

Chapter 6

ON SAYING YES TO "LOS NORTE AMERICANOS"

What motivates a young person to emigrate, or rather flee, from one of the safest countries in the world? In my case, I think it probably can be explained mostly by something in myself, because I do not remember I longed for any external goals. Yet one event no doubt made a difference. In 1967, Kristen's mother had come to visit us in Copenhagen. She was very grateful that I had taken her "runaway" daughter under my wings. I was shocked when this charming well-to-do lady in mink fur met me in my sheepskin coat, but Margaret Godfrey read my mind right away and said: "Oh, I'm actually myself a wolf in sheepskin – an old hippie and communist ... like you all over here." She had already met Kristen's other boyfriends, including the nice doctor's son Søren from Sorø, and since Margaret herself was married to a doctor and had a son who was dating a medical student, she had had enough of the kind.

Therefore, as an uneducated person, I became her favorite among the candidates, and as she immediately felt sympathy for me, she invited me to come over and work on their new farm in Canada.

Kristen went home to Canada and wrote me almost daily for a year, about why I didn't soon come over. "For remember, we're engaged," she ironized in the letters. But now, taught by Kristen herself, I had acquired several simultaneous girlfriends, including an unusually beautiful West Jutland peasant girl, Louise, whom I think I stole from my brother during a New Year's party at the vicarage. I invited her on a romantic date to Copenhagen during my wildest period, a date which made her run home screaming. For during her first visit to the city, as she has since told everyone, I made her hang up Vietnam posters day and night.

When we finally relaxed at night, it was to revolutionary, intellectual films like Antonio das Mortes (about a peasant uprising in Brazil) and the six-hour Argentine *La hora de los hornos*. She hadn't understood a lick of these works, which I have since identified as some of my main inspirations for American Pictures. "

So Louise fled back to her safe peasant surroundings where she instead fell in love with my complete opposite – the rightwing Uwe Jensen of the Progress Party. He was later sentenced to 14 years in prison in Florida for smuggling drugs and weapons. Like me, he became a writer with his book *Operation White Terror* (well, I guess also something about getting weapons and money to poor countries), and it wasn't until 30 years later, when I myself had been de-radicalized, that Louise and I got back together. When I now had the big compensation case of 35,000 kroner on my neck for my railway sabotage in Vordingborg, Mrs Godfrey, much against my will, became a convenient life raft for me, and I finally accepted her offer to become a farmer's boy rather than a terrorist in the making.



The peasant girl Louise did not understand the Brazilian peasant revolt as a young girl in "Antonio das Mortes" (an artistic allegory against the US-installed military dictatorship). But 35 years later she managed to organize an exhibition of my rebellious paintings for the local peasants. And ever since, I have used her and her husband Jan's farm as my permanent base in West Jutland.

Before that I had to apply for a visa to work in Canada, and I was cross-examined by a fine official at the Embassy, bringing with me Mrs. Godfrey's request that they could not find equally qualified labor in Ontario. Hm, as an agricultural laborer!? The conversation went well about my knowledge of Canada. Except for one point: "Do you speak French?", to which I replied, "Yes, of course I do", whereupon he immediately switched to French. I didn't understand a word. Little did I know that Canada is a bilingual country, so with a "Merci beaucoup, Monsieur" I was given an undeserved kick out on the street.

It was then the cheater Mrs. Godfrey had to resort to higher powers - mon Dieu - by letting me "engage" to her own lost hippie daughter and by taking advantage of her friendship with Canada's Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau.

Deep down, I was so ashamed of running away from it all that I didn't tell anyone but the closest that I was going to work on a farm in Canada. To most I gave answers as the wind was blowing. That I wanted to go to Cuba if it was my revolutionary friends I was talking to. To Latin America, if I talked with my bourgeois friends. But to no one did I say I wanted to go to the United States, for there I had no articulated desire to go at all - except perhaps in some deeper unconscious dream of the America of opportunity, which even the most articulate anti-American youths around the world still believe in today, while they frustrated stand up and threaten "the Great Satan" with clenched fists. I was later accused in *Weekendavisen* of saying that I wanted to go over and support the Black Panthers' struggle. But that was just something I made up in a drunken 50th birthday speech to Jørgen Dragsdahl many years later to please him as a former spokesman for the Panther Party. For in my mind at the time of my escape, the United States was just a big white mastodon through which I only had to travel if I wanted to go both to Canada and to Latin America.

Late will I forget the loneliness and anxiety when, after spending the day saying goodbye to Lisbeth, Lotte, Joginder and my new American girlfriend, Linda Freeman, I finally set out one dark afternoon on Gammel Køge Landevej. I had hitchhiked to Italy only once before to visit three simultaneous girlfriends, Lisbeth, Kristen and Italian Dorianna, but there I had the certainty that I would end up in their safe embrace and return home safely.



The year before, I had practiced hitchhiking inspired by the new guiding star in my life, Kristen Godfrey, by hitchhiking down to visit her, here at the Arno River in Florence, where as a hippie she made leather belts that she sold on Ponte Vecchio to rich Americans.



Either Kristen or Steve had dragged home an Italian backpacker to my slum in Dannebrogsgade the summer before. She had become my girlfriend and I now wanted to go down and visit her too in Florence. Today Dorianna still comes to visit my wife and me once a month, just as I have written parts of this book in her four splendid homes, including one in Lucca.

Now, however, I was plunging into an uncertain future with no idea when I might return and no purpose other than to get away. Soon it was dark, and I was stranded in Tappernøje for hours without anyone picking me up. I was desperate since I had to catch a plane in Luxembourg. So desperate, in fact, that I finally stole a girl's bicycle from the grocery store along the road, and on its small wheels I slowly cycled the 25 km down to my friends, Kurt and Pia, at their little hippie farm in Stensved to get a few hours of sleep. The next morning, they drove me to the police station in Vordingborg, where I left the bike with a note stuck on it. "Borrowed from the grocer's daughter in Tappernøje. Please return it." I felt not only guilty towards the little girl, but also guilty towards the police, because it was the very same police station that Kaj and I had painted over with "Fight the USA and Soviet Imperialism". The guilt of having stolen my way to America followed me for the next five years so much on the American highways that I never again stole my way to such shortcuts of darkness. And when, ten years later, I gave lectures at both Brøderup School and Korskilde School in Tappernøje, I also publicly apologized to the town's small citizens for them having unwittingly helped create "*American Pictures*."

Icy hospitality

In Luxembourg I bumped into all the other longhaired youth who were going on the same cheap "hippie route" with Icelandair to the US. And since I was in no hurry to become a Canadian peasant boy, I got the idea together with a German hippie first to see Iceland for a few days. Arriving in Reykjavik at five in the morning, we sat in Hotel Vik's coffee shop and pondered where to stay in this seemingly snow-covered wasteland without a human to be seen. When my new friend talked about going to the Salvation Army's dilapidated barracks around the corner, I suddenly got the crazy idea that in such a small country, I might as well try my luck starting from the top with the president. I knew from the media that his daughter was about my age and named Dora, and I imagined that I could get her to invite me in.

Therefore, I looked up President Ásgeirsson in the phone book and wandered through the deep snowdrifts to the President's residence and rang the bell to ask for Dora. But alas, bad luck had struck. Wasn't it Ásgeirsson's house? Yes, it was. Didn't a daughter named Dora live there? Yes, there was. Wasn't it at the President's? No. I had no idea! But slowly I realized that I had come to the wrong Ásgeirsson, the country's Minister of Trade! Who had a daughter of exactly the same age, *also* named Dora. So, after a nice breakfast they decided to take me to see the President, a middle-aged man who looked nothing like the President I knew from the newspapers. It was not Ásgeirsson, but Thoroddsen, the President's son-in-law, who was only a Supreme Court judge. This conservative man clearly did not seem to like me as I stood there long-haired and in my big sheepskin coat with a meter-long Vietcong scarf fluttering behind me in the snow. So, I quickly asked for Dora in a tone of voice as if I knew her, and he went in and woke his daughter. In the few minutes we stood there alone in the doorway, I quickly convinced her that she should invite me in, since I hadn't slept in two nights and was stranded in Iceland.

And wow, to my surprise the President soon after came by for lunch, after which I was allowed to go to bed in a large hand-carved oak bed from the country's early days that creaked like a Viking ship.

I was just rejoicing in my huge bed at having come to a completely foreign country, in which I knew not even one person, and before a few hours had passed had breakfast with the Minister of Commerce, lunch with the President, and gone to bed with the Supreme Court Justice. In all their cliquishness I now understood my bewilderment, for the President Ásgeirsson I remembered from my childhood had recently resigned because his wife, also named Dora, had died, and now they were licking their wounds over the fact that his son-in-law had lost the presidential election. But what did it matter that I had gone wrong, when one Dora could be just as good as the other? In all her beauty with the long red hair and her reciprocated interest, I immediately thought I would try to seduce her with a little of my out of necessity acquired Jack the Dullard art.

- Verodigt vindes jeg ogsaa den forudgaaende aftenstund, hvor en tusindtellig
 skare fulgte mig med fakler til en sidste hyrdetone med glasskledsen. En stille regn
 silende ned og gjorde steningen saa sekeret at brostenene helt gik i blide. Jeg havde
 ventet paa dette gjenblik gennem maaneder. Forst nu havde jeg blyrget mit visum,
 forst nu var jeg fri og kunne betale min opbeholdte guld - og saa stod man blot der
 og traadte vande i sin sjallose plafboethed i en diluviansk versta-tristesse og
 glaede paa den som havde den indvane paa tegningget, som brostenene sajlde
 bagud i afaendigheden. - Og der stod vi og sang for de dode, for dem der falet
 i troen for dem der falet i tvivlen vietnams kvinder og mand i de blomsterlaest grave
 - Sang for de dode raabte i de tomme sale i de kolde korridorer raabte med de blin-
 de ruder hvor isblomsten groer - raabte for at faa stenerne til at lytte og jorden
 til at groe *raabte til de dode skipper i de blinde styrebaand i de levende bredde
 ved naest og roer " - Ja vi kaldte ogsa Jer med vand i vor mund. - Skal lig -
 stanken de drive Jer ud af skytgravene for i sigder hvad det vil sige at have ud-
 slattet 2 millioner menneskeliv og have lige saa mange i koncentrationslejre. Vi
 er alle skyldige i. Ogsaa du Maj, du ha smedret endnu et par ruder i ambassaden,
 - i Pan An, - i Pillestrade, - i Folketinget saa laenge der er blot en
 rude tilbage i hele landet er vi skyldige i Vestens forrydelser i Indokina - - -
 - - men naar denne rude er knust saa maaske regeringen kunne maake hvil-
 ken vej vinden blaeser og saa maaske ligstenen kunne tringes ind og stikke
 selv Poul Moller i kongenosen. - Knus alle Danmarks ruder som selv de kaldste kon-
 servative kan maake stanken af nepelbrundt hud i, saa selv Thastrup springer op i
 natton med svad paa panden ved lyden af dodeskrigende fra barn gemmebaaret af split-
 terboer. Og er der saa stadig nogle konservative, hvis stanken ikke har rakt sit
 visitkort, - nogle stenharde sjelle, der ikke protesterer saa knus
 ogsaa dem - Ohl saa her de hjorter af glas, og i aendhed - hvad er vold med glas
 i sammenligning med den vold vi udsver i Vietnam, i den tredje verden i - Knus
 alle landets ruder i Knus de fize bloddryppende ruder i Dannebrogflaget, knus alt
 - saa laenge det er den eneste hjalp vi kan give vietnameserne, - saa laenge VNR -
 regimet tvinger os til at bruge disse midler.

