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Citizens of Eden

By William Neil Martin

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The background of the cover is a painting of a desert landscape. In the foreground, there are various desert plants, including a tall saguaro cactus on the left and a prickly pear cactus in the lower center. A chain-link fence runs across the middle ground, with a white building visible behind it. The background features rolling hills under a bright blue sky with large, fluffy white clouds.

CITIZENS OF EDEN

William Neil Martin

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Books by
WILLIAM NEIL MARTIN

FICTION

CITIZENS OF EDEN

STORM SURGE

THE McALLISTER BRAND

A THIRST IN BABYLON

NON-FICTION

NORTH OF RED ROCK CANYON (No longer in print)

THROUGH THICK AND THIN

The coming of age of Floyd and Christine Martin

in Southern Mississippi 1922 - 1952

1

DEPUTY RON CORDER looked at his watch. It was exactly three p.m. He glanced at Sergeant Grierson and smiled to himself. It was uncanny, he thought, the way the sergeant had a knack for ending briefing at exactly three o'clock; not one second before, nor one second after.

By the time Corder had closed his notebook and pushed his chair back from the table, most of the other ten or twelve sheriff's deputies had arisen and were walking out of the briefing room.

He waited until the remaining deputies departed, then stood up and moved toward the sergeant. There was something he wished to discuss with the supervisor and preferred that it be done in private.

"Could I see you for a minute, Sarge?"

Grierson looked up at the tall, dark-haired deputy and smiled. "Sure, Ron. What can I do for you?"

"I was just wondering," Corder began, "how much longer am I going to have reserve deputies as partners? This is the third month in a row that I've been scheduled to work with them."

The sergeant's smile faded, yet his expression was not bitter. "Don't tell me that our illustrious dollar-a-year men are getting you down."

"Oh, no. Nothing like that. It's just that I'd like to work with a regular partner for a change. I'm tired of working with a different guy every night. I want to be with someone I can trust – someone I know I can count on for back-up."

"Can't you count on a reserve deputy for back-up?" the sergeant asked mildly.

"Hell, how should I know? I don't work with any particular one long enough to find out. I'll work with one for one or two nights. Then, just

when I'm beginning to feel at ease with him, I'm assigned another partner. Most of these guys don't work more than two nights a month." Corder paused. He looked down at the floor and breathed a sigh, then looked back at the sergeant. "Besides, I suppose I'm beginning to feel like everyone else. I mean, ever since the shooting..."

"Come on, Ron," the sergeant interrupted. "Don't tell me that you're going to start acting like all the others. I'd expect it from some of the men, but not from you. You know very well that Fisher's reserve partner couldn't have prevented him from getting shot."

Sergeant Grierson removed a tobacco pouch from his trouser pocket and filled the bowl of his pipe. "It's a shame. The whole mess is a rotten shame. It's a shame Fisher lost an eye in the shooting. It's a shame that his reserve partner went to the front of the building instead of the rear. It's also a shame that all this animosity is brewing between the regulars and reserves.

"If the regulars only knew how much we depend on these guys as a manpower source. Without reserves we wouldn't be able to take extra days off. And we'd be in a hell of a mess during the vacation months."

The sergeant stopped talking long enough to place the pipe in his mouth and strike a match. Holding the lighted match above the bowl, he sucked the flame onto the tobacco. Satisfied that the pipe was lit, he shook out the flame and dropped the match into a nearby ash tray. Breathing a lugubrious sigh, he continued, "The whole Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department relies heavily upon a favorable rapport between regulars and reserves. So far, the animosity that exists is restricted to the deputies here at Industry Station. It's up to us to see that it doesn't spread any further."

"I can appreciate all this, Sarge," Corder replied. "But what does it have to do with whether or not I work a reserve car?"

"It has everything to do with it!" The sergeant's usually pleasant tone had vanished. "Ron, you've been assigned to Industry Station for a little over three years. During that time, you've developed into a damn good deputy. You're looked up to by your peers. When you talk, they listen. And it's for that very reason that we've placed you in the reserve car. If the other deputies see that you are willing to work with reserves, perhaps this animosity will pass.

The sergeant drew a few short puffs from his pipe, then took it from his mouth. "Whenever you make any comments about reserves, please choose your words carefully. Any negative remarks from you can only serve to worsen the situation. On the other hand, any favorable comments from Deputy Ron Corder may very well serve to mend the severed relations."

Before Corder could reply, a deep voice came over the public address system: *One forty-seven, contact the desk prior to going ten-eight.*

Corder rolled his eyes toward the speaker, then looked at Grierson. "Well, I'd better go see what the desk wants. Five'll get you ten it's a mal mish report. That's about all that's been happening in Hacienda Heights lately." He opened the door, then added, "See you later, Sarge."

"Just one more thing before you go, Ron."

The deputy stopped in the doorway and looked back at the sergeant.

"I understand you've got your sights set on becoming a detective, possibly even working Homicide someday." Grierson paused a moment, then added, "Work with me, Ron, until this reserve mess blows over. And when an opening comes up in detectives, I'll do what I can to get you the assignment."

Corder smiled and said, "Thanks, Sarge. I'll do what I can."

Closing the briefing room door behind him, he walked up the stairs from the basement and proceeded to the complaint desk.

"What do you have for me, Jim?" he asked as he approached the watch deputy.

The watch deputy, who sat at his desk between the dispatcher and the complaint deputy, looked up from his work. "Oh, hello Ron. I've got two things for you."

Corder took out his notebook and pen. When he was ready to write, the watch deputy continued, "Looks like you're going to have to take three, maybe more, mal mish reports."

When the deputy gave him the addresses, which were all in the same block, an expression of disgust came over Corder's face. But before he could comment, the watch deputy explained. "Seems some jerk was walking down the street with a tire iron. Apparently, he had a

notion to be destructive, so he smashed the glass out of every car that was parked on the street. So far, we've taken calls from three victims who want reports taken. From the looks of things, there'll probably be more."

Deputy Corder looked at Jim, then raised his head toward the ceiling. He extended his arms in a dramatic gesture and asked, "Why me, Lord?"

