

Fiction

Zero Zero Day

Excerpted from *Chicago Noir*, a new collection of short stories edited by Neal Pollack

In his introduction to the new anthology *Chicago Noir*, editor Neal Pollack mourns a city he remembers from back in the day, when he labored in the trenches as a staff writer for this paper. Pollack's ideal Chicago is a city pocked with old-man bars and dubious ethnic restaurants, "weird little museums" and empty storefronts—a city that's disappearing as planters replace potholes and tourists replace workers. His goal in putting together the collection, one of a dozen regional tomes in the series *Akashic Books* launched last year with *Brooklyn Noir*, is to pay homage to that city. "Chicago noir," he writes, "has a special quality of nostalgia, an extra dimension that makes nearly every story seem like an epitaph for a city now gone."

Pollack's eulogy is a bit overwrought—there's still plenty of grit to be found in these parts. His nostalgia trip may just be the result of too much Texas sun; he now makes his home in Austin. But the 18 stories that make up *Chicago Noir* do share a certain dusty, wistful air, from Peter Orner's "Dear Mr. Kleczka," an imagined letter from the paroled and laughing Nathan Leopold to an indignant former neighbor, to Pollack's own contribution, "Marty's Drink or Die Club," set in a thinly disguised *Simon's Tavern*. Kevin Guilfoile, author of the recent novel *Cast of Shadows*, contributed the story below. Pollack hits Chicago next weekend for the *Boucheron World Mystery Convention*, and he, Guilfoile, and others are promoting the book around town through September and early October; check the *Readings & Lectures* listings in the coming weeks for more. —Martha Bayne

The kitchen was small and square and further encroached upon by splintered cabinets and ancient appliances, the latter kept in working order by a combination of the tenant's unusual skills and his hard-to-find tools. The walls of the musty apartment cracked and peeled, but mechanical objects, clocks, lamps, televisions, and especially radios had been restored like museum pieces among the ruins. Anything not electrical, like walls, bathroom tile, and ceiling paint, remained in a state of ongoing neglect.

—Twenty-two-thirteen.

—Twenty-two-thirteen go ahead.

—Yeah, squad, do you have me logged on?

—Negative. [Pause] Try again now.

—Am I logged on now?

—Ten-four. I'm sending that job again.

—Ten-ninety-nine.

This radio, Kimball Dent's original creation, had been cobbled together from sets abandoned in Dumpsters around the city or in his shop downstairs by aborted customers who realized it was cheaper to buy new and better ones than pay to have them fixed. For Kimball, hunched over a late-night bowl of oatmeal in his kitchen, every banal word squawking through the receiver tonight between shrill fits of static was like a cut fastball thrown for a strike in the middle of a perfect game.

—Keeler and [unintelligible] with a [unintelligible].

—Seventeen-thirty-five, I can't understand a word he's saying, his radio's garbled.

—[Unintelligible] Milwaukee and Keeler, stalled car blocking traffic.

—Ten-four.

—Gonna be a red Honda [unintelligible]. Need to order a tow.

His heart beating at an accelerated rate, Kimball seized the scanner with both hands and repositioned it on the table for better reception. He didn't want to miss a single thrilling exchange.

—Can I get an RD for a zero-four-six-zero?

—Your RD is Henry-King-four-zero-four-six-four-three, Henry-King-four-zero-four-six-four-three on event number zero-eight-six-two-five. Zero-eight-six-two-five.

—Ten-four. Thanks.

The old analog clock on his stove read 10:55. If it continued like this for another sixty-five minutes, until midnight, he would be a witness to Chicago history.

—I still can't log on. Hold me down going in for a new PDT.

—One-three-three-five, please call me in the sergeant's office.

The Holy Grail of the police scanner hobbyist.

—Can I get a female for a search? A Zero-Zero Day.

—Twenty-one-ten.

—Twenty-one-ten, go ahead.

—Anyone know of a Dominick's near Paulina and Ogden with a Western Union [unintelligible] currency exchange?

Last year there had been over 600 homicides and more than 3,000 "aggravated batteries by firearm" within the city limits. The last time Chicago had a Zero-Zero Day, a twenty-four-hour period, midnight to midnight, with no murders and no shootings, was 1999, and as far as Kimball knew there were no witnesses then. No ears listening in on the scanner with an appreciation of the event as it occurred. No one anticipating the countdown to midnight the way he and dozens like him were doing just now.

—Yeah, uh, we were following a youth on a bike that fits the description of a suspect [unintelligible]. We have him on the hood.

—Twenty-one-ten, is that a negative on the Dominick's?

