

# Uncooperative Characters

Pete Simons

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## Teapot

**D**eah, I'm a little teapot, short and stout, but if you try to make anything out of that I'll kick your ass. We can't all grow up to be stainless-steel coffee urns. Yet what I lack in physical stature, I more than compensate for in sheer gumption. So don't mess with me. You've been warned.

I was relaxing in my office that morning with a nice cup of Earl Grey spiked with Jack Daniels when this classy scoop walks through the door. She was a real ladle, alright. Not your usual flatware, that's for sure. She had curves in all the right places and was extremely well polished. My water started bubbling as soon as I saw my face reflected in her shiny silver bowl. They don't make 'em like that anymore. Her beautiful oval head tapered down to the most attractive handle I'd ever seen. *That dame can spoon with me anytime*, I thought.

"Mr. Kettle, I presume? I understand that you are a private detective, is that right?"

Even her voice was attractive. As steam started coming out of my spout, I tried like hell not to whistle at her.

"That's what it says on the door, gorgeous. Yeah, I'm Kettle, but you can call me Sam. What can I do for you?"

"I am Lady Portmeirion. I have a case that I'd like you to work on for me."

*I'd like to work on her case for sure*, I thought. *I'll bet it's a very nice case. Smooth burgundy felt. Solid wood framing. Just the two of us, rubbing against the ...*

"Mr. Kettle? Sam?"

I snapped out of it. "Yeah, as it happens I have some time right now. Please take a seat, and tell me what you need, Lady Portmeirion."

She sat, and I reached for a rag to wipe the condensation from my lid. I'd swear the temperature in the room had increased at least fifty degrees in the last minute or two. I waited for her to speak.

"It's my husband, Mr. Kettle. I'm sorry, I mean Sam. My husband. Lord Portmeirion. I think that ... he's seeing someone else."

"If he's seeing anyone else, he's an idiot, Mrs. Portmeirion. If you don't mind me saying."

"Thank you, Sam. But I'm afraid it's true." She broke down in tears.

I let her cry for a minute, then I handed her a silver polishing cloth that I kept in my desk drawer for moments like these. She dried her eyes and buffed herself, handing me back the towel with a sad little smile. *I'm never gonna wash that cloth again*, I thought.

"And what would you like me to do, ma'am?" I asked.

"I need photographs, Sam. Proof of his infidelity. Without that, he could divorce me and leave me with nothing."

I nodded sagely, but a little too far. A few drops of hot water escaped my spout. She was kind enough not to comment on it.

"One more thing," she purred. "We need a cover story."

"What's that?" I asked.

"It's a believable lie used to cover our tracks. I'm surprised you didn't know that, particularly in your line of work."

"I know what a cover story is. I'm asking why we need one."

"My husband ... he pays people to follow me. He may track you down and ask why we met."

"I see. Sure. How about this: You hired me to find your long-lost twin sister, who ran off with a guy who plays the spoons."

"No," she replied. "That won't do. My husband is quite aware that my sister settled down with a nice man who manages a dinner service. Instead, we'll say that I asked you to guard these valuables for me." She handed me a box. I looked inside and let off some steam. *Damn*, I thought. *I'd hate to be walking down a dark alley and suddenly meet the oysters those pearls came from.* Underneath the pearls was a slip of paper with some numbers written on it. I didn't know what they meant, and I didn't care.

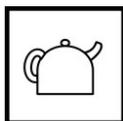
That was my first mistake.

I closed the box and gazed at her perfect form. The windows began to steam up. She waited.

Finally getting hold of myself, I said, "Okay. I get \$500 a day plus expenses. If I get you the proof you need, I get an extra two grand at the end of the job. That sound okay to you, ma'am?"

She agreed and I placed the box of pearls and her cash advance in my safe while my secretary brought in the usual contract for her to sign. When our business was concluded she got up and headed for the door. Then the dame suddenly turned and whispered in a sultry voice, "If you need me, Sam, just whistle. You know how to whistle, don't you? You just put your lips together and blow."

Oh, I knew how to whistle. I was boiling over as she closed the door behind her. You could hear the sound five blocks away. Dogs started to howl. It took a full three minutes for me to cool down enough for the tooting to stop.



The dame wasn't kidding about her hubby. Walking home that night, a car drove up on the curbside and before I could react two mugs jumped out and grabbed me. The first mug smelled of stale coffee and told me we were going for a ride. The second one had more of a pilsner aroma. He said nothing and shoved me into the back seat. They got in on either side of me and the driver took off.