Harefuld og mistroelig vejlede jeg hjem den Mai Lains. Her havde man arbejdet
 i de sidste tre aar for at faa folk til at indse deres medskyld i dette folkeraad,
 argumenteret, demonstreret, omraadet vinduer, viltet huse, malet mure, brugt alle
 sine penge, bombarderet, gullet, opteret - - - og stadig var situationen
 sama - en nyklarisk marionetregering, der siger "vi kan ikke stiltiende vore vid-
 ner til at folkernes frihed og selvstaendighed kraekes" og saa dog stiltiende apprae-
 rer at det sker - saa stiltiende myrder et helt folk, saa stiltiende leder danske
 fireaar (Christiansen og Nielsen) bygge flyvebaas i Thailand, hverfve vi hverdag
 myrder i hundredevis af mand, kvinder og barn i Nordvietnam, Laos og Cambodia.
 (Det sker i dette øjeblik - - - du ved det - - - og du bliver blot siddende og
 laeser dette teabelige brev - - - uden at unde brosten gennem naboens vindue,
 uden at vilte hans bil, hans kleskab, hans fjernsyn blot for at faa ham til at
 indse sine stiltiende massakrer og plyndringer i den fattige verden i i)

Dagen efter Mai Lei tog jeg af sted, modlaest og desillusioneret. Skuffet
 over at 25 saas massakrer med et andet folk stadig ikke alider i befolkningens be-
 vidsthed, skuffet over at den stadig ikke aner at klap om hund der faaegaar i Inde-
 kina, skuffet over at vort arbejde for at aendre disse forhold var resultatloest og
 udsigtloest, skuffet over at tilhøre et folk af mand, ferdbruede, smertede,
 postfyldte, unormale "mennesker", - man saetidig -
 - lettet over at vore undsluppen 5 millioner blinde vordere,
 - lykkelig over at vore opfaen fra dederiget Danmark.

My angry farewell salute to the Danes sent from Canada. Some of it quoted in the foreword of American Pictures.

Unfortunately, she was engaged at the time, so after three weeks of stiff conversations with the conservative father at posh dinner tables, I gave up and left for Canada. However, I did gain a little goodwill with Thoroddsen when I revealed an empathetic and deeper knowledge of his favorite newspaper, Berlingske Tidende (the conservative Danish paper I sabotaged from within for its Vietnam policy, see Chapter 5).

But I am not one to give up completely, so when Dora divorced after many years, and I had now begun to commute back and forth to my lectures in the United States, I finally "liberated" the beautiful "red" Dora from the social control of the presidential family. And now she confided in me that throughout my stay with the family as a young and impressionable 22-year-old, she had had a particularly loving eye for me. So, for 30 years, every time I had a 6 am Icelandair stopover on my way home from touring the US, Dora was now faithfully standing in the frost in the Keflavik airport to drive me home to a warm bed and her Icelandic home brew - the best cure I know for jet lag.

When I came back down to earth in New York after this trip with Iceland's finest families, I had little desire to continue north to Canada immediately. But with my new self-confidence, my desire for travel was now ignited and I wanted to briefly see New York for myself, because who knew if I would ever get the chance to come to America again?

"In the US I will also see if I can get to live with the President's daughter," I said laughingly to Dora at parting, so great was my triumph when, many years later, I returned, with foolish pride, to tell her that I had managed this in the US too. No doubt it would not have happened had I not in the meantime had had help to get out of the enormous prejudices about the country that I came lugging with through customs in the JFK airport. But having spent my youth building up so much prejudice towards US governments for their human rights oppression in poor countries, I had a strong urge now to find some humanity behind the oppressor. I was immediately given a helping hand by the smiling government-employees in the airport with their proud and genuine, "Welcome to America." This loving reception was so surprising to the sinner in me that I was immediately struck with guilt.

In love with New York

That same day, as I wandered the magical streets of Manhattan, I do not forget the first American who approached me in the very city that Americans themselves consider rude and misanthropic. A guy came up to me hastily and asked, "Have you got the time, man?" I replied, "Yes, but what for?" to which the man cracked up laughing and shook his head and walked on. I didn't understand what was so funny when I had just said I had the time to help him. I thought that my English was now excellent, because even though I had gotten a 5 all the way through high school (equivalent to an F in America), I had learned a lot from having housed American deserters in Copenhagen. But these hash-smoking youngsters apparently had a different concept of time than the fast-running New Yorkers. The city's later Jewish mayor, Ed Koch, once said "that if after six months in New York you feel that you walk faster, talk faster and think faster, then you are a New Yorker." Worse, when I excused my poor English by saying I had only been in America a few days, many began to protest, "but this ain't America, you are in New York." Especially during the Vietnam War, New Yorkers were so busy denouncing the reactionary boogie-land "America" across the Hudson River that my whole concept of "Americans" quickly fell apart. I had to start the fun work of integrating with a myriad of different kinds of inhabitants in this "melting pot," as they proudly called it, while at the same time arguing in each ethnic group that it would be more accurate to call it a bouquet of diverse flowers. But both sides were right, for only by enthusiastically cultivating their diversity were they able to make the newly arrived immigrants, with all their different cultural baggage, feel immediately at home. In so doing, they gave immigrants the freedom - often against their own deeper will - to end up merging with other Americans in a new shared culture that now bore the stamp of them all. If they had encountered typical Danish-inspired thinking with demands for assimilation, they would have immediately closed themselves off in parallel societies and continued to cultivate their old cultures.



My New York pictures in this chapter are from later, since I had not yet gotten a camera and never imagined that I would return to the United States. But one way or another I have to illustrate the loving reception that made me dream in Canada of coming back from now on. As a vagabond, I hitchhiked over 30 times back to this city, which for 30 years after was also my home base as a lecturer.

One of the first things I heard them say everywhere, as soon as they heard I was from Denmark, was "Wow, you speak so good English!" With their wonderful ability to praise and enthuse, I felt for the first time that I was something as a human being and was lifted out of the low self-esteem I had acquired under the Danish Jantelov oppression. With this edifying ability, which I still feel Americans master (when racism against their own oppressed groups doesn't get in the way) better than any people I've met (yes, that's a gross generalization), I've felt a deep gratitude to them throughout my life.

I often use the example of my first year as a hitchhiker, when I had some small photo books made of my first photos, which I showed to drivers in the hope that they would invite me home or give me some money for films. The pictures were so bad that very few of them later made it into my book. Still, they all exclaimed enthusiastically, "Wow, you are a great photographer. You should make a book!" Never during the wanderings did I, with my low self-esteem, ever plan to make a book, but in this way they encouraged me to continue the otherwise hopeless wanderings out the endless highways - and thus eventually helped me to create a book and become a writer.

I now realized that my rich American girlfriend in Copenhagen, Linda Freeman, hadn't actually been "American" at all, but as she herself always said "from L.A." She had insisted that I wait a few months to sail with her back to America - a trip that would take about three months along the "Columbus route" through the Panama Canal up to Los Angeles. But since I had to leave quickly, she had at my departure given me the address of "my best New York friend", who now turned out to be English, or "British" as she called it.

Thus, after my first day's wandering around the city, I came unannounced in the afternoon and knocked on Marnie Hallsworth's battered door at 724 Amsterdam Avenue in Spanish Harlem. Without a moment's thought, Marnie said I was welcome to sleep on the couch across from her bed in the cramped one-bedroom.

It was my first encounter with the familiar American hospitality to which I was to be subjected for the next six years. Impressive, I've thought since, because in New York (where I ended up living in 44 different homes for the next five years) people usually have so little space that it would be excuse enough not to invite strangers in. Living with an outsider/insider "American" turned out to be a good introduction for me because Marnie, like me, was able to see Americans from the outside and therefore, like typical new immigrants, was able to generalize about their customs. I have long since lost that art, the more "American" I myself gradually became.



Marnie helped make me angry at the banks, but without my prior radicalization I probably wouldn't have taken a picture like this with an inscription that could be seen all over New York at the time. And how visionary I was! For the bank here, E.F. Hutton & Co. lost millions on money laundering for the Mafia on "Black Monday," which nearly made world capitalism crash in 1987 - after which it merged to become Lehman Brothers, the company that in 2008 started the financial crisis and nearly toppled all of world capitalism again. That's why this picture has become my best seller with art galleries, who sell it to capitalists to hang in their offices. Indeed, that's how my radicalization ended up making myself a kind of capitalist, "One man's death, another man's bread".

I don't remember most of Marnie's generalizations today, but one of them caught my attention. Not only did she tell me that New York banks didn't hire blacks, but they didn't even hire Jews. I found the latter hard to believe when she also told me that there were more Jews living in New York than in Israel. But even though I had never known a Jew and was now apparently surrounded by them, I remember thinking that she was probably exaggerating. I have since realized that she was right, for it was only the following year that Rockefeller became the first to allow the employment of Jews in his Chase Manhattan Bank. I was so angry about this discrimination that I remember in my astonishment I began to go into the banks to see if it could be true, but I soon realized that I had not yet learned to tell the difference between Jew and Gentile. It would be many years before I began to see black employees in the banks, but by then I had become so knowledgeable about racism that, unlike the New Yorkers, I could always see in every bank that they were not American blacks, but rather black West Indian immigrants. Every time I saw it, I protested this discrimination, just as I did at the big chain restaurants in the South for using blacks only in the kitchen but not to serve in the restaurant.

The poor Anglo-American Marnie was a good starting point for understanding what was characteristic of "Americans." During this my first visit, as I said, I generalized wildly as typical first-time visitors do. Most absurd was Jacob A. Riis' description of how he as the very first thing bought a gun with his little pocket money on his arrival in the United States, exactly 100 years before me. Because he thought every American carried one.

