



**Revenge of the Anarcholesbian Epidemiologist: A
Dick Burns Minit Mrdr®**
William Garner & monkeyrotica

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Chapter 1

Channel Hopping

Dick Burns caulked his tub and occasionally glanced at a screaming stock broker slam his styling-gelled head against a Corinthian column.

PBS was premiering an exposé on the latest trend among Wall Street executives. The footage was caught by a passing Greek tourist with a Handicam: three bystanders tried desperately to restrain the stock broker from painting a marble column with his brains. Dubbed by pundits “The Woodpecker Syndrome,” this was the third time in as many weeks that an affluent broker had committed suicide in this macabre manner. According to the documentary, those stricken with WS fell into a narrow group of victims: white, Republican, right-handed, six-figure-per-year suburbanites with neurotic, young Valium-popping, trophy wives.

Burns saw a pattern forming.

He tossed the Hechingers’ caulking gun into the fish tank, swigged his tepid Dry Ice Beer and stared intently at the vaguely arousing spectacle. He stabbed the mute button, jacked up the Realistic stereo, punched in a heavy metal station and watched the suit-clad yuppies pound their heads into guacamole to the sound of Anthrax. Burns slapped the remote a couple of times until he reached the Adult Amputee Channel. Long Jean Silver was doing something unusual with her leg stump. Burns kept switching between the two channels, unzipped his shorts just as a hail of blood and grey matter shot out of a Merrill Lynch exec’s nostrils. Before he could take himself in hand, the phone rang.

“Burns?”

“Mommy?” He switched off the TV and the stereo.

“Goddammit Burns! Are you watching the special on those head-banging execs?”

“Not any more. It was getting my dick hard.” Burns reached down and flicked Dick Jr. like he was swatting a fly.

“Well, you’d better get familiar with the situation, but quick. We’ve

got a major client that's asking for you. The National Institutes of Health have run into a roadblock in their investigation of who's behind this whole woodpecker business. They think CIA has a hand in it."

"What makes them think that?"

"Hell-llo? Earth to Burns. Remember the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment? AIDS? Swine flu? Am I talking to myself here?"

Burns zipped his pants up. "Yeah, alright, you got me dead to rights, doc. I'll be down in twenty minutes, but you've got to promise me one thing."

"Name it."

"If there's a woman involved, I get to do... things to her." A pregnant pause followed.

"Done. But no rough stuff."

"Forget it then." Burns laughed like a hyena with a throat full of broken glass.

"Alright, alright, you can do the rough stuff, just don't get it on video. Remember what happened the last time you made a video of..."

Burns hung up.

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Chapter 2

Tight Wet Gene Splicers in Heat

The N.I.H. rep folded her arms, asked, "So what exactly do you know about genetic engineering, Mr. Burns?"

Burns sat quietly in his Barcolounger, thoughtfully puffing on his linoleum green Dr. Graybow. "I know that if you crossed Pat Buchanan with a onion you'd get a Nazi that would taste great with liver."

Burns smirked, resumed smoking. The N.I.H. rep walked around his desk, slapped the grin off of his weatherbeaten face. She pulled a strand of battery-acid blonde hair from her beestung lips. Burns liked it when women beat the crap out of him. He liked to watch their breasts jiggle like blobs of quicksilver on a sheet of plate glass. This doctor was just his type: cleavage that a spelunker could get lost in, a lab outfit that stopped at her upper thigh, owl glasses that made her look as smart as a pin in the ass. Burns had a soft spot for smart girls: they were the only ones whose heads were worth peeing on. Just like Mommy. This one was different, though. He could feel it down where a man likes to feel it. Burns was in love with a capital "F."

"Honestly, Mr. Burns, how do you expect to find whoever's responsible for the Woodpecker Syndrome unless you have even the most basic grasp of epidemiology?"

Burns rose, removed the pipe from his mouth and jabbed the stem at the doctor. "Looky here, Ms. Schtupp. I don't need your fancy schmancy technobabble to figure out that there's no way in hell the CIA's behind these head bashings."

She folded her arms again like a disappointed schoolmarm who wasn't getting enough. Burns felt hotter than Red Adair's jockstrap.

"And exactly what makes you so certain, Mr. Burns?"

"This epidemic of yours only strikes white male conservatives who just so happen to make up a goodly portion of the intelligence community." Burns examined the bowl of his pipe. "It would be like Congress eliminating subsidized parking perks or passing an incremental

income tax. They might as well slit their own throats with a dull carrot peeler.”

Ms. Schtupp was unimpressed. “All our research at N.I.H. shows that the CIA is the only organization with the resources to run a...”