I started to boil and felt the muzzle of a gun push into my side. Coffee Mug muttered menacingly, "Keep the lid on, Kettle, or I'll plug you." Beer Mug just looked out the window and smirked.

Deciding I'd better keep chill until I found out just what the deal was, I sat back and enjoyed the ride. We drove past a guardhouse and through some gates onto the Portmeirion estate. It was the kind of place you generally only see in the movies, built by people who had more money than sense and who probably didn't even know how many rooms it had—forget about using them all. Several of the chimneys were belching smoke. Probably burning money, I figured, and I seriously considered raising my fee. At a minimum, I'd be heavily padding my expenses. Baby needed a new tea cozy.

We stopped in front of the main doors. "Get out," Coffee Mug instructed. "His Goblet wishes to have a word with you."

I got out. The door to the mansion was being held open by a stunning dish. She was hard, smooth, and pleasingly round, wearing a dress that provided just the right amount of embroidery around the edges. Her perfume smelled of elderberries. She took my coat and directed me to the library.

"Have a seat. His Goblet, the Lord Portmeirion, will be with you in a few moments. Is there anything I can get for you while you wait?"

I refrained from making a lewd comment, which was unusual for me, and instead I asked, "What are you supposed to be, honey, his butler?"

"Of course not. I'm his cutler."

"His cutlet? I'll bet you are."

"Not his cutlet, wise guy. His cutler. A person who makes, deals in, or repairs cutlery. Look it up. Gosh, it's cold in here. Do me a favor and stoke that fire a little, would you?"

I went over to the fireplace and threw another log on, then adjusted its position using the iron poker.

"Much better," she smiled. "Thanks."

With that, the sexy dish departed, presumably to polish the dinnerware. I closed my eyes and imagined I was made of heavily tarnished silver.

Lord Portmeirion entered a few moments later. His Goblet had a stately bearing and crystalline features. He seemed a bit in his cups, and I wondered

how much wine he could hold. It seemed like quite a lot.

"I understand my wife came to see you earlier today, Mr. Kettle," he said, sloshing around as he paced back and forth. "I'd like you to tell me why."

"I'm afraid that my relationship with my clients is confidential," I replied.

"It's good that you're afraid, Mr. Kettle. Very good, indeed. Because there is a man who works for me who can be very persuasive. Shall I call him in?"

"You mean Coffee Mug or Beer Mug? We've already met. They don't seem so tough to me."

"Ah, no. Not them. I was referring to Mr. MacKenszie Carver, otherwise known as Mack the Knife."

I'd heard of the Knife. He was no joke. Sharp as a razor, he would come straight to the point in an interview. I sure wouldn't want him to take a stab at questioning me, particularly if he was on edge.

So I backtracked. I'm tough, but I'm no fool. "There's no need to be unpleasant, Your Gobletness. As the lady's husband, I'm sure it will be fine if I tell *you*. She asked me to guard an item for her. A string of pearls."

"Now why would she do that? We have a perfectly serviceable house safe and a well-trained security staff."

"I wouldn't know, Your Carafe. Perhaps you should ask her. I just do as I'm paid."

Lord Portmeirion nodded and reached for the half-empty wine bottle on the side table, tipping it up and emptying it into his orifice. I wondered again how he could hold so much wine without toppling over.

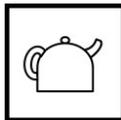
"Alright, Mr. Kettle, you're free to go. I do hope I shan't find out that you've been fibbing to me. That would be most ... unhealthy." With that, the good lord turned on his stem and wobbled out.

The sexy dish returned with my coat and saw me out the door. There was no car waiting, so I walked out the main gate. When I was out of the guard's line of sight, I circled back toward the house and hopped over the fence, hoping like hell that they didn't employ attack dogs on the estate.

Finding a nice spot in the tree line overlooking the house, I settled in and steeped for a while.

Around 11:00 p.m., another car arrived, and a young woman entered the house. Through the lighted window, I could see Lord Portmeirion embrace her. I raised my camera, thinking "paydirt." I was so focused on my camera that I didn't hear anyone creeping up behind me until it was too late. I got the briefest whiff of elderberries, and then something struck the back of my head.

I'd been iced. I was out cold.



