



**ONE NIGHT IN 1979 I DID TOO MUCH
COKE AND COULDN'T SLEEP AND HAD
WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A MILLION-
DOLLAR IDEA TO WRITE THE
DEFINITIVE TELL-ALL BOOK ABOUT
GLAM ROCK BASED ON MY OWN
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE BUT THIS
IS AS FAR AS I GOT**

STORY

DENNIS COOPER

"A DISQUIETING GENIUS."—VANITY FAIR

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SHORT STORY

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HarperCollins e-books

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“Jerk” previously appeared in the book *Jerk* (Artspace Books, 1993).

“Ugly Man” and “The Boy on the Far Left” previously appeared in Scott Treleven’s art catalog *Some Boys Wander by Mistake* (Kavi Gupta Gallery, John Connelly Presents, and Marc Selwyn Fine Art, 2007) and in *Dennis Cooper: Writing at the Edge* (Sussex Academic Press, 2008).

“Graduate Seminar,” “Santa Claus vs. Johnny Crawford,” “The Worst (1960–1971),” and “Three Boys Who Thought

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“Knife/Tape/Rope” was originally the text of a performance art work of the same name created and directed by Ishmael Houston-Jones in 1985.

“One Night in 1979 . . .” previously appeared in the anthology *Thrills, Pills, Chills, and Heartache: Adventures in the First Person* (Alyson Press, 2004).

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It was 1972–73. There used to be this nightclub on Sunset Boulevard called Rodney Bingenheimer’s English Disco where every star who was remotely Glam Rock—Bowie, Sparks, Roxy Music, T. Rex, Slade, Suzi Quatro, Jobriath, the Sweet, et al.—hung around when they were performing in town. I was just out of high school, and very “glammed” up—platforms, shag haircut, shimmery outfits, etc.—so I gravitated to the club, like wannabe cool people did. We danced, did a lot of quaaludes and downers, talked to Rodney, who was sweet but

a moron, and waited for Glam celebs to show up. Then we'd schmooze them for whatever—jobs, drugs, ego boosts—and/or try to get in their pants. It was a serious contest. We even drew up this graph with a point system indicating which stars were the most trophy-like—Bowie, Bryan Ferry, Marc Bolan, Todd Rundgren, and I forget who else—all the way down to the “only when desperate” types—say Lou Reed, or the drummer from Silverhead, or any local band member, no matter how foxy and unknown, or how famous but unbelievably disgusting like Flo and Eddie, or how great but too old and insane like Arthur Lee. I wasn't that cute, obviously, but I was smarter than most of those overdressed airheads, so I was a top notch schmoozer, if a total loser as a groupie. Everyone who mattered dropped by Rodney's at some point. All the names: Paul Lynde, Andy Warhol, Erik Estrada, Debbie fucking Reynolds, Raymond fucking Burr. Even enemies of music like Jackson Browne and the Eagles. And since Glam was all about sex as rebellion and bisexual cool, stars treated the club like a brothel. Like I remember Bowie picked up one cute Glam boy whose name escapes me, tied him up, fucked him, then pissed all over him in a bathtub. Actually, his name was Karl. He played bass for a really well-known band of the time, and you can easily figure out his identity if you care. Fuck him. Several boys and girls did Iggy Pop, who was such a total junkie back then that he wasn't the trophy you would think. After a while, Iggy would stagger into the club yet again, and we'd just go, “Puh-lease.” Anyway, one of the regulars was this very cute, pimply boy a little younger than me. Everyone was

into him. His energy level was just adorable—I can’t begin to do it justice—although a few years afterward when he became extremely famous, that same energy fueled one of the creepiest, most backstabbing personalities in the history of showbiz, if you ask me. Anyway, he’s a joke dinner theater actor now, so ha ha. Point is, the energetic boy had a rock band, a kind of Tinkertoy Iggy and the Stooges meets something really horrible like, say, when the Bay City Rollers went heavy metal, if you remember that phase. One night they played at the club. They were so pathetic it was almost sublime. Here’s this sixteen-year-old rich kid screaming suicidal threats, pretending to shoot up, and acting all wasted and animalesque. We were all just like, “Yum.” After the show, he joined us at our table, which was extremely unusual. I guess he was tired. For a while in its history, Rodney’s had these big round tables where regulars sat around strategizing and saying, like, “Look . . . yawn . . . it’s the guitarist from Zolar X . . . yawn.” So I was sitting at a table with Chuckie Starr—that’s two r’s—who was sort of famous at the time for wearing seven-foot platform shoes on *The Mike Douglas Show*, and this girl named Michelle, who was fucking Rod Stewart—in fact he wrote this famous song about her—I forget its title—that goes, “Red lips, hair, and fingernails / I hear you’re a mean old Jezebel,” and some other bullshit. She was there. And Sable Starr—again two r’s—who ended up snagging Johnny Thunders, and even lived with him, which impressed us at the time, although, really, it can’t have been all that much fun. There were all these other people too—nice, creepy, cute, not cute. Anyway, I was pontificating,

like I tended to do, about how, say, the Raspberries' songs were so hermetic they were holy or something, and the energetic boy seemed impressed, but then he wasn't, like, brilliant. So our eyes started flashing back and forth. You know, that way. Lust. No one could believe it, because he seemed so unavailable. After a while, he said, "You should, um, come home with me." And I was, like, "Done. Say the word." So I drove him to his house—this big white mansion a block or two south of Sunset—and we snuck inside—it was about five in the morning—so as not to wake up his parents. But his mom was awake for some reason, I don't know why. I think she was a diet-pill head. Her eyes were really weird. She stopped us in the hallway. That's when I thought, "Oh my God." Because she was the star of this hugely famous TV series, which meant she was also the mother of this hugely famous teen idol/actor/singer of the period, which meant that the energetic boy was, like, royalty. I was thinking, "I fucking scored." Because he'd never exactly let on that he was you-know-who's little brother. Anyway, his mother, who's a Republican scumbag in real life, was actually nice. She didn't give a shit that we were completely 'luded out. She was just, like, "Have fun, you two." It must have been the diet pills talking. Then he and I went to his bedroom. We took some more quaaludes, and smoked some pot, and I forget what else, frankly—probably talked about his famous mother and brother—and I was beginning to see what a superficial little narcissist he was underneath all that cuteness. But at that point, who cared? And I think he eventually said, "Let's, you know, do it." Not an exact quote. And we took off

our clothes, and then . . . it's all sort of hazy, I guess because of the drugs. But we did all the obvious stuff, and I remember that at one particular point I had been rimming him for, like, an hour, as I tended to do, especially when I was on downers, and thinking, "Wow, he must really love to be rimmed," and "We were made for each other," etc. I looked up, because I needed another hit of his face to stay interested, and that's when I realized that the look on his face, which I'd been reading as slack-faced delirium, as, "Oh, I have found the sublime," or "Oh Dennis, how could I have lived so long without . . . etc.," or whatever, had nothing to do with me. He'd been asleep the whole time, the self-involved little piece of shit. Yeah, like that stopped me.

About the Author

DENNIS COOPER is the author of the George Miles Cycle, an interconnected sequence of five novels that includes *Closer*, *Frisk*, *Try*, *Guide*, and *Period*. His post-George Miles Cycle novels include *My Loose Thread*, *The Sluts*, which won France's Prix Sade and the 2005 Lambda Literary Award for Best Men's Fiction, and his most recent work, the highly acclaimed *God, Jr.* He divides his time between Los Angeles and Paris.

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