“...clandestine biological warfare operation, yeah, yeah.” Burns poked the burning embers of his pipe with his index finger, wiped it off on his argyle sock. “Everybody and their mother knows the Company’s been up to their gonads in everything from AIDS to zebra infantigo. Gene-specific contagion is old hat, sister. Somebody wants the public to believe that the Agency’s behind it. It’s as plain as the caked-on pee on my commode.”

The professor peered over the edge of her glasses, sighed, “Well, Mr. Burns, I’m at a loss.” She shrugged, turned away. “If you’re so confident of your suspicions, I am authorized to put all of my department’s assets at your disposal.”

That was his cue. Barking, Burns rose up on his haunches, shoved Ms. Schtupp back onto his desk. Her head landed on his Scooby Doo fountain pen stand. Her feet flailed helplessly in the air, sending one of her patent leather Mary Janes flying across the room. Burns swiftly mounted her.

“Ow! What the hell are you doing, you idiot!?” she shrieked, rubbing the back of her head with one hand and punching Burns in the groin with the other.

“C’mon, baby,” Burns groaned, “give Uncle Dick a quick exam. I’ll let you see the H.R. Puffinstuff tattoo on my ass.”

“Aaaaaaagh!” The young professor struggled against the hulking, seersucker-clad Burns, but it was all in “vein.”

“Yeah, that’s it, baby,” Burns groaned, unzipping his pants. “Ol’ Doc Burns needs a butt culture.”

Just as Burns’s trousers hit his ankles, a knock came at the door. He left Ms. Schtupp on the desk, trying to pin together the wretched remains of her Versace blouse.

Burns opened the door. The hallway was deserted. He heard a cough, looked towards his shoes. Smiling up at him from groin level was an immaculately dressed Frenchman in his late forties with lacquered hair, a pencil mustache, pince nez glasses and no legs. He squatted in a rickety Radio Flyer buttwagon. His right hand held a brick, the other held a stainless .45 pointed at Burns’s crotch.

“Bonjour, Monsieur Burns. We meet again. But alas, ze advantage ees mine.”

Chapter 3

Dial "P" for "Pedophile"

Burns cracked a knowing smile, slipped his palms behind his neck. He spun around, headed for the wet bar. The Francophone amputee propelled himself into the office with his brick.

"My compliments on your magnificent escape from Marseilles, Monsieur Burns. I assure you zat my associates in S.M.O.M. were most impressed."

Burns snapped, "Put away the heat, you sawed-off frog. Say your piece then get the hell out. I'm missing 'Saved by the Bell.'"

Still shaking from her near fatal encounter with Burns's one-eyed love bishop, the bewildered Ms. Schtupp pointed at the amputee, shouting, "What in the hell is that?"

"That, my dear," Burns replied, pouring himself a highball, "is Maurice LaPetomaine: international arms merchant, agent provocateur and amateur bacteriologist. Morrie and me go way back. We worked opposite sides of the Situationist Revolt in '68."

"At your service, Madame," Maurice intoned, bowing.

Burns swirled his drink, inhaled. "Except the last time we met, you had a bit of a surplus in the altitude department. What gives?"

Maurice's sow-like eyes darted about nervously. "I... I cut myself shaving. But enough of your insipid questions...!"

"Well, out with it, Wagon Boy! What brings you to the Murder Capitol of the World, Stumpy?"

"Business, Monsieur Burns, as always." The Frenchman snapped a Galois into his mouth, lit it with a pearl inlaid lighter, smoothly placed it in his telescoping cigarette holder. "I understand zat you and ze Madame are investigating zees unfortunate rash of, how do you say, eh, Woodpecker Syndrome?"

"Straight-up. " Burns chuckled, downed his bourbon, sloppily wiped the excess off on a Hot Shoppes doily. "And the Knights of Malta want to get their mitts on whatever is causing this so-called epidemic, right?"

"I see you are as perceptive as always, Monsieur. As zees disease strikes only affluent conservative males of ze Caucasian persuasion, ze Woodpecker Syndrome sreatens ze very existence of our organization; indeed, ze existence of every secret society on ze face of ze earth, weese ze possible exception of ze Oriental Shriners. You can see why we must stop zis plague tootsuite." The Frenchman ground his cigarette into Burns's carpet for emphasis.

"Look likes you need to get on the tip, Legs," Burns threw a thumb at Ms. Schtupp. "Sparky and I are just as clued out as you. N.I.H. has narrowed the culprit down to the CIA, but that avenue makes about as much sense as Fermat's Last Theorem."

