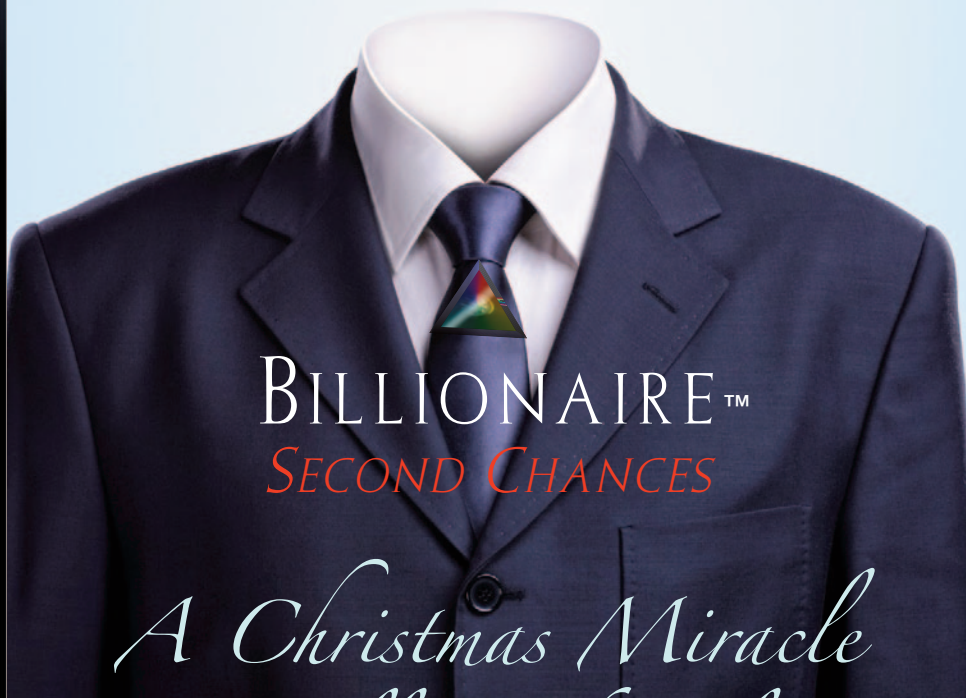


E. R. HAAS & KENT C. MADSON



THE INVISIBLE



BILLIONAIRE™
SECOND CHANCES

*A Christmas Miracle
Hollywood Style*



PUBLISHER'S NOTES

First Edition

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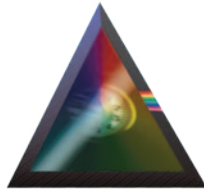
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The Invisible Billionaire™

SECOND CHANCES

A Christmas Miracle

Hollywood Style

First Edition Christmas 2018

By E. R. Haas & Kent C. Madson

Most writers would probably call this the “About the Authors” page, but we are not like most writers! Our story is different and so is the story you have in your hands.

Kent and I are performance experts, founders of ThinkTQ, Inc., the world’s leading publisher of virtual training products exclusively focused on personal and professional excellence. We have written numerous books, including *Success On Purpose* (the followup to Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life*), *The Excellence Habit*, and *The Power of TQ and the 10 Choices of Intentional Excellence*. See ThinkTQ.com for more information.

The pursuit of excellence and the rejection of mediocrity is always on our minds. Writing a story about a Christmas Miracle has never been on the forefront of our thinking.

BUT, AS THEY SAY, MIRACLES HAPPEN WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT THEM.

Ever since we founded The World Excellence Project to develop and deploy The Time Prism®, The World’s Smartest App™, the rags to riches story of Tommy Quinn

has haunted us. In a way, he has been nagging at us for years to let him out of our imagination and onto the pages you now hold in your hands.

Tommy's story is good old fashioned lore. His story could be your story — or the story of anyone with a dream and feels that, because of all the wrong turns in life, he or she is no longer entitled to dream... or worse... that their life is over... and had they been given a second chance and new beginning... things just might be different.

SO, HERE'S YOUR SECOND CHANCE. TAKE IT!

Actually, if you like the story, please do pass it on and give someone else the Second Chance they might need. Also invite them to download their own personal Time Prism. It is now online at your App Store. It is free.

SEARCH: TIMEPRISM (ONE WORD)

We want you and everyone you know to become wildly successful... then pass it on. You will understand why as the pages before you unfold!





DEDICATION

To succeed in today's relentless world, you must find the inspiration, motivation and resolution to face your deepest fears and rise above your challenges and circumstances.

You must find those who will encourage you to live up to your full potential... excite you... and guide your path with wisdom and enlightenment. To give you a Second Chance at the life you will love.

I found such a being — a Dark Angel on a mission with a message. So it is my honor to share the message with you, and set you on a mission towards your destiny.

This is my story. A Christmas Miracle Hollywood Style.

It is a timeless story of the challenges and struggles to achieve our dreams and goals, and our desperate need for

Second Chances and new beginnings.

The reason I write this today is to give you HOPE for a better future...

Hope for a life of meaning and purpose...

Hope for a life of untold enrichment...

This book is dedicated to you and your dreams.

Through my story you will find your story.

The moral of my story is simple: We are all worthy of a second chance, and must pay it forward by being each other's second chance.

I am yours, you are mine, and together we can become the light we must create in the world.

Christmas Eve is not a date or day on the calendar. It is the reflection of true love and the promise of hope and light.

We are each called to be each other's Second Chance. Believe it.

God Bless,
Tommy
Tommy TQ Quinn, *The Invisible Billionaire*

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“There's nothing as exciting as a comeback — seeing someone with dreams, watching them fail, and then getting a second chance.”

— Rachel Griffiths

“At one time I was rich — very rich — of that there is no doubt,” Tommy thought to himself as he looked up at the shimmering Hollywood sign on his way to Jake’s Place, his favorite neighborhood haunt. “But, just where I went wrong is nothing but a drug-induced haze right now. Hell, it really doesn’t matter anyway. It is what it is, and there’s no turning the clock back.”

For a Christmas Eve in the City of Angels, it was especially windy and cold. Looking northwest to the Santa Monica mountains, Tommy could see a light dusting of fresh snow, glistening in the fading sunset, casting shadows of dark and light up into those high-rolling Hollywood hills.

No question, it was biting cold. All you had to do was look at the snow on Mount Lee above Griffith and that told the entire story. “The weatherman just plain got it wrong. It will be a white Christmas this year in LA.” Tommy thought to himself.

As he inched closer to Jake’s, Tommy noticed the people filling the space between the cracks in the sidewalk. “Lots

of people,” he thought, “not a one that gives a damn about me or anybody else. Hell, I don’t even care. Soon enough the past will rest in peace.”

Tommy looked around and shrugged. He pulled the black hoodie over his ice-cold ears, flipped the collar up on his ragged overcoat and started to smile. Actually, it was more of a smirk, the kind of look you give off when you know something the world doesn’t. And what he was holding in was a secret years in the making.

“I was a player. Now I’m not. Reasons don’t matter.” Tommy mused to himself. “Tonight will be the night this insanity stops. It is, as they say, a beautiful night for a good death.”

Tommy suddenly stopped to feel the vibe of the city — to breathe in the strong diesel smells of the passing buses and listen to the rhythm of the horns and screeching tires on the pot-hole infested pavement.

“Lordy lordy, I love this place,” Tommy shouted as he swung the door to Jakes wide open and stumbled in. The first thing he always did was to look around to see where he belonged. People looked up from the booze and jazz,

wishing Tommy would just close the door and stop letting the heat out and the cold damp air in.

The bar was packed with the leftover lunch crowd, all hitting Jake's happy hour for everything it was worth. The beer, cheap. The bar nuts and pretzels, stale.

Lots of familiar faces, but Tommy couldn't put a name to any of them. To him, they were all lost souls riding the same slow train heading nowhere. The brokenhearted. The wounded warriors. The daydream believers who gave up dreaming and stopped believing years ago. The only thing they had in common was that they all murdered their inner-child before their spirit could find a way out of the hell they were living in.

Tommy laughed to himself, "This is perfect! A fitting end to a life filled with nothing but pain and sorrow, and here I am surrounded by a bunch of drunk morons who don't have a clue."

A couple of the regulars waved Tommy up to the bar. "Whatcha drinking big guy?" Bobbie yelled from the end of the bar. "It's Christmas and it's time to get this party started!"

Zumma, a stripper from Orange County and Star, a part-time Uber driver grabbed his butt and planted a hot wet kiss on Tommy's ear. It caught him by surprise and he winced at the old woman's touch.

“Not interested, not tonight, not ever,” Tommy cringed.

“Just what the hell is eating you sweet thing?” Zumma asked. “Bad day at the office? Your sexsatairy had her evil way with you,” she grinned.

Bobbie and the babes cracked up. Tommy chuckled and slammed his fist on the bar. “Set up the whiskey, make it neat, and hold the fruit, you slacker! I only got time for a couple of shots with you losers, cause I have places to go and people to see.”

The burley bar-keep poured some old rot-gut to the brim and pushed the glass down the bar. As always, Tommy's reach was true, and in one fluid motion, hoisted the glass, and poured it down his gullet faster than Bart poured it from the bottle.