Through Marnie, I learned what seems to be the only generalization about Americans that I have held onto ever since, that they "are all racists" - which includes myself as a later American. Apart from a little curiosity which led me - despite Marnie's warnings - to walk up near Harlem during the day, it was truthfully not a subject that occupied me in any way at the time. Partly because Marnie and other whites immediately planted fear in me about blacks with their warnings not to go here and there, and partly - and perhaps for this very reason - I experienced blacks as angry and hostile toward me.



Even from New York, I wrote home to my parents on postcards produced in Vietnam to support the Vietnamese's continuing struggle.

The only sentences I have written about them in my diary from those days are, "5 days in New York and then finally a smile from two black girls. You feel guilty for being white when you experience that." But a few days later I have a sentence that partly in its condescension reveals my racism and partly that I begin to question my inherent leftist values, "It may be wrong to fit everything and everyone you see into your ready-made systems. To claim that the well-dressed Negro you meet in the expensive bars is a class traitor is, of course, building castles in the air, since she knows nothing about class systems and, with her background, finds it natural to do precisely what she does." Wow, can I just say today when I know how great a mental cost it still is for many blacks to try mentally to survive in such places.

But by and large, as in Ralph Ellison's classic "Invisible Man," the blacks remained socially invisible to me. The "Americans" were still, in my brainwashed subconscious, mostly "white," whom I immediately came to like so much that I had difficulty seeing faults in them.

In retrospect, I can see what an advantage this was, for by thinking of them affectionately without reservation, it further encouraged their own natural interest in strangers and made them open doors to me everywhere. Quite the opposite of the blacks, towards whom I unconsciously built up prejudice and fear. For example, one night Marnie was attacked by a gang of blacks with knives as she cycled through the park. "She came home pretty shaken up," I wrote in my diary.

It was the inequality of Americans, however, that I was most shocked by and described in the letters home, for the insane wealth juxtaposed with the comfortless poverty I had never experienced before. This is my first postcard home to my parents about my stay with Marnie: *"Dear all. I am now in New York. It is the most terrible place I have ever been. That people can be so mean to each other is unbelievable. I've never seen such poverty before. It's full of beggars, burned-out drug addicts and human wrecks. In several places I have seen beggars sitting on their mattresses in the street. I don't know if they sleep on them, I dare not go to these neighborhoods at night. Inside the city, outside the quarters of the filthy rich millionaires, there are children of negroes, who have been left to beg. And I haven't even been to the ghettos, people say, the ghettos of Harlem and Brooklyn. I live with a 29-year-old girl in Spanish Harlem. During the day, it's somewhat safe here. At night, there are padlocks, police locks and security chains on the door, and her dog barks at the slightest noise on the stairs. I want to try living here for a while longer. Later I will try to move to the rich neighborhoods around 5th avenue, where Jacqueline Kennedy and Nixon have apartments, to see the city "from above" as well. Everywhere in the city you see slogans for the black panthers on the walls: "Free the panther 21" is the most frequent. And the bombs explode, like I don't know what. I have seen some of the houses (4-5 floors) totally destroyed by explosions. The underground movement is in full swing. I hope the newspapers back home write about it. I'll write more extensively when I get to Canada. Many greetings Jacob".*

But I had much more to learn about the Americans. One day I was with Marnie visiting a friend, Dolle Latronic, at the betteroff 365 West End Avenue.

I remember Dolle saying, "I was in Colorado two days ago and tomorrow I am going back to L.A." Wow, how Americans travel, I thought. And with my inherent prejudices, Dolle Latronic, lounging there on a giant striped sofa, already fit perfectly into one of the "laid back" types I imagined California was made up of.

But what was Colorado? A country in South America? A river? With few exceptions, I had almost no idea what states made up the United States. Later, as a vagabond, I could draw accurate US maps of every state and every highway better than any American, and later still, as a lecturer, sit on planes and tell the other passengers the names of almost every major thoroughfare in the big cities we flew over. What a creative life I wasted uselessly filling up so many brain cells with maps of countries and cities before we learned to Google and GPS our way through life.

Something else that surprised me so much that it made it into my diary was that the women wore perfume. This, like shaving hair on legs, genitals and arms, I had never experienced (in my circles) in Denmark, but Marnie claimed that women themselves liked it. Although she, like most New Yorkers I met, was leftist, I thought they were still subject to society's years of indoctrination, which, through advertising, foisted these crazy non-hair-dressing ideas on them. But despite such few exceptions, I felt - again strongly generalizing - that Americans in the spring of 1970 were engaged in a far more pervasive cultural revolution than the Danes' little university rebellion. I was completely sold and fell in love with the playful attempts of the youth to change society by changing themselves. I felt it was diametrically opposed to the Europeans' attempts to pull some suffocating ideological blanket over the heads of others, while perpetuating a largely bourgeois lifestyle themselves. Not least when Marnie took me to see the biggest Broadway hit of the time, "Hair", I could see clearly how much the musical reflected the revolution outside. Especially, of course, in the whole hippie area around St. Mark's Place in The Village, which would later become my home for many years. I loved the line in Hair, "I fell through a hole in the American flag", because that was exactly what I myself did upon encountering the American youth.

And yet I was in the midst not only of a cultural revolution, but also of a political and even violent revolution. For at that very moment, the bombs of the revolutionary groups - the white Weather Underground Organisation (WUO) and the Puerto Rican Young Lords - had begun to explode everywhere, and I was around to see the ruins of the bombed houses, including the "Greenwich Village townhouse explosion", in which two of the Weathermen ended up blowing themselves up and destroying the house of the enraged neighbor, Abbie Hoffman. Over the years, I've conveniently repressed how much I obviously applauded this counter-violence. But I have since, as a (peaceful) old man, found diary entries in which I seem to have used for the first time the youngsters' own term, "the system," for the deadly monster they were up against: "In the same park where Marnie was attacked, a short time before, a nice old lady was found with two poodles - all three cut up into pieces. It was a young Puerto Rican who, along with two Negro girls who played prostitutes, cut open the victims and removed their testicles. Now in a mental hospital. It is all this violence, the violence of the system against the slums and the desperation, that now needs to be turned against that very system. After all, it is better to blow up a few banks and skyscrapers than to kill people and commit robberies. But the system always suffers from distortions of proportion and screams up when a few houses are blown up but does not protest against this daily violence."

I don't remember exactly how close I came to blowing up myself. One day I had walked up to pick up a huge roll of posters with pictures of the My Lai massacre victims at a large anti-Vietnam War peace office on the 8th, 9th or 10th floor of a high-rise building located at 39 Union Square West. I wanted to send them home to the Vietnam Movement in Denmark, but since they didn't have that many there, I had to trudge a long way to a warehouse in the Bronx to pick up the posters. I couldn't afford to use the subway (which cost 25 cents) for all those 5 years in the US, so I ended up walking the 13 miles each way, which took me a whole day, greatly weighed down on the way home by the heavy roll of posters on my shoulder. For the first time, I wandered down the middle of Harlem, though I now felt comfortable looking like a busy worker.

So enormous was my shock when, a short time later, I saw that the entire high-rise building I had been up in had either been bombed or burned to the ground. Ever since, there has been just a McDonald's on the bottom floor of a strangely empty lot in an otherwise high-priced Manhattan next to Starbucks' ten-story high-rise. Whether it was really bombed, as people said, I never did find out, as everyone was so excited and nervous during the bombing era that of course they believed it all.

For the same reason, we longhairs were subjected to so much hatred and suspicion in New York that many began to cut their hair short. The most explosive place, I experienced, was Columbia University, from which the Weathermen's bombings had started during the widespread anti-war demonstrations before my arrival. Since it was only a 25-minute walk from Marnie, I often went there to feel "in the belly of the monster" from which Che Guevara had urged us to fight the battle. For long periods, students shut down classes with the battle cry, "On strike - shut it down."



It was a roll of about 50 pounds of these color posters from the My Lai massacre that I carried on my shoulders through New York and sent home to the Vietnam movement to hang in Copenhagen. Back then, a genocide in color shook the world. Today, after Rwanda, Iraq, Syria, etc., we hardly think of such images. Here used in the Vietnam veterans' big demonstration in Washington the following year.

One night things got crazy when the well-known leftist lawyer, William Kunstler spoke. I would later meet Kunstler again and again at demonstrations across the country, but on this particular night he gave the most inflammatory speech I had ever heard (and which I recorded on tape), calling on students to more or less go underground. I quoted him in my diary: "We know the war, we know the revolution in Vietnam, we know the revolution is going on in this country." It got so violent that the police started shooting in the dark, which was the first time I experienced that in the United States. I was shocked to have truly ended up in the "belly of the beast" in that confined square, where I stood exactly 15 years later, on April 5, 1985, entertaining a younger generation of students about the earlier struggles. The day before, the youth had cordoned off the buildings with shackles to get the university to pull its investment out of South Africa's apartheid regime and had invited me - while they themselves lay for days in sleeping bags on hunger strike - to show their own domestic apartheid with my slideshow on a big screen at the Hartley Building, now renamed the Mandela Building.

I didn't understand then why Marnie didn't join me at the Columbia demonstrations: 'How can you sit relaxed and read and mind your own world when such violent things are happening out there? I think it's escapism just to indulge in study,' as I wrote, followed by her response which was probably shared by the majority: "She says there is no point in demonstrating in the university. In 1968, they burned down several buildings to shut down the university in protest of the Vietnam War (led by Mark Rudd, who started the Weather Underground), but didn't get them back."

Funny enough, when I began to get tired of the poor Marnie's passivity, it was with the revolutionary children of the upper classes that I felt most at home. Especially with the Jews, though I didn't yet know they were Jews. Thus, during the demonstrations, I met the revolutionary Stephanie, who helped fulfill my dream of moving in with the rich on the 5th. Avenue. I wrote about this sometime later in a densely written letter which, on reading today, surprises me not only by the revolutionary state of mind with which I apparently arrived in the



Fifteen years later, standing in the same spot at Columbia with my slide show (in a white shirt) during the students' campaign to get universities to pull their investments out of South Africa, I told the striking students about our earlier struggles to get the US to pull out of Vietnam.

United States, but also by how clever I became at wading into the homes of both the poor and the richest, as American Pictures since became known for, already in my very first days in the United States.

