

dreams are the flashlight; time is the battery

My journal from March 22, 2000 - January 27, 2002
by kris kemp

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March 22, 2000, evening

7pm - This evening, I accompanied Vince and daughter Chloe and her friend, Lizzy, to dance lessons at this small studio off Northlake Boulevard. The studio was linoleum floored, empty except for columns that ran from the floor to the ceiling, with a sitting bench along the mirrored walls. Vince, by the way, is a semi-famous sculpture from England. His name is Stephen Vince. He sketches and designs his ideas on paper, then usually gets an assistant to help him fabricate his creations into aluminum or steel sculptures. I met him at the Unarmed Underground Art Center (UUAC), when he hired a welder friend of his to help him complete a project. At the UUAC, I live in a small studio/room in the southeast corner of the east bay.

After dancing, we tumbled into his van, a comfortable gas hog with swivel bucket seats, and Vince drove to Clematis Street. All the way there, I felt like a hyper 22 year old, losing myself in the intoxication of the moment, tired from dancing, yet anticipating what was to happen next, going along for the ride, like an adolescent being whisked away on a surprise field trip.

On the way to Clematis, Stephen jokes about my metamorphosis from creating art projects such as FLO Film Fest and the FLO, a small zine I used to publish, to a guy who roams the streets passing out Gospel tracts.

"You're going to go hang out with the God squad, aren't you?" He smiles good naturedly. "And pass out those little Jesus books to people downtown. All they're going to do, once they see what they are, is throw them on the ground and create a mess. All you're doing is littering. But that doesn't matter because this world doesn't matter, now, does it? It's the next world that matters when you go up to be with St. Peter in the clouds. People come downtown to relax, not be told that they're gonna go to Hell because they don't believe in your God. Kris, why don't you leave them alone. If they wanted to hear about God, they'd be in a church. Don't you agree. That would be logical now, would it not?"

I'm starting to chuckle, then begin to laugh. "Oh no," Stephen muses. "Here he goes." Then his daughter Chloe giggles, and her friend Lizzy laugh. We're all laughing and we can't stop. "Look at you," Stephen remarks. "You're hysterical. What's come over you? My God, you're a complete loon."

"Perhaps medication would help," suggests Chloe, smiling. "Have you tried Zoloft?"

By this time, I'm giggling like a dosed hyena, shouting that they merely don't understand, that all the art projects that I used to create in downtown West Palm Beach are of little value, eternally, compared to reaching people for Christ. And yes, I understand that their jests, all in good nature, mirror their worldviews. Their perspective, however, seems limited to me, though, as they cannot understand God's plan for redemption, or deliberately ignore it to squell their conscience.

"You know, the whole problem with you Christians," Stephen starts, waving a hand in the air like conductor about to cue the orchestra, "is that you don't give a damn about this world, you only care about the next one. So you destroy the environment, completely desecrate other cultures in doing so like what's currently happening in the Amazon rainforests--they're all being clearcut to death, and allow entire species to go extinct, because this world doesn't matter. Because of the Christians," he sets the firecrackers onto the sidewalk, quickly lighting the fuse, "trying to convert everyone, entire cultures have been wiped out!" Ker-blam, ker-blam, ker-blam!!! The firecrackers pop. "Entire civilizations destroyed because they won't convert to the church!" Ker-blam, ker-blam, ker-blam!!! More firecrackers join in the vitriolic chorus. "You think you're saving people, but they don't want to be saved. In the name of God, you're destroying hundreds of years of culture." Ker-blam, ker-blam, ker-blam!!! The remaining firecrackers explode into bits, echoing off the sidewalk.

"You don't understand, Stephen, that wasn't the Christian church," I explain. "That was the Catholic church. And they're not Christian."

"Oh c'mon, now, Kris," he huffs. "They're both the same and you know it. Basically, they're all the same, but they have different names. If all the religions came together, the world would be a much more peaceful place."

"No they're not. Trust me, Stephen. They're not. Granted, many Christians have done harmful things in the name of God, but you have to understand something," I begin, remembering what my mom told me. "God only had one perfect servant, and that's Jesus Christ. Everyone else that serves him is going to look poor in comparison. Especially me. I'm the biggest sinner and worst example of a Christian that you ever met, but I'm saved by the grace of God. It's nothing that I can do. It's the gift that - "

"Okay, okay, Chris. Let's get off this topic. I don't want you preaching," Stephen sighs. "See, it just gets us in arguments anyway. What's the point."

"Some things are worth arguing for," I reply.

Stephen parks on Clematis and we roam toward the fountain in front of the library, where Clematis and Narcissus meet. Nearby stands an ice cream vendor, Stephen fishes through his wallet, extracts a wad of crumpled bills and accepts four Edie's ice-cream bars.

"Wow, thanks Stephen," I smiled, accepting his generous token of friendship. Good ice cream makes for good neighbors. Chocolate covered ice cream bars help to smoothe over any rough edges.

Silently, we slowly devour our treats while the warm air causes them to melt between our fingers. I'm looking around when I notice Liz, a Palm Beach Atlantic College (PBAC) student who sings at my church, Rock Church, sitting at a table near the fountain. Beside her is Irving, a homeless guy, another homeless guy, and two other PBAC students, Josh and Claudia. Lizzy is crying. I wave at her. "What's wrong?" I ask her.

"Can you come over here," she asks. I run over to Stephen and tell him that I have a friend to help.

"Okay," replies Stephen. "We'll be walking up the street, to O'Sheas. Then we'll come back, and get you."

"Alright, thanks," I tell him, then jog back to the table and pull out a chair.

Matt, a gray-haired street person was arguing with Liz regarding the text 'Thou shalt not kill'. "Then," Matt stammers, "you're a murderer if you eat meat because in Genesis it says: 'I will give you every herb bearing seed and to you it shall be for meat'. This guy knew The Bible.

"That's in the pre-flood diet," I clarify. "Post-flood, God allows us to eat meat. There's a verse that says 'I will put the fear and dread of every creature upon you, to you they shall be for meat', something to that effect. I'm paraphrasing."

"Let's see what The Word says," recommends Irving as he hands me a Bible. I accept it and thank him. Matt, the street guy pushes back his chair, stands up, and storms off. Liz continues to sob. "What's wrong?" I ask her. "I'm so upset, because if that guy

doesn't accept Christ, he's going to go to Hell for eternity." We pray and I start crying, too. Stephen Vince, Chloe and Lizzy return. I say goodbye, give Liz a hug. On the way to Stephen's van, I spot Mike Gorga and Maria at the entrance of The Underground Coffeeworks, a basement coffeehouse below Pescatore.

"Hey Mike! Hey Maria!" I call. They walk to me.

"Guess what?!" asks Mike.

"What?"

"Maria got saved yesterday."

"Praise The Lord!" I yell into the heavens. Maria is a hairdresser that I've known since 1995. When I published the FLO 'zine around that time, she worked at Planet Hair, a hair cuttery on Clematis Street, with well known stylist Peter Mangione.

"Yeah," gushes Maria. "I tore up my Marilyn Manson CD's."

"I'm going back to New York tomorrow," says Mike.

I got Mike and Maria's phone number. I'll invite Maria to church. God is awesome! Later that night, midnight, I heated some Velveeta cheese with macaroni.

March 23, 2000 - morning

Stuffy nose. Conclusion: don't eat food out of the box, especially processed cheese and pasta. PRAISE THE LORD!

August 10, 2000

This evening, Jonathon and his mother, Francis, visited the warehouse where I live. (This warehouse is known as the Unarmed Underground Art Center, a halfway house for artists, musicians, poets, writers, renegades. As of yet, it has not been determined whether this arena is halfway towards the top, or the bottom, of the barrel. This place is also called Flamingo Art Studio's, an interesting collection of makeshift studios and living spaces that occupy three, joined-at-the-waist quonset huts that lie about 20 feet from the railroad tracks. Alan Patrusevich, the owner/gallery director, is a benevolent artist, writer, poet who also runs an antique restoration company out of the front section of the west bay.) Jonathon wheeled in his amplifier, with the guitar in a carrying case hanging from his shoulder. She carried Winn Dixie bags containing fruit and water. The food was a gift and ended up in my mini-fridge in my studio, a hamster cage in the southeast corner of the east bay.

I set up my drums to face Jonathon and attached a strip plug for power to his amp. He connected everything, tuned his guitar, then began playing. Jonathon is an incredible guitarist. I'm not even that fond of the guitar sound as I like keyboard, but this kid's playing won me over, chewing up the strings, creating beautiful sounds, new

landscapes like an architect. The kid's gifted, touched by God, special. He's nice as well. While we played, me playing drums and Jonathon playing guitar, Francis sat attentively, one eye on her golden egg, the other witnessing visions of his future career, which she hopes will be music. So do I. Meanwhile, I played drums, then some keyboard. But I could not keep up with Jonathon. That kid is amazing. It'd be a privilege to be in a band that opens up for his band. He's way out of league for me. He's in the majors. And I can't even play for the minors! Hah!

The musical notes that escaped from Jonathon's fingertips attracted the curiosity of Jimmy, the trip-hop artist and club promoter, and Tommy two thumbs, a multi-instrumentalist who plays mandolin. They peeked into my cubby hole to witness Jonathon's playing. Later on, Francis chirped: "Well, I guess we should be going." I walked them out. At the car, Francis refused taking the groceries back. Praise God! She left cantelopes, grapes. How cool is that? Thank you, Francis! And thank you, Jonathon! You guys are cool!

Rewind ... Earlier today, this morning found me confused and a half step behind the gravity clock that centers the inhabitants of daily living. The wind swept through my room and I felt a significant calm and reassuring surge. (God, You're so awesome! I love you!) I drove to Carrie's apartment on Alabama and "O" Street to disassemble her bed. There, my head began to ache, as if a tiny heart were pulsing on my left side, just above my ear, a little to the right. At that moment, I felt like collapsing but said: "Praise The Lord! Thank You, Jesus!" over and over, hoping my echoes would reach God's ears. The bed took an hour to break down. After loading it into Alan's van (Thanks Alan, for letting me use the van!), I drove to her new place. What's it like? Okay, it's small and comprised of four rooms. It's cheaper than her other apartment. The rent is \$500 a month, including electric and utilities, which is super for this area of high priced cottages trafficked by PBAC students. Carrie did well. (Man, God is Awesome!) Assembling the bed was difficult, but, thank Jesus, was helped by cool music on WMCU, 101.9 FM, Christian radio out of Miami, and WAY FM, 88.1 FM, local Christian radio. I teared up as God's presence and love was felt through the music which ministered to me so wonderfully. Praise The Lord! So there I was, crazy-skinny-smelly Kris Kemp putting together a bunk bed (formerly Allison's) in Carrie's new cottage, alternately on my knees thanking Jesus for loving me, such a loser, attaching bed rods with an alan wrench, raising my hands in prayer to thank The Lord Jesus Christ for His mercy, His kindness, His grace, His love for us enough to die on the cross and be resurrected. God, You're awesome! Thank You! Thank You soooo much. Let me live for you with wreckless abandon and get rid of everything and everyone that gets in the way. My loneliness is erased as I draw closer to God. And any problems with lust disappear as I find that real love is where it's at-- real love for God, for others. As long as I forget myself and look to Jesus where my hope, the real Hope is, I am happy. Lord, help me to forget myself. Use me. Kill me. Do whatever You need to bring people to You, the only One that matters. This world isn't worth working for. The next one, as long as it's Heaven, now ... that's incentive. Talk about a retirement plan! Praise God!

August 10, 2000

This morning, sleepcake-eyed and skinny, I stumbled to the car and drove to meet Chip at Marty Frank's packing warehouse. He did not arrive. I waited twenty minutes, til 9:20 a.m., then drove home, munched red, seedless grapes--Praise The Lord!--returned to the warehouse. By then, Marty, the owner, and Marsha, his co-worker and girlfriend, were there having breakfast, Dunkin Donuts coffee and cigarettes. I talked with Marty, expressing my fears about joining Michelletti Antique Services as a partner. After hearing Marty reveal his plans for the company, though, I decided to join. Now, I'm at the bunker. It's 11:39 a.m. I called Kim, left a message about planting tomatoes in the front of her house. She's probably having breakfast with dad.

It's 11:57 p.m. Gee ... what did I do all day? This afternoon, from four-to-six, I went to the beach. Nice breeze, cool, not hot. I brought the David Wilkerson's book *Racing Toward Judgement* and read through some of it. I remember attending his church, Times Square Church, when I lived in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York. He gives a terrific sermon. At the beach, I bodysurfed the one-to-two footers that rolled in, before collapsing and taking a brief nap.

After reading about meat and dairy on the internet, I've decided to go completely vegan. Treatment of cows, chickens, pigs is horrendous. Besides, they aren't made for human consumption. I can't have anything to do with that--consuming meat and dairy.

August 11, 2000

This morning, the phone rang at 8:20.

"Kristopher, this is your dad," his vocals echoed through the cheap answering machine. "You said to call you, so I am."

I grabbed the phone. "I'll be right over," I told him.

I drove to Century Village where he lives. We talked for about two hours. That's a record. He admitted he has a problem. "My problem has always been women," he smiled sheepishly. So, can I by a vowel, Michael? A "U"? Rhymes with trust? Lust. Spit it out, Mike. Don't beat around the bush, jump in it.

Later this morning, around noon, I broke particle boards and threw them in the dumpster in front of the east bay. Pulling one away, a heavy 2x4, about ten feet in length, descends onto my head. I kept checking for blood. "See any blood?" I asked Alan, my fingers pulling back hair, my head in his face. "No," he croaks.

Alan went to the dentist today. He's going to have to get one of his front teeth pulled, so when he smiles he'll look like a little kid that's lost his tooth in a baseball game or from falling out of a tree. "How much is it for a fake tooth?" I asked him. "A

thousand," he replied. Wow.

Sometime in the afternoon, Niklas Jennings calls. He's a sometimes model, sometimes performance artist who volunteers at Florida Atlantic University's radio station. In his spare time, he organizes local bands to play tribute shows, for alternative acts like Depeche Mode, Bauhaus, The Cure. Ever since I've known him, he hasn't changed much. He's a music and pop culture junkie. He's always buying so much music and pop culture icons, like limited release drink bottles at 7-11, in fact, that he's usually broke. For this reason, he remains unhappy. His main habit, though, is music and seeing live shows, even if he has to travel to get there. No matter what the obstacle, he nearly always manages to see whatever show, even if it's hundreds of miles away, or even if he has to borrow someone else's car to drive there. Because of his addiction to music and live shows, he can't afford his own place, so he still lives at home. That's wherein lies the source of his dissatisfaction. Still though, he refuses to face reality. I keep telling him that in order to afford to rent his own place, he needs to curb his music appetite. But it's no use. He doesn't listen. So, he remains dispondent. Sometimes, he crashes at different houses downtown. He even had a studio at the warehouse here, at 502 Kanuga, for a few months, but the level of entropy suffocated his sense of style.

"The humidity's destroying everything, my records and my clothes," he huffed in a yawning midwestern drawl, sounding like a gothic version of Thurston Howell the Third, that rich dude on Gilligan's Island. Imagine Peter Murphy crooning "Lovey!" and you're halfway there.

This time, though, he sounded depressed about the mounting costs of fixing his car. Slowly, he mentioned his usual money troubles in a steady flow of exasperation, each revelation like the escaping wind from a deflated basketball, the last basketball on the court. Eventually, his complaints grow wearisome, though, as each consequence is the direct result of his choices. Like others that have listened and offered advice that he refuses to take, I cut the conversation short and say goodbye. At the end of the day, you can't play with a deflated basketball, no matter how hard you try.

This evening, I visited Allison, a laconic friend that I know through Corrie Tatham, my cousin. At Allison's, I made a mix tape for my friend Andrea at church. Then Ally and I went to Wild Oat's, an organic grocery store off Dixie. Back at Ally's, I played keyboard and convinced her to sing. She has a unique voice, with an interesting singing style, kind of like a female Peter Murphy. Before leaving, she let me borrow some CD's: 1) Peter Murphy - "Love Hysteria" 2) My Bloody Valentine - "Loveless" 3) Cocteau Twins - "Blue Bell Knoll" 4) The Smiths - "The Queen is Dead". Walking to the car with the keyboard under my arm, a blonde-haired guy with baggy pants approaches me. "You in a band?" He asks. "I'm trying to form one," I tell him. "Why? You wanna be in a band?" He says that he plays keyboards. "Cool," I reply, giving him my phone number on the back of a Chick tract. "There's a party Saturday, here," he points to the house nearby. "There's gonna be six deejays. It's gonna be blowin' up. Invite anyone else you want, too," he smiles. "Cool, that's chill," I thank him. When I get home, I call Allison and invite her to the party. She says she might have plans. Flake.

Nighttime, Susan arrives and we go to Winn Dixie. There, she tells me that her mom has a growth. "It might be cancer, but we're not sure," she says cautiously. I grab her shoulder, look into her eyes and plead with her. "Please don't allow her to get chemo, radiation, or surgery. Please give me an hour with her. It's diet. I can save her. There's nothing Jesus and diet can't cure."

August 12, 2000 Thursday

Sue Van Excel, an energetic artist that lives in the middle bay, visited my studio this evening. I was gobbling down a late snack, my mouth chomping raddish, carrots, and broccoli mixed with two-day old, homemade brown rice--a slopped together Chinese style dish--yum-yum!

"Is that your drum?" She asks, raising an eyebrow, a beautiful eyebrow full of possibilities. She points to a small bongo nearby.

"Yes."

"Can I borrow it?"

"You can have it."

She picks it up and looks it over. "Thanks Kris." Her cigarette prevents her from entering my room, but I watch the glow from the burning ember light up her face and reflect off her animated eyes. Her burning cigarette, in my mind, becomes a sparkler and it's the Fourth of July and she's eleven again, in her hometown, running through her front yard, high on soda pop ... her mouth opens, the dam bursts as an avalanche of words escape their holding cell ... "drum circle, Clematis Street, on Thursday, after Clematis-by-Night, around 10, now I can join ... " bla, bla, bla. And in the parenthesis of my mind, I'm thinking: 'You do that. Keep searching. But in the end, the only thing that matters is your relationship with Jesus Christ. Everything else is a waste of time.'

God, help me to be on my knees daily for this generation whose lust and rage for life keeps gravity as the best supporting actor, as their feet, glued to the conveyer belt of options, move among the aisles of choices, through the ever open shopping malls of desire. Stores come and go displaying overpriced fashions that, within weeks, become yesterday's pile for Goodwill. Computers fight for your attention, urging you to trade your dollars for a sense of control. Like car dealers, they promise you a free test ride, knowing that once you've bitten into that piece of fruit, you cannot put it down. The problem with technology is it's short shelf life, demanding upgrades in order to keep up with current software. Toys rust but the hunger lives on. God, help me to be in constant prayer. Eternity is forever. Use me, Holy Spirit. My life is not my own. I love you, Jesus. Thank you for saving me and those who come to you. Please Lord, open the eyes of the lost, allow them to see, even for a moment, that real joy, can only come from knowing You! Amen.

August 13, Friday

Arrived home from work. Carrie Cutlip left a message, that she's leaving for New Hampshire at 4:30 p.m. I listened to the message at 5 p.m.. In it, she reminds me to return her videos, remote control, and asks me to finish the Publix chicken and the lettuce in her fridge before it goes bad. Then she says that she loves me very much. Carrie's the best! I love that girl so much. I would do anything for her. No girl even comes close to Carrie Cutlip. She's brilliant and beautiful, inside and out. I prayed for her this evening, that the Holy Spirit would flood her with peace, that she would know joy, the joy that comes from knowing The Lord Jesus Christ.

Earlier this afternoon, I sweated in the back of the delivery van while Marsha, a manager, drove and Chip, an employee, rode shotgun. The van was full of furniture. My head started to ache as the smoke from Marsha's stinky cigarette mixed with the stuffy air that hung like fog at the back of the van. At one point, I reached for the radio to turn on some music that "would save you", to which Marsha emphatically spit back: "I'm not listening to Christian music. So don't bother turning it to a Christian station."

"But Jesus loves you. He died for you." I replied.

"I'm Jewish."

"So was Jesus." I argued, hoping for connection.

"But I don't believe in Jesus. And I don't want to talk about it. It just makes me angry."

"He loves you."

"I don't want to talk about it." She concluded.

(Okay, God, tell me what to do.) I am going to talk about it, Marsha. When I help you and Rocko load furniture tomorrow, I'll be praising the name of Jesus. Fire me, if you want. Romans 12:11 (NIV) "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." Jesus Christ and preaching of His love, His mercy, and everlasting Holiness have eternal value. This job, this life, is temporary. Thank you, Jesus, for saving my soul. Thank you, Jesus, for allowing me the privilege of becoming a Christian. Help me, Jesus, not to take that privilege lightly, but to serve you with all my mind, my soul, my heart. Let me not waste time on those who have no room for you in their life, and those who have already rejected you. If it's your will, Jesus, give me the discernment to know who to pray for, talk to, listen to, who to try to effect with your perfect love, mercy, compassion, and redemption from sin. Only You can change the world, Lord Jesus. Use me to point people in your direction. Crucify my flesh, any sin in my life; reduce any strongholds, held captive by the enemy, to rubble. Make me bold for you ... to take your Gospel message to this world. Thank you, Jesus.

August 15, Sunday 2000

Church was terrific today. The worship was really inspired. Even though Jeff Summers, one of the guitarists, was absent. (He was surfing at Sebastian Inlet.) Bill Shea, the worship leader who plays guitar and sings, managed to fill the church with his strumming and his voice. Of course, Kelley Strecker, another vocalist, and Chris Paul, the bassist, were heavy contributors. Playing drums is such a privilege. Sometimes, I think half the battle is encouraging the audience to participate, like a cheerleader rallying the crowd into action, onward. Let's soak in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Mike Toby's message focused on studying The Word of God, that reading The Word on a daily basis will bring us closer to Him. Praise Jesus! He's right on! This entire week, God has helped me to ameliorate my urges toward sexual gratification. Knowing God, in the smallest way, has turned my urges upside down. You don't look at things in the same way anymore. The mission field is just outside your door. Everyone needs Jesus.

Those who refuse to acknowledge the need merely remain swamped in the clutter (and cares) of this world. Enough of this clutter serves to stand as an obstacle course wherein its occupants run from one exercise to the other, in a futile attempt to keep the larger issues outside--eternity, purpose, destiny.

Melanie, this sweet girl from the Jennings' crib, called. She asked if I could pick up Kristine Iverson from the train station at 8 p.m. Sure. Krissy's arriving via Orlando via Philadelphia where she participated in protests against the Republican National Convention. When she arrives at my car, all she'll see is a giant eardrum. I want to hear her story, so I intend to drive her home in low gear unless, of course, she promises to tell me the story of her trip at a later time. Thank you, God, for protecting Krissy. Help her to return to the conclusion that YOU are the only one worth being consumed by. Thank you, Jesus!

August 19, Thursday 2000

Last night, I went for a walk, headphones on playing Andrea's mix tape of Christifari (reggae), Passion (worship), Sonic Flood (contemporary worship). I strolled north on Dixie. Spotting a streetwalker, I offered her a Gospel tract. "Here. Read this. It's about Jesus. It's awesome. Thanks." I stand there, shuffling my feet. "Thanks," she mumbles, continuing on her way. Walking east, I headed toward Flagler, passing out tracts to passersby. An older couple refused. "We're already Christians," they acknowledged. A young black girl accepted one without hesitation, then slowed to first gear, her head buried in the literature she'd just received. A big, bouncer-looking guy, looking like the poster boy for post-modern angst, declined. "Okay," I smiled. "Thanks anyway." His dog, a fierce looking big black dog, a rottweiler I believe, lunged at me as if to confirm his master's response.

At that point, on the south end of Flagler where the sidewalk curves and is shaded by overhanging tree branches, I turned and walked south. Near Palm Beach Atlantic College, two women joggers refused the tracts. "We go to church. Thanks," they panted. A gentleman with a Scottish accent said: "No thanks. I'm a Christian. This world is getting to be in bad shape. I can't believe what I'm seeing on television." I agreed, then opened the slot machine of my mouth as if he'd inserted the winning quarter. "That's why I unplugged my cable," I started. "It makes me lust too much. All it is is sex and violence. Yeah, this world is in bad shape, and The Bible says it will only get worse. I can't save it, but I know Someone Who can--Jesus Christ. That's why this world isn't worth working for, but the next one, as long as it's heaven ... " He spoke some more. "It's good to see a young fella like you out here doing this. Not many people your age would go out and do this. Keep it up," he encouraged. "Goodnight."

I kept walking on Flagler until I had crossed Okeechobee, then headed west, walking along Trinity to Dixie. On Dixie, I walked north. At the intersection of Hibiscus and Dixie, I noticed two guys in a car with the lights off. "Would you like a Gospel tract?" I offered. "It tells you how to avoid hell." "No," one said. "Okay, thanks anyway. Have a good night." From there, I left the literature on windshields and walked along Dixie up and down the cross streets, starting at Hibiscus and ending at Evernia. At Subway, I saw an idling semi-truck and placed three tracts on the footpedal above the gas tank. Returning home, tractless, I noticed the truck was gone. I checked the ground nearby. The tracts were gone, too! Praise Jesus! Thank you, Lord! Save 'em, if it's your will. Thank you, Lord!

After plastering cars between Olive and Flagler, from Hibiscus to Evernia, I walked along Evernia to Flagler, where I passed two couples who were heavily lip locked. I offered two teenage girls tracts. They both accepted. One began talking. "I work at Summit Christian School," she said. "That's great. Super." I said. (I know ... dumb reply.) "Read these," I bubbled. "They're great. They tell you about Jesus--He's awesome. And how to avoid Hell after you die."

