a big deal out of having nudity and never show it." Pete said that, and for once, I think he's right. I never saw bare tits on Chips or Three's Company. Monty Python comes on next.

Spent the day with my cousins. We went to see Jedi again and then had dinner at Burger King. Mom and Aunt Lydia toasted their Jedi glasses in honor of the end of the trilogy and not having to buy any more Star Wars toys.

I told Dennis about blowing up the X-wing and made him promise not to tell Pete. I couldn't tell him about the rest of the Trappers Run stuff. Dennis has a Han Solo that's still in the box. He says he's never gonna take it out and that someday, it'll be worth a hundred dollars. I thought that was a waste to keep a toy in its box and told him so. Dennis said blowing up the X-wing was a waste.

Dennis showed me his straight A report card from this year. It doesn't seem possible that anyone can get straight A's. I told him he should get it framed.

Then, I had to look at Frank's soccer trophies. The kid's only eleven, and his trophies already take up all the space on top of his dresser. At least, Frank made a few B's along with his A's. How can Nana even like me? Pete's going to college, but I've got nothing to be proud of. All I have is a B in summer school. Big deal.

Going to Cape Cod in the morning.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 2, 1983

We drove by the beach house we used to rent. I couldn't go looking for my Jawa, because another family was staying there. I bet some other kid has found it by now.

Dad also drove us by the part of Cape Cod where the Kennedys live. I didn't see any. Pete said there

are a lot of Kennedys, so maybe we did see some, but didn't recognize them. We ate clams.

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 3, 1983

We went to the Boston Aquarium today. I guess the last time I went was 1976, because I remember the tour guides dressed in red, white and blue and those three-sided colonial hats. They just had on regular uniforms today.

They still have the huge round tank filled with sharks and sea turtles. At the top, it's open and you can look all the way down. I used to have nightmares that I would fall in. But there is a rail there to make sure you don't fall in. Besides, there are divers in the tank that clean the windows, and the sharks don't eat them. So, I guess you would be safe until they got you out.

THURSDAY - AUGUST 4, 1983

I hate it when my Yankee uncles call me Reb! They say I have a Southern accent, but they're the ones

with accents. They can't even say "car" or "corn."

"Let's get in the kah, drive to the stah and buy some con."

Every year they have to crack on the South for losing the Civil War. When I was younger, I used to stick up for the South and said if there was a rematch we'd win. One day Pete explained that if the South won the war, there'd still be slavery. Now, I just ignore them and hope it doesn't come up.

I tried to brag about N.C. State winning the NCAA Championship, but all they talk about is the Celtics and Larry Bird.

SATURDAY - AUGUST 6, 1983

On my way home to Cary. Last night, we had a big lobster dinner with all our relatives. Lobster is my favorite food. The only time I eat it is when I'm in Boston. It's too expensive in North Carolina.

It's hard to believe Aunt Lydia still makes us sit at the kid's table. To be honest, I don't really want to sit

with the grown-ups, but I wish we didn't have to eat off the fold-up Mickey Mouse table.

Dennis and I talked about him coming down to stay with us for a week next summer. That would be cool to take him cruising and stuff, but it seems like we always plan for him to come down, and he never does. Aunt Lydia told Mom that Dennis gets homesick.

Dad's gonna try and make it to North Carolina in one day. I hope he does. I miss every one so bad. I sent them post cards yesterday, but I think I'll get home before the postcards do.

I'm tired of acting nice and feeling like a kid. I want to be myself again.

Pete took my picture by a black 1984 Corvette that we saw at McDonald's. I can't wait to get it developed.

I'm home. It's too late to call anyone.

I'm tired. I'm going to bed. My own bed.

SUNDAY - AUGUST 7, 1983

All I can say is, I'm glad I went to Boston. I tried calling John and Dave today, but they were both at work. I decided to go up and surprise Candi and Laura.

Laura was babysitting, so I just hung out with Candi. We took a walk so she could smoke a cigarette. I've decided to quit smoking again. I told Candi about my trip and how boring it was. My postcards haven't come yet.

When I asked Candi what went on in Trappers Run, while I was gone, her eyes lit up with excitement.

"You didn't hear?"

"Hear what?"

John and Dave got busted for siphoning gas. It happened the Saturday I left for Boston. An unmarked cop car snuck up with its headlights off and surprised them.

They are both working community service now. John's at the city garage washing cop cars and helping with repairs. Dave doesn't have as many

hours, since it wasn't his car. He works at the Cary library shelving books.

I went through the back newspapers that collected at home, while we were gone. They print all the police stuff that goes on in town. I found the page with John and Dave on it and threw it away before Mom could read it. It doesn't mention them by name, because they're minors, but their addresses are listed. I'm glad Mom doesn't talk to Dave or John's parents.

MONDAY - AUGUST 8, 1983

Talked to John and Dave. I told them I heard the bad news. They were pretty bummed out. Between work at Food Crown and the community service, they don't have much free time.

I spent the day with Laura and Candi at Rush Lake. Candi bought a bikini that her parents won't let her wear. She just put it on under her old suit and snuck out. The bottoms are so small you can see most of her butt.

Laura and Candi were working on their tans on

the bank of the pond, while I was swimming. Brandi and Kristy showed up and laid out with Laura and Candi. I guess Brandi didn't know I was there, because she looked kinda surprised to see me when I came out of the water.

It was cool, because I've been working out with John's weights and am in the best shape of my life. Brandi and I actually talked to each other for the first time in months.

Just to make Brandi jealous, Laura asked me to put lotion on her. As I was rubbing lotion on Laura's back, I'd let my hands slide down lower and lower until I was reaching the sides of her tits. Laura said that was enough lotion for now and laid down on her stomach.

Candi asked me to rub oil on her. I wanted to say no, but didn't want to be rude. As I rubbed it on her legs, I felt bad that John was doing community service, while I was oiling Candi. She was just trying to tease Brandi though.

It must have worked too, because Brandi also

asked me to rub oil on her legs. Man, she has the best legs. That brought back some memories.

While I was floating on my back in the pond, I could hear them giggling and whispering about me getting hard while I was rubbing them down. When I got out of the water, they just started talking about General Hospital. I guess maybe that's what their plan was all along. To try and make me get a boner.

My postcards finally came.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 9, 1983

Saw John today. He said he's learning a lot at the garage. He gets to work on the Camaro if there's no other work to do. The Camaro is running better than ever and hasn't stalled out in weeks.

A guy at the garage is going to paint John's Camaro. All John has to do is buy the paint.

John hasn't decided on the color yet. It's down to green, red or black. John thinks there are already too many red Camaros in Cary. He would like to paint it black, but that gets dirty too fast. He likes dark

green, because it's different. I like red.

Went by Dave's house, but he was doing community service at the library. I told his Mom to have Dave call me when he gets home. Still haven't heard from him.

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 10, 1983

This sucks! I'm finally free of summer school and Boston, and everyone is either working, doing community service or babysitting. I had to spend the day with Pete and Mom.

Mom asked about the missing page from the newspaper. She made sure to say it was the page with the police stuff and that she liked reading that part to make sure the neighborhood was safe from burglars. I said I didn't know anything about it.

THURSDAY - AUGUST 11, 1983

John got his car painted yesterday. It's a dark green. With the huge new back tires, it looks mean as hell. John's gotta a new front plate that says

"GODZILLA." John was gonna get it air brushed with Gumby, but Godzilla can kick Gumby's ass, Dammit!

Some guys at the garage were telling John about this town called Benson. Hundreds of kids go there on the weekend and just ride around all night. John wants to go there with Candi, Dave and me on Friday.

The only thing is, we won't get back until 11 p.m. if we go. With my 9:30 curfew, I won't be able to make it. Oh, well.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 12, 1983

I'm going to Benson! I look cool. I've got on my tight jeans, Def Leppard tour t-shirt and some Polo cologne.

I told Mom and Dad that we were going to see Jaws 3-D. I said we had to see the 9:30 p.m. show, since John and Dave had to work until 8 p.m. They went for it and even gave me three dollars for my ticket. That gives me at least until 11:30 p.m. Why I

never did this before, I don't know.

I asked Dad for some popcorn money.

"But you just ate."

He gave me another buck.

"Get a small."

SATURDAY - AUGUST 13, 1983

I had my first real night of cruising yesterday. Just like in the movies, except nothing really dramatic happened. We just kinda rode around all night.

Benson is cool. It takes about an hour to get there. For about a 1/2 mile it's solid cars down the center of the small town. John was jamming the live version of "Godzilla" by the Blue Oyster Cult. The Jensen kicks ass!

Dave and I rode in the back and Candi rode shotgun. We saw some girls go by in a convertible, and Dave and I yelled at them. John said we were pussies, because we didn't get out and talk to them. I would have, but I didn't get a good look at them.

After we went up and down the strip twice, we

went into Hardee's to eat. In the parking lot, we met this dude, Ronnie. He had a red 1972 Camaro Z28 with black racing stripes. He wanted to race John, but John didn't want to risk it after just getting busted for stealing gas. John also thought he'd lose to Ronnie.

Ronnie was pretty cool. He wasn't a dick or anything about not racing. He really liked John's car. Ronnie had a good-looking girlfriend. She didn't even mind it when we talked about cars.

Why can't I have a Camaro and a good-looking girlfriend?

Ronnie caught a huge wheel out of Hardee's and the whole parking lot was filled with smoke and the smell of burning rubber. One of the Hardee's dudes came running out and asked if we knew who Ronnie was. We said we didn't.

I gave the rest of my money to John for gas and we cruised until 10:30 p.m. and then went back to Cary. We never saw the girls in the convertible again. John wants to come back next weekend. I don't think

Candi had a real good time.

I have to help Dad and Pete trim the bushes today.

I hate yard work.

SUNDAY - AUGUST 14, 1983

I'm going to be a rock star! I was working out with John at his house and was looking in his closet for a spare shirt. That's when I saw his electric bass guitar. I can't believe he never told me. I told John that Pete has an acoustic guitar, but never uses it. Dad always said if I learned to play the acoustic guitar, he'd think about buying me an electric guitar.

John and I are going to make a band!

MONDAY - AUGUST 15, 1983

Had the first band meeting with John this morning, before he went to the garage. We need to decide on a name and image. I want to be a progressive political band, but John wants a "kick ass Southern rock band."

So far, here are the names we're debating:

<u>MINE</u>	<u>JOHN'S</u>
Men at Play	Old Grand-Dad
Stormtrooper	Johnny Law
Isosceles	Rebel Yell
Sky Blue	Shot Glass
The Kids	12 Ounces

A cool name is so important. We also need a drummer and singer.

John showed me some chords on Pete's guitar. I can now play the beginning of Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water."

Only one more week of summer, and then school starts. This sucks. I just get a band together, and I've got to go back to school.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 16, 1983

THE R.O.S. BAND is born! Rockers of the South! John came up with the name at the garage. We are going to compromise on the image. I'm going to be

MTV progressive and John's going to be "red neck Freebird."

John drew the R.O.S. logo at work, while on break. It's two guitars crossed. One guitar is a Flying V with a British flag on it, and the other is a Gibson Les Paul with a Confederate flag on it. At the top is The R.O.S. Band with R.O.S. written kinda like the KISS logo.

Judas Priest uses crossed guitars, but John said we could always change our logo when we're famous.

THE R.O.S. BAND RULES!

My fingertips hurt from the guitar strings. John said the more I played, the more my fingertips would callous over, and I wouldn't feel so much pain.

Pete gets mad when I practice "Smoke on the Water" with his guitar. Screw him! He never used it. Pete's just jealous, because I've got a band.

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 17, 1983

Didn't have a band meeting today. John had to work. He only has ten more community service

hours to work off.

It was stupid to shave my hair. I don't look like a rock star. I'm never gonna cut my hair again.

I'm gonna try and get a hold of Robert Johnson and see if he wants to be the drummer for The R.O.S. Band. I looked up his phone number, but it's too late tonight to call. I don't want his parents getting mad at me.

THURSDAY - AUGUST 18, 1983

Robert is in The R.O.S. Band. For now anyway. He's not so crazy about the name and image, but he said he'd try it. We're gonna get together tomorrow after John gets off work.

It's funny, all last year, Robert and I would debate about music and now we're in the same rock band. At least we both agreed that Synchronicity was the best album this summer.

I can really jam "Smoke on the Water" now.

Dave wants to be in the band, but he doesn't know how to play anything. He said he can sing, but he

can't. I told him he could be our roadie. He liked that, but he thinks that means he's the boss of everyone. I tried to explain that he would just be in charge of setting up the stage and stuff. He still thinks he's the boss.

"Hey man, chill. I'm the Roadie."

FRIDAY - AUGUST 19, 1983

John and I went to Robert's house for our band meeting, instead of going to Benson. Candi was kinda mad, but that's the price you pay for being in a rock band.

Robert can really jam on the drums. He keeps his drums set up in his room. His room is really clean and neat. I wish my room was neat. Robert kept getting mad at John, because John would listen to tapes and not put them back in alphabetical order on Robert's rack.

We're keeping the name The R.O.S. Band, but the logo is changing a bit. Robert likes American Rock and Roll, so we added a third guitar in the middle.

It's a Fender Stratocaster with an American flag on it. John said it's cool, because Judas Priest only has two guitars and The R.O.S. Band has three. We kick ass!

We practiced a little bit, but the only song we can all play is the beginning to "Smoke on the Water."

We set a goal of playing at the 1984 Spring Day with all the other bands at school. We're gonna blow everybody else away!

It's weird seeing Robert out of school. He's not looking forward to school, either. He's got marching band practice after school, so it's gonna be tough to practice with R.O.S., but we'll do it.

John wanted to smoke a cigarette, while we were all jamming, but Robert wouldn't let him. Not even outside. Robert's parents are real strict about that stuff.

John caught a wheel outside of Robert's house as we were leaving, just to show how mad he was.

"If I can't smoke a cigarette, then I'll just have to smoke a tire."

We're gonna have our first photo shoot tomorrow.

Dave's gonna take the pictures with his mom's camera. I'd use Dad's, but he'd start asking a ton of questions about the whole thing.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 20, 1983

Dave is no longer our roadie. He refused to carry our instruments, so we fired him. All Dave does now is take pictures. We took some around John's Camaro at Rush Lake and the railroad tracks, just like on the cover of the Clash's Combat Rock album.

A train came by at the end of our shoot and John wanted to jump on it. I talked him out of it, because John had to give Robert a ride home soon.

I looked the coolest. I had on my black parachute pants with blue and red bandanas sticking out of the pockets and dad's camo jacket along with my Ray Ban sunglasses.

John just wore some torn up blue jeans and no shirt. He carried around a bottle of Jack Daniel's filled with iced tea. It looked pretty real and came in handy, because it was hot as hell.

Robert wore mirrored shades, gray parachute pants with all the zippers zipped up, a purple Izod shirt with the collar turned up and a thin white tie with a piano keyboard pattern on it.

John and Robert still don't get along too well. They kept arguing about who got to pose in the middle. To keep them happy, Dave had to take two shots of each pose, so each one could be in the middle.

SUNDAY - AUGUST 21, 1983

Practice sucked tonight. When John and I showed up at Robert's house, Robert's father grabbed John by the arm and shook him pretty hard. He yelled at John for burning his wheels the other day. He said there were a lot of children who play in the neighborhood, and the next time he caught John peeling out, he was gonna call the cops.

I tried to get Robert and John to play Smoke on the

Water, but everyone just kinda goofed around on their own instruments.

We need more focus.

John was real quiet and didn't touch any tapes this time.

I had a weird dream last night where I jumped a train that was going real slow. However, as soon as I hopped on, it sped up to like 100 miles an hour. I wanted to jump off, but I was afraid to. My fear was that I'd break a bone when I hit the ground because of the speed. But the longer I stayed on the train, the further I got from home, and I didn't want to miss dinner.

I finally decided to jump, but my Nikes, I remember I had Nikes on, got caught in the wheels and my legs got sliced off at the kneecaps.

My biggest problem was that Mom and Dad were screaming at me in front of all the police and ambulance people. They kept yelling at me for doing such a stupid thing and ruining my Nikes, too.

I never really remember my dreams, but I felt bad

all morning about this dream. I felt so bad, that I told Mom. She said sneakers were the last thing she would be worried about, if I got my legs sliced off by a train. Then she started grilling me about jumping trains. I told I never jumped them, but still, she kept going on about how I'm not even supposed to go near the tracks. Finally, I left to see if Dave was up yet. I can't tell Mom anything anymore.

MONDAY - AUGUST 22, 1983

The R.O.S. Band has broken up. Both Robert and John each called me today. Robert said that with school and "real band practice" that he wouldn't have time for R.O.S. He said maybe after marching band stops, we can get back together. John said he needed more time for Candi and work. What the hell about me?

I guess I could make another band when school starts. I still want to jam at Spring Day with all the real bands. No more air guitar! Maybe I'll go solo and learn to play "Eruption."

Pete thinks it's pretty funny that we broke up. He wanted his guitar back, but Mom and Dad are letting me keep it. It was nice to have Mom and Dad on my side, for once.

From the way Pete whines like a baby, you'd hardly think he's the one moving out to college tomorrow. I'm much more mature than Pete.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 23, 1983

Pete's so lucky. His dorm room is pretty cool. Pete has a sink in it and Dad bought him a baby refrigerator. If I go to college, that will be the main reason I go. I'm gonna have the coolest dorm room.

It sucked moving Pete in, because whenever I'd see a good- looking girl, Dad would yell at me for dragging a cord or for forgetting to hold a door open. I hate that shit.

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 24, 1983

Dave got the R.O.S. photos back. His mom picked them up and went through them to find some family

pictures. When she saw the Jack Daniel's bottle half empty, she called John's mom. The whole thing almost got out of hand. Luckily, John still had some of the iced tea left in the Jack Daniel's bottle and let his mom sip it.

That'll be a good story to tell to Martha Quinn if she ever interviews me on MTV. I should become a rock star just to tell that story. "Well, Martha, there's actually a funny story behind my first rock group. On our first photo shoot, you see..."

Dave went to school today to take his senior portraits. He was pretty psyched about it. He wanted me to go, but I'm not gonna step one foot on that campus one day sooner than I have to.

Dave's lucky. One more year of this shit, and then he's free.

THURSDAY - AUGUST 25, 1983

Spent the day with Laura and Candi. John and Dave had to work. Terry is going to get an apartment next week. I told him I'd help him move in.

I thought Terry was gonna go to college, but Laura said Terry was just gonna keep his job at Sears for now. He's gonna be living with this chick that works at JC Penny. They're not going together or anything. They're just sharing an apartment.

I told Laura she should go out to Benson with us. Laura said she baby-sits on the weekends. The girl must have a thousand dollars saved from babysitting.

Mom got mad at me, because she wanted to take me shopping for school supplies and clothes. Like we can't go tomorrow.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 26, 1983

Last weekend before school.

Just got back from the mall with Mom. First we bought school supplies. I got a few Erasermate pens and a new Trapper Keeper with a red Porsche 911 on it for school.

Then Mom took me clothes shopping. She actually bought me what I wanted. I got a pair of new jeans,

OP corduroy shorts and a Panama Jack long sleeve.

The only suckie part was some girls saw me walking through the mall with Mom. I don't understand why she gets so mad when I ask her to walk in front of me a ways.

Gonna go to Benson tonight. Told Mom and Dad the same story about the movies. It worked again. They think I'm going to see Risky Business tonight.

Actually, I wouldn't mind seeing Risky Business. The video for it on MTV looks pretty cool. I like it when the Porsche 928 falls in the water.

I'm looking out my window waiting for John to show up.

The grass is getting high again.

I know Dad's gonna ask me to cut it.

A cat just jumped down the sewer in the side of the street.

I hear John.

SATURDAY - AUGUST 27, 1983

Had a great time in Benson. I saw some girls all

riding in the back of a pick-up truck in front of John's Camaro. Dave reached over and honked John's horn. The girls all waved back. At first, we didn't do anything, but then John started to give us the big pussy speech again.

"You guys are the biggest pussies I've ever seen...."

I asked Candi to lift her seat up, and I hopped out of the Camaro to go talk to the girls in the back of the truck.

They were okay looking and real friendly. They asked me if I wanted to ride in the back, so I climbed over the tailgate when the truck stopped and sat next to this girl named Parker.

I told Parker she looked kinda like Daisy Duke and all the girls laughed, because that's Parker's nickname. Parker told the other girls to "just hush."

I waved back to John, Dave and Candi as Parker let me share her blanket. Parker and I kept bumping into each other as the truck stopped and started from the traffic. After about ten minutes we were holding hands under the blanket.

They were from Henderson. I didn't know where Henderson was, so they spent about five minutes trying to tell me where. Finally, I said I knew where one town was near it, just so we could get on to another subject.

They were real country girls. They don't like MTV, either, just country music. Some of the girls even had on Future Farmers of America jackets. I didn't say anything about how much I hate country music. I wanted to be cool.

We lost John's Camaro at a stoplight. I started to get nervous. I didn't want to lose my ride home, but I didn't want to stop holding hands with Parker, either.

Some of the girls were telling me about the farm animal exhibitions they have at the state fair. I never look at the farm crap, just do the same rides they have every year and play a few games when Mom and Dad aren't looking. Mom thinks all the games are rigged, because she saw a bad report about them on 60 Minutes that said you can never win the games

at fairs and carnivals. If that's true, how come John has so many rock banners?

The guy driving the truck was one of the girls' brother, and he said he was going home. I asked Parker for her phone number, but she said she had a boyfriend.

As I jumped out, I said I'd look for them next week. All the girls started giggling and yelling out Parker's phone number. It was pretty funny. I only wish I had my journal there to write her number down.

If it wasn't so weird, I would have felt bad about feeling like I finally might have had a girlfriend. It was just weird, like a movie. She had a boyfriend, but she was holding my hand? Maybe she was lying.

I walked around the strip, searching for John's Camaro in all the traffic, but I couldn't find it. There I was, an hour from home, alone on a street corner at night, surrounded by Cougars, Barracudas, Mustangs and Firebirds, after just jumping out of a truckload of girls I didn't even know. It was just

about the coolest moment of my life.

I was kinda zoning when I heard Godzilla somewhere in the background. John honked his horn and Candi waved to get my attention. I got ragged on for not getting Parker's phone number, but Dave couldn't say shit, because he didn't even get out of the car. John's just lucky he has a girlfriend. It's hard to be alone.