“Again you fat bastard — Bart's nickname — but this time make it the good stuff,” Tommy crowed.

“You got dough, Tommy?” Bart replied.

“I’ve got enough tonight you prick. Be quick cause I’m heading up the street for some ‘bottle service’! I ain’t getting drunk tonight at your prices!” Tommy quipped.

Bart obliged and sent Tommy a shot filled to the brim of Makers Mark with a Coors chaser... the best boiler maker money can buy. “Tommy, this one’s on the house. You’re a degenerate inbred-redneck, but I love you more than you know!”

“Thanks you fat bastard, the feeling is mutual,” Tommy howled! “Little do you know how much Christmas cheer this brought me tonight.”

Tommy downed the shot of Makers and raised his mug of ice cold Coors high above his head and proclaimed, “Here’s a toast to all you misfits, losers, and morons spending Christmas Eve in this dump. I love you all and hope you will miss me when I’m gone. CHEERS!”

Of course, the drunken crowd replied with a loud, “Screw you, but we love you too Tommy!” The patrons of Jakes Place were a bit rough around the edges, but they had a lot of heart... and not a bit bashful at expressing their true feelings.

After an hour or so of banter with the sultry blond sitting next to him and the booze still talking, Tommy buttoned up the front of his coat and staggered out the door. “See you never you losers!” Tommy crowed as he flipped them the bird and pushed the door wide open. “Little do these sons a bitches know about my beautiful plan for a Christmas with my dad.” Tommy thought to himself.

As he turned to walk up Vine, Tommy stumbled over a bum passed out in the middle of the sidewalk. Maybe he’s dead, maybe just dead drunk, who knows. Who cares? The mean streets of LA are cruel. Unless you have money in your pocket, you are a nobody.

Tommy was tired of being a nobody. From somebody to nobody is a frightful journey, especially when it happens in the blink of an eye.

One day you’re on top, the darling of the Newport Beach jet set, the next day forgotten and pitched out with the day’s retched garbage. Gone are the fast cars, faster women and free-flowing cocaine, Tommy’s vice of choice.

Not to get sidetracked, but now might be a good time to get a glimmer of the man, his dreams and the circumstances that put him at Hollywood and Vine on that cold Christmas Eve. Through his backstory, you will come to understand his rise from rags to riches and his spectacular fall from the mantle of wealth and privilege.

In much the same way the parable of the prodigal son portrays a fall from grace and goodness, Tommy's story is typical of the over-indulgent, California excesses of legend. Good boy, hot girl, and a dream... a dream that ultimately took a hard left turn at the corner of Achilles and Mount Olympus high up in the Hollywood hills where Tommy crashed his second new Ferrari in less than a month. Just listen to Bob Seger sing Hollywood Nights to get the picture of a life of highs and lows in the land of conspicuous consumption and unfettered desires.

But I digress. Tommy's story is actually more like a Greek Tragedy than a VH1 music video, and as you will see, much more interesting than either.

Tommy's true love, his high school flame, was a total hottie named Amy. He was captain of the football team, she was the queen of the world... officially the most beautiful girl who ever came out of Iowa. At 18, she was Miss Iowa and first runner-up for Miss America — flirty and gorgeous beyond imagination. 18 going on 28 is the best way to describe Amy and her desire to make it big in Hollywood. She had talent and she had Tommy. Stardom was her dream, Tommy wanted to be the guy who made that dream come true. So they packed two duffle bags containing their entire life's possessions, jammed them into the back of his shackled-up '67 GTO, pointed it west, and her dream became his destiny.

The long and short of their story is classic. She took waitress and modeling gigs, Tommy became a studio carpenter, electrician, and an all-around handyman. If it was broken or needed to be built, he was the first choice at Sony. Over time, he gained a reputation as a smart young man with a strong work ethic, admired by his bosses, directors, producers and his peers.

Amy was the proverbial horse of a different color. She too was wicked-smart and beauty-queen beautiful. Her exotic

looks got her noticed and her talent got her recognized. Combine kindness with sensuous then add glamorous and you have the full picture.

As a couple, they were known as the “dynamic duo”, Amy sparkled like the Hope Diamond in front of the adoring camera — the perfect candidate for leading lady — while Tommy worked behind the camera on the sets. Both fed each other the skinny on what was happening, who needed what, when and where. They didn’t need The Hollywood Reporter to get the story — they were living the story in HD Technicolor — complete with soundtrack by the Eagles’ *Life in The Fast Lane*.

Good looking couples in Hollywood attract a lot of attention, and they were no exception. Five years into the acting gigs, she was being fast-tracked for stardom. She was what you would call a serious working actress.

Like Tommy, Amy made friends with everyone she met and truly loved the pure energy of cinematic life. Unlike many Hollywood wannabe's, Amy had few enemies and a host of best buddies: Julia, Babs, Oprah, Jennifer, and Jessica were all on Facebook Messenger and never more than minutes away from each other via texts and Instagram.

She was respected by everyone, from the makeup artists to the flower arrangers. Other rising stars loved her as she worked her craft diligently. The producers loved her because her work ethic was unrivaled.

Amy got bigger and better parts as she honed her craft. She mentored the kids and befriended a few aging beauties whose stars were now fading. Amy offered encouragement and true friendship. She was adored by coworkers and fans alike.

Tommy was at the opposite end of the spectrum and turned his hands into a money machine. He found that a great number of stars loved old cars, planes, and boats, and they saw him as their new best friend. It didn't matter what it was — a vintage Benz, tricked out Vette, or a '37 Chriscraft needed for a high-speed boat chase, Tommy was the man to fix it, build it or amp it up.

Over time, Tommy fell in with a group of yacht builders from San Diego and turned his passion into a bundle — real wealth in the eyes of a 26-year-old jock from the cornfields of Iowa. Five years of hard work, the right connections, and he and his partners sold their business to the largest custom yacht refinisher in California. Tommy walked with just

under \$3 million in cash.

Little did he know that this windfall would be his downfall. How could he? He was now living a dream this young Iowa Hawkeye could never begin to imagine.

At first, Tommy was money-smart, investing in a couple of film deals and two interesting startups. He and Amy knew how to work a room, so the more they invested, the more the money poured in. Money, as they say, is no problem at all in Tinseltown — as long as you have it. If you don't, now that's a whole different story. And far more salacious.

Rags to riches stories are a dime a dozen in Socal. It's the riches to rags story that is truly interesting. The fall from the pinnacle of success into the mud is what makes the 24-hour LA news cycle so hot... especially in the TMZ.

So, you might be asking yourself about now, does this yarn have a happy ending? For Amy maybe. But for Tommy, it is just the beginning of his steady plunge into a hell of his own making... all driven by a single word: Seduction.

Put succinctly, Tommy went from riches to rags because he was seduced into a life he never knew, was incapable of handling, and couldn't escape.

You could blame it on the gold-diggers at the Newport Beach Yacht Club. Drop-dead georgous women constantly on the prowel for a man who can buy their way into a moment of happiness, false as it might be.

For a rich young man, it's easy to forget the beautiful wife at home and go for the thrill of the kill. In fact, a stunning redhead, trained from birth to compete for a man's attention and affection is a difficult thing to ignore.

Sadly, Tommy met such a creature one night at the club and this is what set him on the path to his inevitable destruction. With money to burn, he did just that, spending more and more and enjoying it less and less. New yacht, his and her Ferrari's, the Malibu cliff-side mansion overlooking the Pacific Coast Highway 5 doors south of The Getty. It's easy to blow through money in LA... especially when introduced to blow.

Tommy couldn't get enough of the stuff — a three grand a day habit — picking up the tab for friends that were not just addicts, they were degenerates. Coked to the gills every morning, Tommy's penchant for the fast life cost him his marriage, his money, and nearly his life.

When you wreck a Ferrari, a Jag and a Lambo all in the same month, even the Geico Gekko will stop taking your calls!

Amy tried to get him help, but until a man is willing to recognize he has a problem — that he was powerless over alcohol and smack — all the kicking and screaming could never drag him closer to the life he gave up for the drugs and cheap thrills he craved.

Day after day she and Tommy fought — yelling and begging matches really. But the more she screamed, the less he listened and their fate was sealed. She was an emotional wreck... he was a fast-moving train wreck.

After 2 years of broken promises with not even the slightest indication that Tommy realized he had a life-threatening disease, Amy went before Judge Kale C. Holder and received the divorce she tearfully demanded.

Addiction is hard on everyone — the addict, the family, and coworkers. This nightmare was interfering with every aspect of Amy's life, personally and in her career. She returned from the courthouse with a restraining order, changed all the locks, and had the cops throw Tommy out.

Although Amy still felt the bonds of love, she was not going to be imprisoned in the bondage of addiction.

It was over.

After that, Tommy drifted from place to place, sleeping in a friend's garage, moving to a horse barn and on to an old RV on the backlot at Fox where a security guard, who still liked him, let him crash when the weather got rough.

Yes, Tommy used up every favor he was entitled to and more. After a time, even his friends couldn't stand to watch him commit slow-motion suicide and it's over meant... it's actually over.

