

INFIDEL



Z i n

Zinfandel

Tales of the Wild Seed Women

Under the influence of love, and happiness in relationship with Wendy, Wild Bill started writing a new novel to be called *Tales of the Wild Seed Women*. On our walks or at the kitchen table, Wild Bill would be on the trail of a tale, working it out.

It was an apocalyptic story set in another time, in a world that had been bombed back into the stone age, a future after nuclear holocaust where people had to return to survival by sheer physical prowess. I don't recall if the main character had a name, he was just the Noble Savage. He is the scion of a chieftain and he shepherds this small nomadic hunter/gatherer tribe in a landscape populated by savage predatory bandit peoples of strange cults and practices. In this world there is a profusion of animals that resourceful nature has replenished. It is a landscape where the cities and civilizations are ruined, but where there are useful artifacts in the rubble. It was a very realistic portrayal of those times that lurked in the back of all our post World War II boomer minds — for we were raised on Cold War, in the mental atmosphere of pandemic nuclear dread — preparing for a future that could be gone in seconds. Indeed the naive grade-school duck-and-cover drills where you crawled under your desk and cowered, scrunched-up on your knees, nose to tail with your fellow student seemed to suggest you would have just enough time to kiss your neighbor's ass good-bye. We grew up with the idea that there might not be any future at all.

In the future world of this novel we are in a kind of pre-historical romance / adventure fantasy. But it was realistic — Wild Bill was gaming out survival scenarios, like they did at the Pentagon. He'd write it with a Bic pen on yellow legal

pad and then type it up. He wrote an almost letter-perfect first draft. I think that is inherent in the idea of Tale: it is an oral text composed in the mind beforehand for telling, and then dictated out whole to the page. Moreover, like the storytellers of old, it was visualized, and described as though present in real time. I would encourage him to read me his sheets, and he obliged. Or sometimes he would just tell the tale from memory as part of our discussions on the dog walk. Our many discussions, as we walked along the river in the shade of tall trees on the warm Texas days, though usually about women, were also about the half-life of radioactive particulate fall-out, or improvised weaponry — making shanks, bombs and traps. Or about gangs and warlords — but mostly it was about women — and the spirit.

The *Tales of the Wild Seed Women* was a very thought provoking project, and it occupied much of our time together in the coming months. Wild Bill and I talked so much about survival scenarios that at times I felt like we were living in one. Being part of the story helped me not only understand nuclear dread, but also an alternative, more hopeful mindset. I was helpful in the tale's unfolding. What I am telling you now is recalled from those storytelling occasions. The manuscript that Wild Bill was writing is lost in all the unstable shifting about in the living situation.

The Noble Savage grew up in the aftermath of the world wide apocalypse. He was with his father and mother in the Sangre de Christos mountains of New Mexico when the bombs hit. There was a short nuclear war. Some glitch in the computers, made one of the nuclear power countries think it was under attack from another. Then the use-it or loose-it admonition of mutually assured destruction automatically kicked in. His father was a geologist and his mother an archeologist. They hunkered down in an abandoned silver

mine with a few friends and colleagues who happened to be visiting at the time. They got a few minutes warning before the nuclear missiles started knocking out cities. They just did get underground before great clouds of radioactive fallout circled the globe. They quickly got used to using the Geiger counter. Batteries were a premium. One has to avoid getting the radio active particulant on your skin, in your breathing or in your food. They laid up in the mine for 10 days, until driven out by starvation. What they found was a world turned into chaos. They looked for unopened cans. And so it began: Survival in a lawless time.

The electrical grid was out. The phones were out, no radio broadcasting. A ham radio operator might still be up if he had a battery back up system that could be crank charged. There were few solar or wind power generators.

They were able to find and have side arms.

We talked a lot about weapons.

I said, "Yeah, once the electricity goes out. People gonna know that they are not in the 20th century any more.

"Food production is totally based on electricity, to pump water, to process. And the computers will be down, and there won't be fuel production so there won't be distribution.

He said, "Gangs will take over areas of the city. If you are not gang affiliated, or part of a group, you are going to have to become a refugee. They'll be on the move in streams, clog the highways until that first tank of gas runs out. Then they will be on foot. Bands of marauders will stalk the countryside — raping, looting, murdering, clashing with each other. Of course, it is a wise gang leader that doesn't get his crew killed; they will avoid clashes if possible unless they think they can win."

I said, "Wouldn't the government restore order? There's the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, . . . the Marines. The

Coast Guard. Presumably they represent the establishment and will try to restore order. Certainly they will move to protect their stockpiles.”

“But an army runs on its stomach,” he said, “and with the electrical grid down, they are sooner or later going to have to send out patrols to start foraging. There are a lot of armed groups in America. And they will certainly clash.

“I read where there is a gun for every man woman and child. 200 million.”

“Yeah, what about the Border Patrol. Maybe they will side with the Mexican cartels, the Sinololas and the Zetas or the Gulf Cartel. They have lots of firepower, they have their own military training grounds.”

“Yeah, could be. Maybe race will win out after all.”

“You know it will.”

When we talked we sometimes got into one-uping each other in terms of the gallows humor of the survivalist.

“There are a lot of Mexican gangs in this country. The Latin Kings, the Latin Disciples, the Mexican Mafia.”

“I even heard of one called Hispanics Causing Panic.”

“We had one in San Francisco called HHG, which stood for Happy Homes Grandé. I don’t know where they were going with that one. And we had Chinese gangs, the Wa Ching. The Wa Ching is watching you, boy. And they were the arch rival of the Joe Boys.”

“Of course in southern California you have the Bloods and the Crips,”

“And the Flying Dragons.”

“And the Feudal Warlords”

“Not to mention the Gangs of New York.”

“Hell’s Angels, Banditos, the Gypsy Jokers, Pagans,”

“In San Antonio, they had the Warlocks and the Banditos.”

“Well there are white gangs too. The Aryan Brotherhood.