The rest of the girls we saw that night all seem to have boyfriends or were too old for me. I had my fun anyway.

On the way home, John got the Camaro up to 100 mph. That's the fastest any of us had ever been. I have to admit, I was pretty scared. Candi was pissed as shit. After we slowed back down, she yelled at John for doing such a stupid thing after he just finished all his community service hours. She refused to kiss him anymore.

John slowed down to like 15 miles an hour, until she made up with him. It took about one minute.

Mom asked me about Risky Business. I said I

couldn't get in, because it was rated R. I said we saw Strange Brew instead. She bought it.

SUNDAY - AUGUST 28, 1983

It's the night before school. Where did my summer go?

Something weird happened today. For the third Sunday in a row, we haven't gone to look at cars. I kinda like going now. I asked Mom if they were gonna start looking again. She got real mad and frustrated.

"I don't know."

I noticed Mom and Dad are fighting a lot. More than usual. The only part I've heard is about waiting until Pete finishes college. Most of the time they talk in their room with the door closed, or I just crank my stereo so I can't hear them.

I hope they're not getting divorced. That's just what I need now.

Tomorrow, I start my sophomore year. Big whoop. I hate school.

SUNDAY - SEPTEMBER 4, 1983

Been a sophomore for a week. This year's freshmen seem stupider and less mature.

I've got a cool civics teacher, Mrs. Wayne. She reminds me of Ms. Whitney, just not as good-looking.

Last week, when the Soviets shot down Flight 007, Mrs. Wayne let us spend the whole class period talking about the Russians and America. Everyone all agreed it wasn't the people of Russia we hated, just the commie government. Most teachers don't care what you think, they just stick to their lesson plans.

Each week in Mrs. Wayne's class, we have to turn in a current event report. My first report was on Flight 007. I got a B on it. I would have gotten an A, but Mrs. Wayne took off for me pointing out a weird coincidence. She wrote, "The fact that the Russian government said the plane was on a spy mission and the flight number was 007 like James Bond has

nothing to do with the current event and how it affects you."

Had my first real party Friday night after we finished moving Terry and Linda in. Linda is twenty-one years old, so she bought beer for everyone. She's okay looking, but way too old.

Linda taught us how to play this game called quarters. Everyone sits around a table and takes turns trying to bounce a quarter into a glass of beer. If you make it, then you get to decide who drinks the beer. If the quarter misses the glass, then you have to drink.

Linda said she bought the kitchen table specially for playing quarters. She even bounced a few quarters off the table in the store when she was buying it, to see what kind of a bounce it had.

I liked missing more than hitting. That way I could drink more.

The party was cool, except for the music. No one has good taste there. They just listen to G-HITS 105. I hate popular music! When they weren't listen to "the

top G-hits of today," Terry would play this stupid song, "Putting on the Ritz," by a geek named Taco. Why can't anyone listen to good music? When I'm a rock star, I'm only gonna play cool music. No slow or dance crap.

My story to Mom was that we were all going to see Cujo, so I got to stay out late again.

I was still pretty buzzed when I got home. Mom wanted to talk about the differences in Cujo from the book to the movie. I said it was about the same, but the book was better. Next time I say I'm going to the movies, it will be to a movie that Mom hasn't read the book to.

Before I went to bed, I stuck my wastebasket by my side. Somehow, I knew I might get sick. I was worried, because I didn't want to drown in my own vomit while I slept.

After about ten minutes, I finally got sick. I had to be quiet about it and couldn't throw the trash bag away until the morning. I slept with the window open so the smell wouldn't be so bad. I don't think

Mom and Dad suspect a thing.

We went back to Terry's again Saturday night. This time I tried to bounce the quarter in the glass and make other people drink. Linda was always my favorite to drink, but she has been drinking since she was fourteen, so she really didn't get that drunk from me. She always calls me kid. Well, this kid made her drink over 18 times.

Pete came home to do his wash. He bought 15 new records at this used record store. I haven't heard of most the groups. Mom won't let him take his stereo to school. She says it might get stolen.

I haven't heard Mom and Dad fight in a couple days. Hopefully, things are better.

John has already skipped two days.

Dave said his parents might buy him a car. I hope he gets a new Camaro.

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 10, 1983

I know what Dad and Mom were fighting about. Dad and I were painting the backyard fence, and I

painted the outline of the Gibson Flying V guitar that I wanted for my birthday.

Dad put his paintbrush down and got real silent. Then he said he wanted to have a talk, but I couldn't tell Pete what he was gonna tell me or let Mom know we had this talk. I promised I wouldn't.

Dad explained to me things weren't working out at the firm. His friend who got him the job was passed over for partnership. Mr. Pritchett wanted to leave the firm and start his own law firm in Cary with Dad and another lawyer.

Dad said he wants to do this, but it's a financial risk. Mom just wanted him to stay at the firm for security, but Dad said without Mr. Pritchett there, his hopes for partnership in the future weren't as good. Mom also wanted to buy a home, and we can't do that now if Dad leaves the firm.

This is also why we stopped looking for a car. Dad said if the new firm works out, there would be more money than if he stayed at the old firm, more security, too. He said if I ever became a lawyer, then I

could come to work at the new firm.

Dad said with his Army pension, we'd always have money coming in, and things should be fairly normal. We just couldn't go making any big investments right now.

He didn't say it, but I knew what he meant. No guitar.

I told Dad that he should do what he wanted to. I worked harder on the fence and tried not to waste any paint. It was cool of him to tell me. I felt real bad when he gave me movie money that was just gonna go in the beer fund. I wasn't gonna ask for it, but he just gave it to me as I was walking out tonight. He said it was my pay for helping with the fence.

MONDAY - SEPTEMBER 12, 1983

I'm depressed. I've been in school for two weeks and I'm not any closer to getting a girlfriend. There were a few girls I liked, but they all like other guys that are partiers, jocks or rich kids. I'm glad I have my Trappers Run friends.

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 16, 1983

Still depressed.

Mr. Pritchett came over last night with his wife and had dinner with my parents. They are talking about starting the new firm November 1st. Mom asked a ton of questions, but I think she now supports Dad leaving. Hopefully, we won't go broke.

Dave and John had to work at the store tonight. I just watched TV at Laura's house. Saw this stupid show with this tiny kid, Webster. I guess they wanted a little kid smaller than Gary Coleman. Laura thought Webster was cute. Figures.

My current event was on George McGovern announcing his candidacy for president. Mom voted for McGovern in 1972 against Nixon, but she said Nixon beat McGovern in a landslide. I don't think McGovern can beat Reagan, if he couldn't even beat Nixon. I'd vote for John Glenn.

John skipped two more days. John still drives everyone to school and acts like he's going himself,

but after the first period bell, he sneaks back off until the end of the day and then meets us in the parking lot. Candi hates this. They always fight about it.

Dave doesn't skip. He wants to get out of this place. In fact, Dave only works on the weekends now, so he can study during the week. John works anytime he can. John says with the Camaro and Candi, he needs the money.

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 17, 1983

Dave got a car! It's a blue Toyota Tercel with dark blue pin strips. Tercels only come with four cylinders, but that's okay, because it gets good gas mileage. We put in three dollars worth of gas and drove all over town, and the Tercel still had gas left. I'm gonna ride with Dave in the morning to school.

Still haven't gotten any closer to getting a girlfriend. I think I'd be the best boyfriend. I'd be cool, too. Not like some dick jock.

SUNDAY - SEPTEMBER 18, 1983

Mom got mad at me, because I cut my current event articles out of the paper before she had a chance to read it. They yell at me when I don't do my homework, and then they yell at me when I do do it.

Dad's letting me use his camera for photography class. I developed my own photos the other day. The class had to take pictures of the fence around the baseball field. Mr. Carson liked my pictures, because they had "good composition."

Some pictures didn't even have the fence in them, just the shadow of the fence on home plate. Other shots were close ups of the rusty locks. I even climbed up on the gym roof to get all of the fence in one shot, but everyone climbed up to get that shot after they saw me up there.

My favorite shot is when I took a picture of the bleachers behind the home plate backstop fence. I held up a broken Coke bottle in part of the frame, so half the picture was focused crystal clear and the other half was dirty and warped with a bit of the Coca-Cola logo in the shot.

MONDAY - SEPTEMBER 19, 1983

John skipped another day. I tried to convince him he was screwing up his life. It's hard to tell John he's screwing up, because he just doesn't listen.

I'm car-pooling with Dave for the rest of the year. The Tercel may not be as cool as the Camaro, but I'll be able to save a lot of money on gas.

TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 20, 1983

I'm doing much better in English this year. So far, I've read everything we're supposed to and that helps. I told Mrs. Grover about summer school and interpreting "Stairway to Heaven." She thought that was interesting, but not her style. "Besides," she said, "we're reading American authors this year."

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 24, 1983

John and I were sitting around Terry's watching

MTV and all of a sudden John just asked me if I wanted to go riding.

"Where?"

"I don't care. Anywhere."

We got in Godzilla and went cruising in the country. We wanted to drive some place neither of us had been. That wasn't hard for me, because I haven't lived here that long, but John's lived here all his life.

We didn't talk about his skipping so much, his troubles with Candi or my problems about trying to find a girlfriend. We just drove, hoping to see something that would make the trip worth- while.

We saw some cows and horses on this country road and pulled over to feed them some tall grass growing by the fence.

John said his grandfather used to have a horse.

I think John's gonna get back on track in school.

WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 28, 1983

Had to put more paper in my journal. I've never used all the paper in a notebook before. The top was

falling apart, so I finally used my I Want My MTV sticker to keep it together. I was saving it to put on my first car, but since we'll be poor for a while, I've decided to use it now.

I started to think again, "Why I am I keeping this journal?"

I've been thinking about why I'm alive. Why was I born?

Why do I have to live with my parents and go to school? Why can't I have my own apartment, Camaro and girlfriend?

It's like I'm some character in a book, but I'm not the author. I have no control over what happens to me.

I used to think I was the hero, but not now. The hero always wins and gets the girl, but I don't have shit. I still have to have my Mom take me clothes shopping! Some hero. I don't even make good grades.

This is the kind of journal entry Ms. Mason would give me a D on. "You're just free writing to take up

space."

I found a station playing classical music. It's good music to listen to while thinking. I bet I'm the only kid at school who can listen to Beethoven and the Sex Pistols in the same night.

I guess I better stop thinking and do my geometry homework.

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 30, 1983

I may have found a girlfriend. Dave and I were walking around the parking lot at Terry's apartment tonight. We were both kinda buzzing. These two girls were sitting on the hood of a Buick Regal. One was a thin girl with long straight black hair, and the other was a black girl. The black girl said, "Hi."

I said, "What's up?" I led Dave over to meet them. I'm pretty confident when I'm buzzing. The white girl's name was Marcia. She was flat, but still good-looking. The black girl, Tonya, was a little on the big side, but not too much.

They asked us if we had been drinking.

"Naw, we're too young to drink," I said back. They kinda laughed.

They both lived in the complex and go to high school at Millbrook. I asked if they wanted to go back to Terry's, and they got real silent and looked at each other. Marcia told me her mom won't let her go near Terry's apartment. Marcia's mom has complained about the parties Terry and Linda throw. Marcia said her mom is kinda old-fashioned. I know about that.

Dave and I talked to them until they had to go in at 10 p.m. I offered to walk them home, but Marcia said it was best that her mom didn't see us with them.

I told Marcia we'd be there tomorrow night and to look for us. She said she would. I can't wait.

Dave didn't like Tonya as much as I liked Marcia. Dave thought Tonya was fat.

Terry got real mad when I told him about Marcia and Tonya.

"Never bring those bitches here!"

Marcia's mom was the one that complained about

the parties, not Marcia. Terry didn't care. He was drunk anyway, and I don't like to argue with drunk people.

I wish Marcia went to Cary. I hate long distance relationships.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 2, 1983

Saw Marcia again last night. Dave stayed at Terry's apartment while I hung out with Marcia and Tonya at the complex playground. We took turns pushing each other on a swing.

They liked the stories I told about Pete, Mom and Dad. They thought I was "a trip."

Even though I party, I told them, I'm really a nice guy. They were glad to hear I never do drugs. They said there were some druggies in the complex, but the manager busted them.

It started when Marcia's mom complained that someone had stolen her flowerpots. The manager went around looking for the pots and saw that the druggies were growing marijuana plants in them.

We talked and swung until they had to go home. I went back to Terry's and got kidded about hanging out with my "girlfriends." I like it when they kid me about that.

Why can't I get along with girls at school as good as I do when I'm not there? Because I don't have a cool rep. That's why.

I need to start my homework again. I have three chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to read. I like Atticus. I wish Dad was more like Atticus.

MONDAY - OCTOBER 3, 1983

Dad and the other lawyers resigned today. He's been real busy setting up the new firm. Our name comes last, because Mr. Pritchett is bringing over the most clients, and Mr. Wilson is putting up the most money.

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 6, 1983

I had an interview with the guidance counselor

about my future. She didn't think I could go to a big university with my grades. I told her I was doing better this year. She thought maybe I should go to a technical school or community college.

She asked me what I wanted to do with my life.

"I don't know."

"That's okay. You've got time."

I would have said I wanted to be a guitar rock god, but I know she would have said that was too unrealistic. When I told her my Dad was a lawyer, she seemed surprised. I said I didn't want to become one, because of all the reading involved. Plus, it would mean more school after college.

"It may take a lot of work becoming a lawyer, but you can make a lot of money."

Yeah, right, that's why I'm not getting shit for my birthday.

FRIDAY - OCTOBER 7, 1983

Went to the Homecoming Cary - Garner football game last night with Dave. The game was pretty

boring, but after the game, a fight broke out in the parking lot between some Cary dudes and Garner jerks.

The story is, it started when two Garner jerks jumped Bobby Quinn. Apparently, Bobby was just leaning on their car and the two Garner jerks started to beat him up. Then a bunch of Cary guys jumped in. By the time Dave and I got there, the cops had broken it up.

Dave and I went to Pizza Hut after the game. It was pretty rowdy with a lot of grumbling about going to Garner to kick ass. Finally, the manager yelled that there were cops right outside the door who would clear everyone out, if we didn't calm down. After that, everyone just chilled out and ate their pizza.

These senior girls knew Dave and asked him if he wanted to finish their pizza. They were all drunk, and Dave kept saying, "Yeah, I wanna piece-of-ya." He said "piece-of-ya" so it sounded like "pizza," and they never knew the difference.

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 8, 1983

There's gonna be a rumble. Word was out today that some Garner dudes were coming to Cary to start some shit. Everyone was out looking for them, even the cops. Anytime more than two cars gathered in a parking lot, the cops showed up and wrote down the license plate numbers and told everyone to leave.

John has a baseball bat in his trunk, and Dave keeps a roll of quarters in his glove box. Dave said it's real easy to break a guy's nose with a roll of quarters tucked away in your fist when you punch him.

I don't know. I can fight okay, but I won't use a weapon. Sometimes assholes who mess with you need to know you're gonna take a swing at them. That's how I got in my last fight.

Billy Shultz was this little back of the bus pest who fucked with all the front seat kids. He screwed with me a couple of times, but I didn't make a big deal out of it. I used to laugh about it with everyone else and

just hoped he'd quit.

One day on the way home from school, Billy kept throwing spitballs in the back of my hair. This was a day it was sticking up on the side. Everyone was laughing, because I didn't notice the spitballs at first.

Even after I combed all the spitballs out, he kept flicking them in. I told Billy twice to cut it out, but he didn't and everyone just kept on laughing at me.

This girl I kinda liked, Suzie, was laughing too. The whole year she never laughed, but that day she was. It was too much.

I got up, walked back to Billy and while the bus was still moving, I started to beat the shit out of him. I was so scared that I just kept punching and punching. I was afraid he was gonna kick my ass, but he was a total pussy. I got him in a head lock and kept punching his face until the driver pulled the bus over and came back to break it up.

I got suspended from the bus for three days, and Mom and Dad were kinda pissed, but not really. I told them about Billy before and they complained to

the principal, but nothing ever happened. My only regret is that I didn't do it sooner, because Billy didn't mess with me after that. He talked a little shit, but everybody knew he got his ass kicked.

Suzie still wouldn't go with me, but she didn't mind sitting with me when the bus was full. Towards the end of the year, she sat with me even when there were other free seats.

I don't want to fight in the rumble, because I don't have anything against Garner. I don't even know anyone at Garner. Besides, Bobby Quinn, is a shit-talker himself. He even gave me some shit when I shaved my head last year. I'm sure Bobby said something to those guys to start a fight. Why was he leaning on their car to begin with?

Driving around tonight reminded me of that movie *The Outsiders*. It was weird the way I felt. In the movie, I liked the guys that kicked ass with switchblades, but I felt like if I was in the movie tonight, I'd be a pussy. I just think you shouldn't fight, unless there is a good reason for it. Like in the

movie, they were gonna drown that guy in the fountain for talking to Leif Garret's old girlfriend.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 9, 1983

So far, no rumble.

Dave, John and I spent last night looking for it, but it never happened. Nobody saw any Garner dudes anywhere.

Twice the cops told us to leave the McDonald's parking lot. They got John's license plate number, but John isn't worried because he wasn't doing anything.

"I'll just say I was eating a Happy Meal."

I wanted to see Marcia, but John and Dave didn't want to miss the rumble if it happened. Candi got real mad at John. They were supposed to go out last night.

"A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do."

I think the whole thing is bullshit. I'd rather be with my girlfriend than look for a fight.

It's funny how the less it seems like the rumble is gonna happen, the more everyone wants to kick ass.

"I hope one of those fuckers tries to start some shit with me."

One thing about me, is when I decide to fight, I fight. When two shit-talkers are about to get in a fight, they start blaming each other for the reason they're about to fight and it usually ends without a fight and a bunch of "all right then's" and the two walking away. The crowd hates that.

MONDAY - OCTOBER 10, 1983

I went up to see Laura today, but she was babysitting. What else is new? I just hung out with Candi talking about the rumble that never happened.

It's cool to have friends that are girls. It's easier to talk to them about stuff like not wanting to fight in the rumble.

We also talked about Marcia. Even though Terry hates Marcia, Candi thinks I should go for it. Maybe a long distance relationship is better than nothing at all. I could just tell Mom I met Marcia at a football game, and I wouldn't have to say a thing about

Terry's apartment.

Candi could understand my frustration of only seeing Marcia on weekends when I can get a ride to Terry's. She doesn't see much of John anymore, because of work. One day, Candi skipped school just to be with John, but she said won't do it again.

John called Candi on his break, when I was there with her. I overheard some of it, and I could tell John was jealous that I was with Candi alone.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

She started to tease him.

"Ohhh, stop. Not while John's on the phone. Oh...it feels so good."

John doesn't have to worry. I like Candi as a friend, but that's it. After John and Dave, I'd say she's my next closest friend. Even better than Laura.

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 13, 1983

The word is the rumble is not going to happen. Too many cops know about it, and the Garner dudes pussied out. Everyone thinks we won. We can enjoy

the weekend.

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 15, 1983

Went to Terry's last night with Dave. I didn't see Marcia or Tonya when we drove in. I had a few beers, and then went out looking for Marcia in the parking lot again.

This little brown four-door Datsun came hauling up beside me. Marcia stuck her head out the window and told me to get in. I got in the back with Marcia and this other dude, Richard. Marcia sat in the middle. Tonya was riding shotgun and another dude, Scott, was driving.

Richard and Scott are brothers that used to live in the complex, but moved last summer. They were back visiting. They looked like nerds, but Scott drove like a lunatic and Richard kept flirting with Marcia. I hated that shit. Marcia didn't seem too interested in Richard, because she leaned on me more than Richard when we took a fast turn. I could hardly hear anything that was being said, because Scott was

cranking a Devo tape. I hadn't heard "Whip It" since seventh grade.

Scott loved to run stop signs and take corners fast. For a four cylinder, the Datsun was pretty quick. Faster than Dave's Tercel, anyway. A couple of times Tonya got so scared, she begged Scott to stop and let her out. That only made Scott take the next corner faster. A couple of times, I honestly thought we were gonna flip.

Scott drove up in one yard and caught a wheel in the grass. It was his old English teacher's yard, and he was still mad that she gave him a B instead of an A.

When we went back to the complex, I said I had to check back in with Dave at Terry's.

I stayed at Terry's for the rest of the night. I didn't even want to play quarters. I just kicked back in Linda's beanbag and drank my Buds and listened to some old eight-tracks. I like Bat Out of Hell. I actually know most of the songs on it. MTV plays "Dashboard Light" sometimes. Meatloaf should lose

some weight and get rid of that handkerchief.

Fuck Richard and Scott! John's Camaro would blow that piece of shit Datsun off the road!

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 16, 1983

Marcia told me Richard was just an old friend. She also told me she went to Terry's apartment looking for me last week, but no one was home. I told her about having to stick around Cary for the rumble.

I felt pretty tough talking about the rumble, even though nothing happened. I guess it was wrong to feel that way, but I did.

It was pretty cool of Marcia to come looking for me. Both Terry and her Mom would have gotten mad if they found out.

Tonya, Marcia and I spent most of our time talking in the complex laundry room, because it's the warmest place in the complex outside of an apartment.

Tonya kept apologizing for Richard and Scott. She said they were "just crazy." Tonya asked about Dave.

I said he was in a heavy game of quarters at Terry's.

Marcia let me walk her home last night. We walked Tonya home first. Tonya and Marcia whispered to each other before Tonya closed the door. Tonya said it wasn't about me. Then why did you have to whisper?

As I was saying goodnight to Marcia at her apartment, I thought about leaning forward and giving her a kiss. I wasn't sure if I should or not. At one point, we were both quiet for about a second, and I thought that was my chance. Before I could make a move, she reached for the front door.

"See ya next week."

"See ya."

I went back to Terry's and played a killer game of quarters to make up for my time outside with Marcia and Tonya.

John and Candi were there. While John was playing quarters with us, Candi kept saying she wanted to talk. Finally, John said they could talk, but then Candi sat down and started to play quarters to

piss off John.

John just sulked in the living room, watching MTV with the volume turned down and the stereo blasting his Quiet Riot tape.

"BANG YOUR HEAD!"