I woke with a crushing headache and reached up to find that my lid was bandaged. It was a few minutes before I trusted myself enough to open my eyes. The light made my head hurt even more, but I squinted until I realized that I was lying in a filthy jail cell. A cop grinned at me from the other side of the bars.

“Officer Pott,” I moaned, “what an unexpected pleasure.”

“We finally got you dead to rights this time,” Pott sneered. “You’ll hang for this, Kettle.”

I rubbed my lid, then decided that was a bad idea. “What are you talking about, Pott? You gonna hang me for taking some pictures of a guy?”

“Ha! Taking pictures! That’s a good one.” He unlocked the cell and pushed me toward the interview rooms. “Let’s go, Blackie.”

He knew I hated that nickname.

Detective Decanter walked up behind us. “Pott, don’t let me hear you call Kettle black again. Do you understand me?”

“Pott can’t help it,” I said. “He’s a racist bastard.”

“After you, *sir*,” slurred Officer Pott as he held the interview room door open for me, slyly poking me sharply in the ribs while Decanter wasn’t watching. I knew I shouldn’t have insulted him since he tended to fly off the handle, but I couldn’t help myself. The guy thought he was stainless steel, but he was just a dirty crock.

We sat down and Decanter came in a moment later. He pushed a button on the tape recorder. “Interview of Sam Kettle, Tuesday, March 7th, 10:20 a.m. Present are Detective Decanter and Officer Pott. So, Kettle, you finally lost it, yeah? You had the combination to the safe, and you just couldn’t resist the opportunity to take the pearls, could you? Go ahead, explain yourself. Spill.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Oh, come off it, Kettle. Be just a *little* cooperative, can’t you? We found the pearls in your office, right where you’d stashed them. Along with the combination to the Portmeirions’ safe. How’d you get that, by the way?”

“Lady Portmeirion gave me a paper with some numbers, along with the pearls. I didn’t know it was the combination for her safe.”

“Oh, so the lady *gave* you the pearls? Funny, she says they were stolen.”

“I’ve been set up. She came to see me. Ask Lord Portmeirion. He can confirm it.”

“Yeah, well, that might present a problem,” scoffed Pott, “since you killed him and all.”

A chill ran down my spine. “Killed? His Goblet is dead?”

“Crystal shards and red wine all over the floor. You really made a mess of it, Kettle. A very sloppy job. Your prints were all over the murder weapon that you left at the scene,” said the detective.

“Ah. Let me guess. He was killed with the poker.”

“Yeah,” said the detective. “I thought you were smarter than that, Kettle.”

“I didn’t,” Pott said.

"I *am* smarter than that," I exclaimed. "I didn't kill him. I've been set up. The cutler did it."

"The cutler, eh?"

"Yeah. I don't know her name. She's the one in charge of the cutlery. I think she and Lady Portmeirion are in cahoots. Talk to them."

"Okay, Kettle," nodded Detective Decanter. "I've always thought you were a little hotheaded, but I never pegged you as a killer. I'll check out your story. In the meantime, feel free to enjoy the comfort of our fine jail."

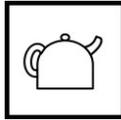
I'd been here before, and it wasn't all that comfortable.

Sometime later, Detective Decanter visited me in my cell. "We're letting you go for now, Kettle. But don't leave town. The investigation is ongoing, and you're still a possible suspect."

"Still a suspect? Didn't you arrest the lady and her cutler?"

"Actually, no," admitted the detective sheepishly. "They both seem to have skipped town."

"Damn. I knew it," I said. "The dish ran away with the spoon."



## Burma-Shave

**R**aindrops dive-bombed the black-and-white patrol car on the side of the road, generating a hellish cacophony. Oblivious to the noise, Frank admired himself in the rearview mirror and noted how well the uniform fitted his slender but muscular frame. Traffic on the highway was light to virtually nonexistent, as usual for this time of night. A solitary car passed him slowly, probably suspicious that the police were using that newfangled radar gun to catch speeders. But Frank was doing no such thing. The Nevada police didn't even have the radar equipment yet.

Frank tilted the mirror down to get a better look at the uniform. His nameplate read "HTUOMYAW" in the glass. *Damn*, he thought as he stared at his reflection, *Officer Frank Waymouth, you are a handsome devil*. Frank combed his hair and placed the peaked cap on his head. Then he readjusted the mirror, checked for traffic, signaled, and pulled the Buick Century police cruiser carefully out onto the road.