Returning home, legging it along Dixie sidewalk, tractless, backpack with a half gallon of distilled water, listening to Passion, hands in the air thanking Jesus for His love and enduring mercy, I felt joyous and with purpose. Passing the cemetery, I realized that, eventually, everyone moves there. The soul is the issue.

At Flamingo Park Grocery, I said hello to Tom, the homeless Christian who suffers from alcohol addiction. We talked for a while. "I've read The Bible, front to back, four times, dude," he smiled. "When I was in prison, I had so much time on my hands, I was like: 'Why not?'" Enthusiastic, I began talking to Frank, an Iranian looking fellow behind the counter, about Jesus. He responded angrily, mumbling something through his bushy, handlebar moustache that I could not understand. So I spelled it out. "Jesus loves you, Frank. He died for your sins. If you accept Him as Lord and Savior, you'll go to Heaven when you die. He's the only way to Heaven."

Mike, an actor and student at Palm Beach Atlantic College, exited the store. Outside, he told me that Schuman, a local science teacher, known for having allowed

numerous kids stay at his house and rent cheap rooms, including Carrie Cutlip (I love you, Carrie!) is finished with his musical.

"It's a musical about Creation, The Bible account," he beamed. "It's Christian. He's been working on it for the last twenty years."

"Wow," I exclaimed. "Tell him he can put it on at the hut (Unarmed Underground Art Center). Alan's planning to use the east bay for plays this season. Here. I'll give you my number and Alan's number. Have him call us, or me, or Alan."

And that cool note capped off my night.

God: You're awesome! Thanks! :-)

August 20, Thursday, 2000

It's 6:16 p.m.. Scott Toreau, this guy I met at Rock Church, an engineer who I introduced to dumpster diving, is driving over. We're getting grub at Publix for sushi. :-)

August 21, Friday, 2000

Scott and I made chinese rice and sushi rolls last night. They were tasty. We made a variety of sushi--cream cheese and avacado, imitation crab meat, raw salmon, canned pink salmon. Good food!

After practice with the worship team, driving home, I noticed a car at the UUAC, the art studios warehouse, that I hadn't seen before. Besides that, the sand-and-grass lot across the street which serves as a parking lot, was empty. The occupants of the car were the raver couple, a guy and a girl, that I had met a few nights earlier. Then, they had been with their friends inside a mini van and I let them inside the warehouse to use the bathroom. In any case, the raver couple had been drinking and they begin to tell me their life stories. The guy is doing most of the talking, well lubricated by the empty bottles of Dos Equi's at his feet. Cultured ravers.

At one point, the girl confessed: "I'm afraid of death. I don't like to talk about that." He continued to talk. Minutes later, I fish through my backpack and extract Chick tracts, "This is Your Life!", and hand them to them.

"Do you want to know for sure you're going to Heaven?" I query.

She answered with a shotgun volley of blanks, reassuring herself of her Catholic upbringing, and her respect for other people's religions. "I have a friend, just like you," she compared. "I love her. She's so cool. She's a Christian, too." Her boyfriend echoed her sentiment.

"Do you guys want to get saved right now?" I cut to the chase, remembering what Phillip Gilmoure had told me in 1995, when I lived with him on Clematis Street,

above O'Sheas. He had said: 'ABC: Always Be Closing. That's how you sell something.'

"Sure," they answered.

I asked them to close their eyes and earnestly repeat this prayer. Then I lead them in the salvation prayer that J.T. Chick had written on the Gospel tracts back, inside page. They chorused the prayer. He was drunk, though, and she was slightly inebriated and somewhat garrulous. I hope they meant what they prayed. I asked them "to mean it" before we prayed.

Thank you, Jesus, for saving these two souls. Bring them into your love, mercy, kindness, repentance, perfect will. Thank you, God! Praise the Lord for your everlasting love and mercy and goodness. Only You can change the world. Let me point people in your direction with everything I do, plan, say.

Dear Lord, let those who straddle the tightrope between the world and knowing you decide to come to you, forgetting this earth, because it's only through you that JOY becomes real. Everything else is a mirage. Allow the Hope of Heaven and the Love for You, Lord, to consume my very being. Psalm 126:5-6 (New International Version) "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. (6) He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him."

Thank you, Jesus. "Amazing Love ... I know it's true ... and it's my joy to honor you ... " Also, Lord, thank you for the wonderful worship practice tonight with Liz, Bill Shea, Chris Paul, Jason Summer, Cara on bongos, Joe and Josh on the sound board. If it's your will, bless this church and help this church to win souls and equip Christians to minister to those in need and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection on the cross, His promise to those that believe on His name. :-)

August 22, Saturday, 2000

Church tonight. Worship was terrific. Pastor Mike pulled out "Jesus People" songs that he strummed on acoustic guitar. They were beautiful. That guy's talented! Nice vocals! After church, I followed Alan to his house, then Ann showed up. Alan played keyboard while Ann and I sang. Wow! Alan plays great. His music sounds like 80's synthesizer pop and early techno. He can even play "Axel F".

Dear Jesus, let us form a music group if it's your will, a Christian band, that glorifies you and brings people to worship you through dance and praise!

August 23, Sunday, 2000

Church was terrific. Before worship, we prayed and I felt something, perhaps The Lord's presence. "We're all in the water, Lord Jesus, but we--The Church--have life

preservors. Those who don't know you, Lord Jesus, are just bobbing and gasping for air, for something to cling to, something to believe. But you, Lord Jesus, give us a reason to believe, a reason to live, and a joy that doesn't fade." By the end of the prayer, I was in tears.

After Pastor Mike's message, he read John chapter 1, all the verses, and encouraged us to follow Jesus and put Him first. Bill Shea walks to the front and begins playing guitar, leading everyone in the song "Redeemer, Saviour, Friend". I start crying softly. Thank you, Lord! Pastor Mike had an altar call, following the sinner's prayer. Although my eyes were closed, judging from what he said in the response, about three-to-five people got saved! Praise Jesus! Afterwards, Joe and Carol, who want to start street ministry in this area, spoke with me. Heather Lawson, J.R.'s wife, has been wanting to start a coffeehouse for a while. This is terrific, since Alan Patrusevich, the owner of the warehouse where I rent a studio, agreed to let me use the east bay four times a month for a Christian coffeehouse. Jon Laetrille, Danielle's husband, Scott Toreau, the hyper engineer friend, Ann Powell, a bubbly Christian girl that reminds me of a Jesus hippie from the 70's, and Jake, J.R.'s son also want to do street evangelism. God, if it's your will, use us for your purpose. Allow us the privilege to serve you in humbleness, guided by your Holy Spirit in Love and in Truth.

Carrie Cutlip sent a postcard. It reads: "Kris - I am at His Mansion and it is so awesome Kris. These people are all about God! I feel like I'm in a huge Christian incubator! I can't wait to get back and tell you all I've learned! Tell Pastor Mike I'm ready to serve! Love, Carrie"

Thank you, Jesus! I've been praying for Carrie, Lord, and thank you for HER. She's so cool. I love her. Protect her, Lord Jesus. Cover her with Love, Peace, Comfort. Shower her with Grace and remove any guilt, shame, bitterness which hinders your abundant joy and love. Thank you, Lord, for what you have been doing, are doing, and will do in Carrie Cutlip. Thank you, Jesus, for Carrie! :-)

August 24, Monday

Carrie arrived safely home. Praise the Lord! God, protect that girl, if it's your will. Give her peace, joy, and an abundant life. Thank you, Jesus!

August 25, Tuesday

Alan Patrusevich, Janine, his sometimes girlfriend from England, Carrie, and I attended a video showcase by local videographer Gary Davis at the Bomb Squadron restaurant on Southern Boulevard. I'm so glad Carrie was there! She makes everything better. She's sooo cool! We arrived and wandered to the west end of the restaurant. A crowd of people dressed in suits, most of them black or latin, sat in booths and tables. A white, blond haired lady danced from one social bouquet to the next, shooting pictures. "Where's the food?" I'm asking Carrie, giggling. Through a

forest of bodies, we spy the buffet table, lock it in, and part the seas of suits. Our journey proves somewhat disappointing when we discover an aluminum tray of yellowish-brown meatballs and a bowl of punch. We plate some meatballs, pour some punch, find a table and sit down. A waitress approaches. Carrie orders beer-cheese soup. She doesn't like it and tells the waitress. "Well," the waitress answers. "I love it." Man, what a dumb waitress! That comment deserves no tip. Janine and Alan join us at the table. Janine orders potato skins and Alan orders crab-mush-something. I order artichoke dip with chips.

"Can you take me home?" Carrie asks. "I'm not feeling well."

I drop her home, give her a backrub, then return to the restaurant. The crowd huddled around us, looking for available seats, as Gary Davis announced the video presentation. Then the video started, a collection of clips from, and trailers of, the action movies written, filmed, and directed by Gary Davis. They included "She is a spy", "She is a spy II", and "The Nubian Vampire". The audience, mainly composed of the actors and their friends, gasped and screamed in delight whenever they happened to appear on the screen. At that point, I felt so disconnected, as if I was in third person and partially invisible. I think I should take up roller skating. Music, wheels, lights ...

August 23, Wednesday, 2000

Here at the UUAC, the giant rec room for America's strays, a kind of animal shelter for artists, I sit in my room and brood. I feel crazy. I'm not excited for this world anymore. It's a sinking ship. Everyone's dying. The only thing that is important is this--are they wearing a life preserver? Where will they spend eternity? Have they confessed of their sins, repented, and accepted The Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour? Life is short. Eternity is long. So many people. So little time. No wonder The Scriptures mention being "sober minded". Use me, Jesus. I want to be used. Help me lead people to The Lord Jesus Christ. Everything else is negligible.

September 26, Sunday night, 2000

Last night, Saturday, I arrived home from work exhausted, even though I got off work early, around 3 or 4pm, to decorate my room. About 11pm, I bicycled downtown, helmet on, headphones on listening to an Elliot Smith CD (acoustic melodies). My backpack, heavy with a gallon of water and stuffed with Gospel tracts, swayed side to side as I pedaled. An American Express bag, strapped across one shoulder, carried the CD player. To passersby, I probably looked like a college student crossing the state on his bicycle.

I bicycled from Dixie to Olive, then headed south. At Datura, I turned left and biked west to Quadrille which was closed to cars due to construction, then headed south to the alley behind Clematis Street. I steered my beat up 10-speed towards the back entrance of Respectable Street Cafe. Steve Foi, a deejay, and his blonde girlfriend

were standing nearby, readying to move their crates of records and CD's inside. "Hello," I said, wheeling the bike into the back patio of the club and tossing it behind the central air conditioning units. Bob Johnson, known as BJ, the cleanup man for Respectable's and Rodney's other clubs, had parked his bike there, too, so I wasn't worried. Besides, I reasoned, it's behind a fenced in area. I watched Steve lock the gate behind him, then ran upstairs, walking through the hallway of second floor apartments to the other side, galloping down the steps, and opening the door to Clematis Street.

The wind was on holiday. The heat remained, like an unwelcome friend who cannot read body language. From Clematis, I walked east to Quadrille, then south to Datura, where I began to swipe Gospel tracts beneath the wiper blades of cars. Behind Sarah Parker's modeling agency (on the south side of Datura, between Quadrille and Dixie), I had my first encounter.

"Hey, hey. What are you doing?" A stocky, bleary eyed man, standing by his pickup truck, asked.

"I'm passing out Gospel tracts." I replied. Judging from his griddled pupils, he was drunk. This was going to be a while. Shifting from fourth gear into first, I locked the doors of my thoughts closed and relaxed my ear canals. He began talking.

"I'm a good guy. I don't hurt nobody. I don't steal. I don't lie. I work for my money," he defended. (All stock crew to Aisle number three for a cleanup. Flights will be delayed half an hour as there is a baggage overflow for this flight.) "But I can't resist a good piece of ass," he continued.

Can you be a little more specific? I'm thinking to myself. Even though we've only known each other for 28 seconds, I'm feeling a wall here. And, why waste time. Let's not beat around the bush when we can jump in it.

"That's why I'm here. There's so much pussy. I mean, look it that," he gestured toward a sports utility vehicle. The doors opened, unloading four pretty girls, dressed in tight fitting clothes, versed in body language, ready to be noticed on a night in downtown. "Don't tell me that you don't look at that. I mean, c'mon. We're human. Know what I mean?" He paused. "Hang on." He stumbled toward the group for a closer leer, mumbled "Hey" a few times, then retreated, returning to his car. "I mean, c'mon," he parroted himself. "Don't tell me that you don't look at that." He leaned in closer to me. "You do like girls don'tchya'?" His pupils shifted rapidly, hunting for an answer in my expression.

I smiled, close lipped. "Yes, I like girls."

He steamrolled onward, morphing into a parrot. "Don't tell me you don't look at that. I can't turn down that - no way. Don't tell me that if that girl came over to you and dropped your pants and started giving you a ... " And on and on he rolled. My grin became a petroglyph. My eyes turned to bullets, blanks that is, until I admitted that yes, I would give in to lust if I was a co-pilot in the situation being steered on a

course toward desire that cannot be avoided. An avalanche hid the rusty amusement park items, buried the enthusiasm. However, I faked the intoxicated man, then continued on Datura, roaming east to Narcissus, then toward Flagler. Among the bright, shiny debt laden cars, the tracts found a home beneath the wiper blades. Like a robot, my right hand picked from the stack clenched in my left hand. The humidity descended in waves. My hair dripped, sweaty at the ends. At least I was dressed for the weather, wearing shorts, a v-neck t-shirt. Ahead, I see an elderly couple sitting on a bench.

"Hi," I greet them. "Would you like a Gospel tract? It tells you about Jesus Christ and how to go to Heaven after you die."

The lady answers: "No."

"Are you sure?" I repeat. "Eternity's a long time."

"No thanks," she answers.

"Alright," I sigh. "Have a good night." Walking away from them, I ask myself: 'Was I too pushy with these two? Naw. Better to offend someone into Heaven than love them into Hell, as The Berean Call, a Christian newsletter, mentioned.

I continue walking toward the south side of Bradley's Restaurant, hitting cars, then turning at Flagler to hit the cars along the opposite side while walking west. After the second car, I turned and eyed the first one, a passenger inside, that I'd missed. Normally, I would not bother people while they're inside their car, as they'd suspect me of being a panhandler, but not wanting to miss an opportunity, I approached her window. "Hi, would you like a Gospel tract?" I offered, smiling.

She stared at me. "What is it?"

"Well, it's a booklet that tells you about Jesus, and how, if you accept Him of Lord and Savior of your life, you can spend eternity in Heaven with Him when you die. Do you want to accept Jesus as your Savior?" I asked.

She stared at me. "Okay," she said. "I just lost my son."

"What?! Your son died?"

"Yes," she spoke softly. "He was fourteen months old. He died in Boston. That's why I moved here, from Boston. To find a new life. I felt called to come to Florida." She quit talking, stared at me as if in a daze.

"Wow. I'm sorry ... to hear that." A long silence followed. She stared at me. I looked at her, then glanced around at the invisible world of answers between my feet.

"Jesus," I began slowly, "loves you. And He can take away any pain or grief you might be experiencing. And He can replace that with joy and peace." The words seemed to tumble from my mouth, arriving from my lips like carefully placed

Christmas gifts--gingerly, deliberately. "Do you want to experience that? Do you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior of your life?"

"Yes," she whispered. "Yes. I do."

"Cool. Awesome."

I told her a two minute version of The Gospel story--that our sins have separated us from God and the only way to return to God was to turn from our sins and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Then we prayed. She repeated the words after me. Praise Jesus! On the passenger side of her SUV, the door opens and a blonde haired guy slips inside. "Do you know Jesus?" I ask him. "Yes I do," he says. I spent more time talking with them, inviting them to church and leaving my phone number, then went on my way. Strolling west on Datura, between Narcissus and Olive, a Nissan Sentra was trailing me. I glance over and the car stops. In it were six punk type kids with piercings, tattoos, unkempt hair. I asked them if they wanted a Gospel tract. They nodded yes. "Sure," one says. I gave each of them one and talked with them about Jesus and our need for Salvation. They returned my pitch with some acknowledgement in different degrees--blank stares, looks of disinterest, suppressed curiosity. Then they drove off. At Dixie and Datura, I legged north on Dixie, then went west along the alley behind Ultima Gym and The Renaissance Group Building, dotting cars with tracts. Eyeing two parking lot attendants nearby, I felt an urge (Was it The Lord?) to talk to the one sitting down, the older one. I walked over to him.

"Have you heard about Jesus? He died for your sins and promises eternal life in Heaven to those who believe on Him." I started.

"I'm not interested," he grunted.

"Would you like a Gospel tract?" I persisted. "Tells you how to go to Heaven when you die."

He glared. "I don't wanna hear about it. Bye."

The door closed. Maybe I was the last seed among many. Perhaps he was saved, but bitter.

I continued west, hitting the cars between Datura and Clematis, in the Rosemary Street parking lot behind Blessing's Market. At the front of Respectable Street Cafe, the original progressive nightclub opened in 1987 by wunderkid music afficianado Rodney Mayo, stood Paul, the bouncer. I offered him a tract.

"I love these things!" He smiled. "These things are great. I collect these things."

"Do you believe in Jesus?" I queried.

"No. I just like the tracts."

I told him I'd get him some to add to his collection. At the backyard section of

Respectables, I grabbed by backpack, threw it on my left shoulder, and hopped up the steps. Chris, the eleven year veteran bouncer of Respectables, a kind of fixture because of his longevity, sat in the office. We chatted for a bit. In the hallway, I spotted Gino Baldoni, another Respectable Street casualty, a barback who also does graphic design for Rodney's enterprises. (Gino inhabits an apartment on the second floor, above the club. Visit him, anytime after 3pm, and you're bound to see clues to his personality scattered across the floor of his living room--toys, empty containers of Mountain Dew, orphaned computers that have been partially dissected, wires, cables lying around like crushed snakes. His apartment, generally, is like walking into a fridge as his air conditioner is usually on the Eskimo setting. Usually, you'll find Gino bathed in the phosphorous glow of a giant TV screen, drinking Mountain Dew between cigarettes, sitting in front of a computer screen trying to troubleshoot some error.) Gino and I got in a conversation. He brought up some interesting, well thought out points. One Gospel tract, he points out, contains an error in which it reads that 700 BC came before 730 BC.

"I'm sure it's just a typo," he said quickly. The other was this. "In Matthew 15:23, or somewhere nearby, it says that it is a sin to doubt, and I don't understand how that's a sin as doubt is often the drive behind digging more into something to figure out if it's true or not."

"Uh, huh. Good question, Gino. Perhaps," I guessed, "doubting is a sin because it's showing we lack faith. Maybe when faith is absent, doubt is present."

That was the only answer I could come up with, but Gino was not satisfied with it. He definitely understood it. He had a really good point, though. I'll have to research that.

I said goodnight to Gino, then headed down the stairs into Clematis, jumped on my bike and rode east. At Quadrille, a girl and her guy friend waved me over. "Can you get Dean, that pedi-cab guy over there and tell him Dee needs a ride. I'll pay you." I pedal east and tell Dean that a girl named Dee, down the street, needs a ride. Then I recognize Dean. A week earlier, I had spoken with him about Jesus. "Do you have the phone number of that Christian deejay you told me about?" I asked. "No, but he's right over there if you wanna talk to him. I think he's in rehab, though." He warned. "Thanks Dean." I turned around, biked west to this rave gear store on the 400 block. Out front, a lanky, silver baggy-pant wearing hip hopper shuffled to the techno sounds coming from within the store. "Are you PJ?" I asked. "Yes," he said. "I'm Kris," extending my hand. "I heard you're a deejay and you spin Christian music." "Yeah, I like Gospel," he replied. I launched into my vision for a Christian techno worship project, one that involved deejays, keyboardists, girl singers, drum machines. I wrote his number, pocketed it, then bicycled home.

What a cool night. Thank you Jesus! :-)

Monday, October 9, 2000 11:22 pm

Sunday afternoon, after church, Rock Church hosted a picnic at Loggerhead Park in Jupiter (or is it Juno?). Milling around the sweaty collection of bodies, I met Raymon, a Palm Beach Atlantic College student majoring in Christian leadership. I mentioned the idea for a Christian coffeehouse. He expressed interest, mixed with caution. I met some other PBA'ers whose names I promptly forgot.

I can't remember names for some reason. People become really upset when I can't remember their names, which stirs my anger, because they take it so personally. What? I'm not a freaking computer. So, I forgot your name. Quit crying, go buy yourself a Yoo-hoo, and forget about it. Seriously. It's not like I don't have enough ideas battling for space inside my head. It's crowded up there. Honestly.

Josh, JR, Heather, Ryan, Melissa Shuttlerow, Jonathon the guitarist :-), Susan, Gabe, and others congregated for a volleyball game. Me, too. We managed to keep some good volleys going. I felt sheepish, though, remembering what Josh said, as I saw his volleyball being kicked. "It costs me ninety bucks," he confessed, allowing me to use it for the game. "Keep an eye on it." His words swished around in my ears like salt water looking for escape. But they remained, nonetheless.

Jim Gumbus, this muscular surfer guy with long hair, brought an ice filled cooler with dolphin, snapper, garlic, lemon, butter, and spices. He tended the broiled fish like a professional chef, minus the uniform.

Jumping from group to group, Pastor Mike pollenated the social bouquets and introduced people to each other, a skill he's honed to an art. Carrie told me that Pastor Mike, the first time he met Jana, turned to introduce Jana to a regular Rock Churchgoer and said: "This is Jana. She's wearing a serong." Carrie laughed when she told me that. I laughed hearing it. That's funny. Pastor Mike's cool. So's Carrie. She's cool without knowing it, or being affected by it, which is even cooler.

Nancy, a PBA student, asked if I would drive her back to PBA. My studio/room at the hut is less than a half mile away. "Sure, I'll be ready to go in ten minutes," I explained. "Okay," she said. "I'll come back."

Driving her home, she told me that the her home church, in Kuwait, regularly experienced outpourings of the Holy Spirit. "It was started by the young people," she related. "At first, the older people didn't want to go along with it, but the young people kept showing them Scriptures." Nancy expressed her slight fear about talking with Pastor Mike and J.R. Lawson about where she felt the Holy Spirit was leading. "Where does Rock Church stand in their beliefs on the Holy Spirit?"

I explained the admonishment Cathy received for prophesying in church, and the frustration experienced by Ann Powell and Scott Torean regarding their beliefs and those of Rock Church. (Both Scott and Ann believe Rock Church should be exercising the gifts and encouraging the gifts to be exercised.

"Does Rock Church believe in the gifts?" asked Nancy. "Because I need to know what they believe before I can be expected to lead the young people."

"I'm not sure," I said, steering the car into the PBA parking lot. "Ask them, I guess, is the best answer I can give you, Nancy."

"I will," she concluded.

By the time I dropped her off at PBA, it was a little after 4 p.m.. Nancy needed to get studying and homework done before going to help with the youth group, at 5 p.m.. After arriving home, I checked messages (three), called everyone back, showered, dressed, then headed to Marr's Music to meet Jonathon and Francis. He told me about Marr's Music that morning at church. "They have all the instruments out," smiled Jonathon. "You can play them all," he had described. Those two are so cool!

Entering the store, I was drowned by a flood of noise--guitars, keyboards, muffled drums echoing through the drum rooms glass doors. How cool. This place is like Christmas, except the gifts are already unwrapped, assembled, and plugged in. I started banging on a keyboard. "Hey," beckoned a soft voice. A hand squeezed my shoulder. I looked up to see Jonathon. He had a huge grin on his face, a big genuine smile. With his baseball cap, his shoulder length hair, and his kind, brown eyes, he looked like the lead for an afterschool special, the sensitive type, who all the girls mothers wish their daughters would bring home for dates to the roller rink, the movies, even the prom. His mom, Francis, appeared. We hugged, then proceeded to play the equipment--keyboards, drums, bongos, guitars, deejay decks. Praise the Lord! What a fun day!

But tonite, Monday, was really fun. Krissy and her friend, Myrna, and I met at Carefree Theatre to watch a 'Occam's Razor', a video premiere by local writer/filmmaker Robert Goodrich. The movie was uneven in sections, as far as the pacing goes, but had good acting and well written dialogue. Krissy's a lot of fun.

Afterwards, piling in the car, I told her that I miss Carrie, but that when Carrie and I get together, she gets annoyed at me. "I miss the fact that Carrie used to need me," I blurted. "I guess I need someone codependent."

"I'll be codependent for you, Kreeestopher," Krissy squeak-whispered in a little girl voice.

"I already like you too much, Krissy." I warned. "Then, I'll really like you."

But I wonder. Did Krissy mean what she said? If she's anything like me, she speaks her mind, so hopefully she did mean it. Does she like me? Is there a chance? To be her buddy? Her best friend? Something more? With Krissy at the wheel, we patrolled Flamingo Park, spying for promising looking piles of trash. It's Monday night - garbage night! So is Thursday! PTL! :-) (Two dates a week!) Tonight, we found: an electric blower, which actually turned out to be the blower tube. I gave it to Myrna. Krissy spotted a birdcage full of toys. Her hand maneuvered its way inside like the claw in those vending machines at Denny's, the claw that never completely closes over the stuffed toys, softened convicts behind their plexiglass prison. Krissy fished out a Nickelodeon blimp that rolled forward once you rolled it backwards on the

ground. I retrieved a stuffed Babaar. I handed it to Myrna. "My mom will love this," she remarked. For myself, I found a stained, smelly, red-orange windbreaker and some toys for Niklas Jennings, including a vibrating ball.

Dear Lord Jesus, Thanks for the FUN night. Protect Krissy, Myrna, Carrie. Dear Lord, please protect them and my mom and Kim and Gina with guardian angels. Thank you Jesus!