Candi kept making me drink, so I made her drink when I bounced the quarter in the glass. I don't think John liked this, so finally he stormed out of the apartment and slammed the door. We heard the Camaro peel out and another car slam on the brakes and honk.

Everyone ran outside, but all we saw was the smoke from John's tires and the other car parking. Terry told us to get the hell back inside, because the other driver was the manager of the complex.

John never came back. Candi just rode home with Dave and me. We were all worried about John last night, but I heard Godzilla drive by this morning. He was probably on his way to make up with Candi.

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 22, 1983

Last night we went to Benson. Terry and Linda wanted to see what the big deal was. They didn't like it as much as we did. There didn't seem to be as many cruisers. I guess fewer people go during the school year when it's cold.

We didn't see any girls worth honking at. I'm happy working on Marcia.

It was pretty boring, so we went back to Terry's apartment and played quarters. It was after ten, so I knew Marcia wouldn't be out.

John and Candi were getting along for once and left early to go park somewhere. Things are back to normal.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 23, 1983

Over two hundred Marines were killed today in Lebanon. Pete says Reagan will make it out to be another Pearl Harbor, so he can rally America into war. Pete thinks Reagan is afraid of being called a chicken if he pulls the troops out.

This was the first time I could talk about a news

event with Mom, Dad and Pete and really know what was going on. I didn't try to sound like a know-it-all, like Pete.

Dad doesn't know many Marines, and he definitely doesn't know any stationed in Beirut.

MONDAY - OCTOBER 24, 1983

We spent the whole class talking about whether we should pull out of Beirut or not. I hate it when people talk about killing people when they don't have any idea about which people should be killed.

"I think we should bomb 'em."

Mrs. Wayne was pretty mad about the whole thing.

"You're too young, but I lived through Vietnam on the news every night. People are going to remember seeing those dead Marines on TV today when election time comes next year."

Everyone is going to use this for their current event.

Tomorrow, I turn fifteen. Mom asked me if I

wanted a party. They have no idea what a party is. Dave is coming over for dinner, and Mom is making a chocolate chip cake, but that's all I wanted. Well, I did want John to come, but he has to work.

I haven't asked for anything, except a jeans jacket and an OP hooded sweatshirt. I used to hate it when I got clothes as presents, but they're okay now, if they're cool. All I really wanted was an electric guitar, but I don't play the acoustic one much anymore.

TUESDAY - OCTOBER 25, 1983

I awoke this morning when I heard the phone ringing. Dad answered it, and I could tell by the hushed tone of his voice that something was wrong. At first, I thought Nana or Grampa might have died during the night.

My fears of a death in the family subsided when I heard Dad hang up and turn on the TV. I went out of my room to see what was wrong and saw the reports that we were invading Grenada.

The guy Dad was talking to has a son in the 82nd Airborne. They're pretty sure he went, but they don't know for sure.

I've got to go to school, but I know we'll talk about this in Mrs. Wayne's class. I'm glad, because we were gonna have a quiz on local government, and I didn't really study that much.

Mrs. Wayne said this wasn't a war, because we have such an advantage. She feels Reagan is just doing this to shift attention away from Beirut. We were only supposed to talk about this for the first half of class and then take the test, but we ended up using the whole period for the discussion.

Watching the news with Dad, I brought up Mrs. Wayne's point about it being a diversion. Dad said, "The Army couldn't organize a crap in two days, let alone an airborne invasion."

His friend's son went with the 82nd, but no one has heard anything else. He should be all right. They would have heard otherwise. There hasn't been any

combat on TV, because Reagan won't let any news people on the island. He says it's too dangerous. I guess he's got a point.

I still don't know what I'm gonna use as my current event, Grenada or Lebanon.

Dave's on his way for dinner. Mom is frosting my cake.

I got the guitar! It's a burgundy Harmony with a black faceplate and two pickups. No whammy bar, though. Dad said he couldn't find any inexpensive V shaped guitars, and he wasn't gonna buy a \$500 guitar until he was sure I'd keep playing it.

Unfortunately, they were out of the amps Dad wanted to get me. The others were too small or too big.

I'm gonna ROCK!!!!!!

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 26, 1983

Pete is so pissed that I got an electric guitar. I gave him his dumb acoustic back.

"Here, son, I won't be needing this anymore. I'm

electric."

Watched the students we rescued from Grenada kiss the ground as they got off the planes in America. Tried to call Dad in the room to see it, but he wouldn't come. He said to call him when there was a real war.

I forgot how painful the guitar strings can be on your fingertips. More play, less pain. I can't wait to get the amp. I'm really gonna rock then.

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 27, 1983

Terry and Sheila are moving to a new apartment complex. They're gonna have a blow out party Saturday night and move Sunday. I'm gonna help them.

FRIDAY - OCTOBER 28, 1983

Had a pretty rowdy pre-blow out party tonight. John wanted to trash the place, but Terry wouldn't let him. They have to pay for any damages.

I knocked on Marcia's door, and her mom answered. She told me Marcia was spending the weekend with her father. I was real polite and said I just knew Marcia from school and wanted to say hello.

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 29, 1983

The cops busted Terry's party. I was afraid they would bust me for underage drinking, but they just told Terry to kick everyone out and turn the music down. No one left, but we chilled out.

I did my first beer shotgun. Terry dared me to do one, and I was afraid I was gonna spill it. But I just kept on sucking, and it all went down without spilling a drop.

Marcia was still at her father's, but I saw Tonya and told her about Terry moving. She asked if I was still gonna come around to see Marcia.

"I'm gonna try."

Tonya gave me Marcia's phone number.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 30, 1983

Partied at the new apartment this afternoon after the move. The new complex looks a lot like the old complex. Hopefully, there are cooler neighbors who don't mind a party or two.

Linda had on a tube top with no bra and you could see her nipples poking out. I wish I was twenty-one.

Did my first tequila shots. I thought I was gonna be sick, but I never threw up. I guess my tolerance has increased.

MONDAY - OCTOBER 31, 1983

The gang just came by trick or treating. Terry and John were dressed up as women. Dave had on his Laker jersey, and Linda and Candi were dressed as baseball players.

I wanted to go out with them, but since it was a school night, Mom wouldn't let me. John wanted to smash our pumpkin, but I wouldn't let him. I had to carve the damn thing by myself this year.

Brandi and Kristy came by, too. Brandi was all dressed up as Joan Collins from Dynasty, Kristy was a hobo. There was another girl with them, but I couldn't see who she was under her ghost sheet.

I don't even remember what my last Halloween costume was. I guess I just used some of Dad's camos.

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 3, 1983

Jesse Jackson is running for president. Pete says he's never been elected to anything before. It's weird seeing a black guy run for president. It's history. I still like Glenn.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 5, 1983

Met two new girls at Terry's apartment last night. They live next door, but are both too old. Amy is an okay red neck kinda girl. She's twenty. The other, Rhonda, is better looking. She's a hair stylist. She's twenty-one. I can't get a break!

I wanted Dave to drive me to Marcia's, but he just

wanted to stay and get drunk. I should call Marcia, but if I call once, then where is it going to end?

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 6, 1983

Rhonda was kinda flirting with me. I made her drink a lot during quarters. Later, she was running her fingers through my hair and telling me she could spike my hair and make it stick up on top like a real rock star.

When Rhonda was leaning forward, I could look down her shirt. She had on a black lace bra.

I started to call Marcia today, but I only dialed the first six numbers. I couldn't make myself push the last number.

MONDAY - NOVEMBER 7, 1983

Went to see Laura today. It's been so long. Laura, Candi and I sat on the front porch talking about my relationship with Marcia.

Brandi was walking by with this new girl I'd never seen before. Candi told them to come over, and they

did. As the new girl walked up the driveway, I noticed she wasn't half bad. I smiled at her, and she smiled back. That's always a good sign. Turns out, she was the unknown ghost on Halloween.

Her name is Tina, and her dad works with Brandi's dad at IBM. Tina goes to Apex High and lives about a mile away. Tina's short and fair-skinned. She's got light brown hair curled back on the sides that just reached the collar of her purple coat.

Tina has a shy little giggle that I first heard after Laura asked Tina if she had a boyfriend. Tina said, "No." And I said, "Good." Tina must have thought that was cute. I saw Laura look at me kinda with an attitude. What was her problem?

Tina ended up sitting with me on the swing. I showed Brandi and Tina the Polaroid picture I keep in my wallet of my guitar. Tina asked if I knew any Duran Duran songs. I said I only play hard rock songs, like "Smoke on the Water."

As Tina and I swung, we started to lean more and

more on each other. My leather K-Swiss sneakers kept bumping her tan suede boots, and Tina would always bump back until our feet hooked up together.

We just rocked back and forth, talking about school stuff, until Brandi said they had to go home for dinner. I told Tina I'd see her around, even though I didn't know if I would. Tina smiled.

Candi and Laura couldn't even wait for Tina and Brandi to get out of the driveway, before they started teasing me about playing footsie with Tina. I acted annoyed with them, but I was really loving it.

"What would Marcia say?"

"Marcia who?"

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 8, 1983

Saw Brandi at school in between classes. She said Tina really liked me! This is awesome! She really liked me! Brandi invited me to come over to her house on Wednesday when Tina was supposed to come over. I wish Tina went to Cary and not Apex.

Brandi asked me if I liked Tina.

"I think so, but I might still be seeing someone else. Don't tell Tina that."

"I won't."

I said I'd definitely be there on Wednesday for sure.

Pete was on the college radio station, WKNC, at N.C. State. I taped him reading the news and weather. I played it for Dave, and he thought it was funny, because Rocking Rick, the DJ, makes fun of Pete when he messes up saying Yasir Arafat's name.

I'm not depressed anymore. I've got two girls who like me and a brother on the radio. I feel great! I don't think I've ever been this happy.

WEDNESDAY - NOVEMBER 9, 1983

Had the best time at Brandi's with Tina. Tina looked so fine. She was wearing N.C. State sweatpants, which showed her panty line and a white Izod, which you could see her bra through. I'm pretty sure everyone else will think she's fine.

Brandi had on her black Vanderbilt jeans and a

long-sleeve wine Polo shirt. I'm not interested in Brandi anymore.

Tina and I both acted a little shy at first. I know she likes me, and she knows I like her, but we didn't say anything about it.

We made chocolate chip cookies. I don't know anything about baking, so I let them do all the work.

Tina let me lick some raw cookie dough off her finger. I like it when girls let you lick stuff off their fingers.

We watched MTV as the cookies cooled. I sat with Tina on the couch, while Brandi sat in her father's recliner.

We put small scoops of vanilla ice cream between the cookies and made ice-cream sandwiches. The cookies were still warm, and the ice cream was dripping down Tina's hand. She let me lick that off, too.

I had to leave before Brandi's parents came home. As I was saying goodbye to Tina, I felt Brandi push me from behind and tease me about kissing Tina.

Tina giggled and blushed. I leaned down and kissed her on the lips. No tongues, just a nice kiss. I was glad Brandi pushed me, because I don't know if I would have done it otherwise.

It was so much easier with Brandi. I wish all girls were like Brandi when it comes to kissing. I like to know for sure they want to.

I missed dinner, and Mom yelled at me for that, but I didn't care. It was just warmed up leftover spaghetti. There weren't any meatballs left, either.

Dad was working late at the new office. He's incredibly busy. Some nights he doesn't get home until after I've gone to bed. I've even gone days without seeing him. I don't really mind. He can't tell me to mow the lawn if he doesn't see me.

I wanted to go back out to Brandi's after dinner, but Mom wouldn't let me. We have a deal that if I do my homework and study after school, then I can go out after dinner. But if I hang out after school, then I can't go out after dinner. I agreed to the deal when I was still feeling bad about flunking. I wish I hadn't

now.

I kinda put up a fight. But Mom said if I didn't cut it out, I was gonna be grounded for a week. I wanted to say, "FUCK YOU!" right to her face, but I didn't want to ruin the start of my relationship with Tina.

I got Tina's phone number, and I'm gonna call her tomorrow after school.

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 10, 1983

Went to Tina's today after school. I called, and she said I could come over for a little while until her parents got home. I got directions and had Mom drive me. I told Mom that Tina's mom was home, so she wouldn't make a big deal out of it.

I jumped out as soon as we got to Tina's, because I didn't want Mom turning off the engine and wanting to meet Tina's mom. It's not so far away, and I said I'd walk home so I wouldn't risk Mom wanting to see Tina's parents when she came to pick me up.

After she let me in, I kissed Tina on the lips, and I didn't need Brandi pushing me this time. Still no

tongue action.

Tina watches General Hospital, so I sat with my arm around her on the couch and watched, too. I remembered a little bit of it from when I used to watch it with Laura. Tina filled me in on what's been happening.

Tina's brother, James, came home, but he was cool. He's ten and not a pest like Scottie. Still, I couldn't make any real moves while he was there.

After General Hospital was over, we watched MTV. During the commercials and suckie videos, Tina showed me a photo album with pictures of her old friends in Delaware. There was a guy in a lot of shots, but Tina said he was just a friend. He's in Delaware, anyway.

Tina seemed real sad when she looked at photos of her old cat, Slippers. Slippers ran away right before they moved here. They think Slippers got hit by a car, but they're not sure. It's sad. I gave her a kiss on the cheek and that cheered her up.

James challenged me at Missile Command, and

Tina and I played him. James beat everyone. I never liked Missile Command. At least I beat Tina.

I got another kiss when I left, but still no tongue. The walk home wasn't so bad. I was in such a good mood, I didn't mind walking at all.

The walk home took longer than I thought, and I missed dinner again. I just warmed up a pork chop and some potato pancakes Mom had left out for me. Tina wants me to eat at her house tomorrow. I asked Mom if I could.

"I don't know. Ask your father when he gets home."

I hate talking to Mom about girls.

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 11, 1983

Back from my dinner with Tina. Dave already left for Terry's, so I have to stay home with Mom and Dad. I'm watching MTV, and I just saw "Say Say Say" with Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney. Why. Paul?

At least I can write about my dinner with Tina.

Mom dropped me off again. Mom made me wear a damn sweater and shirt instead of my white long sleeve Ocean Pacific shirt.

"Hey, you look nice when you go to someone's house for dinner. Especially, if it's a girl."

"Mom! These aren't the old days!"

"Do you want to go or not?"

"Okay, fine I'll wear the dumb sweater!"

Mom got out when we got there, but Tina's mom wasn't home yet. Tina lied and said she just went to the store and was on way her back. Mom said to call when I wanted to be picked up and left.

Mom said she liked Tina. I guess that's cool. I'm glad.

Mrs. Schafer was real nice. I talked about Dad's new firm and Pete reading the news on the radio.

Mr. Schafer is a computer programmer. He showed me the computer in his study. Mr. Schafer's computer doesn't have any games on it, so it was pretty boring. I acted interested anyway and asked a few questions.

While Tina and her mom set the table, I watched the news with Mr. Schafer. The U.S. troops are starting to come home from Grenada. Mr. Schafer is glad we finally kicked some ass after being pushed around for so long. He hated Jimmy Carter.

We ate a delicious spaghetti dinner with plenty of big juicy meatballs and mushrooms. I had seconds to show how much I liked it. I didn't go for thirds, even though I could have. I didn't want Tina's parents to think I was a pig.

After dinner, Tina and I went for a walk around her neighborhood. We held hands, which was really nice. A couple of kids rode by on their Red Line dirt bikes and joked about us holding hands. They rode off when I said was gonna kick their asses. Spoiled brats, I never had a Red Line.

Tina and I talked about moving so much. She said that IBM also stands for "I've Been Moved." It's kinda like the Army in a way. We also talked about Brandi and how much we owed her for introducing us to each other.

When we got back, Mr. Schafer asked me if I needed a ride home. I didn't really want to go home, but I got the feeling Mr. Schafer was telling me rather than asking. I wanted to keep my good impression, so I graciously accepted.

I sat in the back of their Ford Station wagon with Tina. I hate Fords, but didn't say anything to Mr. Schafer. Station wagons don't really count, anyway.

Tina got out at my house, so I could kiss her good night. No tongue, but since her dad was right there, I can't blame her. I love being in love. I haven't told Tina I love her, but I do.

When I got in, Mom asked me about everything, and I told her about the spaghetti and the computer. I really hate telling Mom about this stuff. I hate telling Mom just about everything these days.

I called Dave, but his mom said Dave already left for Terry's. I knew without calling where John was. That's when I started to write this entry.

I don't think about Marcia anymore; Laura, either. All the girls that I liked before, and especially the

ones that didn't like me back, mean nothing now. I have Tina. God, I'm in love! It's silly, but I like it.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 13, 1983

I had to rake the front yard today and the backyard yesterday all by myself.

I just got off the phone with Tina. For the first time, I feel comfortable just calling a girl up. I don't worry about dialing her number or anything, because I know Tina wants to talk to me.

I never asked Tina to go with me. I assume we are. We kiss and everything. I don't know. I went further with Brandi, and we weren't going together.

I wanted to see Tina this weekend, but she thought it was too late to come over after I got done with raking the leaves and eating dinner.

I went to Terry's last night. Rhonda's gonna spike my hair next week when she cuts it. She's only charging me five dollars. I don't want any length taken off. Just the spike and a little trim.

I showed a picture of Tina to John, Dave and

Terry, and they all thought she was cute. That's cool, but I wish someone would say she's fine, instead of cute. Cute doesn't seem as mature as fine.

I walked to the store and bought a rose for Tina. I've got the rose in water to keep it alive and will give it to her tomorrow on our one-week anniversary.

Love songs don't annoy me anymore. I can finally listen to them and think about someone else for real. Maybe, I'll write a love song for Tina.

MONDAY - NOVEMBER 14, 1983

Tina loved the rose and thought it was "sweet" that I remembered our one-week anniversary.

After she stuck it in a vase on her dresser, she turned around to give me a thank you kiss, and we finally Frenched. She let me feel her up a little, but not much. As we kept kissing, she just held my hands down by her hips.

I wanted to try and go further, but we both heard her brother come in and turn on MTV. Tina pulled

away and said we'd better break it up before her brother walked in on us. I hate brothers.

I played Missile Command with James again and beat the shit out of him this time. He got so mad when I passed his score that he reset the Atari while I was still playing. He ran away after he did it, because he thought I might hit him or something.

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 15, 1983

Tina went to the mall with Brandi today. I wanted to go with them, but Tina wouldn't let me. Tina said it was for girl things.

I went up to see Laura. I think Laura is a little jealous, but won't admit it. She had her chance.

Laura had to leave to go babysitting, so I just hung out with Candi. Candi said John skipped three days in a row last week and is flunking everything. She doesn't know what to do. I don't either.

John called Candi on his break from work, but this time she motioned for me to be quiet and didn't tell John I was there. I don't see what the big deal is.

Candi said she just didn't want to start another argument.

WEDNESDAY - NOVEMBER 16, 1983

I guess I have to give Tina something to get a French kiss. Regular kisses are a let down now.

Tina is gonna ask her parents if we can go out on Friday. She doubts they will let her, but I still want her to ask. Sometimes you just have to keep asking until they break. That's what Pete and I did to get the Atari. We never let up.

We kinda had our first fight today. Tina wanted to know if I was seeing someone else. I said I wasn't.

"Brandi said you might be seeing someone else."

Good 'ole Brandi. I explained that I knew this girl that lived near Terry's old apartment, but I only saw her a couple times, and I haven't even seen her since Terry moved.

Tina still seemed a little pissed about it. I gave her a kiss on the cheek, but it didn't help.

After that, we just watched MTV until I had to

leave.

It's a long walk to Tina's, but at least I have something to look forward to. It's the walk home I hate.

I may go to Washington, D.C. in April. Mrs. Wayne was telling us about a three-day field trip the school participates in. It might look good on my college applications to say I went to the Capital. With my grades, I need all the help I can get. There's a meeting on it after school tomorrow.

Mom and Dad like the idea, but they want more information.

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 17, 1983

Tina can't go out. It's okay, because both John and Dave are working this weekend and I don't want to have any parents driving me on a date.

While I was over at Tina's today, this guy, Brian, called Tina. She just gave him some homework assignment and asked if he was feeling better. Tina said Brian was sick and needed know what was

going on in their class. I didn't make a big deal out of it, but it did bother me to hear her talking to another guy.

It's gonna cost four hundred dollars to go on the Washington trip. That includes our plane ticket, meals and a hotel room for three days. Our group is gonna put on fundraisers to make the trip more affordable. I suggested a Battle of the Bands concert, but no one liked that.

I should have kept my mouth shut. There were mostly brains, nerds, a couple of semi-partiers and, of course, me at the meeting. They were all from Mrs. Wayne's advanced placement class. I was the only kid there from the regular class.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 19, 1983

Went to Terry's after Dave got off work. Dave told me that John told him that Rhonda and Amy had some pot. I don't know. I hope John is just making it up.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 20, 1983

When Dave and I got to the apartment last night, Terry, Linda, Rhonda and Amy were passing a joint around. I'd never seen anyone actually doing drugs before. People are always disappointing me. Amy held out the joint for me to take a hit.

"No, thank you."

I'm not a goody-goody, but I won't do drugs.

I just watched MTV and drank the rest of my beers from last night. Dave thought he might like to take one hit, but I talked him out of it.

The other bad news is I called Tina today. Her brother answered.

"Hello?"

"Is Tina there?"

"Yeah, hang on. Tina! It's Brian!"

Boy, I was pissed. I didn't get too mad over the phone, but I was steaming. Tina just said that Brian usually calls around this time to get his homework assignments. I don't know.

I wanted to tell Tina about the pot at Terry's, but

Mom and Dad always pick up the other phone to make a call when I'm on talking to someone, and I didn't want them to overhear anything. I wish I had my own telephone line.

Brian. Who the fuck is Brian?!!!!

I had to watch *The Day After* tonight for Mrs. Wayne's class. Just the thing to pick me up. It wasn't as much about World War III, as it was about how bad life would be after a nuclear war. No duh! The special effects were all right, but not as good as *Star Wars*. It did scare me thinking about it. There really is nowhere to go when the bomb is dropped.

I'm starting to get depressed again.

MONDAY - NOVEMBER 21, 1983

I'm grounded for three days. I got into a fight with Mom over Thanksgiving. Tina invited me to have Thanksgiving dinner at her house. I was so excited that our relationship was back on track that I called home to Mom just to okay it. I figured it wouldn't be a problem, but I should have known Mom wasn't

gonna let me have any fun.