With nowhere else to go, out of options and all hope erased from his tormented soul, he headed to downtown LA where he would at least be with others in the same plight he found himself in.

From the pricey cliffs of Malibu to the bowels of Skid Row in a year and a half is how he descended from the pinnacle of success — a real-life rag to riches story — to the tortured riches to rags existence he was now living.

“God, it’s cold tonight,” Tommy muttered under his breath. “I ain’t seen it this cold since I don’t know when.”

Tommy slowed his pace a bit and stopped to chuckle at a thought that just popped into his mind. “Damn, this is just like the old Everly Brother’s song... ‘It’s cold and getting colder... they’re evacuating Satin waiting for Hell to freeze over.’ What a great song and a perfect description of December 24th in the City of Angels.” Tommy muttered under his breath.

A couple of blocks down to Hollywood Boulevard, Tommy reached his destination, Liquor To Go, a favorite among the down-and-out crowd. If you’re looking for cheap booze and juicy broads, this is your place.

Tommy knew the manager, Farhad Hassan, pretty well, and the manager knew all the degenerates by name. “Yo, you Iranian terrorist,” Tommy yelled across the mostly empty aisles, “What’s a rag-head like you doing here on Christmas Eve?”

“Tommy, what’s a skid row bum like you doing walking around on a night like this?” Farhad retorted flashing his toothless smile!

They both laughed at the off-hand pleasantries and waited for the jaundiced hooker to pay up and leave. “What can I do for you, Tommy? The usual?”

“Not hardly — not tonight!” Tommy retorted. “Give me a fifth of your best Macallan’s — that 18-year-old batch way up on the top shelf.”

“That’s \$66 bucks and change Tommy, you sure you want to blow your whole wad on a one night stand?”

“That’s all I’m looking for tonight — the best for the rest.” Tommy cackled. “I ain’t got nobody that gives a damn about me, so might as well talk to the bottle before the night passes on.”

Tommy reached deep into his left coat pocket and pulled out \$20 bucks in change and the rest in well-crumpled, really dirty ones and fives.

“You’ve been good to me Farhad, here’s a finskie as my last Christmas gift to you. Don’t spend it all in one place,” Tommy barked with a smile.

With his precious golden elixir safely tucked inside his coat, Tommy walked out and headed due east towards the mission. Not a lot of folks on the sidewalk now, just the street-people with nowhere to go but back to their tents and cardboard palaces.

“What a stinking life,” Tommy thought to himself as he passed a steady procession of shopping carts filled with cans, plastic and what little they had to show for their existence on earth. “66,000 homeless in downtown LA living in tents on the sidewalks, and only 13,000 beds. How low can a human be pushed before he breaks?” Tommy screamed into the cold night air. No answer returned, not even the echo of his own voice.

“Peace on earth, goodwill towards men, what a friggin joke,” Tommy thought. “Just look at these poor devils, each as lost as me, but at least I’ve got a plan to get outta here — and I’m goin’ in style.”

He slowly made his way up the street. The bite of the cold north wind on his gnarled face and the half-snow half-rain dripping through his matted beard was the only proof that he was still alive.

“What a miserable Christmas Eve,” he thought. “Looks like I picked the right night to party with Reaper Man.”

Off into the distance, Tommy could see his destination, what he was calling his final resting place at the top of skid row. The Jesus Saves sign on the mission flashed a reluctant welcome, beckoning him to keep moving towards the light. There, across the street was the tenement he was looking for — a rat-infested cold-water walkup that was the perfect definition of the word slum.

The wind was howling now so Tommy picked up the pace — determined to get off the street and into the ramshackle fire-trap masquerading as a transient hotel.

An old woman leaning against the vestibule held out her hand and asked for a little money so she could get off the street and into the coffee shop across the alley. Tommy whipped out 4 \$1 bills and revenantly placed them, one by one, into the palm of her hand. She beamed.

“What’s your name sweetie?” Tommy inquired.

“Maybe Brenda or Barbra,” she replied. “Don’t really remember.”

Tommy smiled as he looked into her hollow eyes. “You

have a blessed Christmas girl. I wish you only good things. Enjoy that hot coffee and remember me fondly.”

Even though the streets made him hard, kindness still ran through his veins. Tommy had a true sense of compassion, a kind of gentle softness that was hidden deep in the darkness of his soul but exposed to the light of a simple human embrace.

After a farewell hug, Tommy walked up the stairs to the hotel and peered in, looking through the cracked glass to the hopelessly dated lobby.

The Chinese man and woman at the front desk waved at him as he opened the door and walked in. “You got money? You can pay?” she asked.

“How much for the night?” Tommy sassed. “Not by the hour, by the night,” he added.

“Just for you only forty cash,” the woman offered in broken English. “Very nice room, way up on top floor. You want it?”

Tommy reached into his jeans and pulled out the rest of his cash. He laid it on the counter and pushed it towards the old woman.

“Here, how long will this buy?” Tommy asked. “Tomorrow’s Christmas, probably going to stay here until they move my cold body down the street.”

“Ok, you stay long time. We keep money,” she smirked.

The old man at the front desk, probably a young man when this rat trap was built, reached for a key and handed it to Tommy without saying a word. He had a distant look about him. Maybe strung out on H, Crack, or he was just lost somewhere between here and where his life took that proverbial wrong turn.

“Room 502. You walk. Elevator busted.” the nameless Chinese woman offered. “Hope you got hot water, but not sure.”

Tommy looked at the long dank staircase and wondered if it had ever been painted. The treads worn, the boards soft and creaky. Only 5 flights up with a sole hanging light bulb dangling from the ceiling where some kind of fixture had been ripped from its base. The smell was ripe with the acrid aroma of piss and mold.

“At least it ain’t snowing in here... or at least, I hope there’s no snow in my room.” Tommy groaned. “Better than the street and why do I care — won’t be here long enough to shower anyway.”

There wasn't another soul on the staircase. In fact, he couldn't hear a sound coming from any of the rooms. "Might be I'm the only one with a buck forty five who could afford such a mansion." Tommy grimaced. "Might be alone. I came into the world naked and alone and I'm leaving the same way. Fitting."

Tommy took three steps up the staircase and abruptly paused, unbuttoned his outer coat and unzipped his hoodie to reveal a torn flannel shirt that he pulled out of a dumpster a month back. Stains everywhere, torn sleeves but it still kept him warm. "Great find," he thought. "I wish I found the socks to go with it!"

He looked around, removed his coat and hoodie, then walked back down to the front of the flophouse where Brenda was still in repose.

"Girl, one more gift from me to you," Tommy chortled. "I won't be needing this tonight, or any night for that matter. It's yours to warm your heart and to remember me fondly. There's even a couple of bucks in change in my left pocket. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May the new year be kind to you and everyone you love."

The old woman looked at Tommy in disbelief. “Mr. man, you are my angel,” she cried in a halting voice with tears running down her cheek. “It is so cold tonight and my bones hurt so bad. This helps me more than you can know. You are the kindest person in the world, and I am so thankful,” she gushed.

Tommy smiled at her compassionately, didn’t say a word, and proceeded back up the stairs that would deliver him to his final destination.

Now at the door to room 502, Tommy tried the old latchkey to enter. It fell out of his hand as he tried to stuff it into the rusty lock. He bent down to pick it up and there to the side was the only proof another human had been there recently: a pile of fermenting puke next to a large blood stain on the wall.

“Probably spit up a lung from the long hike up those stairs, or maybe they just couldn’t hold their booze.” Tommy opined silently to himself. “I’m winded but good for round two.”

After a couple of minutes, Tommy jimmied the lock and pushed the door open. As he entered the room, he looked

across to the bed and saw a big sewer rat crawl back into a hole in the far wall. Everything was filthy. Dead flies everywhere. It looked like nobody swept in a year. Maybe never.

Tommy took stock of this room he would call his final resting place, where RIP would actually mean he would find the peace he so desperately sought.

He walked around and what he saw stunned him. “How could a place this trashy even get a permit to run a flop house,” Tommy wondered? Shattered mirrors in the bathroom... bedsheets with stains all over them and smelled like rotting sweat... cockroaches running in and out under the bathroom door... chipping plaster coming off the walls... greasy vents hanging off the wall and ceiling.

“This place is totally disgusting, but it, in the big picture, doesn’t matter,” Tommy shrugged. “I’m not here for the ambiance, but for privacy and this is just fine with me.”

Tommy walked over to the graffiti-stained nightstand in the corner of the room. The drawer-front was laying on the floor next to the Gideon bible open to John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s

friends.”

A small sheet of crumpled up notepaper fell out and Tommy picked it up. It read...

"Nothing is given to man on earth—struggle is built into the nature of life, and conflict is possible—the hero is the man who lets no obstacle prevent him from pursuing the values he has chosen. A hero has faced it all: he need not be undefeated, but he must be undaunted." ~ Andrew Bernstein

“Interesting,” Tommy thought. “I am here to end it all and I’m given a crappie quote to snap me out of it. Not hardly. What are you going to tell me to do next, pay it forward? I can see this is crazy — and I’m actually insane!”

Out of curiosity, Tommy turned the unfolded note over and it read, Pay It Forward. “What a friggin joke. A tree had to die for this?!”

