

***“The bleak shall inherit the Earth.”***

*- Dr. Freckles*

## **LSD #4: “Sideways Sally has a sprain ...”**

“What do you mean? YOU FUCK? ... I ain’t got no problems in my splinctous!”

Sally and “Crazy Koh” arrived at Dr. Grunkis’ back alley surgical center and health clinic about 25 minutes after their run in with Chunky, and Harry, and the playing of “Hold Your Head Up” by Argent. Sally was miffed by the whole thing ...

Sally had twisted her ankle and scraped herself up pretty bad.

Sally was also coming off her last hit of meth - the combination of withdrawals and the pain made her angrier and crazier than normal ... that, and Koh had given her what was left of his Colt 45 6-pack. Alcohol made Sally, usually, more belligerent.

“I ain’t got no money for that procedure!”, screamed Sally, at the top of her lungs. The windows, poorly set and with rotting putty seals, shook when she screamed - as if a pane of glass would fall out, eventually, if she didn’t stop. The

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“surgical center” was really a poorly lit tool shed, nestled in the darkness of forgotten Seattle, in an alley in Little Saigon – where none of the “good white folk” of Seattle tend to go.

Dr. Grunkis’ clinic was well known in Little Saigon.

Dr. Grunkis’ served those who had very little money, and even less concern for their safety.

Dr. Grunkis’ prided himself on his “years” of experience, and he would often tell his strange story to any mother fucker who was able to hear it, for as long as they could stomach the details.

Tolo Grunkis (aka Dr. Grunkis) was about 50 years old – plus or minus ... he was never really sure about his birth, when it was. His mom had gone completely insane when he was 5 years old, he didn’t know why – he figured it was because his father abandoned him and his mom just after he was born. Tolo’s mom abandoned him, at a fire department station in Anacortes (WA) hoping someone would take pity. Tolo never saw her again after this.

Tolo grew up in halfway houses, foster homes, in Anacortes, Sedro Woolley, and Seattle – his last “home” before becoming an adult was in the Northgate neighborhood of Seattle, not far from the mall.

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Tolo, like many on the streets, failed to make a go-of-it with normal life. Whatever “normal life” is, or was, in the 1970’s and 1980’s ... well ... he failed. He was beaten, of course ... (lots of people in the “system” start out there). He was sexually abused by his first foster parents, and he was peddled to the pedophile elite of Seattle – all of this before Tolo turned 13 years of age. Nobody cared about the trash in CPS (Child Protective Services), least of all CPS.

In 1997, Tolo got a job cleaning up garbage near the Seattle Aquarium. It wasn’t an official job, more like the kind of work which paid cash, and involved very little paperwork – Tolo loved this job. He worked hard, and he was even able to afford a crappy apartment near Sodo. There was that “glimpse” he would sometimes talk about. That partially obscured view of “normal” that he had almost attained, connected to. He had a new girlfriend, they talked about getting married, it was the closest he’d come to peace.

On December the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999, Tolo and his girlfriend Denise went for a walk – not far from where the WTO Protests were happening – the “Battle for Seattle”. They knew to avoid the melee, but that day was special – it was as if the Mayor of Seattle had given every cop in the Seattle Police Department

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“extra permission” to beat the shit out of these “close minded protesters”, these anarchists, these hippie freaks. Tolo wasn’t a protester, neither was Denise.

They stopped at a cafe in Belltown, Tolo had the money to treat his girl right! A cop came in looking for suspects, and he found Tolo. To the cop, Tolo and his girlfriend looked like protesters, having a quick meal before going back to the “battle”.

“What are you guys doing here?”, the cop asked as he leered at Tolo, hovering over the the booth at the cafe.

“We’re just having coffee, eating breakfast Sir”, Tolo was always polite with cops, believing this helped.

The cop pulled his gun, and walked closer to the table they were at - Denise began to shake.

“DON’T MOVE! DON’T MOVE ONE INCH!”

“Sir, we’re not causing problems ...”

“I said don’t move ... that means DON’T TALK ASSHOLE!”

The cop moved closer to Denise, and Denise (who suffered from seizures) began shaking uncontrollably.

“I SAID DON’T FUCKING MOVE!”

Denise’s hand looked as if it was going under the table, maybe for a weapon, perhaps the cop had taken too many

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amphetamines that day. What happened next was too fast, so fast most of the customers in the Cafe wouldn't have noticed - except for the loud, fairly recognizable sound, of a pistol being fired.

The cop shot at Denise, the bullet ripped through her chest, a jet of hot blood shot out at Tolo and before he could recover his senses, the cop shot him with a taser. The policeman, Officer Sherby, had a spare "gun" with him, for situations like this - untraceable, from a previous arrest, every Seattle cop has one. This is the gun you leave behind, with the "suspect", next to the body. This is the gun you use when you accidentally kill someone AND you're a cop, and you as the "cop" need plausible deniability.