The watch deputy grinned, then said, "You're going to be busy for a while, so if anything else comes up in your area, I'll try to give it to seven Adam."

"I would appreciate it." Corder paused before asking, "What else did you have for me?"

"What do you mean?"

"You said you have two things."

"Oh, yeah. I almost forgot. Your reserve is here."

Corder noticed that the watch deputy's expression turned sour as he pointed to a young man standing against the wall, near the drinking fountain. It reminded him of the growing animosity about which Sergeant Grierson had just spoken.

Corder looked at the youthful deputy, who stirred uneasily, aware that the two veterans were talking about him.

"See you later, Jim," Corder said as he moved away from the watch deputy and walked toward his new partner.

As he approached the young man, he concluded that he could not be more than twenty-one or twenty-two years of age. He made a quick inspection of the rookie's neatly creased uniform. The tan shirt and forest green trousers were new. The sheriff's star and name tag on the man's shirt were polished to a high gloss. His Sam Browne belt appeared to be stiff, - not yet softened from wear. His shoes were spit shined to a high luster.

When Corder was three feet from the man, he said, "My name's Corder. Ron Corder. We'll be working together tonight."

"How do you do, sir. My name is Fred Dauer."

They shook hands, then Corder asked, "Tell me, Dauer, are you still in the academy?"

"Yes sir."

"I thought so. How far along are you?"

"We just finished the eleventh week, sir."

"I see. And how many rides have you made in a radio car?"

"This is my first."

"Your first! And you're in the eleventh week?"

"Yes sir. You see, reserve cadets aren't issued weapons until the tenth week. And we can't ride in a patrol car until after we qualify at the pistol range." There was a note of pride in the cadet's voice when he added, "I qualified last Sunday."

Corder breathed a sigh. "Ok, it's your first ride. So, let's get something straight from the beginning." Daur listened intently as Corder continued, "I'm not one of those prima donna drill instructors at the academy, so you can drop this 'sir' nonsense. I'm not your superior. We are equal partners. When I get into a jam, I'll expect you to get me out." Corder smiled warmly and added, "Hell, I don't know if I could trust a guy who called me 'sir' all the time."

Daur felt the warmth of Corder's smile, and he began to relax.

Corder led the way to the station armory, where he checked out a twelve-gauge sawed-off shotgun and four rounds of ammunition. He stepped out of the armory and closed the door. On the floor nearby was his metal patrol box and flashlight. He started to ask Daur to pick up the box and follow him to the patrol car but stopped when he saw Daur eyeing the shotgun.

"Ever fire one of these before?" he asked.

"Oh, yes sir... I mean... yes. In fact, I have one just like this. Of course, the barrel on mine isn't as short as this one."

"I should hope not," Corder replied. "It's illegal for civilian guns to have barrels this short."

Instead of instructing Daur to carry the patrol box, he handed him the gun and ammunition. Corder picked up the patrol box and flashlight and led the way out the side door of the station.

It was a warm, pleasant afternoon, though the sun was nothing more than a dull glow among the usual smoggy haze. They walked through the parking lot, behind a row of black and white patrol cars, looking for the vehicle assigned to them. As they passed each car, Corder examined the five-digit number that was painted on the trunk lid. When he found the number that was assigned to them, he moved to the driver's side of the vehicle, a 1970 Plymouth Fury.

He glanced toward Dauer, who was standing beside the passenger door, holding the shotgun with the muzzle pointing toward the sky.

"Do you know how to break the gun down and check the firing pin?" he asked.

"Yes, I do."

"Well, then, set the shells on the hood and go to it."

After setting the shells down, Dauer slid the action down and unscrewed the barrel, then removed it from the gun. He held the barrel up and looked through it, making sure it was void of any obstructions. He carefully set the barrel on the fender beside the shells, then slid the action up. He placed an index finger over the firing pin and pulled the trigger. Corder noticed the young reserve wince as the firing pin struck the finger.

"Works fine," Dauer commented dryly.

Corder offered an amused smile.

Dauer slid the action back down and replaced the barrel, then slid the action back up and pulled the trigger. Corder was truly impressed with the cadet's proficiency.

After loading the magazine with the four rounds, Dauer looked at Corder. "Well, sir ... I mean ... partner, it's all checked out."

"Aren't you going to crank a round into the chamber?" Corder asked.

"I will if you want me to," Dauer replied, but his facial expression indicated that he would rather not.

Corder read the expression and asked, "Wouldn't you feel better with a round in the chamber and the safety on?"

"Frankly, no. I don't trust the safety mechanisms on these guns. I'd feel much safer with no rounds in the chamber and the safety off. That way I know that all I have to do is crank a round in the chamber and pull the trigger."

Corder shrugged his shoulders and said, "Suit yourself. You're the man riding shotgun."

Dauer placed the gun into the rack that was located just forward of the front seat. At Corder's instructions he did not lock the rack. The cadet then watched his partner inspect the patrol vehicle. He checked all the tires, including the spare. He made sure the trunk contained a

jack, lug wrench, road flares and a blanket. He also checked the electrical devices, including the horn, siren, flashing red lights, amber light, the outside speaker, the headlights, taillights and brake lights. He even checked the license plate light.

Corder opened the back door and removed the back seat. When Dauer asked what he was doing, the veteran deputy explained that he was searching for contraband.

"Prisoners," Corder began, "when being transported to the station, will quite often remove unfound contraband from their pockets and stuff it behind the seat of the car."

Satisfied that that there was nothing behind the seat, he pushed it back into place. "Now, if we take someone to jail, then find something behind the seat, we'll know who it belongs to. Right?"

"Right," Dauer replied, impressed with his partner's thoroughness.

Corder then started the engine and listened to it idle for a moment. Satisfied that the car was in good condition for patrol, he drove to the station gas pumps and had one of the trusties clean the windshield, windows and mirrors.

While the trusty worked, Corder looked at his partner and said, "I'm afraid I can't offer you any excitement for the next hour or so."

"Why is that?" Dauer asked.

