

# Homeless House



*Darius The Baby*



*Darius The Toddler*



*“Dari-Dude”*



*“Gramma” and “Pap-Pah Jordan”*

*I prefer to step my homeless streets,  
As so many times before,  
Than step into and sleep inside  
My Homeless House beyond that door.  
Homeless House*

G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

This is not a children’s book. It is an adult book written about a child.

Unless otherwise specified, all opening chapter quotations are from G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

Unless otherwise specified, all biblical references are from *Scripture As I Hear It*, G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se. Included are suggested scriptural references that most closely reflect the application. Use your desired translations and concordances for reference.

Unless otherwise specified, all defined vocabulary is from *Diction As I Speak It*, G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se. Use your desired dictionary for reference.

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*Without Jesus’  
foundation,  
you build a  
Homeless  
House.*

*Scripture As I Hear It*  
Scriptural Reference:  
Psalm 127: 1

Introduction

*To me, babies and children are like nuclear waste plants. They need to exist, serve some ultimate worthwhile purpose, but as the saying goes, “Not in my backyard!”*  
*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Three*

From my recently published theo-political autobiography book trilogy, *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? (An Atheist’s Libertarian trek to Christ)*, readers commented that they enjoyed how the work consisted of numerous “stories-inside-the-story.”

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* presents my conversion from fifteen years of political anti-Christian, atheistic activism, then my 1998 conversion to Christ based on later research of His Resurrection. True, many stories under-gird the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* story. *Homeless House* is one of them, and a special one.

For twenty-four years, I have lived a secret. A secret not from shame, disgrace, or anything defaming. In fact, it is noble. Very few people in my life for twenty-four years learned of that episode of my life and its residual aftermath. “Dari-Dude” drew it out.

I have always claimed that I would share that 1989 story, but not in light, casual banter. I exposed it in *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two* because I prayed its exposure may prevent one more such incident. I am sharing it again in prayer that my agony of 1989 through today be used to benefit a certain community; babies and children.

I have excerpted the Dari chapters here in this monograph, *Homeless House*. You will likely find subject matter included that is unclear because you have not read the whole *Shiny Hats* story. However, such subject matter remains irrelevant to the Dari aspect of the excerpts. You have the option to purchase the whole story on .PDF e-Book:

[jordanconvert.faithweb.com/blank\\_3.html](http://jordanconvert.faithweb.com/blank_3.html) \$8.99 via PayPal

Many acquaintances of mine over the last two-and-half decades have mistakenly perceived me as a baby and children hater, anti-babies and children. That simply has never been so: quite contraire. Read on.

I am not motivated by monetary gain. So, *Homeless House* is being produced for churches and other entities to reproduce and sell with copyright considerations waived, provided proceeds go to babies and children ministries.

If this story can generate a mere few dollars for a child, I feel rewarded. I will feel at least something good came from my 1989 victimization that Dari shed new light on in the mid 2000's.

This is not merely "based" or "inspired" by a true story. It is the actual true story; each laugh, each tear.

I ended the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Introduction* with  
". . .through tears and laughter, I present *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? (An Atheist's Libertarian Trek to Christ)*."

Darius produced a bulk of the laughs and tears that I typed. He entered the *Shiny Hats* story at *Chapter 214* of *Volume Three*. Meet "Dari," "Pap-Pah Jordan's" "Daffodil."

*There are no bad or illegitimate babies and children.  
There are only bad and illegitimate parents.*

*Old Witticism*

Chapter excerpts begin with my wife's request:

## 214 No One like You, Dari-Dude

*I know a man who is old now.  
As his life wraps up its ends,  
He recalls that's it's claimed by friends,  
"Life starts at fifty."  
But as life nears its end, he furthers,  
"We've been lied to, My Friends;  
Kids are when life just begins.  
That's when life begins. . ."*

*. . .He fathered progeny  
He'd never have a chance to know.  
A child growing never knowing him,  
Him never seeing his baby grow.  
Now, they'll never get to know. . .*

*When Life Begins*  
G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

. . . "Are you ready to eat?"  
"Eat what?"  
"I'll throw something together."  
"Yeah, that's fine. I'm pretty hungry. Let me check my e-mail to see what apologetics work I've missed."  
"Babe, do you really have to tonight?"  
"Yes, I do. That's what I do. Remember?"  
"But why so much so often?"  
"Because that's how much it takes. I vowed to

devote my life to the Lord. This is the manner He chose for me to serve Him. He blessed me with an ability to write and debate. These debates are affecting many fence-sitters' thinking. You knew from the beginning that I'm a Christian fundamentalist apologist who devotes his available time to proclaiming the name of the Lord. It's been months since I put the ball in Locks' court demanding he offer his explanation of what the disciples actually saw when purporting visions of Jesus after His death. I expect he has no answer. So far, he's failed every challenge, even after his voluminous pages of verbiage."