After a couple of minutes in the room, Tommy made his way over to the broken window and found himself at eye-level with the Jesus Saves sign he had been following up the street from Jake’s.

On off, on off, it seemed to have a rhythm of its own,

sometimes a fast flicker, sometimes a slow burn.

“This has it all,” Tommy thought to himself. “A real rat trap, abandoned by the fleas, and here I am. This room feels just like me — rundown, pure crap with no hope of being anything but a distant memory of a time long gone by.”

After a couple of minutes, Tommy dropped himself down on the tattered scrap of cloth that was trying to be passed off as a bedspread. “It sure beats the sidewalk with cardboard over me, but not by much.” he thought.

“Now, I can get down to business. It’s time to get it on.”

Tommy rummaged through the deep pocket in his pants and retrieved an envelope containing a treasure-trove of pills he had been collecting for this very moment. He opened the packet and carefully laid the pills out, one by one, all in a neat little row — the reds... the greens... the blues — a beautiful rainbow concoction. Like Alice living the good life in Wonderland, some will make you small, some will make you large, some will just numb you to the reality of a life well past its prime. Enough will get you dead.

“I can’t believe I scored all these great drugs! A little cash, some smart trades, and the occasional five finger

discount made tonight possible. Now for the main course — the Macallan’s to wash it all down.” Tommy beamed.

“I am just so ready for this to be over. So there’s no better time than right now.”

Tommy got up and walked into the dingy bathroom looking for the cleanest dirty glass he could scrounge. There were two to choose from: one with a strange yellow crust around the rim; the other chipped but fairly clean.

The clean glass was the obvious choice, so he rinsed it in the rust-stained sink and walked back to the nightstand to pour a strong one. One swig was all he needed to put a big smile on his face.

“Damn, that’s a fine scotch.” he proclaimed. “It’s so good, I’m going to have another for dessert!”

Instead of one more, he had three. After a few minutes, the whiskey was starting to dull the pain and the usual reality-blur was setting in. The room began spinning, slowly at first, then sped up. Another minute blew by, and the room felt like a tilt-a-wheel — faster and faster... around and around to the point where Tommy was starting to lose control.

When he tried to stand up, his legs went out from under him and he took a hard fall onto the grungy floor. Face up, looking at the small rosettes in the ceiling spinning to the right, then the left, Tommy knew this wasn't the usual effect he had come to know from a couple of glasses of scotch. Especially the good stuff.

“This is the time to do it,” Tommy thought out loud. “All I need is the courage to grab the drugs on the nightstand, and it's over.”

But he had lost all control over his arms and legs, impossible to move, but yet, still possible to think. “What a nightmare. This can't be happening to me.”

But, like most things that are impossible to happen, sometimes they do, and all we can do is take our shot and pray for the best.

Helpless and hopeless, Tommy had just hit rock bottom.

“Would somebody just put me out of my misery? What did I do to bring this plague on me and everyone I ever loved?”

With tears in his eyes, and the room spinning out of control, Tommy went limp — totally relaxed. His breathing became steady, and the scotch-induced fog miraculously started to lift.

“Strange,” Tommy thought, “I’ve never felt like this before... clear, calm and sharp. Impossible, but yet, here I am. I can’t move, but there’s something about this place that feels so familiar... reassuring... good in a far-out kind of way.”

Little did he realize that he was now in the presence of a force so powerful, it literally has the power of life and death over every single person on earth. Fate had put him in room 502 with the Dark Angel and Tommy was about to get his life or death wish.

The only question in Tommy's mind, "What the hell is going on?"

Hell might be where he was headed, but maybe divine intervention had a different plan. As Tommy looked around it was clear that where he was now, is not the same room 502 he entered 20 minutes earlier.

In fact, it wasn't just different, it was a world away from the roach motel he was left to die in.

The room slowly stopped spinning, and he was able to sit up and look around. "Where am I, how did I get here, and who is pulling my strings?" Tommy thought. He was a bit stunned, but there was no fear. Tommy felt completely at ease and the room seemed hauntingly familiar.

"Jesus, this feels just like the Ritz Carlton in Laguna Niguel. All I need is the ocean view and it will feel like home," Tommy smiled as he picked himself up off the floor and walked towards the windows.

As he drew back the blackout curtains and opened the sliding glass door, he was stunned. There was the long stretch of sandy beach running for miles below the high cliffs of Laguna.

“This cannot be real,” Tommy thought. “It seems real, feels real, and so very familiar, but I must be in a drunken hallucination recalling my past life in the fast lane. Maybe this is exactly what people mean when they say they are close to death and their entire life flashes by in an instant.”

But he was not in a drug-induced detachment from reality. The sweet smell of the ocean pounding on the sand below was all too real. The cabinets and paintings were as real as they get.

To prove or disprove it to himself, Tommy walked around the room smelling the art on the wall, feeling it, caressing it. The kids playing volleyball down below were sounds of joy and laughter he had not heard in a long long time, and he knew, in his spirit, this was only too real.

It felt like Christmas morning from a time, far far away.

Then, a frightening thought poured upon him, “what if I lose this feeling... what if I’m exiled back to the flophouse... please let this be real and let this be mine... please hear my prayer,” Tommy silently pleaded.

“OK, I’m listening, Tommy. Let’s talk,” an eerie voice said, almost like it was coming from the big screen on the

wall, but the TV was turned off.

“Who’s here? What do you want?” Tommy asked the disembodied voice that seemed to come from everywhere around him.

“What do I want? That’s simple, I want you dead. D. E. A. D. — as in, no longer alive,” the voice replied.

“You want me dead? Why???” Tommy exclaimed.

“Duha, because you wanted to die, you moron. I’m just here to fulfill your death wish.”

“Deathwish? What are you talking about? Tommy replied. “I may have hit a rough patch, but look at me now. I’m back!”

“Not quite. This might be a good time to introduce myself, Tommy. I am the Angel of Death... the guy you called when you wanted your life to be over. You can call me Bill.”

“The Angel of Death, is named Bill? That’s crazy,” Tommy yelled at the TV. “What kind of a sick joke is management playing on me?”

“No joke, Tommy, I’m here to do what must be done. So, before I do it, let me show myself so we can chat for a

moment.”

Tommy felt fear rise in his veins. Way beyond the hackles standing up on the back of his neck — the deep-seated fear of death that accompanies a man who, in that last fleeting instant, knows his time has come.

“Calm down Tommy, come on out here on the balcony so we can see what’s what,” Bill advised.

“Are you going to throw me off the deck, is that why you want me out there? I do not want to crash into the rocks and have my mangled body found by a bunch of kids who will be scared for life.”

“Hell no, Tommy! If I wanted you dead, you would be dead. I’m here to give you a second chance at the life that could be. But, if you choose death over life, that’s better for me because I’m on a tight schedule here.”

Of course, Tommy thought this was the result of one too many hits of LSD along the way, kind of a delayed distorted reality reaction he found himself in. One minute he’s in the worst bed-bug infested room on Skidrow, the next in the Presidential Suite at the Ritz... talking to the Angel of Death that goes by the name, Bill.

“This is what Purgatory must be like... somewhere between heaven and hell, where my soul wanders for an eternity before being released into the wild,” Tommy thought to himself. “I must be dead but I don’t feel dead... not quite alive, but not embalmable either.”

Haltingly, Tommy crossed the room and made his way to the open slider where he saw a man sitting on the chaise lounge. As he got closer, the figure became clear, and Tommy knew he was in full-blown delirium. There sat Bill Murry in a Chicago Cubs shirt with a hat that read, Tempt Me & Die Fool.

“Bill, how did you get in here?” Tommy whispered. “You must be in the wrong room!”

“No, this is where I am supposed to be. But, we need to handle our business pretty quickly ‘cause I have a 3 O’ clock tee time in Bellaire. That course is sweet to play Christmas day!”

“What business?” Tommy babbled. “We have business, are you kidding me? Are you working on a project with my ex-wife, Amy?”

“Big point, you hockey puck. You went to Room 502 to

call it quits. You have the means — 10 pretty little pills that will certainly do the trick. You swigged some first class scotch... you with me so far you bucktoothed, degenerate, inbred redneck?” Bill sneered. “You called me, I didn’t call you, you moron.”

“You’re here to kill me, but first you insult me? That’s bull shit. What are you going to do, make me die laughing?!”

“Aha, gallows humor, my favorite. How’s this?” Bill quipped. “Hello, city morgue... You stab ‘em, we slab ‘em... You kill ‘em, we chill ‘em... You snuff ‘em, we stuff ‘em... You slice ‘em we ice ‘em... You bag ‘em we tag ‘em.”

“I’ve got a million of ‘em. I even do a little consulting work for CSI and NCIS when they have a tough case.”

“So, you’re the Angel of Death by day, and a stand up comic by night? Is that what I’m hearing?” Tommy scoffed.

“Close. I’m more the Angel of last resort here to make you an offer, just like the Godfather, an offer you cannot refuse.”

“My deal is real simple, you get to choose life or death, and you need to do it in the next, say, 10 minutes. You can

imagine that, as the Angel of Death, Dr. Doom and Gloom so to speak, my talents are in high demand.”

