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Naked Lunch

By William S. Burroughs

Exterminator.
Mm-hmm.
You want I should spit right in your face?
You want, hmm?
You want? You want?
I ran out.
You ran out?
Oh, that's nice.
You ran out.
It's impossible you run out!
What'd you do, eat the stuff?
The Chink shortchanged me.
No "glot." Come "Fliday."
It's funny.
It's actual very funny what you just said.
Ran out.
They can either paint it, or draw it, or write
it down and then pass it on to somebody.
They read what you're saying,
and then they reexperience.
That's the only connection
you have with that, man.
So you can't rewrite...
'cause to rewrite is to deceive and lie...
and you betray your own thoughts.
To rethink the flow and the rhythm
and the tumbling out of the words...
is a betrayal.
And it's a sin, Martin.
It's a sin.
I don't accept your, uh...
Catholic interpretation
of my compulsive, uh...
necessity to rewrite
every single word at least 1 00 times.
Guilt is -Thanks.
Guilt is the key, not sin.
Guilt re not writing
the best that I can.
Guilt re not, uh, considering everything
from every possible angle.
Balancing everything.
Well, how about guilt
re censoring your best thoughts?

Your most honest,
primitive, real thoughts...
because that's what your laborious
rewriting amounts to, Martin.
Is rewriting really censorship, Bill?
Because I'm completely fucked if it is.
Exterminate all rational thought.
That is the conclusion I have come to.
What is the man talking about?
I'm being serious.
So is he.
So how is the extermination business
going there, Bill?
Somebody's stealing my roach powder.
Somebody's got it in for me.
Hmm. Well, Bill,
maybe you should take it as a sign.
Maybe you ought to try your hand
at writing pornography.
Yeah, a novel a week at 120 bucks.
It's serious money.
I can connect you with the guy.
We're thinking of
collaborating on one ourselves.
I gave up writing when I was 10.
- Too dangerous.
- Only if someone reads what you write.
So far we haven't had that problem.
I've found my profession.
I'm an exterminator.
Of course, Bill. That's just
what the world needs...
- ...more literate exterminators.
- Give me a cigarette.
Of course, then, you know...
you're gonna have trouble
if you can't keep track of your roach powder.
Wait a minute.
Do you boys know something about this?
We don't exactly know anything.
No, but we suspect
it's a domestic problem.
- My God, what are you doing?
- You weren't supposed to see this.

Well, now that I'm seeing it, what is it?
I'm shooting up your bug powder.
You might like to try it yourself.
Or you might not.
I ran out in the middle of a job.
You gotta stop using the stuff, Joan.
They ration it out like snakebite serum.
Well, just do what everybody else does -
cut it with baby laxative.
The roaches will
shit themselves to death.
It's the best job I ever had.
If I run out again, I'm finished.
Hmm.
It's, um -
It's a very literary high.
Very literary.
Is that why Hank and Martin
know all about it?
No, we just, uh -
We all just tried it together-
spur of the moment thing.
They didn't like it, I did.
What do you mean,
it's a literary high?
It's a Kafka high.
You feel like a bug.
Try some.
Well, I don't know.
I don't know.
- I think our metabolisms are very different.
- Whose?
Yours and Kafka's?
I thought you were finished
with doing weird stuff.
I thought I was, too,
but I guess I'm not.
Personally...
I prefer a pyrethrum job to a fluoride.
With the pyrethrum...
you kill the roaches right there
in front of God and the client...
whereas this starch and fluoride-
leave it around,

the roaches eat it...
come back a few days later,
they're running around fat as hogs.
And there it is, Bill.
You want to put on some weight...
you gotta switch
from that yellow powder diet of yours...
to some of this good
fluoride stuff right here.
Sure works for the Chink.
He's healthy enough.
You see him scarf that poison down?
He doesn't really eat it.
It's sleight of hand.
The hell he doesn't. Been breathing in the
powder so long, it just makes him laugh.
Just like them roaches.
William Lee.
- What is this?
- He's Hauser. I'm O'Brien.
City Narcotics.
We're gonna take you downtown, Bill.
Little matter of possession
of a dangerous substance.
You've got quite a record, Bill.
A lot of drugs poured down the old vein.
I was a troubled person then.
I'm married now.
Straight. Got a good job.
That's good, Bill.
That's nice.
- What's this, then?
- That's my job.
I use it to kill bugs.
- He says it kills bugs.
- He could be right.
- I'd like to see it.
- Me, too.
- I'd like to see it, too.
- Well, gee.
I'd like to demonstrate, but I already
got rid of that last case of crabs I had.
Very funny, Bill.
But, you know...

I think we got a bug
around here somewhere.
You're right.
Let's see
if that yellow stuff will kill it.
We'll be back later
to see how it worked out, kiddo.
Yeah.
Break a leg.
William Lee?
I have arranged all this
just to have a moment alone with you.
I am your case officer.
- Uh, my what?
- Case officer.
You are my agent.
I, in turn, report to your controller.
Come, come, Mr. Lee.
You don't have to play dumb with me.
Oh. No. Well...
that would be foolish, wouldn't it?
It would. Say, Bill...
do you think you could rub
some of this powder on my lips?
Uh, yeah.
Sure.
Well, now.
As you might have expected...
I have instructions
for you from Control.
It's about the little woman.
- The what?
- The little woman.
Your little woman.
- Your wife.
- Tell me.
Your wife is not really your wife.
She is an agent
of Interzone Incorporated.
You must kill her.
Kill Joan Lee.
It must be done soon-
this week.
And it must be done real tasty.