".....I was only in New York for two weeks; I simply couldn't stand it any longer. The first week I walked around in all the poor neighborhoods, and it was honestly my impression that New York does not consist of much else except the small area where they have placed the skyscrapers. But I also stayed with a filthy-rich family on 5th avenue not far from the Nixon and Jaqueline Onassis apartments. They lived at the top of a 35-story skyscraper. There were only two apartments on the top floor, and a skyscraper has a certain amount of space, so the apartments weren't exactly small. The other apartment was John Steinbeck's, or rather his wife's since he is now dead. He had been a good friend of the family and inside his leftist son's apartment we were smoking pot. His cat was constantly high and jumping around wildly because it ate all the grass that fell on the zebra skin. By the way, the family also had the apartment downstairs, but they mostly used it only when they had guests (elsewhere in New York, you're three to a bed).

When we drove up to the place, me and the daughter, Stephanie, herself a leftist, there was immediately a doorman in uniform to open the car doors. Another man announced our arrival over the radio as we entered under the canopy of the red carpet that ran all the way across the 10-metre-wide pavement. The canopy was very handy for when it rained, you could walk straight from the car inside without getting wet. The doorman was also very handy to help keep away all the begging negro kids. The hall you then entered was at least 25-30 feet high, marbled and covered with mirrored glass with glittering gold ornamentation. The red carpet led us to the lift with electromagnetic buttons, which you only had to blow at and it went up at 50 miles an hour. Once up, the butler was immediately there to help us undress. He was Czechoslovakian, by the way. Then we could choose where we wanted to go first (I never got to see the whole apartment). Usually, we chose to go into the bar first. The bar simply had everything why I was walking around in a constant inebriation from morning till night. That was probably very good, as otherwise I would have been kicked out much sooner than I did. When you were a little "uplifted" you could almost forget all the poverty you had just seen and shut up, but eventually I blamed them for these facts so strongly that I had to move. The relationship became rather tense. For these were the days right after I had seen nothing but misery, so suddenly coming to the super-upper class was a bit of a change. The daughter took me around to artists and exclusive nightclubs where I could never have set foot without her money purse. Her mother was one of the bigwigs on Wall Street, but she had sold her stocks and bought a small car herself because of the Vietnam War. Driving around in a fully automatic car was also very pleasant after using only the horses of the apostles for the first several days. The stay in her apartment was also interesting because I there got an impression of the fear which probably especially the rich have gotten. After all, most bombs have exploded in their very neighborhoods and offices. Of course, I didn't become more popular with Stephanie's family when I said that I fully agreed with the revolutionary groups, if only because for almost 20 years now the Americans have been dropping bombs, spreading death and destruction over a small country far from themselves. It's so easy to just drop bombs on "crooked gooks" when you don't even know the effect



OR THE MYTH



The pictures here from New York shows "The American Way of Life." If you do not agree you must at least admit that they do not show the urban or the obscene way of life. - The laws of capitalism, invisible and blind for most people, act on the individual even though he is not aware of them. He sees only a horizon that appears infinite. This is how capitalistic propaganda presents it, pretending to extract from the "Rocksfaller" story whether it is true or not - a lesson of the possibility of success. The amount of poverty and suffering required for the emergence of a Rockefeller and the amount of depravity that the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude entails, are left out of the picture and it is not always possible to make the people in general see

this, in any case the road to success is pictured as one beset with perils, but which, it would seem, an individual with the proper qualities can overcome to attain the goal. The reward is seen in the distance. The way is lonely. Further on it is a route for wolves, - one can succeed only at the cost of the failure of others.

Below:
In order to make us better wolves, capitalist propaganda teaches us to despise people like these, whom we have crushed under our march toward success, because if we showed love for them we would not be wolves, but human beings - and as human beings we would be destroyed ourselves in the system.....

OF SISYPHUS



YOU CAN COVER UP ALL THE CRIMES OF THE SYSTEM.....



COVERING UP JUST ANOTHER VICTIM

Missy turns the ambulance-driver around from the dead man and sees on the wall in the background the inscriptions "Reporter: Mr. Gandhi, What do you think of Western civilization?" - Mr. Gandhi: "I think it would be a good idea!" - A nighttime photo of the wall finds two wounded vietnam veterans who lost part of their bodies defending that "civilization". Now that civilization lets them beg in the streets trying to survive until the next morning.

.....BUT ITS EFFECT WILL NOT ESCAPE THE WORLD.



In my later picture books, I tried to show Americans the shock of inequality I had already experienced in these first days in NYC. But in fact, it was the greatest equality the United States had ever had and created through high tax rates that I saw then and later depicted in "American Pictures." It wasn't until Reagan cut taxes for the rich in the 80s that inequality exploded in earnest, inspiring naive liberals around the world to follow suit.

When I finally returned to Marnie before departure and told her about it, she surprised me by asking if there was nothing positive, I had seen in New York. I was confused because I felt that I had been genuinely excited by it all and for the first time felt instantly at home in a country. I was particularly enamored of the struggling youth - both its "Hair" and its bombs. They had, for the first time in my life, made me feel outgoing and appreciated, so I was a little upset by her perception of me and didn't understand it until I recently found this passage in the diary from those first days in the US:

"I find that Americans are far more sentimental than others. Endlessly I must sit and sing with them, "All we are saying, is give peace a chance." The Danes could not sing such songs in Danish. Oh, God, I hate Americans. Here they've been bombing the hell out of Vietnam for years, and suddenly they find out what peace is when their own young people are dying in droves. The Vietnamese have never known peace. America doesn't deserve it. I'm sitting here among thousands of singing, sentimental young people. Can you blame me for being a little bitter?"

Yes, Marnie was right. The country that had instantly opened its heart to me was not one I had unconditionally opened up to and lived in without judgment. I had arrived as an interim immigrant with all my prejudiced bundles, which thrilled many with my political enthusiasm and knowledge, but caused others to close their minds to my self-righteous and downright killing judgments. I had a much longer journey ahead of me before I could meekly attain salvation by integrating wholeheartedly, not half-heartedly, with "Americans" and thereby earn their undivided love. Something I had clearly forgotten from my childhood church:

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Mat 5:1-12)

Canadian Angels

During the trip from Marnie's New York up to the farm outside Toronto in Canada, I felt really "poor in spirit". All the way up there in the Greyhound bus - filled with black and poor white passengers - it struck me how bleakly the people mirrored my own inner state of mind in the poor "upstate" New York we were driving through. Prejudice is interesting, because I could feel myself almost disgusted by this shabby area from a distance. But years later, when it became one of my most important as a lecturer, it opened up to me with its tear-jerking testimonies of incest and trauma.

Immediately upon arriving in Canada, Kristen reproached me for taking so long to arrive. I replied that I had been seduced first by the daughter of Iceland's president for three weeks and then by a rich woman and a poor woman in New York for two weeks. When she asked if we had had sex, I replied, as was right, that I didn't think either of them had that in mind. But when I told her about how Marnie's and my beds had been so close that we could touch, and how Marnie had lain night after night and babbled away in the wee hours of the night when I tried to sleep, Kristen gave me even more rebukes. "Well, why don't you ever learn to read women and their needs? It's obvious from your description that she was just dreaming about getting into bed with you. How could you be so cold-hearted to the poor woman who let you stay with her for a whole week?"

I remember feeling ashamed for a long time that I hadn't even thought of giving a little back for the wonderful American hospitality Marnie had shown me in New York. But since then, as I've learned to integrate better with both "Americans" and "Englishmen," I can see that Marnie's signals to me have not been as unambiguous as Kristen imagined with her own prejudices about American women. Indeed, as a British-American, Marnie was a product of both cultures. Partly the loose American side that I would later learn to embrace, and partly the puritanism that I experienced many years later from British women who didn't even think of inviting me into their homes in England, and which is probably best characterized by one of the longest running plays in London, "No Sex Please, We're British".

The only woman in England who ever invited me to share her bed was American, just as - with the exception of Kristen - it was the rule throughout my long stay in the British-influenced Canada. So how could two such confused immigrants as Marnie and I possibly reach each other in such a short time?

In retrospect, I don't regret arriving in the US with such ideological blinders on, as that very revolutionary outlook helped me see some of the things that later led to "American Pictures." But what if the same blinders had led me to completely close myself off to the humanity of Americans, resulting in me staying up in the more politically correct Canada or fleeing home to righteous Denmark? For in Canada I felt again the human loneliness I had felt in Denmark. A loneliness which caused my political condemnation of the "Americans" up here to grow into ideological fanaticism.

Therefore it was good to see the non-ideological hippie Kristen again after almost a year's absence, even though I had forgotten her quibbling and argument-resistant generalizations when I myself came forward with my own ideological and know-it-all generalizations.



The Godfrey family upon my arrival in April 1970. From left youngest brother Adam, father Charles, mother Margaret, Kristen and older brother Mark.

If I hadn't discovered in New York that I had been in the midst of Jews, I now realized that I probably would have been anyway, listening to her prejudices, "Jews smack with their lips," "Jews are too ideological and argumentative," "Jews always argue about who should sit where at the table," etc., which seemed to describe herself in so many ways that for a long time I thought she was Jewish. Through Kristen, I now discovered that it was precisely all these traits that I had come to love about "Americans."

But she also gave me a welcome I'll never forget when she made us do LSD together. It felt like an endless and cold brain cleansing or Wudu of my newly acquired prejudices for better or worse, during which I suddenly saw everything "brilliantly clear" but at the same time didn't surrender completely. For all the time I kept a paranoid eye on the knives in the house, and whether the hot-blooded Kristen would freak out and (again like in Dannebrogsgade) throw them at me. When, after half a day in this insane state of mind, we ventured out into the streets of Toronto, the huge skyscrapers seemed utterly adventurous around us, and I later regretted that I hadn't arrived in Manhattan on a similar acid trip.

After the LSD trip, Toronto, with its two million inhabitants, seemed like a tiny village compared to New York and almost devoid of people. So suddenly it wasn't so bad to have to go to the farm two hours north and be a farm boy. Especially not when it quickly felt like they had acquired it mostly just for me - with no actual farm work to do - because Dr. Godfrey made so much money as a doctor that it seemed mostly about getting an investment he could write off. That's why they had been desperately waiting for me to come before they bought the twelve cows - slaughter cattle that didn't even need milking - that I was to herd and drive in and out of the newly built barn. I quickly gave them names like Che, Marx, Lenin, Rosa, Trotsky, Ho Chi Minh, etc., but as they kept running away and I had to run around the neighbors' fields and in the woods shouting "Trotskyiiii!", my first big task was to dig down stakes to fence in the huge hilly area.

On weekends, the whole family came out to the farm to help, and the cultured Dr. Godfrey set up giant speakers in the fields playing opera music. Especially on Saturdays, we had it broadcast "live" from the Metropolitan Opera in New York while we worked. None of us in the family, Kristen and the two brothers, Mark and Adam, liked his presence much, as he was an absolute workaholic and nurtured some inner aggressions towards the indolence of the family, which made him go around the table swatting flies when we finally tried to relax together during the meals.