In the middle of the Formica-topped table, on the other side of Kimball's oatmeal but still at arm's length, was an approximation of a laptop Kimball had Frankensteined from computers so obsolete that cash-strapped schools wouldn't even accept them as donations. Scanning enthusiasts from across the country were instant messaging with Chicago hobbyists demanding the latest news on the lack of news, and the conversation scrolled with the speed of a stock ticker. Curiously, cops and dispatchers weren't even acknowledging the feat over their radios. Maybe they were afraid of jinxing it. Maybe the different shifts and the different districts had no way of comparing notes in real time. Maybe they wouldn't have any idea what had happened until the CPD command staff had their briefing in the morning. It was funny to think the scanning community shared real-time intelligence better than the Chicago PD. That notion made Kimball chuckle. He spat wet cinnamon and oatmeal onto a small auburn oval of mustache and goatee, then rubbed his face with a moistened washcloth he kept on hand for mealtime grooming.

—I just on-viewed a traffic accident at 95th and Pulaski. Hold me down over here and dispatch EMS for me, please, squad.

—[Unintelligible] medic [unintelligible] contact the station.

—Ten-four. Let me know if you



By Kevin Guilfoile | Illustration by Paul Hornschemeier

need any more help over there.

His phone rang, a lovely clapper-and-drum trill. He allowed those awful digital tones neither in his home nor in his shop, where the synthetic tweeting might go on for minutes, unnoticed and unanswered under the din of labor, static, and police dispatcher conversation.

"Hullo?"

"Dent!" It was Jen Colino. In the background, her own scanner, an expensive Radio Shack Pro-96, belched in harmony with the homemade one in Kimball's kitchen. "Amazing, huh? Amazing! Do you think it will hold up?"

"Dunno," Kimball said, now wondering if the cops weren't right to observe a superstitious moratorium on discussion of the Zero-Zero in progress. "We'll know in an hour."

"Wanna come over for the finish? I'll open a bottle of champagne at midnight. Like New Year's."

Kimball sighed. He didn't have a girlfriend, hadn't for a long time, and Jen Colino was the only woman availing herself to him currently. They had plenty in common. She was a scanner-head. She was sweet and kind of pretty, maybe a little fleshy

around the face and under the arms, but no more than he was. Jen was plenty attractive enough, was his point. But if they became a couple she would be over every night. She would make chicken and they'd track the scanner together, but she would want to talk. Constantly. Over the dispatchers. Over the cops. Over the paramedics. Although nearly every one of his friends was, like Jen, a member of the All Chicago Scanner Club, Kimball believed his hobby was a solitary pursuit, and he wasn't ready to give up his bachelor benefits for a warm body on the couch just yet. "No, I don't think so," he said to Jen now. "I don't want to miss anything."

All his life Kimball had chosen paths he could walk by himself. Maybe his parents imprinted that on him when they made him an only child. When he was a boy he loved jigsaw puzzles, and from there it was a small step to taking apart radios and fitting the pieces back together. He liked keeping his own schedule. Answering to no one but his customers, who were in and out of his shop as quickly as it took them to set a television on his counter and get an estimate. The

Chicago Noir with Neal Pollack and Kevin Guilfoile
WHEN Wed 8/31, 7:30 PM

WHERE Barbara's Bookstore, 1218 S. Halsted
INFO 312-413-2665

Chicago Noir with Neal Pollack, Joe Meno, and Marlon James

WHEN Fri 9/2, 7 PM
WHERE Quimby's, 1854 W. North
INFO 773-342-0910

stop below. With his eyes he could follow Grand Avenue east all the way to downtown but Racine only as far south as the Metra tracks on the other side of Hubbard. The Italian joint across the street was playing host to its Monday-night-lasagna regulars and a fleet of Caddies and Lincolns were squeezed into the angled parking spaces in the tiny lot. Along with the bakery and butcher and the storefront men's club down the street, Salerno's

people he felt closest to, the dispatchers he knew by name and the cops he recognized by beat tags, didn't even know he existed.

Kimball cupped his right hand at his temple and leaned against the kitchen window, peering down at a refrigerated truck idling at the four-way

was one of the last landmarks of the old neighborhood. There was still an Italian for every yuppie on this thin sliver between the expressway and the meatpacking district, but you couldn't really call it an Italian neighborhood anymore, not like the Polish and Korean blocks up Northwest where hardly anyone spoke English and you had to check with your waiter twice before you put a spoonful of anything in your mouth. There were still a handful of aging or wannabe wiseguys about. A few of them passed the hot days in lawn chairs on the sidewalk in front of the bakery, telling tales of the great Italian migration of the '50s, from Cabrini-Green up Grand all the way to Harlem. But in the condo sales brochures and restaurant listings, this neighborhood was River West now, a name as stripped of ethnicity as the realtors could manage.