"Indeed, it would seem highly improbable. Perhaps eet is ze result of some rogue research operation, no?"

"Eh... no," Burns mumbled into his drink. "Funny thing, though. Why would any CIA scientist create a disease that's targeted toward people like himself?" He stared at Ms. Schtupp, who was still trying to hide her cavernous cleavage from the prying eyes of both Burns and the Frenchman. Then it hit him like a ton of manure. "Unless..."

Schtupp was on the same warped wavelength. She looked up and added hesitantly, "Unless the disease was created by someone who wasn't a rich, white, conservative!"

Burns pivoted on his heel, snatched the Lavender Princess phone from his desk. "Hello, Operator? Gimme Bristol Myers personnel office and make it snappy, buster."

The Frenchman rolled over to Ms. Schtupp, jabbed her in the thigh with his bony elbow, whispered, "Ze Agency bought out B.M. years ago. Zat ees where zay do much of zare biowarfare research."

"Get away from me. You stink." Schtupp backed away, wiping off her thigh and sniffing her hand.

"Hey, Rikky? Dick Burns here... hey, how's that little daughter of yours?... The bleeding stopped?... Glad to hear it. Listen, Rikky, I need a favor... C'mon man, stop crying, I haven't even asked you for anything yet! What the hell's the matter with you?... Look, I just need you to check your personnel records. Get me the names and numbers of all the female minority staff members on your black ops research team. Keep an eye out for those with a genetic engineering background. You got that?... Great! Hey listen, thanks for letting me babysit little Ashley. Tell her if she's really good, Uncle Dick will come over and let her play 'Hide the Breadstick.'"

Chapter 4

Riot Grrrl

Burns, LaPetomaine, and Schtupp pulled into a metered space in front of Lambda Rising bookstore at Dupont Circle. Through the window, they immediately spotted their target. Rikky's tip had struck gold. They had tailed their mark from the CIA offices in Langley. Burns took out the personnel photo that Rikky had faxed him, the others looked over his shoulder.

"My god! That's Patricia Anne Sewer!" Ms. Schtupp cried. "She used to work on our ebola research team at N.I.H. Her specialty is regressive viruses."

"Looks like her specialty is bearded clam dip," Burns retorted. "Lookit the way she's fondling that cashier."

The three of them stared through the window of Burns's '69 Plymouth Superbird. Ms. Sewer was slightly smaller than a sperm whale. She must have weighed 350 naked, an idea Burns didn't care to dwell upon. Her hair was cropped short, her dress was a formless sack and she wore Doc Martens with white laces. She was intently fondling the breast of a arty lesbian with a chrome-plated bone through her nose. The rest of the crowd listened intently to the annual Hyphenated-American-Lesbian-Warrior-Poet-a-Thon.

"Alright, froggie. You know the routine. Just like in Marseilles." He popped open the trunk latch and got out.

LaPetomaine saluted. "Oui, Mon Generale."

Ms. Schtupp ducked down in the back seat. The Frenchman slid out, Burns helped him into his wagon. The Frenchman put on some Armani shades, wheeled over to the door of the bookstore. Burns stood next to a Ford Speculum two cars back and made like he was peeing in the gas tank. Maurice pulled out a Dixie cup, dropped some laundry change into it, jingled it. Burns gave the signal that Sewer was leaving the store. The Frenchman pushed his cup in front of the huge woman who promptly knocked it over.

“Oh, I’m so sorry, sir,” she said in a childlike voice, getting on her knees to pick up the change.

“Oh, no matter, Madame. But if you could help me put my wagon in ze trunk of my car, I would be most appreciative.”

“Why, certainly.”

Sewer rolled Maurice over to the car, lifted the Frenchman out of the wagon and placed the wagon in the trunk. Burns silently approached from behind.

“Say,” the woman asked, “if you’re blind and have no legs, how do you drive?”

LePetomaine sneered, “Very badly.”

Burns shoved Sewer into the trunk headfirst, slammed the hood on top of her. He grabbed the Frenchman by his belt, tossed him clumsily into the back seat, put his red-and-blue flasher on the dashboard. They ran a dozen lights on the way to the Bristol Myers lab in Rockville.

Chapter 5

The Torture Garden

Burns picked up a pizza at the Bethesda Uno's on the way to the lab. They ate it. It was good. Burns slipped his cocked-and-locked .45 into the grease-splotched box and drove up to the guard's shack at the lab's entrance. Looking up at the twenty-foot fence, Burns thought to himself, nothing says welcome quite like electrified razor wire.

He asked the guard, "Who ordered the large with onions and pineapple?"