Oh yes, I forgot to mention, Kristine played her Indigo Girls tape, the first one, while we zipped around in her bubble car and foraged through trash. What a wonderful way to spend an evening. Garbage goggles on ... check. Seatbelts on ... check. Music on ... check. You ready ... check. Check. Check. Whoo - hooo! Krissy's a lot of fun. I like hanging out with her. I feel like we're best friends, and can help each other out through difficult times, if need be.

Yes, I have a crush on Krissy Iverson. That stew, although on the back burner, has been simmering for over a year. I even wrote a song about her. The song is called "Fond". It's in the red notebook "songs & poems". Krissy: I'm fond of you. And I will expect nothing, as I so often do when I put emotion and energy into people or projects. And yes, I only do projects because I want to be loved while being able to be the anonymous recipient of that love. The feeling that sweeps over you when 300 people descend on an event that you have organized seems hard to contain with words. Let me suffice it to say that you sleep well that night. Even though the bed is empty, and you would gladly trade in all the fireproof grins and rubberstamp handshakes for an evening spent rollerblading, sifting through garbage, bike riding, night swimming with someone like Krissy Iverson or Carrie Cutlip, two brave Pepsi indians who are intense as they are individual, you sleep well, as if you're sleeping in an economy hotel, pulling back the covers to find clean sheets drawn tight, during a leisurely, well deserved vacation.

Dreams are the flashlight; time is the battery. Everyone, myself included, has so little time with which to focus their energy, harness their dreams, and shine their spotlight in a specific direction, pushing back the darkness of this world with the light of their God given gifts. Even a life, like a flashlight, has a duration. Our lifespan, like a battery, is constantly diminishing. Use your time wisely. In real life, there are no reruns.

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Today, Andy Cotter and I packed the truck. He arranged most of it, did a terrific job. Niklas Jennings and I leave in four hours, at 5a.m.. I hope he's not late. Our first stop is Sarasota, Florida, then north to another small town, then north to Atlanta, Georgia. All in all, 46 stops, pickups and deliveries. This trip will be a long one. This will be Niklas' first trip with this company.

We'll be delivering furniture for Michelletti Antique Services, a small company that was bought out by Marty Frank's Pack & Ship, the warehouse that stores, weighs, and

packs the frieght. The business is on the corner of Alabama and O Street, near Robert St. Croix's sculpture foundry. Marty, who runs the business, is nice enough. He's a shrewd business, though. The guy knows how to turn a dollar. These trips don't come that often. Usually, I drive locally, picking up furniture with Andy Cotter, cruising from Miami to Jupiter throughout the week, then helping load the trucks for out of state trips.

Arrived home at 9:30 p.m. Returned phone calls. Called Adam Kowalsky, the talented sculptor who used to do set designs in for films in the New York City area. He's organizing an art show on November 11, at 7 p.m.. One room is dedicated to film and video. He wants me to show some of the best short videos from FLO Film Fest. I'll probably set up a mini FLO Film Fest, complete with Pop-Tarts, a toaster, couches, and an Atari 2600 with games nearby. Maybe Allison or Krissy can help with it, man the room. I mean woman the room.

I called Allison. She told me she had a tape for me. I have a CD I bought her. "It's the 77's, a Christian new wave punk band from the 80's," I shouted. I biked to her house and hung out for a while. Basically, we analyzed each other.

Kris: "So ... what's your deepest darkest fear?"

Allison: Long pause. "Probably being alone. I'd hate to be one of those homeless bums that doesn't have anybody."

Talking to her, I felt overwhelmingly filthy, as I had not showered and was dressed in work clothes, dusty shorts, t-shirt, unshaved, hair clumped and greasy. But ... I was not bothered by this feeling, instead becoming a different person, serious, not smiling as often.

"Sit down," she motioned beside herself at the couch.

I sat. She showed me pictures of herself, black-and-white pictures, shot by some photographer from the modeling agency where she works as a booking agent. The pictures were sharp in contrast. In them, Allison held a serious look. They didn't look like her.

"I looked stoned, don't I?" She said.

"Uh, yes. They don't look like you at all," I remarked. "I mean, they're good, but you're prettier in real life."

She is pretty. She is cute. Then, I realized what I need and blurt it out.

"Man, Allison, I'm going to kidnap you when I come back. I'm going to take you on a date."

"Where?" She asks calmly.

"Bike riding. I need to hang out with you once or twice a week. Because hanging out

at the hut with artists is lonely. I just want to hang out with one person, who I want to hang out with."

"Okay," Allison says.

That's what's been missing--dates. Dates without any expectations. Hanging out one on one. Wherever. But, at least twice a week. Bowling, bike riding, swimming, dumpster diving, garbage nights Monday or Thursday, rollerskating, ice skating, library films, drive ins, second-run dollar movies, Tuesday night at church, Thursday night at Thursday Night Live (TNL) at PBAC, Border's Books & Music, Marr's Music, playing music, reading in the park--the same book with each person reading a paragraph, riding a bus, exploring West Palm Beach, Palm Beach, going canoeing, horseback riding, racing go-karts, playing mini golf, working on projects--Christian coffeehouse, tract distribution, FLO Film Fest, visitng rooftops on Clematis Street, library secret spot, downtown everglades. This new Cure CD is pretty. Bloodflowers, I think. Ally made it.

Thanks Ally. Allison, I think I want to hang out with you.

Dear Lord, Protect Allison from harm. Keep lonliness away from her life. Give her a hunger for your Word. Thank You. Amen.

Dear Lord, Protect Carrie Cutlip, that beautiful, brilliant brave girl. Help her to find your will and a purpose and not be lonely. Thank You, Jesus, for your wonderful plan. :-)

Saturday morning, October 28, 2000

A few days ago, I returned from a two week work trip, delivering furniture along the east coast of the United States, with Niklas Jennings. For the last several days, I've making local trips to deliver the remaining furniture, and recuperating. The recent journey with Niklas amounted to a lot of stress. Nick fails in the stamina department, acting physically tired most of the time. For half the trip, he acted like he was in a coma. Another annoyance is his penchant to urinate frequently, like a kid with a restless bladder. "I have a very loose bladder," he sighs, eyes half closed, like a sleeping prophet. When he is awake, he's a running faucet of romantic notions--crippled children groping for crutches. He rambles on about his stupid dreams. One involves driving this band to New Orleans to play at the Vampire LeStat Ann Rice Halloween Ball. But, he doesn't have the band, the bus, the gas, or the permission from author Ann Rice. Another plan of his is to open his own moving company. "Kris," he begins, placing his idea on the launch pad, "my moving company will provide the drivers with laptops." He pauses, tilts his head like a dog looking for approval, then grins, staring at me. Silence follows. "Sounds cool," I lie unenthusiastically. "I'm not talking about any laptops," he clarifies. "The kind of laptops I'm talking about are the kind that NASA uses. These aren't available to the commercial public." Another pause, another head tilt, another grin, another bout of silence. "And I woudn't make the drivers sleep in the truck, either. I would make arrangements with hotels and motels for sponsorship."

In a nutshell, Niklas Jennings is stubborn. His inability to forgo one thing for another puts him in situations that he cannot escape. For instance, he's always buying CD's and paying inordinate sums of money to travel to see his favorite bands. Because of this habit, he cannot afford to pay rent for his own apartment. So he lives at home. He wants his own apartment, however, but he refuses to curb his music addiction. He ends up in a perpetual loop, a skipping compact disc that plays over and over, whose owner has left the building.

On the trip, Niklas was stubborn. He refused to listen to my instructions about keeping the paperwork organized. I couldn't find the bills-of-lading (moving receipts) or the maps. Usually, they were hidden beneath his duffel bags of clothes and CDs. (Since we were heading to New York City, Niklas felt the need to bring multiple outfits, glam costumes, for his emergence into the nightclub scene.) After telling him repeatedly to place these items where I could find them easily, I gave up. He kept arguing: "Kris, I have my own way of organizing things. I know where they are." I'm sure he did know where they were, but the mystery is trying to find them when Nick falls asleep.

Last night, Mike Antinori, this actor in John Arndt's new play that's being produced here at the Unarmed Underground Art Center, drove Buffalo, Candice Murphy, and me to City Place. Buffalo, a skinny, long haired kid who lives in his Volkswagen Van with his big dog, part Siberian Husky part wolf, set up a temporary bedroom outside my studio. "He just needs a place to stay," Alan mumbled. "For a few days." Candice Murphy, an attractive Irish girl with a fierce independent spirit that's unleashed whenever she has Merlot, lives in the west bay of this warehouse and has a sculpture studio beside Andy Cotter's room. Sitting in the back of his BMW, with Buffalo, who remained silent, I laughed hysterically, peeking my head between the front bucket seats as Mike roared through Flamingo Park, a residential area, turning blind corners at so fast that his car ended up in the opposite lane, sliding through stop signs, tires screeching in protest, reaching sixty miles an hour.

This guy's a nut, I'm thinking. But a likeable nut, nonetheless. Spending time with Mike Antinori behind the wheel is akin to putting your hand into a bag of potato chips. One chip in your mouth, and you know you're done. Even though you know his friendship may prove to be harmful, he's charming and hard to resist. His vigor to live--wreckless, selfish, unencumbered by the rules, wild and with carefree abandon--slowly lures you closer. Eventually, the bag of chips is empty, and you feel sick.

At City Place, we run into Gail Sheperd, her beautiful girlfriend, Steve Ellman, and Gabe Lazlo. I've known these people for years. They're all writers. When Gail published Red Herring, a monthly arts & entertainment paper, Gabe and Steve wrote for her. Now, Gail is working on her novel. Gabe writes freelance articles and works for an art gallery. Steve Ellman contributes articles to an online newspaper out of France. They're an interesting montage of characters, that haunt the cafes and clubs between here and Delray. Usually, you'll find them at poetry nights or art openings. Like me, you'll find them munching on complimentary snacks, nursing plastic cups of free Merlot. They, however, chat about the latest editorial in the New Yorker. Me, I listen, eyeing the buffet table cautiously.

While Mike, Candice, and Bufallo roam around City Place, this group of writers and I stand on the corner of Rosemary and Hibiscus and review our surroundings. My parting shot leaves them laughing. "This place isn't even cool enough to be called boring," I comment, then walk north towards Clematis Street. Visiting Respectable Street Cafe, I gaze at the myriad of Halloween costumes, absorbing the creativity while chugging my half gallon of lukewarm, distilled water that's in my backpack. I watch Monkeypaw, an intense, local group that reminds me of Slipknot. They were loud and energetic. The crowd was shocked into a state of quiet reverence, applauding loudly at the end of the songs, watching silently while they performed. Carrie Cutlip was there, as her boyfriend is the bass player. Allison was there, too. Tired after seeing their show, I planned to leave but heard a voice inside my head, saying: "Stay. Protect Carrie." I wanted to leave again, but felt an urge to remain, that there was someone who would need me. I stayed for an hour more, then, bored from hearing the the deejay playing the same songs, I decided to leave.

Outside the club, the night sky was ink black with a wash of blue swirling in, indicating the approach of dawn in less than two hours. The air seemed thick, a heavy clothesline of hopes and expectations left unanswered by the quiet asphalt and the revelers returning to their cars alone. Weary bar hoppers, many dressed in costumes--superheroes, witches, schoolgirls, gothics--fumble for their keys, exchange hugs, pose for one last time in a futile attempt to bait the eyes of their latest prospect, then disappear into their cars and slowly navigate their exit. Following the same wrinkled script that, by now, was down to a pattern, I walked east on Clematis Street towards Quadrille. A blonde girl, wearing an "I dream of Genie" costume, turns the corner in front of me, then crumbles to the ground. She is sobbing hysterically. Quickly, I crouch down beside her.

"What's wrong?" I ask.

"I " she breathes heavily "was" she takes a deep breath "raped!" She sobs, holding herself, shaking. I grab the nearest passerby and tell her to call the cops. Two policeman exit a nearby car and approach us. We help her up from the ground and sit her in a chair in front of Spanky's.

"Go get them!" She screams, sobbing. "Before they rape my friend! They're in a white van."

"What do they look like?" One of the cops asked.

"I don't know! I was raped. I was raped!" She repeated, hugging herself, shivering.

"Are you cold?" I asked her. "Do you want a blanket?"

She nodded. I ran down the street and ended up at O'Sheas, an Irish pub. There, I asked Sean, the friendly bartender and theatre actor, for a blanket. He did not have one, so I resorted to buying a black O'Shea's t-shirt, ran back and helped her put it on. One of the cops, a short, fatter version of John Cusak, looked at me when she was out of hearing range. "She wasn't raped," he stated coldly in a deadpan monotone. At that

comment, I wanted to strangle him. Uncaring SOB! What a jackass. Unbelievable.

Over the course of their conversation with the girl, the cops get descriptions of the guy Tia (the victim) left with. Apparently, she met some guy at the bar, then left to talk with him. When she woke up, he was on top of her, in the back of a van. He probably slipped some kind of tranquilizer into her drink. Her friend returns and consoles her, asking Tia what happened. "I - was - raped." She continued to repeat.

"Come over here," Tia motioned. "Sit down with me."

I did, gently placing my arm around her shoulder.

"You're so sweet. Do you live around here?" She asked.

"Yes," I said.

"I live in Tallahassee. I shouldn't've even been down here."

"It's not your fault," I gave her shoulder a squeeze. Then I told her a Bible verse about reaping and sowing, telling her that God will comfort her and the assholes who did this will come to justice.

"I'm an atheist," she admitted.

"God loves you, too," I said. "A lot."

I gave her a long hug, my phone number, telling her to call me if she needed anything.

"I'm going to call you," she smiled through her teary eyes.

Then I walked home along Dixie, praying for her the entire way. At home, I drove back to Clematis with an overcoat for her. I drove up and down the street, but didn't see her. Thinking she may be at the hospital, I headed to Good Samaritan Hospital, parked, and ran into the emergency room. "Did anyone come in her tonight, within the last hour, that was raped?" I asked the secretary, then explained the story in more detail. No. Feeling frustrated, I drove to the police station, on the northwest corner of Rosemary and Clematis, parked the car, ran inside. After pressing the buzzer, then meeting a cop, I launched into a microversion of what happened. No one showed up there, either. So, I returned home, looking for white vans along the way.

The sad thing is the treatment that Tia received by the cops. Understandably, they were doing their job. But even the female officer didn't even put her arm around her to console her. Instead, she, as well as the other emotionless badges, told her: "You're gonna have to calm down and tell me what happened." Uh, hello, Mr. Policeman. She was violated, you uncaring asshole!!!

Dear Lord, Help Tia. Give her strength. Fill her with joy and peace. Protect her. And Lord, please bring the rapist(s) to justice, quickly and effectively. Thank you, Lord.

Amen.

Saturday evening, November 3, 2000

It's 11:02 p.m. Earlier, Tara left a message. I called her back, thinking she was Tia, the girl that was raped last week. This was a different girl, though. This was Tara, an artist who I offered a Gospel tract to, and invited to church several nights ago.

"Do you want to go to church, tonight?" I asked her. "I can give you a ride."

"I have a car."

"Okay, but if you want a ride, it's no problem."

"What time does it start?" Tara asked.

"Cool. Seven."

"I'll think about it and call you back."

"Cool."

She called back and told me to meet her at Starbucks on Clematis Street. I drove to Starbucks, double parked in front, and switched on my hazard lights. Jay, this painter who I had worked for last year, sat in front.

"Hey Jay."

"Where do I know you from," he squinted.

"I did some painting work for you. Remember? The 29th floor of the Trump Towers? You were faux finishing. I was doing trim work."

"Oh yeaahhhhhh ... ," the memories descend into his mind.

Tara walks up. She's really cute, looking sheepish, pale, and birdlike with her head bobbing, making diving board neck rhythms down-up-back-forth-side-to-side. On the way to church, we share a pleasant conversation. Everyone was friendly once we arrived. Jon Stepp, a vocalist/guitarist who recorded a CD of his own original music, led a good worship session. Pastor Mike Toby preached, more reading The Word than anything else. Using his hands to illustrate his message, he told the story of Peter and John healing the cripple at the gate Beautiful. One of them said: "Look at us." Pastor Mike preached that we should look at Jesus, as "He, and only He" can heal you. He closed the message by leading us in a prayer of salvation. Then he opened up a time to comment. Tara raised her hand, and made this painfully honest observation: "What if you look back but have nothing to look back that makes you happy?" Pastor Mike was very encouraging in his response, so was the surfer guy (whose name I forgot) beside me.

Driving home, Tara asked: "Are you hungry?"

"A little. Are you?"

We drove to Pollo Tropical. She ordered plantains and a mango icee. I purchased a small white rice and medium black beans. Nice conversation. I asked her what she thought about Rock Church.

"It was laid back. It was cool. I liked it."

Then the topic drifted toward the deep end of the pool.

"What about my Jewish friends? Are they going to Hell?"

"If they do not accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are. That's what The Bible says."

"What about God?" asked Tara. "Is He Jewish?"

"I don't know," I replied.

"Well his Son is, so He must be Jewish."

I laughed. "Good question, Tara. You're smart."

Afterwards, we browsed books at Books-a-Million. Tara flipped through Dante's Inferno, showing me this illustration of the levels in Hell. She bought a 1920's book. I bought nothing. I drove to her car, parked behind The Professional Arts Building.

"Do you want this table?" I offered, pointing to the table in the backseat of my car, slowing to a stop.

"You don't want it?" She asked.

"No. I found it on the side of the road."

"Why'd you pick it up?"

"I figured someone could use it."

"Sure. Thanks." We loaded it into her car. Both car seats were littered with her artwork, sketches, prints, drawings. From the loose collection, she produced a picture of a dress that she made at a fashion show. Wow. Both the prints and the dress were terrific. She's talented. "Thanks for the fun evening," she said. I gave her a hug and we parted ways.

Praise The Lord. Dear Jesus, Lead her to your truth and to the almighty work of Salvation. Thank you Jesus! Praise The Lord!!!

Sunday night, late, November 5, 2000

Dear God,

Thank you sooo much for your precious mercy, enduring Grace that rains softly, washing away all vulnerabilities and fear from the sidewalks in my life, and the alleys that offer detours to the crimes of the heart--to sins created by stray thoughts, imaginations not taken captive by my Love for you, The Lord Jesus Christ. Straighten my ways, narrow my paths, clarify my mind with pure intentions. Spark the fuel of joy that leads me on and leaves NO room for fear as I move ahead toward you, as I maneuver through the obstacle course of this world and race towards your presence ...

Earlier tonight, I experienced the wonder of the ear at Rock Church, listening to John Stepp play guitar and sing. Accompanying him was the rhythm section of Vinyl (originally the rhythm section of Chris Wood's band, Double Stack Scoobie) both the bassist, Brad, and the drummer, Rob. (Vinyl, by the way, composed of singer/songwriter Jeremy Clark, Brad on bass, and Rob on drums, is probably the best local band I have ever heard, as good as, if not better than, the now defunt band Six Silver Spiders. But John Stepp himself, as he writes all the music and the lyrics, remains a force to be reckoned with. His music, to put it bluntly, is a blend of catchy melodies and memorable hooks. Sitting in the audience ... Jana Tatham, cool cousin and witnesser, Francis the artist, Jake, a bright, punk style witnesser, Ann Powell, the witnesser that had a near death experience, Kristine Iverson, college student, friend, and a house member of the Villa, a residence for activists in Lake Worth. Pastor Mike Toby walked among everyone, wrapping his tree trunk arms around me, holding me in a hug. "I needed that," I smiled.

"What are you doing?" Ann asked after the concert. "Let's go to Denny's."

"I only have a dollar," I hemmed. "I bought a CD."

"That's okay. I have ten dollars," she smiled. After the concert, Ann and I prayed for for souls, renewal, hunger for The Word of God, and gave thanks to God. At Denny's, we found a table, sat down, and talked.

"You know what?" I began.

"What?" smiled Ann.

"There should be a Denny's on wheels," I bubbled, "that drives to houses and areas where the restaurant is not nearby, but where the area residents crave Denny's faire. They could drive the Denny's mobile to places like Century Village, and then all the people could come out like zombies like in that got milk commercial when the magician makes the milk disappear."

In the booth behind ours, two girls busted out in laughter.

"Hey, what's up?" I asked them. I walked over to where they sat. "What are those marks on your arm?" One of the girls had black marker lines in three or four places.

"We just got back from the Buzz Bakesale," one replied.

"How was it?"

"I liked it, but she didn't," pointing to her friend.

"Why not?"

"The bands that I went to see didn't play."

"Bummer."

"One of their singers had a sore throat, and in the other band one of the members got shot."

"Wow."

"Yeah."

"Do you guys want to go to church? I go to this really cool church," I pepped.

"Sure, I'll go," one said.

"I'll give em a card," Anne said.

The waitress arrived. She looked like the happiest waitress on earth, eyes shining with joy, a beautiful contentment radiating from her peaceful face.

"You have the joy of The Lord, don't you?" Ann remarked.

"Yes I do," she replied.

"You have a church home?" I asked.

"No," she said.

Another invite. Praise The Lord! At the checkout, I invited the cashier to church.

"Oh, I love The Lord. Yes. I love Him," he expressed. "I have a church. But, where do you go?"

"Rock Church. Here's a card."

Ann and I were about to leave when I said: "I want to invite that couple to church, but I'm kind of scared."

"Where?" Ann asked.

I pointed them out.

"I don't know," Ann cautioned. "That guy's been staring at me. I'm getting wierd vibes." We both stood there. "All right. Let's talk to them."

"Hi," I greeted. "Sorry to interrupt you guys. I just wanted to invite you to church."

"It's okay," a girl answered. "Cool. What church do you go to?"

"Rock Church." I glanced around the table. "Hi, I'm Kris," I extended my hand to a guy sitting beside the girl that answered. We shook hands and he introduced himself. I immediately forgot his name. Praise The Lord. "I'm Fresa, like Fresca but without the "c". I'm Catholic," she admitted. "But I don't have a church home. I'll come," she agreed.

"Cool. Great."

Outside, Ann and I gave an offering prayer of thanks to God, along with another petition for lost souls and stray souls. Yes, God willing, individually or collectively, together or alone, may we reach these strays and help them to find shelter under the wings of The Lord almighty. Thank you, Lord, for conviction, mercy, and patience. Allow us the privilege of being part of our generations concern (God given concern) for lost souls. Help us to sweep them, herd them, lead them into your Kingdom. Thank you! Praise the Lord, significant in the details that make the smallest of actions count for eternity!

November 9, Thursday, 5:24 p.m. 2000

Last night, I visited Pastor Mike at Rock Church. I bought a fish sandwich, a greek veggie pita and salad. Pastor Mike told me to come in the office. He was walking back and forth behind his desk, cleaning out his office. Dwayne, the portent security guard, unshaved, sat jello'd in the chair in front of the desk, his stomach overflowing his belt like semi hardened molten lava formations. We moved to the conference room to eat, saving the salad for later.

On the way to church, I visited Jana and Byron to pick up their Windows 95 disk. "It won't boot up unless you have a startup disk," warned Byron, deflating the tires of my idea to re-install Windows 95 on my heavily handled, five year old personal computer, a massive shell of hairballs and upgrades.

"Sit down and talk to me," suggested Jana, skimming fresh baked chocolate chip cookies from a pan, sliding them into a bowl, and bringing them into the living room. She settled into a couch. Byron disappeared into the computer room.

"Wow," I exclaimed, looking around. "I love the way you decorated your house. It's so Banana Republic."

"Thanks," she smiled.

I mentioned the coffeehouse idea, particularly the fact that I'd visited with PBAC administrators, left them a one page summary, and discussed my intentions--to win souls, encourage straying souls, provide a Christian alternative to bars and secular activities. Then Jana asked a thoughtful question.

"Why are you still living where you live? Why don't you move out?"

She refers to the warehouse where I had lived since 1997. The warehouse, at 502 Kanuga Drive, houses art studios and makeshift living spaces for low rent dwellers. Officially, it's known as Flamingo Art Studios. Another name for it is the Unarmed Underground Art Center. Most people who come into its gravity field, however, call it by its slang name, the hut. Rent is cheap: \$200 a month, including utilities. Inside, there are three bathrooms, two showers, a kitchen, a washer and dryer. The inhabitants of the hut, a rotating cast of characters that includes artists, con artists, musicians, slackers, poets, writers, scientists, hippies, travellers, drug addicts, alcoholics provide an interesting backdrop in which to live and work. If you're kind enough, you can usually barter with someone, as I have been doing for the last three years. As I don't have a car, I barter with Alan, offering to run errands for him if I can use his car. Of, if Alan refuses, I'll try to barter with another artist with a vehicle. My computer comes in handy for this, as they like to get online to check their e-mail. They can, as long as they're willing to give me rides. The hut itself is like a black hole that absorbs the loose nuts, and the spare change. The warehouse is like a monastery for misfits, an halfway house for orphans who, usually through their own neglect or refusal to play by the rules, cannot return to mainstream society. It's kind of like a dryer on a constant cycle, spinning its residents into familiar patterns that are hard to get out of, as they bounce around each other while trying to find their dreams, whatever they may be. Because I've always felt like somewhat of an outsider, perhaps because of the isolation that I experienced in high school, the hut remains a place that I can call home because there, everyone is an outsider. A hand painted slogan above Sue Van Excel's studio reads: "If you're out there, you're in here". As I live there, I can make forays into the group of nonconformists, then retreat to my cave to write about the experience. Sure, it has it's bad points, the railroad tracks are less than fifty feet away, possums and rats roam the warehouse but, generally, keep to themselves, and there's the ankle deep frustration experienced from living with people who are flakes, but the sparks that fly from the friction only serve to grease my wheels, keep my mind occupied, and propel me to follow my dreams, no matter how unconventional. Once you step to the edge, the world you left loses its appeal.