Interzone Incorporated?
An organization based in Interzone...
a notorious free port
on the North African coast.
A haven for
the mongrel scum of the Earth...
an engorged parasite
on the underbelly of the West.
Ah, I can't see it.
Why would a classy
American woman like Joan...
ever want to work for a two-bit outfit
like Interzone Incorporated?
But who says Joan Lee
is really a woman?
In fact, who says she's human at all?
- What do you mean by that?
- I can say no more.
Hey, where you going?
Don't do it. Don't do it.
There'll be hell to pay.
We've been made.
We gotta get out of town.
Wait a minute.
- What's going on?
- I got busted for bug powder.
I started
hallucinating behind the stuff.
God knows what I really said
to those two flatfeet.
I'm not even sure
how I got out of there.
Did you bring back
tomorrow's bug powder?
Did you, Bill?
Did you?
My God, Joan.
You're acting like a full-fledged junkie.
And it's bug powder,
for Christ's sake!
Oh.
I do have a little bit of a habit, yes, hon.
You ought to at least give me
a few marks for originality.

How did you know
it just wouldn't kill you?
I don't know, Bill.
I felt drawn to it.
You know?
Like you feel drawn...to an old lover.
Say, Bill...
could you rub
some of this powder on my lips?
Could you, Bill?
Please?
Hey!
Bill.
Hey, where were you this morning?
We missed you at the Automat.
I, uh, got in a bit of a jam.
I misplaced the gear,
in a manner of speaking.
Yeah.
We heard about it.
We saw you go off with the heat, in fact.
They won't give it back to Cohen.
It's evidence, they say.
Yeah. It's an embarrassment, yes.
Is that why you tried to lift mine?
That's unkind, Edward.
"Lift" is unkind.
I'm doing a job for a friend.
The centipedes, Edward.
The centipedes are getting downright arrogant.
They're starting to attack his children.
Take it from me, Bill.
You're not the first one
to develop a bug powder problem.
See this man.
He'll help ya.
"Dr. A. Benway...
General Practitioner."
Bug powder?
- You mean, uh, pyrethrum?
- Yes.
Hmm. I get a lot of you folks
in the extermination trade.
You better help this friend of yours

get off the yellow stuff.

- It'll kill him.

- How do I get him to kick?

- Kick?

- H-How do I get him off it?

Oh.

Mix it with this.

Gradually increase the percentage
of black without telling your friend...

and he'll lose his taste

for the bug powder soon enough.

What is it?

What does it do?

Oh, it's all natural.

It's made from, uh...

aquatic Brazilian centipede

or some such outlandish thing.

It shuts down the brain's

response to the bug powder. That's all.

The powder becomes

irrelevant to the addict...

and the addict then

ceases to be addicted.

Side effects?

Nothing that will surprise the addict.

But, uh, before I -

before I do your cure...

I've gotta score some bug powder.

Score?

You're not trying to... pull a fast one
on the old doctor, are you?

I came here for help.

Of course you did.

Phew!

My God.

It smells like a... tainted cheese.

You'll see how elegantly this works.

The black will disappear completely.

And there'll be no smell,

no discoloration.

It's like an agent -

an agent who's come to believe

his own cover story...

but who's in there, hiding...

in a larval state...
just waiting
for the proper moment to hatch out.
Extra, extra! Read all about it!
Thirty-nine cents, just for today! Special.
Thirty-nine cents.
Fresh cabbage.
Centipedes.
"Followers of obsolete,
unthinkable trades...
"doodling in Etruscan...
"addicts of drugs not yet synthesized...
"black marketeers of World War III...
"excisors of telepathic sensitivity...
"osteopaths of the spirit...
"investigators...
"of infractions denounced...
"by bland, paranoid chess players...
"servers of
fragmentary warrants taken down...
"in hebephrenic shorthand...
"charging unspeakable
mutilations of the spirit...
officials of unconstituted
police states, broke -"
Hi, Bill.
Say, why don't you and I join them?
Hank and I were just bored.
It wasn't serious.
I didn't take it seriously.
Where is Hank?
He got embarrassed and left.
Not before he came, I hope.
Hank's on junk.
He doesn't come.
Not before you came, I hope.
I'm on bug powder.
I don't need to come.
"Officials of unconstituted police states...
"brokers of
exquisite dreams and nostalgias...
"tested on the sensitized
cells of junk sickness...
"and bartered for

raw materials of the will...
"drinkers of the Heavy Fluid...
sealed in translucent
amber of dreams."
I guess it's about time
for our William Tell routine.
Oh, God.
Oh, God.
Joan.
Joan.
Oh, Joan.
Are you a faggot?
Not by nature, no.
I'm not.
I wouldn't say... faggot.
No.
However, circumstances have forced me
to consider the possibility that -
I'd like you to meet a friend of mine.
He specializes in sexual ambivalence.
Sexual ambulance, did you say?
My God.
He's called Mugwump.
No point in feigning surprise.
You knew we would be
getting in touch with you.
Why else would you come
to a waterfront dive like this?
Why else?
I suggest a Clark Nova portable.
It has mythic resonance.
Clark Nova. A typewriter?
You suggest it for what?
For your report
from Interzone, of course.
Handwriting is not
considered professional.
Interzone.
My report.
And don't leave out
any of the tasty details -
the small red hole in the forehead...
or...
the look of astonishment on her face.

