

"There's a shadow just behind me
Shrouding every step I take
Making every promise empty
Pointing every finger at me
Waiting like a stalking butler
Who upon the finger rests
Murder now the path of must we
Just because the son has come

Jesus, won't you fucking whistle
Something but the past and done?
Jesus, won't you fucking whistle
Something but the past and done?"

-- Sober by Tool

"There's a time and a place for understanding
And a time when action speaks louder than words
And I don't seem to get no indications
And I don't know how to get through to you
And when time like the pyramids has worn away
All the mountains and the valleys
Of the words that we say

We have got to make sure that something remains
If we lose each other we've got no one to blame
So never look back
Never look back
Don't turn your back on me..."

-- My Life by Oingo Boingo

"Too late, my time has come
Sends shivers down my spine, body's aching all the
time
Goodbye everybody, I've got to go

Got to leave you all behind and face the truth
Mamma, oooooooh
(Any way the wind blows)
I don't wanna die
I sometimes wish I'd never been born at all ..."

-- Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen

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December 15, 2023

Hello, guys! It's me again! Rod! I finished an autobiography this past Labor Day, and I'm at it again! I had a lot I didn't get around to. That's okay! I have time, now. I have energy. With a little luck, I can get to the things which went unfinished. Also, my circumstance has changed. Significantly. I think about you guys all the time. There are a lot of conversations I wish we had. These writings are the best way I know how to get through to you.

There are ten days until Christmas. Let's take a little time to reflect, and then let's try to get things up to date. Right before Thanksgiving of 2019, I moved to Seattle. I soon got a job at a P&R Paper warehouse. I drove an electric pallet jack and I picked orders. Of course, there were a lot of paper products such as toilet paper and paper towels. We also sold a lot of hand sanitizer. This was January of 2020 and not many people were aware of the Covid 19 virus which would change our planet. By March, businesses were shutting down inside operations. Everyone was wearing masks. Life had changed.

While I worked at P&R Paper, I got an idea to write

an autobiography. After all, I had moved away from all the friends and family I had ever known. I grew up in Southern California and I was nineteen hundred miles away from my hometown. Of course, I kept in touch with many of them through traditional mail and phone text messages. I wanted more. I was working a lot of overtime and I believed I could save a lot of money. I was forty-nine years old at the time. Seattle was about to get a new expansion NHL team. In early 2020, they weren't named yet. I started thinking ahead. In a little more than a year, I would be turning fifty. This would be a great time to have a huge celebration! With all the overtime I was working, I believed I could save enough money for...

- airplane tickets
- hockey arena tickets
- a hall for a big birthday party

Up until January of 2020 when I started working at P&R Paper, I thought life had been unfair to me. That's okay! It all evens out! That's what I believed. It's like watching your favorite football team play on TV. Every now and then, a referee is going to make a bad call, and your team's going to suffer. But? If the law of karma is true and consistent, it will balance out. By the fourth quarter, your team is going to benefit from a bad call against whoever your opponent is. That's the ideal way it's supposed to play out.

In 1983, John Elway was the most coveted quarterback coming out of college. He was drafted by the Colts, but he did not want to play for them. I have a lot of Raider fans in my family. They are my second favorite team behind the Cowboys. I don't believe many people know this, but the Raiders almost got John Elway in a trade. Of course, the Colts wanted to sign him, but John

Elway had big leverage. He was a two-sport star. He threatened to play professional baseball instead if things didn't work out to his liking. Al Davis, the owner of the Raiders, set up a trade with the Colts. In exchange for Elway, the Colts were given a menu of players. They could pick an A-list Raider, and a couple of B-list players. I'm going off of memory, so the details might be slightly off. There might've been draft picks also involved. The point is that John Elway did not come over to the Raiders even though a trade was agreed upon. You see? The commissioner, Pete Rozelle, got involved. He blocked the Raider trade. John Elway wound up being shipped to their rival, the Denver Broncos. He wound up playing in five Super Bowls and won two of them.

Al Davis believed Pete Rozelle and the League had something personal against him. Some kind of vendetta. Why? Who knows? But over the years, there would be clashes and lawsuits. The Raiders moved from Oakland to Los Angeles. They couldn't get Coliseum to install luxury boxes at the stadium. Al Davis tried to move the Raiders to a nearby quarry in Irwindale. He took the city's money but the relocation effort didn't pan out. The Raiders returned to Oakland. They were on their way to the Super Bowl when they played a young Tom Brady in the New England snow. Late in the game, Brady fumbled the ball and the Raiders were on their way to victory. Who knows? Maybe Tom's spirit would've been broken at this point and maybe he would've sulked off into the shadows, but wait! A referee decided it wasn't a fumble! There's some bullshit "tuck rule" in the books so New England kept possession and wound up winning the game.

There are people who believe in curses. Over the years, I've talked to many Raider fans who believe

the Raiders are cursed. Brady went on to win a Super Bowl after beating the Raiders in the playoffs, but the Raiders weren't done. With the help of Jerry Rice and Tim Brown, the Raiders got to the big show after the 2002 season. Raider fans are known for over-the-top costumes such as spikes on shoulder pads. They were allowed to wear these throughout the whole season. When they got to Super Bowl against the Buccaneers, they weren't allowed. The League decided against them. And? They had a Pro Bowl center, Barret Robbins, who had a mental breakdown of sorts the weekend of the game. They had to play with a backup. And they had to play the Buccaneers who were coached by former Raider, Jon Gruden. He knew the Raider plays and this contributed to their demise.