"I could come over there," Jen offered.

"That's okay," Kimball said. "I mean, I'm kind of tired. I'm going to bed right after midnight." He added, "Or sooner, if somebody gets capped."

"Oh. Okay." The disappointed

silence was interrupted briefly by a unit responding to an alarm at a Clybourn clothing boutique and then continued for thirty seconds or more, as Kimball lingered with one ear pressed against the phone receiver and the other listening for the dispatcher.

Then the buzzer rang downstairs. "Someone's at the door, Jen. I gotta go."

"Who would be coming over at this hour?"

Her words were armed with jealousy and Kimball wanted to defuse them. "Could be a customer," he said.

"You shouldn't answer. You'll miss the Zero-Zero."

"I'll call you tomorrow."

"Okay. Call me."

Kimball hung up the phone and walked to the intercom, smudged with greasy fingerprints, next to the apartment door. With some frequency, folks from the neighborhood brought their televisions to Kimball's apartment after-hours. It most often happened on nights of Bulls playoff games. A desperate basketball fan might arrive at his doorstep, TV set cradled in his arms like a sick baby. Kimball

continued on page 22



Join the Club. Get an iPod® shuffle.

Join now through August 31st and get a **FREE iPod shuffle!**

While supplies last. Current enrollment fees apply.

Visit any Club location to join today!

Or take a virtual tour at

www.LSAC.com

Offer expires August 31, 2005.

In cooperation with



iPod is a registered trademark of Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple is not a participant or sponsor of this promotion.



Illinois Center
211 N. Stetson
312.616.9000

Lincoln Park
1320 W. Fullerton
773.477.9888

Downtown
441 N. Wabash
312.644.4880

Streeterville
333 E. Ontario
312.944.4546

It's a good time to join the **Club.**

Lakeshore
ATHLETIC CLUBS



p

TREK

GO TO WWW.VILLAGECYCLE.COM TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BIKES AT 40% OFF

MOUNTAIN BIKES

2005 **Trek 3700** msrp \$290 now **\$217.49**

- lightweight Alpha aluminum frame
- Shimano Acera rear derailleur
- bump-busting RST front suspension fork

2005 **Trek 3900** msrp \$330 now **\$247.49**

- lightweight Alpha aluminum frame
- light alloy wheelset
- bump-busting RST front suspension fork

2005 **Trek 4300** msrp \$360 now **\$269.99**

- lightweight Alpha aluminum SL frame
- trustworthy Shimano Alivio rear derailleur
- bump-absorbing RST front suspension fork

2005 **Trek 4500** msrp \$500 now **\$374.99**

- tough Alpha super-light aluminum frame
- proven RockShox Judy front shock
- off-road-ready Shimano Deore rear derailleur

2005 **Trek 6700** msrp \$959.99 now **\$719.99**

- Alpha SL aluminum frame
- RockShox Pilot SL front suspension
- Shimano Deore LX rear derailleur

ROAD BIKES

2005 **Trek 1000** msrp \$630 now **\$569.00**

- sleek super light aluminum frame
- road-dampening Bontrager carbon fork
- reliable Shimano Sora/Tiagra shifting system

2004 **Trek 1200** msrp \$880 now **\$659.99**

- sleek super light aluminum frame
- road-dampening Bontrager carbon fork
- reliable Shimano Tiagra/105 derailleurs and shifters

2005 **Trek 1500 or 1500WSD** msrp \$1100 now **\$999.00**

- Alpha SLR frame w/race geometry + women's-specific option
- Bontrager Select wheel set
- Shimano 105 shifting system

2005 **Trek 2100** msrp \$1649.99 now **\$1237.49**

- ZR9000 frame with OCLV carbon seat stays
- Bontrager Race wheelset
- Shimano 105 rear derailleur

2005 **Trek Madone 5.2** msrp \$2970 now **\$2227.49**

- light and fast OCLV carbon frame
- bullet proof Shimano Ultegra shifting system
- Bontrager Race Lite wheelset

HYBRID BIKES

2005 **Trek 7000FX Fitness** msrp \$290 now **\$217.49**

- lightweight aluminum frame
- smooth Shimano drivetrain
- *only available at Village Cycle Center

2005 **Trek 7000** msrp \$260 now **\$194.99**

- lightweight aluminum frame
- upright riding position with comfort seat and seatpost
- smooth-shifting Shimano TX50 rear derailleur

2005 **Trek 7200** msrp \$390 now **\$292.49**

- super-comfortable suspension seatpost
- upright adjustable handlebar
- RST front suspension fork

2004 **Trek 7300** msrp \$440 now **\$329.99**

- lightweight Alpha aluminum frame
- comfort seatpost and front shock absorber
- precision SRAM X-7 shifting system



Wump pedals, not gas

UP TO
25%
off msrp
2004 + 2005 models

OVER 10,000 BIKES IN STOCK

SALE ENDS AUGUST 31, 2005

OFF MSRP!