"Thanksgiving is for your family. Besides, we have company coming."

We argued for a good ten minutes, until finally, Mom told me to come home right then. I just hung up on her and stayed another hour. I didn't even walk straight home. I went by Dave's, but he was at the library working on his research paper. I knew John was working. He's always working. Candi was home, and we talked about the whole thing. Candi is the only girl who understands me. Laura kinda does, but she was babysitting.

After Candi's, I decided to walk to Rush Lake. I checked the beer shack, but it was locked. I just stood on the pier until it was dark and way past dinnertime.

Walking back through the woods in the dark was a trip. I thought I heard someone behind me, but I knew I was just hearing my own footsteps. I can really freak myself out like that.

When I was a kid, I'd hide under the blankets a lot

because I thought someone was in my room. As long as I stayed under the blankets, I was safe, but as soon as I lifted up the tiniest bit of blanket and looked out, they'd kill me.

I kinda knew if they wanted to kill me, they could shoot or stab me through the blanket, and that scared me even more. I also thought I'd suffocate if I stayed under too long, so I would make small breathing holes between the blanket and mattress, and as long as I didn't look out them, I'd be okay. Why am I writing about this shit?

Mom and Dad started to yell and scream when I got home. What else is new? I just kept saying, "Whatever."

Even after they grounded me for three days.

"Whatever."

I've decided I'm not gonna eat with them for Thanksgiving. I'm just gonna eat in my room by myself.

I've called Tina, but her line has been busy for an hour. I bet she's inviting Brian over now. That is, if

he's not sick.

Mom doesn't give a shit about me.

"Whatever."

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 22, 1983

I called Tina. She's bummed about the way things turned out. I told her I did it for her and how much I hate my parents.

Twenty years ago, President Kennedy was assassinated.

Mrs. Wayne told us she was in her high school home economics class when she heard. She brought in the newspaper from 1963 when it happened. That would be a cool current event. I think I'm gonna do my current event on the anniversary. Today's paper said there might have been a conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

I remember when Reagan was shot. Since Mrs. Cohen's classroom had a TV set, all the students in our building came in to watch it with us. There must have been two hundred kids crammed in there.

It seemed like everyone was getting shot back then. Reagan, John Lennon, even the Pope.

Mrs. Wayne got mad at me, because I was joking with Richard Spencer about Buckwheat getting shot on Saturday Night Live. She thought we were laughing about Kennedy getting shot.

I explained to Mrs. Wayne that it was just an old Eddie Murphy sketch. She wasn't so mad then, but I felt bad about upsetting her in the first place.

I'm depressed.

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 24, 1983

Still depressed.

Called Tina and talked about school and stuff.

Our Thanksgiving company tomorrow is Dad's friend's son that went to Grenada. His name is Andrew, and he lives at Fort Bragg near where we lived. I never saw him there, though. Andrew's parents live in New York, and he can't make it up there to see them.

I haven't decided whether I'm gonna eat with the

family or not. I don't want Dad yelling at me to come to the table while we have company. I hate it when he yells and someone is over.

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 25, 1983

It's Thanksgiving. I'm gonna eat with everyone else. Andrew is pretty cool. He was telling us about Grenada. They thought something was gonna go down a few days before the invasion, but after the bombing in Beirut, they didn't think they'd risk it.

He said everyone was cocky at first, but once they got close to the island everyone kept quiet or prayed silently to themselves.

Andrew said his biggest fear was snipers and friendly fire. Friendly fire is when your own side kills you in war. Andrew's unit was never in any real danger. He didn't think that he killed anyone, but he did shoot back at some snipers.

I'm gonna see if I can do a report in Mrs. Wayne's class about his stories for extra credit. I wish Andrew could speak to my class, but he had to go back to

Fayettnam.

I showed Andrew my pictures of John's Camaro and the '84 Corvette I saw coming back from Boston. He liked John's Camaro, but he thought the new Corvettes had lots of problems. Something about the crossfire fuel injection. I didn't really understand too much about it. I'll ask John about it later. Andrew said he likes the new Mustang GTs better. I guess he's a Ford man, but I didn't want to get into a debate about it.

Andrew thought Tina's picture was "cute." I guess she is more cute than fine.

Dave came by to wish me a Happy Thanksgiving. He was on his way to Terry's, and I asked Mom if I could go. She didn't seem happy about letting me go out, but Dad was cool about it, so I got to go.

Rhonda spiked my hair tonight. It looks cool as hell. Mom wasn't sure if she likes it. She did say it was better than shaving my sides though. Pete says I look like a member of Blondie.

They didn't get high tonight. Amy wasn't there,

though.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 26, 1983

Tina went shopping with her mom. She can't wait to see my spike. I hope she likes it.

Went back to Terry's with Dave tonight. John was there without Candi. As soon as I got there, John grabbed me and told me if I ever caught a wheel outside again, he was gonna call the cops. John kept shaking me and laughing. He was stoned.

Dave even took a drag and acted stoned.

This shit always happens to me.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 27, 1983

Wanted to see Tina, but Dad made me cut the grass, and after that Mom made me study for my geometry test. Tina, Tina, Tina. My spike looks really cool, and she hasn't even seen it once.

MONDAY - NOVEMBER 28, 1983

Tina loves my spike. She kept touching the top of

it. I love it when girls touch my hair.

I talked Tina into asking her parents again if she can go out with me this weekend.

Thought about Marcia today. Wonder if she thinks about me?

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 29, 1983

John got Friday off from work, and I asked him if Tina and I could double date with him and Candi. He said sure. He gave me a new rubber.

The first one he gave me got a rip in the wrapper from being in my wallet for so long. I don't want to take a chance of getting Tina or anyone else pregnant. Hopefully, this one won't be in my wallet after Friday.

Tina is gonna ask her parents tomorrow about going out. She's sick today, so I couldn't come over.

I teased Tina about her calling Brian for her homework assignments. She didn't think it was funny.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing, it's a joke."

"Fine. Well, I've got to go."

"Okay."

"Bye."

"Bye."

WEDNESDAY - NOVEMBER 30, 1983

The double date is off. I'm starting to hate Tina's parents as much as mine.

I got a D on my John Kennedy current event.

"The anniversary of a death twenty years ago is not a current event. Even the conspiracy theories are several years old."

When I told John that Tina was sick, he said she probably caught something from kissing Brian. I know he was joking, but I think he maybe right. Tina, what's happening? Why can't we talk?

THURSDAY - DECEMBER 1, 1983

I'm so depressed. I've called Tina three times, and each time her brother or father said she wasn't home.

I asked when she was gonna be home, but they didn't know.

I just called Tina's house, and her mom said Tina was in bed. Who the hell goes to bed at 9:30 p.m. in high school?

FRIDAY - DECEMBER 2, 1983

"Thriller" had it's world premier on MTV. I hate Michael Jackson, but the zombies were cool. They would have been a lot cooler if they didn't dance. Except for the break-dancing zombies. They're the best part of the video.

Alan Hunter said on MTV that "Thriller" cost a million dollars to make and is the most expensive video ever. How do they make money off videos?

"I'm not like other guys...I'm different"

No shit, Michael.

I was so depressed at Terry's. MTV kept playing "Thriller" every hour and we had to watch it every time. They have no taste at Terry's. They all got stoned, again. I was so depressed about Tina, that I

thought about taking a drag, but I didn't. It's not worth it.

I just drank my Buds and listened to the Black Sabbath eight-track on Linda's new headphones. Linda is going to sell me her old headphones for five bucks. It's a pretty good deal. I just have to peel the Shawn Cassidy sticker off the side.

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 25, 1983

It's Christmas.

I stopped keeping this journal for a while, but I'm back.

I've been through a lot in 1983. Especially, the end of it.

That weekend Tina couldn't double date with me, John and Candi, she went on a double date with Brandi, Brian and that junior that wanted to kick my ass! Do you believe that shit? This all came back to me little by little from my friends. My real friends!

John and Candi saw them all at the movies. Candi asked Laura about it, and Laura asked Kristy about

it. Kristy told Laura what happened, but made her promise not to tell anyone else. Kristy is jealous that Brandi spends so much time with Tina.

Laura told Candi what happened, Candi told John what happened and John told me what happened the next night at Terry's.

What happened was that Tina went to spend the night with Brandi on Friday. Brandi's dad took them to the theater where they met Brian and the junior dick, without Brandi's dad knowing. They didn't count on John and Candi being there.

Everyone at Terry's knew Tina cheated on me, and I had no other choice but to say it was over. Especially, when John told me he saw Tina Frenching Brian.

How come you couldn't sneak out for me! Fuck it. I'm way over it now.

At the time, I was beyond depressed. I felt like I was watching myself in a movie. Like I wasn't really me. Like there was this other guy that was getting shit on again. People always do this.

I started drinking hard and missed the quarter on purpose, when we played quarters. When Rhonda started a joint going around the table, I stayed. No one could believe it when I took a long deep drag and held it in, until I started coughing. I had to drink two tall glasses of water to stop gagging.

When I was at the sink, I saw Dave taking some tokes. I just went back to the table, slapped his hand and took another hit myself. It really didn't matter anymore. I was tired of being treated like a fucking kid.

I didn't think about Tina after that. It was like I was watching a TV show. Like it really didn't matter what anyone said. Nothing seemed to matter.

When Dave dropped me off at home, it was straight up to my room and into bed. I didn't want to talk or see anyone. I couldn't sleep though, so I got up and listened to The Wall with Linda's old headphones cranked to 10. I was still kinda high, so it was cool. I think it's the only way to listen to The Wall. Stoned and in the dark.

I had my eyes closed and didn't notice when Mom opened my door and came in. She grabbed my shoulder and scared the shit out of me. She wanted to make sure it was me that came in and not a burglar.

"It's just me. God."

"I'm just checking. How was the movie?"

"Fine. I'm trying to listen to music, Mom."

"Did you ever see Tina?"

"No."

"Are your eyes all right?"

"Smoke from Dave's cigarettes irritates them."

"Not your cigarettes?"

"I don't smoke. It's stupid and expensive."

"Go to bed. We have church in the morning."

"All right. Goodnight"

"And don't play your stereo so loud with the headphones on. You'll ruin your ears."

"All right, please?"

"Okay, I'm going. Goodnight."

"Goodnight. God."

I'll only smoke weed if Terry, Rhonda or Amy have it. I won't buy it. Dave and I promised each other we'd never let each other get that bad.

I've got a bottle of Visine for my eyes. I'm almost out, because Dave and John use it, too.

Laura wouldn't talk to me when she found out I got stoned. It didn't last. She did hug me when I gave her a Teddy Bear for Christmas, but that's all she gave me in return. I wanted to give something to Candi, but I thought John might get jealous.

I got John a Corvette book that was on sale at B. Daltons. I gave Dave a drink holder and a Playboy air freshener for his Toyota. The air freshener was kind of a joke, but he put it up anyway.

I got Dad a World War II airplane book, Mom a cookbook and Pete the live U2 album.

I got my amplifier, finally, but I was promised that from my birthday. I got a PCH sweatshirt and a Lamborghini calendar. Pete got me the Big Country album.

At first, I thought there were so few gifts because

of money problems. Then Dad said instead of getting everyone a bunch of little gifts, he decided to get the whole family one big gift. I thought it was a new stereo, but it was Beta video recorder. Dad said he really liked the one they have at the law office. I guess things are going good at the new office. Maybe, they'll buy a car soon.

Everyone got a blank videotape in their stocking. So far, off MTV, I've taped Ratt's "Round and Round" and the "Against All Odds" video with the red Porsche and blue Ferrari racing. I wonder if the movie is any good? It looks like a love story.

It was a pretty cool Christmas after all. I'm not so depressed anymore. At least we have a Beta now.

Dave is coming over to look at the Beta. Dave got a leather jacket and a cassette stereo for his Toyota. I asked Mom for a leather jacket, but she said I was still growing and if I got a leather jacket now, I'd outgrow it in a year. I tried to argue we could get one a couple sizes too big and I'd grow into it, but I knew she had a good point. I'll ask for it again next year.

Maybe, I'll stop growing by then.

MONDAY - DECEMBER 26, 1983

I talked to John today. He's dropping out. He's missed 25 days and is flunking everything. He'd rather just drop out of school, work full-time at Food Crown and maybe try ninth grade again next year.

I tried to talk him out of it, but I knew he was right. There was no way he was gonna pass this year. Besides, his Mom is real pissed off about it, and he had a big fight with Candi, even though he gave her a real nice ring for Christmas. I just decided to be his friend about it and stand by him.

Dave, John and I shared a joint together at Terry's. Just us and nobody else. We even cranked some ZZ Top, just like the good 'ole days. It brought back some fine memories.

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 27, 1983

Pete's a DJ! Because WKNC is so short of DJs from Christmas vacation, Pete gets to do the graveyard

shift.

Pete said he'd play some Judas Priest for me tonight. I'm listening to him now. He's doing okay. He just gave some tickets away for R.E.M. to the tenth caller, but I couldn't call in for them, because I was his brother. Plus it was at a club, and you had to be eighteen to win them.

Saw Candi today. She showed me the ring John gave her. It's real pretty, but Candi can't wear it at home. Her dad told her to give it back to John. In fact, she's barred from even seeing him. Candi said her Dad is real upset that John is dropping out.

"My daughter's not dating a drop out."

I've decided to stay unattached for a while. Maybe, when I go back to school, I'll look for a girl again. I don't know. They all think I'm kinda weird for shaving my head last year. I'm never gonna do anything weird again. It just doesn't pay.

Laura got a dual cassette stereo. She's gonna let me copy her Asia and Loverboy tapes tomorrow.

THURSDAY - DECEMBER 29 1983

It snowed today. Dave and I walked up to Candi and Laura's. We had a huge snowball fight with Scottie and all his bratty friends. Dave and I kicked their ass.

We made a killer snowman and put a fake joint in his mouth. Candi made us take it out. Scottie saw it, but he thought it was a regular cigarette.

I remember when it would snow in Fayetteville. The snow on our side of the street always melted first. The kids on the other side had snow for days after ours all melted. It really sucked.

FRIDAY - DECEMBER 30, 1983

The snow melted today. It melts on our side first here, too.

At night, the roads ice over and Mom won't let me go driving with Dave. I told Mom that Dave's a safe driver, but she doesn't care.

"Hey, they don't call them accidents, because you do them on purpose."

I hope it won't snow again and the roads will be safe for Terry's New Year's party. I'm gonna try and stay until 1 a.m.

SATURDAY - DECEMBER 31, 1983

The last day of 1983.

I'm not going to Terry's, but it's worked out kinda cool.

When Mom found out there weren't gonna be parents there, it was "out of the question."

"How many times do you go to Terry's apartment?"

"Not much. This is just a one-time thing. Please?"

"There are no parents there?"

"Probably not. No."

Dad's always understanding.

"You're not going to any New Year's Party!"

They get to go to a party. It's not fair. This is the last time I tell Mom and Dad the truth about what

I'm doing. I thought they would understand, but since they don't, forget it.

Pete's letting me come sit through his ten p.m. to six a.m. shift at the WKNC. It was that or sit home all night, and Mom and Dad were gonna call every half hour from the Pritchett's party to make sure I didn't go to Terry's.

I wanted to stay home and try and sneak over to Terry's, but when Mom and Dad said they'd call home every half hour, I decided to go to the radio station with Pete.

I've got five tapes to fill with new stuff. Pete said they got thousands of albums in the record vault. I've never been to a radio station before. I hope some good-looking girls will be around.

I've got the Beta set to tape the MTV's New Year's Eve party. Van Halen is gonna premiere their new video, "Jump," at midnight. The new record comes out tomorrow. I'm gonna go down to the mall with John when it opens to buy it.

Dave just called from Terry's. Mom answered it

and when she handed me the phone, she gave me this, "Yeah, you were gonna go there," look.

Dave was already pretty wasted. "1999" was blasting in the background and everyone was yelling. He kept babbling about smoking a "hog leg" joint. I answered back to his babbling with real answers because Mom was just in the other room. I said good-bye real nice and then hung up on him.

I wish I could be there. They always have all the fun.

Time to go to WKNC. The next time I write an entry it will be in 1984.

There's some book called 1984. I saw it in Pete's bookcase. I think we have to read it our senior year. 1984, here I come!

SUNDAY - JANUARY 1, 1984

It's 1984.

The radio station was cool. I wore my Who shirt and parachute pants. There was only one DJ there, and he left for a New Year's party after Pete took

over. For the rest of the night, Pete and I had the whole station to ourselves.

The walls were covered with radio station bumper stickers. Pete says they're sent in from all over the country by former WKNC DJs. I wonder if I'll be sending one from California someday?

Pete set me up in the production booth and showed me how to make tapes of all the records I want. The first tape I made was of a promotional copy of 1984. I bet I was the first kid at Cary High to listen to the new album. Eddie Van Halen plays a synthesizer on it. How will Eddie play guitar and synthesizer at the same time when Van Halen goes on tour?

I also got copies of:

Judas Priest: Screaming for Vengeance

Judas Priest: Point of Entry

Judas Priest: British Steel

Golden Earring: Twilight Zone (parts)

Dio: Rainbow in the Dark (parts)

Paul McCartney: Pipes of Peace (parts)

Around four o'clock in the morning, I fell asleep on the floor. Pete woke me up after the new DJ took over. We crashed back in Pete's dorm room.

We slept until noon and then went to get lunch at this sub shop, Sadlack's. It's pretty cool, because punk rockers hang out there. This one girl had green hair and a pierced nose. I'd love to have a girlfriend with green hair, but I don't think nose piercing is very sexy at all.

After lunch, we walked to the Record Hole. Pete bought a bunch of records I'd never heard of. I looked around, but didn't buy anything.

After the Record Hole, we went back to Pete's dorm and called Dad to pick us up.

I was hoping to see more girls, but everyone was away for break. I had a good time anyway.

How'd I do in 1983? I came pretty close to meeting all my goals I set when I moved here.

1. GET TO KNOW THE BRUNETTE: I got to know her.

2. GET LAID: I came pretty damn close. Whenever anyone asks me if I'm a virgin, which I hate like hell, I just say, "I've had sex."

3. GET FRIENDS: I've got the most friends I've ever had in my life and they are all cool. Some of them are even girls.

4. GET A JOB: No one will hire a fifteen-year old. I'll be sixteen in October, and I'll get one then.

5. GET WEIGHTS: I look awesome. I'm going to increase my reps and sets for 1984.

6. GET GOOD GRADES: What can I say? I'm doing the best I can.

My goals for 1984:

1. Steady girlfriend
2. Job and driver's license when I turn sixteen
3. Look into colleges
4. Party
5. Write in my journal everyday

SATURDAY - JANUARY 7, 1984

I've already broken my writing goal. Oh, well. It's not like I'm gonna get a bad grade on it.

Pete had an extra ticket to the N.C. STATE - UNC basketball game tonight. Pete could have scalped the extra ticket, but instead he took me. I'm not used to him being this cool to me. It's weird.

Because UNC and N.C. STATE were the last two teams to win the National Championship, the game was supposed to be the Clash of the Champions. It wasn't much of a clash, because UNC won 81 to 60.

Pete kept telling me to watch this UNC guy named Michael Jordan. Michael made the game winning shot for UNC in the 1982 Championship game. The guy sitting next to us said Michael is supposed to be the best player in college basketball. I hope he goes to the Celtics. Michael Jordan. I'll probably forget his name. At least it's written down.

I got a program for Dave.

SUNDAY - JANUARY 8, 1984

Dave liked the program. He's heard of Michael Jordan.

Big news! John and Candi have broken up! I bet they will get back together before the week is up.

John wanted Candi to run away with him. Candi said she wouldn't. John said since they are not allowed to see each other, then maybe they should just break up.

"Fine."

That was it.

Candi said she wasn't going to get back together with John unless he goes back to school.

I told this to John.

"Fuck school and fuck Candi!"

John wanted me to go in on a quarter bag with him. I was going to at first, but I don't want to cross that line. I said I just didn't have the money. Which is kinda true.

I'll smoke it if it is there, but I won't buy it.

MONDAY - JANUARY 9, 1984

Dave went in on the quarter with John. I don't think Dave has a problem, so I didn't say anything. We went to Rush Lake and smoked two penny joints.

The beer shack was locked.

FRIDAY - JANUARY 13, 1984

It's Friday the 13th, but I have great news. I might be able to get a job.

The family went to eat at Morrison's Cafeteria tonight. I saw this dude I know at school, Mark, carrying dishes out to the food line. Mark and I always debate who is the best Heavy Metal group, Iron Maiden or Judas Priest. Everyone at the smoking court hates it when we debate.

I was getting more iced tea and made sure to bump into Mark. I said, "What's up?" Then I asked Mark if he lied to get a job there. I knew Mark wasn't sixteen, because he didn't have a license.

Mark said you could work there when you're 15, if you got a work permit. I asked if they were still

hiring and Mark said he'd get me an application, but first, I'd have to say, "Iron Maiden kicks Judas Priest's ass."

I did, but didn't really mean it. Hell, it was for a job.

Mom and Dad aren't sure about me working. I knew they wouldn't be. They said I should enjoy my youth and not have to worry about a job. If they want me to enjoy my youth, then they should let me quit school and stop making me do yard work.

How can you enjoy anything, if you don't have any money?

SATURDAY - JANUARY 14, 1984

Mom helped me type my job application. I was just gonna fill it out with a pen, but Mom insisted that it be typed.

"You want to be as professional as possible."

It's just washing dishes!

Mom can't understand why I want a job washing dishes when I complain about having to clear the

table at home after dinner.

Because you don't pay me to clear the table!

At the party last night, I told everyone I might get a job. Terry said now I could buy the herb, since I'd have a paycheck.

I didn't like the way he said it. I don't buy for moral reasons, not monetary ones. I always let Terry keep the change when I pay him to buy us beer. Sometimes it's like three dollars and I let him keep it all.

I noticed John was flirting with Rhonda, and she was flirting back. John gets all the girls.

MONDAY - JANUARY 16, 1984

I had my interview today after school. Mom wanted me to wear a tie, but I talked her down to a sweater. Hell, Mark said he just wore his Iron Maiden Number of the Beast t-shirt to his interview, and he got the job easy.