"We have to take a few mal mish reports."

"We have to take what?" Dauer asked.

"Mal Mish. It's an abbreviated way of saying malicious mischief. You know – vandalism."

When the trusty finished cleaning the windows, Corder shifted into drive and the patrol car rolled across the parking lot.

"But before we take any reports, what do you say we go someplace and have a cup of coffee?"

"Sounds good to me," the rookie replied.

Pulling out of the station parking lot, the patrol car moved east on Abbey Street. Corder picked up the radio mike and placed it in front of his mouth. Depressing the transmit button, he said, "One forty-seven, ten eight. One four seven."

A soft, feminine voice came back over the radio receiver. *One forty-seven, ten eight.*

Dauer reached into his back pocket and removed a small, tan booklet. Corder recognized it as the official guide to the Sheriff's radio code.

Grinning slightly, he said, "Ten eight means that we are in service and subject to calls. One forty-seven is our unit number." A brief pause, then Corder added, "Tell you what. Why don't you put the code book away? I'll explain the radio traffic as it comes up. Ok?"

"Ok," Dauer replied appreciatively, then placed the booklet back in his rear pocket.

The black and white turned right, onto Hacienda Boulevard, and moved southbound. The traffic was still relatively light. The afternoon bumper-to-bumper procession of workers returning home was still an hour away. The patrol car crossed Valley Boulevard and continued southbound, toward Hacienda Heights.

FOUR MILES WEST of Hacienda Boulevard two chopped hogs rolled eastbound on Valley Boulevard. They passed under the 605 Freeway and entered the unincorporated area of Bassett. At Temple Avenue they stopped for a red light. The bikes moved side-by-side in the left lane, the engines idling loudly.

It had been two weeks since his initiation into the Iron Chariots, and Rocket Man felt a surge of excitement run through him as he pictured himself wearing the patch with the skull and crossbones on the back of his soiled jacket. He began to feel impatient as he sat on his bike, waiting for the light to change. Within minutes he would be committing the act that would win him the felony patch. And Crazy Horse, the biker who rode beside him, would be his witness.

As he waited for the light to change, Rocket Man happened to glance to his right. In the lane beside him was a green Volvo. The driver of the car, a conservatively dressed man in his early forties, was staring curiously at the two bikers. When Rocket Man looked his way, the man realized that he had been staring and quickly turned his head away.

Rocket Man leaned over to the right and tapped on the window of the Volvo. When the man turned his head toward the biker, Rocket Man extended his middle finger. It was only inches from the man's face. The man flushed and an expression of shock appeared.

Rocket Man laughed, then straightened back up on his bike. He looked at Crazy Horse, who was also laughing. Rocket Man was pleased that the club president had seen him give the man the finger.

The light turned green, and the bikers continued eastward on Valley Boulevard. The businesses that lined both sides of the road were rough and shabby. There were several topless bars that seemed to blend naturally with the cheap motels. There were also several automobile parts stores, junk yards and discount gas stations.

They rode another half mile, then Crazy Horse pointed to a small grocery market a hundred yards farther, on the north side of the street. Rocket Man nodded in acknowledgement as he felt another rush of adrenaline. The moment for which he had been waiting had arrived.

THE PATROL CAR continued south on Hacienda Boulevard. It crossed Gale Avenue and entered the business district of Hacienda Heights. For the next mile both sides of Hacienda Boulevard were occupied by shopping centers, service stations and other small businesses.

"I'm curious," Dauer began, as the patrol car passed under the Pomona Freeway, "just how much of an area does Industry Station cover?"

"You mean in square miles?"

"Well, no. I was wondering more about the boundaries of the station's jurisdiction."

"Roughly speaking, the area that our station patrols is from the 605 Freeway on the west to the Pomona city limits on the east, and from West Covina city limits on the north to the Whittier city limits on the south."

Dauer whistled. "I had no idea Industry Station covered such a large area."

"Oh yeah," Corder said with a note of pride. "Industry Station is actually *the* police department for about seven different communities." Before Dauer could comment, Corder continued. "Let me see. There are the incorporated cities of Industry, La Puente and Walnut, and the unincorporated communities of Valinda, Bassett, Hacienda Heights, La Habra Heights, Roland Heights and Diamond Bar." He paused

briefly before adding, "I suspect that, someday, in the not-to-distant future, some of these communities will become incorporated."

Dauer shook his head. "I had no idea it covered such a large area."

Just south of Newton Street Corder turned the patrol car into the parking lot of a small shopping center. The car rolled across the asphalt-covered lot and stopped in front of a donut shop. Corder shifted into park, but did not turn off the engine.

Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a dollar and handed it to Dauer. "I'll take a plain donut and black coffee. No sugar."

Dauer opened the door and moved to exit the car when a woman's voice on the radio stopped him.

"One forty-six handle. One forty-two rolling from the station to assist. A two-eleven just occurred at Bassett market, one-four-two-two Valley Boulevard. Suspects last seen eastbound Valley Boulevard on two chopper-type motorcycles. One four Six."

"Get back in and close the door!" Corder exclaimed.

Dauer did as he was told, a questioning expression on his face.

"A market on Valley Boulevard was just robbed by a couple bikers," Corder explained as he shifted into reverse and backed out of the parking space

He drove across the parking lot and stopped the car before entering the traffic on Hacienda Boulevard, Corder started to turn north, toward Valley, but paused momentarily to consider the best plan of approach, then made up his mind. The car rolled onto the street as he turned the wheel to the left, and they moved south on Hacienda.

Dauer was puzzled. "Isn't Valley Boulevard behind us?"

"Yeah," Corder answered as he reached over and pushed a toggle switch, activating the flashing amber light.

"But we're an assisting unit. And assisting units don't roll directly to the crime scene. Our job is to block off possible escape routes."

"Yes, but..." Dauer was interrupted by the voice on the radio.

One forty-three, code five at Valley and Hacienda.

"There, you see. By the time we got to Valley, all the obvious routes will have been blocked off."

One forty-four, code five at Valley and Azusa.