"Um ... " I hesitated, looking for a place to land, but no landing spot was in site. So I ejected myself from the cockpit, only to discover my parachute flailing as well.

"That's a really good question. I save rent," I brewed, giving her the standard answer--the tugboat that pulls the ship of excuses. "With the money I save, I can put that to good use. Like buying tracts, saving up for a house, etc."

"Yeah," Jana started. "But isn't it hard for you to live there? That place is, like, full of demons."

"Yeah it is," I agree.

Ten minutes later, we said our goodbyes. Jana wanted me to stay and talk, but Pastor Mike was waiting.

At Rock Church, inbetween bites of his sandwich, Pastor Mike told me about dispensation, a certain period of time, usually measured in years, when God moves. He said that this, coupled with obedience, is when miracles and wonders are seen. He said he thinks the next dispensation will happen soon, and I'll be part of it. Wow. I'm not that cool, but it sure would be a privilege. God is awesome! I really like Pastor Mike. His application of Scripture is so practical.

After eating and talking, we went over to his house to pick up his son, Jonathon. There, after a lot of coaxing from me, Pastor Mike played piano. He played this delightful, original piece that sounded like a song by the Cocteau Twins. Very cool.

November 9, Thursday, 11:30 p.m. 2000

Biked downtown with about 75, maybe 100, self made salvation fliers called "The real vote". If you want to read this flier, go to the main page of my website (www.kriskemp.com), click on Christian commentaries, then read "The real vote". At Palm Beach Atlantic College, I spotted Bo, dressed up, wearing a tie, standing with two girls and a guy, on the sidewalk along Olive, just across from the PBAC theatre.

"I'm working as a customer receptionist at a credit card company in Boca Raton," beamed Bo. "I love it."

"Praise The Lord. That's awesome, man," I told him.

"What are you doing?" He queried.

"I printed up a Gospel tract and I'm passing it out."

"Cool."

"Are you guys Christians?" I asked his friends.

"Yes," they said.

"Praise God. That's awesome!"

A crowd, no matter how small, gathers a crowd. Two guys walked over. I offered them the flier. They took it, said thanks.

Then Liz, Karen, Meagan crossed the street, all of them Rock Church attenders, all of them cute and lovely. Liz is absolutely beautiful, probably the most beautiful girl I have ever known. Her eyes are bright, and sparkle when she laughs or smiles. They're like a catchers mitt for the stars. Physically, she's stunning. I know that physical features, in the long run, don't matter, though. The description needs to be made so

you can imagine what she looks like. Still, no one is as adorable as Carrie Cutlip, the millenium's Shirley Temple. Carrie has beautiful eyes, adorable, juicy-fruit lips, cute nose, and is snuggly enough to get lost in for several years. Carrie Cutlip is the girl I will never, ever forget. And that's a good thing.

"Hello," I smile to the trio of beauties.

"What are you doing?" They chorus. I tell them. "That's cool," they remark.

"What are you guys doing?" I parrot.

"We have a stupid hall meeting to go to," one shrugs. "Well, have fun." They jingle off down the sidewalk.

Biking downtown. Nouveaux, a terrific Christian band composed of blessed musicians who compose beautiful melodies and write memorable lyrics, is blaring in my ear. I steer the bike through the slow moving traffic on Clematis Street and pedal east. At the theatre across the street from Pescatore, I lock the bike, then stand there surveying the social tornados of people, the human schools of fish as they head upstream to spawn.

"Check it out," I blurt out. "Free." Or ... "Take it. It's free." I pretend like I'm going to die any moment, in order to lose any sense of self preservation. Acting fearlessly, even though the strength is not my own, I look at each person, making eye contact, smiling, mirroring their behavior, as I offer The Gospel tract, The Real Vote. The music playing in my ears provides a soundtrack for my actions. Thank you, Lord! At the corner, I pass out 40 fliers. Then, as the crowds begin to thin, I walk west on Clematis, dotting small flocks of friends as unobtrusively as possible, often not saying a word or saying "here". I cross Olive and being handing them out to drivers, as they idle in traffic. They peer from their vehicles, windows down, music up, guys with their girls riding shotgun (passenger side), their cars shining from the recent wash, wax. Most of the cars appear to be new purchases, modified, lowered, credit card extended autos that hide mountains of debt birthed interest beneath their exterior. Halfway down Clematis, on the 400 block, I spot Peejay, wearing oversized silver raver pants, glasses, sweating, goateed, hair frizzed. He's slouched in a bench in front of the raver clothing store "420".

"Waz upppppp?" He sings.

I wigger walk my way to him, we hug. "When are we gonna jam, man?" I ask, smiling.

"I have horns, guitars, drums, and you can play keyboard. Call me and tell me when."

"Cool." I hand him a flier, then continue handing them to car passengers slowed in the quicksand of traffic. Nearby, two girls are manning, or is it womanning?, or is it personing?, a booth to re-count Gore's votes since it's believed that there was a

miscount in Bush's favor. They ask me to stop distributing the fliers. "People are going to think this is what we're passing out," they claim.

"Sure. No problem," I tell them. I say goodbye to Peejay, hug him, and keep moving, saving the last flier for Chris Sargent, the legendary bouncer and now manager of Respectable Street Cafe. Chris and I chat for a bit. He has the merriest eyes. They're always sparkling, like blue marbles at the bottom of shallow fountain, silvery and shiny, like the white flashes from a camper in the distance who uses a mirror to get the attention of his lost buddy. I deliver Chris a bag of pre-Christmas gifts for Rodney Mayo, the deejay and tornado cave architect, then split. Thank you, Jesus. Let your will be done. Thank you, Lord!

November 10, Friday night, 11:26 p.m. 2000

Krissy Iverson visited me tonight. "I don't think I'm going to move out of the Jenning's house. Even if they don't like me," she admitted, "they are my friends."

"A few days ago," I told her, "I visited PBAC with the coffeehouse proposal. I want to do it there. I spoke with two administration types and felt like I was talking behind a glass, as if my body's actions were controlled by myself, only myself had been reduced to a pea sized me, a construction crane operator viewing the world from behind my eyes, controlling my arm movements by shifting the gears beside my leg."

Krissy was laconic, so I filled in the space.

"I want to take you out to dinner. There's a chinese buffet on Palm Beach Lakes and it's only, like, \$8 dollars for dinner and they have, like, 75 or 50 items." We high fived.

"Don't beat yourself up, Krissy," I suggested. "You look sad."

"I always beat myself up," she replied.

"Well, the next time you feel like beating yourself up, enter a different room. Like, if you are upset emotionally, then enter a physical, spiritual, or mental room. Here. Let's do an example. Step outside my room." She did. "Okay, pretend you are in the emotional room and beating yourself up." She did. "Come on into the physical room." She walks in. "Okay, let's do 10 jumping jacks. Yeah. Feel it." I do jumping jacks and so does she. She smiles. "Now, don't you feel better." "Yeah," she says.

I'm such a loser. Sometimes, I'm embarassed to be alive. No wonder people drink. Maybe I've let too much dust settle. Hmmm.

November 11, Saturday afternoon, 2000

I shopped today. Purchased a soap set at Target, plus a shaving kit (blade, gel,

aftershave), Dep hairgel. Also, I bought a \$5 box of chocolates (Turtles), devouring them as I roamed the aisles. I still feel guilty. I will try to fast for a week. I need to beat myself up, work harder, be more disciplined, less accepting of ordinary circumstances, mundane expectations, and people whose vision of their lives are glued to this world only. Use me God. Let me fall in love with you. Let me not care about this world but work for Heaven. Thank you, Jesus.

November 12, Sunday evening, 2000, 5 p.m.

Last night, the church crowd was fewer as the PBAC homecoming was underway. Originally, Krissy Iverson and I planned to go, but Krissy's friend Devon was in town and they wanted to eat at Bizarre Cafe, an expensive bistro that also sells its furnishings, in downtown Lake Worth. She left a message inviting me to join them, but I had a commitment to playing drums at Rock Church. It was cool. We already planned, for some time in the future, to visit the Chinese buffet on Palm Beach Lakes. \$6 lunch, \$8 dinner, 50-75 items. Praise The Lord for cheap food!

Church was amazing! Pastor Mike, Jonathon, and I played an acoustic set, sitting crosslegged at the stage steps. Bongos, acoustic electric by Pastor Mike, and clean sounding electric by Jonathon.

After church, Gabe and Susan, a young, attractive married couple, her petite with big blue eyes, him model-like, muscular with chiseled features, invite us to a bonfire at Singer Island Beach. Ann Powell and I decided to go. "We can witness," she smiled, her brown eyes blazing with anticipation. Before we left, we prayed. According to Gabe and Susan, the landmark to look for would be the Radisson Hotel. So, I fold myself into my car, then drive west on PGA Boulevard. At A1A, the road that runs north-south along the beach, we headed south, slowing the car and looking for the Radisson Hotel. We couldn't find the Radisson, so we decided to park in The Sheraton Hotel parking lot. Unloading from the car, we strolled to the beach, then scanned the shore for signs of life. Eyeing the bonfire north of us, we began trudging in that direction. Along the way, we noticed a guy sitting by himself, about 20 yards from the ocean, watching the waves.

"Let's go talk to him," suggested Ann.

"Hey, what's up?" We asked, smiling, approaching him.

"Hey, have a seat." He offered. "You wanna smoke?" He held a joint in his outstretched hand.

"No thanks." We introduced ourselves and shook hands. His name was Jason.

We talked, stacking enough dry branches of conversation to spark a conversational campfire.

"What are you doing out here?" He asked.

"We were gonna go do some prayer and praise at that bonfire over there, with some friends from our church," Ann replied.

"Do you know Jesus, man?" I asked him.

His reply was vague. He didn't understand how or why Christianity could be the only way to Heaven. Like so many twenty-somethings that are indoctrinated into the tornado of tolerance once they enter college, he wanted to believe that all highways, no matter how incongruent, lead to the same place. "I'm not sure," he surmised. "It seems pretty small minded of a God to say that there's only one way to Heaven. I think God's bigger than that."

We listened to Jason, allowing him to sort out his doubts about Christianity. Judging from his confession, he seemed interested in knowing the truth, but expressed his skepticism nonetheless.

"How does anyone really know?" He mused, staring at the sand.

"That's where faith comes in," I answered.

"And trust," Ann added. "God wants us to trust him, like a child trusting his father.

"The evidence is provided in The Bible, The Word of God," I explained. "When you apply that in your life, you'll see a significant change, that will further your faith in God. The Bible is like God's love letter to us, to humanity. It answers your questions about Who God is, and what our purpose is in life."

More conversation followed.

"You wanna come over to the bonfire with us?" Ann asked.

"Sure," Jason said. "I'm cool with that."

We stood, dusted the sand off from our shorts, then headed north toward the blazing light. As we approached the glowing, somewhat small, flame, four groups of people came into view. One guy buy himself, two guys sipping bottled beer, several guys and girls sitting cross-legged in a low volume conversation, and two guys, one sitting, the other standing.

"Hey Kyle," we greeting, recognizing the guy sitting on the sand as Kyle Cohen, a pro-surfer Christian who attends Rock Church.

"Hey guys," he mumbled, smiling broadly. "This is my friend, Dave."

"Are you a Christian?" I asked eagerly.

"Yes I am."

"Praise God," I squealed. "That's awesome."

"Kyle, this is Jason," Ann remarked, turning to him and putting her hand on his shoulder. They shook hands and greeted each other.

We slowly folded our legs into position as we sat around the fire. Kyle and Jason began talking, immediately hitting it off as they colored in the spaces of common ground--surfing, interest in marine biology, even their views of God. As their conversation veered toward God, I was impressed by the amount of Scripture that Kyle knows. I remained quiet so I could listen. For every question, Kyle or Ann seemed to have the answer. Kyle used The Scriptures, plus examples from his own life that illustrated Biblical truths. Ann told parts of her testimony, a graphic drama of life changing experiences that brought her face to face with The Lord Jesus Christ. Sitting there, the cool night air wafting around us, the warm fire flickering nearby, feeling the cold sand sink inbetween my toes, casually glancing at the stars as they pockmarked the heavens, I felt privileged. This is what the disciples must have felt like, I thought to myself, witnessing the grace of God flowing through earthly vessels. Even Kyle's face seemed to glow as he expressed the desire for Jason to come to know The Lord Jesus Christ.

Later, Kyle, Ann, Jason and I laid on our backs, watching the stars.

"I don't even want to go home," admitted Ann. "I could sleep right here."

I think we all felt the same way. Praise the Lord!

Kyle arranged to meet Jason and his parents for breakfast, then give him a ride to church. Then, Kyle excused himself to jog down the beach so he could offer Rock Church surf-night fliers to a few other groups that were headed to their cars. Later, I dropped Ann to her house. We prayed. That night, I arrived home around 1 a.m.. I had to be up at 7 a.m. to get ready for church since the worship practice starts at 8:30 a.m.. and it takes twenty minutes to drive there. Thankfully, I slept like a child. At 6 a.m., I awoke feeling refreshed. God is awesome!

Church was terrific. Thank you God! Jon Bodecker, a pastor from Lake Wales, gave the message. He spoke about Esther, explaining that God wants to use us, and will use us for His glory if we let him. Afterwards, he offered a salvation prayer. He mentioned that three hands were raised in acknowledgement.

Bill Shea, the vocalist/acoustic guitarist, Chris Paul, the bassist, and Jason Sumner, the lead guitarist, walked up to the stage to play a closing song. The worship, playing with these guys, is unlike any worship that I have experienced. When Pastor Mike joins us with his guitar and vocals, it's even better. After playing some music, I was approached by Ann Powell.

"Remember that guy who we were talking with last night?" She asked.

"Yeah."

"He got saved. He said the prayer," she beamed. "There he is," she pointed.

Sure enough, at the altar was a beautiful sight--Jason, the young man who we met at the beach late last night and talked with until early that morning, in tears, wearing a smile so big that it could barely fit on his face, sitting at the steps. Beside him, crouched down, was Kyle Cohen, an arm around him, smiling, talking with him gently.

I run up to him and give him a big hug. "Jason! I am so happy for you, man! Praise The Lord!" I yell at the ceiling.

Thank you Jesus! You are awesome!

Monday, November 13, 2000, 6:52 p.m.

No work today ... Praise The Lord! Washed dishes, drove to Jennifer & Matt's, borrowed MS Frontpage 2000, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Pagemaker. Cool! Installed it. Made phone calls to Carrie, Allison, Scott. Plan to call Krissy, Cara & Bill Shea ...

Jonathon's mom, Francis called. "I'm here with Jonathon. I picked him up because he wasn't feeling well," she explained. "He's feeling better now and we were wondering if you'd like to meet us at Marr's Music. Maybe you and Jonathon could work on some songs or just jam."

I was laughing after the part where she said "He's feeling better now". How could I refuse? An hour later, I end up inside Marr's Music, a massive store that sells all sorts of musical instruments and allows you to play the instruments. For someone who likes to play music, this place is better than Disney World. At least for me it is. I spy Jonathon as he skulks into the guitar section and gently picks up an electric from its stand. Like usual, he's wearing a baseball cap and his bangs hang from the front blocking his eyes. Then he starts to play. I have never heard anyone play like that before. He rips. After some guitar playing, he walked over to drums and sat down. He plays drums pretty decent, better than average for someone who's never played before. This kid's a prodigy, a natural talent, blessed to overflowing. I walked over to the keyboards and played a nice one that has warm, analog sounds on it. Sean, a nice sales clerk approached, giving me his card. God-willing, I plan to buy the keyboard I played. At 5:30 p.m., I arrived home. Ann Powell called at 6 p.m. "We really need to pray for Kyle," she urged. "this girl that's a friend of his just committed suicide." Kyle and Ann and I are fasting and praying today. "I will definitely," I assured Ann.

Dear Lord, Please comfort Kyle, Lord Jesus. Flood him with peace and with the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Occupy his troubled heart and comfort him in this time of grief, Dear Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

"Was the girl Christian?" I asked Ann.

"I think so," Ann replied. "He said that he talked to her about it and she thinks she was, but she had difficulties with it."

Comfort Kyle, Lord, please be with him in his grief and sorrow. Thank you, Lord, for your provision and awesome love! Amen.

Tuesday, November 14, 2000

Quit work today, my job as a antique furniture mover at Marty Frank's Pack & Ship / Michelletti Antique Services. Now, I'll be an on call driver, blanket wrapping and loading the truck for local trips Monday through Friday.

Krissy Iverson was over this evening. From about 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. We worked on a book report, about this guy named Popper, for her class. I like Krissy. She's nice and interested in the same stuff I am--dumpster diving, garbage night dates on Monday and Friday in Flamingo Park. Physically, she's devastatingly beautiful. Her lips are bright red, like those of an English girl, her neck is long, and the way her head sits on her neck reminds me of a nest that sits atop a tree branch that's been chopped down. Okay, that's odd, I understand. She's really cute. She's pretty stunning.

Wednesday morning, November 15, 2000, 5:04 a.m.

Took a shower. Ate the yogurt that Krissy Iverson brought over last night. Tasty, French Vanilla, organic yogurt, a whole quart. I squeezed red grapes in it and mixed them up, yummy. Thank you, Krissy. Thank you, God, for making Krissy. She also brought over two bunches of bananas, Indian corn, whole wheat bread, two regular sized yogurts (plain flavored), a half dozen large grade A eggs, two tubs cottage cheese, and tofu! All of this was a dumpster score from the rubbish bin behind Wild Oats. Praise God! What a find! Krissy told me that she didn't even make the dumpster run, they, probably Cara, Mel, Peter--activists that reside in Lake Worth--did.

I really enjoyed re-typing Krissy's book report last night. For the most part, I edited Krissy's writing by adding transitions between paragraphs, putting sentences together for succintness. Looking through the thinnest book she had on Popper, philosopher who sought to draw the line between science based on empiricism (evidence that is tangible) and science based on a presupposed set of ideas or theories, I managed to extract nearly two pages. Originally, she was two pages short. Tonight, God-willing, she's coming over and we're going to work on the report, perhaps downloading a picture of Popper to use for the cover page. Maybe she'll use pictures throughout the report. The required style is Turbanian. After editing the report, we plan to his the Chinese buffett, but maybe we'll go for a walk first. I like hanging out with Krissy. :-)

Wednesday morning, November 15, 2000, 8:07 a.m.

Fun things to do.

- 1) Dumpster diving behind Walgreens, Eckerd's (for Christmas gifts and birthdays)
- 2) Visiting the library ... free videos, DVD's, books, audiobooks, CD's, air conditioning, internet access, magazines, newspapers, secret spot)

- 3) downtown Everglades
- 4) rooftops
- 5) homemade eggs, toast, honey, hot cocoa
- 6) walking briskly in the park, 2pm dancing to Big Band songs at 2pm at the community center
- 7) writing, playing music
- 8) drive in - Trail Drive Inn on Lake Worth Road, south side, just west of Congress Avenue
- 9) Movies of Lake Worth - second run movies, 6 theatres, only \$3
- 10) bike riding, day or night
- 11) swimming, day or night
- 12) visiting an hotel, pretending like you have a room, going for a swim; renting a local hotel room & pretending you're on vacation
- 13) reading The Bible, talking about it, witnessing, passing out tracts
- 14) cooking with what you have or cooking a special meal
- 15) visitng Aunt Ruth & Scott, Mom, Kim, Gina & Kevin, Jennifer & Matt, Carrie Cutlip :-)
- 16) playing hooky at Marr's Music, the browsing Borders Books next door
- 17) buying mask, snorkel, fins and exploring underwater
- 18) keeping a journal
- 19) doing exercises on the heart trail or jogging path at the nearby park
- 20) bike riding, pulling a skateboarder along with you, on Flagler
- 21) garbage nights - Monday and Thursday - in Flamingo Park
- 22) Goodwill, when books are five for a \$1 dollar
- 23) guava con quesos at Tulipan Bakery (southwest corner of Belvedere and Georgia)
- 24) eating vegan
- 25) knowing friendly people
- 26) being involved at Rock Church
- 27) talking on the phone, making ten-to-fifteen short phone calls, keeping in touch
- 28) praying for people and fasting
- 29) dressing eclectically or dressing up for dinner with a friend
- 30) getting advice from Carrie Cutlip; it's even more phone to take it :-)
- 31) riding your bicycle with the radio bungeed to the handlebars and playing your favorite CD, tape, or radio song
- 32) praying, fasting, crying for the persecuted church, sending them the bulk of your paycheck to support them, dumpster diving and living cheap so you can suffer in solidarity with the brothers and sisters in Christ who are being tortured and murdered for their witness for Christ

Wednesday evening, November 15, 2000, 6:02 p.m.

Krissy's driving over. We're going to that Chinese buffet place on Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard. Then, God-willing, we'll return here to my room, format her report on Popper in the Turbanian style, maybe add pictures. I'll show her some Photoshop tools. I think she'll like that. She's visual.

Driving the van this afternoon along I-95, Marty Frank, who owns and manages Marty Frank's Pack & Ship and Michelletti Antique Services, turned to me and said: "Well, you know, it's okay to be a free spirit and part timer, but then you should expect to be poor." Wow, I thought. How cool is that. My whole face became a smile. I almost started laughing with glee. At least if I expect to be poor, I won't be disappointed, nor will I have to jump on the treadmill of consumerism, buy into the latest technology, then commit to the inevitable upgrade. So, I'll be poor. What a relief. At least I'll know what to expect. And if I have extra money, I'll tithe more and give it to people who need it, like Carrie Cutlip! :-)

Marty's statement closed the doors on the conversation we had concerning my decision to quit his company--Marty Frank's Pack & Ship and Michelletti Antique Services. As it stands, I'll be on call, primarily for deliveries and pickups, Monday through Friday only.

On another note, I need to pray more, and read The Bible more. Otherwise, I struggle with lust, veering to see pictures that are convenient and harmful. Dear Jesus, Help me extinguish my sinful lust and all lustful thoughts, in the name of The Lord Jesus Christ. Cover me with The Blood of Jesus. Thank you, God! Make me an instrument, Lord Jesus, for your purpose. Consume me with a passion to reach the lost for Christ, to seek you with all my being. Thank you, Jesus!

Thursday night, November 16, 2000, 12:59 a.m.

Praise God! Spent day with Bill Shea, teaching him Photoshop 5 basics, showing him the basics of web design via Microsoft Publisher 2000. For lunch, ate four vegetarian wraps. Cara arrived home around 6-pm something with Stacy and Jim, then we ate. A prayer meeting followed, laying on of hands, tears, Praise The Lord. After saying goodbye, I drove to Rock Church. My cousin, Jana Tatham, Pastor Mike Toby, surfer/witnesser Kyle Cohen, cool witnesser girl Ann Powell, Cara, Mia, and Suzanne (Gabe's wife) were there. They were finishing a night of praise and worship. We prayed, then danced to Christian music, the CD's volume cranked on the loudspeakers. On the way home, I felt led by the Holy Spirit to avoid the Okeechobee exit and, instead, continue to Belvedere. Once I turned off on Belvedere, I felt led to get gas at the first open gas station. Before pumping the gas, I offered a Gospel tract to a couple nearby in their car.

A black man approached me, looked in the garbage, then eyed me. "You got a gas can?" He asked.

"No," I said. Then I remembered I did have one, in the trunk, with gas in it. "Yes. You need gas?" I asked.

"Yeah. I ran out of gas over there at the 2nd building. I was looking for a club," he explained. "You can follow me."

"I'll give you a ride," I offered.

I drove to his car, two blocks away, and parked. I poured gas into his engine. He starts the engine and it cranks to life.

"Thanks," he smiled.

"Here," I offered a Gospel tract. "I just wanted to show you the love of God in a practical way. Jesus loves you. He died for you. And he promises a place in Heaven for those that come to accept Him as Lord and Savior." He nodded. "I go to this cool church. It's on the back. It's called Rock Church. It's fun, about a hundred people, Saturday 7pm and Sunday 10am."

"I might check it out," he said.

Praise The Lord! Thank you Jesus, for leading me to people in need! If it's your will, keep doing it. Thank you Jesus!

At church, about an hour ago, I felt the need to talk to Krissy Iverson and tell her: "You're valuable. Take your eyes off other people. Keep your eyes on The Lord Jesus Christ. Find out your value in Christ. "... for you are bought with a price".

Dear Jesus, Allow Krissy the privilege of experiencing your love. If its your will, God, soak her with comfort, leave no room for doubt or uncertainty. Guide her to you. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Also, Lord, tell my mom that she is loved and being used. Thank you, Jesus!

Make us instruments! Praise Jesus!

Friday night, November 17, 2000, 9:40 p.m.

Dear Lord, Thank you soooooo much for tonight! You are awesome. Praise you, Lord!

Dad called earlier, a little before noon, no, more like around 10'ish a.m., saying: "I'm at Gunclub Plaza, on Military and Southern, off of Gunclub and Military. There's a lot of TV cameras out here, and people are arriving with signs."

"Cool," I told him. "I'm coming over there. Thanks for letting me know."

Earlier, I had driven to Office Depot, buying stapler, staples, ten posterboards, two cardboard squares, two fat, black Magic Markers. Praise the Lord. I called several people--Krissy Iverson (not home), Melissa Shuttlerow (had an afternoon commitment), Ann Powell (she had to work, but suggested I call Kyle Cohen and said she would come by after work). Determined to make the most of this opportunity, I called Kyle and he was excited.

"Yeah. Let's go." Kyle agreed. He suggested I call Pastor Mike Toby. I did. No one answered. I left messages on his cell phone and on the answering machine at church.

"I'll be there in a half hour," Kyle confirmed. So I sat on the floor of my room and began to work, ink stamping Rock Church logos on the back of Gospel tracts and praying. An hour and a half later, Kyle called, apologizing. "I'm glad you're still at home. I'm on Okeechobee. I'll be there in five minutes."

