

Chaos - Two Weeks in August

The Endless Night – LAPD Lockup, August 18th – excerpt

I wanted desperately to reach Ben, to let him know I was nearby, and that I knew he was near me. I struck up a conversation with a Hispanic cop, and, despite my intense fatigue, my mind was now working again at a furious pitch, and my eyes must have burned. I exerted every ounce of my ingenuity and strength, mustering a fierce, almost daemonic trance, which I exerted on this poor, not overly bright cop. He didn't stand a chance. By constant intellectual argument, and manic intensity, coupled with perfect body language, I had him convinced that I was capable of seeing his soul. I made him believe that he, alone of all the cops in the facility, had a shred of a soul left, and that he could rescue that soul from destruction. There was not an argument that he could muster that I couldn't instantly contradict with a telling blow.

I'm aware that this story would sound so much more convincing if I could recall the conversation. But it's of the nature of mania that a lot of what you say in extremis vanishes into a sort of black hole never to be recalled. All you can remember is the glowing brilliance before it vanished past the event horizon.

Finally, once I had him in my hand, so to speak, I let slip my commitment-ceremony-ring so that it fell into his side of the room. I told him that he could save his soul from destruction by simply picking up my ring, stepping next door, and giving it to Ben.

But that would be breaking the rules, he said.

I knew that I could be really hurting this man; and he knew it too. He seemed to be good-hearted – indeed the only such cop I came into contact with that night. I didn't want to hurt him, but I felt an inconceivable urgency to get out of the cell, whatever it took. The poor man kept gripping his head, saying, 'Oh man, you're messing with my

head.' Other people, mostly janitorial staff members were also watching, transfixed at the scene. I'd never, at any time in my life, been more focused and present than I was right then, intent on forcing this man to my will, even from my position of apparent helplessness.

I pulled his partner into the conversation, a German-American blond guy, surnamed Weh, primed with the bravado and cruelty that was written on his features . He tried to goad me, and humiliate me, but I wouldn't be overridden. I told him that I could see right into his head.

'What do you see,' he asked.

'Nothing,' I replied. 'You have no soul.'

After more exchanges like this, he tried to laugh me off, but wouldn't meet my eyes.

'Do you know any German,' I asked him.

'No,' he said.

'Do you know what your surname means?'

'No.'

'The word weh, means empty.' (It doesn't.)

A certain chill entered their eyes. My eyes and my relentless argument tore into them, for I was desperate. In the end, almost inconceivably, I had both of them convinced that I was the Anti-Christ, and that they had two choices: one was to hand the ring to Ben; the other was to suffer the extinguishment of their souls by placing it on

my finger. I was in the grip of manic brilliance: these two cops were so scared that neither of them would put the ring on my finger