

ANTHONY SWOFFORD

At the Collision Between

After the war we live in *The Time After The War*.

In the past, sex has been held back. To no consequence. The man returns to the hand, and memory or fantasy, and local prostitutes and other men if necessary, and after war the women welcome the men home.

Photos of Marines and Sailors kissing wives or girlfriends or random caring women.

Holding back sex has never worked. Parades and drinking. The warrior knows. This is not to say the warrior is smart, only that he knows, he has seen the photos, read the stories in national news magazines or Thucydides.

Once, there was a Royal Prostitute. She was holy. Some say the return of the Royal Prostitute will never occur. Return is inevitable. Forms breed new forms, return to old forms. A boy is born and he looks like his grandfather. His father is a successful businessman in the city. The boy returns to the fields, where his grandfather worked. There is always a man living alone in a desert for forty days and forty nights. This man grows a beard and eats what he picks from trees and bushes and he eats the animals he kills with his hands or traps if he has been taught. The man wears sandals he bought in town and a robe his wife or mother made.

There is always a woman in a temple, screwing warriors. She's clean. She's Clean!

New. Bomb. City. New city bomb. Now bomb cities.

Today someone will wake early and design a better killing machine. He or she will be a scientist, good with numbers. An advanced degree is preferred but not required.

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The author's wife grew up in a house in Chicago that had been in her family for twenty-one years when she was born. The house was a large brick house on a street near the University, a street with mostly other large brick houses on it, and at the end of the street a series of depressing Housing Project homes were a reminder of the great gulf between the university community, as some people call it, and the rest of the nearby dwellers. But sociologists have written about those Projects, so we won't.

Before the author's wife's grandparents, Sol and Gert, bought the house in 1950, a family last name of Stein lived there, no known relation to Gertrude of Paris and Alice B. On the bathroom door on the third floor the inscription in the wood reads—Lucy is a stink head or Lucy sucks butt—ostensibly carved into the door by a younger sister of Lucy Stein.

During the Second World War, when work on a Chain Reaction was being done at the University, the Steins rented the home to the physicist Mr. Enrico Fermi and his family (a wife and two children). In 1999 the City of Chicago placed a sign in front of the house stating that Mr. Enrico Fermi and his family had owned the house when he worked on the first Chain Reaction. (Which is incorrect—he did work on the first Chain Reaction but he'd only *rented*; he was, anyway, a recent immigrant scientist who was being underpaid and not trusted by his new country, as is generally the case in War Time when a foreign scientist defects—he is welcomed but underpaid and not trusted by his new country, and when the biography comes out one usually comes across a sentence such as, *He was welcomed but underpaid and generally not trusted by his new country.*)

The sign was erected so that passersby or out-of-towners will stop and read the sign, perhaps even have a picture taken in front of the sign or the house, before moving on a few blocks to the Robie House, or after having left the Robie House, or before going down to Jimmy's for a beer and a hamburger.

The author's mother-in-law called the Alderman and complained about the sign and the increased foot traffic, as if the University undergraduates weren't troubling enough, rumbling over the sidewalk like cattle on the way to classes, and the Alderman said, There is nothing you can do about it. We call it New Civic Pride. You are part of the New Civic Pride of Chicago, whether you like it or not,

et cetera. Have a good day thanks again for voting for me see you next election, et cetera.

The house Mr. Enrico Fermi once rented was very comfortable. When the author and his wife visited her parents (which happened regularly for a year and a half when the author and his wife lived 243 miles west of Chicago) the author and his wife would sleep on the third floor, in what was commonly called the Guest Room, but when the author and his wife visited it was called Tony and Sarah's room.

Also on the third floor was an extensive Humanities and Social Sciences and Anthropology library, the author's wife's mother's study, and a bathroom with a small bookcase full of what we might call Occasional reading, joke books and minor plays and books on botany and a cheap Penguin edition of *Parkinson's Law* or *The Pursuit of Progress* and outdated editions of *The Pill Book* and a first edition *Merck Manual* and two books on Mr. Enrico Fermi. On occasion, the author read these books. Especially the two on Mr. Enrico Fermi, especially the one titled *Atoms in the Family*, because it was written by the physicist's beautiful wife, Mrs. Fermi, and it had such a corny title and the author often wondered how on earth no editor caught that title, and he would think, I hope if I ever come up with a title that corny an editor will stop me.