By the way, he never did respond. He extricated himself from the debate, claiming I had too closed of a mind for a serious debate. You be the judge. The pages remain available at [jordanconvert.faithweb.com](http://jordanconvert.faithweb.com), *My Debates*, Steve Locks.

"I know. I know."

"Don't give me that frustrated patronage."

"I'm not, Babe."

"Yes, you are. Now, I've already effectively handled Professor Cavin. I'm glad I'm the one on my side of that debate. The e-mails I've received regarding him are very encouraging. Melinda, I simply am not going to allow a woman to divert me from my work, especially a frisky one."

"Well, why not? We still have the evening."

"No, we don't. I have this to do. I took time away so you could visit your ailing mother. I spent time with your family. It's time, now, for me to get back to Jesus."

"You're just a phony, Jordan. Drink another."

"Don't mind if I do. Mind grabbing me one?"

... The evening wrapped up with Melinda dropping the bombshell as we settled in bed."

"Babe, I really need to talk to you about something important."

"Oh, no, I'm afraid of this."

"No, Babe, really, it's not as bad as you think."

"Yes, it is, probably worse."

"Tunishia's having some problems."

"No doubt. Gratefully, they're hers, not mine."

"No, Babe, listen."

"What?"

"It's baby Darius."

"Darius? What about him?"

"She needs somewhere for him to stay a few days, maybe a week while she relocates."

"So, 'y'all' expect him to come here? I remind you, I don't like children. I certainly can't stand babies. He's not my problem. I don't care!"

I spoke the truth. I truly did not care.

"Babe, he's my grandbaby. I'd want to spend time with him anyway. This is an appropriate time."

"There is no appropriate time for anything with you. You habitually abuse any and all blessings God bestows on you. If you could behave like a healthy parent or grandparent, that would be one thing. This will turn into a nightmare just like your pizza deliveries and Monika's stay."

"Jordan, Tunishia won't be anywhere near LaGrange."

“She’s in Georgia. That’s frightening enough. It’s too close for comfort. If her bodily excretion, i.e., a baby, is here, it opens me up to unannounced visits and a host of other annoyances and potential expenses.”

“See? Everything is money to you.”

“That’s because I don’t have any. I’m not eager to walk myself into needing even more of something I already don’t have. I don’t need anymore liabilities, especially liabilities for which I’m not responsible. I’ve never been willing to assume the expense of time, effort, and money for a child. Therefore, I responsibly never produced one.”

My memory flashed back to Julie’s belly.

*That’s not the same, not my baby, anyway. I have the papers to prove it. I made my mistake, then, distanced myself from more.*

“Money, to you, is not an issue. However, I can’t seem to get you to go earn any.”

“Babe, I have a right to my grandchild.”

“Great point, wrong address. You have no rights, here. You’re not my wife or other family member. You’re not a roommate. You contribute nothing to this household’s responsibilities. You’re a guest. Guests don’t invite guests.”

“You are so cold.”

“Notice, here, how your daughter is too flaky and irresponsible to care for her fatherless child. Somehow, however, I’m the bad guy! How the hell did that happen? I didn’t do her. One of her two boyfriends did. How about ‘y’all’ figure out which one, then send Darius to him?”

“Why do you hate babies so much?”

“I don’t hate babies. I would never do one any harm. Not only would I help feed one, I have put my money where my mouth is in the past. I’ve donated money over the years to the *Feed The Children* programs. I remind you that I came from a mother who struggled to feed us. I’ve been fed by many a person not responsible for my being here. I do, Little Girl, pass that on in my adulthood. To me, babies and children are like nuclear waste plants. They need to exist, serve some ultimate worthwhile purpose, but as the saying goes, ‘Not in my backyard!’”

The argument finally ended with, “Melinda, give it three days. This way, you can visit with him in a grandmotherly fashion. I do not want to hear that thing crying while I’m working. I don’t want to smell diapers in the household trash. I don’t want to be interrupted to go see him smiling or otherwise being cute. I don’t care. Also, don’t even think of me spoon feeding him a single bite or touching a diaper. Do not even think of leaving it alone with me for even a minute. If you have to go somewhere, it goes with you.”

