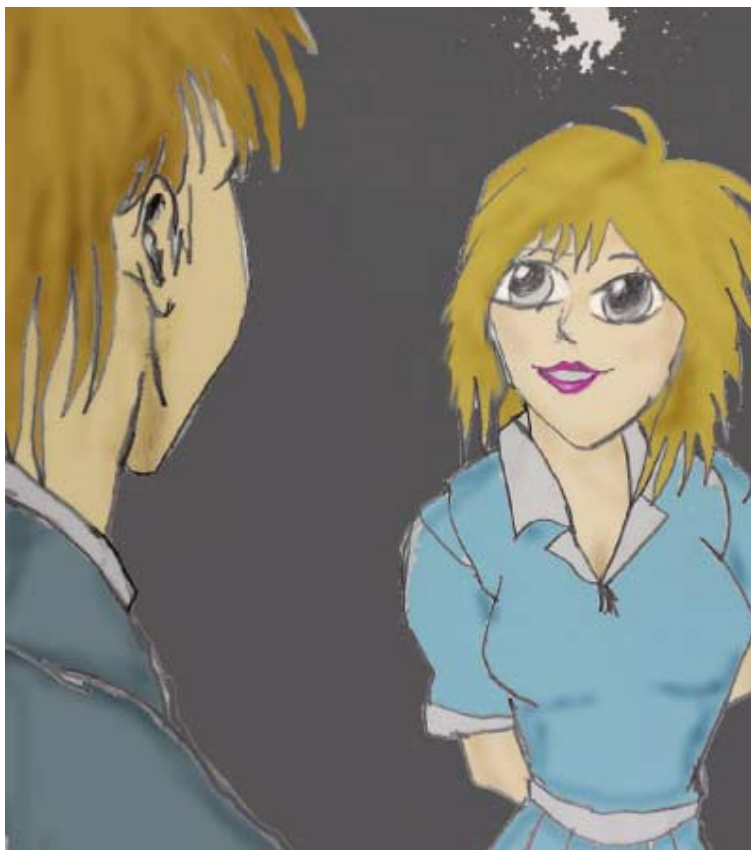




Reluctant Press presents:

Battle To Change

E. B. Stevenson



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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BATTLE TO CHANGE

by **E.B. Stevenson**

One

The summer of 1972 was a very tough time in my life. I had just gotten home from Vietnam, after serving twelve years in the United States Army as a corpsman and assistant clerk, reaching the rank of First Lieutenant. My last assignment before being honorably discharged was at a MASH unit about 100 miles north of Saigon. Back home in Lebanon, as well as the rest of the country, Vietnam had been a very unpopular war. Like most who served in Vietnam, we did not get a hero's welcome. The only welcome I got was from my parents and my grandmother.

At thirty years of age, I was the oldest of seven children; one of five sons. Three of my brothers also served in 'Nam. My oldest brother, Pete was a twenty-eight-year-old Marine; a First Lieutenant who served as a fighter pilot in an aerial combat unit based outside of Saigon. His plane was shot down in the fall of 1970; he was about to be released from the infamous Hanoi Hilton. My second brother, Jon, was twenty-four and served in the Army. At the rank of Sergeant, he was a rifleman; he was about to gain his honorable discharge. My youngest brother, Jeff, was twenty and also in the Army; he was a corporal serving as a combat engineer. My oldest sister, Fran, was twenty-six and a reporter for a television station in Des Moines; my seventeen-year-old sister, Ruth, was entering her senior year in high school. My third brother, Norris, was twenty-three and was unable to serve in the military because of psychological problems and trauma from a savage beating he took when he was sixteen years old.

I received my discharge on June 16, 1972. Leaving for home three days later, I was very shaken up at the images I saw in the war. People hurting and people dying can really change a person. I began to have flashbacks to some of the bloodiest episodes of my tour of duty once I got on the ground in Okinawa, before flying on to Los Angeles, and then to

St. Louis. When I got back home, the only people waiting for me when I got off the 747 that carried me home were my parents and maternal grandmother.