“You’re serious? You’re here to take my life, is that it?” Tommy muttered. “Why???”

“You’re not paying attention dickwad. You summoned me. All I see right now is an oxygen thief — sucking up my precious time and your precious air.”

“Let’s get down to the heart of the matter, Tommy. You wanted to die, to make Christmas Eve your last day on the planet. Someone, quite mistakenly I am certain, sent me instead of the usual Old Croaker.”

“Want to know why Tommy? It’s because the powers that be think you might be worthy of a second chance. They always saw an incredible future for you, but look what you did with all that energy and talent. God is not at all pleased that you squandered it. Not pleased at all.”

“God? You work for the Almighty Himself? He sent you to save me from myself?”

“What part of ‘I don’t care’ do you not understand, Tommy? I’m a stone-cold killer of hopes, dreams, and people. Mostly, I get sent in, people die and that’s that. End

of story... literally.”

“In your case, they wanted to give you one final second chance... what I would call a fully informed death. You see your crappie life as it is right now and what it could have been. Just between you and me, I would have jumped a long time ago, probably right about the time Amy — total hotness by the way — walked out after giving you what, 12 chances to clean up your act? What a friggin moron. She loves you, believes in you and all you did was break her heart?! Still does, and until you leave this wretched planet, she can’t move on.”

“So here’s the deal. Those 10 pills are laying there on the table. You can take them with that expensive hootch you bought for the ride, and just bow out. It will be over, I can get to my golf game by 3, and you go wherever degenerate losers like you go. Heaven, hell, it’s not up to me to decide. That’s a whole different department way above my pay grade.”

“Or — are you paying attention fungus brain — you can open the gift you have been given, look into the future, and see what life might be like. The good you can do, the hope you can become.”

“So, option #1 is to swallow the pills, take a final splash of single malt, and you’re on your way to where only God knows. Literally.”

“Or, you can pick up the pills, take one last drink for old times sake, and toss them in the trash. You live for now.”

“What happens next, Bill?” Tommy stuttered.

“No clue, Tommy. It’s always different. This is not a Christmas Carol where I tell you that you will be visited by 3 ghosts, or It’s a Wonderful Life where Clara get’s her wings. We got out of that business a long time ago. All I know is that I don’t get to whack you. You’re somebody else's problem once I leave.”

“So, this is a test of faith thing, where I leap and believe I will be caught? Is that it?” Bill.

“Don’t know, don’t care and that’s that, Tommy. If you believe you are worth a second chance, maybe that’s your choice. Maybe you walk out of here exactly the same as when you crawled up those 5 filthy flights of stairs. Pretty grim, but that’s the breaks.”

“Or, maybe you become the changed man we hear you praying about. Maybe there is a reason for you to live.

Maybe there is something important for you to do. A purpose for your mangled life. Frankly, I do not know and my time is growing short.”

Tommy is obviously humbled and frightened of the choices ahead. He knows how he got to this point in his life, and wants nothing more to do with it. This is why he wants to die.

But if there’s even a chance at a higher calling, a life he would love, why not take it? Why throw away this second chance?

“Ok, Bill, what’s my downside in this? I pitch the pills, what’s the catch? What if the life I’m shown is worse than what I have now? What happens then?”

“Tommy, I can’t predict your future. I’m here to clean up your messy past. Life means struggles, but maybe if you get a glimpse of what’s possible, who knows. Will probably be the same struggles you faced before, but you will be different and will make different choices.”

“Or, maybe you’re as stupid as I think you are — that’s stoopid spelled with 2 O’s — and you choose the life you have now. But keep in mind, you never made the choice to

become a skidrow bum. You didn't wake up one day and proclaim, 'this is my day to become a worthless burned out druggie'. You got to where you are right now, through a million little choices that added up to one big problem."

"Remember, when they call me in, it's game over. Rarely, and I mean rarely, do I get to go on these second chance trips, and I am sad to say, most of the ones I granted are worse off the second time around than the first."

"This is your risk... the fully informed small print we talked about. You will need to mount courage beyond anything you have ever had to believe in yourself enough to make your dreams come true."

Tommy sat stone-faced looking down at the ocean. He was fixated on the rolling of the tide, ebbing and flowing below him.

Death is final he thought, but there's always a life worse than death. A living death where you spend your days committing slow-motion suicide inside a bubble of hopelessness and despair.

Suddenly it got very quiet. Tommy was ready to ask one more question, but Bill had vanished into the marine layer

below.

Tommy was not just scared to death, he was scared of life. Afraid that by choosing life, he was choosing the worst possible outcome... one that might go on for decades. Bill never said how long he was to live. The pain was unponderable, and his purpose a mystery.

Out of nowhere, he heard an old gospel song that he and his mom and dad sang in church every Sunday. Pastor Mark would always conclude his service with the same song, week after week, year after year. Christmas, Easter, Advent, it really didn't matter. It was always the last song of the service, immediately following Amazing Grace even when Pastor Mark officiated a funeral.

Tommy walked back into the living room suite and saw that the \$100,000 Bose Rosso Fiorentino audio system at the Ritz was off, but the tunes were smooth as silk, almost as if Curtis Mayfield were singing right there in the room just for him...

People get ready

There' a train a-coming

You don't need no baggage

You just get on board
All you need is faith
To hear the diesels humming
Don't need no ticket
You just thank the Lord

For the first time in forever, Tommy got down on his knees to pray one last prayer.

“Lord, thank you for your healing grace. I am ready to live, please put me on that train to Glory. Whatever you will, I pray it will be done.”

Memories of the good life started to swirl around him as he picked up all 10 multi-colored pills from the nightstand and clutched them in his right hand. With tears streaming down his face, and his heart pounding like a drum, Tommy looked at the pills, clinched his fist and started to throw them out the sliding glass door to the craggy rocks 200 feet below.

But something in him just couldn't toss them aside. As bad as the past was, he just couldn't bring himself to erase the evidence of his intended purpose. These powerful agents of death needed to remain a constant reminder of the struggle that catapulted him to this point, and an ugly memento of the decisions that brought him to the brink of despair.

Tommy wiped the tears from his eyes with his left hand and tried to crush the pills into a powder with his right. He squeezed with all his might, feeling the pills slowly granulize to powder.

It was then that his miracle began.

Some might call it the miracle of second sight, others might see it as the result of a mystical power releasing good into Tommy's life. Whatever you call it, it became an unforgettable explosion of color, motion and intense emotions — a truly awesome spectacle... much like what Noah must have felt when he saw the dove with the twig in its beak, and the rainbow appear above the storm clouds on the horizon. A ray of hope and promise, that regardless of the storm, there is always a new beginning.

As Tommy stood there looking in the palm of his hand, he saw the powder rising up and swirling with the same intensity of a miniature tornado while pulsating like a neon strobe, making unique patterns of shapes and colors against the tapestry of the room's beautiful art. Millions of colors flashing and swirling as distant images took shape.

Tommy thought it was alive. Maybe it was, but as quickly as it began, the swirls of color stopped and the powder crystalized into a breath-takingly beautiful glass prism about the size of a golf ball.

There it was, in his hands, the miracle he prayed for. It was a Time Prism, an energy source that rivaled the power of a black hole, power that could command time itself... a

spectrum of light broken into rays like a mirror ball dancing off the walls.

Almost intuitively, Tommy picked it up and peered into the angeled-glass, hoping to see nothing more than those beautiful colors that were there at its creation... the reds, yellow, orange, green, blue, violet — the exploding colors of the rainbow at the beginning of time itself.

What he saw as he held the prism closer was not colors of the rainbow, but rather, pictures — fleeting memories maybe — of a life past and future. He saw that as he turned it right and left, up and down, the colors changed to 3d holographic projections in front of him.

“Dude, this is Princes Leah Star Wars stuff,” he yelled out in amazement. “This is absolutely brilliant!”

Tommy’s first instinct was to just flip through videos one right after the other the way a 9-year-old would work a new toy. But after a couple of minutes, he started to pick up on a theme.

This was all about him, his family, friends and important times in his life. This both scared and excited Tommy to his core.

When he stopped turning the prism, the images faded back into the mist of time. Thinking he was being punked, he looked around the room for signs of projectors, lasers, anything that could produce a life-like image in mid-air like that.

To his surprise, there were no projectors, props or trick video players. Actually, there was absolutely nothing that could explain what he was experiencing.

Tommy took a long deep breath and sat down on the foot of the bed. He kind of processed and understood what was happening, but not really. No one could understand the experience, let alone explain it to others.

To Tommy, this was a magic piece of glass that had encapsulated his entire life in it. Just the idea of this frightened him, as he wasn't sure he wanted to relive his past or see what his future held.

After sitting there on the bed for 15-20 minutes, he got up and went out to the deck to take a good look at the ocean below. To feel the force of the tide on the sand, and listen to the roar of the sea.

“Was this is it, is this what my life has become? If this is

real, how did I get suspended in time? If it is a psychotic delusion, how does it end?”

He smelled the fresh morning air and felt he was a changed man. But then, he realized he had no idea where he was, how he got there, and more importantly when it was. All he remembered was the cold biting into his hands on Christmas Eve, but here he is in the middle of summer with no clue what time it was.