The list marched on.

Upon delivery of the package, I offered little to no comment. I focused on my station work of bills, apologetics, Shiny Hats, etc. Actually, I never really worked my manuscript. I mostly merely glanced it.

“Thank you, Jordan,” Tunishia offered.

“I’m not the one to thank. It’s your mother’s burden.”

“Aren’t you going to come see him? Look, he’s

being so sweet.”

“No. I’ll be okay. As you know, I’m not a baby person. It’ll be safe. I’m no harm to it.”

I continued my work as a vision of Julie’s 1989 ultrasound flashed through my memory.

*I really don’t need this.*

Three days turned into a week. The week eventually turned into more weeks, months, and years.

“Melinda,” I eventually asked from my desk.

“Yeah, Babe?”

“Can you come talk a minute?”

“Yeah. What?”

She settled.

“It’s been a while.”

“What?”

“Darius.”

*Sigh*, “I know, Babe. Really, though, I’ve worked hard to keep him from bothering you. . .”

“No, Melinda, Sweetheart,” I softly interrupted.

*Man, what a misnomer if ever there existed one.*

“That’s not where I’m going. Much to my surprise, you’ve done extremely well on that.”

“What’s the matter?”

“What’s up with her?”

*Sigh*, “Babe, I really don’t know.”

“Looks like it’s going to be here a while. I really don’t need to hear about any of your conversations with her, anyway, because the net result remains; it’s still here. I had that concern from the start. I knew that once it arrived, I risked it never leaving. I have a serious concern you need to share.”

“What, Babe?”

“It seems the organism would require some follow-up care. Is it on Medi-what-the-hell-ever-something-care-aide?”

“Yeah.”

“Shouldn’t it be seeing doctors? What if it takes sick?”

“He’s not a ‘It’ or an ‘Organism.’ He’s a He!”

“Yeah, sure, great, anyway, if it, ah, he, is going to be here longer, you need to get his paperwork and get his care down here.”

“I know. I thought you’d get mad.”

“I am mad. I’m not going to holler. I know he’s just a baby, but conflict will remain stored in his subconscious if we fight around him. I much appreciate how you’ve managed to contain yourself since he’s been here.

Maybe you’re a responsible grandmother as opposed to. . .well, whatever. I’m not happy about it, but the responsible thing at this point is to get his paperwork in order so you can maintain his care.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, really. Just because I’m repulsed by babies doesn’t mean I’m not aware of his innocence and the fact he needs responsible care until I can rid myself of the creature, well, ‘Baby,’ ‘He,’ whatever.”

“You could say hi back to him.”

“Huh?”

“Look at him. He’s looking right at you and smiling.”

“Well, he can just keep right on smiling. At least he’s not crying.”

“Jordan, Babe, really, just look at him. Isn’t he cute?”

“No. Nor is he ugly. He just looks like a baby.”

“You can’t see how he looks like. . .”

“No, Melinda, I can’t. They all look alike to me.”

“How can you be so cold?”

“It’s easy. Do I appear challenged at my being so cold?”

“He’s still smiling at you.”

“You see, Melinda? That’s why I shouldn’t get involved. I merely expressed a responsible concern for his health. Don’t make it something it isn’t. Next thing I know, you’ll be trying to get me to hold him, burp him, all sorts of gross acts. He’ll be peeing and farting on me, drooling and sneezing on me, and whining.”

Turning to Darius, “C’mon, Darius. Come with Gramma,” she advised as she lifted him.

“Don’t listen to him. He doesn’t mean it, Dari.”

“Yes, he does,” I assured.

More days passed until. . .

“Babe?”

“Yeah, Melinda?”

“I have him settled so he won’t bother you. I need a quick nap in the other room.”

“And. . .?”

“I don’t want to move him.”

“You propose to leave him here? With me? We’ve already been over this.”

“Babe, it’s just a few minutes. If I wake him, it’ll take forever to get him back to sleep.”

“What if he coughs or chokes or something? That

could prove catastrophic.”

“Jordan, just holler for me. He’ll be safe.”

“I’m not talking about his safety. I’m talking about him breaking my concentration.”

About to angrily respond to my coldness, she noticed by the grin on my face, that I merely teased.