Mr. Barnes said I looked nice. He asked me what kind of hours I could work. I said I could only work

weekends until the summer, then I could work whenever he wants me to.

I told him about the paper route I had with Pete back in Fayetteville. It was really just Pete's, but I helped fold papers and deliver them sometimes.

Mr. Barnes marked a few things on my application and asked when I could start. I said this weekend. He said he would call.

I didn't say anything about money. I didn't want to seem greedy. I'm sure I'll only get minimum wage. That's what Mark gets.

I did my current event on the Democrats' debate. Glenn did all right. There is a big controversy on how old Gary Hart is and how he changed his name from Hartpence. I'd never change my name.

TUESDAY - JANUARY 17, 1984

No word about the job. Mom keeps saying I should have worn a tie.

WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 18, 1984

I got the job! I start training at 4:30 p.m. on Friday. This is so awesome! Mark is going to train me. He's going to be promoted to line service next week, because the bread server quit.

Mom's taking me downtown tomorrow to get my work permit.

THURSDAY - JANUARY 19, 1984

I got my work permit, and Dad bought me a new pair of jeans and three white t-shirts for work. Mom and Dad said if my grades go down, then I have to quit.

Tomorrow, I'm a workingman. 1984 is gonna be a great year.

FRIDAY - JANUARY 20, 1984

Just got out of the shower. Cleaning dishes can be dirty work.

The first night at my job was pretty cool. I showed up at Morrison's at four o'clock and waited for Mark

to show up at four-thirty.

"Dude man, you're early."

Mark took me in the back and got me a paper hat and apron. He then gave me a tour of the kitchens, freezers and laundry room.

The automatic dishwasher dominates the dish room. It's as big as a car. Dirty dishes are set on a pegged belt, which carries them through the washer and out to the other end, where they come out clean.

All I do is break down the dirty trays that come in from the bus crew. I throw out the left over food and stick the dishes on the pegged conveyer belt so they won't fall off.

I got the hang of it pretty quick and even made the mistake of saying that it was kinda fun. Whenever I'd get backed up, Mark would always ask sarcastically, "Are you still having fun?"

At 9:30 p.m., the last of the dishes come through, and we start to clean up. I'm off around 9:45 p.m., if we work quick. I was pretty soaked when I got off, so Dad just picked me up. It was too late to call Dave, so

I just showered and started writing this entry. I can't wait to get my first paycheck.

SUNDAY - JANUARY 22, 1984

My first weekend of work is over. I should do some reading, but I'm tired. I'll try and do it at lunch. I like my job. I can't believe that I'm actually working. It's so cool!

MONDAY - JANUARY 23, 1984

Went up to see Candi and Laura. Laura asked about John. Candi pretended not to care, but I know she did.

I didn't say anything about John hooking up with Rhonda on Saturday night. I don't know if they did or not, but it doesn't take two hours to go on a beer run. John said he just ran into a friend. Candi thinks Rhonda is a slut, anyway. Too bad Rhonda's not a slut around me.

Candi is happy for me that the new job is working out, but Laura thought it was funny that she makes

more money an hour babysitting than I do washing dishes. At least, I don't have to change any diapers.

The dish room is the coolest place to work. As long as clean dishes keep coming out, no one bothers us. All the guys in there like to party. Mark said working the line is not as much fun as the dish room. Yeah, but I don't see Mark leaving the line to come back to work in the dish room again. No one ever comes back to the dish room, once they get promoted.

Tony cleans the pots on the other side of the dishwasher. We can't talk much, because of the loud grumbling the washer makes, but whenever one of the cooks brings back a pot with food left in it, Tony calls me over and I grab a quick snack. Sunday night, we munched on some banana pudding and pot roast.

I asked Tony why he hasn't moved to the line yet. He said the main reason is because he can come in stoned and do pots.

It's hard to tell when Tony is stoned, because he always talks kinda buzzed. He's pretty cool.

Bobby Quinn works the drinks on the line. Even though he's a jock, he's still kinda cool. I told Bobby that Dave, John and I were out cruising when the rumble was gonna happen after he got jumped last year. He seemed thankful.

"That's cool, man. Can you make sure I get these coffee pots back quick?"

"Sure, man."

"Presh, dude."

All the jocks and popular kids work the line or dining room. Angie, a cheerleader, is the cashier up front. Angie's not the prettiest cheerleader on the squad. In fact, if she wasn't a cheerleader, I think most guys would say she's just okay looking. Still, she's a cheerleader. I know I don't have a chance with her, but, once, while I was punching in, I did say, "Hi."

I came up with a term everybody uses now, "Dish Dude." Tony really liked it.

"I'm a Dish Dude, dude."

SATURDAY - JANUARY 28, 1984

We got our paychecks yesterday. I put mine in the bank, but kept out five dollars for the weekend.

Before work yesterday, I saw Mark at Time Out. He had just bought a quarter. Pretty nice buds and not much stem at all.

Work was okay, but it's starting to get boring.

I could tell Tony was stoned, because all I had to do was look at him funny and he cracked up. Sometimes, I just had to look.

After the line closed, Mark came back with his bread dishes to put in the dishwasher.

"Are you still having fun, Dish Dude?"

Mark showed Tony the quarter.

"Killer buds, dude."

Mark asked if I wanted to go out partying with him and Tony. He seemed surprised when I said yes.

I called Dad and told him that I was gonna see a late show with some guys at work.

"What movie?"

"I don't know. Were just gonna go and see what's

playing."

"Do you need to shower?"

"Naw, I'm clean."

"When are you coming home?"

"I guess when the movie's over."

When we got to Tony's Monte Carlo, Mark rolled a joint, and we had a killer smoke-in. Tony was jamming Boston's first album and "Smoking" was just about the perfect song for that moment.

The parking lot was empty, so Tony did a couple of donuts before we left. Smoke was everywhere, inside and outside.

We cruised to the elementary school and hung out on the swings and oversized tires and smoked another joint. Mark wouldn't let us vandalize anything, because then cops would start patrolling the playground looking for the kids hanging out there at night. Mark is pretty smart like that.

Tony and Mark talked about when they used to play dodge ball on the blacktop. Listening to Mark and Tony reminisce about their fourth grade recess

heroics was getting boring, so I told them about Terry's apartment and we went there next.

There wasn't much going on. Just Terry, Linda, Dave and Amy playing quarters.

At first, Terry seemed kinda pissed when I showed up with two strangers. But, when Mark pulled out his bag, then it was cool.

Mark was cool and passed around a couple of joints, but he wanted to save some of it for the week. Everyone caught a good buzz. I gave Tony two bucks for gas and Mark two bucks for being cool with his weed. I don't consider that buying it. That's just being cool.

I did my current event on Reagan wanting a permanent space station. I wanted to do it on Michael Jackson's hair catching on fire, but I knew I'd get an F if I did.

That would be so cool to cop a buzz in space. Zero gravity!

SUNDAY - JANUARY 29, 1984

Mark pissed me off today. I asked him if he had a good time last night at Terry's. He said did, but then said some racist stuff about Dave.

I didn't get real pissed, because he got me the job, but I can't look at him anymore without thinking about what he said.

Tony didn't say anything racist like that. He's too cool.

People are always letting me down.

Someone wrote Dish Dudes on the work schedule, but Mr. Barnes put whiteout over it and rewrote "dish room staff."

I hung out with Dave today before work. We just played some basketball and watched a little MTV. He's not gonna apply for any colleges. He just wants to work.

"Look for a paycheck and a party."

Reagan announced he's running for re-election. Good luck, Gipper.

FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 3, 1984

John has a new job working construction. His fling with Rhonda is over. The age difference might have been a factor. She was five years older. Five years! That would be like me going out with a ten-year-old.

SATURDAY - FEBRUARY 4, 1984

Mom and Dad came by work tonight. I said hello, but went back in the dish room. Mark let me know they were here.

"Hey, man, there are some old people looking for you. I think they're your parents."

I'll talk to Mark, but that's it. He doesn't know how I feel about what he said about Dave.

Tony was stoned tonight.

"Dude, look at that pan. That's a tripping pan."

So far I have fifty dollars saved for my Washington, D.C. trip.

I took my break with Angie tonight. I was cool. She was eating alone, and I just sat down with her and we started talking. She didn't realize I was the guy who shaved his head for the Clash video,

because my hair is so long now. She heard about the Brandi story though. I found out we both have something in common. We both think Brandi is a bitch.

Angie and Brandi used to be best friends in junior high, but when Angie made the JV cheerleader squad and Brandi didn't, their friendship ended.

Angie was real honest with me about why. Brandi told the other girls that the only reason Angie made the squad and not her was that Angie was flat and the JV cheerleader coach was prejudiced against girls with big breasts.

I didn't know what to say. I'm not used to cheerleaders talking to me that honestly. I shrugged and said, "Yeah, Brandi's that kinda person."

Angie asked me if I was a stoner, and I said no. Some people I tell and others I don't. If they're cool and party, I do, but I don't think a cheerleader would want to know a stoner. I just said I drink a little bit. I don't consider myself a stoner, anyway. I don't consider myself anything. I'm me and that's it.

FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 12, 1984

After church today, Dad drove though some new subdivisions looking at houses with Mom. I asked if we were gonna move.

"We're just looking."

"I don't want to move. Let's just go home."

"We'll be home in a few minutes."

"No we won't. Can you at least turn to a good radio station?"

"Leave it where it is."

"Let's just buy a new house in Trappers Run. Did you hear me?"

"We heard you."

"I thought we were poor."

"We're not poor."

"Can I get a Camaro when I turn sixteen?"

"No."

They didn't see anything they liked.

SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 19, 1984

Mom and Dad dropped me off at home and then went out looking at houses without me.

My current event was on Andropov dropping dead in the Soviet Union and Chernenko taking over. I hope he doesn't want war.

Mom and Dad better get back soon, because I need a ride to work. I wish I was sixteen.

FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 24, 1984

I've been keeping this journal for real for one year. I bet no one in my class kept it after they got their final grade. And what do I get out of it? Not shit. I don't know why I'm even bothering.

Mondale won the Iowa caucus. Glenn didn't do well. I think I like Gary Hart now. He's supposed to be the next Kennedy.

SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 26, 1984

I bought a dime off Mark at work. I was scared as shit. I kept it in my underwear, in case someone wanted to check my pants pockets.

When I got home, I stuck it in the battery hatch of the Millennium Falcon in the closet.

Mark didn't have any papers on him, so he showed me how to use an aluminum can as a pipe.

I caught a little buzz last night and listened to The Wall in the dark. I was paranoid about Mom coming in, so it wasn't as cool as the first time.

The last of the Marines are pulling out of Beirut. Losing sucks.

TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 28, 1984

Michael Jackson won eight Grammys. He was there with Webster and Brook Shields. I took my can and bag behind the house and caught another buzz. Life sucks.

TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 29, 1984

It won't be February 29th again until 1988. I'll be nineteen. I could be drafted and die for my country, but I still won't be able to walk in a bar and order a drink.

The cool news is Gary Hart won in New Hampshire. Hart is my candidate now. Hart looks like he could beat Reagan.

I hope I can see him when we go to Washington.

SATURDAY - MARCH 3, 1984

Saw Spinal Tap with Pete. Mom and Dad dropped us off at the theater, and then they went to look at houses. Lenny, from Laverne and Shirley, was the lead singer in Spinal Tap. In the movie, they play a concert at UNC in Chapel Hill, but Pete says it never really happened.

Pete says Spinal Tap is not a real group, but they play their own instruments and have an album out. Isn't that what a real rock group does?

I played my guitar for the first time in a while, but the strings really hurt. I smoked the rest of my weed and then tried playing again. Pain is a trip when you're stoned.

TUESDAY - MARCH 6, 1984

Hart won in Maine and Vermont.

Mrs. Wayne is all angry now, because Reagan wants prayer in school. I like it when Mrs. Wayne gets angry about something, because that means we'll have a class discussion and won't have to do any work.

Got two hundred saved for D.C. I'm actually looking forward to it.

I'm in a weird position at school. I ride in the morning with a black guy and then in first period, hang out with redneck heads in gym.

"Man, I'd like to cover the gym floor in weed, set it on fire and charge people a buck to sit on the bleachers and get a killer contact buzz."

In the halls, I can say, "What's up?" to the cheerleaders and jocks I work with at Morrison's or "Hi" to the nerds and brains I know from the D.C. trip meetings.

Then, I go to work and have an intelligent discussion with some of the cooks or Mr. Barnes about politics, music or news.

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen."

"That's all? You seem older."

It would be nice to talk to a girlfriend. I thought I could meet someone at work, but they are all too old, have boyfriends or are out of my reach. For a while, I thought I might have a shot with Angie, because she was so honest with me, but that was a one-time deal. I think she would have said the same thing to Mark or Tony, if they would listen.

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 7, 1984

I went to see Candi and Laura today. I hadn't been there in a while. Laura was real excited to see me. Then after a hug she got real serious.

"Guess what."

"What?"

"Guess."

"You're going to sleep with me?"

"No. Guess again."

"You got a boyfriend?"

"No. I'm moving."

I guess I really liked Laura more than I thought, because when she said she was moving my legs got weak. I couldn't believe it. I had to sit down beside her on the bed to keep my balance.

I laid my head on her shoulder and played it up like I was really hurt, but I was genuinely sad.

In April, Laura is going to move with her real mom and stepfather to Florida. I didn't go into why she was moving. Divorced families still make me uncomfortable. I'm always afraid I'll say something dumb.

This sucks. No matter what happened to me and all the stupid girls I met, I could always go up and tell Laura about it. Even if it was right before she left for babysitting. After April, I can't.

Candi said I could still come up and see her. Yeah, but I can't hold your legs while we watch TV or sneak a feel when I hug you goodbye.

I'm really depressed about this.

THURSDAY - MARCH 8, 1984

I went up to see Laura, but she was babysitting. I hung out with Candi. She knew I was really down, because Laura was gonna move.

Candi made me promise not to tell anyone, but she talked to John today. She doesn't know if they'll get back together or not.

The funny part was that John thought Candi and I would have gotten together when they broke up. Candi told John that I was his good friend and that John should feel pretty bad thinking about me like that.

It was a proud moment when I heard Candi say she stuck up for me. I'd never see a friend's ex-girl. Never.

SUNDAY - MARCH 11, 1984

Work sucks now! I wish I could fuck around at Terry's or hang out with Laura. At night, when I try to sleep, I can still hear the dishwasher roaring and the plates all clanking together.

The other night, a cook sent a burnt pot back to Tony. Tony complained to Mr. Barnes, "I can't clean that. It's filthy." Mr. Barnes laughed and wrote what Tony said down on a sheet of paper and taped it up in his office.

At the debate tonight, Mondale asked Hart, "Where's the beef?"
Mondale is a dick.

FRIDAY - MARCH 17, 1984

Glenn dropped out of the race. Bought another dime from Mark.

SATURDAY - MARCH 18, 1984

Mom and Dad showed me a house they like. It's a lot bigger than the one we're renting in Trappers Run. The lawns are also bigger, which means more yard work.

Dad said we might get a riding mower, if we moved there. At least I could drive something then.

There's a new dessert girl, Leia, working the line.

She's pretty enough to be a cheerleader, but she still seems cool. I said, "Hi," to her today and she said, "Hey," back. I guess that's a good sign.

SUNDAY - MARCH 19, 1984

Angie said Leia asked about me. She asked about me! Angie said she told Leia I was "a nice guy." Nice guy good or nice guy bad, I wonder.

MONDAY - MARCH 20, 1984

Candi and John are back together. John is gonna go back to school in the fall. He may go to summer school for English, so he won't be a seventeen-year old freshman.

Things are starting to get back to normal.

FRIDAY - MARCH 23, 1984

I saw Leia grab Bobby Quinn's ass as she walked by the drink station. I don't believe this shit. Fuck it.

SATURDAY - MARCH 24, 1984

I'm tired of being a Dish Dude. I'm gonna ask Mr. Barnes to put me on the line or work in the dining room.

Leia said, "Hey," to me again, but I just said, "What's up?" like it didn't really matter.

SUNDAY - MARCH 25, 1984

One more week of classes and then Spring Break and D.C.

I hope my grades don't go down. I get my report card after I come back from D.C.

MONDAY - MARCH 26, 1984

I turned in my check for the D.C. trip. I'm booked. It'll be cool to fly again.

TUESDAY - MARCH 27 1984

I called Marcia today, but another family has moved into their apartment. I think they're Iranian or something. I should have called sooner. I thought about going to see Tonya to get Marcia's new

number, but I've decided to not to live in the past.

Hart won Connecticut. I told Mom I was gonna run for President someday. She said you had to be rich to run for President.

"I thought we were rich."

"We're not rich."

"You said we weren't poor."

"We're middle class. Upper middle class if the firm keeps doing well."

"Can I get a Camaro if the firm keeps doing well."

"No."

FRIDAY - MARCH 30, 1984

SPRING BREAK! Too bad, I have to wash dishes in an hour. I finished the quarter strong, so I should be fine grade-wise. As much as I hate my job, I don't want Mom and Dad making me quit, because of stupid ass grades.

Laura leaves Sunday. I may go up real quick before work and see her today.

SUNDAY - APRIL 1, 1984

Laura finally left with her Mom today. Dave, John and I were there to say goodbye.

John told me that Laura wasn't really going. He said it was just an April Fool's joke. I almost believed him at first, but I knew Laura wouldn't have all her stuff packed up and be crying for a joke.

Laura even took down her Menudo poster. I guess I got my wish. I'll write Laura a letter in a few weeks. I'll tell her about my D.C. trip. I wonder how she'll feel when she gets one of my letters.

As we said our last goodbye, I could tell she was only gonna hug me. I wouldn't let her get away with just a hug. As we let go for the last time, I gave her a kiss on the lips and started to cry myself. John and Dave didn't say anything about me crying. It was pretty cool of them.

MONDAY - APRIL 2, 1984

It's weird going to work on a Monday. I told Mr.

Barnes that I wanted to be trained on line or bus tables in the dining room, but he said he needed me in the dish room.

Mark told me that he had to threaten to quit before he got promoted. I don't know if I want to do that. I can imagine Mr. Barnes would say to me, "Fine, quit."

I only work two more days before the D.C. trip.

WEDNESDAY - APRIL 4, 1984

I leave for D.C. in the morning. I get to use Pete's big suitcase, because of all my clothes.

I'm sharing a room with Chris Culp. He's kinda a nerd, but he seems all right.

Thought about taking a joint with me and getting high in Washington, but the risk is too high. If you get caught drinking, using drugs or having the opposite sex in your room, then you get sent home on the next available flight.

Screw that. I paid two hundred bucks of my own money. I hope colleges appreciate this.

THURSDAY - APRIL 5, 1984

I'm 30,000 feet high in the air. I wrote 84 on my journal cover. Now it reads, "History 1983-84." The cover is pretty ragged, and I want people to think it's my history notebook for this year and not from 1982-83.

I'm in the hotel room in Crystal City. In a few minutes, I have to go downstairs with Chris to the general meeting with all the other kids.

Just got back from a bus tour of D.C. We saw the White House, the Jefferson Memorial, the Capitol, the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. That would be cool, to have a monument built for you.

I barely remember coming here when I was a kid, but I do remember the Lincoln Memorial. Big 'ole Lincoln sitting up there. I didn't even know who he was back then. Just a big stone giant.

There are kids here from California, Florida, New Jersey, Kansas and Wisconsin.

Just got back from our group discussion. We talked about our biggest concerns in government.

#1 Nuclear war with the Russians

#2 Spread of Communism

#3 Pollution

#4 Education

#5 Homeless and hungry people

#6 Terrorism

When we were calling out our concerns, I yelled out Grenada. Everybody laughed. Heather, the discussion leader, just stuck it with the spread of Communism, but was sarcastic about it, so I felt bad.

Mrs. Wayne was sitting right next to me and I whispered to her that I didn't mean Grenada as a joke. Mrs. Wayne nodded and whispered back, "Call out Beirut and see how many people laugh." I really like Mrs. Wayne. She knows I'm trying.

FRIDAY - APRIL 6, 1984

Saw the Senate debate today. I had no idea what they were talking about, but at least I can say I saw them debate. I also got to see a House Committee meeting. They were talking about cow hooves.

Chris and I had a picnic on the Capitol lawn with some of the kids from New Jersey. I was in my jacket and tie and this Jersey girl, Elizabeth, said I'd make a good Senator.

The Jersey kids don't say "cool" or "bad." They say, "righteous."

Elizabeth's kinda cute, but I really hate long distance relationships. I didn't come to D.C. to fall in love. I just want something for my college applications.

Some kids from Kansas saw Ted Kennedy walking around the Capital subway shuttle and got his autograph. I always miss the good stuff. I bet he'll be president one day, and I missed getting his autograph.

SATURDAY - APRIL 7, 1984

Went to The Wall today. Our fearless tour leader, Skip, said, "The Vietnam Memorial is the most emotional monument in Washington." It's weird looking at all the names. I wonder if anyone died on the day I was born.

I got a bunch of pictures of The Wall for Dad. I should have asked Dad if he wanted me to look for any names. We can always come back on a family trip and get more pictures, because The Wall isn't going anywhere.

While our group was at The Wall, a girl from Wisconsin started crying. The rumor was that she saw her Dad's name on The Wall, but no one knows for sure. I wasn't going to ask.

It's midnight and some shit happened. Some of the Californian dudes bought some beer with a fake ID and were having a secret party in their hotel room. Two of them went to hook up with some Kansas girls. This one girl from Florida heard the guys in the next room and was afraid she'd get expelled, because

she shared a bathroom with that room. So, the Florida girl told her teacher that guys were in the other room.

I was scared, because I was at the California party, but left when it started to get too loud. There was a dance downstairs, so I went down there. I was slow dancing with Elizabeth when word spread of the bust.

I wanted to stay with Elizabeth, but I overheard other kids saying that Skip was trying to get the names of everyone that had been at the party. I went back to my room, brushed my teeth and went to bed like I had been sleeping all night.

Chris came in, and I pretended he woke me up. He told me about the California guys getting busted and a few guys from Jersey and Kansas, too. No one from North Carolina got busted...yet.

Chris asked if I had been at the party.

"No, I was too tired. Did you go?"

"I thought about it, but decided not to."

