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IF CHINS
COULD
KILL

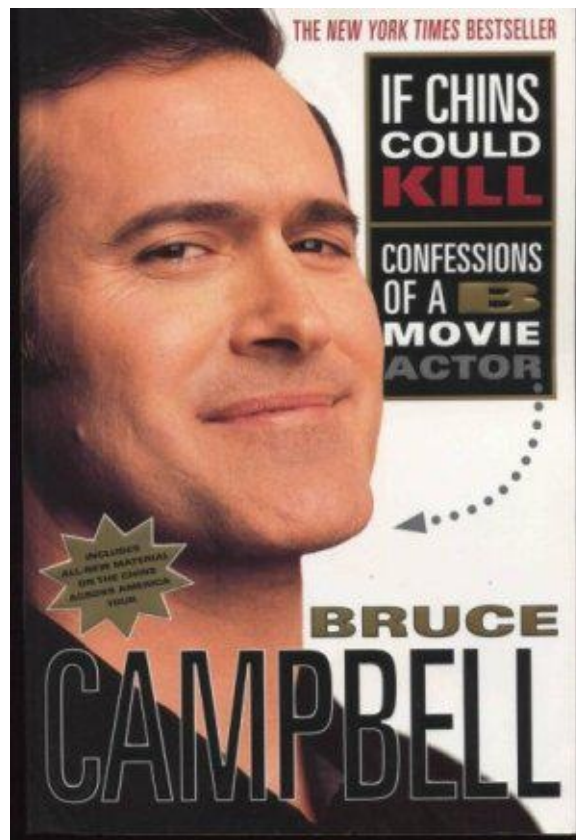
CONFESSIONS
OF A **B**
MOVIE
ACTOR

INCLUDES
ALL-NEW MATERIAL
ON THE CHINS
ACROSS AMERICA
TOUR

BRUCE

CAMPBELL

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If Chins Could Kill

Confessions of a B Movie Actor

by Bruce Campbell

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Acknowledgments
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FOREWORD

BY IVAN AND SAM RAIMI

EDITOR'S NOTE by Barry Neville

As an editor at St. Martin's Press, it is my responsibility to hire the author, edit the text and arrange for the book's introduction as based on the author's wishes. Mr. Campbell requested that brothers Ivan and Sam Raimi write the introduction for *If Chins Could Kill*.

In September of 1999 I telephoned Mr. Ivan Raimi and conveyed Mr. Campbell's request. At first, he seemed rather impressed that such a large publishing house was handling Mr. Campbell's book and happily agreed.

Within the hour, I received a call from his "literary agent," who refused to give his name, but claimed he was negotiating on behalf of the brothers. Strangely, the caller ID feature on my telephone revealed the telephone number of this "agent" to be the same as that of Mr. Ivan Raimi. I will allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.

This "agent" said that the fee was three thousand dollars. He asked whether it would be possible for St. Martin's Press to cut the check today? I informed the "agent" that customarily there is no fee paid for introductions. Usually an autobiography's introduction is written as a gesture of friendship toward the author. The agent claimed that the three thousand dollars was the "discounted friendship fee."

After some discussion, St. Martin's Press issued a cashier's check in the amount of \$280 made out, as requested, to Ivan Raimi. The check was cashed the same day.

Two weeks had passed and where was my introduction? I telephoned Ivan Raimi, who claimed there must have been a misunderstanding. Apparently, his "agent" had told him that the \$280 check was just the "starter fee" and should be treated as such. He mentioned that if I wanted to meet him, "somewhere nice, for say, lunch and drinks," that could be arranged.

Instead, I thought it best that he and his brother, Sam, come down to my office to discuss the introduction. He said he was far too busy to be bothered with that. I suggested that if his time was at a premium, I could tape-record the meeting, capturing the Raimi brothers' thoughts about Mr. Campbell, and have a ghostwriter put the introduction together. In this way, I assured him, no real effort would be required from him or his brother. This aroused his interest. He agreed, upon the condition that the subject of fees not be discussed in front of his brother, Sam, as he had distaste for all matters of business.