“No, Melinda, that’ll be fine. Take your nap. I’ll holler if anything happens.”

Something did happen. Something happened that I had been told by many for years happens. It defies all rationale. Babies are loud, dirty, expensive, demanding, and the list marches on. I failed to see how they could offer anything to recommend themselves. God’s Word tells us that children are a blessing from God. I could never grasp that concept. It remained one of the mysteries of God’s Word.

Darius shifted in an odd way, different from any I had witnessed. *Oh, no, is he going to crap? No, I don’t think so. He seems adamant about something. He’s not making any noise. He seems so focused. What could he possibly be doing?*

The wonder commanded my undivided attention.

An insight surfaced.

*This really isn’t about Darius or babies, is it, Jordan? It’s about your lifelong Wondering Evenings. You were deprived yours. You looked forward to and welcomed diapers, drool, and cries. She, or he, is a teenager now, practically an adult.*

My memory tearfully flashed back to scenes from 1988-89. . .

*"There's the baby's head, there. You see the arms?"  
the technician pointed.*

*"Yeah," I confirmed as I marveled at the image inside  
the dark spots on the screen.*

*"It seems to be a girl," she informed.*

*"Seems?"*

*"Yes, the legs are closed. We can't be sure."*

*"Yes! See, Julie? She's a girl!"*

*"Huh?"*

*"If this were a boy, he'd be like me, legs wide open and  
playing with himself!*

*No, no daughter of mine would spread her legs in front  
of an audience. She's a lady, already!"*

*My memory traveled on. . .*

*"You always have recourse to her actions. I appreciate  
your concern as to the affect on the child. It's rare that a client  
truly considers that. You are correct. The child is the one who  
suffers. You will not be the father that you dreamed. She will  
not have the father she deserves. The mother wins at both  
your expense. That's just something to think about before you  
contest. Sure, you could make her life miserable. What about  
the baby?"*

*"Well, you've affirmed my legal grounds and my moral  
concerns."*

*"Mr. Jordan, unfortunately, the court cannot provide the  
ideal. It cannot change a heart; it can only divide a child."*

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

*And on. . .*

*"Well, Matt, I'm dropping it," I informed in response to  
his query as we smoked on our office balcony.*

*"That's smart. You're gonna save a fortune."*

*"That's not the issue, Matt. It's the baby."*

*"Yeah, right, well, whatever. At least you were smart  
enough to get out of it while you could."*

*"You know, Matt? There's an 1800's Agnostic who in  
his writings and orations presented that he'd rather be  
absolutely honest and have the whole world believe in his  
dishonesty than to be dishonest and have the whole world  
believe in his honesty.*

*"There's the old King Solomon story of him calling for a  
sword to divide a baby in half to give two woman claiming him.  
He gave the baby to the one who pleaded not to harm him. He  
decreed her the true mother.*

*"Perhaps I'm the parent who loves that baby. Perhaps  
love can mean living the hurt of the absence. I'd rather the  
whole world think I've dropped it so I could enjoy financial gain  
and shirk my responsibilities, while I know the agony and  
sacrifice I underwent and probably continue through to death  
in this decision, than to do the reverse for my pride, legal  
rights, and sporting my balls while everyone would think I did it  
for the baby. It would be so much easier to fight this than  
leave it. Most people will think me a flake and copout, while  
I'll be believing there may be a Pharaoh at the end of my  
baby's Julie-built River Nile."*

*As my *Wondering Evenings* ending lyric  
reverberated my mind another countless time. . .*

*. . .Please, don't be lonely, oh, no, please,*

*Don't be lonely, down 'n' blue.*

*Tell your mom I'll forgive her true if you're not blue.*

*No, don't be blue like your father, on another,*

*Wondering Evening all about you.*

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*



I remained in memory of years-long suppressed thoughts about the year I planned on fatherhood. Thoughts that I tucked deeply hidden away in my memories for a decade and a half; planning to never revisit; vowing to never look back. Now, Baby-Dari sailed me back to my then wife-to-be, Julie, broaching . . .

“Honey?”

“What-ey?”

She rolled over as I placed my reading material down to listen. Her tone suggested something of importance.

“I want to have a baby.”

“A baby? Like a human?”

“Yeah, I really do.”

“Oh.”

I had to let that digest.

“And. . .?”

“Let’s have one. Really, I’ve wanted to for a long time.”

“Well, ah, Julie, ah. . .hmm, ah. . .”