The bewildered geezer shrugged, shuffled back to his phone, put a call through to the main desk. Burns snapped out his gun and shot him in the kneecaps. The Frenchman did a tuck-and-roll out of the Chrysler and duct-taped the screaming guard's eyes and mouth. Burns hoisted the Frenchman back into the car and they drove to the main building. Burns got out of the car, walked to the trunk, let out the asphyxiating Ms. Sewer.

"Not a peep out of you or you'll never eat it raw again." Burns sniffed, cringed. Sewer had evacuated herself in Burns's trunk. He'd smelled worse, but not by much. Burns made her walk Spanish through the revolving door, up to the front desk. The startled guard put down his copy of *The Spectator*, slowly rose.

"Hello," Burns chimed, "we're Ms. Sewer's family. I'm Billy Bob, she's Ellie Mae, and the one in the wagon's Uncle Baphomet. Patricia Anne is gonna give us a tour of this here CIA... I mean this nice medical facility, ain't ya?" Burns roughly threw his arm around her shoulder and grinned like an idiot with a new twig.

"I'm sorry, sir," the guard gruffly replied, "but no one is allowed in after midnight without..."

Burns pulled his two .45s and stuck one in each of the guard's hairy ears.

"Now that's real funny," Burns laughed, "'cause my watch says it's only five o'clock. Ain't that right?"

Burns yanked a gun out of the guard's ear and showed him the wrist-watch. It had no hands. They escorted their hostages to a set of sliding steel doors. Sewer passed her ID over the scanner pad, the doors slid silently apart.

Inside the main lab room, Burns tied Sewer and the guard to a set of tubular chrome Breuer chairs. The cavernous room reminded Burns of a cross between his old grade school gymnasium and the National Arboretum. The stench was overpowering. It smelled like a rendering plant after a P.E.T.A. firebombing. Exotic herbs and plants glistened with moisture, hung from the walls behind vials of boiling liquid the color of antifreeze and Pepto Bismol. LaPetomaine rolled next to a gas tank of ether, snapped open the nozzle, greedily gulped the escaping gas.

Sewer cried, "Will you tell me what the hell this is all about? What do you want from me?"

Burns lit a filterless Camel. "We're after the Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, but we'll settle for the Woodpecker formula. Give."

"You're insane! I demand you release me at..."

Burns aimed, blasted her right big toe off.

"Wrong answer! Where's the formula?"

Schtupp screamed, "Burns! What are you doing?"

"Stay outta this, doc. Patty-Ann here and I are just getting acquainted."

The fat lesbian screamed incoherently for several minutes, blowing the smoke from where her toe used to be. Burns paced for a while, running one of his pistols through the glass cabinets in a futile search for grain alcohol.

"Alright, once more... whose idea was this Woodpecker disease and where is the formula?"

"I... I... don't know..."

"Wrong again!" Burns hollered, firing three more rounds. This time he blasted a hole in her foot the size of a grapefruit. Burns crouched down next to her. "Look honey, why don't you make it easy on yourself. I've got enough ammo for Christmas in Beirut and you're running out of digits. Now, give it up." Burns grabbed her by a fold of fat behind her neck, hanked her head back.

Sewer slipped in and out of consciousness. "I...was assigned...biowarfare section...wanted to fine tune an AIDS virus...only kill black men in their twenties...if I didn't cooperate, they wouldn't...wouldn't give me my cheddar spore research grant...only wanted to use knowledge of diseases...the betterment of mankind."

"So naturally you joined the CIA," Burns snapped back, lighting a Marlboro.

Sewers eyes fluttered, her head bobbed from side to side. "Had no idea that this was an intelligence operation...found out...decided that I had to sabotage their plans...reversed the DNA sequences of the virus...would only killed rich white males...added a sub-helix code...affected their central nervous system."

"Of course, the bashing heads..." Ms. Schtupp smacked her forehead. "The virus generates a genetic dysfunction in the nervous system creating the uncontrollable torso spasms. Sort of a localized Tourettes Syndrome. When the spinal fluid level reaches critical mass, the patient enters a quasi-comatose state. Ingenious. But why?"

The smoking epidemiologist grimaced in agony, clenched her teeth. She was livid now. "Because, you poor deluded bitch, the corporate Caucasian daisy chain has turned this planet into an open latrine in mid-summer! Permanent war, the screaming fist of capitalism, overpopulation to serve for cheap labor. They don't give a damn about the women and children who have to bear the suffering of their excesses. I will not rest until I see the last politician hung with the guts of the last born-again Christian. They should all have one neck. But they don't. The only way to put them on the fast train to hell is through this disease. My disease."