There are curses in life. The Raiders are the victim of a curse. Other sports curses have existed. The Cubs and Red Sox went decades without winning a World Series. In the case of the Cubs, it had to do with a bar owner who wasn't allowed to bring his pet goat into a game. As for the Red Sox, it was because they sold Babe Ruth to the Yankees for cash. In basketball, the Clippers are cursed. It has something to do with Native Americans and traces back to when they moved from Buffalo to San Diego. In TV entertainment, Diff'rent Strokes and Family Feud were said to be cursed.

Sometimes, dark clouds follow people around. They say, "The path to Hell is paved with good intentions." Every few years, you hear about disasters which happen at huge festivities. Eleven people were crushed to death in 1979 as a maniacal crowd tried to make their ways into Riverfront Coliseum before a show from The Who. Three people were stampeded to death in 1991 before an AC/DC concert in Utah. One hundred and sixty-two people

died in the Ozone Disco Fire in the Philippines in 1996. People have good intentions. They even have *great* intentions. These festivities are meant for people to enjoy life. We know this. Seven people died in 2011 when a stage collapsed at the Indiana State Fairgrounds before a Sugarland concert.

I don't want to go so far as to say my life is cursed, but it often feels that way. I had great intentions in January of 2020. I had visions of meeting friends and family at the SeaTac Airport for when I turned fifty in May of 2021. I had more than a year to prepare for it. A global pandemic disrupted the plans and eventually obliterated them. I still reflect on what "could have been" and I wonder how far it would've gone. I stayed in Seattle until the end of 2020. The NHL team wound up being called the Kraken. I learned this while working at a different warehouse than P&R Paper. I was working more than seventy hours per week at Animal Supply Company. I sent Kraken merchandise to loved ones back home. I thought about the times we could've had at the Key Arena if I stayed in the Northwest but, instead, I was in Southern California before Christmas. I never told anyone about my intentions for the celebration. They say, "The best things in life are unexpected." As things turned out, I was living in Las Vegas as my fiftieth birthday rolled around. I had a great time! Many family members came to see me. We celebrated on Fairmont Street and at Circus Circus. There's always a silver lining.

I want to talk a little bit about sequels and irregular naming. Here are the three Naked Gun movies...

- The Naked Gun
- The Naked Gun 2 1/2: The Smell of Fear
- The Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult

The first three Rambo movies...

- First Blood
- Rambo: First Blood II
- Rambo III

Let's think about the Traveling Wilburys' second album called...

- Traveling Wilburys Vol. 3

The Naked Gun is slapstick comedy. I loved the films! Nice beaver, eh? Just kidding, but it jumped to 2 1/2 then 33 1/3. The Rambo films started off as First Blood, went to First Blood II, then wound up with Rambo III. Why was it not First Blood III? I'm sure some marketer or focus group knew better. But we stay light in life. The Traveling Wilburys skipped Vol. 2 and went straight to Vol. 3! Why? I think George Harrison just wanted to be silly.

My autobiography project was started in Seattle in early 2020. Almost four years later this past Labor Day, I finished...

- Jumble - Rod, Vegas, Blunder

"Rod" was my personal, non-fiction autobiography. "Vegas" had to do with social commentary. "Blunder" was a fictional journalistic autobiography written as Braden Callypso. Now? I'm working on Rod II. I might add a subtitle later on. This is not Jumble II, though. I took a hint from the Rambo movies. The naming and sequencing don't need to make perfect sense. I plan to keep the style of the other pieces, though. Like I said, "Blunder" was written like a journal. I will write parts of Rod II like a journal. I

will not forget my social commentary. I will have spurts similar to "Vegas" where I discuss politics, world events, and conspiracy issues. The difference from the "Jumble" project is that I don't plan to separate these sections into a "beginning, middle, end" format. I'd also like to include open letters. It's a work in progress, but I have a lot of leftover material. I don't feel as "jumbled" in other words. Rod II might not be linear, but I believe I know my direction a little better than early 2020.

Oh! I'm writing this sober! That's why I included the lyric from Tool. I'm staying at an AirBnb near Rubidoux, California. I'm sober for three main reasons: (1) health, (2) economics, and (3) house rules. It's not that I was drunk every time I set down to write "Jumble" but I usually cracked open a beer and wrote until I had a decent buzz. Why? It loosened me up. Things came out that otherwise wouldn't have come out. It was an autobiography, and I wanted to get things off my chest.

Now? I'm okay. I can get this done! Will it have the same tone? I'm not sure, but my first book, ZoToN, was written mostly sober. I can do this!

I care about you guys! I had great intentions to keep in touch. I had great intentions to be together in exotic atmospheres. Life went sideways here and there. I'm surviving, now. Christmas is less than two weeks away. A new year is on the horizon. I'm fighting for a normal life. Right now, it's "jumbled" just like the autobiography I printed around Labor Day. I will continue to fight. I hope things turn out. I hope we can still share good times together. This goes for most of you! Who knows? Maybe we can watch a Kraken game together in Seattle! Let's put it on our bucket list!