“How was your tour of duty, Jerry?” my father asked after I received hugs from my mother and grandmother.

“It was horrible, Dad; there was a lot of blood, day in and day out. I couldn’t stand it,” I replied.

Pete got home three weeks later, and told me of his horrible experience as a prisoner of war; he received intense psychotherapy before he was cleared to seek employment as an airline pilot; he found a job with a regional airline in the Deep South, flying twenty-year-old propeller-driven airliners. Jon returned home the next day; he was the most changed by his Vietnam experience. The nice guy who left Lebanon in the fall of 1967 had become moody and angry from his experience. The only job he could find was as a bouncer at a nightclub in Washington Park.

It was in September of 1972, three months after I was discharged, that I decided to go to Los Angeles to see how Norris was doing. He went to USC to pursue a degree in business; he had just graduated and started a job with a major movie producer. He also had started a career on the side to supplement his income.

I arrived in Los Angeles on the afternoon of September 12, after a smooth flight from St. Louis. Norris was at the gate to greet me, sharply dressed in a business suit. “What brings you to LAX, Jerry?” he asked me.

“I came out here to visit you,” I replied.

“How was ‘Nam?”

“Terrible. I served in a MASH unit; the people I served with were literally up to their heels in blood. I’m glad I was able to gain an honorable discharge when I did.”

“I’m glad I was able to get out of serving in that terrible war. It wouldn’t give me the freedom to do what I do now.”

“What’s that?”

Norris took out a photograph of a young lady. “Who is that girl?” I asked him.

“She’s me,” he replied.

“You dress as a girl? For what, may I ask?” I asked with shock and surprise.

“I’m a female impersonator; I work three days a week at a club in West Hollywood,” he replied.

“I thought that was illegal,” I added.

“This is California, Jerry,” he informed me.

“When I was growing up, I used to think very negatively of men who like to dress in women’s clothes. I thought that these men were homos; dressing up like girls to attract men.”

“Believe it or not, I’m attracted to the very same people who dress like this every day.”

"You mean to say that while you dress up as a woman three days a week, you still like the girls?"

"Yes. I'm only attracted to those of the female persuasion."

"Do you have a girlfriend?"

"Yes, I do; Sandi is a very understanding girl when it comes to what I do to bring in an extra few bucks. In fact, she taught me how to apply my makeup."

After I claimed my luggage, I went to the car rental agency to pick up my rental car; a 1972 Ford Mustang. I followed Norris to his apartment; a two-bedroom apartment in Venice Beach. I set my suitcases in front of the bed, and went into the living room, where I watched television until seven o'clock. It was that time when I walked down the street to a pizza place, and ordered a small sausage pizza for myself.

When I returned, Norris was about ready to walk out the door with a red sequin gown and a yellow ball gown in his arm. "Are you performing tonight?" I asked him.

"Yes, I am. Show time is ten-thirty," he replied.

He left me directions to the club, which was fifteen minutes' driving time away. When I arrived at ten o'clock, I paid my one dollar cover charge, and sat down at a table close to the stage. A tall girl with long red hair approached me. She was wearing a sleeveless floral print dress with a flowing skirt that extended just below the knee, along with a pair of sandals. "Are you Jerry Blaine?" she asked me.

"I am," I replied.

"I'm Sandra LaFollette, but you can call me Sandi," she added.

"I'm very pleased to meet you, Sandi. I'd take it you're Norris' girl."

"I've been going with Norris for the last year and a half. When I met him as a student at USC, there was something different about him. Most of the guys I met were former soldiers returning from combat in Vietnam; they were quite arrogant; some also were prone to get into a fight or two. Norris is a different kind of guy; he's been a sweetheart ever since we met. When he told me he worked part-time as a female impersonator, I was surprised. I started to help him with his makeup; he mastered the art of feminine illusion within six months. I love him as both Norris and as Nancy."

"Nancy...is that his feminine name?"

"Yes, it is. He said he took the name from his Aunt Nancy. On stage, he's known as Nancy Kahn."