In the bedroom the author would make love to his wife and often wonder if in that bedroom one of the scientists responsible for the atomic bomb had, roughly fifty-seven years before, made love to his (not the author's) wife in the same beds (beds plural because the Guest Room was appointed with two single beds; the author and his wife would push the beds together and share the space—Spanning the Crack, they called it) and since no one knew where the beds came from and the wear on them suggested they could be as old as fifty-seven or more years and in the Old Days proper married men and women such as the Fermis used two beds, the author decided that Mr. Enrico Fermi had indeed made love to his (not the author's) wife on these same two beds, that the famous physicist had also Spanned the Crack with his (not the author's) beautiful wife, and that the physics of Spanning the Crack had something to do with the physics of the first Chain Reaction and that while he made love to his (not the author's) wife Mr. Enrico Fermi thought

about The Destruction of the World, even though the US Government paid him poorly for his hard scientific work.

Even though the US Government pays the author nothing and he is not a physicist, sometimes when the author makes love to his wife he thinks about The Destruction of the World.

This is my rifle, my cock is my gun, my rifle's for killing, my cock is for fun. (Variations on this sweet tune occur in most Vietnam war films. Did they sing these same songs in Korea and World War II? Of course. Why don't we hear these tunes in the movies of those wars?)

Warriors worry about their wives and girlfriends, and the non-combatants at home, befriending the women.

There is always a non-combatant befriending wives and girlfriends. The warrior knows this. He waits. Occasionally this non-combatant is truly a friend, sometimes he is a nice gay man, often he is attempting to get laid. How to tell the difference? No one has figured this out. There is no science.

Foreword to *Warfighting: Fleet Marine Force Manual 1, US Marine Corps:*

6 March 1989

This book describes my philosophy on warfighting. It is the Marine Corps doctrine and, as such, provides the authoritative basis for how we fight and how we prepare to fight.

By design, this is a small book and easy to read. It is not intended as a reference manual, but is designed to be read from cover to cover. There is a natural progression to its four chapters. Chapter 1 describes our understanding of the characteristics, problems, and demands of war. Chapter 2 derives a theory about war based on that understanding. This theory in turn provides the foundation for how we prepare for war and how we wage war, chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

You will notice that this book does not contain specific techniques and procedures for conduct. Rather, it provides

broad guidance in the form of concepts and values. It requires judgment in application.

I expect every officer to read—and reread—this book, understand it, and take its message to heart. The thoughts contained here represent not just guidance for action in combat, but a way of thinking in general. This manual thus describes a philosophy for action which, in war and in peace, in the field and in the rear, dictates our approach to duty.

A.M. Gray
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

“The Prologue” to the Koran:

In the name of Allah, most benevolent, ever-merciful.
All Praise Be to Allah,
Lord of all the worlds,
Most beneficent, ever-merciful,
King of the Day of Judgment.
You alone we worship, and to You
Alone turn for help.
Guide us O Lord to the path that is straight,
The path of those You have blessed,
Not of those who have earned Your anger,
Nor those who have gone astray.

This contract is final. You cannot change who you work for. The pay rarely improves. The revelations are unconsoling.

There are famous deserters and traitors, but few songs about them. At one time, most deserters were shot.

In California, three marines refused to board their unit’s deployment aircraft, bound for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. They claimed to be Muslim. They believed it was their right to refuse to board the aircraft. Their colonel disagreed, as colonels tend to do when on their way to war and some of their marines decide not to attend. The colonel and his major behaved poorly. They insulted the marines

and their religion. The marines were restrained with thumb cuffs and forced onto the aircraft. The Muslim defense will likely not stand, as all over the desert, on the Coalition side, there are armies with Muslim members prepared to war against the Iraqi Muslims. The three marines should've done what deserters used to: say nothing and quietly retreat to Canada.

Million Barrels Per Day. Black gold. Start your car. Smell the fumes. Put your nose in it. Drive with no concern for fuel economy. The muscle car is back. 0-60. Unfasten the safety. Unfasten your learning.

The Marines were ill-equipped for the waiting. The only real tension: Hurry up and wait. The Marines trained. The marines waited. Thumb. Up. Your. The marines trained and waited.

Why run when you can walk? Why walk when you can crawl? Why crawl when you can sit? Why sit when you can lie? Why lie when you can sleep? Why sleep when you can . . .

Become like apes despised. (This is from the Koran. It's what happens to infidels.)