Its amber light flashing to the rear, the black and white patrol car weaved in and out of the afternoon traffic.

"I have a theory. It seems that whenever a two-eleven goes down, there is one road that never gets blocked off. I suppose it's because most people think of it as being out of the way."

"Which one is that?"

"Turnbull Canyon Road."

The tires squealed as the car turned westbound on Los Altos Avenue. Corder slowed somewhat as he drove along the usually quiet residential street.

One forty-seven Adam, code five at Hacienda and Pomona Freeway.

"Now, unless they double back some way, most of the escape routes are blocked, except for Turnbull Canyon Road." He paused briefly before adding, "Most deputies don't bother with Turnbull Canyon Road because of the upgrades, downgrades, and sharp curves. It's just not a route robbers would consider as an escape route. It's too hazardous. But, if they ignore the hazard, it's a direct route to Whittier and the southbound 605 Freeway. An hour from now they could be sipping suds in a bar in Long Beach."

One forty-six, ten ninety-seven.

"One forty-six just arrived at the market," Corder explained. "We'll be getting a broadcast any minute now."

Corder brought the car to a stop against the right curb of Los Altos, no more than fifteen feet from the T intersection of Turnbull Canyon Road.

Placing the radio mike in front of his mouth, he pressed the transmit button. "One forty-seven, code five, Los Altos and Turnbull Canyon Road."

Both men sat in silence for a full minute. Then Dauer looked at Corder questioningly as he heard the senior partner chuckle.

"The other units are probably wondering what the heck we're doing going code five so far from the location." He was silent for a moment, then added, "To hell with 'em."

Attention all units. Special attention Industry Station and units. One forty-six advises that a two-eleven occurred seven minutes ago, at Bassett Market, one four two two Valley Boulevard, perpetrated by two suspects.

Suspect number one described as a male Caucasian, twenty years, five-eleven, one hundred forty pounds. Long brownish-blond hair, tied in a ponytail. Fu Man Chu type mustache and beard. Wearing Levi jeans and sleeveless Levi jacket. Armed with an automatic pistol, possibly forty-five caliber.

Suspect number two described as a male Caucasian, twenty-two years, six one to six-two. Two hundred pounds. Brown bushy hair, mustache and beard. Wearing Levi jeans and sleeveless jacket. Unknown if armed.

On the back of each suspect's jacket is a motorcycle club decal, possibly Iron Chariots.'

Property stolen, forty-one dollars in miscellaneous U.S. currency. Suspects last seen, each riding a chopper type motorcycle, unknown license numbers, eastbound Valley Boulevard from location.

For additional information, contact one forty-six or Industry Station. KMA six two eight clear.

"Stupid jerks," Corder commented. "Pulling a two-eleven while flying their colors. Might as well have left their names and addresses."

“Are these Iron Chariots a local club?” Daur asked.

Corder shrugged. “I’ve never heard of them. Probably a new club. But I know the type. One biker is as bad as the next. They’re all dirt bags – the scum of the earth.”

Five minutes passed, then Corder exclaimed, “Listen!” as he held his hand up for silence

They both listened. At first the sound was faint, but it grew louder and was unmistakably the hollow sound of motorcycle engines. Since leaving the donut shop, Dauer had felt a twinge of excitement building within him. It was now a nervous uproar in the pit of his stomach.

The bikes were twenty feet north of the intersection before coming into view.

“That’s them!” Corder shouted excitedly as the bikers crossed Los Altos.

Corder dropped the shift lever into drive and the black and white lurched forward and turned left onto Turnbull Canyon Road. The tires squealed violently as the car fishtailed slightly, then settled onto the road.

The two bikers looked back as the siren and revolving red and blue lights of the patrol unit caught their attention. They twisted the throttles, and the front wheels of their bikes leaped as their speed increased. But the sheriff’s unit stayed close behind them.

“Pick up the mic and hold it in your hand!” Corder instructed without taking his eyes off the road.

Dauer did as he was instructed.

“I’ll tell you what to say,” Corder began. “Press the button and say, ‘one forty-seven is in pursuit of two-eleven suspects.’ Say that!”

Depressing the button, Dauer repeated, “One forty-seven is in pursuit of two-eleven suspects.”

“Southbound Turnbull Canyon Road from Los Altos,” Corder continued.

“Southbound Turnbull Canyon Road from Los Altos.”

Dauer fell against the door, almost dropping the mic, as Corder negotiated a hairpin curve. The tires squealed as they slid on the pavement.

All units stand by. Industry Station one forty-seven is in pursuit of two-eleven suspects, southbound Turnbull Canyon Road south of Los Altos.

The bikes began to pull away from the patrol car as they entered a straightaway, but the sheriff's unit regained its position as the bikes slowed for a ninety-degree curve. Two wheels of the car left the road as they rounded the curve and threw sand and gravel from the road shoulder. Corder quickly regained control of the vehicle. He had momentarily lost sight of the suspects but soon found them after rounding another curve. The bikers gained slightly and were now fifty yards in front of the black and white.

Dauer felt a twinge of car sickness. He swayed from left to right as the car snaked around another S curve. The sickness increased and he thought for a moment that he was going to vomit.

"Passing Holly Tree Road!" Corder shouted above the wailing of the siren.

"What?"

"Damn it, pay attention! Tell 'em we've passed Holly Tree Road!"

Dauer forgot his wave of nausea as Corder's words snapped him to attention. Depressing the transmit button, he said, "One forty-seven, passing Holly Tree Road."

One forty-seven now passing Holly Tree Road. All units continue to stand by.

As they rounded a wide horseshoe curve along the canyon shelf, Dauer caught a glimpse of the canyon floor a hundred feet below. He quickly turned his head and watched the road. Suddenly the road seemed to disappear in front of him. Corder wheeled sharply and they rounded the apex of another hairpin curve. The rear wheels slid to the road shoulder. The driver over corrected and the rear of the car moved to the opposite side of the road and scraped along the canyon wall. It fishtailed a few times before settling onto the road again.

On the next straightaway Corder observed that the suspects had doubled the distance between them. He reached over and took the mic from his partner.