2004 **Trek 7500FX**
msrp \$660 now **\$494.99**
per light aluminum frame
wired-spoke design Bontrager wheelset
per tough Shimano LX rear derailleur

COMFORT BIKES

2005 **Trek Navigator 100**
msrp \$310 now **\$232.50**
lightweight aluminum frame
upright-riding comfort frame
clock-saving suspension seatpost

2005 **Trek Navigator 200**
msrp \$380 now **\$284.99**

- upright geometry for the ultimate comfort
- suspension fork and seatpost
- Shimano Alivio rear derailleur

2005 **Trek Navigator 300**
msrp \$440 now **\$329.99**

- light and comfortable aluminum frame
- safety conscious flashing tail, light and pedals
- comfort geometry with dual shock absorbers



• price match guarantee
• professional assembly + custom fitting
• lifetime warranty on parts + labor

• 30-day check-up + 2 free fall tune-ups
• no-hassle 7-day return + 30-day exchange policy

HOURS
10-9 MON-FRI
10-6 SAT & SUN

312-751-2488
1337 N. WELLS • CHICAGO
(2 BLOCKS SO. OF NORTH AVE.)

Village Cycle Center

The Bike Experts

n a t i o n ' s l a r g e s t b i k e s t o r e

Fiction

continued from page 19

tolerated such visits and even encouraged them. His services might not be needed much anymore in the era of disposable electronics, but they valued his skills when appliance stores were closed for the night.

He pressed the button and talked at the beige box in the wall. "Yeah?"

"Kimball?" a voice replied.

"Lemme in."

"Who is this?"

"Gerry!"

"Gerry," Kimball repeated.

"It's me. Genuine. My TV in your shop. You gotta let me in."

Genuine Gerry was a neighborhood character of indefinite Central Asian origin. Possibly Kyrgyzstan. Turkmenistan. Tajikistan. One of those. It would be a stretch to call him a neighborhood *resident*, as he didn't exactly have an address. To get by, Gerry relied on good weather and the generosity of others, and in Chicago the latter was just marginally more reliable than the former.

Story was he had been a Comiskey Park beer vendor. His nickname was from the Miller Genuine Drafts he once poured from his tray. Allegedly he'd been fired over an aggressive response to a drunken fan's insult. Since the spring, he parked cars at a new jazz club around the corner on Ogden, spending the hours from 7 PM to 3 AM in an aluminum and glass box the size of two old-fashioned phone booths welded together. His most prized of few possessions was a tiny eight-inch black-and-white TV, but during the day it wasn't safe in the parking lot booth. By long-standing agreement, when he left his shift, Genuine would hide the television on Kimball's second-story back porch. In the morning,

Kimball would retrieve the TV and take it into his shop for safe-keeping until 6 o'clock on the nose, right at closing, when Genuine would stop by and retrieve it for the night. Twice Kimball had made minor repairs, once to the antenna and once to the loose knob, without charging Genuine or even mentioning what he had done.

"Yeah, okay," Kimball said. "I'll be right down."

Kimball slipped back into the kitchen to get a quick bead on news coming over the scanner. Nothing going on, just a trespassing call from the University of Chicago library. Gerry leaned on the buzzer three times in annoying succession, and Kimball grabbed his keys, spun out the door, and sprinted down the steps.

Genuine was hopping on the sidewalk, arms rigid at his sides, his long, curly black hair, *Ace Frehley hair, you know, from KISS*, Jen had called it, bouncing around his head. Kimball had seen him high before, although he was never certain what combination of herbs, inhalants, liquors, powders, or pills got Gerry off.

"Let's make this quick, Gerry," Kimball said. "I'm kind of busy."

"Oh yeah, oh yeah," Genuine said. "You have a lady up there? Jennifer?"

"No, man," Kimball said.

"Just . . . stuff. It's late."

"I know. I know. This is the case."

Kimball pegged Gerry at about his own age, forty, and wherever he was from originally his accent didn't sound foreign, exactly. His English was occasionally quirky but always understandable, even in his present state, and his dialect sounded more like a nasally amalgam of Chicagoese and urban slang than it did Middle Eastern or Russian. His body

rigid, Gerry continued to hop like he was underdressed for the cold. But the night air couldn't have been much below seventy.