“What’s the matter? Don’t you want a baby, someday?”

“Yeah, ah, I guess, someday. Ah, well, I haven’t thought about it.”

“Honey, I’m not getting any younger. We’ll both be thirty soon.”

“Ah, yeah, I know. Julie, really, I’ve never felt secure enough in life to have a child. In fact, I spent so many years high that I never had to think about it. Granted, it helps that I’m totally in-love with you.”

“I love you, George. I’d really be happy to have a

child who looks like you. I really would.”

“Ah, ah, yeah, well, ah, it obviously matters a lot to you. Julie, My Heartthrob, I really want you to be happy.”

“Give me a baby, then, a little Georgey.”

“Trust me, Julie, one George has been enough on this planet. If we go that far, let’s hope for a girl. Besides, there have been too many males in my family line. Julie, I don’t see myself stable enough. I mean with my drug history, and I’ve had no real family life as a guide. Hell, Julie, I’m a telemarketer.”

“Yeah, and you’re very intelligent, a hard worker. When you’re not working, you’re here with me every night. I never wonder where you are or what you’re doing. You have a relationship with your mother I respect. You take care of Bear-Dog as well I do Charlotte. You care for Marjorie who’s not even a relative. I think you’d be a wonderful father.”

“I wish I shared your positive view of my character, thank you. As for me, I don’t trust me. Look, Julie, I’m not an old-fashioned person. I’m all for free love, shacking up and the like. But, man, Julie, children, well, that changes things. I’d have to be married if I were to knowingly and intentionally impregnate someone. I simply don’t have the material offerings and social stature to propose marrying me.”

“So, you would marry me?”

“Hell, yes, if I thought you’d go for it.”

*Smile*, “Really? You would?”

“Yeah, I’d be crazy not to. There are a few things I’d change if I were married, but you’ll need to understand that there are a few things that I won’t.”

“Like what?”

“I’ll never return to the travel industry and I’ll always drink beer.”

“I love you, Honey,” hand on my thigh.

“I love you, too, Sweetheart. So, you want to have a baby, you say?” turning my head, “Bear-Dog? Charlotte? Get in here and close the door behind you!”

As I looked down below, I furthered, “So, you want to have a baby, Baby? Well, it seems you’re off to a good start. Don’t even think of turning off that light. I plan to enjoy this.”

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

The memory remained all too alive again. . .

. . . We arrived home to find the house empty. Fran and Freddie were both at work, which allowed us an opportunity to talk while we prepared a snack.

“Julie, you know where to find a Justice of the Peace? It shouldn’t be too difficult.”

“I don’t know.”

“So, I guess we set an appointment, go in, sign the papers and we’re out?”

“Well, actually, George, Mom really wants a small wedding.”

“A wedding? Is she crazy? There’s no way we can afford that.”

“She said she’d pay for it.”

“Julie, I really think a lot of Fran. I know she means well, but, it’s too expensive to let her attempt it. I’m not going to feel right about her paying for it.”

“She said she could keep it small and affordable.”

“Do you believe that?”

“I don’t know.”

“Julie, we can afford the move in for the apartment. It’s serious money, though. I’ve got a feeling that, in the end, it’s going to cost us.”

“Honey, how many times are we going to marry?”

“I like thinking just once.”

“Let’s do it right, then. Make it something to remember.”

“I’m not going to ruin this for you. If it means that much to you two to have discussed it already, I’m not going to disappoint you. It’s against my better judgment, though.”

“It’ll be all right. I promise.”

“I don’t know,” I commented as I kissed her forehead, “I’ll have to trust you on that. How’s your period?”

*Smiling*, “Funny you ask. What period?”

“Aren’t you about due?”

*Smiling harder*, “Past due.”

“Really?” I began to smile with her.

“You think maybe, ah, well, you know, you might not have one for a while?”

“I think maybe.”

“Like, maybe, oh, say, about nine months?”

“I think maybe.”

“Hmm, get outta here. You mean I might have actually had a few live ammos in there?”

“I think maybe.”

“When will we know for sure?”

"I don't know."

"Well, ah, that's almost scary."

"Scary? Why?"

"Well, it's so final. No more thinking about it. Of course, we don't know that for certain. You've been late before, I'm sure."

"Yeah, could be nothing."

"We can get an early pregnancy test kit."

"That's what I'm gonna do, next time I go out."

"Great, as for me, I need to hit the bookstore at Christown Mall."

"For what?"