"Aunt Nancy is my mother's older sister. She and Uncle Ned celebrated their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary in May, just before I got back from Vietnam."

"What did you do in the war, Jerry?"

"I was a corpsman and an assistant clerk in a MASH unit. MASH is an acronym for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. The MASH I was stationed at moved anywhere within a ten-mile radius of a small village about one hundred miles from Saigon. The experience was just awful; it was wall-to-wall blood and death day in and day out. The doctors were

the whole ball game there; one even received a Purple Heart for continuing to operate, even with a bullet lodged in his left leg."

"Is this your first time seeing a female impersonator show?"

"This is my first time. I've heard about such shows when I was in high school; some newspaper ads I read declared it was 'different!' Yet, I was raised to believe that men who dress up as women are sick to some degree. I have not met a crossdresser, let alone a female impersonator, just yet."

Norris then approached my table; he was all made up to look like a woman. Wearing a shoulder-length reddish blonde wig, a blue dress, skin-colored stockings and a pair of blue pumps, he walked up to where Sandi was sitting, bent down and gave her a kiss. "No one is going to think you're really a guy, Nancy," I said in a low tone.

"That's the amazing thing about feminine illusion. You're supposed to make the audience believe that you're a girl. Call it a suspension of disbelief on my part," he added.

"Wish me luck, darling," he whispered to her.

"Good luck tonight, honey," she cooed before kissing him.

The show started on time at ten-thirty; the first one on stage was Debbie Desire, a go-go dancer. Debbie was dressed in a short yellow sleeveless dress with the hemline reaching halfway down her thigh; she was dancing to a tune from the soundtrack to the movie "The Odd Couple." The show's hostess, Virginia Robins, came on stage, wearing a red dress, telling jokes similar to those I heard on Redd Foxx's party albums at Pete's party after returning from Vietnam. The bawdy jokes were followed by an African-American female impersonator named Brittany Shirley; she was doing an illusion of Diana Ross. Nancy followed her, doing an illusion of Doris Day, performing "Sentimental Journey." In the second part of the show, Nancy was doing an illusion of Nancy Sinatra, performing the theme from "You Only Live Twice." I was personally impressed with the ability of a man to make himself up to look like a woman.

After the show, Norris came to the table, still dressed as Nancy. "I didn't want to tell the rest of the family I was doing this. I would be afraid of their disapproval," he said in no uncertain terms.

"My lips are sealed, Nancy," I added.

"You probably know what happened when I was sixteen years old, Sandi," he said to her.

"That was so terrible...some guy traumatizing you like that," she added with sadness.

"It's a long story, but that kept him out of military service," I added.

After the show, I went back to Norris' apartment to get some sleep. When I woke up around eleven o'clock, the door to Norris' bedroom was open. He was in bed with Sandi; he was wearing a white pair of pajama bottoms; she was wearing a fuchsia full slip. I walked out of the apartment to go on the Universal Studios tour, before taking an afternoon walk on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and taking pictures of the footprints in front of the Chinese Theater. When I returned, Norris was at a photography studio in West Hollywood, having his photos taken dressed as Nancy. While he and Sandi were away from

the apartment, I had one of my flashbacks to Vietnam; it was very scary. When I finally came out of the flashback, I saw two people in my room; one in a red dress, and another in a pink sundress. "What's the matter, Jerry?" Sandi asked me.

"It was awful! I saw helicopters coming in, loaded with wounded. I was helping a corporal carry a badly wounded shoulder in to the pre-op ward to be prepared for surgery. I could see soldiers profusely bleeding, creating a sea of red. I could see soldiers dying. When I woke up, I was screaming. Thank God you two arrived," I explained.

"How many of these flashbacks have you had since you returned?" Norris asked.

"I've had one at least three times a week since I returned from 'Nam in June," I replied.

"I think you should relax for a while," Sandi added.

"Let me get out of this dress into some guy clothes," Norris then added.

I sat down on the couch in the living room, while Sandi brought me a glass of ice water. "You must have been in the military a long time," she said.

