

Four Stories Held Thinly Together With Rage

by Robert Crisman

I. Happy Ending? Why Not!

My wife and I got divorced and my little dog died and I decided I'd had enough of Seattle, so I hopped a boat to Belize, and soaked up the sun and gained back some weight and, by God, I got happy again. And I met this cool beauty in Belmopan, man, and she owned a bar and she liked me enough to let me drink free and then help her lock the place up when it came time to close, and then walk her home to her place that was nestled in snug by the beach.

Sometimes we just lay on the warm silver sand, and the moon and black heaven came down and made love to us there and we made love back.

My lady and I tied the knot and I bought into the bar and really started to pull my own weight, and we prospered together, and grew old and fat with smiles that pretty much stayed on our faces.

I'd say that a happy ending to this little story is damn near a shoo-in by this time.

Knock wood...

II. Fat Chance

"Belize, man," Fred waxed poetic, "is the only country in Central America that never had no death squads, my man. Beautiful ocean, beautiful beaches, beautiful ladies who give it up free, no taxes to speak of--the place is a fucking *paradise*, man!"

So, what the hell, I cashed in my sweeps and went down there, and lo and behold, the place was everything Fred said it would be and then some.

I used to lie on the beach with my sweetie and watch the stars *dance*.

And then the plague washed up on that beach in a box wrapped in ribbons and stamped in black letters, "Made In the U.S. of A.," and we knew it was time now to flee to *deep* jungle and hope that the plague, though truly the best that money could buy, would fail to take hold in Belize and go the fuck back where it came from.

Fat chance...

III. In Appreciation For a Job Well Done

There he stood in the picture, the death squads' own "Godfather," Mario Sandoval Alarcon, holding his little poodle dog Suki and staring into the camera. It was a black-and-white shot, taken in shadows, and he looked as if he was going to die soon of some inner rot that would turn him completely to tallow.

He sported a cocksucker mustache like the one Franco wore, with eyes that he'd stolen from Reinhart Heydrich, the Third Reich's author of death camps for Jews, no doubt the better to oversee his own torture/slaughter of tens of thousands of peasants his death squads then dumped on the roads, to let others know just what it was they were in for.

This was Guatemala of course, in the '60s, '70s, and '80s, and most of the peasants were Indian descendants of Mayans, a quarter of a million of whom were butchered after the CIA deep-sixed Jacobo Arbenz in the '50s, all so United Fruit Co. could prosper and grow without their slave-labor peons squawking for better working conditions, or raises, or any of that kind of commie-ass crap.

For his efforts at cleansing his country of nettlesome riff-raff, in much the same way as we rid ourselves of Cheyennes and Apaches and Sioux and so forth, and for essentially the same reasons, Sandoval was invited to attend the first-term inaugural ball of our own Two-Gun Pete, Ronald Reagan.

We like to take care of our own...

IV. Chickens Come Home To Roost

I was supposed to come home for Christmas, you know, from the war and--you're asking me which war, my man? Any one of a hundred, brother, just pick one out; we're all over the *globe*, man, I shit you not.

I came in on the plane from, where was it, Iraq? Afghanistan maybe? I'm so fucking woozy...but no matter, really; wherever it is, we'll be there a long fucking time, covertly, overtly, however it goes, seeing as all those Arabs and Muslims don't wanna stay dead, or stay bought, or whatever it is that we have to do to make sure we *break* 'em and--

Hey, I remember, my plane came out of *Detroit*, man, no shit, and yeah, Jesus Christ--it was those *food* riots, man, and they busted on into the armory there, the National Guard couldn't stop 'em, or wouldn't, you know, and they got all those guns and started on down to the Ren Cen and shit, just thousands and *thousands* of people, man, I swear to God, and they sent us out with the tanks and, you know, the bombs and concussives and flamethrowers, man, and we had to kill like *goo-gobs* of people, and now they're saying the whole fucking *country* went up when they heard what came out of Detroit, and then all that shit in St. Louis, and then they hung that sheriff in Phoenix and cut off his dick which, all fine by me, but those vigilantes went *crazy* and went into *Mexico*, man, and then *they* got beheaded and tossed in that landfill in Ciudad Juarez, and, fuck, it really *is* war now, the whole fucking country and Mexico too, and *Christmas*--fucking forget it; that bitch is cancelled.