Tolo was arraigned in King County Court and his "public defender", the one they assign to poor people, plea bargained his sentence to mere "inciting mayhem". That was it ...

What could have been the best day of Tolo's life, the day he was going to ask Denise to marry him. The day he was going to believe that even garbage like him had a shot at "normal". That was also the day Tolo started calling himself Dr. Grunkis. Tolo lost his mind.

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By the time of Tolo's sentencing hearing, the judge could tell he was incapacitated and unable to understand the proceedings. She decided to commute Tolo's sentence to 90 days in the Harborview Medical Center (County Hospital) Psych Ward. Tolo was observed, given meds and group therapy sessions and all sorts of new-age'y psychological bullshit. He wasn't really crazy, he had simply decided to retreat so deep inside himself that "nothing would ever harm Tolo again". One of the interns, a guy named Chris, believed Tolo had multiple personalities ... "he suffered a schism in his mind." Of course, Tolo knew who he was - he was happy the docs were the ones who were confused.

When Tolo was released in March of 2000, he spent time in a halfway house off of Rainier Avenue, not far from where he now lives - from that day onward he was Dr. Grunkis to those that knew him. Not even Tolo knew his real last name, he discarded his mother's last name years ago ...

It was revealed to Tolo when he was 10, by one of his less evil foster parents, that his mom had left him a recording - a tape. The tape contained information about Tolo's real life, where he was born, how she and her dad arrived in the

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United States. Tolo listened to that tape, one night in 1978. He listened as his mom told him his “history”.

“Dear Tolo. I am sorry about leaving you. I must return to Absalom. I must return to the place I, and your father, are from ... I was told it was destroyed ... an island ... in a lake ... in the mouth of a giant volcano ... destroyed and swallowed ... no one even remembers the name of that land and no one cares ... I can’t take you ... just no way ... but I hope you can forgive me, one day.”

And that was it ...

The last he’d ever heard from his mom ...

And that was the crux, the kernel, the essence of what he would tell people, if they asked him: “where are you from Grunkis?” He would tell them he grew up on an island, an island nation, a place called Absalom. He went to the medical school there, and was licensed by the Nation of Absalom to practice medicine ... He was Dr. Grunkis, the only known survivor of the Island of Absalom, destroyed by a volcano on December the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999.

“FUCK YOU GRUNKIS, DON’T YOU STICK THAT FUCKING ROD IN HER WHAMMY!” ... Koh, who was about the same age

as his hooker, Sally, didn't want his chief source of income damaged.

For her age (around 60 years old), her experiences, Sally was still an attractive woman ... well ... attractive to people who have to pay for sex ... which, well, is every man that was ever born.

"Crazy Koh" met Sally around the time of the Great Financial Crisis, in 2008. Sally didn't like to talk about it, but long ago, many drinks of whiskey ago, many snorts of meth ago, she traded derivatives for WaMu - Washington Mutual Bank. The bank that imploded in 2007, as a warning that something ominous approached ...

WaMu had a small trading desk, mainly working default swaps as "finance vehicles" for cash strapped communities - cities, counties, etc. She never considered the work "good", she just didn't reckon, at the time, it was as dangerously bad as it would become.

Sally had "traded" WaMu into a sketchy venture involving a tribe of coastal Salish, a casino, and a housing development funded by Saudi Arabia. The deal was big - billions big ... the deal was good ... real good ... the deal was based upon the assumption that there would never be, could

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never be, a crash in home prices. By February, 2009, Sally was already “hooking”, selling herself to the sex starved baby boomers in her upscale condo complex.

By 2012, Sally was strung out on meth, living in boxes, in Pioneer Square - this is when and where “Crazy Koh” found her.

Koh promised Sally he’d keep her safe - and he did.

Koh promised Sally he wouldn’t beat her - and he never did.

Koh promised Sally he would make sure she was “straight”, and Sally never went without the drugs she needed.

And, for all this, Sally earned Koh an average of \$2,500.00 a month - Koh kept decent books.

Koh only ran a few other prostitutes, and they were all treated well - but if you were a John? A customer? And you got rough with one of his? They called him “Crazy” for a reason.

Koh once took a man that would not pay to South Park, not far from the bridge over the Duwamish River (an EPA super-fund river). There was this spot, like quicksand ... but not sand ... not mud ... it was a 30 foot deep mix of metal

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shavings, diesel fuel, toxic chemicals, biological waste, and other crap the “environmentally friendly garbage men” would dump there ... late at night ... being paid in cash.

Koh took this man, dropped him in the pool of muck, and watched him sink, scream, yell, for the 2 minutes it took the man to drown, to sink, in that nasty shit.

“YOU HURT MY BITCH ... YOU TOUCH MY BITCHES, GRUNKIS! ... AND I’LL SHOVE A ROD THROUGH YOUR EAR!”

Dr. Grunkis fully understood Koh’s concerns.