"I was in the Army for twelve years, Sandi. I enlisted in the Army when I graduated from high school in 1960; I took my basic training at Fort Dix. I entered boot camp as a basic Private, and finished as a Private First Class. After boot camp, I trained as a corpsman, medic and clerk. After taking my medical training at Fort Sam Houston near San Antonio, my first assignment was at the clinic at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia. While I was there, my unit got called to duty in the Berlin Crisis; we left for France in October of 1961. Our unit went to France, Germany, Italy and North Africa during our ten months overseas. After I came back from Europe in August 1962, I was promoted to Corporal and moved to Fort Campbell in Kentucky, where I was stationed until August 1964. I spent a year and a half in Germany at a hospital some 100 miles from Frankfurt. When that tour wrapped up in February 1966, I was promoted to Sergeant and assigned to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington. I stayed in D.C. until May 1968, when I was moved to Fort Leonard Wood in the Missouri Ozarks. In January of 1970, I got the lucky ticket to Vietnam and a promotion to Second Lieutenant. I was wounded five months later in a sniper attack on the MASH unit I was assigned to; I was protecting my commanding officer from bodily harm. I won a Purple Heart for risking my life to protect my CO. I got wounded in the back of my left leg and in my shoulder; I still have the scars from the attack. At the end of 1971, I got my final promotion, to First Lieutenant. I was honorably discharged three months ago; I had served a total of twelve years in the United States Army," I explained.

"So, Vietnam was really hell," Norris added as he came into the room, wearing a tank top shirt and a pair of blue jeans.

"It certainly was. I came home with more of a respect for human life. The war reminded me of how precious life really is. Pete came home with that same respect, even after being a prisoner of war for two years. Jon's a totally changed person now; he's not the nice guy we grew up with. He's angry and bitter; he won't see a therapist to talk out his experiences," I added with concern.

"I hope he doesn't turn violent," Sandi added with an equal amount of concern.

When she finished that statement, the phone rang. Norris answered it, and talked for a moment. "Jerry, it's for you," he informed me.

Norris and Sandi were reading the newspaper while I was on the phone with my former commanding officer, who was still in Vietnam. I was writing down pertinent information as he relayed it to me. I knew that something happened to Jeff, my only remaining brother in Vietnam. When I came back into the living room, I had a serious look on my face.

"Norris, Sandi, I have some news," I informed them.

"You look concerned, Jerry," Norris added.

"Jeff has been wounded in combat. He was on patrol ninety miles outside Saigon when his unit was attacked by a group of Viet Cong guerillas. He got a lot of mortar fragments in the left foot; he was taken to my old MASH unit. The fragments did major damage to his foot; they had to amputate his foot at the ankle. He's about to be flown to a military hospital in Tokyo to continue his recovery," I explained.

"It will take a while for him to recover, that's for sure," added Sandi.

To change the subject, I asked him more about his job as a female impersonator. "How many of your cast mates are dating?" I asked him.

"I'm one of the few who dates women exclusively. I know that Erica Smallwood, who does impressions of Barbra Streisand, is married. Her spouse is a dress designer; she has designed all of Erica's dresses and gowns. Debbie is dating a young college girl; she has altered her old go-go outfits for Debbie's act. One of our part-time performers, Paulette Collette, is dating a Hollywood businesswoman. Some of the others don't date, while others prefer to hang out with the men," he replied.

"I hear that those who are attracted to their own sex have some sort of psychological problem; at least that's what the Army told me," I added.

"But, we have to be understanding of why some people are attracted to those of their own sex," Sandi then added.

"This is something I really need to understand," I informed them.

"We have some literature on why there are some guys who dress in girls' clothes," Norris informed me before giving me a bunch of pamphlets and booklets on the subject of crossdressing, transvestism and female impersonation.

After spending two weeks in California, I returned home to Lebanon on the red-eye flight on October 2. I spent a lot of time studying the information Norris had given me. The more I read, the more I started to understand why Norris was working one of his jobs dressed as a girl. There was a lot I had to learn, but I would learn all about the subject matter as time went on, through both reading and real-life experience. It seemed that, to me at least, this was brought about by a necessity to pay his debts.