Tommy’s brain could not reconcile the logic of his predicament. He felt he knew more, but had no idea what he knew, or how he came to be where he was. He didn’t even know what day it was... or what year it was for that matter.

He didn’t feel young or old. He felt only that he existed in something attune to transitory amnesia. His mind was a blank slate that seemed to have been erased back to birth.

All he felt was that he was still alive, and something incredible was happening. How right he was!

Tommy walked back into the room and picked up the glass prism from where he left it on the bed. He no longer feared it, or the story it might tell. In truth, Tommy was now ready for whatever resided inside the prism... controlled by

emotions and the deep connection with his life over time.

Instinctively, Tommy knew that if he slowly panned to the left, images of a younger man would present themselves. Panning to the right seemed to show a much older man, past his prime, but still very much vibrant and alive.

From where he sat, he couldn't really make out the faces but figured there had to be a way to zoom in and out, just like swiping on an iPhone.

Tommy was fixated on the realism of the images that were flickering by. After a couple of minutes, he learned how to slow down the slideshow and zoom in on a specific moment in time.

But, as he quickly learned, he only had a minute to see what the story told as there was no way to view and pause. It seemed that freezing time, either forward or back, was not the natural order of things.

He also saw that there was no apparent order to what he was seeing. One minute he sees an image of a baby in a crib, and in the next, a man fishing off the dock in a crystal-clear turquoise blue lake surrounded by huge mountain peaks. There was no way to know who the baby was, maybe a son,

daughter, or even granddaughter. He could see the man in relief, but couldn't pinpoint when in time it might be. Or if he was even catching fish!

Was it in his past or in his future? He just didn't have enough information to see the whole timeline.

"This is where it gets interesting," Tommy thought to himself. "A 3D view of snippets of life, but nothing that makes sense. I assume it's my life, but there are so many blurs and fragments, so many possibilities, I really can't be sure."

After 20 minutes or so, Tommy started picking up a theme. He knew this was about him, his life, his friends, and family, but couldn't quite see a big picture emerge from all those snippets. Was it next year, or in the decades to come?

The people in the rotating story could be anyone, friends, business associates, family. He could see, but only so far.

Tommy was intrigued and somehow inspired. He knew this was why he was in this room by himself, but remained clueless as to the point, or the grand purpose behind it.

Now more comfortable with the prism and his ability to see these live motion sequences, he decided to go very very

slow, and seek meaning in the random stories unfolding before him. He had a plan.

He would totally immerse himself in the image in front of him, taking away what he could. Since he couldn't rewind, he would try to capture the moment in his heart, not just his mind.

“Let me see what's in this magic Time Prism,” Tommy chortled. “Let's see what you got!”

Tommy slowly rotated up and down, right and left and became exceptionally good at controlling this constant flow of 60-second slices of time. Vignette by vignette, it became clear that the future was full of people, potentialities and opportunities — what he couldn't see, of course, is how to affect an outcome. That seemed to be well outside the power he held in his hands.

What he could see is the possibility of a future life, not contrasted against his past or current circumstances, but just the way it might be on some alternate time line...

Images of someone pitching a deal in a crowded room where people were all smiling and clapping. Obviously a successful presentation...

The image of a team of people worried and drained, clearly facing tough times. Just the look on their faces told the entire story that something was about to go from gloom to doom...

A series of images that looked like powerpoint slides depicting some grand business strategy. Charts, graphs, and a highly orchestrated presentation worthy of a Bill Gates or Steve Jobs...

Which immediately faded into an image of an old man cradling a year old grandbaby in his arms. The child was sleeping, beautiful and calm...

That then flowed into a montage of a middleaged couple dancing passionately at a large wedding on the shore. Who or when was not revealed. Only the reflection of happiness and love.

There was no time for him to memorize a place or date in time. Everything happened so quickly.

All he had while he zoomed in and out, forward and back was a feeling. He felt hope. He felt admiration. He felt compassion and camaraderie. He felt the force of kindness.

Tommy felt that life was truly worth living. Good and bad,

ups and downs, poor decisions and all, life was precious. It was meant to be embraced, not simply endured. He saw this experience as a sizzle reel from one of the blockbuster movies he worked on... not the full story... just enough of the story to make people want to see all of it.

As Tommy stood up, he felt the room begin to slowly spin again. It sped up, faster and faster until it was moving so fast it seemed like he was in the eye of a hurricane made up of swirling psychedelic colors.

Dizzy, he stretched out on that great California king bed with the perfectly tailored duvet, clutching the soft, goose down pillows with both hands.

Tommy was out cold, passed out like a Navy pilot who just pulled 9 G's vertical in an F-22 at 60,000 feet running tactical maneuvers. And like a Navy G-Monster, the blackouts came and went in seconds.

But when he woke up, he was no longer in the Presidential suite at the Ritz in the middle of summer, he was back in room 502, shivering from the cold pouring in from the broken windows.

Somewhat dazed, Tommy slowly found his sea legs and

proceeded to the shattered glass and looked out at the same flashing sign that greeted him when he walked into 502: Jesus Saves.

But now, there seemed to be a prismatic color hue encapsulating the sign... something that seemed so soft and out of place given where he had just been and what he had just experienced.

Tommy took one last look around the room and shook his head. Partially in disgust, partly in pity for the next person who was unfortunate enough to call this home for the night.

Through the open window, he could hear the traffic on Vine together with the voices of the street people moving about. Even on the 5th floor, the constant din was an indication that the city was still there and he was very much alive.

Tommy turned towards the door and caught a spark of light coming from the ancient, cigarette-scarred dresser across the room. He went over and saw that it was a small glass prism.

“Cool,” Tommy thought. “I don’t remember this being here last night — actually I don’t remember anything about

last night, other than I seemed to sleep like the dead.”

This looked like a keepsake, so he stuffed it into the right pocket of his pants and walked down the stairs to greet the day.

He felt different but didn't look different. He actually felt alive, not the walking dead from Christmas Eve, the night before.

“I gotta get some new clothes, get out of this ghetto and run as far away from this life as possible. And I need to do it now, not after my second or third fix of the day.” Tommy thought.

Tommy skipped down the stairs and twirled into the lobby. Old lady Chang was still behind the desk, and old man Chow was still as silent as ever.”

“Merry Christmas,” Tommy shouted as he opened the door.

“We China people, no celebrate.”

“No problem, Jesus loves you and so do I.”

Tommy walked out onto Vine and looked up and down the street. It was still cold, but not the bone-numbing cold

from the day before.

He felt in his pocket for a few bucks in change but came up short. “Doesn’t look like a Mocha Grande at Starbucks this morning for me,” Tommy muttered to himself.

And then he saw it. A truly unbelievable sight there in the ghetto.

A brand new, \$500,000 Rolls-Royce Silver Phantom sitting squarely in front of the flophouse he just exited.

“What total idiot would park a car like that in a sleazy neighborhood like this,” Tommy asked himself. “Total crazy, no doubt. I think I’ll hang out to see who claims this Royce... maybe they will feel the same Christmas cheer I feel this morning and pop me a couple of bucks for some morning Joe.”

Tommy walked up to the navy blue convertible with saddle leather top and peered into the driver’s window. “OMG,” he thought. “This is the most incredible work of art I have ever seen!”

Slowly, Tommy worked his way around the car, gently caressing the sidepanels as he dreamed of a day when he too could afford such a masterpiece.

He made his way to the passenger side and pressed his nose against the freezing cold window. “Wow, look at the giant navy blue RR embroidered into the calf leather seats,” Tommy exclaimed out loud. “Stunning!”

He worked his way to the front of the handcrafted, rolling dream and looked lovingly at the Parthenon grill with the little silver lady on top. He stood back to get a better view. The license read, MR TQ 1.

“This car represents the finest workmanship in the world,” Tommy thought to himself. “The design is excellence in motion and the build-quality beyond reproach.”

Then, out of the blue, Tommy leaned over to kiss that miniature hood ornament, and this is where the big magic unfolded. It was exactly like rubbing Aladdin’s Lamp or the clicking of Dorothy’s ruby slippers.

A swirling colored light engulfed the morning chill, and Tommy felt a tremendous energy take over his aching body. It was his moment of epiphany — the moment he realized he was the bridge between two worlds: the ultra-rich, and the broken and downtrodden.

For those who have never had the pleasure of owning a Rolls Royce, the Silver Lady adorning the trademark Parthenon grill has a special significance. Back when cars were called horseless carriages, the handcrafters of each work of art wanted to make their offerings feel and look different to the touch... to all the senses, actually — sight, smell, sound — hitting the emotional high notes in this brand new field called the “motor car.”

Which is where the Silver Lady was born — of an affair between two visionaries.

As you might imagine, there is a long and sordid story behind the affair of Lord Montagu, an original investor in the nascent auto industry, and his mistress Eleanor Velasco Thorton, but there is no reason to get too far off the story, but this is interesting. The name given the Rolls-Royce sculpture is the Spirit of Ecstasy — a perfect depiction of Eleanor with draping cape blowing in the wind — and to him and her, this spirit held the power of love over death.

The Spirit of Ecstasy. This is exactly what Tommy was experiencing.