Most of what Dr. Grunkis did, surgically speaking, was as useful and as dangerous as the magic performed by a Brazilian faith healer. Table magic, hand cons, mental gifts. It caused little harm, it was mostly theatrical, and probably did nothing to help. Grunkis knew the truth about much, if not all, of “healing”.

Grunkis learned about the “placebo effect” while he was being housed in the psych ward. There was a small library for patients in the psych ward’s common area, with lots of inoffensive literature - stuff like Reader’s Digest. He read a Reader’s Digest article about the placebo effect AND that in many cases it was more successful at treatment than the REAL drugs prescribed by doctors. This gave Tolo (Dr.

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Grunkis), in his addled state, a brilliantly weird idea – what if he could treat people, mainly, by fucking with them? What if healthcare is a mind game?

“Mr. Koh, you know me ... I’ve never hurt any of my patients.”

“You say that ... but then you talk about ‘metal shavings’ and knives and grinders and shoving wood chips into open wounds ... YOU DO THAT SHIT TO SALLY? I WILL FUCK YOU UP!”

“Listen Koh, you can go to the ER at Harborview ...”

Koh was silent ...

As bad as Dr. Grunkis was, the Harborview Emergency Room was worse ...

“Shut up ... just help her.”

Dr. Grunkis massaged Sally’s ankle – it wasn’t broken, just a little sprained. He took a cold iron rod from his tool kit and ran the rod from the ankle to her knee, and back again, several times, while humming the sound track from the musical My Fair Lady, particularly “Wouldn’t it be lovely ...”

“I’m feeling better K ...”, Sally said, after 15 minutes of sitting their, stationary, undergoing the “rod treatment”.

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“I have your real medicine baby ...”, Koh said as he held Sally’s hand and kept an eye on Grunkis.

“I know you do K”, Sally smiled. She knew the world was hell, and Koh might have been the one person that loved her.

Dr. Grunkis mixed a green Kool-Aid with a red Kool-Aid from his mini fridge – he made it seem dramatic, because he knew “acting” was a big part of the “cure”.

“Here Sally, drink this.”

“What’s in it?”

“You really want to know?”, after Grunkis said this, Koh shook his head, and Sally nodded.

“It’s a mixture of herbs from the western slopes of Tibet, minced liver from fish captured below 3,000 feet, and some other minerals, all of which are necessary to your body’s recovery ...”, it sounded good.

Sally drank it, squinted – Grunkis would often add the extract of the ghost pepper to his mixes ... just a few drops ... to give it the kick that would allow people to know “it’s working”.

“Shit doc, that’s good stuff ...”, Sally smiled, and got up from the old barbershop chair Dr. Grunkis used for examining his patients. “Crazy Koh” paid him the 50 bucks required,

according to Dr. Grunkis' public fee schedule, posted on his wall.

"Doc, I hope I don't see you again, but if I do ... fuck ... I hope you can help ..."

"I do too Koh, you know I enjoy helping the sick."

Koh and Sally left the tool shed ...

Grunkis, who was hungry, knew the food bank would be open for another hour - and so he shut up his office and walked there ...

The sky was obscured by whatever gumbous Raytheon was spraying that day - could be barium salts ... aluminum ... and other endothermic compounds ... no one really knew or cared in Seattle. Most people focused on what was important - their "smart devices".

As Dr. Grunkis made his way down Boren Avenue, he saw an old friend of his, "Chunky", and a young stranger, sitting on the concrete retaining wall off the sidewalk.

"Yo, Chunky, you feeling ok?", as soon as Dr. Grunkis got close enough, he could see Chunky was not ok.

"Are you a friend of Chunky's?", Harry asked.

"Yes, a good friend, and his doctor", Chunky winced a little when Dr. Grunkis said this.

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“He’s not good ...”, Harry replied.

“What’s wrong Chunky?”

“I’ve got the demons visiting again ...”

“Fuck ... that’s not good at all ...”, Grunkis shook his head and recalled the last time he treated Chunky for demons.

The procedure took 8 hours, rope, Pink Floyd music, a fifth of whiskey (mostly for Grunkis) and some weed (mostly for Chunky). Chunky suffered from severe PTSD – and Grunkis pondered “how does a man that old, with such a messed up brain case, stay alive?” So Grunkis understood.

“Well, listen ... my office hours are over, but if you want we can go back to my office now and talk about it ...”

“Sir, that would be great”, Harry quickly responded and got Chunky on to his feet, assisting him in the short walk to the Dr. Grunkis’ clinic.

These three men made their way the two blocks, down Boren, on towards that back alley tool shed ...

It was nearing evening, and the gray, nasty, spiderweb sky was giving way to darkness ...

Grunkis didn’t say much on the walk there, he was a little upset he missed going to the food bank.

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Grunkis did say, to himself, knowing the secret to healthcare ...

***“Dammit, if this isn’t the best scene for the next act!”***