Two

By the end of 1974, much had changed. Jeff was able to recover from his injuries and get fitted for an artificial foot; he began college in the spring of 1973 to pursue a degree in psychology. I was able to get a job driving a delivery truck in Belleville; I also enrolled in college in the spring of '73, majoring in English. We had joined Ruth at the same college;

she was majoring in art and design. Fran had moved from Des Moines to Bakersfield, where her job took her. Norris and Sandi had become engaged in the fall of 1974; they were planning to marry in the spring of 1975. Jon continued his job as a nightclub bouncer; after all of the fights he broke up and the injuries he sustained, he started to look more like Frankenstein by the fall of 1974.

It was December 9, 1974. I had just closed on renting an apartment in Belleville. I went to a tavern down the street from my new place of residence to have a glass of cola. A pretty blonde girl, who couldn't be more than twenty-four, was on the stool next to me. "Do you come here often?" was her opening cliché.

"It's my first time here," I replied.

"What's your name?" she asked me.

"I'm Jerry Blaine," I replied.

"Susie Darrow," she added.

We carried on a conversation for about fifteen minutes before a man with a muscular build walked in; he had short, dark, curly hair. He was wearing only a tee shirt, a pair of shorts and a pair of tennis shoes. He looked like he was going to harm someone. He approached me, with an angry look, and asked me: "What the hell are you doing talking to that girl?"

"We were just making conversation," Susie replied.

"Like hell you were! This guy ain't worth your time!" he angrily said.

"Look, pal, leave her alone!" I yelled to him.

"And who in the hell are you?" he angrily asked me.

"I'm Jerry Blaine, proud Vietnam Veteran," I replied.

"You fought in that lousy war?" he asked, even angrier.

"And who in the name of Sam Hill are you?" I asked, looking on him in a strange manner.

"David March," he replied.

"You're the son of a bitch who severely beat my brother Norris back in high school," I informed him.

"Yes, I'm the one who beat your faggot brother, for going after my girl!" he yelled at the top of his lungs.

"Why don't you get the hell out of here, David, before I get the police," Susie angrily informed him. After that, he started to throw a punch at me. I had no choice but to fight back, using the skills I learned in Vietnam. Half the guys got involved in the fight, most of them trying to beat David to a pulp. When the sheriff's deputies arrived, I was hauled off to jail.

Most of the people involved in the fight were all thrown into one cell. When that cell was full, I was taken into another cell. There, I found only one other person; a platinum blonde-haired girl, wearing a short red skirt, a baby blue shirt that revealed some cleav-

age, a pair of white high heels, and a pair of rhinestone earrings dangling from her ears. "What are you in here for, honey?" she asked me.

"Peace disturbance," I replied.

"I'm in for solicitation," she added before asking me my name.

"Jerry Blaine," I replied.

"I'm Tara Morgan," she added.

"What got you into the St. Clair County jail, Tara?"

"Jerry, I was walking up and down Lincoln Trail in Fairview Heights, looking for a good time. I asked a man if he wanted a good time, and he accepted. I told him that I would charge one hundred dollars for an evening with him. When we got to the motel where I was staying, he informed me that he was a sheriff's deputy working undercover. I was arrested, and charged with soliciting a police officer for sexual favors."

"I got into a fight at this tavern on West Main. I was talking to this beautiful blonde girl named Susie; we were just making conversation when a man named David came up to us, about to blow his top. He made a lot of threatening remarks toward both me and the girl; when I asked him his name, I realized it was the same man who traumatized my younger brother, Norris, back in 1965. He threw a fist at me, and I fought back. About half the male patrons in the bar came to my aid; two sheriff's deputies happened to be driving by. I was arrested, along with six others and David."

"Is that where you got the black eye?"

"Yes, it is. Now, why were you soliciting?"

"It's a long story, but there's a reason why I'm doing this. I am a transsexual."

"I've heard of a transvestite; exactly what is a transsexual?"