On October 22, 1999, Ivan Raimi entered my office and what follows is a transcription of that meeting:

Barry: Hello, Mr. Raimi. Welcome to St. Martin's Press. I'm Barry Neville, Bruce's editor. We spoke on the phone.

Ivan Raimi: Hi. Yeah. This place is really nice. Speaking of which, you got a damn good-looking secretary out there. I mean when I dropped those papers and she had to bend down and --

Barry: Yes. Thank you. As mentioned, I've got the tape running...

Ivan Raimi: I mean that's the kind of woman... I'd drink her bath water --

Barry: -- We're tape-recording...

Ivan Raimi: Sure, play anything you want. Listen, Sam's coming up in a second ... so we should get this fee thing out of the way.

Barry: Fee? As in... "additional fee"?

Ivan Raimi: Fee. As in "fee structure." It's an ugly word, but I think we need to get it out of the way before Sam comes back. Or he'll walk.

Barry: But we paid the fee. The two hundred and eighty --

Ivan Raimi: Barry, you paid the starter fee. Good. Good for you. But now let's talk completion. You still owe us some kind of completion fee. And please, do it quick, before Sam gets here.

EDITOR'S NOTE ****

At that point I paid Ivan Raimi an additional \$120 from my personal cash. Shortly thereafter, Sam Raimi entered the room.

Sam Raimi: The headlights weren't on.

Ivan Raimi: Really? Hey. This is that guy I was telling you about.

Barry: Hi, I'm Barry Neville, pleased to meet you. Bruce is very excited to have you aboard.

Sam Raimi: Bruce. Bruce. Bruce this. Bruce that.

Barry: We think our readers will really respond to this book. Kind of an insider's --

Sam Raimi: You want to know what I think, Barry? I think, your readers are tired of the same old drivel pushed on them, time after time. Tired of being force fed purée by half-artists. Your readers have teeth. For God's sake, let 'em chew.

Barry: What do you mean?

Sam Raimi: I mean let's tell a different story. The story of an ordinary man --

Ivan Raimi: An extraordinary man!

Sam Raimi: Either way. But the forces of mediocrity are against him. I'm talking the story of a guy who fights his way up *from* the B movies!

Barry: Who?

Sam Raimi: Not Who. The question is... "why?"!

Ivan Raimi: I like it. It's good! Barry, let's do it!

Barry: Well, it's really interesting... but the task at hand is the introduction to *If Chins Could Kill*.

Sam Raimi: I see. And who, may I ask, is going to read this book? His illiterate fans?

Barry, people get the wrong idea sometimes. See, Bruce is like a puppet. *My* puppet. I pull a string, he smiles. I pull another, and he runs through the woods and hits his head against the tree. And that's it. So tell me, Barry, whose story is more interesting? The

puppet or the puppet master?

Barry: Well, we think that Bruce has developed quite a big following over the years. We believe this book has its own niche.

Sam Raimi: Uh-huh. Well, if there's such a big following, how come yer only paying my brother and I a hundred bucks to write the intro?

Barry: Guys, maybe this project isn't your cup of --

Ivan Raimi: Please, Barry, this is a *great* project, one that Sam and I both believe in and want to make special for you. Now, we agree to do the touch-up on Bruce's book, but don't expect --

Barry: "Touch-up"?

Ivan Raimi: What we in the film world call a "polish" -- but don't expect us to work for nothing, even if Bruce is our close friend -- 'cause that's like slappin' Bruce in the face.

Barry: But --

Sam Raimi: So what's this book about anyway?

Barry: Didn't you read it?

Ivan Raimi: Sure he read it. We both read it. It's got its own niche.

Barry: Gentlemen... the book does not need a polish. It needs an introduction. What I'd like to do now is to leave you alone, so that you might ruminate on your memories of Bruce. How you met, how you work together... I'll come back with a writer who will give some form to it, and put it in the context of a proper introduction.

Ivan Raimi: Why don't you send up some drinks and sandwiches. Something nice. And we'll start the creative process right away, Barry.

EDITOR'S NOTE****

At that point, I left the room. What follows has been transcribed from the tape recording made in my office:

Sam Raimi: This is horse shit.