Kimball pushed aside the padlocked iron cage that stretched across the door to his shop and unlocked two dead bolts and then waved Genuine Gerry inside. Gerry rubbed his hands together and blew on them. "It's right here," Kimball said, walking quickly back to his workbench. He lifted the set by the handle and held it out, but Gerry was looking away, his eyes scanning the broken merchandise.

The indoor fluorescent lights were off, but plastic knobs and chrome trim twinkled in street light leaking between the iron bars on the window. Hundreds of small appliances lined every wall in the narrow shop. Some were awaiting repair. The ones that had been wiped clean and polished and dusted with compressed air sat near the front of the shop in anticipation of their owners. Many were shells, partially hollow, which Kimball had cannibalized for parts.

Gerry counted the shelves with his finger, one, two, three, four, five, six, all the way up to the ceiling. "You got any of those flat screens in here? Whatyacallem? Plasma TVs?"

"Not today," Kimball said, still holding the television in his outstretched arm. "Sometimes, though. Most of them are under warranty. Repaired by the manufacturer. Occasionally I get one of, uh, dubious origin that needs to be fixed."

"Dubious?"

"Well, I don't know for sure, of course, but when a plasma comes in here I usually suspect it's been stolen."

"Uh-huh. And whaddya do?"

"I fix it. It's none of my business where it came from."

Gerry began walking the perimeter of the dark shop, examining each television, radio, toaster oven, and computer. He didn't look ready to leave. Kimball leaned impatiently on his left hip. Of course, if he didn't hate confrontation so much he would have told Gerry months ago to find a new place to stash his crappy little TV. The secret to a solitary existence is to never make waves. Entanglements are just like they sound, ways in which you and other people are hopelessly entwined. Kimball reached up on a shelf and turned one of several in a row of police scanners to low volume.

—Go ahead.

—We're at the CITGO at [unintelligible]. We have an individual refusing to leave. It's going to be a black male [unintelligible].

"Most of the stuff I get nowadays is old," Kimball explained. "Stuff with sentimental value, or obsolesces the Compaqs and the Sonys and the RCAs no longer make. Big console sets. Lots of record players. Tape machines. That kind of thing."

Gerry turned to face him. "I need money."

"What?"

"Hundred-fifty dollars. I don't give him, he cracks me up."

"Who?"

"The man. The man in the green car."

Kimball had no idea what Gerry was talking about, but he assumed the man in the green car was a drug dealer. What else could he be? On the other hand, what dealer would give a guy like Genuine a line of credit?

"I'm sorry, Gerry. I don't have any money." He was still holding the television, waiting for

Genuine to take it.

"Maybe I take something from here," Gerry said. "Something worth hundred-fifty."

"No. No. No." Kimball walked toward Gerry and tried to force him, again, to take back his own set. "These things belong to my customers." Gerry was still studying the merchandise. "Come on," Kimball said. "You have to get back to work. Back to the club."

"This is why it's a good idea, Kimmy," Gerry said. "These things, they don't belong to you. I take them, you tell the owner it was stolen. Oops."

"No. Come on. Leave." He put his hand lightly on Gerry's arm and tried to guide him toward the door.

Genuine Gerry spun away from Kimball and when he regained his balance, his right hand was holding a pistol, pointed away, toward the wall.

"What the hell, Gerry?"

"You let me take something. I take something or I shoot it, your choice. You ever fix television full of bullets?"

—Can I get a description? Suspect will try to blend in here.

—White T-shirt. Long black jean shorts. Short Afro.

"Genuine, come on. Put the gun away."

Gerry was leaning over a set of twin turntables Kimball had already repaired and tagged for pickup. "What are these?"

"Turntables," Kimball said. "Record players. You know, for a DJ." He made a noise in the back of his throat like a scratching record. "I should take."

"No. No, you can't, Gerry." Genuine took one step back, turned his head away, shut his eyes tight, and fired a bullet into the machine.

"Gerry! Shit!"

continued on page 24

verizonwireless
We never stop working for you.®

At Verizon Wireless, we'll sustain your ambition and talent with:

- A supportive and professional environment
- Award-winning training
- Rewarding benefits
- Advancement opportunities

Sergio is just one of our success stories. You could be next.

To **Own Your Career**, visit:
www.verizonwireless.com/careers

Verizon Wireless is an equal opportunity employer, m/f/d/v.
We proudly service our customers from here in the USA.