"A transsexual is a person who is born of one sex, but is completely convinced that he or she is of the opposite sex. I was born a boy named Terence in 1949; from the time I was five, I was totally convinced I was a girl. When I finally told my parents I wanted to become a girl, I was thrown out of the house. I left my home in rural Texas a year ago, and traveled around the country, seeking out other people in my situation. I started to live full-time as a woman when I was in New York; I started on the hormones while I was in the Big Apple. That's why my breasts are so big now. I was on my way to San Francisco when I stopped in Fairview Heights for a couple of days. I am hoping to save up enough money for a sex-change operation."

"That's something new for me."

"This is not very well-known to the public. Until just twenty years ago, no one knew that one could change sexes; in this case, from man to woman. I've always been emotionally, physically, romantically and sexually attracted to men."

Another sheriff's deputy approached our cell while we were speaking. "Mr. Blaine, the owner of the establishment has dropped the charges against you. You're free to go. Miss Morgan, we've checked your priors, and find you to have a clean record. The deputy who arrested you is willing to reduce the charges to misdemeanor obscenity," he informed us.

"How much is the fine?" she asked him.

"It's a one hundred dollar fine," he replied.

After Tara and I were released from jail, I went back to my apartment in Lebanon, while Tara went back to her hotel room. The next day, Jon stopped by the apartment to check on me. "What's going on, Jerry?" he asked me.

"I spent a couple of hours in the clink last night," I replied.

"Why did you get tossed into the joint?"

"Peace disturbance charges. I was sitting at the bar inside a tavern on West Main in Belleville when a muscular man came in and started trouble. I was talking with this blonde-haired chick named Susie. When I asked the son of a bitch his name, I found out he was the guy who made Norris' life a living hell when he was seventeen. He picked a fight with me and half a dozen others; a couple of sheriff's deputies were in the neighborhood, and took us into the county jail."

"That damn son of a bitch who terrorized Norris and made his high school life a living hell?"

"That's the bum, Jon."

"While all the other guys were packed into one cell, I had to share another cell with a person going through a sex change. She was in on prostitution-related charges."

"You mean to say you shared a cell with a fairy who's a whore?"

"She got off with a misdemeanor obscenity charge and paid a one hundred dollar fine; the charges against me were dropped."

"The other six were released within hours; David was held on \$25,000 bond."

"That David March is a connected mother up to the ass. His father is a God-damned assistant district attorney."

"Jon, you better not be thinking what I'm thinking."

"You're damn right, I'm thinking about dusting him off!"

"Don't do it. You'll bring shame and disgrace on our family name for years to come."

Jon stormed out of my apartment, angrier than I ever saw him. He went back to his place off State Road 4, and started his scheme. I decided a visit to Norris and Sandi would be necessary. After final exams, I flew out to Los Angeles.

"Jon's angrier than ever," I told them.

"I wonder why," Norris said with concern.

"I went to this tavern on the west end of Belleville to have a soda before going home for the night. I struck up a conversation with this gorgeous blonde named Susie; all of a sudden, a muscular man rudely interrupted our conversation. I swear on my military honor, he was a control freak. He tried to get Susie to end our conversation; he said a lot of demeaning things to the both of us. When I asked him his name, he complied. As it turned out, he was the man who terrorized you when you were sixteen. He threw the first punch, and I had to fight back. I was joined by half a dozen others; it happened that two sheriff's

deputies happened to be patrolling the neighborhood. I would end up getting arrested, along with this loser and the six others who assisted me in the fight. I spent a couple of hours in the clink; I shared a cell with a person who was going through a sex change from man to woman. She had been taken in for solicitation; she got off with a one hundred dollar fine," I explained.

"Did you tell him what happened?" Sandi asked.

"I told Jon what had happened; and he was beside himself with rage. I had never seen him so angry in my entire life. He told me that he wanted to 'dust him off.' I would assume he meant he wanted to kill him. The guy is connected up to the rear end; his father is an assistant district attorney. I told him not to do it; such an act would bring shame and disgrace on our family name for years to come," I replied.