Ivan Raimi: Tell you something else, I smell a screw job.

Sam Raimi: This guy'll pay.

Ivan Raimi: Right. Like those guys at United Artists paid? Did you ever get your money outta them?

Sam Raimi: Are you absolutely sure they never paid? 'Cause when I called, they said they sent the check to you.

Ivan Raimi: Somehow, I'm not surprised. I'll tell you what we do. This time we screw them before they screw us.

Sam Raimi: High five!

Ivan Raimi: High five!

Sam Raimi: Check this out...

Ivan Raimi: Look what I got.

EDITOR'S NOTE****

The remainder of the tape had no more voices, merely the sounds of drawers opening and closing. When I returned to my office, the Raimi brothers were gone. A gold pen and an antique silver clock were missing from my desk. In addition, my

cellular phone was missing. I had it disconnected the next day, but when the phone bill arrived, I noticed that more than a dozen calls had been made to a series of 1-900 numbers that day.

I leave the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. But having had the privilege of getting to know Mr. Campbell through the preparation of this book, I beg the reader not to judge his character by the quality of his friends.

-- Barry Neville, Editor, St. Martin's Press

INTRODUCTION

Genealogies appearing in book form usually begin with a great statesman, a renowned warrior, an illustrious divine, poet, author or reformer, and are so blended with fabulous detail as scarce to leave room for the supposition that the founder of the family ever had a father. Not so in this case, for the worthy progenitor of our race, first to cross the Atlantic Ocean, with whom, for lack of earlier information, our genealogy must begin, was a man of lowly origin and humble occupation...

-- Great-grandfather Hugh Campbell in 1906

So, another actor writes a book about their glamorous, whirlwind life. Personally, as an ex-Detroiter, that crap bores me to tears. I've always been more interested in the working stiffs of Hollywood, ninety-nine percent of whom are overlooked in those phony "tell-all" books. For every Bruce Willis and Steven Spielberg, there are a hundred no-name slobs scraping out a living in this shockingly difficult profession.

Therefore, this is not a memoir about what I said to so-and-so at the Beverly Hills Hotel. It's also *not* about an actor's "meteoric" rise, or "tragic" fall. Rather, this book is dedicated to the players on the second string, the "B" people, if you will, and I cheerfully include myself in that lot.

I was the first member of my immediate family to make a living in the arts. I can't say that I was the first Campbell to be published, because George John Douglass Campbell, eighth Duke of Argyll, kicked out a half dozen books in the late 1800s -- my personal favorite being *The History and Antiquities of Iona*.



Great-great-great-grandfather Peter Campbell was a shepherd in Killin, Perthshire, Scotland. Tiring of that (and who could blame him?), Peter and his wife, Catherine, set sail to America in March of 1798 and eventually took up the farming life in Caledonia, upstate New York. The family became "official" in 1810, when Peter was awarded his Certificate of Citizenship.

According to family records, this man was "spare in frame, somewhat stooped, long features, solemn but pleasant countenance, with piercing black eyes and wavy black hair." An extremely pious fellow, he was a teetotaler and "endeavored by precept and example to cause others to abstain from their baneful use."

He wasn't exactly Mr. Excitement, but ol' Pete got the Clan Campbell up and going in the States.

Four generations later, my grandfather ventured westward to attend the University of Michigan as a pre-med student. World War I interrupted his studies, and Donald MacKenzie Campbell found himself serving a tour of duty in France. His father, Hugh, was a pacifist and objected to his involvement, so Donald enlisted in the ambulance corps, reasoning that he could "save lives instead of taking them." Ironically, the horrors of war outraged him so much, he transferred to the artillery division without telling his father.

After the war, which he refused to discuss, Donald changed majors and graduated from college with a degree in history -- the first in his family to do so. Right out of college, Donald landed his first and only job as a sales engineer for Alcoa Aluminum in Detroit. Forty-four years later, he retired. His marriage to childhood sweetheart Dorothy lasted almost as long -- forty-three years.