Listen to me.
You're just gonna have to leave town...
and Interzone is the only place...
that'll have a shady character
like you at such short notice.
Take this.
Take what?
What is that?
Your ticket to Interzone.
Tourist class, I'm afraid...
but what can you expect these days?
We'll contact you there.
Hmm. It's commie trash.
And it's been fired very recently.
You use it in a holdup?
I want that typewriter in the window.
I want the portable.
This plus...
\$8.00.
You got any ammo to go with it?
These'll cover the state tax.
- Bill.
- Martin.
Listen, Bill, I told the police it
was a drunken accident, that I saw it.
So at least that's on the record.
They're after you though.
They're saying that,
you escaped from custody...
and murdered your wife,
and-and they want you.
I'd better lie low till my ship sails.
- You booked passage somewhere already?
- Sure. Look.
Got my ticket.
Put this away,
for God's sake, Bill.
- I'll send you a report.
- You'll send me a report?
Well, I'll send you
a copy of the report.
Are you gonna be all right?
I hear Interzone's really nice
this time of year.

He woke up in bed...
to find himself wedged...
between a Dutch transvestite...
and six Arab men.
Clark Nova.
Very nice for writing reports.
I use a Krups Dominator myself.
Company policy.
You're American, correct?
You know Dr. Benway?
I am interested in selling...
a large stash of the black meat.
Verstehen Sie?
The sun-dried, powdered black meat...
of the giant
aquatic Brazilian centipede.
And...
for some reason...
I am certain that you are working
for Herr Dr. Benway.
I'm - I-I-I'm sorry.
I apparently mistook you
for somebody else.
But as it happens, Mr. Lee,
I am, among other things...
a provider of rare services to the arts...
and in my experience as a provider
of rare services to the arts...
I have found that writers
are a-a particularly needy group.
Is there nothing
I can provide for you...
Mr. Lee?
A very professional...
operation...
as you can see, Mr. Lee.
You like a taste?
I'd be happy to join you in a taste,
if you're planning to have one.
You can understand
that if you were...
a purchasing agent
for a foreign power...
how it would be

to my advantage...
to impress you with the cleanliness...
and the sincerity...
of our operation.
- You, uh, mentioned a Dr. -
- Benway.
- Benway.
- Benway. Correct.
Yes.
Does he qualify as a foreign power?
Oh, but yes!
He's very foreign.
May I?
Yes.
Lee, wake up.
This is no time to doze off...
like a freckled-face boy
on a fishing raft.
What's up?
Now, now, Bill.
No need for that.
You didn't think
we'd abandon you, did ya?
No, no. The thought
never occurred to me.
Good. We like confidence in an agent.
But don't let it make you careless.
I was, uh -
I was just in the...
process of configuring my report.
That's good, Lee. Admirable.
But there have been some changes -
- Changes at the top.
- Oh? Yeah?
Good changes, Bill.
Fresh blood. Sparkling insights.
Uh, Bill, could you do me a favor?
What?
I want you to type
a few words into me -
words that I'll dictate to ya.
Yeah.
Sure. What the hell.
Okay. Now, the first sentence is...

"Homosexuality is the best
all-around cover an agent ever had."
Aw, come on, Bill.
Don't be such a pansy!
Be forceful.
Hurt me.
I love it.
That is a great sentence.
These are words to live by, Bill.
I'm glad these words
are going into your report.
Our new management will be so pleased...
that you see our point of view.
What -What point of view?
Well, uh, just that we appreciate...
that you might find the thought
of engaging in, uh, homosexual acts...
morally and, uh, possibly even...
physically repulsive...
and, uh, we are encouraged...
that you are able to overcome
these personal, uh, barriers...
to better serve the cause
to which we are all so devoted.
You have left the Clark Nova at home?
It's doing all right without me.
And, uh...
you have contacted Dr. Benway?
I told you before
I never met the man.
Bill, I can smell him on you.
Benway marks out all those
whom he has met like a lemur...
pissing on a liana vine
to mark his territory.
You're a marked man, Bill.
Joanie.
Joanie, shall we go?
Yes. Yes.
Hans. Hans, that couple.
Who are they?
They are Tom and Joan Frost.
Americans who have lived here
a very long time.

They're both writers.
Writers of fiction, like you.
They live in a nice flat...
in the new building
at the foot of the mountain.
They're visited constantly...
by many handsome,
young Interzone men.
Sometimes...
two or three at a time.
Can you, uh, introduce me?
I do not think
it would be to your advantage.
For some reason...
that woman has taken
a serious dislike to me.
Kiki.
Come sit with us.
Kiki, this is Mr. Lee.
Hello.
Mr. Lee is curious
about the Frost couple.
He would like to meet them.
I think the woman would have
sex with you, Mr. Lee.
The man, he only likes Interzone boys.
I don't want to fuck 'em.
I just want to talk to 'em.
You know how
Americans are, Kiki.
They love to travel...
and then they only want to meet
other Americans...
and talk about how hard it is
to get a decent hamburger.
There's a party tonight
at the O'Leary place.
Frost will be meeting
a group of us here...
and then walking
through the casbah.
My friends and I would be happy
to take you with us.
You're the new writer, aren't you?