“One forty-seven approaching Skyline Drive.”

One forty-seven approaching Skyline Drive

Depressing the transmit button again, Corder said: “One forty-seven to SRC.”

SRC bye.

“Advise my desk to contact Whittier P.D. and have a unit code five at Turnbull Canyon and Whittier city limits. One four seven”

One forty-seven, ten four.

Just as Corder was about to hand the mic back to his partner, he observed the suspects make an unexpected move. The big, bushy haired biker continued south on Turnbull Canyon Road. The one with the ponytail turned right, onto Skyline Drive.

“Bitching!” Corder said aloud.

He put the mic back to his mouth and pressed the button. “One forty-seven, the suspects have split up. One is continuing south on Turnbull Canyon Road. We are pursuing the other one westbound on Skyline Drive.”

One forty-seven advises the suspects have split up. One is continuing southbound Turnbull Canyon Road. One forty-seven is pursuing second suspect westbound Skyline Drive.

The patrol car turned onto Skyline Drive and followed its gradual curve to the right. The distance between the sheriff’s unit and the suspect had decreased to about sixty yards.

Just beyond the suspect, the road turned sharply to the left. A narrower road angled off to the right, forming somewhat of a Y intersection.

“Turn left, you slimeball,” Corder coaxed. “Stay on Skyline.”

The biker slowed his machine as he approached the intersection, then turned left. He then twisted the throttle, and the chopped hog quickly picked up speed.

"Beautiful!" Corder exclaimed as he reduced the speed of the patrol car and turned left. "Get ready, partner. The road dead-ends a few hundred feet from here."

The biker came upon the dead-end with a suddenness that caught him by surprise. The end of the road was barricaded by a rusty steel bar that extended across the road, three feet above the road.

In order to avoid colliding with the barricade the suspect laid the bike down and slid along the ground. He pushed himself clear of the machine as it continued under the barricade.

Corder turned off the siren and spoke rapidly into the mic as he applied the brakes of the vehicle. The car slid to a stop ten yards from the suspect. "One forty-seven code six the end of Skyline.

As the dispatcher repeated Corder's broadcast, he let the mic fall onto the seat beside him as he unbuckled the seat belt and opened the car door.

The biker, on his knees, quickly looked around. Then he saw the object for which he was searching. The forty-five automatic that he had carried in his waistband had fallen out when he fell from the bike. It now lay on the ground no more than ten feet away. He crawled toward it.

Corder wasted no time getting out of the vehicle. He saw the suspect moving toward the weapon, which was now only a few feet away. Corder reached down to draw his own weapon from its holster.

It was gone!

In the split second it took the deputy to realize that his holster, in the shuffle of getting out of the car, had worked its way around and was resting on his buttocks, the suspect had moved close and was now within inches of the forty-five. He reached down to pick it up...

"Freeze!"

The order came from the passenger side of the patrol car. The suspect looked up and stopped cold. He was staring into the muzzle of a twelve-gauge sawed-off shotgun.

Dauer leaned over the hood of the car, holding the shotgun firmly. "Now, move away from the weapon!" The rookie reserve spoke slowly and with authority.

At first the suspect did not move. Then Dauer slid the action back and the gun made a loud clicking sound. He pushed the action forward and there was another loud click, as he drove a round into the chamber.

The suspect slowly crawled backward, away from the weapon that lay on the ground. He had crawled ten feet when the deputy ordered him to stop. Dauer then walked over and picked up the forty-five and placed it inside his waist band.

Corder watched his partner with pleased disbelief. Here he was, standing like a spectator, watching a rookie reserve cadet doing an excellent piece of police work. For several seconds no one spoke. In the background a siren could be heard. It grew louder, then faded. Corder guessed that it was another unit pursuing the other suspect.

Dauer directed the suspect to stand upright on his knees. When the biker complied, the cadet instructed him to place his hands on top of his head and interlace his fingers.

Corder grinned and shook his head as he watched his partner. He then walked toward the suspect. As he approached, his eyes met those of the biker. The biker's blue eyes held nothing but contempt for the deputy. A sardonic grin made its way through the Fu Manchu mustache, exposing yellowish-green teeth. The deputy's eyes dropped to the name embroidered above the right pocket of the dingy sleeveless jacket: *Rocket Man*. Corder gave him a pat down search for weapons, then handcuffed him.

As he escorted the biker to the black and white, a second patrol car pulled up and stopped beside the first. Corder saw the driver speak into the radio mic. A moment later the car's outside speaker blared out:

One forty-two, code six, one forty-seven's location.

Corder caught the driver's attention and held up four fingers. Again, he saw the deputy speak into the mic, and a moment later the amplified voice of the dispatcher spoke out:

One forty-two advises code four one forty-seven's location

The deputies from unit one-forty-two stepped out of their car and walked to the passenger side of One-Forty-Seven, just as Corder was assisting his prisoner onto the rear seat of the patrol car.

"Hey, Ron," the driver of the other unit began, "that was a beautiful pursuit. You did a hell of a job."

Corder closed the door and turned to the other deputy. "Not this time, Rudy."

"What do you mean? You caught the turkey, didn't you?"

"What I mean is that, if it hadn't been for Dauer here, this punk would have blown me away" He paused long enough to glance in Dauer's direction, then added, "My partner saved my life."

Rudy looked at Dauer, and the rookie blushed modestly.

Extending his hand to be shaken by Dauer, Rudy said, "Well, now. It's an honor to meet you, Dauer. And I'll tell you something right now: reserve or not, you can ride as my partner anytime."

"And I'll tell you something right now, Rudy," Corder said angrily. "The next time I hear some jerk badmouth reserves, I'm gonna knock him on his ass!"

Rudy was stunned slightly by Corder's sudden outburst. The two men stared at each other, but neither spoke, for there was nothing to say. Ron Corder was standing up for the reserves. And it was fitting, for it was a reserve deputy who had saved his life.