The Campbells, up until 1928, had been a serious, hardworking lot, but with the birth of Charles Newton Campbell, everything changed. Charlie didn't want to be another "Man in the Grey Flannel Suit" -- he had dreams in the late forties of becoming a painter, so when he attended the University of Michigan, it was to study art and history.

Upon graduating, his parents persuaded him to find a "real" job -- this came in the form of a billboard inspector for the Campbell/Ewald (no relation) advertising agency in downtown Detroit.

At least in advertising, Charlie thought to himself, I can still be creative.

Yes, my father was creative -- very creative. His territory of inspection was everything east of the Rockies, and Charlie could, in the days predating cell phones and fax machines, get anywhere via Chicago -- where he knew a cute girl.

After two years of this, Charlie moved up to the "creative" world of media buying. By all accounts he excelled -- so much so, he caught the eye of an attractive secretary across the hall named Joanne.

Joanne Louise Pickens was different than the other women Dad met at the ad agency. As a practicing Christian Scientist, she was a far cry from the hard-drinking crowd Dad hung with.

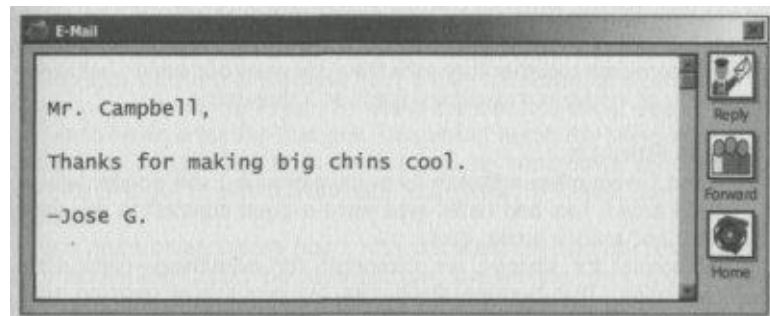
"The other women were a hell of a lot of fun," Dad recalled, "but I couldn't see myself marrying one of them."

Joanne was also unique in another way for a woman in the mid-fifties -- she was a single mom with a three-year-old son named Mike. Charlie didn't seem to mind, and a year later they married and moved into a house in the suburbs.

That's where I come in....

1

THE PROVING GROUNDS



There is an L-shaped scar on the left side of my chin. People always ask me how I got it and I've told them everything from "One dark night in Bombay," to "A scuffle with bad, bad, Leroy Brown..."

In actuality, it came about because I was a fearless kid. I played outside a great deal of the time, in any weather and in suburban Detroit, Michigan, that's saying something. In this age where laser surgery rushes to correct every imperfection, I'm not going to touch that scar -- it reminds me of too much fun.

Bilbo Baggins would have felt right at home in my neighborhood -- it was a magical place. *The Braes of Bloomfield* was created by commuters hoping to get away from the faded glory of the Motor City, and the results were impressive. As a kid exploring the woods between these upper-middle-class homes, the city might as well have been a million miles away.

Unlike the embarrassing names attributed to subdivisions today -- like "Pine Meadows," where there are neither pine trees nor meadows -- if a street in my neighborhood was called Old Orchard, it was because there used to be an orchard on that very spot. Rogue trees in many of the yards still produced apples.



With street names like Braemoor, Idlewyle, and Darramoor, you'd think you were in rural Scotland. Most of the traditional ranch-style homes weren't all that big, but they had land around them. The best part of all is that there were virtually no fences -- this was long before the "planned" communities of today, with guard gates, motion-sensitive lighting, and Neighborhood Watches.

Our neighborhood had an epic feel to it, and this broad range provoked a sense of unlimited possibility. As a result, the three Campbell boys (Mike, Don and Bruce) were "free range" and could explore at will.

I am the youngest of the three. Don is a year older. He and I wound up spending more time together than with Mike, six years our senior, but there were plenty of industrious summers spent as a threesome.

SIBLING RIVALS

Don and I were often mistaken as twins, although I still wonder why -- his reddish brown hair and hazel eyes were a great contrast to my dark brown hair and muddy brown eyes.