You've just arrived.
A few days ago.
I write, uh, reports.
Oh? Uh, and did you
come to Interzone for the boys?
- No, I didn't.
- Tom and I did.
That's quite a hot threesome
you arrived with.
They're very cheap,
and they're really a lot of fun.
Yoo-hoo!
You use a Clark Nova, don't you?
To write with. Typewriter.
Oh, I do. Yes.
I wouldn't use a Clark Nova myself.
- Too demanding.
- Demanding?
Oh, come on. We're both writers.
We know what we're talking about.
Well, I'm new to this game,
to tell you the truth.
If I get blocked again,
I'll let you try my Martinelli.
Her inventiveness will surprise you.
I can't wait.
They say you murdered your wife.
- Is that true?
- Who told you that?
Word gets around.
It wasn't murder.
It was an accident.
There are no accidents.
For example...
I've been killing my own wife slowly,
over a period of years.
- What?
- Well, not intentionally.
I mean, on the level of conscious intention,
it's insane, monstrous.
But you do consciously know it.
You just said it. We're discussing it.
Not consciously.
This is all happening...

telepathically.
- Nonconsciously.
- What do you mean?
If you look carefully at my lips...
you'll realize
that I'm actually saying something else.
I'm not actually telling you
about the several ways...
I'm gradually murdering Joan -
about the housekeeper Fadela,
whom I've hired...
to make Joan deathly ill by witchcraft...
about the medicines
and drugs I've given her...
about the constant nibbling away
at her self-esteem and sanity...
that I've managed
without being at all obvious about it.
Whereas Joanie finds that she simply...
cannot be as obsessively precise
as she wants to be...
unless she writes
everything in longhand.
Look, uh, I'm afraid, um...
I'm not gonna be
very good company tonight.
Thanks for the invite anyway.
I think, I'll have to take a rain check.
Oh.
Enjoying the beach?
I would never have expected
to see you up and out so early.
You certainly were in rough shape
at the O'Leary party last night.
Was I?
You were very raw -
emotionally, I mean.
You seemed to be in a lot of pain.
Pain.
I don't remember... pain.
And, in fact, I don't remember
the O'Leary party.
In fact, I don't remember you.
Well, it was a very intense

performance in any case.
My name's Cloquet.
Yves Cloquet.
Can I buy you breakfast?
I've seen you around,
but I had no idea you were queer.
Queer.
I saw you arrive
with those three Interzone boys.
What an entrance.
You all looked very...
familiar with each other.
Queer.
A curse.
Been in our family for generations.
The Lees have always been perverts.
I shall never forget
the unspeakable horror...
that froze the lymph in my glands...
when the baneful word seared
my reeling brain:
I...
was a homosexual.
I thought of the painted,
simpering female impersonators...
I had seen in a Baltimore nightclub.
Could it be possible
I was one of those subhuman things?
I walked the streets in a daze...
like a man with a light concussion.
I would have destroyed myself.
But a wise old queen
Bobo, we called her.
taught me that I had a duty...
to live and to bear my burden
proudly for all to see.
Poor Bobo came to a sticky end.
He was riding in
the Duc de Ventre's Hispano-Suiza...
when his falling hemorrhoids
blew out of the car...
and wrapped around the rear wheel.
He was completely gutted,
leaving an empty shell...

sitting there
on the giraffe-skin upholstery.
Even the eyes and the brain went...
with a horrible "schlupping" sound.
The duke says he will carry that ghastly
schlup with him to his mausoleum.
You sound as if you could use a drink.
My place?
A drink.
A drink?
No.
No, I can't. I gotta go home.
I have a...I have a...
I have a report to write.
Excuse me.
Hmm.
You made a big hit
with our young friend Yves.
- Yves?
- Cloquet.
Yves said you were wonderfully funny.
Said you did a little routine that made him...
chuckle to himself all day.
Yes, you-you could, um -
You could probably get him into bed
if you worked at it a bit.
Deadly aphrodisiac, humor.
I'm not, uh -
I don't really-
Have you seen Hans around?
Oh, you mean you haven't heard?
No. I haven't heard.
Hans was arrested and deported
two weeks ago.
- Deported.
- Mm-hmm.
They let him take his clothes
and his passport.
That was it.
Everything else - nationalized, as they say.
Why?
He neglected to pay
the right officials, I think.
You knew he ran

a drug factory in the medina?
What, um -
What drug did he manufacture?
Nothing too exotic.
Majoun, I think.
It's a local hash resin-almond paste.
You'd spread it on a muffin like jam.
Try it.
While you're at it,
why don't you try my Martinelli?
Take her now.
Try her out.
Holy shit. That machine doesn't
belong to me. It's Tom Frost's.
My God, Lee...
Surely you know better than to bring
an enemy agent into your own home.
You gave me no choice. You were giving her
access to your innermost vulnerabilities...
forcing them on her,
for God's sake!
But what am I gonna tell him?
What's your assessment of the situation?
Did Frost know that his machine
was an Interzonal agent?
He, uh - He and his wife
appear to have a close connection...
with the indigenous population here.
His wife.
Yeah, yeah!
Of course!
The key is Joan Frost.
You will seduce her, and you will discover
the substance of her report...
and deliver it directly to me.
Seduce her?
But what about -
What about Kiki and
the Interzone boys? My cover.
It'll work beautifully, Bill.
The opposition will be thrown into total confusion.
- Tom's gone out with the boys.
- I came to see you.
Oh.