My working hours were 8 hours a day, but as I recall, it was mostly those two days during the weekend under his supervision that I toiled. The rest of the time I was alone on the farm with Mrs. Godfrey, who did not keep an eye on me, so I laid me down in the hay up in the barn to sleep during the day because I was tired from reading and writing in my little isolated cabin out in the hills at night. When all the fence posts were dug down, Dr. Godfrey racked his brain to find more work for me. Water had to be laid from the house the 500 yards or so down to the stable, and he wanted to buy an expensive trench digging machine which he could write off.



I loved my cows. I think it is Trotsky on the far right in front of the barn.



Dr. Godfrey preferred to rent machines. Here Adam is laying the gravel road down to the new farm with Mark and me in shorts.

I said I could dig it with my cheap Danish labor of 200 Canadian dollars a month in less than a week. To his annoyance, my guardian angel, Mrs. Godfrey, cried out, "Yes, let Jacob try to make the attempt." It turned into a major bet, which I almost came to regret. For in the meantime, summer had arrived with 110-degree humid heat in this area of Ontario where, to my surprise, tobacco was even grown. And the soil into which I was to dig the water pipe turned out to be almost entirely rocks. So the sweat drenched from me as I hacked my way through, and if I hadn't identified so fanatically all the time with the struggling Vietnamese, who were at the same time digging their giant tunnel systems in far worse humid heat, I would never have been able to do the job. And so, with all my fanaticism I made it on time and won the bet to "deliver water to Ho Chi Minh." And every time friends visited since, such as Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Mrs. Godfrey stood boasting and referred to me as "Canada's fastest and most 'subversive' trench digger."

To my amazement, I ended up loving my work as a "guerrilla farmer", spreading cow manure over the rolling fields to the tune of

Bizet's Carmen's battle cry, "*Toreador, dream away, yes, dream in combat, That dark eyes wait for you, Toreador, love awaits you! The menacing (American) picador on horseback will fall*" (though quickly replaced by my own tape recorder's Vietnamese battle songs when Dr. Godfrey was not present). And I loved driving around in my jeep to buy hay from the neighboring farms' giant old, red-painted oak plank barns (which made me burst into tears when they sometimes burned down after lightning strikes in all their historic beauty). I also became an expert outdoor designer, buying "two by four" planks for all the walkways (down to our big swimming pool) and drying racks that Mrs. Godfrey asked me to construct and design so she could walk around dry. Always with my two big black dogs, Dodger and Fagin, when they weren't behaving criminally as in *Oliver Twist* and themselves went underground for days only to return smelly and needle-strewn after wild fights with heavily armed skunks and porcupines. After that I could spend a whole day pulling the needles out of them, and myself smelled so badly that I was relegated to my remote cabin for that reason alone.



Mrs. Godfrey and Kristen at lunch.



I loved driving around in my jeep with my two swarthy *Oliver Twist* characters.

Otherwise, the best times were meals alone with Mrs Godfrey, where she partly admired my left-wing idealism (in deep disappointment that her own children had none) and partly warned me of the dangers of such radicalization in a way I only later understood the significance of. The fact was that Margaret and Charles Godfrey had met in their youth at a church debate meeting, when he was a Christian and believed in the forgiveness of sinful man, while she, a fanatical Communist, believed in the creation of a new man.

After a heated debate, he invited her on a date "so that we can continue our important discussion," after which they ended up de-radicalizing each other in a long marriage of grueling debates, often characterized - I felt - more by dependence on each other's sarcastic remarks and fly-swatting prickliness than by deeper love.

With the bloody development of communism in the Soviet Union, Margaret's idealism and belief in a better world had long ago faded and been replaced by cynicism. And yet she wanted to hold on to a little faith and hope, and so listened eagerly to my arguments that the quite different new revolutions in Vietnam and Cuba would succeed in creating "the new socialist man." I subscribed in Canada to the English-language edition of the Cuban newspaper "Granma" and sat and re-read Castro's long speeches at dinner, and she too agreed that they sounded incredibly sensible and intelligent as solutions to the problems of poor countries. Otherwise, I got almost all my information from - and had only faith in - American sources like Lee Lockwood's "Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel" and "Venceremos Brigade" written by enthusiastic young American volunteers in Cuba. With all my trauma from the Maoists who had inhabited my house in Copenhagen, I had no interest whatsoever in Mao's China, but funnily enough it was Mrs. Godfrey who now eagerly opened my eyes to this new Communist experiment with her observations from her own travels in China. The book by the English surgeon Joshua S. Horne, "Away with all pests", describes starving poor colonial China and later Mao's China, and it was very close to turning me into a Maoist - at least so much so that I realized that there was no other way than a Communist revolution if the poor countries were to be saved. Thus, in my budding dialogue with my father, I now sent home a lot of postcards with colorful pictures of Mao's China with phrases like "Mrs. Godfrey also says...." What I conveniently forgot to write about was all her inner doubts about whether this large-scale revolutionary attempt to save human life would not also end up suppressing human life and democratic freedom in the long run. Yet she always proudly claimed that it was she who first persuaded Trudeau to establish diplomatic relations with China, which happened in October 1970 while I was there.



When I later hitchhiked through the ghettos of Quebec and moved in with the oppressed French, I understood very well why many had rebelled and supported the FLQ seen on the door. The children seemed shabby, just as I later saw it in the black American ghettos. But in Quebec, the blacks ranked above the French in the hierarchy because they belonged to the English-speaking oppressors.

But if we were thus close to radicalizing and de-radicalizing each other on the question of whether revolutionary violence justified great and necessary social progress, it may well be that we were both shaken to our feet when, later that fall in October, violent revolution broke out in Canada only five hours' drive from the farm. At first, I applauded the Marxist Liberation Front, the FNL, inspired by rebel groups of the time around the world, seeking independence from French Quebec. "Even here in safe Canada, you cannot hide from justice," I shouted enthusiastically, while it still seemed like only a game. But now Margaret's light mood changed into absolutely black, applauding Trudeau's suspension of democracy by imposing martial law to quell the rebellion. Everywhere there were roadblocks as in a war. But when guerrillas kidnapped both the British Trade Consul and then Labor Minister Laporte, who was eventually found murdered in a trunk, they were given safe conduct and flown to Cuba on condition that they did not kill the Trade Consul too. It was a wakeup call anyway during all my revolutionary romanticism. After that bloody experience, I felt remorse for having initially rhetorically and blindly supported the madness and began to soften and become more responsive to Mrs. Godfrey's arguments - not to mention Dr. Godfrey's Christian message of reaching the enemy through reconciliation and dialogue. It's so easy in isolation to justify violent freedom movements, but when they get so close that they touch your daily life and you can almost see the people in their eyes, I could feel my legs shaking beneath me.

From the confessions of a revolutionary

The reason I have since attributed so much importance to Mrs. Godfrey as a "saving angel" who may have ended up saving my life is that I could not easily sweep her arguments off the table, as I could when arguing with most right-wingers. No, she was fundamentally supportive of my project and admired it because she herself had shared so much of it as a young person. I used the lessons learned from her later in my life when I worked to de-radicalize the equivalent Islamists of our time - with the same loving and solidaric inside arguments.

For if there was anything in which she and most Canadians I met stood in solidarity with me, it was their resistance to the Vietnam War. Hence, there was widespread understanding of the violent resistance inside the US (though, as mentioned, mixed with fear that it would inspire violent resistance in Canada). So outwardly, the public supported Trudeau when he opened the borders to hundreds of thousands of American draft dodgers and deserters fleeing military service in Vietnam. This despite the fact that many of those I met were actually radicalized themselves to varying degrees - or like me, quickly became so.

For in my own Canadian alienation, I felt naturally at home among these young long-haired Americans, whose better-educated backgrounds were a great gift to Canada. If, despite my isolation on the farm, I became so attached to and inspired by these draft dodgers, it was not simply because they were the ones to whom I naturally gravitated, since their Toronto headquarters, The Yellow Ford Truck, at No. 25 Baldwin St., was right next door to No. 29, where I lived with Kristen in my spare time in the old Jewish-Chinese ghetto, now renamed "the American ghetto." Furthermore, they bought up many of the farms around Dr. Godfrey's and turned them into hippie communes. As a result, I was frequently invited to their festive barn balls with dancing to fiddle, guitar and especially bluegrass banjo music well into the night. I also think they were the ones who, along with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, organized the great alternative "Strawberry Fields" music festival not far from our farm, in frustration at not being able to get to the even bigger fabled Woodstock festival just south of the border. Kristen and her brothers brought me along among the nearly 100,000 half-naked grass-smoking attendees, but other than Procul Harum, in my boundless ignorance, I didn't know the musicians until, to my astonishment, only a year later I was on stage in New York myself, with names on a piece of paper, introducing some of them to the audience in The Village Gaslight. Both there and especially at the barn balls, my frustration was always that, unlike the unapproachable Canadian girls, I fell in love with the American hippie girls in their flashing Indian skirts and long flowing hair, but in vain as they had almost all come to Canada with their

escaped boyfriends. Oh, how I loved and felt drawn to these young Americans!

Instead, in my sexual frustration, I threw myself into the "revolution" (against the US) in my little secluded cabin, which Kristen decorated on the outside with a picture of Lenin from her friend Lindsey's left-wing silk-screening cooperative. I left it hanging there merely to annoy Mrs. Godfrey, for I had no interest in Lenin, whom I knew only from the things Indian Jogindar had told me at home.

I have since wondered why we young people, who briefly form angry countercultures, so frequently choose the most provocative symbols - Hitler, Stalin, Bin Laden, etc. - without deep down believing in them ourselves. But here, where Mrs. Godfrey had no access, I felt protected to cultivate my belief that the young generation had learned enough from the mistakes to avoid betraying the needed rebellion of the poor. Being the slow reader I am, I cannot believe today that I read so many revolutionary books in the light of the kerosene lamp. I was particularly moved by the plight of the poor in Latin America when I read books by New York Times correspondents like John Gerassi. I bought books and tapes to learn Spanish, and even a sleeping bag, which I spent the summer practicing sleeping in outdoors, imagining that this was how I would live in the future, when I went down to support the guerrillas in Guatemala in my outrage at Nixon's bloody suppression of free elections there - an outrage against "Los Norte Americanos" Nixon himself was made to feel everywhere during his visit to Latin America. I didn't think much about what these naive reveries otherwise might entail. And not in my wildest fantasy did I imagine that I not even one night during the next five years of vagabonding would I need that sleeping bag, because Americans everywhere so hospitably invited me in under their own covers. So lovingly that I completely betrayed my own planned revolution against them and corruptly ended up distorting the Cuban battle cry to "Venceremos en la cama". Call it de-radicalization for all it's worth!