Thirty years later, LIFE Magazine would name Nevada's Highway 50 "The Loneliest Road in America," but back in 1956, "godforsaken" might have been a more apt descriptor. At night, you could drive for hours without seeing the lights of another car—and you'd better carry some extra gas in the trunk in case you didn't make it to the next filling station. The solitude suited Frank, who was hoping for a quiet evening's drive as he set off in the direction of the California state line.

His lights illuminated the first of many small signposts along the side of the highway, placed there by a Minnesota shaving-cream company.

"NO MATTER," read the first sign.

"HOW YOU SLICE IT," said the second, a few hundred yards later.

"IT'S STILL YOUR FACE"

"BE HUMANE"

“USE”

“**BURMA-SHAVE**,” proclaimed the last.

Frank drove on, knowing there’d be no more of these signs for at least a few miles.

The radio suddenly came to life. “Attention, all units. Two convicts have escaped from Ely Prison. They are dangerous and should be approached with caution. We believe they may have acquired civilian clothes. They may or may not be traveling together and are likely heading for Highway 50 or 93.”

*Damn*, thought Frank. *There goes my peaceful evening.*



Roger Burnbaum rubbed his eyes and rolled the window down a crack, trying to prevent the monotonous sound of the windshield wipers from putting him to sleep. It let in some rain, but the breeze would help keep him awake. He tried the radio again, but he was too far afield to get a good signal. The only welcome distractions were the occasional Burma-Shave signs.

“WHEN DRIVING”

“IN THE RAIN”

“SLOW IT DOWN”

“OR FEEL THE PAIN”

“USE SOOTHING”

“**BURMA-SHAVE**”

His head nodded and quickly popped back up. *Damn. If this keeps up, I'll have to pull over for the night, even if it means missing the sales meeting in Reno. The boss will have a fit, but that'll still be better than running off the road in the middle of nowhere ... WHAT THE ...? God damn it!*

Roger slammed on the brakes and swerved to avoid hitting the guy standing on the side of the road with his thumb out. *Who the hell would be out trying to hitchhike in this rain, at this time of night?*

On the verge of driving away, he felt a sudden surge of pity for the man and brought the car to a stop, leaning over to open the passenger door just as the hitchhiker ran up and got in. He was drenched to the bone and had a couple days' stubble on his face, but he seemed reasonably clean.

“Much obliged, sir, I really appreciate it. It's a hell of a night out there. The name's Jim. Jim Smith. Pleased to meet you.” He offered his hand.

Roger shook it. “Roger Burnbaum. Happy to help. I'm heading to Reno.”

“That would be perfect for me, if you don't mind the company. Thank you kindly.”

“There's a towel in the back seat. I keep one handy in weather like this. You can wipe yourself down. I'll turn up the heat.”

“Much obliged, sir.”

“Call me Roger.”

“Okay, Roger.” He flashed a smile.

“Truth is, Jim, I got a selfish reason for picking you up. You can help keep me awake. I almost dozed off before, and I can’t afford the time to pull over.”

“Well, now, Roger, if you want, I’d be happy to drive a spell.”

Roger felt a brief shiver and wondered if he’d made the right choice by allowing this man into his car. “No, that’s fine, Jim. I’ll be all right with a little conversation.”

They both stared out the window as some more signs appeared.

“DON’T STOP”

“FOR HITCHERS”

“AND BE THEIR”

“CHAUFFEUR”

“WE’D HATE TO LOSE”

“A CUSTOMER”

“**BURMA-SHAVE**”

Jim chuckled. “Well, well, well. I’m sure glad I wasn’t standin’ on the other side of them signs when you drove up.”

Roger forced a laugh and said, “Aw, that wouldn’t have made any difference to me. Like you said, it’s a hell of a night. What’s your line of work, Jim?”

Jim finished using the towel and tossed it into the back seat. “Well, I guess I’m what you’d call a jack-of-all-trades. I do a little of this, a little of that. You know how it is.”

“Yes. Yes, I do.” He didn’t.

“And yourself, Roger? What do you do?”

“I’m in sales. I’m on the road a lot. Have you been shopping for a new swimming pool, by any chance? We’ve got some nifty aboveground models. I got some brochures you can look at in the trunk.”

“Ha, ha. No. Got no use for a pool. I live on the road.”