There's a great restaurant
in New York looks just like this.
Oh, really?
- You write in longhand.
- Yes.
I'm not good with machines.
They intimidate me.
I think I broke Tom's typewriter.
The Martinelli?
He'll be furious.
- Does he have another one?
- He has that one, the Mujahideen.
- It's Arabic.
- Does he use it much?
Not much.
What happened to the Martinelli?
I probably just
threw it on the floor and smashed it.
Probably? You don't know?
I suffer from, um...
sporadic hallucinations.
Join the club.
Do you intend to kill Tom's Mujahideen?
Only in self-defense.
I understood writing
could be dangerous.
I didn't realize the danger
came from the machinery.
- What are you talking about?
- I'll show you.
Oh.
- Are you gonna write something in Arabic?
- No.
You are.
I don't like using Tom's things.
We don't trespass on each other.
Do you have any objection
to trying some of this?
I can't read it.
Is it erotic?
It's, um, fairly erotic.
- Kind of uncivilized.
- More erotic.
Filthier.

- Filthier? Okay.
- All you think about.
- Followers of obsolete, unthinkable trades...
- Getting really...
- pretty good here.
- doodling in Etruscan...
- addicts of drugs not yet synthesized...
- I'm surpassing myself here.

black marketeers of World War III...
excisors of telepathic sensitivity...
followers of obsolete,
unthinkable trades.

Ooh, this is very good.

- Addicts of drugs not yet synthesized-
- Very, very dirty.

World War III...
excisors of telepathic sensitivity...
osteopaths of the spirit...
investigators of infractions...
denounced by bland,
paranoid chess players.

Joan.

Oh, Joan.

Mrs. Frost!

This is an evil
and insane thing that you are doing.

You must stop it at once!

Pull up your hair.

Who's that?

Oh, my housekeeper.

It's my Mujahideen.

For God's sake!

It jumped of its own accord.

You did see that, didn't you?

Joan, are you all right?

What happened?

Fadela stormed in here, and she
threw your typewriter out the window.

Well, that's it.

The woman has to go.

She certainly seemed deadly to me.

Oh, I knew it.

Look, Tom.

Look.

This is how Fadela's
been controlling you,Joan.
Your blood, your pubic hair,
your fingernails.
Fadela controls nobody,
and you know it.
We have forced control upon her.
Poor woman's probably desperate
to get out of our household.
No, missus.
She's making you say everything...
even that.
You must find all of these in your house.
You must destroy them.
Bill...
I'm going to need my Martinelli.
I feel desperately insecure
without a typewriter in the house.
Yes, well, I haven't had a chance to try it out
yet, Tom. I was kind of hoping -
I'll leave Hafid here with you,Joanie,
in case Fadela comes back.
Bill and I will go to his place
and pick up the Martinelli now.
I'll go with Bill.
You two stay here.
I need to get out.
Fadela's within 30 feet of us.
See if you can find her.
There.
She's right there.
That thing she's cutting up...
have you ever seen that before?
No.
Looks like some kind of
sea creature, I think.
All those women...
they work for her?
In a sense.
They're all Fadela's lovers.
I'm going to have to -
I'm gonna have to
stay here with Fadela -
do penance.

I've been instructed to reveal to you...
that you were programmed
to shoot your wife, Joan Lee.
It was not an act
of free will on your part.
Hey!
Who the fuck asked ya?
You worry me, Bill.
You cause me many anxious moments.
Oh, gee, I hope you're not
losing any sleep.
No need to be nasty, Bill.
There was some thought that you might
actually want to hear this information -
that it might assuage your guilt.
Save the psychoanalysis
for your grasshopper friends.
You have to admit,
it was a pretty tasty setup, Bill.
Joan marries you as part
of her agent's cover...
not realizing that you were
the very enemy agent assigned to kill her.
As elegant as it is brilliant.
Wait a minute.
You're saying that Joan was sent
by Interzone, Incorporated to marry me?
Yeah. In fact, she was sent
to you by Fadela, who was her controller.
We did a lot of groundwork
to set you up in their files...
as the prime candidate for marriage.
And it didn't matter that
I didn't know anything about it?
An unconscious agent
is an effective agent, Bill.
The situation does generate
some ethical paradoxes at times.
I'm the first to admit that.
When you bugs first approached me...
one of your associates suggested...
that Joan was possibly not human.
What did he mean by that?
Women aren't human, Bill.

Or perhaps more precisely...
they're a different species from men...
with different wills
and different purposes on Earth.
You know this instinctively, Bill...
and it's your instincts
that make you such a good operative.
I'm talking about Joan.
If Joan Lee wasn't human...
what was she?
Well, Joan was a special case.
Joan was an elite-corps centipede.
Joan was a centipede.
Where's my Martinelli?
Jesus, Tom, are you nuts?
Don't fuck with me, Lee.
I want my typewriter.
A lot of people have tried to silence me.
All have failed.
Tom...
she's here...
in pieces.
I fear it's hopeless.
All right.
We're taking your Clark Nova.
Hafid, the bag.
No.
No.
Wh-Wh-What's going on here?
Wait, wait, wait! This is
a heinous mistake you're making.
Lee, do something.
Stop them.
Well, he's got a gun, Clark Nova.
You don't want to lose your best agent, do ya?
You're gonna have to write
a full report, Lee. And I mean full.
How am I gonna write it,
in longhand?
Will you take this sack off!
This is insubordination!
Ooh, you're all gonna pay for this!
Heads are gonna roll!
Your days in

Interzone are numbered, Lee.

