

**Alpine**

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Vincent declined his offer on that point. We thanked him for the information and went on about our way. We walked through the Afro-American residential section, looking, still, not for drugs, but for prostitution.

We came out on Ridgewood again, a few blocks down from where we turned off. We had had no luck in finding a hooker, and the tequila staggered along at a hurried rate, so we turned up the street to head back to the hotel.

We first saw her yelling at the cars on Ridgewood Avenue.

"Heey, baby, hey baby, let me suck that thing, baby!"

She was subtle!  
We stood on the other side of the street, she crossed it, walked up to me and grabbed my crotch.

"What 'choo need, baby, I'll take real good care of ya'll, both of you. Fifty bucks and we go back to my place and you get all you can handle of Carin."

"We've got \$10," Kamper said.  
"Ten bucks? Baby, where you think you are? Disneyland?"

I sniggered.  
She continued: "I'll tell ya what -- you're both cute -- one of ya real fast for 10 bucks."

Kamper suddenly felt anti-social, so he loaned me the 10 bucks. She did some sort of hand trick with the bill and blew it off, no

doubt, to some prostitution savings and loan. She grabbed my arm, pulled me across the street.

"I'll take good care of you Bam-bam. Yeah, you kinda look like a bam-bam. I'll take real good care of you."

Leaving Kamper in front of the unrobbed convenience store, we went to the back porch of this deserted house. There was a 24-hour telephone answering service right next door -- she pulled down my pants.

Now, some Chinese guy pulled up to deliver food, he stood with his package a mere 15 feet away from me, but choose the standard path of logic in Daytona: He pretended he saw nothing.

The wind was blowing, I'd had too much to drink, my biorhythms were low -- I don't know why, but I was not excited. Not one iota. She wiggled her head around making all sorts of noises and it just wasn't going to work. She kept trying for another 10 minutes or so, then she took out a knife.

"Damn, I'm going to have to kill her," I thought.

"Here, baby, you take this knife," she said, opening the blade and showing it to me there on the dark back porch. The Chinese guy was gone, my pants were around my waist again. I felt relaxed.

I took the knife.

"I stole it from this dude's house," she said, "it's a good knife. You come back when you feel more up to it, baby, I'd almost do you for

free; you're cute, but I need to make a living, ya know?"

Carin and I split up when we came to the front of the house. She took the \$10 from the same secret place with the same secret trick and went to stand with a group of boys farther on down the street. I walked to Kamper, who was standing on another street corner eating a hot dog and drinking a cup of coffee.

"How was it?" he asked.

I smiled, showed him the knife. He gave me a look that was wondrous and inquisitive and condemning. As we walked back to the hotel, I recounted the incident. We laughed and laughed and laughed.

"That's great!" he said, "not only did you get the experience, but you got the knife, too."

"It was a good deal," I said, and we laughed some more. The knife turned out to be a \$45 genuine buck knife. I was pleased.

"This knife will work fine for me when I'm up north. I'm very glad I met Carin."

...

A month passed slowly, like a sandbar, the wind warmed up and by April it was a full-bloom summer. I walked down Ridgewood, not looking for anything more than a soda. I saw Carin standing on the same piece of sidewalk across the street. She waved and I returned the gesture, crossed the street to talk to her.

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**LIFE IN HELL**

**HOW TO ARGUE THE AKBAR & JEFF WAY**

<p><b>PROVOKE YOUR OPPONENT.</b></p> <p>I LOVE YOU BUT I DON'T LIKE YOU.</p>	<p><b>CONFUSE YOUR OPPONENT.</b></p> <p>I DON'T UNDERSTAND.</p> <p>TYPICAL.</p>	<p><b>MAKE YOUR OPPONENT ANGRY.</b></p> <p>NOT ONLY ARE YOU PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE, BUT YOUR NOSE IS BIG.</p>
<p><b>THE SECOND YOUR OPPONENT IS EMOTIONALLY ENGAGED, MAKE LIGHT OF HIM OR HER.</b></p> <p>OOH, GRUMPLICIOUS.</p>	<p><b>NEEDLE YOUR OPPONENT WITHOUT MERCY.</b></p> <p>YOU KNOW I CAN'T STAND IT WHEN YOU CALL ME GRUMPLICIOUS. PLEASE DON'T CALL ME THAT.</p> <p>ANYTHING YOU SAY... GRUMPLICIOUS.</p>	<p><b>WHIP YOUR OPPONENT INTO A FRENZY.</b></p> <p>GRUMPLICIOUS! GRUMPLICIOUS! GRUMP-LISH-EEE-YUS!!</p>
<p><b>AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT, BACK DOWN.</b></p> <p>I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY</p>	<p><b>ENJOY YOUR MUTUAL HAPPINESS.</b></p>	<p><b>NOW WAIT FOR YOUR OPPONENT'S TURN.</b></p> <p>SOMETIMES I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I HATE YOU.</p>

"Baby, it's a slow day. You got 15 bucks? I'll do you full-trip for 15 bucks if you've got it on you."

"Nah, I'm okay. Thanks for asking, though."

"Well, loan me a dollar then!"

I loaned her the bill, rather, I gave her a dollar, and I walked across the street to the convenience store.

The elderly Greek woman sat on a stool in the far corner of the shop. At the register, I soon realized, was the human incarnation of the most beautiful woman ever photographed. I was surprised, shocked and destroyed. She wasn't smiling. In fact she looked sort of like a sneering, Greek Chihuahua.

She had a bad complexion and had obviously gained 10 or 30 pounds since the picture was taken. I bought my soda, smiled, she didn't return the gesture. I left the convenience store in need of a new Miss Universe.

"Mexico, Kamper?"

"Yes, Mexico."

"Soon?"

"Sometime, I'm sure."

"Yeah, someday we'll have those village girls and that tequila."

"Yes. Yes, we will. And if not, there's always those convenience stores." **D**

Cowan is a senior sociology and English major and a Diversions columnist.

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