

PARTY PIECE

I was thinking about going straight home that night but Terry said we might as well have a drink, so we went down the Grove after we finished. And we had a couple of beers and we met this guy that Terry knew from school. His name was Lee something or other, I forget what it was.

Anyway, he said, there's this big turn on tonight at Rob Goodsell's place down the Bay, why not come along?

He said there were a lot going. Rob Goodsell's olds were away and he and his sister had the place by themselves for the weekend. It was a big place down the south end of the beach. Lee said it'd be a good turn, there'd be a lot of shit around, because Rob had some and this chick was going to bring some more. There'd be plenty of piss too.

Terry said he'd bring his own. I thought then he meant beer.

Lee said, beer or shit?

Terry said, what do you reckon?

Lee said, yeah, the more we get the better, man.

So anyway, we got the address and I was going to pick Terry up about eight. He said he had to go and see a guy before then.

I went home and had tea and then went round and got him. He didn't have any cans when he came out so I knew he'd got some dope, and I asked him and he showed me. He didn't get grass though. He had two caps of morphine and a needle. He said he scored it off a guy up the Junction.

I knew he'd tried smack a while back. He wasn't really on it but he had had a few hits. But this time I thought he was probably getting pills or grass, and I said, what do you want that stuff for?

Terry said, I just felt like a good flash.

I said, you remember what happened the last time.

He said, yeah, but that wasn't the last time. Because I hit up again the week after that and it was all right.

Because the last time I saw him hit was a couple of months before, when he got a cheap cap. He said maybe the dealer reckoned he could get him started on it, then jack up the price when he wanted more. But he said he could take it or leave it.

I said maybe it was bad quality, but Terry hit with it anyway and he was really bad afterwards. It was in a big place at Centennial Park, and we had to take him over the Park and walk him to get his blood moving,

to get his heart going. It was a really bad experience.

But he wouldn't say it was anything bad about the stuff. Now he said it must have just been a big dose that time, and he wasn't used to it. Because the next time it'd been really good.

I thought that maybe he was just talking and there hadn't really been any second time. But I never said anything then, I didn't want to encourage him. I mean, needles really freak me out. There's too many things that can go wrong. Then you get to be a real junkie anyway, and it eats you right away.

I couldn't talk to Terry about it because he reckoned I was chicken. And anyway, I reckoned it was his trip, and if he really wanted to get into it I couldn't stop him. So I just drove on down the Bay.

Rob Goodsell's place was back round from the surf sheds. All the lights were on and I could hear the music before I even switched the engine off. There was an old woman in one of the places next door watching us go in. But I thought, it's Goodsell's place, that's his problem.

They had the music up loud and there would have been about thirty there already. I didn't know most of them but Terry started talking to some and I ended up talking to this blonde chick. She was a bit silly and she didn't do much for me but the dark chick with her was all right. Then a few more came in, and Lee came in with a chick. Then somebody said, here's the gear now.

This chick with big glasses in the corner was rolling sticks and they started passing them round. I saw Terry talking to some guys and blowing a stick when it came round. Then the blonde chick passed me one and I had a suck and gave it to the dark chick, and she gave it back to me.

I could tell I was starting to get through to her. I was more interested in scoring with a chick than getting a charge anyway. The place was pretty crowded by then and some of them were dancing. I don't think Terry was anywhere around then, but I wasn't thinking about him and his needle any more. I was concentrating on the chick and I was really going all right with her.

After a while she said, have you seen around this house?

I said, no, not yet.

She said, let's have a look upstairs.

So we went up and had a look in the bedrooms. She was holding on to my hand all the time. We went into the front room, Goodsell's parents' room, and we could see out across towards the surf sheds.

We were looking out the window and I could feel her just touching me, and then she turned round and started kissing me, and we got down on the bed and I started getting her gear off. I was feeling her all over

and getting her all excited, and she was saying, oh, yes, come on, all the time. She wasn't just lying there like a lump of shit the way most chicks do, she was a real goer.

She was so good it was a pity we were doing it like that with the place full of people. I had the door shut but I was scared somebody'd come in on us, or Goodsell'd want us to stop mucking up the room. But then I thought, you've got to make the most of it when you can get it. So anyway, I was just going to try and get her pants off when somebody started knocking on the door and calling out for me.