As is normal for siblings, we competed for everything -- particularly Mom's attention. That became obvious to me one school morning as I leaned down to buckle up my rain boots at the top of the stairs. Don saw this as the perfect opportunity to eliminate me from his world, so he planted a foot against my butt and shoved. I tumbled forward, sure of my fate, but Mom jabbed a finger into my belt loop and held me aloft just long enough to grab the railing.

This incident, no doubt, contributed to an altercation in our front yard years later. After provoking Don for some unknown reason, he chased me across our front lawn in a rage. Somewhere along my escape route, I managed to snag a screwdriver. As Don swung his fist, I raised the Phillips head and it promptly became impaled in his wrist.



"You stabbed me!" Don screamed, incredulous.

"I did not. You swung at me and I defended myself."

Aside from the occasional near-death experiences, Don and I actually got along well. As we aged and grew, our "roughhousing" became not only discouraged but feared. Epic wrestling matches encompassed the entire house and resulted in broken

furniture. The fact that we were both on the junior high wrestling team only made things worse for my mother.

"What's the problem, Mom? We're practicing..."

In the late sixties, war films like *Kelly's Heroes*, *The Devil's Brigade* and *The Dirty Dozen* seemed to be everywhere. Our favorite TV show, *Combat*, only encouraged this preoccupation with war, and Vic Morrow soon became my first favorite actor. He was the embodiment of laid-back cool and I loved how his cigarettes bounced on the edge of his mouth when he talked.

Years later, I worked with Michael Caffey, who had directed several *Combat* episodes. Instead of asking him for motivation, all I cared to know was who could kick whose ass -- Vic Morrow or his commanding officer, Rick Jason? Don, on the other hand, was partial to the character Kirby because he had the coolest gun -- a Browning automatic rifle.

Don took all this make-believe stuff a little too seriously. The difference between us was fundamental: I'd watch *Combat* and think, *Gee, it would be fun to be an actor like that guy*. Don would watch the same scene and think, *Gee, it would be fun to be that guy*. He went on to join the army reserves and got to play the ultimate "war game" in Kuwait during Desert Storm.

Don and I passed many hours with G.I. Joes. We had the basic ones -- the Russian, the Cadet, the Japanese guy, the German -- who didn't? They were cool, but unless you were Billy Jazinski, the spoiled rich kid down the street, there was a limit to how many you owned.

Fighting with "Joes" meant that our military engagements were restricted to "skirmishes." That wasn't enough for the post-World War II, pre-Vietnam kids that we were -- Don and I wanted to stage *full-scale invasions!*

The only way to do this was with those little green army men. Down at the brand-new Toys "R" Us, a bag of what seemed like hundreds only cost a couple bucks.

Somehow, it didn't seem right reenacting D day in our living room. Too many soldiers fell behind the sofa, so the great outdoors became the place to rumble.

The backyard, however, was a no-go. Our basset hound, Nuisance, reigned supreme back there. The dangers of fighting in her territory were twofold: running the risk of having entire platoons chewed to death or, even worse, mounting a frontal assault through scattered piles of "dog dirt."



Our front lawn wasn't much better. There were too many trees and tall grass, so battles weren't practical. We'd lose a dozen of them with each "engagement" and Dad sliced any MIAs to ribbons mowing the lawn each Saturday. Of course, that wasn't all bad, because we could round up their shredded carcasses and use them as "casualties." Even at that tender age, we knew war was heck.

Our driveway proved to be a better staging area for campaigns. Because it was dirt, you had a good color contrast and we never lost a single green man. The driveway was also elevated above the lawn on fieldstone. This was ideal, because a defending army (usually Don's) could hole up in hundreds of nooks and it might take an entire weekend to flush them out.

A garden hose added the element of water. With it, an army could be flooded out into the open, where they could easily be massacred. The defending army in this case (usually me) had a certain amount of time to build up damlike fortifications until the evil attacker turned the hose on, unleashing torrents of water. The battles usually were declared over when either the water broke through the defender's dam, or Mom came back from the grocery store.