But before my great journey down to the poor countries, I first had to justify it all - like all true revolutionaries - with a great revolutionary manifest.



With Ho Chi Minh on my desk, I sat here in my hut after working hours and wrote endlessly on my large manifest and equally long letters.



My beloved cabin out in the hills decorated with Lenin to provoke Mrs. Godfrey.

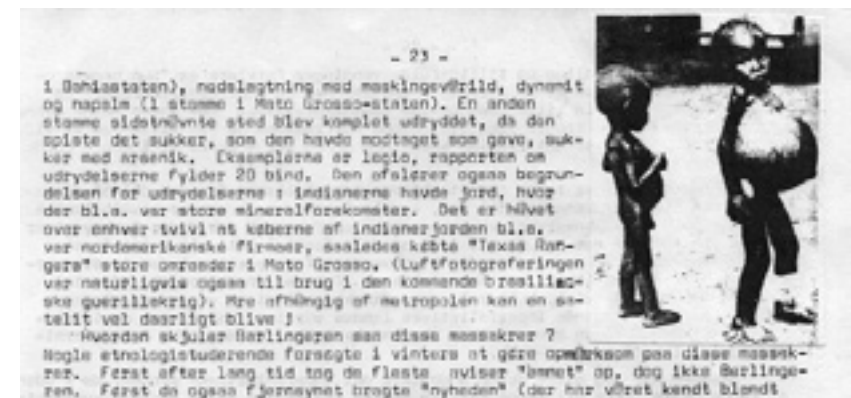
For it goes without saying that one does not want to die in vain and anonymously. So, night after night I sat and wrote endless pages in pen about why there was no other choice now but to support the worldwide struggle for the poor. Since I wanted to send my manifest to my more bourgeois friends in Denmark, I tried to use almost exclusively bourgeois sources. And when I used the high economic growth rates at that time in the socialist countries as an argument that only socialism could save the poor countries, I remember, among other things, quoting Herbert Pundik (chief editor of Politiken) for this sentence about South Korea's poverty as opposed to North Korea's. "The land where the birds have stopped singing and the children are crying for food." That is precisely why I noticed that 25 years later Pundik used the exact same phrase, but now about North Korea, whose growth rates had meanwhile fallen like those of the other communist countries, while they had exploded upwards in South Korea's tiger economy.

So while the first part of my great manifest was mostly about the unjust oppression the US was inflicting on the poor countries, I launched into a huge analysis of how the poor countries could only be saved by the high growth rates of socialism (which at the time in Yugoslavia, for example, was 11%). I am impressed today to see all the graphs and mathematical equations I used - and, I think, even understood myself - which made my whole manifest look like something, for me today, incomprehensible as Thomas Piketty's "The Capital". It is terribly embarrassing today to skim through these pages (of my naivety), but I am nevertheless a little proud of never once therein - like the home-grown Danish university Marxists - pleading for a socialist upheaval in our own Western countries. Here I felt that we had already achieved the ideal welfare state and continued to be a good social democrat for life after 1969. No, for me it was only a question of reducing our own artificially high standard of living by redistributing to the developing countries.

I didn't even realize how much I had written over the summer until the fall, when I took the huge stack of handwritten papers to Kristen's apartment in Toronto and then sat in the Trotskyist office on weekends, typing it all with one finger on 150 sheets of stencil paper to duplicate it their Edison-style stencil duplicator.



My finished, thick manifest with my Chinese friend, Ejnar Chang's engraving on the front. And next to it the thick bundle of handwritten pages which formed the basis of the typed script. My old schoolmates who received it have never accused me of laziness (except in school).



My illustrated manifest was filled with indignant reporting from American sources about the massacres and starvation in the U.S.-occupied dictatorships. Here from Brazil, where two of the combatants in the guerrilla war I mentioned later became Brazil's democratically elected presidents. So here I had the coming democracy on my side!

The work alone of correcting all the typos with correction ink was as admirable as pretending that I supported Toronto's handful of Trotskyists with their endless, empty talk about "the masses". 150 densely written pages - a total of 820,000 keystrokes, equivalent to one and a half times this book - duplicated in about 100 copies for my friends in Denmark. But just before I was to send it all home, it happened that on



Kristen in my cabin in the summer of 1970, which we still lived in together 35 years later.

September 4th, 1970, Salvador Allende, the first socialist ever, won the elections in the only democratic country among Latin America's dictatorships. And so, the whole message of my battle manifest that only a violent revolution could save the poor came crashing down, and from then on, with the influence of Mrs. Godfrey and the October Revolution in Quebec, I began to change my attitude and talk about wanting to go down and support "Allende's democratic struggle against the United



Kristen and I in the farm's big swimming pool.



Kristen with Ricardo from Argentina.

States" rather than a violent overthrow. But for my own mental state, I felt that it was good for me to have spent that summer writing my way out of my anger against the United States - peacefully but with violent words - and in that way to slowly open up to and become more understanding and tolerant of people in my continuing journey.

As suggested, there were probably some deeper motivations behind my anger and frustration. While Mrs. Godfrey became the mother to me I had never really had, on the farm I missed the intimate girlfriend relationships I had had in Denmark. I felt so lonely that I started writing to former girlfriends like Lotte and Lisbeth, asking them to come over so we could give our relationship a fresh start. I did spend weekends with Kristen, but she soon found another half-boyfriend in the Argentinean Marxist, Ricardo Perez, who moved in with her. He was a bit of a Che Guevara type from the Argentine bourgeoisie with parents in the violent Tango Apache cult of the 1950s. We immediately became good friends and planned to go down together to defend Allende's revolution in Chile. (We had both abandoned the revolution, however, when years later he recognized me on Wall Street in New York in 2004, while I couldn't possibly recognize him now that he had become a rich Argentine businessman in a suit with short hair.) And we had no trouble sharing the same girlfriend when Kristen took turns sleeping with him and me.



The now 90-year-old Dr. Godfrey at my 60th birthday party in Copenhagen in 2007



Four generations together. The 90+ year old Lithuanian Jew who changed his name to Godfrey in the US with Charles, Adam and Adam's son. Adam died of birthmark cancer in May 2019.

This special relationship with Kristen continued through life as the most natural thing. During my travel years in the US, she kept hitchhiking down to stay with me in New York, San Francisco, or wherever I happened to be, even when I was staying with American girlfriends, just as black girlfriends would later hitchhike up to the farm in Canada when I returned to be with Kristen.

Sexually, since I met her at 18, we had never given our relationship a second thought. I remember my shock one day in Toronto, after two years away, when she said how good I looked naked. I could not say the same about her, as I think I was never very much physically attracted to her, but mentally drawn to her, in the same way that I have since been drawn to Jewish women. And perhaps the explanation was the same, because at the time of this writing, when I needed some facts, I wrote to her now 101-year-old father, who told me for the first that his own

With Mrs. Godfrey in 1986 during one of my many later visits, for which she had laid the groundwork with her invitation in 1969.





Kristen with the seductive Jewish traits I would later fall for and benefit from so often in the United States.

father, whom I had met frequently in 1970, had fled to the United States from a Jewish shtetl during the pogroms in Lithuania. Since then, they had both fled to Canada under the influence of McCarthyism's coded anti-Semitism. So only now, 50 years later, did I understand Kristen's generalizations about Jews, and why she had always reminded me, with her "frizzy hair," of the Russian Jews who, for the next many years in the United States, took me into their loving embrace. It was also these dark-haired girls in particular that I had felt drawn to under the barn balls that first summer, when I didn't yet know that they were Jews with all the political idealism so typical of them and which, in turn, always made them interested in me. If Kristen had inherited even a little of the same genetics, I also understood why she felt attracted to two such fanatical revolutionaries as Ricardo

and me, while she herself looked at it all a little from above - with suitably cynical and teasing distance.

On the road

This first lonely year on the farm seemed endless for a young man who didn't so much miss sex as intimacy. So, when Kristen and Ricardo were having fun together during my weekend visits to Toronto, I'd wander back and forth along Bloor Street in the evenings - the street where all the smart and good looking young white women strolled to be seen. The only problem was that none of them would know anything of me with my long hair. Or they did and ignored me for the same reason. And the black Caribbean women around Spadina Avenue in our own neighborhood were even more indifferent to me, shaped as they were by Canada's British cultural pattern, not to forget that I hadn't yet taken an interest in blacks myself. This was and remained the depressing female response to me everywhere in Canada, where throughout that first year I failed to get a single girlfriend. Only once did I come close, when I somehow lured a young girl, Patricia Smidth from my local town, Stouffville, out to the farm. I will never forget that day, Monday, August 17, 1970, while Mrs. Godfrey was shopping in Toronto. God knows how, because Patricia was no more than 16-17 years old, but clearly looking for a bit of excitement in her short, cut-off jeans in the incredibly boring teenage culture out there in the boonies. I must have been really needy, because I used all my political ideas to seduce her into my cabin, where I also managed to at least "mind fuck" her. This was new to me, as I had always passively let women take the initiative. Therefore I was probably a bit clumsy and not entirely happy with the role, which is why she held back herself and we agreed that she should go home and think about it and come back another day if she felt like it. But before that, I wanted to influence her a bit, so I let her borrow Jerry Rubin's new American bestseller, "Do It", to take home. It was an easy-to-read, seductive picture book from the American counterculture, with a provocative mix of hippie, yippie and left-wing political ideas. I was shocked, however, as I waited hopefully to see Patricia again, when instead her father, a local banker in his finest suit, came running out to the farm, scolding me for

giving such smutty literature to his daughter. "What kind of immoral filth are you teaching her? Have you no decency?" he shouted, showing how the book everywhere used the word "fuck" and throwing it at my head with the same words, "Go fuck yourself, but don't fuck with my daughter's head."

My God, I thought, that was a word all the kids were already using. I was more disappointed that Jerry Rubin's romanticization of the Cuban revolution didn't seem far more subversive to this financier, but that was apparently not the case here in Canada, where Trudeau had established a close relationship with Castro. Afterwards, I realized that I had erred by not following the book's main slogan myself with my first and only Canadian date, "Act first. Analyze later. Impulse - not theory - makes the great leaps forward. JustDo it!"

This nagging misstep in my character, funnily enough, I was to be accused of again and again over the next years by American women with their different capability of action. "Why do you always procrastinate?" (I didn't know what it meant, but could in the context figure out it wasn't meant positively.)