"I hope he doesn't do it," Norris added.

"If he does, he'll have the rest of his life to regret it," I said with concern.

"Would you like to change the subject?" Sandi asked him.

"Yes, I would, darling. We've decided to get married next June," he replied.

"That's wonderful!" I exclaimed with glee; I then asked them who's going to wear the gown in the wedding.

"I am. We can wait for a double-gown ceremony until a special anniversary," she replied.

"Besides, Sandi can fit into all my dresses," he added.

"What are you going to do about your work as a female impersonator," I then asked.

"I'm planning to cut my schedule of appearances significantly after I get married," he replied.

The subject didn't stay on plans for Norris and Sandi's wedding for too long. The phone rang around eleven-thirty. Sandi picked it up, and then handed it to me. I knew that it would be the news I was dreading. When I came back into the living room, I had a look of consternation on my face.

"What's wrong?" Sandi asked.

"That was Mom on the phone. David March has been murdered," I replied.

"Somebody finally had the guts to put a bullet into the dumb palooka?" Norris asked me.

"From what I could get from Mom, he was shot twice; one went through his back and exited through the chest, and the other one went into the back of his head. The crime occurred in back of the same tavern where I was involved in the fight a week ago," I replied.

"Have they got a suspect?" Sandi asked.

"The only suspect they have in mind is Jonathan Blaine. He's currently on the run," I replied.

I had a hard time getting to sleep that night; Jon just didn't listen to me. While I was sleeping, a nationwide all points bulletin was issued for him and for the car he was driv-

ing, a 1961 Ford Falcon with Illinois plates. I was told to stay put in Los Angeles until further notice. I was asked several questions on his personality and changes he had gone through since his service in Vietnam by two Los Angeles detectives and one from Belleville at police headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. I was informed that Jon was headed toward southern California; the Highway Patrol had been notified. Three days later, he arrived in Los Angeles; he led police on a chase through the city, starting at Vermont Avenue and Century Boulevard. The chase continued for several hours, before a roadblock finally caught him at Victory and Laurel Canyon Boulevards. He was immediately taken into custody.

“What are they calling this murder?” Sandi asked me after I received news of Jon’s capture.

“They’re calling it a revenge killing; he took revenge for what David did to Norris back in high school,” I replied.

“I’m sure you will be subpoenaed to testify in his trial,” I informed Norris.

“Will they ask me about what happened nine years ago?” he asked me.

“I’m sure of it,” I replied.

Three

I had graduated from college with a bachelor’s degree in English in the fall of 1977; I had accepted a part-time teaching position at a community college in Belleville while going through graduate school. Jeff had graduated with a bachelor’s degree in psychology at the same time; two weeks after graduation, he married Fiona Major, a sociology student from Liverpool in the United Kingdom. Pete finally moved up to flying jetliners throughout the southeastern United States in the fall of 1976; it was about that time he married Savannah LaMarche, a farm girl from northern Louisiana. They met in the spring of 1975, when she was working the snack bar at the Memphis airport. When they married, Pete was thirty-two and Savannah was twenty years old. After I graduated, Norris and Sandi announced they were expecting their first child. Fran had moved again, this time to Charlottesville, Virginia. Ruth had also graduated from college with a degree in art and design; she took a job as a photographer at a local photography studio. As for Jon, he was serving a sentence of twenty years to life at the state penitentiary in Joliet for second degree murder; the charges were reduced from first degree murder due to his mental state and the fact that he was avenging a family member for what happened several years earlier.

My feelings about transvestites had changed dramatically since Vietnam; I was starting to recognize it as more of an art form than a sexual outlet. I started to see more female impersonator shows in the months after graduation; although most of their audiences were gay, I was one of the few straight guys in these venues. I still did not know what to think about transsexuals and transsexualism, however; I had too little information and too little experience meeting such people to form an opinion on the subject. I still preferred dating genetic females. I avoided the same tavern where I was arrested, even though the man whom I fought had been dead two and a half years by that time.