In a matter of hours, the news would be spread throughout the station. And in a matter of days the tension between regulars and reserves would pass, for the incident with Corder and Dauer would remind deputies at Industry Station that reserves and regulars are very similar in make-up. Occasionally some will screw up, and occasionally some will become heroes.

They were interrupted by the radio dispatcher.

*One forty David, One-forty-seven Adam is
requesting you switch to Frequency Edward.*

Corder opened the front door of the patrol car. He leaned inside and turned the dial to the car-to-car frequency. He then sat on the

edge of the front seat, his feet still on the ground. The other deputies stood around the open door and listened to the radio conversation between unit one-forty-seven Adam and the station desk.

One forty-seven Adam to one forty David

One forty David bye

Yeah, David. We're code six on Turnbull Canyon Road about a mile south of Skyline Drive. The second suspect apparently tried to take a curve too fast and went over the side of the canyon. He's about a hundred feet down with the bike on top of him. It looks like a fatal. Request you notify CHP and fire rescue and have them respond to my location. One four seven Adam

David to seven Adam, ten four

Corder turned the radio dial back to the normal frequency.

"Do me a favor, would you, Rudy?" Corder asked as he stepped out of the car.

"Name it."

"How About impounding the bike for me so I can get this turkey to jail?"

"I have a better idea," Rudy said. "Why don't I impound the bike while you take this turkey to jail?"

"Cute," Corder replied with a grin.

Dauer carefully removed the shotgun round from the chamber and injected it into the magazine. He then returned the gun to its rack in front of the car seat. Walking to the driver's side of the car, he opened the rear door and slid onto the back seat beside the prisoner.

Corder returned to the driver's seat. Dropping the shift lever to reverse, he backed the car to a wide section of the road where there was room to turn around. The car swung around and stopped. He shifted into drive and turned eastbound on Skyline Drive.

"We've got to get our prisoner booked in a hurry, then get back to our original detail," Corder commented as he picked up the radio mic from the seat where he had dropped it.

"Detail?" Dauer asked. "What detail?"

"The mal mish reports."

"Oh, yeah! I forgot all about them." Dauer thought for a moment, then added, "The victims are probably wondering what the heck happened to us." He shook his head and groaned. "I'll bet they're fit to be tied."

Corder looked at his partner in the rear-view mirror and smiled. "Yeah, I suppose they are." Putting the mike in front of his mouth, he pressed the transmit button. "One forty-seven, ten fifteen. One four seven."

6

WHEN KEWELL AWOKE it was dark – not merely a darkness with the lights turned off but pitch dark – an impenetrable blackness that offered no promise of light. Kewell closed his eyes, then opened them again. There was no change in his vision. Visibility was absolutely zero. He put his hand in front of his face but was unable to see it. He brought it closer and closer, until the palm touched his nose. Still, he was unable to see even an outline of his fingers.

Kewell began to panic. I'm blind, he thought.

"I'm blind!" he said aloud. No. Wait a minute. I've just been thrown into a dark room. But where 'am I?

He sat up and carefully moved his arms around until he felt something solid. A wall. Running his hand slowly upward, he rose to a standing position. The wall continued upward beyond Kewell's reach. Sliding his hands along the wall, he carefully moved his bare feet, testing the floor beneath him. Taking side steps, he slowly moved along the wall.

The floor on which he stood was soft, with what felt like a vinyl covering. At first, he thought it might be a bunk, but as he moved along the wall, he became convinced that it was the floor.

The wall did not feel like wood or concrete or plaster. It was very smooth and felt more like plastic. As he moved, one step felt more like the previous one, and he gained a little more confidence. He began to sidestep slightly faster, spreading his arms wider along the wall.

He sidestepped for the better part of two minutes before the realization came to him that there were no corners. The room was circular. He had apparently been going around in circles. He stood still for a moment, thinking. Then, turning his back to the wall, he started walking, taking tiny steps, across the soft floor. He had a visual picture

of a regular size room, but his picture was shattered as he abruptly met the other side of the enclosure.

Turning around, he walked back, placing the heel of one foot against the toes of the other, until he reached the other side. It took slightly fewer than eight steps. Kewell surmised that the room was about seven feet across.

He tried similar measurements in a few other places, and the results were the same. The room was circular, with a seven-foot diameter. It was void of any doors, windows or furniture.

Kewell leaned his back against the wall. It was cool to the touch, so he moved away. It then became obvious to him that he was not wearing a shirt. Feeling about the rest of his body he discovered that he was without pants or underclothing. He was stark naked. Stupid pigs, he thought. They even took my threads. In disgust, he reached to run his fingers through his long, brownish-blond hair, then immediately let out a string of profanities. His head was completely shaved.

In a fit of rage, he struck the wall several times with hammer-like blows from both fists.

"You pig bastards!" He shouted at the top of his voice.

His eyes strained as he looked around, trying to penetrate the darkness. There was nothing but impenetrable blackness. Then he looked up and was startled to see a very dim red light. It was less than two inches in diameter and offered no relief to the darkness within the small cylindrical room.

Kewell stood on the balls of his feet and extended his arms upward to touch the light. It was beyond his reach.

"Good morning, Mr. Kewell," came a voice from the darkness.

Kewell was unable to determine the direction from which the voice had come but decided that a speaker was mounted near the red light.

"Where am I?"

"You are in a chamber that we call the Rebirth Capsule." The voice sounded familiar to Kewell, but he could not place it.

"I want a lawyer!"

"You had a lawyer, Mr. Kewell. You also had a fair trial and were found guilty. Now you are being punished for your wrongdoing."

"This ain't no state prison!"

"You are in a state facility, just as if you were serving time in Folsom, San Quentin or Chino. It's just a different type of facility, Mr. Kewell."

"How long will I be in this miserable hole?"

"That is up to you, Mr. Kewell. You may be in here for days, or weeks, or even months, in total darkness. It depends upon how long it takes you to willingly submit to our program here at Project Eden."

"Let me out!" Kewell demanded.

The voice ignored the remark and continued to speak in a calm, undisturbed manner. Your capsule is temperature controlled. There is no need for blankets. The floor is soft enough for you to sleep comfortably anywhere.