Lore? Lies? Dan Daly fought at the Boxer Rebellion. He killed hundreds of scoundrels with his bayonet. After the battle, Dan Daly practiced necrophilia. Mohammad, like Junipero Sera after him, wore concertina wire for skivvies. The prostitutes in Olongapo, Philippines enjoy their work. The men married to the prostitutes are happy their wives are employed. The women are proud of the acronym LBFM, Little Brown Fucking Machine. Some have the letters tattooed on their asses. General Douglas MacArthur coined the nomenclature. Truman, let's not talk about Truman. The marine sniper can effectively destroy a human target with a head shot from one thousand meters.

Lore? Lies? In Olongapo, PI, in January 1989, the author slept with seven prostitutes, at an average cost of seventeen dollars per transaction. Three of these affairs were overnighters. One overnighter might've been a man. Her name was Lola. When they were introduced by a mutual friend, Lola offered him cocaine but he refused.

For three hours they ate shrimp cocktail and drank martinis before heading to her apartment. The restaurant bill totaled three dollars, with tip. The author paid the check.

As they walked toward her apartment, Lola joked with people on the street, monkey-on-a-stick vendors and other prostitutes and shoeshine boys. The author paid twenty dollars for a shoeshine. He wore canvas shoes that were white before the shoeshine and shit-brown afterward.

Lola's apartment had three bedrooms, and in the two other bedrooms prostitutes (her sister and cousin) were screwing marines. The furniture was Western and new and expensive.

In the bedroom, Lola insisted on lying on her stomach. She looked back and said, Marine, you have some big horse cock. While they fucked she offered other compliments about his genitals. He felt good about being a man. (He was nineteen years old, receptive to compliments regarding the size of his penis.)

Lola talked about the Air Force sergeant in Okinawa who sent her one thousand dollars a month and bought all of the furniture and paid the rent on the apartment. The Air Force sergeant visited her once a month, and for that weekend she'd kick her sister and cousin out of the apartment, force them into the clubs, and she'd play the role of happy contented exotic domestic. One thousand dollars a month, she repeated. Dumb motherfucker, she said.

She again offered the author cocaine. This time he took. She wouldn't shower with him. They continued fucking because they'd agreed on an overnigher.

In the morning, she made huevos rancheros and margaritas. More sex and cocaine. She repeated nice things about his penis, the size of it. One of her roommates called her Leonard.

The author arrived back at base ten hours late. The charges were dropped because no one had seen his Platoon Sergeant in five days and the assumption was that the sergeant was holed up in some hut with a supreme LBFM, and how could you charge a young marine for following the example of his superior?

Four days later on the USS San Diego, the author dropped his trousers. He said to his Platoon Sergeant, a man proud of the forty-seven cases of clap documented in his Medical Record, I think I caught something, Sergeant. The sergeant laughed and said, Welcome to the Corps.

While being treated for the clap, or rather, while waiting in the long Clap Line in order to receive treatment for the clap, the author missed a Piss Test. The next time he had to pee in the bottle, sixty days later, the cocaine was out of his body, pissed into the sea or some other septic system.

The discharge is green and thus easily identifiable in standard-issue white skivvies. Nonetheless, first-timers tend to ignore the symptoms, convincing themselves they've seen it before, that it has nothing to do with relations with prostitutes. It's something in this damn tropical water. Or they stop wearing skivvies. It will go away if I wait long enough.

Clap clap clap clap clap clap. What is the sound of one, two, three, four, five, six, seven?

The treatment is called Punching The Bore. Thus, the famous song *This is My Rifle, This is My Gun* is invoked. A medicated cotton swab attached to a thin metal wire is pushed, by a nurse, into the patient's genital duct. Most recipients consider the procedure extremely painful. Occasionally, there are incidents of pleasure during the procedure. The nurses refer to these marines and sailors as Sick Motherfuckers.

In an American military prison cell on Okinawa there sits a marine who contracted a disease from a local prostitute. He ignored the discharge. He had a wife and children in the states. One morning, his penis fell off and he nearly bled to death. No one knows what the disease is. Some call it Hamburger Dick, others call it Bad Motherfucking Luck. The marine will never leave his cell on Okinawa. The guards wear plastic gloves when they pass food under his cell door. His wife married the neighbor and his children now call this man Daddy.

A dream: Seven prostitutes are on a boat, laughing. The wave is from Hokusai.