Eventually, the thrill of these games wore off, so Don and I resorted to more drastic measures: burning the little green men into puddles of goo. In the late sixties, before Ralph Nader halted all the fun in the world, the plastic used in those army guys must have been toxic -- they made the coolest *zzziiiiip, zzziiiiiip, zzziiiiiip* noise with each burning drip. This game evolved into "lava tossing," where you flung the napalmlike substance at your opponent (or brother), as it dripped from the melting man.

Mom stopped us before Nader did, though, because one day a big flaming blob of plastic sizzled its way into my finger. I am reminded of this, happily, every time I type.

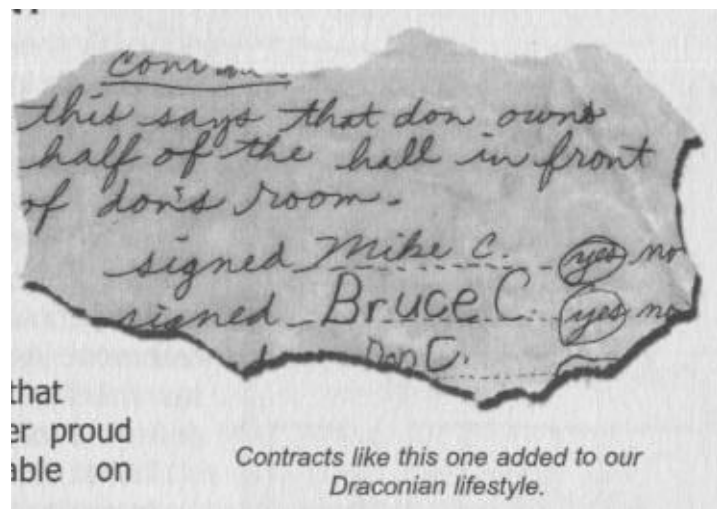
Born in 1952, my oldest brother Mike was a child of the Cold War. His favorite TV show, hands down, was *Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, so everything he was interested in

revolved around espionage. To protect sensitive information -- sent mostly from himself to himself -- he spent hours creating elaborate codes and writing them into tiny paper books. There was the *Code of the Pointing Sticks*, the *Words-for-Numbers Code*, and who could forget the *O.O.R.A. Code* (Off and On Reversible Alpha Code).

When not saving the world from evil invaders, Mike was making stuff. Never one for those goofy shop class projects, Mike went right to the real deal -- like a memory device, an electric "stop" light over his doorway, and a metal locator.

It made sense that Mike went into computers because his mind worked like one. He made lists of everything: untrustworthy people (Don and I were often on it), his weekly income from 1959 through 1967 (in cents), and secret hand-to-hand combat routines. To this day, I still rely on "Routine number 6" (to "run headlong into them and tackle them") whenever I'm confronted by an enemy.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



Mike's use of extensive lists came in handy when it came time to determine the "rules" of our childhood. In a household of three boys who were always tormenting each other, a system of rules and fines was drafted and strictly adhered to. Many contained wording that would make a contract lawyer proud and all fines were "payable on demand."

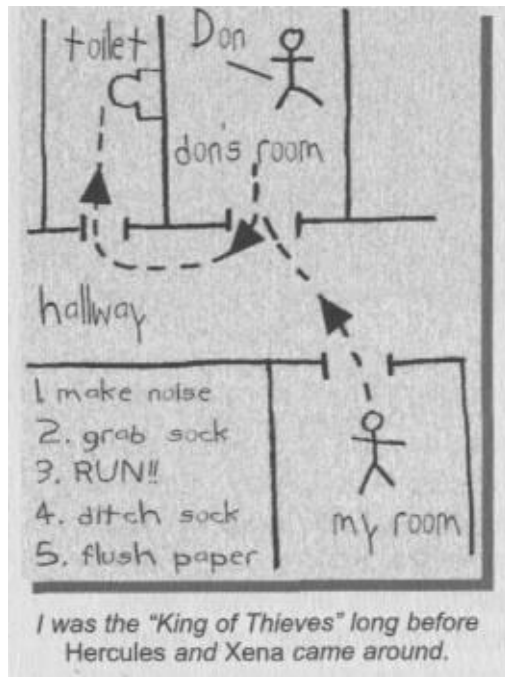
It became our own brand of justice that addressed issues important to us all. A rule stating that *Don owns half of the hall in front of Don's room* was a key property right. The rule *If Don or Bruce leaves or throws belongings in my room, they are mine unless they want to pay 20¢* seemed a bit harsh, but I'm sure it was just Mike's way of saying "leave me the hell alone."