I didn't want to answer but then I thought they might come in if I didn't, so I said, yeah, what is it?

The guy outside said, hey, Terry's out in the kitchen and he's shooting up.

I said, what's that got to do with me?

The guy said, we want somebody to stop him, man. We don't want any of that here.

I was going to say, what do you think I can do? But then I remembered the way he was the last time I saw him, and I knew somebody'd have to look after him if anything went wrong, and it'd be better to stop him to begin with. So I said, yeah, all right, I'm coming.

I said to the chick, look, I'll see you later, all right? And she said, all right, but the way she said it I knew I'd blown it there. So by the time I got down to the kitchen I was pretty pissed off.

Terry was there and he had about six people watching him. He had the gas stove on low and he was just heating the needle before he sucked up the stuff out of the spoon.

Goodsell was saying, shit, Terry, I don't have to give any reason. I just don't want any of that stuff here.

Another guy was saying, come on, man, cool it. He's not doing any harm.

I said, shit, man, do you have to do that here?

Terry wasn't taking any notice. He put the needle in the spoon and let it squeeze out, and sucked the stuff up. He had his belt ready and he twisted it round his arm. Everybody was watching but nobody tried to stop him or anything.

He said, some of you can have a go after. I think he might have been trying to be funny.

I said, go easy on that, remember what happened last time.

Terry said, it was great last time.

I had a crazy idea that he might only shoot half the stuff and leave some in the needle. But I guess no junkie who ever lived could stop half-way like that.

Then he twisted the belt and flexed his arm and put it in. One girl said, oh, no, I can't look. But the rest of us watched the blood come and then his thumb go down.

He took the needle out sort of in slow motion. His eyes were closed and his mouth was open. I heard him say, oh, yeah, as if he was talking to somebody else that the rest of us couldn't see.

Rob Goodsell said, shit, what do we do now?

I said, he's having a flash now. We better just leave him for a while.

Goodsell said, how's he going to get home?

I said, I'll get him home later on.

Terry looked up at us and he moved his hand as if there was something he wanted to say. He looked as if he was going to fall off the chair.

I said, let's get him somewhere where he can lie down.

Goodsell said, out the back.

Terry was sweating and his eyes looked funny. We got him up on his feet and out the back door. There was one of those long sunbaking chairs on the patio and we got him to lie down on it. There was a guy sitting with a chick at the other end of the patio in the dark. They were looking at him and I told them he was a bit crook and he had to take it easy for a while.

I asked Terry how did he feel, and he said, too much.

I said, well, just stay there a while. You'll be okay in a while.

He said, I'm okay now, I'm fine.

I looked at him there and I said, okay, then, and I went back inside with the rest of them.

His needle and the rest of his gear were still in the kitchen, and Goodsell said, what about that stuff?

I said, he'll take it with him when he goes.

I was a bit worried about it but there wasn't anything you could do except leave him to get over it. The rest of the party was still going on and some guys were passing another stick around, and after a while I wasn't thinking about him. He just went out of my mind. I was having look round for that chick, but she wasn't there any more. I was a bit pissed about that.

I think all this time some of them were going out the back to look at Terry. I think they were the kids that hadn't seen anyone on the hard stuff before. And then one girl came in and said something to Goodsell, and Goodsell went out. And somebody said, Terry's OD'd.

I went out the back and all of a sudden there were a lot of people standing round. And Terry was lying on the chair, he was lying on his side and he looked sort of stretched out tight. He was perspiring and his face looked all red.

I said, hey, Terry. But I couldn't tell whether he could hear me or not.

Rob Goodsell said, he looks pretty bad, doesn't he.

Somebody said, ring for a doctor.

Goodsell said, shit, no, we'd all get busted. We've got to get him out of here.

Somebody else said, take him to a hospital.

I said, no, they'd hand him over to the fuzz then. He'll be all right, he was like this before. He just needs to sleep it off.

Another guy said, yeah, this is like his party piece. He was one of the guys that helped us walk Terry in the park the time before.