CHICAGO'S
101
BEST
EMPLOYERS
TO WORK FOR
WINNER 2005



**THIS IS BIG.
THIS IS REALLY BIG.
NO, WAIT, IT'S SMALL.**



The MINI Cooper Convertible starts at \$22,000*

BILL JACOBS MINI

1564 West Ogden Avenue
Naperville, IL 60540
630-357-1200

KNAUZ MINI

409 Skokie Highway
Lake Bluff, IL 60044
847-604-5050

PATRICK MINI

696 East Golf Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173
847-303-MINI

*MSRP, including destination and handling charges. Price excludes license, registration, taxes and options. Actual price determined by MINI Dealer. MINI Cooper as shown with exterior chrome package, bonnet strips, fog lamps, 17" wheels, and metallic paint \$25,635. Prices do not include installation or painting, which may be required for particular items. ©2005 MINI, a division of BMW of North America, LLC. The MINI name and logo are registered trademarks.

MINIUSA.COM

IMAGINE PEACE - U2 Guitar Auction and Benefit Concert for the Chicago Peace Museum

September 21, Wednesday// International Day of Peace

**Buddy Guy's Legends, 754 S. Wabash, Chicago
Phone: 312-427-1190 • 7pm - 2am**

**With Emcee Terri Hemmert of WXRT Radio
Plus, Hawk (original rock),
Elevation (U2 tribute band) & Surprise Guests!**



A night of music, fun and peace to benefit *the only museum in the U.S. dedicated to peace through the arts*. Live and silent auctions for highly collectible green Gretsch guitar signed by U2, plus autographed items from Dave Matthews, Green Day, Moby, Ziggy Marley, Melissa Etheridge, Stephen Spielberg, Elvis Costello, Bruce Cockburn, Norah Jones, Leonard Cohen and many more!

**TICKETS: \$50 advance tickets available
at www.peacemuseum.org (via PayPal). Or phone: 773-638-6450**

U2 FANS AFTER-PARTY!

11:30pm \$10 donation

When the United Center lets out, come to Legends and support the Peace Museum! Hear the band Elevation and view the U2 autographed guitar before it's sold.



THE PEACE MUSEUM
100 NORTH CENTRAL PARK AVENUE
CHICAGO, IL 60624
(773) 638-6450
Hours: Wed-Fri, 10am - 4pm
Sunday, 11am - 3pm

www.peacemuseum.org

Fiction

continued from page 22

"I told you. You let me take or I destroy. Either way you lose."

"No. No. No. Look, settle down." Kimball studied the situation nervously. Gerry seemed terrified of his own pistol and he held it away from his body the way you would a snake or a lit match. "Gerry, you *have* things you can sell." Kimball held up the set. "You have a television. Obviously, you have a gun."

Genuine shook his head. "Television is crap. Gun is not mine." He waved at an old Waring blender on the counter. "What is this worth?"

"Not a hundred and fifty bucks." With a sharp, stabbing motion, Gerry shot the blender twice at short range. The bullet pierced the glass pitcher and ricocheted off the concrete floor with a ping. Kimball ducked and covered his head, although if the bullet had been coming for him his evasive action would have been far too late. This had to stop.

He took a step forward. Gerry, his back turned, was looking for his next mechanical victim. Kimball put an arm around his shoulder. Gerry twitched but didn't move away. Kimball

reached slowly for the gun. Genuine began to weep. He surrendered the pistol and put his hands to his eyes. "Please," Genuine sobbed. "Ple-ee-ase just give me money."

"Gerry, no." Genuine turned to Kimball. His eyes appeared full of hatred. *Because he had seen Gerry crying? Because Kimball had taken the gun?* Between tears Genuine yelled, "You goddamn wop! You fecking dago!"

Kimball blinked at him. Wop? Dago? These were slurs from another era. Right street, wrong decade. And Kimball was a mutt bred from many ethnicities, Scotch-Irish, German, even a family rumor that would have made him one-sixteenth Sioux Indian and, if proven true, eligible for a low-interest business loan. But he wasn't Italian at all. Genuine Gerry didn't know the first thing about him and for some reason that made Kimball angry.

"Relax, Gerry." "Give me the money!" Gerry had squared himself with Kimball and was waving his taut arms beside his head. Now that he no longer had the unfamiliar pistol in his hand, he seemed less

scared and more agitated. Quietly, Kimball recognized the irony in Gerry's demands, which had become more confident and assertive now that Kimball had the gun. He also recognized the upside-down logic of his own fear, which had likewise and just as oddly become more intense.

"You're not going to shoot me," Genuine said spitefully. "I know you. You're not going to shoot me." After one failed attempt, he lifted himself up on a gray, painted workbench and sat there, feet dangling. His tone was mocking. "Come on, Kimmy. Just a few bucks. A loan. It is nothing. Hundred bucks and I leave. No money, maybe I stay."