Simple crimes, like *borrowing stuff without permission*, *calling names* or *socking someone* only cost the perpetrator 5¢. More obscure offenses, like *hanging around doorway*, *fooling with light switches*, or Mike's legislative masterpiece, *squealing when I want to look at something Don or Bruce has*, shot up to 10¢.

Some rules were obviously the result of either a pet peeve, or a very specific incident. There would otherwise be no explanation for the 20¢ fine of *taking something from me while I was looking at it*, or the 40¢ whopper for *damaging rocket controls*. In our draconian world, you could even be fined for suspicion.

Some rules, however, did make sense. In the tight quarters of a garage fort, it was simply a matter of decency to place a ban on "*dirtey boots or shous*" (spelling unaltered) and "*letting gassers.*"

Of course, all of these rules did absolutely nothing to stop the sibling abuse. Mike once laid out detailed plans to raid Don's *left-hand drawer* in his half of the room (that he and I shared) that included an overhead diagram, complete with escape routes and a comprehensive list of excuses to use if he got caught. For some reason, even though Don did "*hit, disobey, lie, steal stuff, and destroy,*" I don't think my mom would have let Mike off the hook.



Because these "raids" happened so often, we each devised ways to protect our "secret stuff." Mike hid things in every possible nook and cranny -- I know, because I went through them all. Don often moved his precious things around, or hid them in "secret books." With a sharp razor blade, usually from Dad's shaver, he hollowed out numerous hard-cover masterpieces from the living room. It wasn't hard to spot which ones were bogus -- *War and Peace* isn't usually paired with *The Cat in the Hat* on a ten-year-old's shelf.

Because invading each other's room was such a big deal, I had to do it as often as possible. One day, a plan to bother Don worked flawlessly. I raced into his room, made all kinds of noise and stole a white gym sock. Don was close on my heels as I ran away down the hall and ducked into the bathroom. As he entered the doorway, he saw me flush what he *thought* was his sock down the toilet.

"What did you do that for?! I'll kill you!"

In reality, I had ditched Don's real sock as I entered the bathroom and flushed a strip of white toilet paper (preplaced) into the septic tank. In the end, our fines evened out, because Don promptly gave me a thrashing -- roughly equal to my 30¢ worth of transgressions. I wouldn't have been surprised if Don invented a fine for *pretending to flush socks down the toilet*.

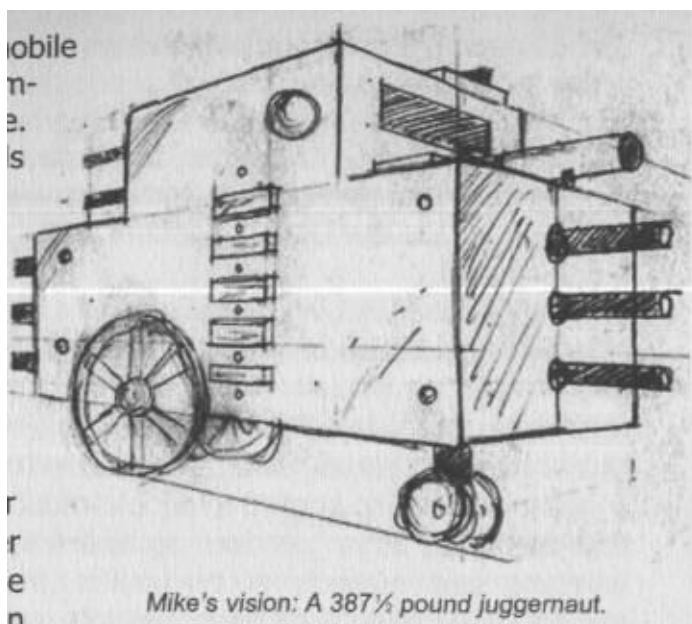
Even the bathroom wasn't a reliable sanctuary. There was a lock on the door, sure, but it could easily be opened with a credit card. To combat this, a drawer by the door could be pulled out to block the way. This worked until Mike drilled a hole through the wall of our linen closet and rigged a coat hanger to the drawer itself.