As Tommy stood upright, he looked down at his left hand

that was propping him against the cold steel on this winter morning in LA. In the reflection from the sparkling silver grill, he began to realize that he was no longer the same man who wanted to end his life 12 hours earlier.

He looked closely and saw a perfectly manicured hand under the sleeve of a beautifully tailored, bespoke Armani suit and a \$50,000 Piaget Emperor watch peeking out from under his handmade silk shirt with French cuffs sporting matching diamond cufflinks.

He instinctively knew this was not a dream. This was very real. He was real. His life had been blessed.

Tommy walked over to the driver's door, reached into his pocket and retrieved the wireless remote and tapped it to open the door.

There sat his beautiful wife, Amy, dressed to the nines, ready for her closeup — regardless of where they were headed.

“Honey,” Amy asked in a sincere voice, “did everything go OK in there this morning?”

Tommy replied, “Way better than I had hoped. It's time to become the change you and I want to see happen in this

troubled world.”

“By the way, Bill says hi and to give you a giant Christmas kiss.”

Tommy fires up all 650 horses and points the Rolls south down the 101 to the Staples Center where he is hosting Christmas dinner for 20,000 homeless who live in tents and cardboard boxes on the streets of LA.

Tommy and Amy are starch advocates for the homeless, the forgotten, and destitute. Their pain is his pain.

He felt it. He lived it. That eternal pain that nearly cost him his life. He, more than anyone, knows what it means to be pushed to the brink of personal annihilation.

Today he returns to the stage as a multi-billionaire, CEO of Global Galactica, with a message. Assembled around him at the Staples Center are 5,000 volunteers — employees, shareholders, and vendors from his sprawling empire of finance, insurance, manufacturing, and high tech.

“Tommy and Amy, it’s time to leave the Green Room and start this show,” Bobby Perkins, his longtime event planner, whispered. “Let’s make some magic today!”

Amy looked loveningly at Tommy and asked, “Honey,

did you ever believe that at 46, we would be giving away \$2 Billion dollars to help these tired and broken souls?”

Tommy looked into Amy’s deep blue eyes and replied, “Girl, this is a beautiful life and we just need to pay it forward. To give people the hope for a second chance and new beginning in their lives. We got our new beginning, we need to give them theirs.

As Tommy walks to the stage to thundering cheers and applause, he holds his hands high flashing the Victory sign, grabs the mic from Bob’s hands and wishes the crowd a very Merry Christmas.

Tommy is in his element and the adoring crowd knows it. He embraces the moment, a feeling of excitement and pure love.

“Ok, ok, enough with the applause,” Tommy yelled into the mic. “Settle down. I have something very important to share with you today.”

Slowly, the excited audience started sitting down, preparing themselves for the message from their friend and fiercest supporter.

As the throng settled in, Tommy paced back and forth

across the stage, making eye contact with hundreds of people at a time. He could see their hope and he could feel their pain.

“Folks, I am so happy to see you this magnificent Christmas morning! It was cold last night, and I know many of you are having a hard time just surviving. I have been there, exactly in the same place you are today. But, I was given a second chance, an opportunity for a new beginning, and now it’s time for me to pay it forward. Today, if you want it, your life will be different.”

“The first thing I want you to all do is stand up,” Tommy advised. “I have a surprise in store for you right now... kind of like a Santa Clause, come to Jesus moment.”

“Stand up, and this is important. Look to your right, your left, front and back. See the person next to you. Shake his or her hand. Tell them that you love them and that your prayer this Christmas for them is for that better life you have all been praying about. Reach out and offer a hug, it’s OK.”

The crowd began to look into each other’s eyes, and many of their hugs turned to tears as pent-up emotions were released from the bonds of years of sorrow.

“While you are still standing, I want to tell you a secret. My old friend, Pastor Mark, flew in last night to be with you today. He will say a few words and offer the invocation before we all go into the convention center for our Christmas feast. But before he does, I have some good news to share. Jesus loves you, and so do I. These are not empty words, they are a promise.”

Of course, man or woman, young or old, Christian, Jew, or Muslim, they all heard these words from the street-preachers for years. So much so, they were tone-deaf to the message. To them, all they hear are the words, but their lives never seem to get any better.

“I know you all are anxious to eat, but I have news that I know you will all want to hear. So PLEASE listen to what I am about to say.”

The crowd, still standing, became quiet. Some might call it a restless calm, but for hungry people anticipating their bellies full and the sound of laughter at the tables, being quiet was not something that came easily to them.

“Today, I will be announcing something that will profoundly change your lives for the better — starting right

now. Today, I, along with other men and women of means around the country are going to stop talking about helping you all, and start actually giving you that second chance so many of you desire and deserve.”

“So, I am going to give you a little motivational speech right now, just like the one we give our salespeople at the big conventions. Stand UP, stand UP, stand UP... feel under your seats!” Tommy bellowed into the microphone. “This is PROOF positive of what happens when you get off your BUTS... BUTS... BUTTS... and look for the bounty that is all around you.”

Almost in unison, the crowd reached under their chairs and found a thick envelope taped to the seat bottom. They laughed like little kids, dancing around at just the thought of what might be in the package.

“Don’t open your present just yet,” Tommy exclaimed. “Just hold the prize high in the air for all of us to see!”

One by one, each person in the massive audience, all 20,000 plus of them, held their packages high.

“I know the suspense is killing you all, so now it’s time to reveal what you have been given,” Tommy coaxed.

“Carefully open the package, be very careful as it contains 3 things I know you will love. Bob, bring that man down there in the first row up here so he can lead us in the big reveal.”

Bob walked off the platform and into the seats and asked a couple of men and women to the stage so they could open their envelopes in front of their friends.

“You all have been given the number one thing you have been praying for: SOCKS,” Tommy shouted. “Not just a single pair, but 6 pairs just for you.”

The crowd roared in deep appreciation and approval. Socks, as it turns out, is a precious commodity on the streets.

“You will also see 10 \$20 bills just for you. And most importantly, you will see a small card. Please keep that card with you at all times as it is your lifeline to the better life you crave.”

Of course, when compared to socks and cash, a little white card seems pretty puny to a man or woman hungry and hopeless.

“Look at what is written on the front of your card in RED ink and big type,” Tommy advised. “It says THIS IS YOUR

SECOND CHANCE. On the back, you will see THE POWER IS WITHIN. PAY IT FORWARD.”

The overhead screen echoed these words in ticker-type fashion scrolling across the giant video monitors.

“I am going to make this short and sweet,” Tommy promised. “You all have been given the power to help one another, and with a guaranteed investment in your future from me and my company, you have a real chance at a life you will love. Truly, Christmas is the time of new beginnings and this is my present to you.”

“This morning, there are roughly 66,000 homeless living on the streets of LA. There are only 13,000 shelter beds so 53,000 folks just like you call tents and cardboard boxes home. For some, that is your life. For others, you know a better life calls, and you want off the street. That little white card has a number on it for a live person who cares, who has the power to help you in ways you cannot begin to imagine right now.”

“Some 8,000 of you have jobs but have been priced out of housing so you have nowhere to go. To you, we are offering a real hand up.”

“There are some 4,000 children under 12 that chronically call the streets home. This is absurd. We have devised a simple plan to help you right now.”

“Sadly, about 1/3 of the people who live on our mean streets at any point in time are Vets... men and women who served our country and deserve not just our gratitude, but our help. Real help, not from a bunch of government paper pushers.”

“Drugs have caused much of this... lack of mental health resources... the death of the breadwinner... there are many causes, but I refuse to look at you as a group and see hopelessness and despair. We have money, plans, ideas and actual solutions... not more research, or report finding, but real life help... right now.”

“Years ago when I was on the street, I came across this message you will find in your package. I still have that worn out paper in my wallet. I never leave home without it.” Tommy confided to the audience. On the big screen, this flashed...

"Nothing is given to man on earth—struggle is built into the nature of life, and conflict is possible—the hero is the

man who lets no obstacle prevent him from pursuing the values he has chosen. A hero has faced it all: he need not be undefeated, but he must be undaunted." ~ Andrew Bernstein

"I know many of my peers think I am foolish to invest billions of dollars in you all. You may prove them right. Many of you may still choose the street to change. Many of you have no belief, even when you see others moving forward. We understand. We are there for you too."

"Today is different. You will be visited at your tables by an advocate, a mentor and a person with the unbridled power to help you. Our goal is to match people up with someone who can help now, yet Christmas Day. We can help you if you permit us to offer you a hand up and off the streets."

"For people with drivers licenses and are working — we are making available a basic class C RV and vouchers for utilities. I even cut a deal with Walmart to permit overnight parking provided you follow all the rules — no fights, drugs or booze. The police will patrol and you will be safer than you are now. Once you find permanent shelter, you will be expected to give your unit to another and mentor them in the

ways of success. The future is your responsibility. This is not a handout. Cherish it.”

“If you have a drug or booze problem, you will be given a mentor-advisor that is 100% on your side. You will attend daily classes for life skills and have a few bucks in your pocket.”

“I have bought a string of child care services and are rotating 25,000 volunteers to staff them in 1,000 locations locally. This is a second chance, not to be abused or taken lightly.”