One of the girls touched his forehead. She said, he's got a terrific temperature.

I said, yeah, get us some water.

The girl got a plastic jug and I poured it over his head and his face. He was mumbling something and I slapped his face. I tried to give him a drink of it but he started coughing and I don't think he got any.

His eyes were open and he was trying to look at me, and I said, how do you feel?

He said, all right.

I said, do you want to get a doctor?

He shook his head and he said, no, I'll be right.

The girl said, you better go home.

I said, he can't go home like that. He's got to stay here for a while. We'd better put him on a bed somewhere.

Goodsell said, there's a bed in the caravan round the side.

Goodsell opened it up and we picked him up and carried him round. We had to carry him most of the way. But he did seem to be getting better, though. He was talking and all that. He wasn't like the time before when we had to walk him.

Goodsell said, you'll be all right in there for a while.

Terry said, yeah, I'll be okay. I'll go home in the morning.

He didn't sound too good but I didn't reckon he was going to get any worse. So we left him in there in the dark.

After that I didn't worry about him till it was time to go. I went and had a look at him before I left. I said, Terry, in a quiet voice at the door, but he didn't say anything. I could see him on the bed but I didn't go in. I didn't put the light on in case he woke up.

It was about two o'clock when I got home and I got in without anybody waking up there. The next morning was Saturday but I had to go to work, and Terry wasn't there. I reckoned he was probably still getting over the night before. But then when I got home my mother

said Rob Goodsell had rung me up.

I thought, oh, no. I had a feeling it was something pretty bad. But I rung him back and he said, listen, it's about Terry, I think something's happened to him.

My old man was in the room there watching the TV and having lunch, so I couldn't ask too many questions or anything. I just said, oh, yeah, how'd it happen?

Goodsell said, listen, he's still there and he's got blood all over his face. And he's not breathing or anything.

Then I knew Terry was really dead and Goodsell couldn't get himself to say it. And I didn't know what to say, and all of a sudden I was really scared, I was really shitless, and I wanted to say, well, what's it got to do with me?

I wanted to hang up but I couldn't do that in case my old man started thinking. I couldn't talk about it any more with him there. So then I just said, okay, I'll come round in a while.

My old woman came in and said, what did he want you about?

I said, he just wants a bit of help about a van he's fixing.

She just said, oh, yes. She's snooply but she doesn't really care about things, she just likes to get you to tell her.

Then I had a bit of food before I went round to Goodsell's. I didn't want to rush straight off in case they thought something was wrong. That was pretty hard, acting like there was nothing doing, and trying to take my time. But anyway, I got out of there and I drove round.

Goodsell and his sister were the only ones there. His sister was about fourteen. She was sitting in the lounge looking at the TV when I came in, and the place was still all wrecked up from the party. She looked at me sort of scared and she didn't say anything, so I knew that she knew what had happened.

I went out with Goodsell and we had a look in the caravan. Terry was still on the bed in there. He was lying on his back with his mouth open and all full of blood and sick-looking foam stuff, and his eyes were open a bit. I touched his arm and it was sort of soft. He was cold and I couldn't feel his heart and he wasn't breathing.

I said, yeah, he's dead all right.

Goodsell said, yeah, well, what're we going to do?

I said, we better get the ambulance.

Goodsell said, yeah, but then we'd get busted. They'd find out about last night and everything.

I said, you could tell them you just found him and you don't know how he got here.

Goodsell said, yeah, but it'd be just as bad that way.

I said, yeah, but look, you know, he's dead now, this is serious.

Goodsell said, yeah, well, that's it. We can't do anything to help him now, can we. So we've got to look after ourselves.

He was really scared, because it was his place and all. And he hadn't been using any hard stuff; and he didn't want to get busted for it, and I didn't want to either. Because the smack was Terry's thing, and now he'd fucked himself up, and now he was going to fuck us up too.

I said, what're you going to do now?

Goodsell said, we've got to get him away from here and leave him some place else.

I said, you mean dump him, just like that?

Goodsell said, yeah, that's what we've got to do.