"At mealtime a small door will open, like this..."

Kewell heard a light buzzing sound, then saw an illuminated area, three inches square, on the other side of the enclosure. He moved towards it and discovered that it was a small door that opened from the wall. It revealed a tiny cubby hole that was no larger than the three-square-inch door. It was two inches deep. The blue-green light that it produced was more of a luminous glow than one that would illuminate the surroundings. Despite the faint red light from above and the small luminous glow from the wall, the room was still pitch dark. Kewell was still unable to see the hand in front of his face.

Inside the tiny space were two capsules, each of which was a half inch long.

The voice continued, "At mealtime you will receive two capsules similar to those you see there in the dispenser. You have exactly one minute in which to retrieve them. At the end of one minute the door closes automatically and will not open again until the next meal.

"The moment the meal dispenser closes, another door will open..."

At that moment the small cubby hole vanished into the darkness. Kewell heard another light buzzing sound to his right. Looking in that direction he saw a larger opening, perhaps eighteen inches square. The glow was also blue-green and, oddly enough, its illuminating powers were no stronger than those of the meal dispenser. This cubby hole was ten inches deep and contained a combination drinking fountain and wash basin.

"The wash basin will remain open for two minutes. After swallowing the capsules, you have that length of time in which to get a drink of water.

"Do you have any questions thus far?"

"Yeah, man. Like, how am I going to live on two lousy pills? Dude, I'll starve to death!"

"You'll manage," the voice answered. "Actually, the two capsules you swallow at each meal contain all the vitamins and nutrients of a full course meal. You will be fed three times a day.

"Any other questions before we move on?"

"Yeah, man. I want out of this stinkin' hole!"

The voice resumed. "The last of your biological needs to be fulfilled is the disposal of your wastes."

"Huh?"

"The toilet, Mr. Kewell. Once every two hours a third door will open..."

Kewell heard another buzzing sound, followed by the faint sound of rollers. He guessed that it was the door sliding open. He looked in the direction of the sound and was surprised to see the blue-green outline of a toilet seat glowing in the darkness. Carefully, he made his way to it. Feeling the area around the seat, he learned that it sat in an opening the size of a small closet. On a shelf inside the closet were half a dozen sheets of tissue. Kewell felt around and found them after the voice had apprised him of their presence.

The toilet itself was like chemical toilets commonly found in motor homes, campers and boats. The only thing visible in the darkness, however, was the toilet seat. And when the user sat down, nothing would be visible.

The voice continued, "The toilet will be available once every two hours and will remain open for five minutes."

"Yeah? Well, what if I ain't through in five minutes?" Kewell asked defiantly.

"Then you will have your first lesson in discipline, Mr. Kewell."

"What'll happen if I'm still sittin' on the crapper at the end of five minutes?"

"At the end of five minutes you shall remove yourself."

"You mean some bull's gonna come in here and pull me off?"

"I mean that you shall voluntarily remove yourself from the toilet."

"Yeah, well, we'll see, won't we Bull!"

"As soon as the toilet door closes," the voice resumed, "the wash basin will open for another two minutes. This will give you an opportunity to wash up after the toilet use."

"Those are the basic instructions. Do you have any final questions or comments?"

"Yeah, man. I got two things. First, I ain't gonna eat those friggin pills. I got a right to real food. Second, what if I hafta crap an hour before the crapper opens? The Constitution says I got a right to crap when I want to."

"In answer to your first question, Mr. Kewell, you will either swallow the pills at mealtime, or you will go without. And secondly, regarding your toilet needs, let me point out the fact that, by the time most people reach adulthood, they have mastered the ability to control bowel movements. If you have not yet accomplished this feat, you might consider it your *second* lesson in discipline."

Then the room was silent. The dim red light vanished, and Kewell was alone in the darkness.

"Hey man!" he cried aloud. There was no answer. "I want to send a letter to my lawyer!" Still, there was no answer.

A chill swept over Kewell. Suddenly he felt alone...very much alone.

KEWELL STOOD QUIETLY in the darkness for several minutes, attempting to collect his thoughts. But his thoughts had nothing on which to cling. Whatever was happening to him had no logic. He tried to think back to his days with the Iron Chariots – a time when his fellow bikers identified him only as Rocket Man. They didn't even know his real name, nor did they care. Kewell found himself straining to recall his few days as a member of a biker club. It seemed like such a long, long time ago.

He spent several minutes inspecting the walls again, scanning every inch that he could reach, trying to find a seam that would break the smooth monotony of its surface. It would also identify the location of the toilet, or wash basin, or even the tiny meal dispenser. He was unsuccessful. It didn't matter, though. He realized that nothing could

be gained by finding them. The only satisfaction would come in breaking the nothingness that the pitch-dark room had to offer.

The minutes seemed to turn into hours after his confrontation with the 'voice.'

"When's the crapper supposed to make the scene?" he asked aloud. "It's supposed to be every two hours. It's been at least four hours already!"

He waited still longer. There was nothing.

Finally, he heard a buzzing sound. Looking around, he found the tiny opening of the food dispenser. Inside the opening were two capsules.

Kewell looked up and shouted, "I told you I ain't eatin' nothing but real food.! You can eat 'em yourself!"

He waited the full minute, then watched the dispenser fade into the darkness. He rushed to where the door had closed and rubbed his hand over the dark wall. There was no break on the smooth surface.

At the same time a buzzing sound came from across the room. Seconds later the wash basin appeared. Kewell looked at it for a moment, then shook his bald head disgustedly and sank to the floor. After what he assumed was two minutes, the wash basin also disappeared into the darkness.

He sat on the floor with his back to the wall and stared blankly into the tarry blackness. "I'm crackin' up," he said. "That's what I'm doing. I'm losin' my freakin' marbles!"

Leaning his back against the wall with his face up, he closed his eyes. He opened them a few minutes later when he heard the buzzing sound again, followed by the emergence of the luminous toilet seat across from where he sat. He stared at the glowing object, and it seemed to stare back, beckoning him to take a seat upon the 'throne.' Kewell slowly got to his feet, never taking his eyes from the blue-green oval imp that seemed to invite him – to dare him – to break the five-minute time limit.