Praise God! Just as I was stamping the last few tracts! :-)

Kyle arrived. Using the markers, we drew the signs. His read: "Christians pray" on one side. The other side read: "Let your light shine!" My sign read: "Jesus Saves" on one side only. Once the signs were finished, we placed them in his car, then drove to the southeast corner of Southern and Military. Along the way, we prayed. He steered into the Gunclub Plaza and parked the car. We emerged from the car with our signs, prayed, then walked toward the throng of, about, 150 sign holders, 95% who were Bush fans.

The crowd was reacting to the reports of the ballot count in Florida. Judging from poll results, the race had been very close. Gore, representing the democrats, had received less votes and wanted a recount. Bush, representing the republicans, had received more votes and didn't want a recount. Both parties had legitimate arguments. Since Florida was the deciding vote, people were protesting in the streets.

Two signholders approached us, then introduced themselves as Fred and Frank from Tampa. Fred carried a giant picture of Bush, taken in 1998, shaking the hands of someone at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

"CNN is saying that Bush doesn't like Jews," Fred explained. "That's why he doesn't want a Florida recount. I took this picture myself when I was in Israel in 1998. Bush loves the Jews. This is proof. This is before he was president. At this time, he was just a Texas governor."

Frank had a sign that had a graphic depicting the Washington Monument on one side and the Dome of the Rock on the other, blended in the middle. Words below read: "God's News behind the news." www.Godsnews.com

Kyle and I held our hand drawn signs. Kyle talked with Frank and Fred. I passed out Gospel tracts. A half hour later, I spot Rodney Mayo, the deejay, wunderkid, architect of people caves, looking healthy and handsome with short hair hanging down in bangs across the front, khaki shorts, docksiders, collar shirt, a high end video camera in hand. Beside him stand Dominik Gianetti and another camera toting long-haired fellow.

"Rodney!" I yell, waving the sign as he looks in my direction. Smiling as he notices me, he laughs, then walks over to me. We chat. Rodney asks some questions. I answer totally from the flesh, all excited, the words erupting like gunfire from my lips, not making the least bit of sense. Kyle later rebuked me for it--not speaking calmly and in the Spirit of God. "Take it as a light rebuke," he cautioned. He was right. Thank you, Lord, for Kyle! Then Kyle was interviewed by Rodney, who filmed and asked questions. Dominik Gianetti stood beside Rodney, holding a boom mike

above Kyle. The other cameraman stood further away (filming a longshot?). After the interview, they snaked into the forest of people.

"Let's pray," suggested Kyle when he returned. Frank, Fred, and I agreed and Kyle walked among the people, inviting them to join us. About ten people meandered over. We joined hands. Kyle sat in the middle. Some of us kneeled. Others stood. Rodney entered the circle, aiming his camera for an inside shot, similar to a "beat down" view popular in rap videos, and Dominik stood outside, positioning his boom mike towards Kyle's mouth. Kyle began to pray. It was sweet. With my eyes closed, I heard the sound of cameras snapping and flashes clicking. Praise God! Following the prayer, Kyle said: "I have a feeling something big is gonna happen."

Kyle and Fred and Frank were anxious to move closer to the the compound of media vans, cameras, lights, microphones, and cables that snaked their way, duct taped to asphalt, among the equipment to its respective power source. Kyle and I laid our signs on the ground as none were allowed past the fenced off area, then entered the media area occupied by a small army of television trucks ready for live broadcast. Fred and Frank, still holding their signs, patiently waited at the fence. Inside the media area, reporters stood before bright lights and faced immense cameras, relating any significant changes about the vote recount. Others milled about, joked with the camera crew, or sat and watched their watches or the streaming live reports on the televisions from CNN. Kyle wanted to see if he could get on the news. He had something to say.

"I'm gonna get back to see if Ann's here yet," I told Kyle. About a half hour before, Ann had called Kyle and said she'd gotten off work. Soon after I walked back near the throng of people standing along Military Trail, Ann arrives, a giant smile. Channel 5 was about to broadcast live, about 25 feet away. I headed toward their cameras, holding my "Jesus Saves" sign right behind a news reporter. Like a giant wave that rises when it hits a reef, the crowd surged behind the reporter as he stood sweating beneath a battery of lights. Everyone in the crowd seemed to have the same idea--position their signs behind the reporters head, making the most of live news to get their point across. Most carried pro-Bush or anti-Gore signs. It was intense. The cameraman cued the reporter who began to speak. I held the "Jesus Saves" sign in an open space left by the other signs, a space so small that I had to move my sign slowly up and down, so TV viewers would first read "Jesus" and then see the sign move up so they could read "Saves". As my sign was moving, it probably got a lot of attention. Later, I found out my friend Scott Toreau, an engineer and dumpster diver, watched the live broadcast at his house. Guess what network aired it? CNN ... international news. Isn't that cool? Apparently, channel 5 is a local affiliate. Cool, huh?

"Let's go back to the news TV area," Ann quipped.

We walked up the grassy embankment that was turning into dirt as it had been trampled by hundreds of protestors and newspeople. Kyle had returned. We chatted, then he placed his sign on the ground once more and entered the media area. Meanwhile, Fred, Frank, Ann and I prayed that The Lord would be with Kyle as he attempted to get an interview with a television reporter. In a few minutes, Kyle

returned. "CNN gave me a spot," he said matter of factly, slightly smiling. "Praise the Lord!" I shouted. We all hugged and smiled, then prayed and layed hands on Kyle. Soon enough, a reporter came over to get him. He gave a nervous smile and left. "Mention Jesus!" I yelled. We continued to pray for him. Five minutes later, he returned. We said a prayer of thanks.

"What did you say?" I queried enthusiastically.

"I said: 'We used to be one nation under God and we need to return to that. It's not about Bush or Gore. We've strayed from our roots. We need to return to Jesus Christ.'"

We prayed again. "I'm hungry," said Kyle. "Let's go eat."

By now, it's growing dark, but the crowd is still here, waiting for an opportunity to flash their signs behind a newsperson when they give a live report. I see a familiar face emerge from the thicket of sweaty bodies. Kathleen, Rodney's friend, approaches us. "Are you guys hungry?" She holds out a bag of snacks. "Help yourself."

"Praise the Lord." I shout.

We sit down, give thanks, eat. I talk with Kathleen. Mainly, I ask her questions. She expressed uncertainty about her future. "Can I pray for you?" I ask. She agreed. I did. It was cool. Thank you, Lord!

We decided to leave. Before breaking camp, we prayed. Two men, one with a son, stopped by. They were Christians. One mentioned he did missions work to Haiti, out of Sarasota, Florida.

"Do you need any help?" I offered. "I'll help. You need a web page? I'll make you one for free. You're doing the Lord's work, so praise God."

His face erupted into a smile. "Praise the Lord," he exclaimed. "I've been needing a web page."

I gave him my number and address. Then, Kyle, Ann and I drove to Umi-Ayu for a sushi dinner. Even there, Kyle and Ann passed out tracts.

Praise God! I love you, Jesus! Thank you for the fire in their lives! Praise the Lord!!

Dear Heavenly Father,

Please be with Kyle and help him reach his lost friends for Christ. Give him strength and courage. And Lord, thank you for Kyle. Thank you for Ann, Lord Jesus. Help her to find a Christian friend to witness with her in Jupiter. Protect her, Lord Jesus. Sustain her with your loving kindness. Thank you, Jesus, for allowing us a way out of the wilderness of the world. Let us be consumed by you. If it's your will, use us.

Make us instruments. Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus! In your precious and Holy name of The Lord Jesus Christ I pray, Amen.

Please be with Jana, Lord, and Carrie Cutlip, Krissy Iverson--strengthen her and calm her soul. Lead her into your perfect plan. Flood her with comfort. Erase doubt, uncertainty, confusion, and fear. Bless Kim Kemp, Lord. Rebuke the spirit of loneliness. Bless and protect Carrie Cutlip, the brave Pepsi indian who has captured my respect and friendship. Thank you, Lord, for her wisdom, insight, intelligence, and honesty. Please Lord, pour your spirit in abundance to my mom, Bible scholar, writer, teacher Grace Kemp. Thank you for her unselfishness and her heart for you! Thank you, Jesus! Amen. :-)

Saturday, November 18, 3:30 p.m.

This morning, Kim picked me up and we drove to Farmer's Girl, a homestyle restaurant on Dixie to meet dad and his new object de desire. The woman, Helena, spoke splintered English weighed down by a Polish accent. Physically, she had short hair, blue eyes, a pretty face, large breasts and a nice figure. She dressed hip, wearing Capri's--those pants that end tightly above the ankles, and a clean white blouse. Conversationally, even though she spoke broken English, she was sweet, kind, and enjoyable company. She's from Poland and has the refined confidence that's common to European ladies, a kind of dignified tranquility, a sort of steadiness that's not often seen in the mannerisms of American women. Overall, she seems terrific.

Although the breakfast was tasty and authentic, the whole hour was sad, another worn page of dad's life to reenacted over the common denominator of food. Restaurants are the real equalizers of this world. You don't have the unction, or urge, to argue when your mouth is full. And after you eat, the blood leaves the brain to digest the food, so you lose the ability, along with the skill, to reason. Groaning while you loosen your belt buckle, you suffer the effects of a food coma. Breakfast with Michael Kemp and Helena passed as another moment witnessing the funeral, the procession of Michael's folly and the memories of those left in, or even at, his wake. The only thing real was the orange juice. Even the laughter sounded canned.

Around 10:45 a.m, I arrive home. Earlier last night, I had called Krissy, Kyle, and Ann to see if they'd be interested in holding Jesus signs at the protest on the corner of Southern and Military. Ann and Kyle had to work. Krissy agreed to meet me at the warehouse, the Unarmed Underground Art Center where I lived, between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m.. Around 10:50, Krissy arrives. We talk for a while. Krissy's having mixed feelings concerning her living situation. She's waffling between wanting to bail and staying, even though she thinks moving would be a better choice. We draw up a pro and con list. She fills it out while I make two phone calls. Then we pray, grab a tote bag full of Gospel tracts, and leave.

Krissy Iverson is beautiful. She is stunning: bright eyes (blue-green), red, red lips that part to reveal a beautiful smile, a lovely neck that her head rests on and reminds me of a curious bird. She has beautiful shoulders, arms, legs, butt, breasts. Physically,

she has a gorgeous figure. I want to hug and kiss her and hold her, but she is not attracted to me physically. Although she did say: "I love your brain." Oh well. She is lovely. So, I'm left behind this glass wall of admiration and fondness, half awake feelings pushed to the back of the stove, on a continuous low burn. Yes, I kissed her on the cheek, buried my head in her hair, but she says: "Kris, Kris, stop." And then I apologize and retract. Praise the Lord for unrequited fondness! I'll deal with it. I'll try to deal with it, anyway.

Krissy and I arrive at Gunclub Plaza and park the car. I grab a gallon of distilled water, signs, tracts, and jaunt across the street. For the first fifteen minutes, we held signs. Then we walked to the media area, left our signs at the gate, and walked around. We returned to the group, continuing to hold signs. Mel arrived. She was handing out flyers to raise consciousness and public awareness that, whoever wins the elections, both candidates are corporate owned. An elderly black couple strolled by. "That's the best sign I've seen all day," the gentleman commented. "Your sign rocks," said another sign carrier.

Mel borrowed Krissy to hand out fliers in the media camp. When Krissy returned twenty minutes later, she wanted to go. "It's hot," she complained. At the car, a lady, after I handed her a tract, asked to take our picture. We posed. She shot. Before jumping in the car, Krissy suggests I hand a tract to a short haired photographer that's nearby. I approach her and offer her a tract. She takes it, looks it over, reads the back, and asks where Rock Church is located. I give her directions. She mentions she'll try to come tonight or tomorrow. Returning to the car, I offer a prayer of thanks. Then, we head home.

Praise The Lord! :-)

Thank you for Krissy Iverson, Lord. Show her that she is meaningful. Use her, Lord, for your purpose, and protect her, Lord. Give her focus and a passion for you. Thank you, Jesus. Amen. Praise the Lord for Krissy Iverson! :-)

Sunday, November 19, 2000, 10:18 p.m.

Awoke early. Showered. Style gel my hair back. Drive to Publix off of PGA Boulevard. Bought red, seedless grapes. Head to church. Read Bible, prayed while waiting (I was early) for someone to arrive with keys to open the door. Melissa Shuttleroe (PBAC student, missionary, guitarist) wheels around, white car, PBAC sticker on back. Jonathon (one of the lead guitarists) and Francis (his mom) arrive. Then Bill Shea (vocalist and acoustic guitar, worship leader), Liz and Michelle (two PBAC students who sing with sweet voices) arrive.

The worship was blessed. Thank you Jesus!!! The last couple of songs, everyone stood at the front of the altar, and hopped and danced. Bill (vocals/guitar), Chris (bassist), Jonathon (lead guitar), Michelle (vocalist), and Liz (vocalist) are truly being used by God ... PRAISE JESUS! :-)

During the message, my unsettled mind began packing for destinations unknown.

Although I tried to focus, my efforts, for the most part, proved fruitless. A prayer of salvation closed Pastor Mike's teaching, followed by the song "You're so good to me". Again, people moved closer to the altar and danced. Praise the Lord! How encouraging! Thank you Jesus. Krissy Iverson looked soooooo cute. What a doll. That girl is beautiful. She has such a sparkle, on the inside and on the outside.

After church, I asked Ann Powell if she wanted to join me for a chinese buffett lunch, "only \$6 bucks, a great deal" I boasted. She rallied the crowd and no one expressed interest. Outside, walking with her, Kyle called me from his car. I jogged over. He invited us to pass out "Surf Nite" fliers at the beach. Surf Nite was Pastor Mike Toby's idea to show surf movies, play surf music, have snacks and drinks in order to lure a surfers to Rock Church. The night would end with a small sermon and an altar call. It's a cool idea.

"You wanna go pass out fliers instead?" I asked Ann.

"I can't," she replied. "I have to get some rest."

"Do you mind if I skip Chinese?" I asked her.

"No problem," she smiled. "Go witness."

We said goodbyes, I prayed that she'd have a good sleep, then she left.

Kyle and I visited three beaches. I handed out fliers at the last one with him. the first two beaches, I highlighted the flier, specifically over the directions, times, dates, and logo of Surf Nite. For lunch, Kyle stopped by Publix and grabbed a sub. I purchased a tub of tabouli, a tomato, and grapes. Sitting in a booth inside the store, we prayed out loud, intensely, before eating. Feeling an impulse to speak to the Publix employee that sat near us on his break, I turned to him and asked: "Do you go to church?"

"Yes," he answered. "I got to Saint Ann's Catholic Church. I like it."

I look at him directly through his thick glasses. "Cool," I managed to lie. It's not cool, I'm thinking. "Cool," I lie again, then turn to Kyle. Feeling compelled to cut to the heart of my concern, I turn again to the Publix employee.

"Have you ever accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" I ask.

"I don't want to talk about it," he says in a deadpan. "You go to your church. I go to my church."

I searched for any opening, looking into his eyes to see if the window was left slightly ajar, but found none.

"I don't want to talk about it," he repeated gruffly.

I turned back to Kyle. We prayed, ate some more. Then, overwhelmed with some kind of sadness, pity, concern, fear, I bowed my head and prayed silently. When I

looked up, Kyle was doing the same. Praise the Lord! :-)

After Publix, we drove down the street. Kyle honked his horn.

"I know that person in the car ahead," he smiled. "I wanna give her a flyer." The car turned down the street. He continued following it. "I used to surf with her brother, Walczak." The car stopped. Kyle stopped behind it, got out and approached the passengers. I followed him.

"I know Stephanie Walczak. Is that who you're talking about?" I asked.

"Yeah, Stephanie," he answered.

(Stephanie Walczak is a friend of mine that I used to know from 1995 to 1996. She worked as a cocktail waitress at Respectable Street Cafe and I worked there as a busboy. We used to hang out, talk, ride bicycles. When I published the FLO, a small zine, I photographed her and put her picture on the cover for a special "Tragedy & Fashion" issue. She's a really nice girl, dramatic and fun. She's mentioned in my journal bicycle days.)

Kyle approached the window and leaned inside. I arrived at the window and saw Stephanie and met her friend, Graham on the passenger side. Steph's hair looked cool as usual, cropped, blonde, chops of hair. As ever, she looked cute, squirrel eyed, pale and adorable.

"We're looking for a place to rent, a house, cuz we have so much stuff. It's so fucking annoying. We had to get a 17-foot truck to put it all in," Stephanie sighs in exasperation. Invisible cigarettes, butterflys escaping from every gesture, anxieties spilling out from spoons, mercury splashed the bloor of favorite rooms in best friends houses.

Kyle invites Stephanie and Graham to Surf Nite. I told Stephanie about knowing God, how awesome it is to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Kyle and I said our goodbyes, then drove to church.

"God is sooo awesome," I blurted. "I've known that girl a long time ago. I've been trying to witness to her."

Praise you, Jesus! And Kyle knows her as well. It's no coincidence that Kyle knew Rodney Mayo and that he knows Stephanie Walczak. How beautiful it is that Kyle knew both Stephanie and Rodney when he was carrying burdens of sin and living in the world while wallowing in his sin without knowing, accepting, believing, and receiving the goodness of God. What's more beautiful is that, now that he is a Christian, Rodney and Stephanie have seen him as a new creation in Christ.

Use Kyle, Lord Jesus. Thank you for letting non Christians (I think) like Rodney Mayo and Stephanie Walczak witness the metamorphis Kyle has experienced, a

beautiful change, transformation from death to life.

I LOVE YOU, JESUS!!!!!! :-)

PRAISE THE LORD!!!! :-)

We arrived at the church at 4:50 pm, cool since we were supposed to be there at 5pm to help set up for Surf Nite. I visit Pastor Mike's office to read an article in the New York Post. The article is called "Sabotage", a story about the Democrats manipulation of the voting system, basically recounting the votes until they can elect Gore, the crook, as the president. What a sad country we live in. PRAISE THE LORD!!!!!! :-)

Around 6-ish, a group arrives at the church. Among them are friends, acquaintances and strangers, including: Ann, Steve (PBAC'er, missionary), Maryla (a Denny's waitress who had received Jesus as her savior after being invited to church--PRAISE GOD! :-), and now attends Rock Church), several others whose names I promptly forget. We all gathered together, many bowing or sitting crosslegged, and prayed in the church office. They left, but Ann and I stayed to pray some more. After a few minutes, we returned to the church and smiled at what we saw. About 100 to 150 people were milling about. Praise the Lord! :-) Kyle, Jana, Pastor Mike, Cara, Ann and others, including myself, filed into a room and prayed for about 10 minutes, for God to anoint us, to save souls, reach the lost. After petitioning the Lord for fertile hearts, we thanked God for the wonderful opportunity to share His Love.

Joe Hamilton, the guy who runs the church, knocked at door. "There about to start," he said, referring to Freeway 7, a Christian band assembled on the stage. Feeling like a group of undercover operatives that were sent to infiltrate the people at a local concert, we emptied from the room and dispersed into the crowd, taking positions, most of us, on the floor. I sat beside Bill Shea and Cara. Bill is friendly and genuinely nice. Cara's shy and more on the quiet side.

Freeway 7 was okay. Two guitars, a bass, a drummer. They played 4-piece rock with a punk-flavored edge while surf videos played on the screen behind them.

Krissy Iverson sat with Beleau, a friend she brought with her. Krissy, as usual, looked adorable. I just wanted to put a pillow in a shopping cart, gently place her inside the cart, then push her the aisles of America, and call it a day. She is stunning, wonderous like a child, curious eyes--open milkfilled spoons waiting for cereal, bits of explanation ... a month of butterflies couldn't begin to describe her gestures, her hands, strong with fragile, graceful wrists, and her brillo-like hair knotted to her head, resting birdlike atop her long neck, like a child that peeks around the corner to catch the latest gift under the Christmas tree.

While watching Freeway 7, I sat with Bill and Cara. "I wanna start a band," Bill confessed. "I was in a band five years ago," he mused, "with a really good keyboardist. We made a tape. It sounded really good."

"Do you still have the tape?" I asked.

"Yeah," he said. "I'll try to find it. I think you'll like it. Jannel, this girl who used to play keyboard at church, is gonna drop they keyboard at my house. Then you can come by and pick it up."

"Cool. Thanks Bill."

PRAISE THE LORD!

After several bands played, three surfers took the stage, one by one, to talk about their relationship with Jesus Christ. Then Pastor Mike led a prayer of salvation. Judging from the hugs and attention that he received following the prayer, I suspect that this new guy accepted Christ. PRAISE THE LORD! Thank you, Jesus. :-) Love kris.

PRAISE THE LORD!

Have you ever felt too guilty to be alive.

Wednesday, November 22, 7:01 p.m., 2000

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving. Praise God! Called Krissy earlier. One of her roomies said she may be sick. "She was sick earlier. She might be in her room, but she's not answering. I'll leave her a message."

Last night, Pastor Mike, Jana, and I explored a golf course in Jupiter. How cool. Apparently, membership to this course is \$200,000 and pastor Mike has never seen one person on it. We ran around, hugged, prayed, chatted. Cool night. Pastor Mike is downright fun. He's so kind hearted. Dear Lord, help Pastor Mike see that he is valuable and needed by many people, and valuable to many people. Equip him, Lord, if it's your will, for the service to which he has been called. Thank you, Jesus. Amen. :-)

And Dear Jesus, help Krissy figure out a living situation. Flood her mind with visions of you, feelings of peace. Allow her the true peace that knowing you provides, Lord Jesus. Thank you, Lord! In Jesus name, Amen. :-) Praise God!!!

I just returned from Carrie's apartment. She's excited, since she managed to get Marcus' band an opening spot for Mark Summer's band (Mark Summer is a deejay at the Buzz 103.1 FM) at the opening of The Cage, an alternative music club.

Carrie's so smart. The smartest girl I know. I love that girl. I always will. She is beautiful, too, inside and outside. A modern day Shirley Temple, a lot more streetwise, yet not hardened by scenarios played out on sidewalks, only more wise because of her experience. That's Carrie Cutlip, modern day Pepsi-indian, brave, full of courage, yet fragile and sympathetic, a person who feels in a world that thinks too much and feels too little, one of a kind, unique, butterflies come pouring from each

smile that she reveals. Praise the Lord for Carrie Cutlip. My lightbulb would only be 60 watt if I had not met her, dim with each object revealing less details. Carrie helps you remember the beauty of each moment. "Snapshots of our life developed in the darkroom of our mind." - My own version of Tom Moynihan's poem. :-) Praise the Lord!

Tuesday, November 28, 2000

Last night (Monday night), Pastor Mike, Cara, Carla, Jana, Ann Powel, Nancy, Lizzy, Kyle Cohen, Adam, Joey (PBAC security guard), Stacy, Jim Gumbus, and myself (and perhaps 2 or 3 more) had a prayer and praise meeting. Incredible. God - YOU ARE AWESOME!!!!!! At one point, lifting my hands in the air, I felt a voice saying "higher" and I lifted them higher and felt angels, one on each hand, moving them even higher ... Praise God!!!!!!!

Krissy Iverson just dropped by with her friend Kim, a former roommate of hers from Lakeland, who's now again at PBAC. In one hand, Krissy had two packages of bagels. In the other, she had a bag of Cheetos. "I came by to drop off dumpster food," she announced, brightly smiling. "Thanks, awww," I cooed, hugging her. Krissy is so nice!

Dear Lord, thank you for Krissy. Thank you for her kindness! Bless her, Lord! Bless her with joy, peace, security, restful sleep, and if it's your will, God, bless her with a terrific husband who loves her and appreciates her kindness and inner beauty! Praise the Lord!

I'm listening to "Freedom" by Darrell Evans, a tape copied by Andrea at Rock Church. Praise the Lord! Thank you, Andrea! Great tape! Cool! :-)

Friday, November 29

Sometimes I rush headlong into spaces foreign to who I am.

I think, of all the times I can remember, I just experienced an amazing night, probably one of the best nights of my life. And days. Krissy arrived after school, around 1pm'ish. I had written a list of things we could do this afternoon, as she had planned to come over. Earlier in the week, she confessed: "I don't do anything. I just sit around and eat." (She referred to the times of self-inflicted boredom at the Jennings' house, where she rents a room, in Lake Worth. The Jennings house, affectionately known as the Villa de Vulva, is a revolving door for travelling activists, anarchists, hippies and disenfranchised dropouts. Collectively, members of the Villa participate in actions--protests organized to advance social change, usually against corporations that flaunt their power over those that don't have a means to fight that power.) Gearing up for her visit, I had written down a list of things that we could do.

- 1) darkroom work - a semi-finished darkroom was built by Eric, Adam, and I in the fusebox closet of the warehouse
- 2) play keyboard - work on music
- 3) ride bikes
- 4) learn Bible verses
- 5) swing on the vines in the park, walk in the park
- 6) dumpster dive
- 7) pass out tracts / hold Jesus signs
- 8) swim
- 9) ride bikes or buses
- 10) pray, pass out tracts near PBA, about the coffeehouse
- 11) fly kites (that we could buy at the \$1 store) off the Palm Beach inlet dock, north end of Palm Beach
- 12) visit hospitals, nursing homes, passing out cookies, tracts, being a listening ear
- 13) frisbee
- 14) jog the heart trail at the nearby park

So ... Krissy votes to pass out tracts. I grab a big bag of tracts and we drive to Good Samaritan Hospital, hop across the giant marble or stone steps and sail through the front doors.

"I feel like I'm in the 60's," I smile as we enter the cavernous lobby. There, we're greeted by a clerk.

"We're from Rock Church," I announce confidently even though I don't have a clue what will happen next. "We'd like to pass out cookies and Gospel tracts ... "

The clerk listened to our spiel and nodded patiently. "Let me call our PR person," the clerk replied. "Here," she handed Krissy a business card. "Try calling her and explain what you want to do." She placed the phone on the counter.