“Do you, Jim? But you’ve got no bags with you.”

“Yeah, I know. There’s a story behind that. I’ll tell it to you later, maybe. Meantimes, I was wonderin’—does this radio of yours work?”

“It works fine, but it’s hard as hell to get any reception way out here. You’re welcome to try.”

Jim turned the knob and got mostly static.

“Pffzzzz ... crackle ... sssss ... news on the hour ... pffzz ... two escaped convicts ... pffzz ... Ely, Nevad ... pffzt ... dangerous and ... szzztch ... do not ... schffftpz ...”

Jim switched it off. “You’re right, Roger. No reception way out here. Nothin’ out here but us.”

They drove on in silence for a few miles. Roger wasn’t sleepy anymore.



Officer Frank Waymouth drove the cruiser cautiously down the highway, not wanting to have any unfortunate accidents in the pounding rain. *It's a perfect night for a jail escape*, he thought. *Terrible visibility and the dogs will have trouble picking up any scent in this weather.* He listened to the police radio, but so far there were no reports of any sightings.

“DRIVE CAREFULLY”  
“AND DON’T LANE HOP”  
“CAUSE THE NEXT BEND”  
“MIGHT HIDE A COP”  
“USE”  
“**BURMA-SHAVE**”

Frank chuckled. He had to hand it to those Burma-Shave advertising guys. They really had a great sense of humor.

The radio broke the silence. “Attention, all units. We have a report of a naked body lying in the drainage ditch on the north side of Highway 50, about ten miles east of Eureka. Who can respond? Over.”

A policeman closer to the location answered the call. “Car 71 here. I am en route. Ten minutes away. Over.”

*Damn*, thought Frank. *This is getting serious. I need to step up my game. Time for a change of strategy.*

Frank stepped on the gas and resolved to pull over the next vehicle he saw.



Roger was gripping the wheel so hard that his fingers were turning white. He couldn’t stop thinking about the little “insurance policy” he had stashed in the glove compartment. He might be able to reach over and grab it if the guy would just fall asleep, yet there seemed to be no chance of that for now. Jim was wide awake and appraised him curiously.

“You sure you don’t want me to drive a piece?” Jim asked.

“No, I’m fine, thanks.”

Roger wasn’t sure whether he could take this guy one-on-one in a fair fight. More importantly, he didn’t know if Jim had any kind of weapon on him.

*Even if he’s one of the escaped convicts they mentioned on the radio, he might not be armed*, Roger figured. *Then again, he’s not in prison garb. He must have gotten his street clothes somewhere. Who’s to say he didn’t pick up a knife as well? It’s probably safest to*

*keep driving until we reach some kind of civilization. But what then?*

“Penny for your thoughts,” Jim said.

“Oh, just wondering how much further it is to Reno. Haven’t seen a signpost in a while.”

“Yeah, except for Burma-Shave. They must have spent a ton of money planting those things all around the country. Look, here’s another one.”

“DON’T TRY TO PASS”

“THAT SPEEDING CAR”

“GET YOUR CLOSE SHAVES”

“FROM THE HALF-POUND JAR”

“OF”

“**BURMA-SHAVE**”

Jim chuckled. “Yeah, that’s pretty darn good, don’tcha think, Roger? Hey, you happen to have any gum on you?”

Roger muttered, “Gum? No. I don’t think so ...”

Jim reached forward. “Maybe in your glove compartment?”

“NO!” Roger yelled. But it was too late.

“What the hell are you yellin’ for? I only ... Well, lookee here. What’s this?”

Jim reached into the glove box and pulled out a handgun. He turned it over, whistling. “Well, I’ll be. If that don’t beat all. What do you got one of these for?”

Jim put his finger in the trigger and smiled at Roger.

It was all Roger could do to stay on the road. As he slowed down, he noticed the flashing lights coming up fast behind him.

Jim glanced back. “Well, well, well. I guess you musta been speeding, my man. Let’s just put this little beauty back in the glove box, shall we, and be careful what we say. The cops get very antsy about weapons. I won’t mention the gun if you don’t. I’d hate to have to shoot it out.” Jim winked.

The car rolled to a stop and Roger turned it off, watching in the side mirror as the police officer got out of his vehicle and approached. Roger rolled the window down, saying a silent prayer.



The rain had slowed considerably. Frank got out of the cruiser and walked toward the driver’s door. He bent down to peer inside.