He moved through the darkness and felt his way into the closet space. He turned around, putting the back of his legs against the toilet seat. At first, he was reluctant to allow his full weight to rest on the seat. But the longer he sat, the stronger his confidence grew.

Soon he was sitting with the posture of a warrior king, defying whatever forces that might dare to make their way through the darkness and attempt to pull his naked body from the conquered throne.

Sitting atop the throne, he was blocking the only object that offered any illumination to the surroundings.

The minutes passed slowly.

"I ain't moving!"

More time passed.

"Five minutes must be up by now!"

Kewell stuck his chest out and folded his arms as he waited for a door to open and the goon platoon to come barging in.

A few more quiet seconds passed. Then, suddenly, Kewell's entire body began shaking violently. His eyes opened widely, and he sprung from the seat.

Rubbing his buttocks, he shouted nervously, "What're you trying to do? Electrocute me?"

He was still inside the closet space and stood directly in front of the toilet. Suddenly there was another jolt. This time, it was through his feet. He jumped up and out of the toilet enclosure, falling on his back atop the soft floor of the dark room. His stomach was in knots, and his whole body shook uncontrollably. A full minute passed before the shaking began to subside. However, it was not until he had witnessed the toilet seat fade victoriously into the darkness.

The toilet incident was followed by another long vigil in the quiet darkness. It seemed forever until the next feeding time. Kewell was slightly hungry but still had the strength to refuse the capsules when they arrived. The only thrill at this meal was being able to witness a break in the monotonous darkness. For the full minute that the dispenser was visible, he did not take his eyes off it. When the wash basin appeared, he did even more – he took a drink.

When the door to the wash basin closed, Kewell was again left alone in the latent surroundings. He walked around the room a few times, then sat on the floor to await the arrival of the toilet seat. He stared into the blackness in the direction from which he expected to see the seat emerge.

It was while he was sitting on the floor that he got the idea as to how he might keep track of time. The 'voice' had said that the toilet appeared every two hours. It was probably two hours between the 'voice' and the first appearance of the toilet. When the toilet appeared again, he could add two more hours. The next time it showed, two more hours will have passed, and so on. Since he had no way of making a written record of the toilet appearances, Kewell would have to take mental notes and rely solely upon his memory.

As he sat on the floor making his plans to remain abreast of the time spent in the dark enclosure, he was somewhat startled to hear a buzzing sound come from behind him. He looked back in time to see his glowing tormentor appear from nowhere. Kewell then realized that, in his walking about in the darkness, he had lost track of the place from which the toilet would appear. Even his sense of direction had been stolen from him.

As the toilet seat seemed to stare scornfully at its recent victim, Kewell felt nervous in his stomach. During his stay in the Rebirth Capsule, he would never again defy the five-minute limit.

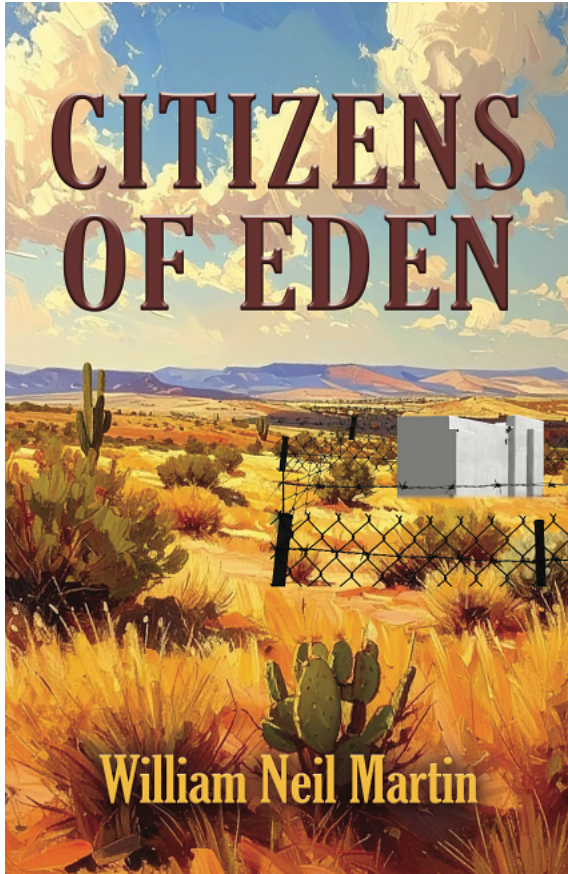
Then it was dark again. Kewell waited. The two hours seemed to go by ever so slowly. All other thoughts faded from his mind. His past grew dimmer and dimmer from his memory. The future meant nothing to him beyond his anticipation of the toilet seat making its bi-hourly appearance. Eventually it came, and Kewell added two more hours to his memory bank.

Soon after the toilet disappeared, the food dispenser emerged. By now he had developed a hunger with which his strength could not cope. As soon as it revealed itself, Kewell dove for the capsules. Instead of swallowing, he chewed them. The taste was very bitter. He wanted to wash them down but had to wait the remainder of the minute for the drinking fountain to appear.

After taking a drink, to his surprise and delight, the hunger soon passed. Then the drinking fountain faded from view and Kewell was alone again. This vigil appeared to be the longest of all thus far. It seemed like ages since the 'voice' had given him his instructions. Now the quietness and darkness were almost overwhelming.

Fear was also present on occasion, and suppressed emotion seemed to swell up inside him. Once he found himself inhaling several short, choppy breaths, much like a child after a long cry.

Kewell leaned his back against the wall and slid down until his posterior touched the padded floor. He sat there with his knees up and his arms folded against them. His head rested downward on his folded arms. He sat alone and helpless in the darkness. He was naked and hairless, like a fetus, locked within the dark confines of his mother's womb.



Attempt to rehabilitate 12 convicted Felons through state-of-the-art procedures, beginning with experimental Rebirth Isolation Techniques.

Citizens of Eden

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