I thought about it, right. Chris wouldn't know

what to do with a beer if his life depended on it.

I hope no one will know the truth. I shouldn't even be writing this. I'm so stupid sometimes.

SUNDAY - APRIL 8, 1984

I'm on the plane home. No one said anything to me about the party, but I think they know I was there.

I felt guilty as shit when I said goodbye to Skip. I could hardly look him in the eye, I felt so bad. He must know.

Skip mentioned that he hated to bust everyone, but if the D.C. program got a reputation as a party trip, then parents wouldn't want to send their kids on it.

I agreed with him and said goodbye. I could see the disappointment in his eyes, as I shook his hand. I don't know if he was disappointed in me or our group in general.

No one was sent home early, but some of the kids may get in trouble when they get back to their

schools. The California dudes left before I could say thanks for not turning me in. It worked out better that way, because maybe they did want to rat me out, but couldn't remember my name. I certainly didn't want to show up and remind them.

Elizabeth gave me a goodbye hug. I told her the next time my family drives up to Boston on the New Jersey Turnpike, we'd stop by for lunch. We said we'd keep in touch.

We're getting ready to land in good 'ole N.C.

Mom and Dad decided to buy the big house while I was gone!

I get to stay at Cary High, but we're moving in May. Dad said this would be the last time we'd ever move. I bet.

It's close enough that I could ride my bike to Trappers Run, and by October I'll be sixteen and able to drive. Dave can always come over and pick me up in the meantime.

MONDAY - APRIL 9, 1984

Saw Dave. He showed me a quarter he bought. I told him all about the California dudes getting busted.

Dave said he'd still give me a ride to school from the new house. But after he graduates, who will I car pool with? I don't ever want to ride the bus again. Never!

FRIDAY - APRIL 13, 1984

It's Friday the 13th. Where's Jason?

John told me not to tell anyone this, but he's thinking about asking Candi to marry him. I can't believe this! He'll only be seventeen in May. I told him not to rush things.

"She's the one. I know it."

I don't know.

Jesse Jackson won in South Carolina. It would be cool to have a black President.

FRIDAY - APRIL 27, 1984

I'm being promoted at work to bread baker. At

first, I wanted to go on line, but Mr. Barnes laughed and said that being a baker was a much better job. I'm gonna start training tomorrow afternoon.

I'll miss being a Dish Dude, but so be it.

SATURDAY - APRIL 28, 1984

I can bake blueberry muffins, corn bread, jalapeno corn bread, French bread, biscuits and rolls.

I ate a ton of raw blueberry muffin dough.

I always joke around with Tony when I take my pots and trays in the back to be washed.

"I want these trays spic and span, and see that you don't scratch them, Dish Dude, or you'll find yourself flipping Big Macs at McDonald's."

"Hey man, how about sneaking me some muffins, Dude?"

The best part about my new job is that I get off an hour earlier, because we stop making food for the line at 8 p.m. I can punch out by 8:25 p.m., if I clean up fast.

I even got to go to Terry's last night with Dave.

SUNDAY - APRIL 29, 1984

Dad and Mom had a big argument over moving, on the way home from church. I was glad that for once, I wasn't involved in the yelling. I was on Dad's side, though.

Mom wants to just get a U-haul and move like we did before, but Dad wants to hire movers. It's only a couple of miles, but Dad doesn't have time because of work, Pete has final exams coming up, and I have my own job. Mom just can't see spending the money when we are only moving a couple of miles.

MONDAY - APRIL 30, 1984

We're hiring movers. Mom started to box things up.

WEDNESDAY - MAY 2, 1984

When I got home from school, Mom was taking my room apart and stuffing it into boxes. All week, she's been nagging me to pack my stuff up myself,

but I never did. Finally, she took it upon herself to pack my room up.

She fucking threw away all my magazines, but what I was most nervous about was some seeds left over from my bags. I had them stashed in the Falcon's smuggling hatch. Luckily, all the Star Wars stuff was still in a box, so she didn't have to touch it.

I started to pack right away to get her out. I ate the seeds just to get rid of them. I don't think I caught a buzz from it, either.

Mom also put my journal on top of my desk. She asked if I noticed I was missing my history notebook. I said I didn't need it today, because we had a test.

I'm pretty sure she didn't read my journal. If she did, I'd probably be on my way to military school. I have to be more careful.

FRIDAY - MAY 4, 1984

Chris Culp is the new Dish Dude. I haven't talked to him since the D.C. trip. He remembered that I told him Morrison's hired fifteen year olds.

Tomorrow, we move, and I don't have to help. Dad said, "Just stay out of the way." Fine with me.

I get to keep my school and my friends. I even get a bigger room. This isn't such a bad move after all.

SUNDAY - MAY 6, 1984

Pete's back, and he is already pissing me off. He's mad that I got the bigger room. Mom and Dad said I could have it, since Pete will be at college, and I'll be spending the most time at home.

Today was the first time I really walked around the new neighborhood. I didn't see any girls. A few blocks over, I saw Chris's family's name carved on one of those wooden signs that hangs under mailboxes. I got out of there before anyone could see me. I guess it was Chris's house. How many Culps can there be in Cary?

None of the other Dish Dudes like Chris. Most heads hate nerds. I think most people hate nerds.

I'm cool to Chris and talk to him, but I'm afraid he'll think I want to be friends with him.

This shit always happens to me.

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 6, 1984

I'm now a junior! I haven't been able to write for a month, because of all the studying and working I've done. I know I passed everything. I only hope I got C's, so I can keep my job. I'll be working during the week this summer and should be able to rake in some bucks.

I burnt my arm on the oven Sunday putting in a tray of biscuits. The burn doesn't hurt anymore, but there is a little scar halfway between my wrist and elbow.

Dave's coming by to pick me up. We're meeting John, Candi and a case of Coors at Rush Lake to celebrate Dave's graduation and start of summer.

Dave's just gonna work full time at Food Crown, until he finds a better job.

Damn, Dave, where are you? I want to get fucked up!

We had a mock election in Mrs. Wayne's class.

Reagan - 18

Jackson - 10

Hart - 1

Mondale - 1

All the black kids in class voted for Jackson, I know who voted for Hart and everyone knows Mrs. Wayne voted for Mondale. I guess Reagan is probably gonna win. What do a bunch of high schoolers know, anyway?

No more politics, it's summer.

Dave's here.

THURSDAY - JUNE 7, 1984

Good news and bad news. The bad news is Candi is gonna spend the summer with her dad and stepmom in Ohio. I'll miss her, but good news is that now John can hang out with Dave and me more.

Gotta go to work.

SATURDAY - JUNE 9, 1984

I got a new drug. Rhonda sold me a bottle of

poppers. I just sniff it, and I get a helluva rush. Rhonda said it wasn't addictive.

MONDAY - JUNE 11, 1984

Got a rash under my nose. I've stopped doing the poppers for now. I'll keep the bottle hidden behind my bookshelf.

FRIDAY - JUNE 15, 1984

Candi leaves tomorrow. I said goodbye tonight, because I have to work all day Saturday. Besides, John is gonna try and get laid one last time before she goes away for the summer.

SATURDAY - JUNE 16, 1984

John's so depressed. Dave and I tried to get him drunk and rowdy at Terry's, but all he could say was, "She's gone, man."

John kept playing "I Guess That's Why They Call it the Blues" over and over. It was even getting me sad.

It's just for the summer, and besides, Candi's mom told John that he could visit them for a week in July.

The rash is going away.

SUNDAY - JUNE 17, 1984

After reading over my journal, I've decided last summer was better.

Why the Hell does Michael Jackson wear only one glove? I just don't get it.

John is not quite as depressed as he was. I spent the day helping him and Dave wash Godzilla. John gave me all the old eight-tracks that were in his glove box, since he can't listen to them anymore.

It's been a while since we washed the Camaro. It would have been cool to go riding in the country again, but we all had to work at four o'clock. We have plenty of time to go riding around in the country in the future.

My nose is all cleared up.

TUESDAY - JUNE 19, 1984

Dave is going to Ohio with John to see Candi. Candi's mom said John could bring a friend, and Dave and John have been friends longest. Also, Dave can take turns driving with John.

I don't really want to see Ohio, anyway.

Did some more poppers today and played guitar. I felt like I was really jamming in front of people. Weird.

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 20, 1984

We're going to Boston on July 13th and coming back July 29th. I asked if I could stay home and work, but Mom and Dad won't let me. I knew they wouldn't.

John and Dave leave for Ohio on July 27th, so I would have missed the Ohio trip, even if John had asked me to go instead of Dave. John said he wanted me to go, too, but Candi's mom was only gonna let him bring one friend.

TUESDAY - JUNE 26, 1984

Pete rented a cool movie today. Easy Rider is about these two hippies ridding across America on motorcycles after they make a ton of money on a drug deal. It made me really want to go with Dave and John on a road trip. I can't wait to drive.

BORN TO BE WILD!

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 27, 1984

I told Mom I wanted a motorcycle and leather jacket with an American flag on the back. She said, "no" on the motorcycle, but "I don't know" on the jacket.

WEDNESDAY - JULY 4, 1984

Went to the fireworks with Dave and John. We had a smoke-in behind the mall before we drove across to the football stadium to watch the show.

I saw Mrs. Grover there with her husband. I tried to hide in the crowd, but she saw me. She asked about my summer, and I told her about going to Boston in a couple weeks. I said I was gonna see

Walden Pond while I was there. She seemed impressed and asked me to take some photographs for the English Department.

Mrs. Grover also asked me why my eyes were so red.

"I went swimming today."

"You should get some goggles."

I said I would and joined Dave and John at the other end of the bleachers. I'm sure she knew I was stoned. I hate talking to adults when I'm stoned. I'm so paranoid about sounding like I'm not stoned, that I know I act as if I am.

John let me borrow his Walkman so I could listen to Dark Side of the Moon while the fireworks went off.

Right before the show was about to start, I snuck below the bleachers to sneak a popper hit. There were a bunch of junior high kids smoking cigarettes down there, like they were the baddest things to hit Cary.

One of them kept bragging that he had just

fingering a girl in the parking lot and wanted the other kids to smell his finger. Another one of the kids was only wearing one glove like Michael Jackson. I really think kids are stupider today. This one kid wanted a hit of my poppers, but I wouldn't let him. I told him it was for asthma.

"It is not. Come on, man, I'm cool."

I bummed a cigarette off him, but I still wouldn't let them have a hit of the poppers. Kids.

SATURDAY - JULY 7, 1984

John asked me to go to Ohio!

Mom and Dad are actually thinking about it! They're really thinking about it! They like the fact that Candi's parents are going to be there.

John said Dave just couldn't make it because of work.

OHIO! OHIO! Born to be WILD!

John is gonna move the trip back until I get back from Boston. I wanted Mom to rearrange our trip to Boston. She said if John wanted me to go to Ohio,

then he would have to move his trip back. She also reminded me of how she had to rearrange our trip plans to Boston last year because of summer school.

I was pretty pissed when she brought up summer school, but I wasn't going to ruin my chances of going to Ohio, so I kept my cool about the whole thing.

Pete said next time he was at the radio station, he'd tape the Steppenwolf album with "Born to be Wild" on it.

I'm going to show John Easy Rider before we go.

SUNDAY - JULY 8, 1984

I'm going to Ohio! No parents, no teachers, no aunts, no uncles, no scoutmasters, no group leaders, no grandparents, no adults! Just me, John and Godzilla on the open road.

Mom talked to Candi's stepmom and made sure everything was cool. I had to cut the grass today, but I was glad to do it.

MONDAY - JULY 9, 1984

Candi called me with some very cool news. Candi showed my picture to this girl, Kim, who she met in Ohio. Kim liked my picture so much that she borrowed it and won't give it back! A girl actually stole my picture! I told Candi I'd bring her a replacement picture.

Candi said the reason she was calling was to see if I wanted her to set up a double date with Kim, her and John.

"Are you kidding me? Yes!"

"Okay, I will."

"Kim's good looking, right?"

"Yeah."

"You're not just saying that to get me to say yes?"

"No. Heck, she's a cheerleader."

"A cheerleader!"

"In junior high."

"She's a junior high cheerleader?"

"No. She was a cheerleader in junior high. She's gonna be a sophomore next year."

"How come she's not a cheerleader now?"

"She likes to party too much now to put up with it."

"Cool."

I know I'm gonna lose it on this trip. John said he was gonna bring a new box of condoms. I can't wait.
I CAN'T WAIT!

TUESDAY - JULY 10, 1984

I found out why Dave couldn't go to Ohio. Candi's stepmom wasn't gonna let a black person sleep under her roof. I can't believe this shit.

The double date is set with Kim. Candi called today to let me know.

"Poor Dave," I said, knowing I wouldn't be going out with a former cheerleader, if he couldn't get off from work.

"Yeah, I feel so bad about it. How is he?"

"He's fine. I guess. What's there to feel bad about? You're not making him work."

"Didn't John tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

This is so much bullshit. I'm so fucking pissed.

I just called John's house, but no one is home.

I just called Dave, but his Mom said he was at work.

I really don't want to work tonight. I hate fucking work!

WEDNESDAY - JULY 11, 1984

I told Chris about all this crap at work. I didn't really want to, but there was no one else I could tell and it was killing me to keep it inside.

Chris couldn't believe it, either. I stayed after my shift to help in the Dish Dungeon. The new pot dude didn't show up and everything was backed up.

As I was scrubbing pots, I noticed Chris was saving all the unopened dairy creamers that came back on the bus trays. I told Chris to just throw the creamers out, because we couldn't use them again. Chris said he just wanted to see how many he could collect by the end of the night.

About ten minutes later, Chris carried some dishes out to the line. I ran over to the dishwasher and smashed every single one of his dairy creamers all over the counter. It looked like The Texas Dairy Creamer Massacre.

I ran back to the pot sink and waited for Chris to return and notice that his precious creamer collection had been crushed. By the look on his face when he took stock of the milky white massacre, you'd have thought he'd seen his dog run over by an 18-wheeler. I laughed, until I almost cried.

Chris's friend, Bill, was gonna pick him up after work and they were gonna rent some movies. I don't know why, but when Chris asked if I wanted to go with them, I agreed.

I called Dad and told him our plans of renting some movies and watching them at Chris's house. It was weird as hell not having to lie about my plans for the night.

Chris and Bill rented Beach Girls on VHS and I got Easy Rider on beta for myself to watch again at

home.

I've seen Bill at school a couple of times. He's not really a nerd, just quiet. I don't know what he is. I guess Bill's kind of a brain. He's in AP classes and all. Bill didn't go on the D.C. trip, because he used to live in Virginia when his dad taught at Georgetown, so Bill saw D.C. all the time. Bill's dad teaches at N.C. State now. I wonder if Pete's had him for any classes?

Mom's mad that I rented Easy Rider again. She just doesn't understand that you can watch a movie more than once. I told her, "That's why they invented rewind buttons."

Just talked to John on the phone.

I lied about not being able to go to Ohio. I said I got in an argument with Mom about being able to stay out later and she grounded me from the trip.

"Dude, that sucks."

"Yeah, I know. Fuck it."

John wanted me to try and talk Mom into letting me go again.

I told him that I would. I'll just call John tomorrow

and tell him it didn't work.

Mom was going grocery shopping and I went along with her to Food Crown to see Dave. I told Dave I wasn't going to Ohio. We didn't talk about why or about him not going. He couldn't really talk anyway, because his manager was watching.

THURSDAY - JULY 12, 1984

Right when I showed up for work, Mr. Barnes said he wanted to see me in his office. At first, I thought I was gonna get fired for sneaking muffins to the Dish Dudes. For a second, I thought it might even be about crushing Chris's dairy creamers.

Mr. Barnes told me that because I stayed late and helped Chris in the dish room, I was gonna get a quarter raise when I got back from Boston.

"Most kids work here for a few months before they quit or I fire them, but you're different. What kinda grades do you get?"

"About average."

"Really? You seem smarter."

Mr. Morrison came in tonight. It was the first time I've seen him, except for his portrait on the lobby wall. Most of the time, Mr. Morrison stays at his restaurant in Myrtle Beach. It was kinda like seeing a famous person when I watched him walk around the restaurant.

I was hoping Mr. Barnes would introduce me and tell Mr. Morrison about me staying late, but the two spent most of the night in Mr. Barnes's office.

When I was cleaning up, I asked Mr. Barnes what Mr. Morrison was doing here. Mr. Barnes said Mr. Morrison likes to check up on the place whenever he is in town. I wanted to ask Mr. Barnes why he didn't introduce me, but I didn't.

Mondale picked a female running mate. It's history. Mrs. Wayne must be real happy about Ferraro. If Mondale is elected and then dies, we'll have a female President. Weird.

It's 3 a.m. and I just finished packing. I don't understand why Pete gets the bigger suitcase, even though I have more clothes than he does.

I'm too excited about leaving for Boston in the morning to sleep. I'm supposed to wake up in three hours. This always happens before a trip.

MONDAY - JULY 16, 1984

Haven't felt like writing. The Democratic Convention starts tonight. Mom's taking Pete and me to Concord and Walden Pond in the morning.

TUESDAY - JULY 17, 1984

I'm in Walden Woods at the spot where Thoreau lived in his cabin. No one at Cary will do this, not even the AP brains, and yet I only got a C in English.

There's a big pile of rocks next to Thoreau's cabin site. You're supposed to leave a rock when you visit, but I'm gonna take one.

I dipped the corner of this journal in Walden pond. Mom didn't know what I was doing.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing."

"You're getting your notebook wet."

"I know."

"Are you baptizing your history notebook?"

"No, just never mind."

"Make sure you dry it off before you get in the car."

I bought postcards of the houses where Emerson, Melville and Louisa May Allcott lived. I'm gonna give them to the English Department next year.

Jesse Jackson is speaking at the convention. He's the best speaker so far. The news people seem to think he'll run again in '88.

WEDNESDAY - JULY 18, 1984

A guy walked into a McDonald's in California with a bunch of guns and killed 21 people. Kids, too.

Mondale was nominated tonight.

THURSDAY - JULY 19, 1984

At least Mondale is honest. Mondale said both he and Reagan would raise taxes, but Mondale admitted he would and Reagan won't.

Dad said it was a stupid move on Mondale's part.
What's so wrong about telling the truth?

FRIDAY - JULY 20, 1984

Went whale watching with my cousins. It was cool to be on a boat out in the ocean. One time it got scary when a baby whale swam too close to our boat. The tour guide said this was dangerous, because mother whales are very protective of their young. Luckily, the baby drifted away, and the mother didn't have to ram us.

I got whale post cards to send home to everybody, but I don't feel like writing anything. Wish you were here.

The black Miss America had to turn in her crown, because Penthouse is publishing nude photographs of her. Pete said he'd try and get me a copy.

SUNDAY - JULY 22, 1984

Went to the Cape. I love the beach. Saw a fine-looking girl at the go-cart track. She had the finest

legs I've ever seen and wore red and white checkered shorts that were so short I could see her tan line when she bent over.

She smiled at me as we were leaving. I've been depressed this whole trip, but when she flashed that killer smile, I just about died.

I had to look behind me to make sure it was me she was smiling at and not someone else.

I tried to get Mom and Dad to let me stay a little longer, but we had to get back to Nana's. The girl was there with her family, too, so there wasn't much we could have done. I wish I knew her name.

She was finer than any girl at Cary, and she was smiling at me, and all I could do was smile back. I can't wait until I'm older.

WEDNESDAY - JULY 25, 1984

Saw Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom with my cousins. Raiders was much better. I really wanted Temple of Doom to be good, but Indy had this kid and lady with him the whole time and it ruined the

movie. We should have just seen Ghostbusters again.

Even Indiana Jones has let me down.

We went to McDonald's afterward and Dennis joked about somebody shooting us. Aunt Lydia got real mad.

"That not funny!"

I felt bad for Dennis. He was just joking, but I guess he shouldn't have said anything while adults were around. Especially his mom.

It seems I change so much every year I come back to Boston, but Dennis is always the same. Always gets good grades, always into the Red Sox, always plans on coming down South to stay with us.

THURSDAY - JULY 26, 1984

It's been raining all day, and we haven't done much. I'm depressed. I want to go to home.

FRIDAY - JULY 27, 1984

Went to see my Grandfather's friends in New Hampshire. Right before we got there, Mom started

to lecture Pete and me about wanting to watch MTV and complaining about being bored. I was gonna be real nice, but when she started to lecture me like a kid, I couldn't help but get pissed!

Doesn't she understand that when they treat me like an adult, most of the time I will act mature, but nothing burns me up more than them treating me like a fucking kid! They just don't understand.

I calmed down when we got there and didn't complain or say one damn word about MTV! I spent most of the time by myself walking in the woods and eating blueberries right off the bush.

I watched the sunset lying on my back on top of huge rock in the middle of a field. I only wish I had the girl from the go-cart track there to share the moment with.

The Watsons had a Polaroid picture of the last time we visited them the summer before last. I had the worst haircut in the picture. I still parted it on the side back then.

SATURDAY - JULY 28, 1984

On our way home.

SUNDAY - JULY 29, 1984

Called Dave, but he was playing basketball at Randy's house. John should be in Ohio by now.

I could be fucking a cheerleader who stole my picture, but instead I'm writing in this stupid ass journal.

My paycheck was in the stacked up mail. I guess if you go on vacation, they mail you your check.

MONDAY - JULY 30, 1984

Morrison's is closed! I'm unemployed. I went to work to check the work schedule and there was big closed sign on the front door and a big red for rent sign under it. The door was locked and I banged on it for a while, but no one answered.

Mom dropped me off at Chris's house, so I could find out what happened. Chris said a few days after I left, Mr. Morrison showed up with a refrigerated

truck, and they started to clear out the freezers.

Chris asked Mr. Barnes what was going on. Mr. Barnes said they were just taking inventory. Word spread that the restaurant was closing. Sure enough the next day it was.

Chris wanted me to rent some movies with him and Bill, but I already made plans to meet Dave.

Dave wanted to sell me a dime bag. Since I'm now unemployed I don't want to buy any. Besides, it was mostly stem. Dave's basketball friend Randy bought it, anyway.

Dave doesn't like to joke around as much when Randy plays.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 7, 1984

John's back in town. Godzilla has a big dent in the front fender. I was playing basketball again with Dave and Randy when John pulled up. We were all pretty cool about it.