“How many in the audience would love to live on my 50,000-acre ranch up on the coast by the redwood forest? Trade in the LA river for your second chance? A tent or cardboard box here, or a yurt with like-minded survivors up there? We have teachers, preachers, doctors and success coaches who will live with you and mentor you to that better life you desire. Yes, this is short term, and yes, you will be expected to work in the community. One of my divisions up there needs 20,000 workers who want to succeed. Maybe with training, you will find real opportunity there. We even bought a fleet of buses to get you to and from, so there is no excuse not to grow into your wonderful new life.”

“You give up here, go there, and get a real start. Not just a second chance, but a new starting point. It is that simple.”

“We are each other’s solution... and if you truly want to live, not just exist, this is your chance. You will be expected to work, learn a skill, and remain drug-free.”

“Your future will be bright. I called 50 of my billionaire friends and they too want to secure your future. Once you graduate from life’s boot camp, our Second Chance Ranch, there will be a job waiting for you — a place where you can grow roots of your own.”

“We don’t care about who you have been. All we care about is the person you can be. At each level, you will be asked to pay it forward — to give a helping hand to those who come behind you, as you get your hand up from those ahead of you.”

“We realize many of you have made poor decisions in the past, I know I did. But with hard work, faith, and love, you can overcome your scars and turn them into stars.”

“We will never give up on your second chance. But you must do your part. We will teach you the life lessons you missed out on. You will take personal responsibility and

grow your self-worth. No one will ever force you, but you will be given something that you have not had in a long, long time: the benefit of the doubt.”

“Folks, that’s it. The high points. Now let's eat and celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light of love and hope.”

As the crowd walked out of the arena, just like little kids on Christmas morning, they all had a gift in their hands.

They had what they prayed for. Socks, a little cash, and a second chance at life.

For 3 hours Tommy worked the dining hall like a politician peddling votes. He and Amy honestly loved these street people. They knew that with a little insight and understanding, some skills and training they would turn out fine.

Tommy looked over at Amy and pointed to the table decorations. There, at every chair was a little glass prism for each person in the room. Attached was this simple message...

The Past is The Way Forward.

Tommy and Amy could see that every person picked up

their prism and played with it like a little kid. It was magical. And every person put one in their pocket as a reminder of the hope and promise of God's gift to man, a rainbow to Noah, and Jesus to the rest of us.

“Attention, please, I have one more thing to tell you before we move on to celebrate the love of Christmas,” Tommy shouted into the mic. “Your bellies are full, your pockets have a few bucks, and you have an opportunity at a new beginning.”

“You also have a symbol of strength, hope, and promise... your own personal Time Prism. Please take a moment to stand, and raise this little glass ornament high above your head. It is there to remind you that all things are possible to those who truly believe.”

“All your tomorrows will be opportunities for your life to be better than they are now. Tomorrow may be harder, or you might find trouble around every bend. That's life.”

“What you now have is a tool I want you to keep on your person always. This glass prism is a constant reminder that in each day there is the possibility for a brand new start... a second chance at love and life.”

“Look at it sparkle and shine. Feel the promise of the rainbow everytime you pick it up.”

“Before you go, there is one thing I want you to know. The reason we put this keepsake in your hands is to remind you that the future has not yet been written, and that what you do matters. Your life can be filled with wealth and power one day, and it can all be taken away the next. I know, that’s what happened to me.”

“I made mistakes, Lord knows, they were huge mistakes. But just the realization that life is precious and that I have the opportunity to write my own future made me look deep in my soul and choose a different path.”

“The Time Prism is a reminder that all things are possible. It is not a trinket, but a powerful tool that reminds us to simply take a bit smarter actions. Smarter choices and actions every day is what got me off the street and onto the cover of Forbes.”

“When it calls you, simply turn it on... take a breath... and THINK. You will receive a good idea that may just change everything!”

A final thought on the power of hope, redemption, second chances and new beginnings.

The truth is, we all deserve a second chance, no matter our past. Our past is prologue.

We will keep repeating our mistakes until we make peace with the past and courageously march into the uncertainty of the future.

We must all become someone's second chance... to give someone the hope for a new beginning.

There is no grand solution to our collective problems. Only we can rise up and create the solutions we need... to become the change in the world we want to see happen, as Mahatma Gandhi put it.

Young or old, you are the reluctant hero in your own life story. Some of us were born to overcome bold challenges. Some of us were born frail and powerless.

Help just a little. Become the Invisible Billionaire.

It doesn't take a Billion dollars to make someone's life just a little better. Pay your fortune forward, regardless of the size of your fortune.

Pick up the grocery tab for that young woman standing in line with a crying baby. You will feel like a millionaire.

Give that waitress who is going to school and raising 2 kids a special tip, maybe even a Walmart or Amazon gift card. Not just at Christmas, but every month of the year.

Why not go down to your local animal shelter and see what they need. Throw a fundraiser for a dog or cat that's been there for awhile. It will make a difference.

Small gestures have real meaning. They can be your legacy of hope.

Now, I want you to think like the Invisible Billionaire — envision more... more hope... more promise... an expanded vision of what's possible.

You are not powerless to help. You have enormous power residing within. Literally.

Why not set up your own personal blood drive — get your family and company involved — because it is this simple

act of kindness that gives so many a second chance at life itself?

Why not make 100% certain your organ donation request is current on your driver's license? You will be dead, no question. But you will give someone a second chance at life — your heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, eyes... your second chance at an eternal legacy.

Why not donate a healthy kidney or share your liver with someone in a life or death battle, desperately needing a second chance before their out of time?

Stop and THINK.

How about registering as a bone marrow donor? Your momentary pain and discomfort are another's second chance at life itself.

How about investing your time in your local children's hospital? Become a child's next smile in an otherwise scary ordeal.

Why not do something even more important, help eliminate the 30 Million word deficit by adopting a child to teach to read? Not aware of the problem — it is the source of an entire lifetimes of crime, pain and suffering...

“According to Stanford University, Children’s vocabulary skills are linked to their economic backgrounds. By 3 years of age, there is a 30 million word gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest families. A recent study shows that the vocabulary gap is evident in toddlers. By 18 months, children in different socio-economic groups display dramatic differences in their vocabularies. By 2 years, the disparity in vocabulary development has grown significantly (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder 2013).

You want to be a child’s second chance at life, even before he or she hits Kindergarten? This is a beautiful way to do it. Fun too.

How about giving a Vet a second chance at the life they served so valiantly to protect? Record their story, become part of their story, let them simply know you care. Go out of your way to do what it takes to make their life just a little easier.

Why not write bigger checks to causes you believe in? Become an active Go Fund Me contributor. Give something, \$5, \$10, \$100 to any story that touches your heart. Maybe people needing money to bury a loved one with dignity. Maybe people who need to rebuild after a devastating fire or

flood. Good people needing a second chance are looking to you to be that angel.

Get in the habit of giving. Maybe even follow the old advice, “live simply so others can simply live.” A life of service is more rewarding than that diamond bracelet gathering dust in your vault.

If your daily commute puts you in the path of homeless folks, do this... make a dozen sandwiches before you leave the house, and pass them out liberally. Be sure to give bottled water to go with.

Buy 100 dozen pairs of socks and take to your local shelter. Hand them out individually and watch the faces of the people receiving your kindness.

As we have said over and over, YOU are someone else’s second chance. You cannot wait for fate, or some grand governmental gesture to help people who are looking for a hand up.

Follow your passion. Become actively involved in the richness of life, for everyone around you.

You can feel the miracle of Christmas all year long...

You can become the gift of life to someone dying for a second chance... who truly needs a new beginning...

You have the power within you...

Kent and I are performance experts and are constantly investing in ways to help people become smarter about who they are... what they do... and how they do things.

Our focus is to help people answer this simple question...

“What’s holding me back from the life I love... holding me back from becoming the best version of myself possible?”

You, I, and the entire world are engaged in the active pursuit of self-betterment. Many of us have found our way, made peace with the past, and are on our way up.

Many of us find ourselves on a downward spiral, and for whatever reason and circumstance, find our lives a struggle just to stay afloat.

It is for this reason our company invested millions of dollars in creating the world’s first Time Prism, a beautiful App that gives you a second chance at the success you desire — many times a day.



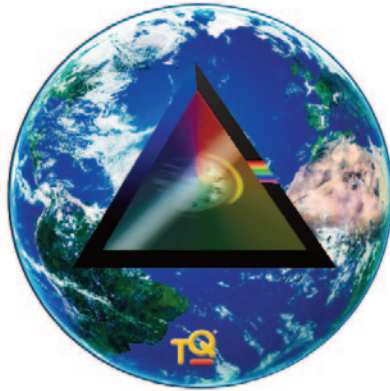
THE INVISIBLE BILLIONAIRE™ ~ SECOND CHANCES

Some see it as magical, where others see it as practical. What everyone agrees is that when you engage The Time Prism, you become smarter in the moment.

This gift to the world is my commitment to your second chance. If you want to achieve all your hopes and dreams, this is a wonderful way to begin.

You may download it free from TimePrism.com

E. R. Haas & Kent C. Madson, Authors



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