Krissy dialed the number and left a message, explaining we were in the lobby. Minutes later, the PR person, a firm looking woman, with blonde hair so shiny that it resembles a shoe-polished polymer helmet, appears in the lobby. In a manner that was memorably professional and very sincere, she expressed that our request could not be met. "Sorry," she said. "Unless the cookies are individually packaged with a list of ingredients on each package, they can't be distributed. We have a number of diabetics and patients with special dietary needs. Sorry," she repeated, tilting her head and clasping her hands.

"No problem," we smiled. "Thanks anyway." Leaving, I felt lackadaisical, like Bill Murray in one of his 80's movies after he's rejected, softly, by a potential date candidate. The bottom line is that I tried. At least I tried.

Krissy and I left the overpriced coffin of medical school pill pushers and offered tracts and cookies to the individuals outside. "Praise the Lord!" We shouted. The cookies brought a sugar rush. The tracts brought the message of The Gospel. Hyper and refusing to be deflated by the rejection from the hospital, we drove back to the

UUAC (Unarmed Underground Art Center), hamster-crib-cage, cubbyhole for the leftover generation. Undaunted, I flipped through the Yellow Pages and called nursing homes. "No, no, but thanks," they all replied. After being turned down from every nursing home we called, I gave Krissy the list of options. "Look them over. What do you wanna do?"

"Let's ride buses," she smiled eagerly, her eyes campfires, her hair begging to be stroked. She's radiant, I'm thinking. In her presence, I'm reduced to rubble, devastated by every gesture, ruined by every glance. It's useless. I know I shouldn't put her on a pedestal. It's useless, though.

We left the warehouse, taking the tracts with us, and walked south on Dixie, sitting at a bus stop near Proctor's. The bus arrived and we stepped inside.

"I don't have change for a twenty," the bus driver commented. "But stay. I'm stopping at Cumberland Farms to go to the bathroom. I'll get change there."

By the time the bus parked at Cumberland Farms, Krissy and I had passed out tracts-with-candies-attached-to-them to every passenger who would take one. No one complained. One guy in the back asked for ten of them, saying, "There's ten people in my complex that need to read these."

"Can I pray for you, that God would soften the hearts of the people you're going to give these to?" I asked him.

"That would be fine," he replied. "That would be nice."

So, I crouch down beside him in the back of the bus, lay my left hand on his shoulder, raise my right hand in the air, and pray that God will go ahead of this witness to soften the hearts of those that will receive this message. The bus rumbled along, bouncing up and down as it continued south on Dixie.

Praise the Lord! The bus was packed, too. Praise God. While the bus driver was in Cumberland Farms, Krissy and I jumped off the bus and walked to Goodwill, the thrift store, across the street. "Let's check out the dumpster in back," Krissy suggested with a mischievous grin. It was behind a fence, so we decided to skip it. Instead, we jumped the wall behind Goodwill and trekked along Olive, roaming north until we found a street that led to Flagler. At Flagler, there was more pedestrian traffic--people walking, pushing baby carriages, rollerbladers, skaters. We wandered along the wide sidewalk, passing out cookies, tracts, sometimes both. On the way back to Olive, Krissy ran into a friend from school who was pushing a baby carriage. She explained that she was a Christian but the people she was babysitting for were not. Krissy gave her a cookie. Then we prayed that the family she worked for would come to know Jesus Christ. We continued up Flagler, passing tracts and running into a Catholic lady that believed "all roads lead to God, as long as your sincere in your belief." Krissy smiled. I did not. Instead, I quoted Scripture, John 14:6 and some others. The lady became annoyed, then left. Krissy said that she looked unhappy anyway, as if something was wrong, despite our conversation. As it was getting dark and we had

been at it for a couple of hours, we returned to the Unarmed Underground Art Center, went to my room and prayed. Krissy wrote some verses down and borrowed a book on depression. I gave her an NIV (New International Version) Bible. Then she left.

About a half hour later, Alan peeks his head in my room. He's petite with boyish good looks and big blue eyes that look so innocent whenever he asks a question that you'd have a hard time turning him down.

"Hey Kemp, howsabout givin me a ride?" He asks

"Sure."

"I needa go to Lake Worth, to see a puppet show, to review it for a possible performance here at the hut. Maybe in half an hour, huh?"

"Sure. No problem, Alan."

On the way there, Alan, slightly drunk, revealed the latest gossip about his life among the artists at the hut, the giant warehouse where we live. He's an interesting talker, deciphering clues to human nature in a humorous, analytical manner. At Lake Avenue, Lake Worth's main drag, I dropped him off, then drove to the Villa to see if anyone wanted to join us. Krissy Iverson was the only one there. She was wearing cutoff denim shorts that were so short as to show her butt cheeks or panties whenever she moved her legs.

"Everyone's away," she said. "I'll go."

"You really need to put on some jeans. Seriously. You're flashing everyone when you move your legs, Krissy." I admonished. "You're sexy enough, Krissy, all ready. Please guard yourself," I cautioned. "You expose everything in those shorts."

She changed into jeans and we drove to the coffeehouse.

"Hey!" Krissy yells to a friend.

"Go visit your friend while I park," I suggested.

I park, then go to the house where Krissy's at. It turns out the friend was looking for a roommate in downtown Lake Worth. PRAISE the Lord!!!! Because Krissy is looking for another place to live. Krissy was ecstatic. God is so in control! We said a prayer of thanksgiving, then walked to the coffeehouse to join Alan and watch the puppet show. The show was okay. Alan was drinking Merlot, laughing in a wild cackle, and yelling "Bravo! Bravo!" I felt like an actor in an independent movie about artists in the post-00 years.

Tuesday, December 12, 2001

Yesterday evening, I called Krissy and asked if she could give me a ride to a church

prayer/praise meeting.

"Yes, but I just got in and I'm eating, so I won't be there at seven," she said.

"That's cool. I'll be here, waiting out front."

Church was cool. Pastor Mike, Kelton, Carla, Cara, Nancy, Cathy Simcich, Francis, Terry, Krissy and myself were there. Pastor Mike had dimmed the lights, then put some CD's of Christian praise & worship music in, and cranked the volume. We danced, praised the Lord, prayed. After singing, Pastor Mike cut the music, sat the stage, and played his acoustic guitar. We prayed and laid hands on Carla.

Carla is this blonde haired PBAC student that plans to do some missions work. She has a cool voice, it sounds like a little kid. She kind of chews her words when she speaks. It's so adorable. When she speaks, I turn into butter. It melts me.

At around 11pm, Pastor Mike needed to talk with Nancy, so Krissy and I went to Pastor Mike's office to leave them alone. We sat at the conference table, just the two of us. Here, I decided to tell Krissy Iverson how I felt about her. Here, I would lay all my feelings for her on the table. Here, the dam would break. I asked her: "How much do you want to know?" I referred to the hints that I had left in front of her, clues to my feelings for her.

"Okay," Krissy replies. "Tell me everything."

I did. I told her how I'm attracted to her physically and was falling in love with her for her personality as well. I confessed that in the course of hanging out with her, I was really falling hard, but didn't want to ruin a friendship if she didn't reciprocate these feelings. Then I asked her how she felt about me.

"I love your mind," she began. "And your creativity. I think you're an awesome person. But I'm not attracted to you physically. I never want to lose our friendship."

"Right on," I said.

Oh well.

Saturday night, 11:57 p.m., December 16, 2001

I am blown away with how much grace The Lord Jesus Christ floods me with. He's so good to me, despite my incongruent behavior.

Candice Murphy, an artist here that paints and sculpts, had planned to join me for breakfast at HoJo's, a \$2.99 breakfast, but she was fast asleep. So I visited Dunkin Donuts for an everything bagel with cream cheese and a hot tea with cream for \$2 bucks and change, then roamed around Goodwill. There, I found nice mugs for my Christian coffeehouse plan and chatted with Francis, an overweight woman who wanted relief from the symptoms of the medication she was taking. I got her business

card and plan to call her tomorrow. Also, I gave her diet information. (I did call her the next day, but she didn't return my phone call. This is usually the case with prospective clients--they're afraid to make a change for the better, no matter how beneficial.)

Worship at church was cool. Afterward, I spoke with two PBA'ers that wanted to go evangelize. It turns out one of them, his name was Jay, was a roommate with Darrell Evans (Christian worship leader) harmonica player. Imagine that! Then Jay says: "I spoke with him yesterday. He's planning on coming to Florida to play some small gigs at churches." Praise God!!

Jay seems really nice. He's a tall, good looking fellow that assistant coaches the basketball team at PBAC. Judging from my first time meeting him, he is genuine.

Thank you Jesus! My car broke down, overheated, "will not turn over". It's parked on the east side of I-95 between Northlake and PGA. Praise God! Melissa Shuttleroe drove me to look at it after church, then dropped me home. The blessing of where I live, the warehouse, is its proximity to Palm Beach Atlantic College, so I can get rides from the students to and from church.

December 25, Monday, 2000

Henry, a gentleman mechanic that lives in his faded maroon VW bus, took a look at my car. He's changing the battery and will update me of the cars status. I gave him \$20 bucks. He agreed to get it all checked out. Praise God! Dear Lord Jesus, bless Henry for his kindness in helping to fix my car for such an inexpensive price. Amen.

Because Gina Kemp, my brother's wife, had to work yesterday, our family celebrated Christmas gift opening and eating at Kim's house yesterday, Sunday morning. Kim Kemp is such a blessing! She is so freaking talented and gifted. How so? In her gift selection, she is abundantly creative, ferociously eclectic, horribly adventurous. The colors of her dreams surface in her decorating skills, an array of post modern, Victorian loungecore and musted pastel aesthetics. The girl's gifted, blessed. Only if she could see herself from the outside, as others who value her, like myself, do. Regardless of my words of encouragement to Kim, or anyone else for that matter, these verbal softballs will continue to plummet to the ground, unable to be caught, then held in the nest of gloves whose pocket is familiar enough to accomodate such compliments. What a shame. Kim would need, I think, to hear the compliment from someone who is more sparse in his acessment of the human condition. Oh well. Praise The Lord!

It's 10:25. You're 31 years old. You are a Christian. You live in a warehouse. You've spent the last six hours eating, talking, opening and giving gifts to others in this "area 51 of the arts scene" (as the Palm Beach Post described this place in a newspaper article) of West Palm Beach, Florida.

To be honest, it's a lonely crowd. Am I lonely? No. Not really. I do not, at all times,

keep the closet door fastened shut in order to hide the realities of loneliness while he is so near. But at times, talking to these same artists, repeating the lines in this weatherbeaten screenplay we call tactfulness, kindly listening to their concluding words or gestures for my cue, experiencing a downpour of deja vu, I feel loneliness. Sometimes, I would exchange this entire cacaphony of noise for one person to pour myself into, one person to receive things from. When you are a giver, like myself, your view becomes wide. Your perspective becomes a giant rake, wide enough to pick up all the stray leaves and eventually lay them to rest in your bag of projects. Given time, you can fix everyone, mend all the emotional wounds, set all the broken bones, construct crutches for this entire cast of crippled spirits. Every road has potholes when you're looking for them. And you, guilty, needing to be loved, needing to be wanted, needing to be needed, needing to be recognized, needing to be accepted, cannot pass them by. So you stop, throw anchor, and, repeating steps so familiar, begin to mix the cement and pave over the potholes. There's no end to the process.

Dear Lord, help me to do things for YOU only. Allow my life to be used for Your glory, Lord Jesus. Praise You, Lord. Thank You, Jesus. Amen.

December 26, Tuesday 2000, 11:45 p.m.

Joey Patrusевич, Alan's son, Candice, the artist, Tony, an actor who's been in some of the plays we've staged at the warehouse, and me (kris kemp), who organizes FLO Film Fest and helps construct studio space here, went to Trail Drive Inn on Lake Worth Road to see "The Grinch". Initially, we thought the movie would be the original, animated one. However, it turned out to be the recent adaptation with megastar Jim Carrey. The movie was tedious--a lonely journey about the Grinch, his reasons for resenting Christmas and how, through the tender action of a young girl, he finds the silver lining in humanity again.

Whatever.

About 20 or 30 minutes into the movie, the young girl sings a song. I breakdanced on the asphalt parking lot. Joey, Candice, and Tony enjoyed that. They were laughing. Besides us, there was only about five or six cars there. I like this drive inn. The snacks are cheap. Sitting there, watching the movie, I felt like I was in an early 80's afterschool special about teen boredom in a small town.

Now, Joey's in my room on the internet.

Look at me. Look at me.

Praise the Lord! Hallelujah.

March 16, Friday

Life is wonderful.

Cinda, Josh and I went witnessing last night. But let's back up ...

Initially, Josh and I met at the PBAC basketball courts, just south of the Greene Complex. There, we spoke with some girls (high schoolers) sitting on the sidelines watching two guys play basketball.

"What about evolution?" One of them asked. "There's all this proof!"

"What proof?" Josh countered. "Show me the evidence."

We talked some more. I gave them a Refuge Coffeehouse flier. Refuge is a Christian coffeehouse that I organize at the warehouse on Tuesday evening's. Usually, we have live Christian music involving acoustic guitar or keyboard, a 10 minute mini-sermon by me, or a testimony from someone else, prayer, drama, and interactive games.

After talking with the high schoolers, Josh helped me lock my bike to a nearby fence (the U lock kept jamming, I had trouble locking it). Then we climbed into Josh's Honda civic and cruised to Rapallo South to pick up Cinda.

We asked the lobby guy to page her. He did. While waiting for her, Josh and I prayed. The elevator doors opened and Cinda appears, an attractive brunette that looked like she had just gotten out of a time machine from the 1950's--very cool. She wore white hose, pumps, and a tight green dress. Overall, she looked like a Mennonite with a small amount of makeup. Very cool. I liked this girl already.

"Hey, I know you," I started. "I saw you at Palm Beach, passing out Gospel tracts. You're awesome." I complimented. "You were talking to these two guys, then asked me if I'd talk to them. So I did."

We decided to take two cars. Cinda's car is radical! It's covered with magnetic signs with Bible verses that preach The Gospel and pictures of Heaven and Hell. Good stuff! I can't believe I'm meeting someone so cool. What a privilege! Hallelujah!

Downtown was packed, as it was a Thursday night. I rode in Josh's car. Cinda followed.

"Man, I don't know what this is," I expressed to Josh while he navigated his car through the crowd of pedestrians, "but I've been having a sinking feeling about this all day."

"Why don't we pray," Josh suggested. We did. On the way to find a parking space, Josh put in a CD called Cloud2ground. The music was incredible: Christian techno, jungle, ambient. Whoa. I've gotta get this CD.

After parking, Cinda, Josh and I walked downstairs from the parking garage and headed toward the fountain at the end of Clematis Street. Cinda looked like an extra from the "Little House on the Prairie" TV show. Josh, dressed in baggy pants, a tight

fitting T-shirt, with gelled hair and an eager crazy smile, looked like a kid on his way to a rave. I wore my usual uniform, black Honchos with no socks (Honchos are oil-resistant, non-slip shoes favored by cooks and people that work in restaurants), baggy khaki shorts, loose black T-shirt, unwashed hair that curled up in greasy clumps, threatening to become dreads unless it was washed with shampoo soon. Near the fountain, a drum circle was in full swing ... lots of youth, banging hands, girls spinning in the open area in the center. Cinda has an enormous bag of tracts and immediately starts offering them to the kids, sitting ducks for her shooting gallery, slow moving targets for our quest to save souls. Josh goes over to a group and starts talking to them. I begin to pass out tracts, joining this wild, evangelistic carnival, losing myself in the noisy whirl that surrounds me.

I think about all these people--kids, teens, young adults, adults, parents, daughters, sons, dads--as they roam the streets, enjoying a cool December night in Florida. They seem happy enough, enjoying pizza, conversation, coffee, ice cream, holding the hands of their loved ones, others scouting for a potential mate. Do they know God? Do they think about death, Heaven, Hell? The irony of living is that the majority of people, it seems, spend so little time thinking about, or preparing for, death. Instead, they surround themselves with friends, distractions, and material acquisitions. It's been said, 'You can't take it with you', but it seems as if we all die trying.

I think about the number of Christians that I have met downtown, in bars, holding court with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Perhaps they're enjoying a night out, relieving stress with a well deserved beer. But is this where a Christian, a follower of Christ, should be? In a bar, drinking, smoking, listening to ungodly music, rubbing shoulders with the world? No wonder this world isn't convinced by Christianity, if Christians are living like the world. Who can blame them? Worldly Christians will be resented by non-Christians who lambast Christianity as a licence to wallow in sin, then use the salvation ticket to enter Heaven once death happens. Many Christians in the west don't share the same passion for Christ as the Christians in persecuted nations, who have their lives at stake for their decision to follow Christ. Raise the stakes and you raise the commitment level.

Jesus Christ does not need a large number of people to make a dent in The Kingdom of Heaven. How many disciples did He have? Twelve?

Still, the question comes down to you. What am I living for? Who am I living for? What am I going to do with the great commission? It's called the great commission for a reason. Many shuffle it under the rug of their excuses, arguing that spreading The Gospel is not their ministry. Through their actions, they change the message to the great omission.

"Friendship with the world is enmity with God." "A man cannot serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other, or love the one and hate the other."

As many dismissed the offer to hear about The Gospel story, I began to get discouraged. Still, most people accepted the tracts. After an hour, I found Cinda and Josh and told them I was going to start putting the tracts on windshields. Walking

along the street, I headed west on the north side of Clematis, placing tracts under car windshields. I reached the end of the 400 block and took a deep breath, preparing myself for familiar territory--the 500 block, west of the railroad tracks, a kind of second home to me when I published the FLO zine and organized Cinema Refuse in the now defunct Speakeasy's pub. Crossing the street, I continued to pepper cars. In front of O'Sheas, I spotted Joel Kelly's older brother sitting in a plastic chair at a plastic table.

"What have you got there?" He asked, eyeing me tiredly.

"Gospel tracts. Take one." I answered cautiously.

"You used to do great things," he said flatly, referring to FLO Film Fest, Philosophy Night, Cinema Refuse, the FLO 'zine and a number of other art projects that I organized.

Ouch, that hurt, I thought to myself. His words rang in my head, like the echoes of a lone spelunker that's lost his way. They were left unanswered.

"Well," I explained. "I found something to do that gives me real joy."

Inside, though, I felt wounded.

"You don't really believe all that, do you?" He pointed at the tract.

"Yes. I do. This world is not worth living for. The next one is. Make sure it's Heaven."

I continued to the 700 block of Clematis, then crossed the street toward the south side, turned around, and began heading back, hitting cars. At the post office, I saw a guy approaching. It was Josh. We sat down at the curb. There, we talked and prayed for a while. I expressed my discouragement, and even wept a little for those that reject the free Gift of God's Love--Salvation. What a shame--to dismiss The Greatest Gift ever offered. After praying, we walked back to the fountain, met with Cinda, continued passing out tracts, prayed, and joined Josh as he talked with some young people. As a few hours had passed since we arrived, we walked Cinda her car in the parking garage, and said goodbye. We arrived 9:30 p.m. and left at 12:30 a.m. Josh only had a credit card for the parking attendant (Banyan & Narcissus), so she let us slide on the \$4 dollar charge. Free. Praise God! He drove me back to the PBAC basketball courts where my bike was parked. The U-lock was off, and the bike sat halfway down the pole. Cool! It must've not been locked properly and came undone. At least it wasn't stolen. Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus! You're awesome!

March 16, Friday

It's 12:30. Krissy Iverson just dropped by with corn, avacados, oranges. Earier, I called her, asking if she could bring by any produce. She said she'd bring some over.

She's a really nice girl. Tonight, she's busy, but said she wants to hang out. "I'll see you Sunday, at church," she waved. "My friend works at John G's, so we won't have to wait in line," she explained.

"Cool," I yelled. "We'll go." She is such a nice girl. I hope we get a chance to talk.

April 1, Sunday 2001, 12 a.m.

I've experienced the most incredible weekend. Friday, Krissy Iverson called to tell me that PBAC's Spring Formal is that night--Friday. She arrived to pick me up. Wow. She looked stunning. Her hair was wrapped into a tight ball behind her head. She was dressed in a lovely, light blue gown, silver shoes, beautiful necklace. She even wore a scarf-shawl type thing. We drove to City Place to the Hillman Theatre, parked, rode the elevator, held hands, entered the mammoth building. (As I've never been to high school prom, this was a cool feeling. The bonus is that Krissy and I are friends, so there's none of that nervous expectation at the end of the night like who's going to initiate the kiss or whatever. Very cool.)

Sifting through the crowd of well dressed college students, we found a table with four unoccupied seats and asked if we could sit down. Sure, a guy said. We sat down and chatted with the couple beside us, then devoured the caesar salads before us. The salads were delicious, so tasty in fact that we decided to eat the other two salads that sat lonely in front of the two empty seats beside us. Later, however, Sara Ann and her friend Kaly sat down.

"Did we get a salad here?" Kaly asked.

Uh oh. Krissy and I looked at each other and shared a secret smile.

"Yes. Umm ... I ate it. I'm sorry."

Kaly laughed. "It's okay," she smiled.

After eating, Krissy and I and Deanna, this supercool girl that goes witnessing with us downtown sometimes who was wearing this medieval looking princess type outfit, walked to the dance floor.

"We'll be the first ones to dance," I laughed, slightly nervous at the prospect but happy to have my two friends, both girls, accompany me. At worst, we would provide a memorable spectacle for the well fed crowd of college kids. At best, we would encourage them to dance. If you're going to look foolish, make it worth remembering.

Once we hit the dance floor, it was all over. The three of us--Deanna, Krissy, and myself--went spastic. I twirled and ran in circles, smiling at the staring sea of faces as they looked at us dumbfounded. Krissy and I danced like maniacs, combining 70's disco moves with 80's pop gestures. Deanna spun around and kicked up her dress,

like an 80's styled punk rocker with rhythm. Everyone stared at us--the people at the tables on the outskirts of the dance floor and those on the balcony. As I glanced up, I noticed people surrounding the balcony above us to get a better view of these three crazies that danced as if their lives depended on it. Man, this was cool. I even started breakdancing. Some were cheering, others laughed. But our plan worked. A few songs into it, everyone joined us on the dance floor. Praise the Lord. Later, there was a party at Krissy's house. I drank some Mike's Hard Lemonade, about half a bottle. It's this lemonade with some kind of alcohol in it. Then I started deejaying, playing some CD's and scratching a record to it.

I crashed on the floor of Krissy's room. This morning, I went to John G's. Then she dropped me off. She had to do laundry. I needed to do laundry, too. I called the villa and left a message for her to call. She did.

"You want to do laundry at mom's?" I asked. "I'll call her, 'cuz I need to do laundry, too."

"Sure," Krissy agreed. "Call her."

I did. It was cool. Called Krissy back and asked her if she could pick me up. She arrived. I jumped in. We drove to mom's. There, we hung out at Kim's while the laundry was running. Sitting on couches across from each other, we read. At one point, she had been lying on the couch and she pulled me close. Wow. I melted into her wonderful arms. It felt like being home, wherever home is, at least for the moment. Then, later, after exiting the bathroom, she curled up in my lap. Treating her like a lovely cat, I kissed her softly on the neck and shoulder. After about seven to ten minutes, she stood up, then said: "I don't think we should hang out as much as we are."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because I don't want to always feel this way."

She's smart, guarding her heart, and protecting mine. I still love her, though. Maybe, one day, she'll love me, too. I think she does love me, though. Not love me, love me, but love me as a friend, if you know what I mean. She's a nice girl. We have a lot in common. Praise the Lord for the fun weekend. Thank you Krissy Iverson for being born! :-)

April 1, Sunday 3:36 a.m.

Just returned from Respectable Street Cafe, that progressive dance club on Clematis Street. It's a fun club to hide out in, lots of dark corners and mysterious figures wearing black whose faces are lit up whenever they take a drag from their cigarette. The music, though, is iffy. Usually, it's the same batch of alternative pop hits played every weekend. The club, though, is kind of a second home for music fans who and post modern intellectuals, those that read Kafka, Doestovsky, Proust, Thoreau, or

pretend to in any case. I went there with Erin, an artist who's on furlough from Italy. Candice Murphy, the sculpture artist and actress, and Mike Antinori, an actor who she's dating, were there. Christy Browning was there, too. She ran over to greet me, wearing a big smile. "Look what I've been making," she beamed, holding out a picture of a baby. "He's seven months old," she declared. Then she asked what I've been doing. "I organize a Christian coffeehouse every Friday," I told her. "Are you married?" She asked. "No," I smiled.

Now, it's 3:40 a.m. I already miss Krissy Iverson. I feel so lonely for some reason, as if there's lonely energy filling up the space in my room. I just wish Krissy would come over and crawl into bed beside me and I'd put my hand on her shoulder and spoon with her. Someone to sleep beside. I really feel like I need that right now. Maybe it's because she curled up in my lap today at Kim's. Man! Why'd she have to go and do that? I was fine but then she had to remind me of what it feels like when a girl curls up in your lap. Arrrrggggg. Then again, it was nice. She was warm. And, for lack of a better way to describe it, I felt like I was home again. My fingers gently stroked her hair above her forehead, combing away her fears. I cannot describe it. It felt significant, meaningful in a way that surrenders a part of me to comfort someone else. I just want to be there for Krissy Iverson and allay all of her fears. This world seems less cruel when you have someone to share it with, or hide from it with. She's my friend but all these feelings, at least feelings that I have, are coming between us. I feel like I'm being held hostage by my own emotions. Somehow, somehow, she's captured my heart.

April 1, Sunday, 11 p.m.