Tears gone as suddenly as they came, he now smiled an unfriendly smile. A menacing smile. The unhinged smile of a dangerous buzz. Something about it made Kimball hot under his skin. This was an outrage. He had the gun now, after all, and Gerry was still threatening him. *And threatening him with what exactly?* This is why he preferred machines to people. Machines perform exactly as you expect them to. There's nothing ironic about a machine. When a

machine acts erratically you find the broken link in the chain, and when you fix it the machine does just as it's supposed to. If you wave a gun in a person's face you never know what's going to happen. If you wave a gun in a person's face and you're still more scared of him than he is of you, how do you fix that?

Kimball pointed the gun at the ceiling, just to remind Gerry it was there. "You don't know me," Kimball said. "How do you know me?"

"What? For years I know you. You keep my TV safe. In your shop. We are friends."

Kimball still wondered how their relationship had become inverted. He had the gun in his hand, but he still didn't have control. Genuine continued to threaten him. Continued to blather on. Meanwhile, the Zero-Zero progressed into its final minutes and he was missing it.

Genuine Gerry? *Ungrateful* Gerry, they should call him. Here he was, robbing the fellow in the neighborhood who had been kindest to him. Kimball had never been afraid to answer his door, hadn't become cynical about helping his neighbors, and for that he

gets an addict blasting away in his shop, keeping him away from the scanner, insulting him at all hours, the waning hours of the most important day in Kimball's otherwise uneventful life.

"I fixed your TV," Kimball said. "What?"

"Twice. It was broken. I fixed it." Kimball poked the gun at the new antenna and knob, which were clearly poached from another make and model.

"I did not know," said Genuine, but the news seemed to please him. "This what I mean. You are nice guy. I know you. Now, you give me money. I leave you alone."

—He's in custody. We have him in custody behind the Office Depot. He's got blue jeans and a green shirt. First name of Jimmy.

—Ten-four.

Cops and robbers, Kimball thought. On the street, the gun represents authority and power, but only when possessed by the willing. In a gangbanger's hands, or a cop's, a gun has influence because bangers and cops are expected to use it. A cop is supposed to exercise restraint, of course, but a suspect will give himself up because he knows the policeman is empowered by the

CROSSROADS  TRADING CO.®

CASH FOR YOUR
FASHION

no appointment necessary
we pay before you leave

lincoln park
2711 n. clark street
773.296.1000

www.crossroadstrading.com

new recycled current women's men's fashion



Photo: Robin Beck, 3rd Place Winner, 2005 Fashion Photo Contest

RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

DO YOU SUFFER FROM A SNEEZY, RUNNY, STUFFY NOSE IN THE FALL?

Researchers at the University of Chicago are conducting a research study looking at an experimental spray for seasonal allergic rhinitis (hayfever).

If you have the above nasal symptoms in the Fall and are skin test positive to common ragweed allergen, you may be eligible to participate in this study.

A screening visit lasting 1-2 hours will take place at the Nasal Physiology Laboratory at the University of Chicago. After recording symptoms for 1-3 weeks, eligible study subjects may receive either an experimental new nasal spray or a placebo (looks like the active medication but does not contain the drug) spray to use for 2 weeks. You will be compensated for your time and travel.

For more information, please call:

773-702-5889

DR. R. NACLERIO, 5841 S. MARYLAND AVE., MC 1035,
CHICAGO, IL 60637

law to shoot him. Genuine Gerry surrendered his gun because he realized Kimball was not. If there are two people, neither of whom is willing to use the gun, then the gun is as impotent as cooked spaghetti. And so is the man holding it. A cop doesn't have power in a roomful of cops. A cop has power over suspects. Over civilians. For you to have power, someone else must be weaker than you. And a man alone is by definition powerless. "You don't know me," Kimball

said, and then he did something unexpected, which was, of course, the only point of it.

He fired the gun. Genuine Gerry yelped and fell forward onto the floor, his legs up in the air like a baby's. He was swearing, "You shot me! You shot me! You shot me!"

Kimball watched the blood ooze from under Genuine's hands, which were pressed tight, one on top of the other, against his thigh. Kimball knew from the scanner that if the bullet hit the right spot

in the leg it could be a bad bleeder, and he watched evidence of that fact form an amoeba-shaped red pool across the painted concrete under Genuine Gerry's body.

"Call the police! Call the ambulance! You fucking dago!"

Kimball walked to the shelf and turned up the radio.