John said a dog ran in front of him up in Ohio, and he swerved to miss the dog and slid into a tree.

John was fine, and the dog ran away. John said it was not big deal, and all he had to do was hammer the dent out.

We played 21 and some two on two. John and Dave were on one team, and Randy and I were on the second team. I really suck at basketball. Even when we switched partners, my team always lost.

We went to Terry's to do some drinking. There, we smoked the last of Dave's quarter and hit the rest of my poppers until it was all evaporated.

I had my best game of quarters ever. I made the quarter bounce in twenty-seven times in a row. Terry says he'd done it 33 times in a row. Bullshit.

THURSDAY - AUGUST 9, 1984

Dave told me how John really dented his car. John was doing 180 degree skids in the middle of the road during a rain shower with Candi and some of her friends. On the last one, he lost control and slid into a telephone pole. They had been drinking.

I'm not supposed to let John know that I know

this.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 13, 1984

Went swimming at Bill's. Chris invited me, and I went because I need a ride to school. Bill picks Chris up, and since I'm only a few blocks over, I figured it was my best shot at car-pooling when school starts. I'd rather ride with Chris and Bill than ride that damn yellow bus again. I can find another ride after the year gets started.

Before I ask Bill for a ride, I figured I'd get to know him a little better. It's a cool pool and even has a diving board. The best part is there is no lifeguard blowing a whistle at you when you run around the pool or horseplay.

My eyes were red as hell from the chlorine. It was cool to come home with bloodshot eyes and not have to worry about Mom seeing them. In fact, I looked her straight in the eyes and told her what I needed for school supplies.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 15, 1984

Bill said it was cool about riding with him and Chris this year. I asked when we were over at his pool again today. I should never have to ride a bus again.

Bill's mom got mad at us, because we ate a whole box of Twinkies she had just bought. Chris brought over the Vanessa Williams Penthouse. He's letting me borrow it.

THURSDAY - AUGUST 16, 1984

Candi called me. She's back, but only temporarily. Her dad and stepmom are moving to California, and Candi decided to go with them. I guess I'd move to California, too, if I could.

Laura, now Candi. Who's next?

I told Candi the truth about why I didn't got to Ohio. I said it wouldn't be cool to go after what happened to Dave.

Candi told me how bad she felt about the whole thing. In fact, when Candi's stepmom told her Dave

wasn't allowed to stay with them, Candi told John the whole trip was off, but she wouldn't tell John why. John thought she wanted to break up again, so Candi told him about Dave. Candi said she cried when she told John that her stepmom wouldn't let Dave come. John talked her into just letting him come along with another friend.

MONDAY - AUGUST 20, 1984

The Republicans are having their convention. I turned it off.

One week until school.

SATURDAY - AUGUST 25, 1984

No one is going to be at school this year. Just me.

I'm definitely getting a girlfriend this year.

SUNDAY - AUGUST 26, 1984

One more day before my junior year. I really have to do well this year. I'll start looking into colleges.

I'll miss riding to school in Godzilla. There's something about riding to school in a Camaro that can blow almost every other car away, even if I was just riding shotgun.

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 1, 1984

So far, my junior year is going well. I want to do something for my college applications. Chris and Bill are both in the Key Club, Computer Club and German Club. Plus they're going to go out for long-distance track. I may go out for track, too.

We ran the track today to help get in shape for tryouts, but running around a track just seem pointless. Bill said maybe cross-country would be more interesting for me.

The first day Bill drove me home, I had him drop me off at the old house in Trappers Run. I don't know why. Candi had gone west to California. Dave was at his new job at the airport. No one was home at John's.

The walk home was pretty lonely. I jogged most of

it to get into shape. Maybe, if I run everyday, I could go to the Olympics in 1988 and meet Mary Lou Retton.

I'm finally in Driver's Education. I'm taking the classroom session now, and in February I'll do the driving session. There's a rumor that the car will be a 1985 Camaro. It's a Ford Escort now.

My favorite class so far is journalism. When I signed up for it, I thought it would be about journal keeping, but it's about newspaper writing. We get to talk about issues and news events just like in Mrs. Wayne's class, so I like it.

Since I'm the only one who knows how to use the dark room, I'm the official photographer of the school's paper. I still have to write eight stories this semester if I want an A, though. I think I should only have to print eight pictures to get an A. Teachers always think words are more important than pictures. At least I can put newspaper stuff on my college applications.

My other classes in order of coolness are:

U.S. History

Computer Science (next semester)

Chemistry

Average English

Algebra II

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 7, 1984

I kinda had a date tonight. Kinda. It was my newspaper assignment to take pictures at the football game. Since I don't know anything about the football team, Jennifer Smith, the sports editor, was gonna go with me to tell me who to take pictures of.

Jennifer can drive, so she picked me up. It wasn't really a date, but when I was getting dressed tonight, it sure felt like I was getting ready for one.

Jennifer is kind of a jock-brain, so she was really psyched about the game. I didn't really care. I bought our tickets and some hot dogs. Jennifer wanted to pay me back, but I wouldn't let her.

After the game, we went to Pizza Hut and sat with some of the girls she plays soccer with and a few of

the football players.

When Jennifer dropped me off, I wasn't sure what to do. I didn't think it was right to try and kiss her, because it was a professional night. Instead, I just shook her hand.

I may ask her out to a movie.

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 27, 1984

Today was college day. I skipped off campus with Dave last year, but this time I got a bag full of brochures, pens, stickers and a few balloons. The college reps said I'd have to get my grades up and that some more extracurricular activities might help. Plus, get a high school on the SAT.

Dad bought me a SAT prep book. It's gonna be hard. Bill took it already and got a 1215. So far, on the prep book sample tests, I've only gotten an 825. That's about average.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 7, 1984

Went out with Jennifer last night. No big deal.

It started in journalism class when I told Jennifer I was gonna see Purple Rain and review it for the paper. I asked Jennifer if she wanted to go see it with me and she said yes.

She picked me up and I paid for the tickets, but she insisted on buying the popcorn.

During the movie, I tried to put my arm around her, but she whispered for me to move it.

I'm giving Purple Rain a bad review. Jennifer liked it, but I just hate dance crap.

When Jennifer dropped me off, I didn't think a good night kiss would be a good idea after the arm incident.

Instead, I went to shake her hand again, but when she grabbed mine I lifted hers up and kissed her hand like a princess. She kinda laughed and blushed about it, but that was it. I don't know.

Reagan and Mondale had their first debate tonight. Pete says Mondale won, but he's still down in the polls. I bet if Mondale worked hard, he could still win.

Jennifer loves Reagan.

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 25, 1984

Finally sixteen.

Chris and Bill came over for a spaghetti dinner and to eat some cake. After that, we watched *Cosby*, *Cheers* and *Family Ties*. I told them not to bring any presents, but Chris and Bill chipped in and bought me a Celtics 1984 World Champions t-shirt. At least they didn't wrap it.

I wanted a Camaro for my birthday. Instead, my big present was a Commodore 64 computer. I can use the word processor for my term paper, and I won't have to retype each new draft. I need some games. Chris said if I buy a modem I can talk to his Commodore 64 over the phone.

I also wanted a white sport jacket like Don Johnson's, but Mom didn't think I'd have anything to wear it to. So, she bought me a Miami Mice t-shirt with these two cartoon mice dressed like Crocket and Tubs standing in front of the Ferrari Daytona Spyder.

Mom wanted me to invite Dave and John over, too, but I didn't feel right about having Dave and John over at the same time with Chris and Bill. I don't think they would have gotten along.

School's a bitch, but I'm doing the best I've ever done.

I haven't asked Jennifer out again. I don't know. We sit by each other in journalism and flirt, but I don't know how she really feels.

Everyone says Mondale lost the second debate.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 26, 1984

Called Dave, but his Mom said he was out with Randy. She asked when I was gonna come around again. I said soon, but that school was keeping me busy.

MONDAY - OCTOBER 29, 1984

I'm gonna help the student council put on the Fall dance. I hope I can put it on my college applications, even though I'm not on the student council.

TUESDAY - OCTOBER 30, 1984

First fall dance meeting went great. I went with Jennifer, since she was a class representative. I couldn't believe how the supposed cream of the crop acted like a bunch of spoiled brats. Dan, the Student Council President, had to yell, "SHUT UP!" three times before anyone would listen to him.

A lot of the reps asked me what I was doing there. They weren't stuck up about it, they just wanted to know why someone who wasn't required to be there would show up to a mandatory meeting.

No one could come up with any themes for the dance. Someone said Stairway to Heaven. This smart ass joked, "What are we gonna do? Pass around a bong and at the end of the night commit suicide?" Everyone thought it was pretty funny, but Dan was getting pissed since no one was taking the meeting seriously. Dan even had to bark at the Sergeant of Arms to be quiet.

That's when I raised my hand. Everyone stared at

me as I started to explain my idea for the dance.

"My Mom says a lot of people put on 50s dances, but the 50s were really boring. So, how about a 60s dance, where everyone dresses up like hippies?"

At first, I thought, great, open your big mouth and all these Beta Club brains are going to dump all over your stupid idea.

The first good sign was that Dan wrote my idea on the blackboard. I could tell that other kids liked it too, as they were flashing each other peace signs. Other kids liked the idea of a 50s dance and Dan wrote that on the board, also.

Some of the senior reps complained about the problems with getting people to dress up for a theme dance. I said maybe we could make it an 80s dance, too. The shit talker loved that.

"Dude, it's only 1984."

Then someone else called out for a 70s dance.

Everyone laughed at first, but I could hear people sing bits of disco songs. Dan shrugged his shoulders and wrote 70s on the board. When I saw all the

themes on the board at the same time I got another idea.

I nominated a 50s, 60s, 70s and (if you didn't want to dress up) 80s dance. The only other nominations were Country, The Sea and Space. Mine won.

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 31, 1984

At today's dance meeting, it was decided that each decade would be divided between classes. The freshmen got the 80s, since it was the easiest; sophomores got the 50s; juniors are doing the 60s and the seniors wanted to do the 70s

The 50s sophomores are gonna get someone to bring a motorcycle and get Coach Johnson to dress up like Elvis and sit on it. They are also in charge of hanging streamers from the gym rafters and bringing the punch.

For the 60s, we're making a tie-dye banner with a giant peace sign on it. Also, were gonna have a tie-dye station where you can tie-dye your own t-shirt.

Refreshment-wise, we're responsible for the

snacks. I said I'd bake my special recipe for brownies, and everybody laughed. They all think I'm a big stoner.

The senior 70s are bringing a disco ball, a boulder-size papier-mâché Pet Rock and Star Wars toys to hang from the ceiling.

The 80s freshman are going to make a giant papier-mâché Pac-Man, a monster Rubik's cube made out of a refrigerator box and a huge MTV logo banner painted with red, white and black stripes like Eddie Van Halen's guitar. I kinda wish I was working with the freshmen.

Dan personally thanked me for coming up with the combination theme and working so hard. He's never seen the council so exited over a fall dance. He asked why I didn't run for one of the junior rep positions.

"I don't have a B average."

"What do you have?"

"An average average."

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 1, 1984

Just came up with a cool idea. I'm gonna try and get a Corvette from the 50s, 60s, 70s and the 80s and line them up in front of the high school gym the night of the dance.

I'm gonna call John tomorrow and see if he knows anyone with older Corvettes.

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 2, 1984

John's coming over tomorrow. We're gonna try and get an ambulance driver he knows to bring his '74 Corvette to the dance. John also knows where a 1959 is, but he doesn't know the guy that owns it.

I've seen a silver 1984 Corvette in the neighborhood, and I hope we can get it. All we need now is a 60s Corvette.

John says there a couple of late 60s Corvettes around, but they would look too much like the '74 'Vette.

It was weird talking to John. He broke up with Candi. They tried the long distance relationship, but

John found a new girl, Theresa. John said Theresa was fine. I figured he would.

John said Candi didn't mind breaking up. In fact, the last time John called her, just to see how she was doing, she had a new boyfriend.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 3, 1984

John and I did well today. The '59, '74 and '84 Corvettes are all going be at the dance next Saturday night.

The 1974 Stingray was the easiest 'Vette to get. John knew Smitty pretty well from when they worked construction together. Smitty likes driving the ambulance more than construction, because he gets to speed and run red lights legally, now. Smitty said he may be on call the night of the dance, but if he can't drive the 'Vette there, his wife will.

The only bad part is the fiberglass is cracked, the white paint is dull and the seats are taped up to cover rips. Sometimes, you just take what you can get.

The black 1959 Corvette was in such good shape that I didn't think Mr. Rose was gonna let us use it at first. Mr. Rose was real paranoid about a bunch of high schoolers touching it.

"This is a show car and if something happens to it, I'm holding the school accountable. What street did you say you lived on?"

I gave my word that nothing would happen to it. Actually, he was pretty cool, just paranoid about his car. Mr. Rose graduated from Cary High in 1945 and was the editor of the newspaper back when he was a student. Not only is he going to bring his Corvette, he is even gonna take out an ad in our paper for the funeral home he owns.

John was the politest I've ever seen him while we were in the trophy-filled garage. He was "Yes, sir," this and "Yes, sir," that. John asked a ton of questions about the car from the original paint color to the 4EYES59 license plate.

Mr. Rose explained 4EYES59 was for the four round headlights. The grill is shaped like a set of

teeth, so the front looks like a grinning face with four eyes.

The 1984 'Vette was the coolest car to get. Trip owns a public relations firm and kept joking that he wanted \$5,000 to bring his car to the dance. He claimed it wasn't even his, it was his grandmother's. Trip also said he'd trade the 'Vette for John's Camaro. John wanted to trade, but Trip backed out, saying he was just kidding.

Trip says he's just leasing the 'Vette. John explained that means he doesn't actually own it, but just makes payments while he drives it, and at the end of the lease, he just turns it in. I don't understand why you would lease something.

Trip told us about an airline pilot in Raleigh who owns a 1967 Corvette. Trip told us to be careful, because the owner gets Vietnam flashbacks sometimes. I hope he was just joking.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 4, 1984

The '67 'Vette is one of the meanest looking cars

I've ever seen. It's blood red with a black hood scope over the engine.

I told Roger about the dance, and he said it was no problem. All he wanted to know was where and when, and he'd be there. I asked if his '67 was faster than Trip's '84.

"Son, a 1967 427 3 x 2 Stingray will beat anything, anytime, anywhere. Hell, if it had wings I'd take it up against an F-14 Tomcat."

On the way home, I told John I was nervous about driving in Driver's Ed. John couldn't believe I'd never driven before. So, he took me to the mall parking lot and let me drive the Camaro around in the empty section. At first, I was scared, but I got the hang of it. John was gonna let me drive home, but I didn't want to risk it.

I asked John if he wanted to bring Theresa to the dance. He said he'd try and swing by. I told him to bring all the gang.

MONDAY - NOVEMBER 5, 1984

I got my report card today for the first 9 weeks. It's about a C+ average.

JOURNALISM - A

DRIVER'S ED - B

HISTORY - B

CHEMISTRY - C

ALGEBRA II - C

ENGLISH - C

The dance preparations are going well. Dan had to leave early for football practice, but as he left, he said I was in charge. I didn't boss anyone around. I just made sure everybody got what they needed and had something to do.

I have to say Dan is one of the coolest guys at school. He's a football player, got a cheerleader for a girlfriend and drives a killer 280ZX. He's even in the Beta club. Yet, even when the geekiest nerd comes up and asks him the stupidest question, he's always cool, never a dick.

In fact, that's my definition for being cool. To have every reason to be a dick, and not to be, that's cool.

I decided to help the freshmen out. They have the fewest people working on their decade. It's funny, because I thought juniors and seniors were so mature when I was a freshman. I just can't see any of the new freshmen thinking about me the same way.

Some of the freshmen girls brought a boombox and were singing along to "Born in the U.S.A." as they made the Rubik's cube. They sang it like it was the new National Anthem. I wanted to feel patriotic listening to them, but I couldn't.

I couldn't help but listen to the lyrics. I wanted to explain to the girls that the song wasn't about how great America is. It's about how horrible Vietnam Vets were treated when they came home from the war. I knew it wasn't worth trying to explain to them, because some people just don't listen to the lyrics.

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 6, 1984

Reagan won.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 11, 1984

The big dance is over. Mrs. Wayne said it was the weirdest dance she ever monitored. One minute, it was a sock hop to Bill Haley and the Comets and the next song, kids were slam dancing to Suicidal Tendencies.

Only a couple of kids came in 70s clothes. The 50s were the most popular. All you had to do was wear jeans, a white t-shirt and slick back your hair.

I came in a tie-dye shirt and some of Dad's camos.

The Corvettes went over great. Even people who didn't know anything about cars knew they were looking at something special.

John never showed up. I asked Trip if he'd seen John around, but he hadn't.

The Corvettes left at 10 o'clock. Trip stayed behind to have one last dance with Mrs. Wayne. They went to college together, and I could tell they really liked each other, even though she voted for Mondale and

Trip voted for Reagan.

As Trip was leaving, he asked me if I wanted to drive his Corvette around the parking lot. I thought he was joking, but he threw me the keys and said, "Go ahead, make your day."

The digital dash lit up like a Christmas tree when I turned the key. Then I heard Trip knocking on the window. As I searched for the button to lower the window, I thought he had come to his senses and was going to tell me to get out.

Trip asked, "Where's your girlfriend?"

"I don't really have one."

Trip said I couldn't drive around in a Corvette, unless there was a pretty girl riding shotgun. Instead of making me get out, Trip called over Wendy, this cute sophomore in a poodle skirt and ponytail, to ride with me. It was pretty funny as she skipped over and hopped in.

Even when I put the car in drive, I kept expecting Trip to tell me he was only joking and to get out. He didn't.

"Only go around once and don't hit anything."

I got the digital speedometer up to 25, but the speed bumps kept me from going any faster.

Wendy couldn't believe Trip let me drive his 'Vette.

"Is that guy your dad?"

"No, I wish. You wanna go to L.A.?"

"Yeah, let's go."

"I wish. I don't have a license."

"This is so sweet. I can't wait to tell my Dad. He loves cars"

"One day I'm gonna own one of these."

"Yeah."

"Yeah, and a Lamborghini, a Ferrari 308 and a Porsche 944."

"Are you gonna to be rich?"

"Someday. Someday."

"I'm Wendy Evertson. What's your name again?"

"I am Eric Andre. Am I gonna wake up?"

"Want me to pinch you?"

Trip was the coolest adult I'd ever met. Even if he

did work for Reagan's re-election. I wonder if he'd be a good beer connection.

As I was saying goodbye to Trip, I kept praying John would show up. I knew Trip would let John drive the 'Vette, if he showed up.

I felt bad as I watched the four rear lights of the Corvette turn out on the street, like four red suns being eclipsed in the darkness.

If John hadn't let me drive the Camaro that time, I probably would have been too scared to drive the Corvette. John deserved to drive the 'Corvette, too. I don't know why he didn't show up.

Brandi was at the dance. I asked her to slow dance, but she was "with someone." Brandi said she'd fast dance with me, but I don't like to fast dance. I look like a complete jerk when I fast dance. Instead, we just made small talk.

After all we'd been through, all we could talk about was what our future majors were gonna be in college. Brandi wants to be a business major. I don't know what to major in anymore. Maybe journalism.

After my shift at the tie-dye station, I looked for Brandi to get that fast dance anyway, but she had left with her "someone."

I asked Jennifer to dance instead. It was actually pretty nice holding her close. I even fast danced when they played the Go-Go's.

When the DJ started to play Wham, I told Jennifer I had to sit that one out. No way I'm dancing to that crap. "Jitterbug!" I'll ask Jennifer out again next week.

Bill and Chris stayed with me to help the clean up committee. I wanted to take the papier-mâché Pac-Man home, but it wouldn't fit in Bill's Celica. We rolled it behind the gym, and I'm gonna go back with Mom and pick it up in the station wagon tomorrow.

It's been a long day and night. Time for bed.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 12, 1984

Some jerk smashed my Pac-Man all over the football field. Mom helped me clean it up before some coach saw the mess and thought the clean up committee trashed the football field.

Mom had a pretty good point when we were picking up the pieces that had blown against the fence.

"What were you gonna do with a five foot Pac-Man, anyway?"

"I don't know. I just thought it would be cool."

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 1985

Candi called me. I thought she was calling from California, but she's staying at Terry's apartment for a week. They're having a party tonight. I haven't seen much of the Trappers Run gang since Candi moved. I was gonna see The Rocky Horror Pictures Show with Chris and Bill. I called Chris and canceled on them.

It's weird writing again. It's been over five months since my last entry. I have a new job as a bagger at Food Star. I'm being trained as a cashier, so that's cool. The only drawback is, I have to card people for buying beer. I feel like a hypocrite doing it.

Sometimes, I just ask for ID and don't even look at the date of birth. I just want my manager to see me

checking it. I get a little paranoid that I'll fake check an undercover agent, or some kid will die drunk driving, and his mom will sue the store.

I've got my learner's permit, but Mom never takes me driving. Sometimes, she lets me drive to work, but most days she drives.

I took the SAT and didn't do too well. Only 925 total. That's still only about average. I'm taking it again this summer. I've still got a C plus average. I'm trying to get it up to a B, but it's hard.

I thought about going into the Army for two years before college to get discipline, but Dad won't let me. He said at worst, I'd go to a junior college, get good grades and then transfer to a better school.

I better get going. Mom's gonna let me drive to Terry's apartment. I hope no one sees me handing the keys back to Mom when I get there.

I'm gonna spend the night at Terry's. Mom didn't want to let me, but since Candi is only here for a week, she said okay. Mom said no drinking, though. Sure, Mom.

It's five in the morning. What a fucked up night.

Everything was cool when I got to Terry's. Candi gave me a big hug when she answered the door. She showed me some pictures of her new friends in California. She said they party pretty good out there. I showed her some of my articles in the paper. She said she would read them later.

It was cool to see the rest of the Trappers Run gang. Everyone seemed surprised to see me. Dave was already drunk. Terry didn't even say hi. John was working late at the garage, but was gonna show up at the party once he got off.

We played quarters for a while. Terry spilled some beer and used my newspapers with the articles I wrote to clean it up. I think he did it on purpose.

MTV played "We Are The World" for about the millionth time.

I tried to get everyone to sing along, but they just got pissed at me. I forgot they actually like most of the people singing it.