Burns scratched his forehead with the barrel of his gun. "You know, I like you."

"Burns!" Ms. Schtupp cried, "You can't be serious? She's talking about genocide!"

LaPetomaine collapsed, unconscious, the mask of the anesthesia tank wrapped around his neck like a corrugated rubber snake.

"Oh, I don't know," Burns puffed, shrugging. "Sounds like a good idea, really. But only a handful of yuppies have died of this thing. When're we going to see some real results?"

Sewer's rat eyes darted about nervously. "Eh, well... we, eh... we haven't yet got a major distributor to circulate the disease. We were thinking about injecting it into the water supply and... ."

"Forget it," Burns assured, "nobody drinks tap water anymore. Not since last summer's turbidity scare. You need big names. Have you talked to Coca Cola? Coors? They could get you a good deal on distribution fees. They could slip it into that crystal crap they're peddling. Hell, you could even have it written on the label, right after 'guar gum stabilizer.' Nobody would notice. Nobody reads anymore, print being dead and all. Whaddaya think, Schtupp?"

"I think you a fucking loon, Burns. You're talking about killing millions of..."

"...useless parasites writhing on the bloated carcass of the Welfare State." Burns stubbed out his cigarette on his palm. "You live in D.C. as long as I have, you learn a few things. Adolescent Negroes are lousy tip-pers and the necrophilic rich are different from you and I: they serve no useful purpose." He turned to Ms. Sewer. "Look, honey, I've got a deal for you. I've got some friends at Pepsi who owe me a few favors for not letting out about their heroin plants in the 'Nam. Give me the Woodpecker formula and you get a ten-percent cut of overseas licensing fees. That's at least a quarter mil off the top."

"Alright! Alright!" Sewer wailed. "Just get me to a hospital!"

"Done deal, Pops. Try not to bleed on the suit."

Burns untied her, helped her over to her desk. Ms. Schtupp stared on in disbelief as Ms. Sewer reached into a hidden drawer, gave him a diskette. They shook hands. Burns helped drag her blood- and feces-soaked body to the front desk. He called the boss's private ambulance company who promptly dispatched an unlabeled clean-up crew. The five of them waited outside and shared Burns' last Camel. After twenty minutes, the ambulance arrived just as they finished waking the unconscious Frenchman.

"Watch your ass, Sewer," Burns waved as she entered the van, "I'll have the execs draw you up a contract and fax it to you by noon."

The doors slammed. The van was off, sirens wailing, into the dark, warm, narcotic D.C. night.

Schtupp idled next to Burns. "I can't figure you, Burns. You sold out N.I.H., you sold out your agency, you sold out your country for a dozen pieces of silver! Why?"

Burns put his cigarette out on his ear, calmly lit another.

"Still haven't learned to read the spaces between the letters, huh?" Burns pointed his cigarette at the fading siren. "The boss is sending our fat Sappho fan on a one way ride to the Wundah Meats factory. As for this disk with the disease codes, copies are going to N.I.H. and all of the major pharmaceutical houses so they can develop an antidote."

"The drug companies? Why them?"

"Remember what happened with AZT? It's bad enough that that the pharmaceuticals industry keeps squawking about how AIDS is a new disease, instead of just a resistant strain of syphilis. Any first year med student worth his formaldehyde will tell you that. Good dose of oxygen therapy, a few hours in an orgone accumulator and some penicillin'll do

you. But Squibb can't clock any ducats on a cheap cure like air, can they? There's no excuse for charging a thousand dollars a pop for a cure that only works five-percent of the time. No dice, baby. We're gonna have a cheap serum for this disease if it kills me."

"An excellent ploy, Monsieur Burns. Bravo!" the Frenchman chimed in, emerging from his ether-induced haze.

"Oh, Dick!" Shtupp sighed, her heaving bosoms rocking like a pair of Jello milk trucks with bad shocks. "How could I have been so wrong about you?"

Burns flicked his cigarette ash down her cleavage. "Because you're an idiot, that's why."

As they laughed their way to the car, Burns looked at the floppy disk. In his hand, he held the fate of the world's plutocrats and politicians. Without the cure to the dreaded Woodpecker Syndrome, they were helpless in the face of the plague that would consume the affluent conservatives of the world. They'd be sentenced to death by head trauma. Burns felt a sense of power he hadn't known since he first introduced his fiancée to bondage, plate jobs and Steak-Ummm humiliation. Proud of his masterful accomplishment, he carefully pocketed the precious disk. When Burns got home, he casually tossed the disk on his bar counter.

The disk's contents were promptly destroyed when Burns used it as a coaster for his morning highball.

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