“Good evening, gentlemen.”

Frank noticed that the driver had a strange expression on his face. He seemed more nervous than a routine traffic stop should warrant.

“Would you mind stepping out of the car, sir?” Frank asked the driver. Then he pointed to the passenger. “And you, sir, are to remain inside the

vehicle, please.”

The driver got out of the car. *Strange*, thought Frank. *He hasn't even asked me why I pulled him over.*

“Would you please walk back here with me, sir? That’s right. Now please put your hands on the trunk and lean forward for me. Just like that. Thank you.”

While Frank patted him down, the driver muttered something. Frank leaned forward and asked, “What did you say, sir?”

“A gun,” the man whispered. “The other guy has a gun. He hitched a ride. I think he’s one of those convicts.”

Frank quickly straightened up and unholstered his weapon. He said quietly, “You stay right here and don’t move a muscle, you understand?”

Frank walked toward the passenger door with his gun drawn.

“Sir? I need you to get out of the vehicle very slowly, making no sudden moves. Am I clear? Okay, do it now.”

The door opened, and the passenger got out saying, “Officer? What seems to be the problem?”

“Hands on your head. Now. Take five steps away from the car and turn around slowly. Keep your hands on your head. Now kneel down.”

The man said, “Look, Officer. My name is Jim Smith. I don’t understand ...”

Frank shouted, “I said don’t move!” and shot him in the forehead. The body formerly known as Jim fell backward into the drainage ditch.



Roger saw the whole thing and exclaimed, “You shot him! But he didn’t reach for the gun! I think it’s still in the car!”

And then Roger noticed the officer’s gun, which was pointed directly at him.

“Please calm down, sir,” the officer said. “Trust me, he was reaching for a weapon. Everything will be fine if you do as I say. Keep your hands on the vehicle.”

“Was that man the escaped convict?” Roger asked.

“Him? No. Never saw him before in my life.”

“Then why—”

“Quiet now, sir. Listen closely. I need you to get into the back seat of the car and strip down to your underwear. You can keep your socks on. Everything else comes off. Leave the clothes in the car. They’re evidence. Now hand me your wallet and keys.”

Roger handed over the items. “Please, I—”

“Shush now, Mister ... Burnbaum, is it?” The officer was looking at the man’s driver’s license.

“Yes.”

“Get in the car and do as I say. Please cooperate. It’s perfectly fine, Mr. Burnbaum.”

Roger got in while the policeman stood at the open door with the gun and watched him undress. When he was done, the officer said, “Now would you mind slipping your shoes back on and getting out for a moment? This will only take a sec. I appreciate your patience.”

Roger was getting angry. He got out and noticed the nameplate on the officer’s shirt.

“Look, Officer Waymouth, I—”

“My name ain’t Waymouth,” Frank said as he shot Roger point-blank in the right temple. Blood splattered Frank’s face and uniform. Roger’s body dropped heavily to the ground, and Frank kicked it into the ditch.

Frank dove into the back seat and rapidly changed into Roger’s clothes, wiping his face clean with the towel. He exited and threw the towel and the police uniform into the ditch, keeping the gun. Then he patted down Jim’s body, pocketed his wallet, and walked calmly back to the patrol car to turn off the flashers.

After closing the cruiser door, Frank sauntered back to Roger’s car, jumped behind the wheel, and turned the key in the ignition. The whole process took less than three minutes from the time he first pulled the trigger.

*I enjoyed being a cop tonight, Frank thought. But there’s no way I could keep driving the cruiser, now that they found the real cop’s body out by Eureka.*

Frank admired himself in the rearview mirror and noted how Roger’s clothes looked a little baggy on him. Still, they’d do well enough for now. *Damn*, he thought as he stared at his reflection, combing his hair. *Mr. Roger Burnbaum, you are a handsome devil.* The new Roger readjusted the mirror, checked for traffic, signaled, and pulled the Chrysler Imperial carefully out onto the road, keeping within the speed limit the entire way to Reno. *It generally pays to obey the little laws*, he thought. *Makes it easier to break the big ones.*

As Roger approached the Reno city limits, he noticed a set of signs.

“DO YOUR WHISKERS”

“MISBEHAVE”

“GRUNT AND GRUMBLE”

“RANT AND RAVE?”

“SHOOT THE BRUTES WITH”

“**BURMA-SHAVE**”