Candi and I got into a debate over the whole

thing. I think USA for Africa is just doing it, because Band Aid did "Feed the World," and they didn't call themselves England for Africa, either. I said if they really cared, then they would give all their millions to those starving kids, quit singing and go over to Africa and become missionaries.

When I brought up her boy, Ronnie Ray-Gun, going over to lay a wreath at the Nazi cemetery, she just ignored me and went back to playing quarters.

I felt real bad about fighting with Candi and asked her to go for a walk. I promised not to debate or talk about politics.

When we got outside, I apologized about the USA for Africa stuff, but not Reagan. I told her how stressed I was about getting good grades and the SAT. She gave me another hug and told me not to worry about it.

We crashed on some lounge chairs at the apartment complex pool. It was one in the morning, so no one was around.

She told me more about California. She likes her

new friends, but she still misses us. She's done coke. I didn't want to get into another fight or anything, but I told her not to get hooked. She said she only did it twice.

I told her how no one is around anymore. How I miss all the good times we had at Rush Lake. She wants to come back here after she graduates. She doesn't want to go to college, but may become an airline stewardess or join the Navy.

Candi told me about her new boyfriend, William, and about all their prom plans. I mentioned that I would be taking Jennifer to the prom. I showed Candi the picture Mom took of Jennifer and me before one of our dates.

Candi asked me if I felt like a big shot, letting Jennifer wear my Letterman Jacket. Too bad I had to explain that it was Jennifer's Letter that she earned playing on the girl's soccer team.

Laura is engaged. Some sailor. Not the one that sent her the letter, though. I still think about Laura. I really shouldn't, but I do.

Candi and I finished our wine coolers and were gonna go back to the party. Candi asked me if I wanted to go swimming and tried to push me in the pool. Instead, I picked her up and flung her in. I jumped in also, to show I was a good sport, plus, I was drunk.

We splashed around a bit and held on to each other in the middle. I think we both wanted to kiss, but we didn't. We just waded over to the ladder and climbed out into the cool air.

We ran back to Terry's apartment, and when we got there, John was waiting. He was happy at first, but when he saw us soaking wet, he turned into his usual jealous self. He didn't yell or anything, just stayed real quiet. He didn't even hug Candi. He said she was too wet.

I changed into the clothes I brought for tomorrow and hung the wet ones in the shower to dry.

When I got out, everyone one was passing a bong around that John had brought. I could tell John had caught a buzz and wasn't mad anymore. He even

gave Candi a big kiss, even though he is living with Theresa now. He showed me her picture, and she is pretty fine.

I told John I got the new ZZ Top album Afterburner. We both agreed Afterburner is cool, but not as good as Eliminator. The videos aren't as good, either.

I also told John about the white '85 Camaro IROC-Z the neighbors bought. He said he thought about selling Godzilla and maybe buying a red IROC-Z, himself.

When he passed me the bong, I went ahead and took a hit. My tolerance was so low, that I caught a pretty good buzz, and after that the night turned into a blur.

When MTV played "We Are The World" again, everyone sang it. We all took turns singing the solo parts. John does a great Bruce Springsteen and Willie Nelson.

What John said about selling Godzilla stuck in my head. I grabbed him and told him to never to sell the

Camaro. John laughed, grabbed me back and said he was too broke to even think about test-driving an IROC-Z.

It's funny, as we were grabbing each other's arms, John tried to force mine down by my sides, but he couldn't. I think I'm as strong as John now. He's really slacked off on the weights. He finally gave up, and we took some more bong hits.

We played some more quarters and chilled out talking about the first party we ever had when I moved into Trappers Run. We kept teasing Dave about getting sick back then. Dave just told us to shut the fuck up and reminded everyone else of the times when they puked their guts.

Some older dudes were there. I guess they were neighbors or something. One of them keep trying to freak me out with his hands and making faces. Another dude was hitting on Candi.

I could see John watching the whole time. When the dude started to French kiss Candi, I saw John get up and start talking shit to the guy. Dave tried to

break it up. I just sat back and watched it like a movie. I was pretty wasted.

Only when John and the dude started fighting did I get up and try to break it up. Someone elbowed me in the face, and I chipped my front right tooth when my jaws smacked together.

By the time Johnny Law knocked on the door, the fight was broken up, the dudes had split and Candi was crying in the back bedroom with Rhonda.

The cops said the party had to end and asked if there had been a fight. I said we were just slam dancing. I don't know why, but I did. The cops ignored me, anyway.

After the cops left, Terry said everyone had to go. I told Terry I had planned on crashing there tonight. He just said, "Sorry," and walked away.

It was four in the morning, so I couldn't call home for a ride.

I wanted to crash at John's, but he had already taken off. Dave said he'd drive me home, but he was too stoned to drive anywhere.

I told him to wait for me and we'd walk home together.

I went back in to get my wet clothes out of the bathroom, but somehow they ended up on the floor and someone had puked on my clothes when they missed the toilet. I decided to leave them there.

When I got back outside, Dave had left. I couldn't believe Terry or anyone would let him drive home.

When I started my journey home, I heard sirens in the night. The more I walked, the louder the sirens got. I kept expecting to see Dave's car wrecked on the side of the road, but I never did and the sirens just faded away in the darkness of the night.

I went into the new Jo-Boy's that's open 24 hours, and warmed up playing Spy Hunter. I also bought my first can of New Coke. I guess it's sweeter. I wanted to pick up a 6-pack of the old stuff as a collector's item, but all they had was the new stuff.

I bet the clerk thought I was running away from home. I wanted to tell him I was actually on my way home, just so he wouldn't feel bad for me. At the

same time, though, it was kinda cool to pretend I was splitting some horrible home-life scene.

On my odyssey home from the convenience store, I heard an angry dog barking. I couldn't see it, but it sounded like it was getting closer.

I ran for couple of minutes, all the time looking for sticks to defend myself with or a tree to climb up, in case the dog got too close.

I stopped once and couldn't see the dog in the blackness of the night, but it was still barking, so I started to run again. The next time I stopped, so had the barking.

I tried to sneak in the front door quietly, but Mom heard me. There was Mom, in her bathrobe, standing in the hallway, ready to defend the household from some blood thirsty, murdering band of burglars.

I just told her Dave had to go to work early at the airport and I caught a ride with him. I also told her about the chipped tooth. I said I chipped it wrestling around and being stupid.

I didn't mind talking to Mom, because the walk

home and dog scare sobered me up. In fact, I would have told her the truth about everything, but I was so tired, I just wanted to go to bed.

Mom said she would call the dentist Monday. She asked about Candi and everyone, and I said they were all all right. Mom told me not to plan on sleeping all day, because Dad had yard work for me.

I'll start keeping this journal again. I hate yard work.

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 1985

I just got back from a party at Dave's. I didn't stay long, only an hour. I don't know anymore.

I started the day with Chris and Bill. We went to see Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome. It wasn't as good as the first two Mad Max movies. We decided to sneak into Back to the Future. Chris and I saw last it last week, but Bill hadn't seen it. He liked it. At the end it says, "To be continued," so I guess there will be a Back to the Future II.

After that, we decided to sneak into one more

movie. All that was left was St. Elmo's Fire. Bill was convinced that it was a sequel to The Breakfast Club, but it just had some of the same actors from The Breakfast Club in it. I liked The Breakfast Club better.

On the way home, a car almost hit us. I thought it looked like Dave's Tercel and told Bill to follow it. We caught them at a red light, and sure enough it was Dave and a bunch of young dudes.

They were coming back from a beer run and going to Dave's new apartment. Dave told us to follow them. I hadn't seen anyone since last April when Candi was visiting. I didn't really want to go, but Chris wanted to. So, we followed.

We played quarters for a while. Bill couldn't play, because he was driving, but I taught Chris how to play. Pretty soon, he was rolling the quarter down his nose and bouncing it into the glass. He told me the only other time he'd had a drink was at his sister's wedding last year. It was weird seeing him drink.

Some of the young dudes there live in Trappers

Run now. I told them about the good 'ole days of the summer of '83.

Around midnight, I decided to go. Bill and Chris wanted to stay longer, but I said we had to go. I told Dave I'd come by sometime. I said to say hello to John and everyone else that I knew that wasn't there.

Chris was buzzing pretty good, and I said he could sleep at my house, so he wouldn't have to see his mom. He was gonna watch Live Aid with me tomorrow, anyway. Bill's gotta work, but I'm taping the concert for him. We picked up his VCR, so I can make a copy for me and for him. Also, with two VCRs we won't lose any concert while I'm switching tapes.

When we got to Bill's house, I kept Chris in the car, so Bill's parents wouldn't see him. Chris kept asking why I wanted to leave the party. I said I really didn't want to talk about it. I did, but I didn't.

Chris kept acting drunk all the way home, but when he called his mom at my house, he acted sober as hell. So, I think it's mostly an act.

We got home in time to watch David Letterman. While Chris watched viewer mail, I looked for my old journal and started to write this entry. Chris keeps asking me what I'm writing. I say I'm studying for the SAT. He doesn't believe me. I guess I'll hide my journal tonight, in case Chris goes looking for it.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1985

Just got back from Trappers Run. I've had my driver's license for about a month, but Mom hardly ever lets me use the car. Fortunately, today, she let me drive up to the mall. Bill and Chris had track practice, so I went by myself.

I went to the mall to finally buy the new Men at Work CD, Two Hearts. It's not as good as Business as Usual or Cargo. I kinda knew without listening to the CD, it wouldn't be. Only Colin Hay and Greg Ham are left in the group. "Everything I Need" and "Hard Luck Story" are cool songs, but the rest of the album is kinda dark and depressing. I've only seen "My Babe" on MTV once.

On the way back from the mall, I drove through Trappers Run for the first time by myself. The only person I saw that I knew was Brandi. She was walking down her driveway to get her mail, when I drove by. I honked to get her attention and pulled over to talk.

I told her she got some votes in the best-looking superlative in the school paper. We only print the winners. I told Brandi that I voted for her. Brandi wanted to know how many votes she got. I said 25, even though it was only 14. It'd kill her to know that Angie, the flat chested cheerleader, got 31 votes. Susan White won, with 85. Dan's so lucky.

Brandi's going to UNC next year. I said I'd probably go to a community college or Wake Tech and then transfer somewhere else.

Brandi's phone started ringing, so Brandi said goodbye and went inside to answer it. I yelled out that Duran Duran must be on MTV, but I don't think she got it.

I went by Rush Lake on my way home. Brandi

said the Rushes sold most of the land for over a million dollars.

When I got home, I listened to my new Men at Work CD and got this journal out and started reading it.

The biggest news right now is that Reagan is meeting with the new Soviet Union leader Gorbachev. Hopefully, something will come of it.

I hope Men at Work get back together.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1986

The space shuttle blew up today. I was in trig, when Brent Zimmerman came back from the bathroom and told us. Everyone thought he was joking at first. Then Principal Coble came over the intercom and announced it and asked for a moment of silence.

I didn't even know they were launching a shuttle today.

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1987

I'm taping the Iran-Contra hearings. The new VHS VCR can tape six hours on a cassette, so I'm getting a lot of the testimony.

Bill and Chris are out back swimming in the pool. I told them they were missing history.

I don't think Reagan should resign, but if they find out he knew about it, then he should be impeached.

Saturday Night Live did a good sketch about it. Reagan was supposed to be this real genius that was masterminding the whole thing. Then, when someone not connected with selling arms to Iran walks into the Oval Office, he plays stupid. Reagan even spoke Japanese when no one was in the room.

Oliver North has been testifying the last three days. I can't say I like him, but he's a character. The country is in the middle of Olliemania. Someone in California covered up the "H" in the Hollywood sign with trash bags, so it reads "OLLYWOOD." I even hear there's gonna be an Ollie doll and maybe an Ollie movie.

My first year at East Carolina University, I got all

A's and a B in fencing. Mom and Dad are proud, but they want to know why I didn't do this in high school.

I'm taking mostly general courses that I won't lose credit for when I transfer next year to The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. If I keep my GPA as high as it is now, it shouldn't be a problem transferring.

It will be cool if I get in, because UNC is supposed to be a harder school to get into than N.C. State. That should shut Pete up for good. I may even get a class with Brandi, if she's still there.

It's funny, my whole freshman year at school, I only got wasted three times. I've got the rep of a choirboy. The guys on the hall have even nicknamed me Senator, because I campaigned for the dorm council presidency in a suit and tie. It must have worked, because I won in a landslide. Actually, I was the only one running, but I thought my constituency deserved a well-dressed candidate, regardless.

Reagan says he's not even watching the Iran-

Contra hearings. He should. During the boring testimony, I've been flipping over to MTV. I think MTV is changing. There's a TV game show on in the afternoon and Grace Slick's daughter is now a VJ. Her name is China, and I'm actually older than she is. I'm older than a VJ, imagine that.

The hearings just recessed for lunch. I guess I'll go swimming.

The VCR is taping, so I'll just watch it later.

I think I'm losing my hair.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1989

As the 80s are ending, the U.S. Army has invaded Panama to restore democracy. About damn time. They found Noriega in the Papal Nuncio, but he won't come out. The Army was even using rock and roll as a weapon to force him out.

The general running the show down there went to R.O.T.C. at N.C. State. I should ask Dad if Andrew went to the 'Ma with the 82nd. I haven't heard Dad talking to his old Army buddy, so Andrew might not

have gone. Hell, Andrew may not even be in the Army anymore.

I joked with Dad that President Bush was gonna call him back to duty to go kick some butt and bring 'ole Manuel to justice. Dad didn't think so.

I got accepted at Northwestern Law. I should be happier, but I'm not. Soldiers younger than I are coming home in flag-draped coffins from Panama, and in mere minutes, I'll be going out to go toast champagne to the start of the 90s. I don't know how lucky I am, but at least I know I don't know.

I'll write more about how I feel in the new journal. I wasn't going to start the new journal until the plane took off for Germany, but the European family vacation has been pushed back. Dad said with all the changes going on in Eastern Europe now, it's better to be safe than sorry. I agree. Still, I can't wait to sit on top of what's left of the Berlin Wall and write, "We won!" I think I'll write, "We all won." That's more PC.

There are only a few pages left in this journal. I should fill it up with my thoughts about the 80s.

Chris just got here. Gotta go. Can't keep Chris from a party. I think he's maybe an alcoholic, but at 21, I think everyone's an alcoholic.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1993

I don't know why I never take this journal back to Chicago. I guess with all my moving around, I felt it was safer tucked away in my old desk at home.

I was inspired to write in this journal again, after I found in this morning's mail a Christmas card from John. John wrote, "Out of the Army. Merry Christmas, John and Amber Hawthorne." I never thought John would get re-married, but if Amber has John keeping a Christmas card list, she must be one helluva gal.

I haven't seen John since we ran into each other at Jo-Boy's after he got back from Kuwait. I didn't even recognize him at first with his crew cut. He was staying with Dave while his divorce went through from Sarah.

John invited me to a party, and I said I'd try and

swing by. The directions John gave me to Dave's apartment were wrong, or I remembered them wrong, and I never found the place. I wanted to see everyone again, but when I couldn't find the party, I was kinda relieved. I know I could have called information and gotten Dave's number, but I didn't.

When I write John back, I'll ask to get everyone else's address. See if Laura is still married to her sailor-boy and find out how Candi's son is doing. I'm glad Candi got her life back together.

I saw Dave working at the airport when I flew in. I guess if I sent a card to his Mom, he'd get it.

I better write the cards this week, if I want them to get there before Christmas. I'm afraid to ask John if he sold Godzilla. He had it two years ago, but if he lost it in the divorce, I'll die.

I drive through Trappers Run whenever I'm in town. I never stop, though. I just like to let the old houses mock me as I drive past them. I know I should quit driving through, but I'm just drawn to it. Someday, someone is going to call the cops on me,

because they'll think I'm a burglar casing the neighborhood. That's what Mom would have done.

Last year, I was going by the house Brandi and Laura used to baby sit at. I saw a kid taller than me washing the same Buick station wagon they had back then. I guess it was the same kid they were baby sitting, too.

The forest around Rush Lake was torn down and a subdivision was crammed in. That's the part that hurts the most. The pier remains, but the beer shack is history. There's a jogging track around the pond and the paved path is marked with hand carved "No Fishing," "No Swimming," "No Trespassing" and "For Residents Use Only" signs. They think they actually own the place.

Dad brought up his offer at the firm again over dinner. I'm thinking about taking it. The Chicago winters seem to get colder and colder. Dad said I wouldn't have to bill any eighty-hour weeks, either.

I've been busting my ass for a year now in Chicago, but I doubt it's doing me any good. Who

can tell when some of the older lawyers are going to retire or die. Life ain't no John Grisham novel.

I really wanted to do it on my own, but I can't fool myself into believing I'll ever be independent of Mom and Dad. I'll always need them for something.

The problem is Carol. I'm this close to asking her to marry me, but I don't know if I can get her to move so far from her parents.

I'm not afraid of Carol saying no. I don't think she will, but I've dealt with enough "no's" in my life to handle it in stride. It's the yes I'm nervous about.

The husband thing is doable, but the stepfather stuff is different. The morning Carol drove me to the airport, I was watching Barney videos with Judy. All I could think about was some summer night in 2004 catching adorable little Judy sneaking out to meet her friends and a case of beer. What would I do then? How do you raise another man's daughter? Barney is so stupid.

Mom loves the tape Carol took of me putting on the puppet show at Judy's birthday party with the

old Ernie and Bert hand puppets. I think Mom likes the idea of becoming an instant Grandmother. Step-grandmother, anyway.

Pete saw the video, too. Now, he keeps bugging me to FedEx his Bert puppet back to North Carolina. It's funny, now that I'm taller and balder than Pete, everyone we meet now thinks I'm the older brother.

I'd miss the Bulls games if I came back home. At least I could see them when they play Charlotte. I sent Charlotte Hornet t-shirts to all my Yankee Uncles. In the cards, I didn't say anything about Charlotte knocking Boston out of the playoffs. The t-shirts will speak for themselves.

I don't know if the Bulls can four-peat since Michael Jordan retired. After his father was murdered by those stupid kids, I can't blame him for wanting some time off to take it easy and be with his family.

Maybe Charlotte will have a shot at a championship, now that Jordan, Bird and Magic are gone. Poor Magic.

Mom keeps asking me what I want for Christmas. I never ask for anything anymore. I'm just glad to be home. I did mention that I wanted the Groovy Hits of the 70s CD with "Lonely Boy" and "Seasons in the Sun."

This is the first Christmas where I actually have money to spend on nice gifts. I still have to get Mom's gift, but I got Dad a Vietnam War coffee table book. On the inside cover I promised him an all expense paid return trip to Vietnam, whenever Clinton or whoever opens the door again. Dad will probably say, "I already got an all expense paid trip once from LBJ." I should start saving in case he takes me up on it. Just Dad and I will go. It'll be a father-son thing.

I got Pete Nirvana's In Utero. As a joke, I got him a shirt that says, "I was born in Generation X and all I got was this stupid t-shirt." Pete gets so mad at Generation X stuff and trying to label us. I couldn't care less. I'm me and that's it.

I keep bugging Pete to run a Men at Work A to Z

marathon at the station. He says it just won't fit the "Hip Hop Hooray format" and he won't risk losing his job for "a bunch of Foster's drinking, Koala kissing, has been Aussies." How soon they forget.

Chris just called. His alumni connection got us tickets to see the National Champion Tar Heels take on Ohio State. I can't wait to see Jerry Stackhouse play at the Dean Dome. They say he's the next Jordan. Maybe Chris's alumni connection can get Chris a job next.

All morning I've been trying to watch MTV, but I can't. It sucks now. It's all news about Michael Jackson child molestation allegations, stupid lip-syncing games shows, bogus reality soap operas and crude cartoons. Actually, I like Beavis and Butthead. Carol won't let Judy watch them, but they remind me of when I was a stupid kid, back in the good 'ole days when MTV just played videos.

I WANT MY MTV BACK!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1993

Just talked with Carol for two hours. I think I'm gonna propose when I get back home. I think Carol is expecting it too. I've never written much about Carol. In fact, once we started dating, I pretty much stopped writing about everything. Talking to Carol was my journal. I've shared all with her. Even things I dare not put to paper.

Carol said Judy loves her tape recorder and has been listing to "Beauty and the Beast" all morning. "The only problem is," Carol said, "Judy keeps looking for the picture and asking, 'Where's Belle, Mommy?'" I guess I should have bought Judy her own VCR instead.

And Mom didn't think a four-year old would know how to use a tape recorder. I told Mom the one I bought for Judy was so simple, that even she could figure it out. Mom didn't think that was funny. Mom's so proud that she pays the bills on Dad's Mac. Man, all Mom has to do is turn the damn computer on, and the program practically runs itself. I acted impressed anyway and let Mom have her moment.

Last night, when we were putting the gifts under the tree,

I told Mom about this journal. I wanted her to know about it, in case something happens to me.

There she goes yelling for me to come down and open my presents. Dad's yelling now. Three days ago he offered me a company lease on an Infiniti to come work at the firm, and now he's yelling at me to come open my presents like I'm a kid. Things never change.

Last lines of the page. Better go see what's under the tree.

What a stupid way to end this journal. No wonder I flunked English.

January 17, 1994

Dear Eric,

As much as it may surprise you, I do remember having you as a student. I'm glad to hear you are doing so well in Chicago at your law firm.

One of the most rewarding things about being a teacher is getting a thank you letter from a former student like you.

I must admit, that when I first found your letter in my mail and saw that the envelope was from a law firm, I thought I was going to be sued. I was so happy and relieved to read that it was from you.

To answer your question, I unearthed my old roll book and before you moved, it looked like you were on your way to a healthy C. I will take your word on your extended journal, trip to Walden Pond and years on the newspaper staff and will add all that as extra credit and give you an A. That's unofficial, mind you. It won't show up on any transcripts.

You're right about school being very different

today. I remember when all I had to take away those beeping electronic sports games and those watches that chimed Dixie. This year they have found three guns in lockers. We even have two full-time security guards.

I think you'll make a fine husband and father. Just make sure you read to Judy at night and buy her a few books along with all these videos they sell.

I'm very proud of what you've done and wish you well.

Your friend and teacher,
Shirley M. Dixon

P.S. I got married in 1988.