But when, like me, you had internalized the puritanical British culture of Canadians ("when in Rome do as the Romans") for almost a year, it does end up becoming the norm and you the deviant. Anyway, I began to delude myself that it was really me who had a problem with women. So strongly did I feel the problem that shortly after the defeat with Patricia Smidth I decided to go to a psychologist in Toronto for help. It cost a fortune, and all I remember coming out of it was his closing remark, "Why don't you go out and cut some trees?" I replied as was right, but even more dejected, "But that is what I already do all day long!" But his advice still didn't help. Only Mrs. Godfrey became even more enthusiastic about me when she saw me all day long chopping wood for the winter and now praisingly called me "Canada's fastest tree cutter."

It helped, however, when the hard winter came, for no matter how much firewood I put in my wood-burning stove, it could not cope. So before Christmas I moved into Dr Godfrey's apartment attached to his clinic in Toronto. And there his beautiful, dark-haired medical secretary began to flirt with me constantly, which totally knocked my legs out under me, so I asked in wonder, "Are you from outer space?"

She replied in surprise, "No, I'm from the US," then hastened to add, fearing I would react negatively to an American, "but politically I'm from Russia, as I'm a Kropotkin anarchist." And soon Ann Ruffner, as she was called, had seduced me under her warm sheet, where she immediately proceeded to "mind fuck" me with Russian anarchism, which I had never heard of before, but which she believed would be the answer to America's coming revolution. I kept pestering her, "Take me away, take me away - far away from this cold country which, unlike the United States, has never had a revolution against England, which is why both men and women remain stuck in reactionary Victorian Puritanism."

And Ann didn't have to be told twice before inviting her new Danish boyfriend to spend New Year with her parents down in St. Louis, even though she'd forgotten she was actually already married.



Ann Ruffner in front of her parents' house, where I was given her sister's large room at upper left, untouched after her sister's death.



This photo of Ann Ruffner and her husband was probably taken at my last show in Charlottesville on November 6, 1995, or during later visits. Our brief anarchist/philosophical relationship kick-started others' more tangible revolution and my activist friendship with Nathan Gardels and Jane Fonda.

That, I thought, would be a very convenient stop, as it was about halfway down my onward road to Latin America, which I now finally wanted to travel down to. I had been warned many times by Canadians not to hitchhike through the violent USA, so I was tremblingly nervous when, after the bus ride through Detroit and Chicago, I finally stuck my thumb out.

But immediately the beautiful, fair-haired Gloria Gardels slammed on the brakes and insisted on taking me home to live with her pastor parents in Cahokia, Illinois. Already, during the next day's church service, I got tangled up in an arms delivery to the Black Panthers by her revolutionary brother, Nathan. And in such ways I was continually derailed by the women of America, yet made it as promised to the big New Year's party Ann Ruffner had invited me to. There I was seduced by her old friend, Sharon Lee Holland, to have my teeth cleaned the next day in her dental clinic, where she raped me in the dentist's chair (having behind my back previously obtained permission from the anarchist Ann). In return, I quickly seduced Sharon with my revolutionary ideas to the point that two years later she went underground to bomb the government.

But Sharon also put me to the test when, in order for us to sleep together, she put me up in her friend Larry's house. Larry was an exceptionally sweet Vietnam veteran who had miraculously survived one of the bloodiest battles on "Hamburger Hill" at the Khe Sanh base. For I had in Denmark followed that long battle day by day, wishing only that the Liberation Front would wipe out all the Americans there so that it could be the Vietnamese's final Dien Bien Phu victory over the Americans. And then suddenly I had moved in with one of my enemies whom I had wished dead. To which I confessed, very moved and tearful, to Larry during our long, late-night talks. But Larry was forgiving because he himself had changed his mind, which is why, shortly after my visit, he joined Sharon and later presidential candidate John Kerry in starting the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

So in the face of such a formidable foe, who everywhere used subversive, conciliatory love and disarming hot beds, I had to surrender quickly. Even Ann's conservative father, a university president, sat around talking about how "we are truly in the midst of a revolution" and tried to persuade me to stay in the US, probably also because they hoped I would be their new "relatively sane" son-in-law now that their own far more anarchic daughter, Ann, was taking a break from her husband. Hm, I thought. When even the reactionaries claim that I am already in the midst of a revolution, why look for the revolution in faraway Latin America? As a result of my and Sharon's conspiracy, however, Ann and her husband later got back together, but I gratefully continued to live with them during my lectures at the University of Virginia until Ann's death on December 2, 2004, at the age of 55. And with Gloria Gardels and her husband when I showed "*American Pictures*" at the University of Alabama... right up until she was killed in a car accident on June 9, 2002, at age 49, along with her mother. She was buried just two miles from the site of Lincoln's old home, where she had given me my first American ride.

I had thought it was a coincidence that the Lord had sent me straight into a rectory on my first American hitchhiking trip, but was later to see a pattern in that I constantly ended up with these rebellious fellow sufferers who also suffered from *Preacher's Kid syndrome*.



Sharon Lee Holland when I met her - and as the terrorist I had turned her into two years later, when she had gone underground and begun assembling bombs against the government. Before that I often met her as a speaker for the Vietnam Veterans Against the war in numerous demonstrations with John Kerry at her side - later Secretary of State and presidential candidate.



That means trying to live out the message of love of preacher parents by going out to save the world. Time and again they became my allies, and Gloria's revolutionary brother, Nathan, like so many of my radicalized friends from that time. Since they ended up at the top of the system we had in our youth been trying to fight. He spent most of his life in negotiations with politicians everywhere. First with our common guerrilla inspiration, Regis Debray - Che Guevara's comrade-in-arms in Bolivia - when he became President Mitterrand's foreign minister in France. In his last Christmas greeting to me in 2016, Nathan wrote, "Jacob, I saw Helle Thorning-Schmidt (the Danish prime minister) the other day and we were talking about you. All the best after all these years, Nathan."

Black conscience and yellow fever

The truth was that all my new friends had united to create a great saving conspiracy against my entire planned revolutionary future in Latin America. All of them had these first days in America scared me from hitchhiking on down through the violent South, where the black revolution was already in full swing just two hours south of us in the city of Cairo, Illinois. So today I can only laugh that the great self-imagined revolutionary liberation fighter was so easily intimidated from hitchhiking through the United States down to "safety in Latin America," as I later called it in my lectures in the United States. And since my parents had in the meantime sent me a camera in Canada, "so you can send home some pictures of your exciting adventures," I was easily persuaded to postpone my southern venture. "Wait. Then I can go down with you and fight with the oppressed!" as Sharon pleaded with the new visions, she had learned from me. So, I turned around and hitchhiked back north towards Canada, with the idea of taking the safer route to Mexico down along the Pacific instead. When I finally made it back to Dr. Godfrey's farm in Canada, I breathed a sigh of relief at this my first baptism of fire as a hitchhiker in the United States they claimed was too dangerous to hitchhike in. Although I had not achieved my stated goal of escaping "los norte americanos", I never forget how proud I was to show them that I could now stand on my own two feet.

I even came back with all of the money I had earned on the farm still untouched, about 1,100 Canadian dollars, just as I did 5 years later thanks to American hospitality. Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey had been on a much longer and more revolutionary trip, about which I wrote to my parents in amazement, "G now home after their round the world trip. The formerly anti-Communist Dr. Godfrey bought a Mao uniform in China for everyday use and is now a convinced Maoist. He has covered his clinic with Mao healing posters and quotes."

But I had to get out of the inhospitable, now icy and even whiter Canada. Fortunately for me, Rich, an American from Connecticut, was applying on a "student ride board" to visit his brother, a deserter on the West Coast. I was not going to regret paying no less than \$10 (Canadian) to avoid standing out in the cold on the 4.500 km Trans Canada Highway, because there were virtually no other cars on the endless boring stretch, where I tried to count all the telephone poles along the way. Unfortunately, just outside Toronto we saw a tall hippie standing with his guitar case and dog and had to pick him up in the freezing weather. It was so cold that every time the dog peed in the little Beetle VW with no heat, it instantly froze on the floor.

It took us two days without accommodation just to get out of the province of Ontario, and only then did it really dawn on me how big North America is. In Sault Ste. Marie we couldn't find the town since the houses were covered in snow up to four or five meters high. It was an indescribably hard winter journey of one week, but as I was soon to learn as a wanderer: the deeper the pain I allowed myself to be subjected to, the more I felt rewarded in Heaven immediately afterwards. For in Vancouver, on the warmer west coast, I was immediately taken in by a couple of American refugees, Andy and Angie Rhodes. Andy had even been the personal secretary to President Johnson's close friend, the influential Senate leader Mike Mansfield, but had been frightened by the American war crimes in Vietnam through his insider knowledge. So, we immediately struck up a strong friendship, and he took me to a party with the many other American political refugees. As usual, therefore, there was a shortage of women, and I noticed a drunken long-haired man sitting

with his arms around a beautiful Chinese girl, going on and on about "we are going home to knock down the Chinese wall." It didn't quite work out that way, though, because without my having said a word to her all evening or sent her a glance, she suddenly turned angrily away from him in the morning and walked up to me with the words, "Pretend we're friends and come home with me."

Since then, I was to see enough instances of this particular racism which Asian women call "yellow fever" in men suffering from the disease, but it was the first time I learned how sexually aggressive American men are - and how I myself could benefit from being "puritanical." But since I had just adopted the more politically correct Canadian code myself, I had to be careful not to also hurt myself by trying to knock down Chinese walls, since I assumed that the adorable Kim Yang was Canadian and not American.



I have visited the Godfrey family again and again throughout my life in gratitude for their birth role for "American Pictures." During one of their visits to Denmark, they gave rise to my second slideshow about Bolivia by virtue of Dr. Godfrey's role as president of CARE Canada. But I hadn't imagined that I'd be giving a thank-you speech about this on Godfrey's 98th birthday, and that the very next morning he'd be getting up at 5 a.m. as usual to drive the three hours to his job in Toronto. Every weekend when I drove with this workaholic to Toronto, he sat during the drive and dictated his many books on the dictaphone. At 102 years old in 2019, he was still working and too busy to make it to my publication of this book in Copenhagen. Margaret died in 2003, but I was amused to photograph my saving angel in the coffin she had previously set up in the living room "so I can get used to it."

There was no doubt that she loved me - also because in that short time I became a beloved papa to her two adorable children. Funnily enough, the relationship was broken off precisely because of "yellow fever", as I wrote to my parents:

"When I came to Vancouver, several whites talked about the yellow peril, i.e., all the Chinese who have poured into the city and later I had to admit that there was a certain "yellow peril". For I had only been staying with Kim Yang for a few days when both she and someone else in the house contracted 'jaundice', or whatever the disease hepatitis is called in English, and I had to flee the house in a hurry. First, however, the children and I were injected at a university clinic which, to my surprise, was overflowing with Chinese staff and where Kim knew a Chinese nurse, so it didn't cost us anything."