This is a dream the author first had at the age of six, when his family lived in Japan: He is crucified above a banquet table in a cave, and

around the table women he has loved feast on good foods, and they throw the foods at the boy, and they allow him to grow hard, but the school nurse flicks his penis with her middle finger each time it reaches optimal size, about the size of the nurse's pinkie finger. Of course, at the time of the dream the boy doesn't know what a hard-on is, he only knows he likes it. (Too bad we have to learn what it means, and we can't continue our lives knowing only this: We like it.) The women around the table include: his mother; his kindergarten teacher; the nurse we've already mentioned; a Japanese woman who runs the candy store just off-base, in Tachikawa; a Japanese woman who works at the Chinese restaurant in Tachikawa; a Japanese woman who works at his favorite toy store in Tokyo; a Japanese woman from the Tachikawa fish market; the school librarian; his best friend's mother; his father's best friend's wife; the woman who runs the Catholic church day care; ten or more girls from his first grade classroom; the Japanese woman who gave the tour of the Coca-Cola plant; a female Japanese cartoon character; the American woman who molested him behind the tool shed in Dayton, Ohio. (He was three. He remembers a neighbor woman coaxing him behind the shed with his favorite bouncy Play Ball and her saying something like, More fun with your pants down. And her hand in his shorts, and then his father's loud booming voice, Hey, lady, what the hell are you doing to my son?) In the dream, the women eat and throw food at the dreamer and allow him to get hard before the nurse flicks his penis with her middle finger. The dream occurs three or four times yearly, with the women replaced by contemporaneous players, though the mother and the molester from Dayton, Ohio and the woman from the Tokyo toy store are always present. As the boy grows older the dream agitates him, he wakes from the dream weeping. Occasionally, the dream is wet. After he has sex for the first time, at the age of fifteen, the dream abates. When he is twenty, and in the Marines, and about to cross the border from Saudi Arabia into Kuwait and do battle with The Iraqi Aggressors, he takes a nap under a five-ton while the generals decide whether or not to send the troops over the border. The dream returns with all of its original players.

If only this could last.

The poor boys will go fight. They will receive Combat Pay and Hazardous Duty Pay and their federal taxes will be abrogated. The poor boys will fight and sing crude songs and write crude love letters to the girls back home who might or might not be faithful. It all depends.

I love you Bessie Jo I ain't halve a man witout yur lov. I can smell yu from a ten thousand miles away it makes me cry that smell.

Mazzie If I find out you gone fukin out on me and i find out who it is ill kill all three of us if i live out this shit fukin whole and if i dont live my little brother will kill you and whoever you out ben fukn. Tell me the stories aint tru.

Sweet Joanie, when I get home I want to lick your hole body, all the holes the dirty ones I can make clean and the clean ones I can make dirty and we can make kids and fuck and fuck and fuck and all I can think of is you I dream of the holes at night when I dig my fighting hole I think of being in your holes and the Sweet Joanie Smell and I don't think of nothing else but lovin you.

I pray every night through the rosary and I go twice my sweet Mary, for you and for our boy I know will come soon from your belly. When he comes you tell him his papa love him and be home soon, that his papa think of him and his papa live for him and when his papa go to war he kill for him. Tell everyone hello from the desert where it is hot and nothing but sand in my boots and my trousers and in my mouth and eyes. I broke my goggles, sat on them, and now I can barely see. I do not want to see their bombs when they come. I will listen because I must.

Misty, My papa told me he saw you runnin around down the liquor store, showin your ass around, wearin those shorts and tight shirts I bought you when I went home for boot camp leave. I don't want spend my money on shit you go showing around to my friends god knoes wants to fuck you. You play pool with marcus and james they tell me you bend over like you bout to pick up the cue ball with your tits. That big white ball between your sweet black tits like some

moon, that smell perfume I bought you all pretty on your chest and your thighs they said. How come they know about your thighs?

Sherry, the nights and days are slow and they tell me very little about why I am here though I guess it has to do with camels and oil. I met an Egyptian man the other day. He sold me a candy bar for an American dollar. He said he hates Kuwaitis and Saudis. His daughter is inside Kuwait City and he hopes she will get out but then we can burn the place. He said he is a fourth class citizen in a first class land. I understood him. We shook hands. I love you. I wish you could've met this man. I forget his name but it sounded nice after he taught me how to say it. I love you.

The poor boys will fight again and die and sing their crude songs and write crude letters.

There were no crude letters written during World Wars I and II, and only a few in Korea, near the end of the war when things weren't going so well.

We are living in *The Time After The Wars*. This is a celebration! Can't you tell by the funny hats and the people spending their pensions drunk in the streets, even the priests and nuns?