I mocked Don through the door one day, protected by the door lock, only to look down and see the drawer magically slide back in all by itself.

"You were saying?" Don said, as he pushed the door open and began beating the grunt out of me.

INDUSTRIAL-STRENGTH FUN

Mike took charge of building a playhouse in our backyard. The end product wasn't some cute cardboard house with a couple of windows -- it was a three-quarter-scale *tank*.



His plan was to make a mobile war machine that could presumably attack things and/or people. Taking into account all materials needed to build the tank, including plywood, two-by-fours, steering wheel, gun barrel, catapult, rubber slings, mirrors, fan belts and a pulley system, Mike estimated that the total weight would be 387½ pounds with occupants. I'll bet he wasn't far off. The only scheme that never came to bear was mounting the damn thing on Dad's riding lawnmower.

To defend against attacking neighbors, we armed ourselves with cracker balls, rolls of caps, sparklers, balloons, squirt guns, sling shot rifles, rubber band shooters and the dreaded Ivory Liquid detergent bottles -- the Super Soaker of their day. We used to beg Mom to buy the Ivory brand bottles because they had the best nozzles and could blast water the farthest. Mike was the best at this, because his hands were stronger. With a good squeeze, he could drench Don or me from twenty feet away. Over time, we learned to rinse the bottles out well -- a soapy shot in the eye could ruin your whole afternoon.

The experience of building the tank only fueled other summer projects -- like the

tunnel. To protect ourselves from parental meddling, we always referred to it by the backward code name of "Lennut."

The first challenge was to choose a good dig site. To insure privacy, we picked a spot in the adjacent woods, but we had to be careful because tunneling too close to a large tree meant hassling with roots. Once we had the site, we excavated a horizontal trench and reinforced the sides with two-by-fours. This was then covered with plywood, six inches of dirt and plenty of camouflage. Now, we could begin digging the main shaft, which went straight down, until we hit water. To communicate with the outside world, a garden hose was lowered through a hole in the roof.

Play time in the "Lennut" was anything but -- it was backbreaking work. After school, on weekends and even during vacations, we'd dig with hand trowels, chop and burn off roots, reinforce the walls, then dig some more. To provide a better working environment, Mike came up with an ingenious method of providing candlelight in a series of carved alcoves and even manufactured glow-in-the-dark candles from phosphorescent crayons.

Eventually, Don squealed about the use of candles, which was forbidden, and Dad gave the order to fill it in. We obeyed, but soon thereafter, Mike built a doghouse, supposedly for our basset hound, but it was ultimately just a front for a hidden tunnel entrance and we started the process all over again.

Most kids came home at lunch with grass stains. Mike, Don and I were a little more "earthy" than that, but it dawned on us that we could apply our extensive landscape knowledge to a project that wouldn't collapse, wouldn't get our knees muddy and didn't fill up with water every ten days -- a golf course!

The Campbell/Ebbing Miniature Golf Course was next door, in neighbor Mike Ebbing's backyard. This club turned out to be very exclusive, mainly since few people actually played it, and our rule book (as you might expect) was more restrictive than the PGA's. People who brought in forged certificates or coupons, for example, were to be "escorted off the grounds," a measure that also applied to people with "malicious intentions," whatever that meant. No other "vendors" could sell their goods on or near the course unless a vast majority of the profit (between eighty and ninety-nine percent) went directly to the organizers -- we didn't even give cut rates for people who brought their own clubs or balls.

Even with rampant overmanaging, we *did* make money -- 37¢ one day, \$1.72 another. Personally, I lost interest in this venture when Don caught me in the bridge of my nose with a wicked backswing.

Soon, brother Mike was old enough to be more interested in girls and cars, so Don and I had to tackle any new construction projects by ourselves. Michigan is all about trees, so we decided to build the "mother of all tree forts" in the Tylers' backyard.