I suggest you give up
the writing game.

- Make tracks for another part of the world.

- You guys are gonna-

Fuck 'em all.

Squares on both sides.

I am the only complete man in the industry.

- Bill.

- Bill?

I must be hallucinating.

What are you cats doing here?

We're here to see you, Bill.

Come on.

Yeah, man. It's probably the first time
you haven't been hallucinating in a long time.

What are you talking about?

What are you saying?

Naturally, I've had a few odd moments.

Everybody blacks out in Interzone.

- Wouldn't you?

- Definitely.

Sure.

What's in the pillowcase, Bill?

These are the remains
of my last writing machine.

It's been a big problem for me.

- Mind if I take a look?

- Go ahead.

Wait a minute.

Where are we going?

Oh, man.

- How about back to your place?

- Nope.

Why not?

I'm not safe there.

I'm a dead duck there.

We'll protect you.

You boys are kidding yourselves.

You're babes in the woods here.

Well, what do you suggest?

We thought it was important for us
to help you get your book together.

Yeah, I've sent sections of it

to my publisher, and they're interested.

- All you gotta do is finish it, man.

- You've already done the hard part.

Book. My book?

Yeah. The one

you've been calling Naked Lunch.

Where did you put

that Bradley the Buyer routine?

Did you find it all?

Yeah. It's on the sofa

right next to the Hassan's Rumpus Room riff.

- It's all right there.

- I'm telling you, boys...

I never saw those pages before.

I truly do suspect

some sort of colossal con.

Oh, someone's planted

these pages in your room, right?

Somebody sent all those letters to me

and signed them with your name, right?

A well-orchestrated cabal

could easily manage...

all of these simple things, children.

When will you learn?

They've done you a favor, 'cause this

stuff's gonna get published...

under your name...

and you'll have a career.

Yeah, you'll probably

get into print before we will.

For God's sake, Bill,

play ball with this conspiracy.

You're patronizing me, boys...

but I don't mind,

'cause you're so sweet to me, too.

Hey, Martin, listen to this.

"So we start for New Orleans past

iridescent lakes and orange gas flares...

"and swamps and garbage heaps...

"alligators crawling around

in broken bottles and tin cans...

"neon arabesques of motels...

"marooned pimps scream obscenities

at passing cars from islands of rubbish.

New Orleans is a dead museum."
So nice.
Sound familiar, Bill?
First time I ever heard it. Read on.
I think it's time to discuss your, uh...
philosophy of drug use
as it relates to artistic endeavor.
I think it's time
to bring this meeting to order.
I think it's time for you boys
to share my last taste...
of the true black meat.
The flesh of the giant
aquatic Brazilian centipede.
So we're still here
in Interzone with Bill, right?
That's right, Hank.
And now we're gonna travel
back to the city, right?
- That's right, Hank.
- I think Bill's on top of things here, don't you?
He has a grip on a certain, uh,
unique reality principle, yes.
I think you both should consider
staying here for a few months.
Everything you could want
is cheap and-and plentiful here.
That reality principle thing
could work for you, too.
Well, my mother's all alone,
and she's kind of sick, Bill.
And besides, my book's
as all-American as football.
- Couldn't finish it here.
- America is not a young land.
It is old...
and dirty and evil.
Before the settlers,
before the Indians.
The evil is there waiting.
What about you, Martin?
Maybe you can, uh, move into my place.
What do you think?
Stay until you finish the book...

but then come back to us.
You'll be okay?
Yeah. Don't worry about me.
The Zone is full of surprises.
The Zone takes care of its own.
William?
You look terrible.
What are you doing here?
I don't - I don't know.
I just -
My only fr-
My only friends in the -
in the world.
I- I'm afraid I-
I'll never see 'em again.
I feel - feel so -
Oh. Severed.
Come with me.
- Take me home.
- I can't go home.
I can't go home.
Is that your typing machine there?
Foutu.
Broken... beyond repair.
If we fix the typing machine...
we also fix the life.
There. You see?
There's no cause for despair.
In this shop,
anything can be fixed that is broken.
I don't know, Kiki.
They don't seem to be capable
of delicate work here.
You must have faith, William.
Look.
We have your new writing machine.
Not bad. Not bad.
Not bad. Not bad.
I feel very comfortable
working with you.
I like that sense of camaraderie in an agent.
You must be progressing.
My predecessor felt you had
an ambivalent relationship with him.

- You mean Clark Nova.
- Yes.
How is he?
He's still in the hands of our enemies.
Such are the hazards of our trade.
A hazardous trade, yes.
Your report on the subversive
activities of Joan Frost...
was a model of its type.
If you continue to develop
your skills as an operative...
I think a top position
with the C.I.A. is not out of reach.
The C.I.A.?
You really think so?
You have the demeanor.
That's something you can't buy.
The C.I.A.
The C.I.A.
Now, that's a career
you can really sink your teeth into.
It has...
resonance.
But giving yourself over
to being a writer-
Ah, well.
This stuff is very potent.
The two are very closely related.
So you boys keep telling me.
Well, what's my next assignment?
I'm hungry for adventure.
Excellent.
You know the Swiss dandy Cloquet?
- Yes.
- And?
I think he's a faggito and won't admit it.
That ought to make it all easier.
You will seduce
or otherwise compromise Cloquet.
We have it on good authority
that he's our conduit to Benway.
Dr. Benway, M.D., Ph.D.?
Self-styled. He never actually
made it through medical school.