—[Unintelligible] domestic. *The neighbor just got home and said she heard a door slam inside the apartment. Ex-husband has physically abused her before.*

—Ten-four.

—*Let me know what you have when you get there.*

"Call the ambulance! I'm dying!"

Kimball looked at an old classroom clock on the wall. It was 11:45. "Fifteen minutes."

"What?"

"I can't call 911 for another fifteen minutes."

"Call them now! I am dying!"

The skin on Genuine Gerry's face had stretched itself tight across his skull. There was blood on his jeans and his hair. When he tried to close his bulging eyes,

his eyelids didn't meet.

"Fifteen minutes, Gerry."

From the floor Genuine wailed in five-second bursts and cursed Kimball in Tajik or whatever. Kimball turned up the scanner's volume knob another quarter inch and as he waited for the day to expire, he reminded himself to call Jen in the morning, as promised, after he had given his statement to the police. This had been a night of revelations.

He might even ask Jen to dinner. ☐

DISGRACELAND

- * BRAND NEW AND GENTLY USED
- * RECYCLING IN CHICAGO SINCE 1994
- * GREAT DENIM SELECTION
- * FOR GUYS AND GIRLS

3338 N CLARK ST. 773.281.5875 OPEN EVERYDAY

AFFORDABLE ART CLASSES!
MAKE A HANDMADE GIFT FOR A LOVED ONE!

POTTERY, PHOTOGRAPHY, KNITTING/CROCHETING
JEWELRY MAKING

FALL TERM RUNS SEPTEMBER 5-OCTOBER 30

NOURISH YOUR SPIRIT!
YOGA, TAICHI, SALSA DANCING, ART WORKSHOPS

Hull House
Center for Arts & Culture

Our mission
To nourish
the spirit and
exercise the
mind through
art making.

1136 W. Wilson Ave, Chicago IL
773-907-9403 www.hullhouse.org

Home Inspectors Wanted
Earn \$60-80,000.00/Yr.

Classes Starting
September 12th

Two Days Per Week,
Ends November 4th

@ 7600 S. Pulaski 10am-4pm

Pay \$175.00 As You Go
10 Sessions Two Days Per Week.

Call to register 312-214-5506.

SINCE 1944

KOZY'S CYCLERY

Hurry, Sale ends 9/1/05

SPECIALIZED BIKE SALE

SAVE 30%

On All In-Stock 2004 & 2005 Specialized Bicycles

Save prices valid with this Ad - Expires 9/1/05. Save 30% off Suggested List Price on 2004 and 2005 in-stock Specialized bikes. Sale price is not valid with any other sale price, offers, discounts, or rebates. For immediate delivery only. F-R

Much More at kozy.com

THE BEST BRANDS

SPECIALIZED **GIANT**
cannondale **BICYCLES**
SCHWINN

Save 15% on Accessories

No Payments, No Interest for 1 Year* Apply Online

Ride Home Today with no payments or interest for 1 year. Apply online at www.kozy.com or at any of our stores. Offer valid with this ad. Expires 9/1/05.

Kozy's Cyclery - 4 Convenient Locations with Free Parking

Near North 219 W. Erie St. (Near Wells & Erie) 312-266-1700 Mon-Fri 10-8 Sat 10-6, Sun 11-6	Downtown 601 S. LaSalle (LaSalle/Harrison) 312-360-0020 Mon-Fri 11-8 Sat 10-6, Sun 12-6
North Side 3712 N. Halsted St. (Halsted/Waveland) 773-281-2263 Mon-Fri 11-8 Sat 10-6, Sun 12-6	Lincoln Park 1451 W. Webster (Webster/Clybourn) 773-528-2700 Mon-Fri 10-9 Sat 10-6, Sun 11-6

KOZY'S OFFERS YOU

- *We'll match any advertised price
- *30 day price protection
- *15 day return policy
- *\$20 holds any bike
- *2 free fall tune ups
- *Lifetime guarantee
- *Financing available
- *1 year free adjustments
- *Test rides *Free Parking
- *Gift certificates *Se habla espanol

SINCE 1944

KOZY'S CYCLERY

*No payment due within promotional period. Interest accrues but is waived if account is paid in full prior to promotional period expiration. Subject to credit approval. Financing provided by C&H Financial Retail Services Division of Citicorp Trust Bank, Inc. Finance charges begin to accrue at the time of purchase. No monthly payments required during the promotional period. Payment of amount financed in full must be received prior to the expiration of the promotional period in order for accrued finance charges to be waived. Otherwise, accrued finance charges will be assessed to the account. Standard rate 24% APR. Default rate 26.99% APR. Minimum finance charge \$1.00. See General Agreement for details.