But on I went, and miraculously that day in the pouring rain I was picked up by a younger woman as I went into the university to find a lift. Beverly, as she was called, was looking for a passenger to join her in the car down to San Francisco. She had already interviewed several other men, but now immediately selected me as her chosen one, she later confessed, having just divorced a professor in New York. And yes, I did not even have to ask her if she was American or Canadian in that regard, with my now hard-won slogan, "follow custom and be seduced by country." For already before the first day's driving was over, Beve, as she was called, had me seduced into the back of the big van, where we literally punched through even the giant Redwood trees on the most romantic trip down the Pacific. The moonlight view alone from our honeymoon bed on the green rolling Highway 1 out over the ocean is something I will never forget.

A vagabond is created

"Welcome to America," everyone seemed to shout seductively around me, but fanatical and stubborn as I still was, I was determined to continue down to the revolution in Latin America, as I said to her at our tearful farewell, when after three or four days of rocking she dropped me off in Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco.



After the 3,000-mile icy trip, we recovered for a few days at Peter, Patricia and Vicky's home in Clearwater, British Columbia. In my diary I wrote that night after night I walked around Vancouver's bars trying to sell my sheepskin coat, as I didn't expect that I would need it down in the heat as a guerrilla in Latin America. But I still have it today.

She dumped me at noon in bright sunshine right near the University of San Francisco, where she said I could easily find a place to stay. Therefore I wandered around to inquire about a place I could "crash," and the first person I struck up a conversation with was a burly black math major. He said I could have his bed in his dorm room, as he himself had to sit up all night writing a big math paper. Fine, I said, I'll be back at nighttime, and then wandered around all afternoon exploring this wonderfully bright city. But it was the middle of the hippie era, and I had landed right in the heart of the hippie movement, and soon I was surrounded by wonderful young hippie girls with flowing hair and colorful Indian skirts. Many of them were incredibly flirtatious towards me, who had just arrived from the icy north and was still wearing my big sheepskin coat with a fluttering Viet Cong scarf around my neck. Since this sexy costume had nowhere been able to capture a single woman in sex-cold Canada, I suddenly felt like I was in the seventh heaven with all these women around me.

And as soon as they saw my backpack and heard my Danish accent, one after the other asked if I needed a place to stay. So, it was just a matter of choosing between all the offers.

But I remember feeling guilty if I wanted to go home with the prettiest of the girls and opted out of the less attractive ones, or elsewhere the funniest, most intelligent etc. over the more boring ones. So, I kept answering that I should just see a bit of the city first, then I would return to the address they quickly wrote down for me. And soon after I was struck with guilt thinking that maybe I just wandered on to find an even better offer, which of course I kept doing, which is why I now felt guilty about leaving the first ones and about later in the day not even remembering who they were and what they looked like. In any other American city, I would not have had all these choices on my first day, so the fact that I had ended up right here in the bright mecca of hippies, and they gave me the blackest of guilt feelings, is probably one of the reasons why I later developed strong prejudices against precisely the hippies.

In the long run, however, this ordeal of "The Peasant in Heaven" turned out to be good for me, because the more I thought about all these options, the more I began to formulate what was to become my "on saying yes" vagabond philosophy. I quickly sensed that if I kept choosing the beautiful ones, I would end up instinctively discriminating against the unattractive ones, which would eventually destroy myself by then sending out selfish vibes that made me less attractive, so that eventually only the ugly ones would feel attracted to me. More importantly, I further concluded that if I kept choosing the young, I would be discriminating against the old and thereby missing out on an incredible amount of experience. And if I always chose the whites (because it was easier and more convenient), I would be unconsciously discriminating against the blacks. And the rich over the poor, etc. I'm pretty sure, though, that on that first day in America, I didn't carry the train of thought to not choosing the heterosexuals for fear of discriminating against the homosexuals. My imagination and capacity for imagination were not at all sufficient for that at the time. But it was soon to do so.

So I had to find a more democratic way to choose the people I would stay with. There was nothing else to do but keep letting the others choose for me, and the only way to do that was by consistently saying yes to everyone - in practice (democratically speaking), by saying yes to the first person who invites me home every day and then patiently see what comes of it. I wasn't able on that first day of travel in the US to think through whether this would even be practical if, for example, you had a specific destination in mind like Latin America, as I did. But it couldn't to try, I concluded.

And so, I started the first real day of travel in America by deciding that I should go back to the black guy who had first invited me, even though I hadn't really found him very interesting and was much more interested in staying with some of the lovely white hippie girls I had met during the day.

Sensing that we wouldn't have much to talk about - math major as he was and living in a cramped little dorm room - I dragged it out as long as I could without infringing on his hospitality. I think it was past 11pm when I rang his bell. He looked surprised but happy, and luckily, I didn't have to talk math with him, because after some polite conversation he let me have his single bed in the small room, while he sat with his back to me at his desk and continued writing his big paper. As I recall, I quickly fell asleep on my stomach, as I like to do in the early hours of the night. I have no idea how long had passed, but suddenly I woke with a scream at something being drilled into my rectum. "Don't worry," he said, lying on my back, "we'll just use a little Vaseline, and it'll all go smoothly." Then he quickly took - while still holding me down - something from the little bottles on the nightstand, reminding me of what my mother had smeared on the thermometer before she pushed it up the same way in childhood. Only that this had been far thinner and far more comfortable. I don't remember much else specifically, except that I protested, though not violently. It continued to hurt terribly, but I felt too ashamed to scream, thinking that "now you must try to take it like a man." Thoughts ran through me as to whether I should try to escape, but it was too late at night, and many had warned me about the crime in the area, so I didn't feel like giving up my "safe" bed.

I'm pretty sure that until that night I hadn't made up any notions that that's what gay men did, just that they probably just sucked each other off or something else that felt good. Not that they were out to hurt each other with such big weapons as he apparently used. When I ended up concluding that he was probably some kind of gay and not a violent man, I also remember thinking that then he was just some kind of person I hadn't gotten to know before. And so, as a traveler, I had to try to make the best of it by opening up to him - which I then tried to do rather than clenching my balls. I also remember, though, that even in this situation I felt guilty thinking that here I had been walking all day and being assaulted by all sorts of beautiful girls who found me irresistible, and maybe this guy was just really desperate because he as a black man wasn't able to find a girl to have sex with. And so I had no right but to offer myself as a substitute, because otherwise he might eventually go out and rape someone. The idea that I myself was being raped under his firm grip didn't strike me at all, because rape was something you did to women, I had heard and believed.

I thought I had better surrender to God, and at that moment the miracle came. My maker suddenly filled me from above with a redemptive agent and injected something into my rectum, after which the torment stopped. He suddenly went limp and collapsed, and a little later, without a word, sat back down at his desk and continued with his mathematics test. I was still lying on my stomach, not daring to move in my complete paralysis - not even to look over at him for fear that he would then attack me again. Only if I thought of him with complete love would that probably not happen. I have no idea when I finally fell asleep and where he ended up sleeping. But the next morning I woke up to him standing with some coffee for me, asking worriedly how I was. He looked very remorseful and asked if we were still good friends. "Yes, of course. And thank you for letting me sleep here," I replied. Then he seemed quite relieved and asked if I would like to go to church with him. It would mean an enormous amount to him if I did, so I immediately said yes - if only because it would be a good opportunity to get away without him feeling hurt and left with the feeling that he had done something wrong.



Two of my first "american pictures" taken with my new camera from my parents. And then straight from the lion's den, the Che Lumumba Club, which many on the Danish left then saw as the center of the revolution. John in the photo belonged to the club, but I lived there alone with the two wonderful black women, Jamala in the photo, and Demetra, through whom I soon came to meet Angela Davis's family and the Black Panthers. (For several years I photographed for the BPP paper). And so it was only fitting that the still-furry white Dane helped babysit in the middle of the Fillmore ghetto, where I was robbed. Since then, almost all of San Francisco's black ghettos have been pushed over to Oakland.



And so, Sunday February 28th, 1971 became a day I will never forget. For here in the Glide church, like another redeeming angel, he led me into a whole new religious way of devoting myself to man, which gradually led to my de-radicalization. And already on the third day my new yes philosophy led me, as the only white, to stay in Angela Davis' closed Che Lumumba club, whereby on the fourth day I ended up in the middle

of the Black Panther revolution, and after a party in the headquarters on the fifth day was attacked and robbed by a black gang armed with guns, which in itself shook me like an asp into an unknown world. Phew, for a young West Jutlandese (rural Denmark) to have both kinds of barrels (*gay* and *gun* is the same word in Danish) pressed into his body immediately upon arrival in a new country.

Twelve years later, we had a big party with many invited guests and media at the opening of the American Pictures permanent theatre in San Francisco. Suddenly during the party, a slightly nervous black man approached me and asked if I remembered him. No, I had no idea who he was. "Well, you stayed with me sometime in 1971," he said. My memory was still like a black hole. After all, I couldn't survive as a vagabond by travelling with eyes in the back of my head. But then he began, whispering in front of everyone, to describe our relationship that memorable night, and I realized that it was he who had raped me on my first night in San Francisco. I was completely enraptured and spontaneously gave him a huge hug and shouted, "Thank you for American Pictures. Without you and your tremendous gift, *American Pictures* would never have been created. Now I have returned with it as a gift to the city and country you opened to me."

So with all those detours - to both heaven and hell - one is inevitably sent on by a consistent testing of the yes philosophy, it actually ended up being a couple of weeks before I was finally invited to stay with one of those attractively beautiful, long-haired colorful hippie girls - my first Jewish girlfriend, Laura Eakins - whose approving father, David W. Eakins, was also one of the great Marxist writers of the time. Although he tried to put it all into perspective for me, I soon had to acknowledge that down here on earth among real people, no high-flying ideologies did any good.

And thus I had to surrender to these powerful "norte americanos" and never made it down to the struggle in Latin America, although the following year I made a half-hearted attempt to find the guerrillas in Guatemala - probably only because of a broken heart after a love affair with another Jewish woman (Marly) who dumped me for Fidel Castro's former confidential comrade-in-arms, now turned counterrevolutionary.

But it was from that moment, when I learned to consistently let every person I met take control over my life, that "American Pictures" really began. Not least a result of my new tool, the camera my parents had sent me for Christmas, which was much faster at describing people than the pen. Because it was on that very first day that I realized that only by saying yes and in my heart opening up to every person I had prejudices or fears about would I be able to empathize with and understand all walks of life. This happened over the next five years of vagabonding, which turned into mutually enriching and lifelong friendships with homosexuals, blacks, Jews, Muslims, criminals, prostitutes, mass murderers, the Ku Klux Klan, millionaires, etc.