He runs an interesting little show here
which he calls Interzone, Inc.

Pretentious, if you ask me.

Benway's behind Interzone, Inc.?

The base of his pyramid
is a drug called the black meat.

- The pyramid's tip -

- Is?

Ah. Well, we'd like to know.

Dr. Benway.

- Of course.

- Yes.

- Yes.

- And he's obviously got sensational cover.

He's floated in and out
of the Zone for years...
without anybody actually
ever seeing him.

But now the pressure's on
to place an agent close to him.

Me.

Assessments are being made.

- You're working away, William?

- Yes, Kiki.

The machine turns out
to be a very good one.

Muy simpatico.

And I have you to thank for it...
and so I will.

Thank you.

I'm very proud
to be your friend, you know.

I'm very proud
that I can help you to be a writer.

You have done that, Kiki.

You really have.

Would you like some tea?

That would be lovely, William.

Kiki.

- Hmm?

- Do you know Cloquet?

The Swiss man with the big house
on the Old Valley Road?

Cloquet?

Oh, yes, yes.
Yves with the wonderful car.
He has a wonderful car?
The most wonderful car.
Enjoying the ride?
I'm wild about it, yes.
Thank you.
It's good to be wild sometimes.
You know, I have often thought of
that funny story you told me...
the first time we met on the beach.
The one about the Duc de Ventre.
At first I didn't know how to take it.
I thought you were
making a pass at me.
Did I ever tell you about the man
who taught his asshole to talk?
His whole abdomen would move up and
down, you dig, farting out the words.
It was unlike anything I ever heard.
Bubbly, thick, stagnant sound.
A sound you could smell.
This man worked for the carnival, you dig?
And to start with it was
like a novelty ventriloquist act.
After a while,
the ass started talking on its own.
He would go in
without anything prepared...
and his ass would ad-lib
and toss the gags back at him every time.
Then it developed sort of teethlike...
little raspy incurving hooks
and started eating.
He thought this was cute at first
and built an act around it...
but the asshole would eat its way through
his pants and start talking on the street...
shouting out it wanted equal rights.
It would get drunk, too, and have crying jags.
Nobody loved it.
And it wanted to be kissed,
same as any other mouth.
Finally, it talked all the time,

day and night.
You could hear him for blocks,
screaming at it to shut up...
beating at it with his fists...
and sticking candles up it, but...
nothing did any good,
and the asshole said to him...
"It is you who will shut up
in the end, not me...
"because we don't need you
around here anymore.
I can talk and eat and shit."
After that, he began waking up
in the morning with transparentjelly...
like a tadpole's tail
all over his mouth.
He would tear it off his mouth
and the pieces would stick to his hands...
like burning gasoline jelly
and grow there.
So, finally, his mouth sealed over...
and the whole head...
would have amputated spontaneously
except for the eyes, you dig?
That's the one thing
that the asshole couldn't do was see.
It needed the eyes.
Nerve connections were blocked...
and infiltrated and atrophied.
So, the brain couldn't
give orders anymore.
It was trapped inside the skull...
sealed off.
For a while, you could see...
the silent, helpless suffering
of the brain behind the eyes.
And then finally
the brain must have died...
because the eyes went out...
and there was no more feeling in them
than a crab's eye at the end of a stalk.
You seem to like my little friend.
I'm so glad.
I'm writing a business piece

on corporate life in North Africa.
Oh, my, my.
We are fragile today, aren't we?
He has to get to know you first.
Oh, does he?
Well, let's see what we can do, then.
Kiki, will you come
and see the parrots with me?
There are cages in the master bedroom.
I, um, don't think I can, Mr. Cloquet.
That is, I don't really want to.
I'd particularly like to interview
a certain Dr. Benway.
Kiki doesn't seem to find my parrots
attractive anymore. Isn't that sad?
Kiki would love to play
with your parrots, Yves...
but Kiki is as anxious to contact
this Benway character as I am.
Fadela, the witch
who works for the Frosts...
she and Benway are...
intimates.
You didn't hear it from me.
Kiki?
Go see the fucking parrots,
will you, Kiki? I gotta take a piss.
Then I'll come and get you,
and we'll go home.
Pissoir's at the end of the great hall.
Kiki.
Kiki.
Kiki.
Hello, Bill. What's up?
Something the matter?
You seem distracted.
I wish you'd say something.
I don't like this mood, Bill.
- Are we going out?
- You're going out.
Why don't you just write something
and calm yourself down?
You're obviously not
in a professional state of mind.

Maybe I should write about
your little double cross.
You expected me to end up in that
parrot cage with Cloquet, didn't you?
Bill, are you thinking
of getting rid of me?
I think an exchange of hostages
is the only viable scenario.
No, really, Bill,
if you get rid of me...
you sever ties with reality.
For instance, take the case of-
Oh! Careful!
Of the female agent who forgot
her real identity and merged with her cover story.
She is still a fricoteuse in Annexia.
And incidentally, you can make a square,
heterosex citizen queer...
with this angle using drugs-
Tom...
I've brought you a new typewriter...
which conveniently dispenses
two types of intoxicating fluids...
when it likes what you've written.
Are you proposing to trade back
for your Clark Nova?
Thinking of it.
Has it written
anything good for you lately?
No. It's too damned
all-American for my taste.
Guess I've gone foreign or something.
Well, my Mugwriter here
is so foreign, it's almost alien.
You're gonna do
your best work on her. Guaranteed.
Hafid, bring the machine
in question for Bill, will you?
And how are you enjoying
your affair with Joan?
Literate, complex and neurotic,
I would imagine.
I haven't seen her for weeks.
She ran off with Fadela and her coven.