Early this morning, I returned from Respectables via a ride home after hanging out with Erin, the artist from Italy who's on furlough. Once I arrived at my studio/room, I crashed for maybe two hours before the phone rang. It was Jon Stepp, this incredibly gifted guitarist/singer/songwriter who sometimes led worship at Rock Church. He was outside the warehouse. Slowly, I unloaded my tired body from the bed, threw on some clothes, then call him back, and start to carry my drumset to the front door.

"I got you some breakfast," he smiled, pointing to a Dunkin Donuts bag containing large tea with milk and a sesame seed bagel that was buttered, toasted. A few days before, when he had asked me if I would be available, he had had offered to grab breakfast. I told him specifically what I wanted. It was kind of him to remember. That's what's important to me--the little things. Kindness, consideration, and follow-through cover a multitude of potholes.

For the most part, we were quiet as he drove his SUV to his father's church, a small red-brick building on Olive Boulevard, the first church south of the behemoth First Baptist. There, we unloaded the drumset and greeted Todd and his wife Stacy. Todd's the bassist. It didn't take too long to set up the drums and rehearse for a few minutes before church.

Inside, the church is completely cozy, begging to be used in a scene for an

independent film. A small crowd maneuvered their way inside and took seats toward the front. Judging from their friendly greetings to each other and us, they looked as if they were a dedicated bunch, loyal churchgoers that had attended for years. Jon Stepp's father introduced his son, Jon, then thanked Jon, Todd, and I for coming to play. We played maybe 5 or 6 songs then returned to the pews in the front. Then, an assistant pastor launched into a sermon that was both terrific and hard to remember, probably due to my lack of sleep.

Back at the warehouse, I cleaned my room, then used Pagemaker 6.5, a program for used for publication layout, to create a program for The Tempest, the Shakespeare play that Alan and most of the fellow studio artists/inmates/residents/patients are involved in producing here. Later that night, Alan Patrusевич, the gallery director here, rounded up the motley crew of characters--himself, John, Su Van Excel, Niklas Jennings (playing a mime), Andy Cotter, Candice Murphy, Mike Antinori, some girls to play the fairies, and others, and kicked off the play with a spoken word diatribe about supporting the art scene here in West Palm Beach, Florida. My job during the performance was to play mood music and make sound effects. For that, I set up three keyboards all around me, sat in the middle with a swivel chair, and had the copied script in front of me with music notes beside lines of dialogue, along with descriptive words like "light" or "uncertainty". Each specific scene had its own specific soundtrack. Inbetween scenes, I set the keyboard on a violin sound and played some minor chords in a quick, descending melody. During the storm scene at the beginning of the play, I set the keyboard on a split mode, with the lower keys on "seashore" and the higher keys on "gunshot" effect--which sounded like lightning. The other keyboard was used almost exclusively for Ariel's appearance, played by artist Su Van Excel. As she's given to romantic notions, she played her part well. For Ariel's soliloquy, the keyboard was switched between four different tones: "pearldrops", "warm strings", "brightness", "synth strings". During a melancholy love scene between Ferdinand and Mira, played by Mike Antinori and Candice Murphy, I switched the keyboard to a warm strings tone and played minor chords. Playing the music for the performance was really fun. I felt part of the play, even though I didn't have to remember any lines. About 60, maybe 70, people were in the audience, including Peter, an activist from the villa, and Krissy Iverson, my buddy.

Being a part of a collective, as I live in the hut, the Unarmed Underground Art Centre, the Flamingo Art Studios, the studios ... all names for this collection of makeshift studios and rooms under the roofs of these quonset huts, I feel as if I'm part of something. And that's important. When you have as many goals as I do, it's nice to be part of a group, as they can help you accomplish those goals. I think Krissy Iverson feels the same way. That's why she likes living at the villa. An intentional community, no matter how draining at times, becomes like a second family.

Me, I'll keep littering this world with my birdseed dreams. Some seed will enable birds to continue on their way, after they've stopped to visit the free buffet of my imagination. Other seed will be snatched away by some other critter that sees an opportunity for a free meal. One day, a like minded covey of birds will feast on the seed, refuel, then take flight and change the world. I don't want the credit for doing

anything. I just want to set things in motion and see where they go.

Talking to Krissy Iverson after the play left me feeling sad. I feel like she gets bored easily, and that she trades the flurry of human bodies whom she encounters with the intimacy that can be shared with one person. (That's one of the reasons why I organized FLO Film Fest--it's a way to be intimate with hundreds of strangers and acquaintances for a two-to-three hour period, that I would've otherwise not been able to meet.) But is what get back from friends and roommates equal to what you get back from one person that you pour yourself into? Would you rather pour your heart into 20 cups or one? Dilluted Kool-Aid doesn't taste as good as when it's made using the correct amount of water. I have expressed this to Krissy before, but don't want to chain her sense of freedom. She is only 22 years old.

April 11, Wednesday, 2001

I played drums with Jay Henderson, who plays acoustic guitar and sings, tonight at First Baptist youth group high school ministry. They call it The Basement. It's the first building (2-story) south of First Baptist Church.

This evening, Mark and Lisa joined us in worship. They both go to Palm Beach Atlantic College. Lisa sings. Nice vocals. Mark plays piano, guitar, flute, bongos, drums. Tonight, he played bongos and flute. He plays by ear, is majorly talented, good looking, and very friendly. On bass was Marco, a laconic high school kid. Jay sang and played guitar. He's a good worship leader. He really loves The Lord Jesus Christ, and has a strong presence.

On the way to The Basement, walking with a cymbal in hand, I ran into Lee, Ryan's roommate. We chatted. This summer, he's returning to Boulder, Colorado. He oversees a lawn company.

"I do the repairs for the equipment and visit customers, making sure everything's okay," he explained.

"So you're a troubleshooter," I quipped.

"Yeah," he smiled.

Closer to The Basement, I noticed a shadow approaching quickly from behind, heard footsteps of someone running. Suddenly, I felt long arms around me, hugging me. I turned to see Darby, this sweet surfer girl that attends Rock Church and is a regular at Refuge, a Christian coffeehouse I organize at the warehouse. She was all smiles, bubbly, joyful.

"Hey!" I smiled. "How's everything goin'?"

"Not too good." Her smile disappears. Like a rapidly descending sunset, the sunshine of her eyes descends below the horezontal horizon of her mouth. She went on to say that Stacy, this blond haired girl from Rock Church who used to date Jim Gumbus, a

good looking surfer and lifeguard, was gossiping about her--telling others that Darby was chasing Jim. "But I like him as a friend, that's all." Listening to her express her frustration, I have a hard time believing that she's so upset about mere gossip. But I do my best to sympathize and nod politely. She finishes her lament and asks for advice.

I laugh. "Don't worry about naysayers," I chuckle. "It's just talk. And talk is like hot air for a hot air balloon. The balloon, in the end, is gonna go somewhere. But you don't have to get in the basket."

She laughed, thanked me, gave me a hug, and split.

Monday, two days ago, I had just showered, dressed, and stepped in my room to see Krissy Iverson sitting at my desk, using the computer. I began rubbing her shoulders and stroking her beautiful mane. My hand moved toward her belly and up toward her breasts. She was not wearing a bra, which I had suspected as I could see the outline of her breasts against her shirt. I moved my hand across her bare curves. She has beautiful breasts. I overstepped my boundaries, even sliding up her shirt and placing my mouth on her nipples and licking them. I was out of control. I couldn't stop myself. I was like an animal, slowly invading the boundaries of someone else's property, marking territory that was not my own.

"Kris," she whispered. "I have to go."

"Krissy," I sighed. "I'm sorry. God, I don't know what got into me."

"I have to go to ethics class," she smiled sheepishly.

Krissy, I'm sorry. What a jerk I am. Sorry God. Please forgive me, Lord Jesus. Please restore our friendship. Please forgive me, Krissy. You're so valuable. I am sorry, Krissy. Use me, Lord Jesus for your purpose. In the Name of Jesus, I pray. Please forgive me, Lord. And please forgive me, Krissy.

April 13, Friday, 2001

Dear Jesus, Thank you for the fun night at Refuge. It's 2:03 a.m. Barry, the shy young man that works at the PBAC coffeehouse, just left after helping me put things away. Tonight, we watched a video about Sudan, the slavery and the persecution of Christians in that area. Kelly Streckler, a locally famous guitarist and singer, led worship tonight. She has great vocals. Then my mom, Grace Kemp, Bible scholar/teacher/writer spoke. It was great! Her topic concerned The Refuge found in a personal relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ. Then she gave evidence for The Bible being The Word of God, and left a handout at the front that several people took. The message was well received. Following that, Jay Henderson and Kelly Streckler played guitars, sang, and led us in worship as we all praised The Lord Jesus Christ in song. Some of the crowd left after that, but Ryan Johnson (Refuge volunteer

and PBAC student), Barry, Kelly (a surfer girl that's a regular at Rock Church and at Refuge), Jay Henderson (the assistant basketball coach at PBAC who usually leads worship at Refuge) remained. After participating in worship, we were all amped.

"Let's go to City Place and carry the cross around," Jay suggested, a big smile on his face.

So we followed him, singing praises to The Lord Jesus Christ, the whole ragtag group--Jay Henderson, carrying a large syrofoam cross, leading the way, and Ryan Johnson, Kelly, Barry, and myself walking alongside. All of us had tracts to pass out to anyone that happened to be nearby. When we entered City Place, lots of people stared at us, which was perfect, as we had an opportunity to offer them tracts and share The Gospel. It was cool. God is Good!!!! :-)

April 27, Friday, 2001

Today is Krissy Iverson's last day of school. I have so much respect for people who go to college. That's radical. What discipline.

She's going to Guatemala this summer to live with a family. Her hopes are to learn Spanish and experience a different culture. I'm really going to miss her. I like her in so many different ways. We share similar interests--we both want to serve God, be active, bicycle, work on projects. She's a Christian, and she's beautiful. Okay, so I'm smitten. I'm fond.

FLO (Flying Low On the radar) Film Fest #3 is in three days. In fifteen minutes, Jana should be here. Howard, Jana and I are testing the audio today.

Krissy Iverson asked to spend the night last night, as she's leaving soon to go to Guatemala. Sure, I said. She comes over pretty late, takes off some of her clothes, then climbs up the ladder to my bed above my desk. She's wearing a white sports bra with dark shorts. Then she crawls into bed. My heart pounding nervously, I walk up the steps and slip under the covers behind her. Even though I tried to sleep, I could not. I began to move my hands across her body. She turned her head, groaned, and we started making out. From there, things got worse, until we were both naked. She sat kind of lifeless, allowing my hands to roam free across the landscape of her skin. "Kris," she persisted, "I have to go to sleep." Tired, but crazy horny at the same time, I retreated my advances and fell asleep beside her.

About last night, will you forgive me, Krissy? I let my physical desires overwhelm me. I am sorry. Please forgive me for not controlling my desires. What scum I am. I don't deserve to live. I must, with God's help, stop acting out on my desires. I'm sorry for not expressing my feelings to you in a pure way. Dear Lord, bless Krissy Iverson and protect her, Lord Jesus. Thank you for your mercy and patience with me. Help me not to take your sacrifice on the cross and your resurrection for granted. Amen.

May 3, Wednesday, 2001

It's 12 midnight. Just biked back from Vinyl. They played Respectables. It was a great show. They played a lot of new material. They are very talented.

Krissy sent me an e-mail that said: "time is the only thing that will restore that"--her respect for herself and me. She's angry concerning what happened when she came over to spend the night. I cannot blame her. I just want someone to sleep beside, she confined to me later. Dear Lord, please restore Krissy's respect for herself. I am dirt.

Sometime in June, 2001

Boy, am I confused. Regarding everything, I am not sure which direction to take. My one year plan, though, is this: continue passing out "This was your life!" tracts. There are 2,000 left. Today, online, I am ordering around 1,000 tracts--10 sets of 100--that are targeted to different groups, Muslims, Jews, Roman Catholics, Masons. Following the distribution of the "This was your life!" tracts, I'll distribute these targeted tracts at places where these groups congregate--their churches. Simultaneously, I'll publish the FLO, a monthly 'zine that tells what's really going on in the media, that Christians are being bashed, that whites are the victims of most racist hate crimes, moreso than blacks or minorities, that Hope in this world and the next world can only be found in The Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe I am not confused as I think. Praise The Lord! His mercy endureth forever!

June 26, 2001, Tuesday

I'm sitting in a Budget truck, a 24-foot box truck, a rental, parked beside a curb in Bel Aire, a posh residential area of Livingston, New Jersey. It's 8:04 a.m. Reed, the decorator, is planning to meet me "8:15, 8:30" according to our phone conversation this morning. Andy Cotter, a self-loathing cartoonist, brilliant writer, contrarian, curbside historian, and very caring friend, aptly called this type of development "McMansions". Dotting this hilly community are big, multi-room, multi-level houses that sit side by side with each other. I call them giant, overpriced coffins. Why? You are overcome with a sense of despair when you wander inside. The ceilings are high. The rooms are massive. So massive in fact that even the antiques--uncomfortable furniture that confuses the senses (as it serves no purpose, except to breathe life into the cottage industry of buyers, sellers, movers)--seem like toys in comparison. More often than not, the only people you encounter are the keepers of this castle, that is, the maids, decorators, electricians, maintenance crew, and contractor (construction supervisor), as ad-ons, adjustments are made--unnecessary cosmetic surgeries performed on different body parts that are already perfect.

It's 10:07 a.m.

Here I am, 32 years old, sitting in a truck in Livingston, New Jersey. I am a mover. I am a 32 year old man.
I am an imposter. I love my life. When you do not plan your life, at least in steps that eventually move you into a career and marriage, you are constantly bombarded with

options. Money gives you less freedom than poverty. Those that are married have a lot of options as well, but less freedom to choose which ones to skip, and which ones to capitalize on. In any case, both single and non-single people are like planets, caught in the gravity field, the orbit, of something bigger than themselves. Dodging the asteroids that lie outside their chosen course. Routine becomes their handcuffs. Whatever is the source of their trust becomes the host. And they, you, I become the parasite. This is not meant in a negative connotation at all, but rather as an observation, a conclusion.

Sometimes I feel as if I am slowly going mad. However, I have not earned the privilege, because I have not taken enough risks.

When I return to West Palm Beach, Florida, I am going roller skating. I can't relate to others who bar hop or go "out to eat". Sometimes I can. I think The Palace, in Lake Worth, has a skate night.

I miss my Carrie. I miss Carrie Cutlip. Last night, at the hotel (Livingston, New Jersey), The Travelodge, off of Route 10, I was thinking about her. I could not sleep. We spent years so close to each other. She really loved me. We did not have much in common, though. Even though my intentions, initially, were to help her, I eventually fell in love with her. She needed me, too. I miss that. A lot. Perhaps it makes me feel responsible. Maybe it justified my existence. My nature is not selfish. Plus, I'm a minimalist. So Carrie Cutlip provided me with someone to help, emotionally and in other areas. The best thing she gave me was friendship, respect, encouragement, and the feeling that I was important because she needed me. I have not been interested in other girls after Carrie, either, except for Krissy Iverson, which is more of a fun over the top date movie dumpster dive climb trees experience. With Carrie, everything was rich and deep. Even in her tears, even in her anger, she had insight (into people) that still puts a smile on my face. Still, it was Carrie's vulnerability that insulated her room in my heart. She also had, and has, amazing facial gestures. Gestures are the hinges to the doors of the heart.

I will never forget her, Carrie Cutlip. When she was mad or sad, she'd make a pouty face and her mouth would scrunch up like the drawstring of a sailor's duffel bag. She has a great mouth, red lips, beautiful eyes, perfect nose, like a modern day Shirley Temple. What a hottie Carrie Cutlip is! When she made this expression of hurt, anger, confusion, or bewilderment, her bottom teeth would go forward and she had this lovely tooth that stick up ... it was sexy in an adorable, huggy way. Carrie ... being close to her makes the horrors of this world disappear.

June 26, 2001

I remember all the good times with Carrie, too, hanging out at her apartment in downtown West Palm Beach, on Hibiscus and Rosemary, the southeast corner, below Holly and Jill's upstairs apartment. Carrie's apartment was the half of the first floor of a big old house. Then we lived at 307 South Sapodilla, on the west side, just south of Evertia, on top of a hill. For a while, she rented a room from my sister, Kim. Then

she lived at Palm Beach Atlantic College at a dorm. The dorm was so small as to be claustrophobic. I'm not kidding. I was ticked when I saw how small it was. Leaving Carrie there, I felt sorry for her. Now, she has her own place, between Dixie and Olive, on the south side of the street, a first floor apartment across from The Palm Beach Post building. Hopefully, when I return, she'll let me treat her to lunch or dinner at Outback Steakhouse or Tommy Bahama's (they serve a delicious caesar salad with blackened fish) or John G's. I wish Carrie would let her hair go natural, colorwise. It looks great that way--it's like dirty blonde, brown. It's cool. Very cool.

Kris, not to self: when you get back, spend less time at the hut. When you are there, do projects. Refuge, webstuff, e-mails, calls. Make new friends. Start rollerskating. Go skateboarding. Fast for three days. Pray for the persecuted church. Go outside more. Otherwise, you'll get absorbed by the broken dreams and alcohol-perfume that is the hut. Visit the monster, but don't become its food.

It's 11:10 a.m. I was in the truck, writing what you just read, the sunlight streaming in, an asthetic experience. I realize now that the song "Fond" that God gave me is really about Carrie Cutlip. "I'm lost in memories of our time, the fondness in my mind, even then I know I needed you; now it's you that I can't find." Yeah, it's about Carrie. When I record, God-willing, I'll record that with Eric at David Knight's studio in Flamingo Park, about two streets from the hut. Dear Lord, thanks for Carrie Cutlip. Restore our friendship. Bless her richly. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

"Make my life a prayer to you, I want to do what you want me to ..." - Joy Electric (cover of a Keith Green song)

June 26, Tuesday, 2001, 9:29 p.m.

Okay, Praise The Lord. I'm back at The Livingston Travelodge, sitting in a chair watching channel 11, the USA network. Late this afternoon, Reed, the decorator, made an interesting comment.

"Gosh, I wish I could just be happy, like you," he quipped, waving his hand extravagantly. Reed, according to his partner, David, has "done well" as a decorator, having honed his craft through years of experience. Seeing Reed's house, off of Palmetto, in Boca Raton, Florida, was evidence enough to back up that statement. It's lavish and decorated esquisitely. Reed has a keen eye for furntiture arrangement, style, and decor.

"You could be happy," I answered. "Hang out with me for a day. I'm serious."

"I should. I'm serious." Reed said. "You are happy. I can see that."

"It's that thing that you're writing," mentions David, referring to my notebook which they see me scribbling in. "What is it? A screenplay? A journal?"

"It's a journal," I smile. He's interested. Cool. Praise God!

"I want to read it," he said.

"Okay, I'll let you read it. Cool."

I'm praying that God will open a door or opportunity so I can tell Reed and David (both decorators), and Rick (the carpenter) and Art (electrician/handyman) about The Lord Jesus Christ. Please God, allow me to be a seed. Use my life. May my life, my body, my everything diminish in the purpose of your calling. Let me be used. The length of my life is less important than the calling.

There's definitely things I want to do: memorize Scriptures, write worship songs and record them, maybe convincing Eric to play guitar, Gina Kemp to sing, finish GraceKemp.com website, produce "apocalypse donut", "the slaves of palm beach", "strobe", pass out tracts, publish the FLO every month, talk at Refuge about persecution of Christians abroad and in the U.S., about ecumenism, the Catholic church, and I want to push out all my money to Voice of the Martyrs and Christian Aid for Bibles, support for the persecuted church and indigenous missionary support. So, therein lies the irony of Kris Kemp. One half of me wants to lose my identity in helping to spread The Gospel of The Lord Jesus Christ. The other half of me wants to produce art. These two boxers exist in the ring around my head. And neither remains silent when atrophy sets in. My mind is crowded. PRAISE THE LORD!!!

It's 10:21 p.m., June 26, Tuesday, 2001

I'm meeting Reed and David at 8:30 at Bel Aire in Livingston, New Jersey. This kind of trip is called a "dedicated run" because the entire truck is dedicated to Reed. Everything that sits blanket wrapped, squared away or tied up in the back will go to one of several destinations determined by Reed. I may be going into New York City on this trip, too. That's always exciting--a real life video game of narrow, potholed streets, crowds of people jamming the crosswalks, honking horns and bicycle messengers that weave in and out of traffic. Manhattan, New York is more than another city, it's nearly another planet.

Here, I'll be helping to unload the chandelier and some other furniture. Then, I'll be driving to another location in New Jersey to unload some furniture. After that dropoff, I'll find a storage unit for the chandelier holders and the blankets, then drive the truck to Caldwell, NJ and return it to Budget. Following that, I have to get a ride to the Greyhound station and book a ride back to West Palm Beach, Florida. Marty, the owner, gave me an option to fly but I'd rather ride a bus. Flying scares me. If I could have a parachute and the option to jump out, in case of an emergency, then I might think differently. At least on a Greyhound, in an emergency, you can open the windows. There's instructions that tell you how, too. Hallelujah! :-)

June 27, Wednesday, 2001, 8:04 a.m.

I'm sitting in the Budget truck, waiting for Reed and David to arrive. They'll be here

at 8:30 a.m. I hope I can get back to West Palm Beach in time to set up for Refuge Coffeehouse. Hopefully, God-willing, I'll be on a Greyhound this evening on my way back. Inbetween now and then, I have to 1) unload the truck 2) find a storage facility for the blankets 3) drop the truck at Budget 4) ask Budget for a ride to the nearest Greyhound station. Dear Jesus, please be with those that have received Gospel tracts, found them at phones, gas pumps, everywhere else. Help them to find their Hope, and Salvation solely through you, The Lord Jesus Christ. Praise The Lord! Thank you, Jesus.

I told Jake Lawson, this cool, smart punk kid from Rock Church, that I'd go to Cornerstone 2001, in Bushnell, Illinois. But now, I'm not sure. I'd like to use the \$300 for missionaries and Bible distribution. Then again, I did tell him I'd go. I'm not sure what to do. Also, I need to get my tooth fixed. It's chipped. Maybe I'll do both. Praise God!

June 27, Wednesday, 2001, 8:24 a.m.

Losing something is cathartic.
Humor is the truth wrapped in a blanket.
Fame shuts you off from what inspired you in the first place.
Maybe poverty is the price of sanity.

June 27, Wednesday, 10:50 a.m., 2001

Sitting in truck, now standing in the back. Rick, the carpenter/contractor fellow is attaching screws on the chandeliers. Apparently, they fell off while the truck was on the interstate. Then, Rick, some other guys and myself will insert a pipe through the loop that holds the chandelier, and carry it into the house by propping the pipe on our shoulders, then hooking it to the holder wire. Fortunately, the wire that we're attaching it to is suspended from its own wench (motorized pulley) that will lift the chandelier to its determined position. It takes him some time to finish, so I return to reading God's Way to Ultimate Health. Minutes later, he's finished, calls for more help, and with a grunt, we hoist the chandelier onto our shoulders. Carrying the massive chandelier, I'm reminded of a Biblical depiction of two men sharing a wooden pole on their shoulders that's carrying an enormous bunch of grapes. I think the picture coincides with the two who were sent forth to visit the land of Canaan, and returned with the grapes as evidence for what they'd seen.

June 27, Wednesday, 6:07 p.m., 2001

Sitting, leaning forward, writing this, the kalidescope of abandoned industrial buildings, quaint, wooden, two story houses and healthy trees rush by in a blur of colors. This is the \$5.45 train ride that left New Brunswick, New Jersey five minutes earlier. It is headed to Newark, then to Penn Station in New York City. There, God willing, I'll board the bus that's bound for West Palm Beach, Florida.

Earlier, I managed to find a Budget at 5 p.m. They closed at 6 p.m. By the time I arrived at the counter, it was 5:40 p.m. "Do you know you went over your mileage," the clerk asked.

"No"

"You had 1,500. You went 1,636."

"Really. I didn't know there was a mileage limit."

"Was it filled up when you got in it?" She asked.

"Yes."

"It'll be \$70 (something, forgot what she said) for gas. We charge \$3.98 a gallon," stated flatly.

"Okay. No problem," I said. "It's cheaper than staying in a hotel. If I do get gas, I mean diesel fuel, you'll be closed when I get back," I rationalized. "So, no problem."

I opened the door for an elderly gentleman who thanked me. I asked him if he knew where the Greyhound station was located.

"I ... don't ... know." Each word fell out slowly, measured.

"Hmmm." I replied. "Yeah, I need to get to Greyhound to go home."

I walked away from him and approached several strangers, asking them for a ride to the Greyhound station.

"I'll give you a ride," the elderly gentleman piped up.

"Thanks. Wow. Cool. Thanks," I repeated.

On the way to the train station, we talked. His name was Kurt. He was Catholic. I told him I love Jesus, that God was and is awesome. "God bless you, Kris," he continued to say. He's lived in New Jersey since youth, he told me. He was a kind man, and waved me off with a handshake and another "God Bless."

Praise The Lord! I left Kurt with a \$10 bill and a "This was your life!" Gospel tract. Lord, help Kurt to know you as His personal Lord and Savior. Thank you, Jesus. Praise God!

June 27, 2001, 8:11 p.m., Wednesday

It's hot in here. I'm at a window seat in the Greyhound bus. We're underground, underneath Penn Station in New York City. On the bus, the windows are closed and the engine isn't even running. Everyone's sweating. The other buses have the engines

idling so the air conditioning can be run. "It's too hot in here," a short haired lady sitting across from me cries out. She bolts for the door and tells the bus driver to turn on the a/c. He steps in, turns the key in the ignition, and the old bus slowly roars to life. The air conditioning wafts through the vents. Ahhhh. "Thank God. Praise The Lord!" I say out loud. Then, this adorable, short haired girl sits across from me. Another one beside her looks at me and smiles, lips together. She is adorable! I spoke with her earlier. She's headed to Atlanta, Florida. I'm pretty sociable, but when it comes to cute girls, I turn into one shy popsicle. Either that, or I begin talking like a nut and an avalanche of confessions sends them running in the other direction. Oh well.