I said, you do it, not me, this is your place. Because Terry was a mate of mine and now he was just lying there with blood all in his mouth like that, and blood in his ears, and I couldn't take it talking about it like that.

Goodsell said, don't be a flip, I can't take him anywhere, you've got a car and I haven't. Then he saw me looking at Terry lying there and he said, come, let's talk about it there.

So we went back inside and we went into his room. His sister just looked at us going through. And Goodsell was saying, look, it'll be easy, the olds don't get back till tomorrow night. So tonight we get him in your car and we drive out somewhere and we leave him. And when they find him, for a start they won't even know who he is. And when they do they still won't know what happened to him and maybe they won't find out.

I said, I don't want to get mixed up in all this.

But Goodsell said, you're in it already. You were here last night.

So I thought about it and I said, yeah, all right. I still didn't really want to but it looked like the best thing to do.

Then we had to wait till it was dark enough to do anything. So I stayed at Goodsell's all afternoon, watching TV with him and his sister. They had the car races on from Sandown and we watched that. Then we had some sandwiches and we watched some other shit, *Young Talent* or something like that, and then we watched the news. And then it was getting dark, so we looked at the maps to try and pick a place for it.

I said, how about down the back of the rifle range? Because that wasn't far and I didn't want to be driving round with him in the car all night.

But Goodsell said, no, that's too close, it's got to be somewhere a long way out. So in the end we picked a place out near the National Park that Goodsell reckoned he knew.

Then it was dark enough so we went back out to the caravan, and

we wiped his face off a bit and we took his shirt and jeans off so they couldn't say what he was wearing. That was Goodsell's idea. Then I got the car round the side and we took him out and put him in the boot.

Driving right down there, it seemed like it took hours. I was driving slow all the time, because I had this idea of us getting pulled up and then one of the cops wanting to search us for dope or something like that. I was really totally shit scared, all the way out. Then we were in the bush more and I wanted to speed up but I was still scared of the cops, and then I thought that if they saw us maybe they'd think something was on because we were driving so slow. That was really the worst part.

I said, where's this place we're going?

Goodsell said, I don't know if it's along here.

I said, this'll do, anyway. We want to get it over with.

I couldn't see anything except the road and the fence in the headlights, so we stopped and had a look round in the dark. But there were fences all along and I said, no, not here.

We went on a bit farther and I kept stopping to look round. Once we stalled and I felt really sick then, with everything quiet all of a sudden and him in the back, and I was scared it wouldn't start again. But I got it going and then we came down on a culvert and some trees. And I said, this'll do.

I pulled up just past it and we sat there in the dark for a minute. Then Goodsell said, come on, let's get it over.

I got the boot open and we started getting him out. I thought he'd be stiff by then but he was still all soft and heavy. We got him down and I tried to stop his head bumping on the road, and Goodsell said, we'll get him under here. We'll get him under the bridge.

We started carrying him over and then we heard something. I thought it was a car up on the road, but then Goodsell said, it's down that way.

It was on the road we were on. And I said, it'll be coming along here.

I let go of him and I started going back to the car, but then Goodsell said, get him over, get him over. And we started pulling him over the side of the culvert to get him out of sight, and I could hear the engine getting closer all the time.

We got him over and I heard him hit the bottom, but there wasn't any time to get him under it. We got straight back in the car and I started, but I flooded it and I had to keep trying, and then I could see the other lights down the road. Then I got it going and I had to do a turn in the dark. There was a big bang at the back but then we got round and I went straight off down the track.

I could see the other lights in the mirror close up behind, and then I

saw them dip down over the culvert. All the way down the track I was trying to lose them, but it was like that guy knew the road, or maybe he saw us and he wanted a look at us. But I got a bit ahead, and then when we got back to the road I really blasted away before he got out. I think he stopped at the end of the track and then he went the other way. But I lost him anyhow.

I got home and I told my oldies I was just helping a mate out fixing a car, and that was okay. And that was days ago, and there hasn't been anything else about it. They haven't found him yet. I don't know what'll happen when they do, though. Because in the end I don't reckon we're going to get away with it, and it's a real bastard because it was all his fault in the first place. But there wasn't anything we could do about it and there's nothing else we can do about it now.