Oh, that's too bad.
Yes, she does that
when she feels attracted to a man.
Don't give up though.
It's-It's a good sign.
With Joanie...
the courtship period can involve
years of passionate ambivalence.
Tom, I think we should
take a close look at his machine first...
test it thoroughly.
Don't you, Tom?
You both have different writing styles.
Bill Lee has always been a man
of powerful instinct, Hafid.
If he says I'll do
my best work on his machine...
well, I'm sure that's prophecy.
Take the gun, too, Bill.
No American should find himself
in a foreign land without a pistol.
You wouldn't be trying to set me up again,
now, would you, Tom?
Well, you've set yourself up already, Bill.
I'm just trying to give you
a fighting chance. That's all.
Clark Nova.
Clark Nova, it's me.
It's - It's Bill Lee.
Clark Nova, speak to me.
You're safe with me now.
They tortured me...
did unspeakable things to me.
I'm on my last legs.
The bastards.
Clark Nova, where is Joan?
Where's Joan?
Hans's old drug factory in the medina.
Fadela is there.
Fadela is your point of penetration
into Interzone, Inc.
Fadela.
Uh, what do I -
what do I do when I find her?

You'll know what to do
when the time comes.
Just remember this -
all agents defect...
and all resisters sell out.
That's the sad truth, Bill.
And a writer-
a writer lives the sad truth like anyone else.
The only difference is -
he files a report on it.
Leave me now...
before it's too late.
But wait. What about Joan?
What about Joan?
Go now!
Vaya con dios.
Clark Nova. Clark Nova -
Hurry. Hurry.
Come on.
Your notes must be much more
carefully detailed to be of any use to us.
You must write very clearly.
The effects of the drugs
must be cataloged...
with painstaking accuracy.
-Joan.
- Hmm?
-Joan.
- Bill.
Oh, Bill.
No.
No.
What is that?
What are you writing?
I'm writing...
"All is lost...
...all is lost."
- It's all I've ever written.
- No.
No.
Oh, Joan.
We have to see Fadela.
Take me to Fadela.
Lee, you're here.

Oh, thank God. Thank God.
You see, my misdemeanor
has borne sweet fruit.
Now you are with us.
I was right to approach you so brazenly.
And now Dr. Benway will have no choice -
- Benway.
- Benway.
No choice but to send me back-
- You'll see.
- Benway.
Where I belong.
Well, well.
If it isn't William Lee.
I got to say I'm proud of you, sir.
It took you a while,
but you got us red-handed.
Full marks, boy.
Full marks.
I expected to see an operation
all out for the black meat here.
What's with all the Mugwump jism?
The black meat concession
turns out to have...
some unfortunate
political strings attached.
We've just cut those strings.
From now on,
Interzone is strictly Mugwump territory.
As you can see, we've made
a flying start here with our modest dispensary.
I can feel the heat
closing in on you, Fadela.
Feel them out there
making their moves, you dig?
Oh, really?
Fadela. Huh.
Huh.
You mean this old thing.
- Benway!
- Benway!
Benway!
We met once before, remember? Stateside.
You don't remember.

You had that look, boy.
The look of a...
sheep-killing dog.
Decided to recruit you
right on the spot.
I'm afraid I was forced
by the tenor of the times...
to prescribe that wretched
black meat powder to start you off on...
but the hole-in-the-wall operation,
limited resources -
you understand the problems.
But I understand from Cloquet
that, uh, you're on to our good stuff now.
Mugwump jism can't be beat.
And as you can see,
we've got ourselves a few more friends now.
And a few more dollars, too.
Oh.
This little, uh, Fadela number
is something I developed...
during my tenure as chief physician
to the prime minister of Annexia.
"El Primo" liked to walk the streets
amongst his people in drag, and, well -
Well...
one thing led to another.
It is an elegant way to strike terror
into the hearts of the enemy...
wouldn't you say?
Old Fadela must be on the rag.
She's been acting subversive lately.
Speaking of new uses
for old technology...
I think the new order could find
a place for a man of your caliber.
A .3 2, wasn't it?
That is what you're here for, isn't it?
Hell...
I could use a reliable man
to send to Annexia.
We're expanding, boy.
I need a... spearhead.
Just tell me what you want.

I want her.
Her?
That purulent little cunt?
What for?
I can't write without her.
Bill, I feel confident...
that you and I can
work something out.
Papers, please.
What is the purpose of your visit...
and what is your profession?
I write reports. I'm a writer...
and I intend to write reports on life
in Annexia for the citizens of the U.S.A.
Do you have any proof of what you say?
How do we know
you are really a writer?
Well, I have a writing device.
That's not good enough.
Show us.
- Show you.
- Write something.
- Write something.
- Yes.
Write something.
Joan.
Joan.
What is it, Bill?
Are we there yet?
Almost, Joan.
But I guess it's about time
for our William Tell routine.
Sure, Bill.
Welcome... to Annexia.
Yes. Welcome to Annexia.