Praise the Lord for Andy Cotter. Thank you God that he was born. He's kind. And I reap the benefits of that kindness. Even now. Listening to "Blue Bell Knoll" from the "Blue Bell Knoll" CD by the Cocteau Twins. CT makes some beautiful music, lovely, ethereal, like being surrounded by butterflies. Mmmmmmmmm. The bus driver turns the lights off. I switch on the overhead light. My imagination leaves no room for memory.

It's probably around 9pm-ish. I don't know since the bus driver said we're not allowed to use cell phones. When he made that announcement, I placed the cell phone in my backpack above me in the baggage compartment. I'm still listening to the Cocteau Twins. We've just left Manhattan and I think we're now on the New Jersey turnpike.

June 28, 2001, Thursday

It's about 2:30 or 2:45. What's left of the bus passengers wearily stumbles onto the bus. New riders board, finding seats among the smelly long haulers like myself. We're idling at the bus terminal in Jacksonville, Florida. Normally, I don't eat fast food, but my hunger compelled me to order something from the greasy walkup counter here at the station. My treat consisted of a greasy fish sandwich on a hotdog? bun, cold, limp fries that even Viagra couldn't help, and overly sweet Dr. Pibb to wash down the entire mess. Dessert was a chocolate round thingy with a cream filled center. Hallelujah. I called Jake Lawson to ask him about the wire connectors for The Refuge soundsystem. He brought them home, he said. I told him that I'd call him tonight, that maybe we'd hook up the system, too, time permitting. He was cool with that. Cool. Cool.

June 28, 2001, Thursday, 5:34 p.m.

I want to save the world.

One way I can do this is by helping people become healthy through a better diet. What you eat is your diet, not a short term binge to lose weight. More importantly, I want to save the world through spreading The Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ever read *The Catcher in the Rye*? I like that book. What a hobby that would be--helping people to remain young, reminding them that youthful thinking has its

benefits. Being responsible in our society seems to be deified by those who are naturally inclined in that direction. Often, peoples virtues become their measurement, their standard by which judgements are made. Sometimes vices seem to be the only things we can call our own.

We're in Orlando now. The bus driver is making announcements. Everyone in the bus is amped, popping up, looking for restaurants, open mouthed with visions of super value meals in their heads ... want a milkshake.

June 29, Friday, 2001

Refuge Coffeehouse is incredible. Kevin McDonald, a singer/songwriter who's an accomplished pianist and guitarist, played acoustic and sang. Eric, the hippie Christian friend, another talented musician that plays drums, bass, guitar and records his own music to a multitrack on his computer, played drums. Watching him, I couldn't help but laugh. He plays with his eyes tightly closed, his mouth smiling in bitten-lip happiness. On the drumset, he's in outer space, an astronaut. Everyone--Darby, Grace Kemp, Kim Kemp, Kelly Kemp, Kelly Mc-something, the witnesser, Robert with his acoustic guitar who Grace, Jana, and I met at the fountain on Clematis Street who ended up visiting Refuge and commenting: "This is what I need, man ...", Gabe--sang their hearts out. Gabe was a first timer who saw The Refuge flier at Marr's Music. He's a musician so we offered him a spare acoustic guitar to strum, and he starts playing and leading everyone in worship. How cool is that? We had three musicians: Gabe, Kevin McDonald, the singer/songwriter pianist & guitarist, and Eric, the guitarist/drummer/bassist/singer/songwriter. Gabe and Kevin played acoustic electric while Eric played lead guitar, keeping his amplifier on a low volume, closing his eyes and orbiting around outer space while he jammed across the galaxy. Jana and I were completely into it, belting out the lyrics like banshees crying out in glee.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, Alleluiah. Alleluiah, Alleluiah, Alleluiah, Alleluiah." After repeating the choruse about twelve times, I felt happy and overcome with joy. Wow! "Praise You, Lord!" I yelled exstactically. Wow! What a great night. Following worship, Grace spoke on The Prayer of Jabez, a terrific, practical message concerning God's answer to Jabez, and how Jabez's motive (not a selfish one) probably helped his prayer to get answered.

July 2, Tuesday

Arrived at Cornerstone Festival 2001. Borrowed my mom's truck to drive here. The truck has a cab, too. Jake Lawson, a teenager from Rock Church, joined me. Today, we pitched our tent beside this lake, then went mountain boarding down these two hills. A mountain board is a skateboard with fat tires, allowing you to ride on grass on hard packed dirt. We met our neighbors who are camping nearby--Jeremy and Kool-Aid from Pennsylvania, these two punk rock teenagers, and Nicholas and

Heather from Indiana. There's a group of about 8-to-10 clean cut looking youth who appear to be college students, or high school seniors. This is cool. Praise The Lord!

At every gas station on the way up, we either passed out "This was your life!" tracts or left them on gas pumps. I handed one to four kids at an Illinois Arby's. They were sitting on the curb, talking, smoking.

"What is this?" One asked.

"It's a Gospel tract. It tells you how to avoid Hell after you die."

"Thanks," he said.

Dear Lord, please save this lost generation. Continue to break my heart and keep me down, on my knees in prayer and praise to you, Dear Jesus. Amen.

July 3, Wednesday, 2001

Cornerstone is incredible. 20,000 punk rock, high school aged couples. Almost alienating for me as I'm single. Earlier, I heard an interesting phrase: "Get an earring in your left ear and you're still 6 inches away from being gay." That line could be used for a play that gives homage to the 80's. I actually have a script idea for a play about the 80's. It's titled 1989.

July 11, Wednesday 2001, 8:48 p.m.

Back from Cornerstone 2001. Thank You Jesus for the safe trip. Tonight, earlier, Jimmy, the guy who started Bike Taxi's in downtown West Palm Beach, visited me. This is what he told me.

"A few nights ago, Candice and Mike (Antinori, her boyfriend) and the rest of them, were outside. They had built a bonfire on the street. And they were throwing stuff in the bonfire. I walked up to them and was gonna ask them what they were throwing in. Then when I got closer, I saw that it was Gospel tracts. This little girl asked them what they were throwing into the fire and Candice says: "Religious propaganda." And they all laughed. I asked why they were doing that. And they all start defending Candice and sticking up for her, so I just turned and walked away."

"How sad," I said.

So far, this is the second time that has happened here at the warehouse where I live. The first incident occurred when Kevin James, an artist that has a studio here, or someone else, used a Gospel tract for kindling, to hold a flame in order to light the gas grill, so they wouldn't risk burning their hands.

Dear Lord,

Please forgive them and lead them to repentance. Convict them. How can I reach them for Christ? Let me know. Thanks, Jesus.

Amen.

July 12, Thursday, 2001 11:25 p.m.

Candice Murphy, glass blower, sculptor, actress, and director of The Burnt Candle theatre group, is verbally sparring Mike Antinori as they rehearse Cowboy Mouth, a gritty play by Sam Sheperd. They are both good actors. There are so many "F" words in this drama that it's distracting. A well placed pothole is significant and can be steered around. Too many potholes leave you taking detours.

Jana, Audrey, and I distributed water, Gospel tracts, and Refuge flyers on Clematis Street, walking from one end to the other. We unloaded two cases of water, a plethora considering each case holds 32-to-48 bottles. Jana and Audrey are fun and encouraging.

Dear Lord Jesus, Thank you for your love and mercy and justice. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for Audrey, Jana, Pastor Mike, my mom whose story that dad told me about her--passing out tracts at a hospital in Nassau, Bahamas--encouraged me to begin passing out tracts here, two years ago. Praise you, Lord! Thank you, Jesus! Amen. :-)

Dear Lord Jesus, Please use us at Refuge, Rock Church, Grace Kemp's Bible class and beyond, to reach this generation for Jesus Christ. Allow us the privilege of serving you. May we make it a holy habit to point people in your direction. Thank you, Jesus! Amen. :-)

Earlier, I visited Carrie Cutlip. She is hot! Wow, she looks really pretty. Recently, she was hired as a teacher at Conniston Middle School. Thank you Jesus for blessing her! Praise God! Continue to bless her Lord as she is a dear friend, precious, smart, clever, and beautiful. Thank you, God!

Dear Lord, please encourage my mom and bless her with a joy that overflows. Help her to know that she is not alone. Please be with Tanya, Lord; help her to heal the emotional wounds inflicted by her mom. Restore her self esteem and security. Put a hedge of protection around her and help her, Lord, to fall in love with you. Thank You Jesus Christ!!! Hallelujah! Praise The Lord!!! :-)

Sunday, August 8, 2001

When you're a hopeless romantic, the whole world could collapse around you and you would find beauty in the way the sunlight dances through the leaves of a tree.

I took Krissy Iverson to the \$2 movies, The Movies of Lake Worth, off of Lake Worth Road. We saw "Chocolat", a whimsical fairy tale about a baker who turns a

small town upside down. Juliette Binoche played the main character, and Johnny Depp played her love interest. A part of me, when I'm hanging out with Krissy, feels like I've never emerged from adolescence. I want to hold her hand but I know that she only sees me as a friend, so it would be a worthless endeavor. When I'm with someone that I'm attracted to, I feel like I'm on a seesaw, alone, trying to balance it by standing in the middle. On one side is reason. On the other side is emotion. Whenever I move too close to one side, the seesaw crashes to the ground. Attraction, at least in its initial stages, is a balancing act.

Even when I'm alone, which is often, every gesture is an emergency, every noise a siren, every glance a peek into a Viewmaster that slides by slowly like the credits that follow the movies whose appetites demand tissues. The world outside is a storm. It's safe in my head. I am not alone.

November 27, Tuesday, 2001

Last night, I heard someone yelling outside my window. I peeked my head out and spotted Wendy, standing beside the railroad tracks, and cursing loudly at the cloudy night sky.

Wendy's this petite girl, a traveller, that's been living here at the warehouse ever since Alan invited her to stay, after meeting her at O'Shea's, a local Irish pub that doubles as a human resources department whenever Alan's looking for new studio artists. So far, Wendy's been kind of like a sister to all the slackhappy artists and bohemian residents of this rundown Belvue. She might not have any money, but she's always ready for a good time, and makes for interesting company.

For a moment, I didn't recognize her. As the tracks are only 25 feet from window, I see a fair share of bums and drunk Mexicans muttering in an alcohol soaked haze while walking home from a night of debauchery. At first, I thought that she was the girlfriend that had been left behind amidst the melee'. But this girl yelled like a teenage banshee, a female cat, exhausting the fumes of her beerfueled head. No one was around, either. And she continued to yell.

"Wendy!" I yelled from my window. "Are you all right?"

"Kris," she looks at me softly, and smiles.

I pebbled down the steps from my bunkbed which sits above my desk, throw on my beatup high tops, then quick step to the warehouse front doors, sliding them open, and wandering toward where I saw her.

"Hey." A voice in front of me spoke. I peered into the darkness and saw the silhouette of Weazel, the hippie-gardener that lives in a ramshackle studio in the middle bay. His hands were at his sides toward his belly button, blurred by a forest of plants. Among his garden, the plants that he carefully nourished through puberty, stood Weazel urinating into his art.

"Sorry," I said quickly looking away. "Have you seen Wendy?" I asked.

"Yeah, I saw her." He spit. "She just went back inside. Her and John walked into my bar earlier. The Irish Rose. I'm like, 'Gosh, I can't get away from the people I live with, even at my own bar'. Har, har."

I returned inside, but didn't see her. So I said a prayer for her safety, then went to bed. Minutes later, Wendy storms in, closing the door behind her, walking up the steps to my bed, then slipping under the covers beside me.

"Hey," she whispered in her beautiful voice. "I hope you don't mind me being so forward, but I'm going to sleep with you."

"That's okay," I said.

"I love you, Kris. I love you." She repeated.

"I love you, Wendy." I said. I kissed her all over her forehead and cheek, then on her mouth. She was hiccuping. She smelled like beer. It was beautiful.

She mounted me, then put her hands around my neck. "I'm going to kill you," she declared. "Mmmphhh." She grunted, squeezing her hands into a vice grip.

"Wendy stop. That hurts." I pushed her hands away.

"I'm sorry," the little girl voice returned to her mouth. She moved her hands across my body. I moved my hands across her skin. We kissed. Her skin felt very soft. We wrestled around and hugged and kissed throughout the night. I moved my hands over her stomach and kissed her on the breasts. Her skin is creamy, pale. This is crazy, I'm thinking. But I don't stop, even though I know it's wrong. This is the shallow end of the pool. Touching her, I realize that I miss this--touching another human that I care about. Human touch, despite its moral implications, is cathartic, I rationalize. And lack of human touch, over a long period of time, leads to sickness and alienation. Sleeping beside her, even if she is drunk, feels good. I leave my hand across her warm neck, partly on her silky dark hair, and fall into a deep sleep.

December 24, Christmas Eve, 2001, 4:27 p.m.

Wendy ... yes, you crawled up beside me last night in bed, and yes, you were drunk, and yes, I was lonely. More than anything, Wendy, I love the potential of who you are, the rest, the adjectives which sprouted from desire that took root when you visited me, is merely infatuation, a watered down version of lust. Yes, you're sexy, Wendy, but I don't know you well enough for it to be love. I will pray for you, Wendy. Thanks for the kisses and attention. I needed that. Physicalwise, I'm glad we stayed in the shallow end of the pool and hugged and kissed. The deep end would have been a dangerous proposition.

Thank you, Lord, for Wendy. Please guide her footsteps and help her to come to know you as her Lord and Saviour and Refuge. Please forgive me, Lord, for my lust captivating me and leading me into sin. Please forgive me, Lord, for being me. Thank you for your mercy to me--a stupid, inconsistent clown walking the tightrope between the world and your mercy, grace, kindness. Amen.

January 22, 10:24 p.m., 2002

Everyone's dying and we're all clinging to pieces of furniture, objects of desire that we mistake for bouys but instead are actually anchors, keeping us tethered to one place, holding us back, weighing us down. It's been said "you can't take it with you", but it seems as if we all die trying. Certain truths are so ironic that everyone agrees to ignore their consequences. The reward for truth, it seems, is cynicism. Those who are told the truth act indignant, disbelieving, sarcastic, usually brushing it off like unwanted dust that clouds their vision. So many battles exist that are worth fighting, that their sheer number overwhelms a willing participant, reducing the most determined of soldiers to an open mouthed rubbernecker, dumbfounded, paralyzed, eventually shrugging and leaving the scene. No wonder so many people watch TV. It's an anchor, keeping them in one place, feeding them lies from the government and sold out media, and training them to associate immorality with freedom, attention with self worth, beauty with superficial characteristics. Television is a legal narcotic. TV takes your mind off your mind. Television is crack. Cable television is mainlining cocaine. Cable television, with premium movie channels, is an endless supply of top shelf heroin, room service and a beautiful friend--a honeymoon that's hard to unplug.

January 25, 7:30 p.m., 2002, Friday

I have been resigning myself of responsibilities here at the warehouse. Usually, I wash the dishes, take out the trash twice a week, clean the showers and bathroom facilities, replace bulbs, set up lamps so people can find their way to the bathroom at night, and generally maintain cleanliness in the common areas. But this takes up so much time, that I'm starting to resent those that are fully capable of cleaning up after themselves. I'm casting my pearls before the swine. My time is the pearls, the swine are the slackers. At the end of your life, dreams are the flashlight, time is the battery. In other words, dreams are what you focus your light (talents) towards. Time, however, prohibits you from using the flashlight forever, since the the battery will eventually run out. Thus, use your time and talent wisely, while you're here on earth. The wisest way to use your talent, since it is a gift for God, is for God. That way, your talent will reap eternal results, not merely earthly gain, which gathers rust, requires warranties, repairs, and ends up at Goodwill. It's ironic and tragic that so many people, including Christians, work so hard for gold. Why? Gold is Heaven's asphalt. Think about it.

I thank God that I took Carrie Cutlip's and Andy Cotter's advice about not doing all the work here. Keep me flexible, Lord, so I can serve you in any circumstance you put me in. Allow me to have the privilege of dying for you if need be. Perhaps this

notion of physical death is absurd. Maybe a "death to self" must come first, putting to death the "old man" before I can expect God to use me, if He wills to use me, in a situation where my life will be at stake.

Tonight, Scott Toreau, this engineer who I turned onto dumpster diving, and Ann Powell, this cool girl that I witness with sometimes, are coming over. We're going to see a \$2.50 movie, a second run movie, at the Movies of Lake Worth. I'm looking forward to it. Even though I only go about once a month, if that, I like seeing movies. My head is like a corral that fences in the wild horses of my imagination. Seeing a movie is like adding industrial strength lithium to the horse feed. Watching the film unroll, experiencing the hypnotic fix of light and sound, the horses are soon fast asleep.

My life is great. As long as I don't compare it to the lives of other people, everything is fine. When you dive below the surface of the water, you find a whole new world--caves to explore, schools of fish to swim among, creatures to hide from and, as you plunge deeper, the silence grows louder, nearly smothering you with the suffocating stillness. Going deeper, and staying down longer, reshapes the angles of your perception, widens your perspective, and strengthens you in areas that previously were atrophied. Sometimes it's easier to stay on the surface and view the world from the top of the ocean than to dive in, see, and recognize the wondrous and terrifying and beautiful world that lies beneath.

January 26, Saturday, 10:45 a.m., 2002

Last night, Scott drove Ann Powell and I to the movies. We watched *The Heist*, an intricate crime thriller. I liked it, despite the bad language. Ann, a half hour before it was over, walked out in a silent protest about the language, which included a multitude of F-bombs and swearing. She had a point. The language was over the top and inexcusable.

After the movie ended, Ann returned into the theatre. On the way out, I noticed a near full bag of popcorn.

"I'm gonna dive that popcorn," I told Scott. Grabbing the popcorn, I began eating. Scott partook some, too. Ann declined, but was laughing. "See if you can find a soda."

"C'mon guys," Ann chided with a smile. "Now that's gross."

"Movie dive, movie dive," Scott squealed in delight. "Whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, ha, ha, ha."

"Don't be negative, Ann." I admonished.

Sure enough, I saw a cup of soda on the ground that was 3/4 full. I bent over, picked it up, and walked outside into the hallway. Examining for lipstick and finding none, I

put the straw to my lips.

"Erg," I withdrew. "Diet. Gerody. You want some Scott? Ann?"

They declined. Scott walked up ahead of us, opening theatre doors and peeking inside to see if any movies were still playing. "They're still showing one in here," Scott whispered, motioning for us to join him. "C'mon. Let's watch it. Movie dive, movie dive."

Ann and I walked up to him and entered the theatre, sitting in the back.

"Good job, Scott." I smiled. "Your first movie dive."

He was laughing so hard that I had to tell him to quiet down.

"You guys are crazy," Ann kept saying. "I can't believe I'm doing this."

The movie was called *My life as a House*. It was a melancholy drama about a family that comes to terms with a horrible accident, finding closure by buying a house on the seashore. One of those boring flicks whose premise demands extremely good acting in order to sustain the plot. The writing, though, seemed expository and sentimental, however, and the pacing of the film was uneven. Still, it was free, a movie dive. The film lasted fifteen minutes, but the ending contained enough information to fill in the bulk of the story.

After piling into Scott's SUV, we dived Nutrition Smart, a health store and vitamin shop on Lake Worth Road. Scott had a flashlight and we had three people, so Ann could be the spotter (for cops or security guards) while we rummaged through the dumpster. The dive yielded 4-or-5 bottles of Vitamin C pills. (Stores throw out "testers", the tablets that they allow their patrons to sample as they walk through the store. Generally, tester pills are at least half full when they are discarded.) They were chewable and tasty. From there, I told Scott about Hoffman's Chocolates, a large chocolate shop further east on Lake Worth Road, on the south side of the street. In my last conversation with Waffle, a hippie, activist, creator of The Lake Worth Food Re-Distro (which benefits needy families by delivering them out-of-date and surplus food from health stores), and major factor in The Community Garden (which provides health food for people as well), he had mentioned that Hoffman's was a major score for chocolate. "Especially after holidays, like Valentine's and Easter," he nodded with a smile and wink. "You gotta check that out. I used to work there, that's how I know."

By the time I mentioned Hoffman's, we had passed the store, so Scott made an illegal u-turn and we head back. The first two dumpsters contained cardboard. You can't eat cardboard ... yet. Behind a gated area was another dumpster. The gate was unlocked. Remembering what Waffle had said about chocolate pretzels when he worked there last season, I opened the gate, closed it behind me, and aimed Scott's flashlight into the abyss. The dumpster was only about 1/4 full. Putting my hands on the dumpster walls, I hoisted myself inside and began ripping the bags. Two of the bags were clear,

see through plastic. Yes! Pulling them up from the bottom, I smiled at what I saw: massive chunks of chocolate sat inside them. These were titanic chunks of chocolate, probably broken from one of those mammoth candy bars they sell for, like, \$50 bucks, you know, the giant Hershey's jobs, the diabetic dream, chocolate junkie nirvana. Man, these chocolate delights probably weighed 4-to-5 pounds each, and there were two of them.

"Yes! Praise The Lord!" I shouted, biting into my chocolate treasure.

Scott rushed up to the dumpster wall and peered inside. Sitting at the bottom of the dumpster like a wild animal, I looked up at Scott and smiled, giggling hysterically as the chocolate hijacked my metabolism and headed west.

Scott handed me an empty box for the edible discoveries.

"Open that bag," he commanded. "Try that one." Scott Toreau was voted received The Young Engineer of the Year award for all of Florida. He works as an engineer, planning architectural designs for water systems in the state of Florida. And here we are, on a cool January night, near midnight, foraging through a dumpster behind Hoffman's Chocolates. We are all crazy.

After the Hoffman's fiasco, Scott drove to Wild Oat's and parked in the back. By the time we arrived, we were all laughing hysterically, whisperscreaming nonsensical phrases and tickling each other, out of our minds on chocolate, rolling from the sugar high, gone and in a state of temporary madness.

The third hand store (dumpster) is always open, so we approached the dumpster with flashlights and peeked inside, spastic modern day archeologists sifting through the ruins. There, we dived three boxes of food--parsley, romaine lettuce, fresh herbs, 3 containers of snacks (2 yogurt raisins, 1 yogurt pretzels), bag of carrots, a large tomato, roasted soy nuts, 4 tubs of tomato sauce. Praise The Lord! Then we hit Entemann's dumpster, on Dixie. Entemann's Outlet store sells baked goods, deserts and breads, for reduced prices. Great dive in preparation for when friends or relatives are coming to visit. Although the stuff is harmful, as it's processed-to-death, bleached-white, sugar-loaded fluff, the dumpster provides snack food. Still, this is a dangerous dumpster, basically all the nutritional pornography you'll need to completely rot your teeth away. That dumpster offered 3 boxes of chocolate macaroons, and a box of "Frosted Devil's Food Popems" (basically, these are donut holes). Praise God! What a great night! Hallelujah. Thank You, Lord!

It's 11:05 a.m. Kim and Gina and Kevin will be picking me up at 11:45 a.m. to meet dad and Helena at Wild Oat's. It's dad's birthday. We're buying them lunch.

January 27, Sunday, 4:17 p.m., 2002

Returned from the library with two videos, "My Iron Giant" and "Invasion of the Body Snatchers"--the one from the 50's. I really dig that film. I find the premise--people whose lives are silently, covertly taken over by aliens--compelling. The

metaphor behind the movie, that we all become adults whether we like it or not, is memorable.

January 27, Sunday, 7:43 p.m., 2002

I slept and awoke in bed, above this desk. I feel like something is wrong, askew, slightly out of place, like I have been misplaced for the last two years, and it scares me in a creeping, gnawing sort of way. I am having a hard time putting my finger on it. Perhaps it's the ice cream and meat in the tacos that I had today. Maybe I just need to eat salad from now on, buy food and shop, and skip this dumpster diving for a little while. Thankfully, my mom gave me a salad in a container I can keep. I'll eat that tomorrow. Yes, that's what I'll do. Maybe I'll fast tomorrow. The options are an ocean. I swim in them. I feel like I've lost my motivation. I think I need to get a steady job, something that feels like a job ... perhaps restaurant work. Lord, help me not to focus on myself. Where did everyone go? How come all my friends have seemed to disappear? The strange ones call me, yet I need some normal friends. What have I missed out on? Am I in the right place? Should I even be in this place, this warehouse, in Florida? Have I been playing hooky for the last three years? Dear Lord, help me. Rescue me from myself. Somewhere, somehow ... parts of me are evaporating. Am I rusting? If so, why? Was I supposed to go to San Francisco and visit some friends? Was I supposed to stay in New York, in Brooklyn? No. Someone please call me. I need help. I need practical advice, with the condiments, minus the dinner mint. Is someone trying to turn me into a robot? I'll keep moving. I will not be a slave to the government. Perhaps I can help all those mind control victims in California. No one helps these electronic hostages as they try to live normal lives. Meanwhile, the government bombards them with ELF (electromagnetic low frequency) waves, sending them vocal instructions and annoying noises. Those mind controllers will have to answer to God for their actions. Have I really been in the drive-thru all this time when a table remains with one empty seat, orphaned by my misdirection? Someone's waiting for me to help them. Where are they? Dear Lord, help me to connect with them and to seek you first. My mind seems to be a wild animal, a horse that cannot be bridled without great risk or even serious injury. May I draw near to you, God, so that you will draw near to me. Let me find refuge in The Shadow of Your Wings. Thank you Jesus for your friendship. Praise You Lord! Thank you, Lord! Hallelujah!