"A Name Change packet."

"You're really gonna do it?"

"Of course, I am. I'm not a Medeiros. I'm not the same person I used to be. I've already thought this through in detail, Julie. You know that. It's time I do it in time for the marriage. Otherwise, all three names have to be changed."

"You're really serious?"

"You bet I am. I'm serious about everything I do."

There's no way I'd give Antone Medeiros his last chance at a grandbaby named Medeiros. I wouldn't do it just to spite him, but I don't want his name and I certainly wouldn't curse a new living being with it. Besides, Julia Ann Jordan has a far better ring than Julia Ann Medeiros."

"Well, I agree. I do like the sound of it."

Julie's legal office secretarial skills made the packet an easy filing. My big day came when I stepped onto Washington Avenue formally, properly, officially,

legally named George Zeineldé Jordan. The name readied itself that 1989 January day for the upcoming wedding the following month. My co-workers greeted me the next day, one announcing my arrival, "Here comes Mr. Jordan."

One marveled and commented, "That's so cool. You actually just went and changed your name. I'd like to do that. I can't stand my name. I didn't even know you could that. I thought you had to get married, or adopted, or something."

"I can honestly say, that though a male, I changed my name when I married."

With the laughter shared, another commented. "Man, you can do that? Really? It's legal?"

"Yeah, oddly enough, there remains a semblance in remnants of our former free society here in America. Give it time, soon enough, our government will begin naming babies themselves, mostly with numbers."

"Okay, there he goes on that political stuff. I'm outta here," he continued in laughing manner, "Good day, Mr. Jordan."

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

So, the date with Julie went well. Everything went well with Julie; well, up until the marriage. The Julie saga served as yet another "story-inside-of-a-story."

*As Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume One* presented, I lived Junior High and High School on pills, beer, and school-skipping. Then, young adulthood consisted of meth addiction. Julie served as my first actual romantic heartthrob.

In time for the 1989 marriage, I did formally, legally,

change my name in the Maricopa County Courthouse. As I stepped down the courthouse steps, I read, reread, and reread the Court's decree. I dreamed back to California that 1987 weekend of my "Unexplained Phenomenon," "Divine Intervention" experience;<sup>1</sup> the day of my deliverance from Crystal-Meth, the day that set me on this new path.

<sup>1</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous' *Big Book*, page 27, presents psychiatrist Dr. Jung's advising a patient of the extremely rare yet real Vital Spiritual Experience. Science considers it an unexplained scientific phenomenon. Theists (i.e., believers in a god or gods) consider it Divine Intervention.

I approached the PSA ticket counter.  
"George Medeiros, a pre-paid to Phoenix."  
I had enough cash and cigarettes to enjoy a beer before boarding. I stared at the ticket, grateful to Rick. My name shot out at me,  
M-E-D-E-I-R-O-S, G-E-O-R-G-E.  
I softly, privately commented as I exhaled my smoke and sipped my beer, *Something tells me you're history. Everything you've been, everything you are, ended back there. . .*  
*Perhaps I'm deluded, I furthered, but whomever I'm to be, better or worse, you, George Medeiros, are not included.*

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume One*

The name change reflected the death and burial of my former life, **George Medeiros**, and the birth of the new man, **George Zeineldé Jordan**. As the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* story continued on, "Jordan" became my nickname, and George relegated to merely initial G. My Se. (Self-Educated) suffix would surface a decade later.

All of these years-long suppressed memories flashed as Darius squirmed. . .

## 68 A Baby?

*Children, softness from a womb, stone blocks?  
Yes! In His hands, building a home's new rooms!  
His precision's fine as flowers blooming heirlooms.*

*Scripture As I Hear It*  
Scriptural Reference: Psalms 127: 3, 4

Freshly showered and desirous of a snack, I entered the family living area. Asking across the kitchen counter, I prepared a snack, "What ya watchin', Sweetheart?"

"I don't know, Honey. I've never seen it before. It's really cute. Come watch it with me."

"I heard the music credit and narration from the kitchen. It sounds a bit unusual."

I trailed into the family room with Julie sprawled about the floor and Fran on the couch. As I entered, I marveled at Julie's pulchritude. Rarely, could I view her in any state without her beauty nearly taking my breath away. I settled on the floor with her.

"That's me, there, Kevin Arnold. . ."

The show rolled on.

"Julie, how'd you find this?"

"I didn't. It just happened to be on."

"I really don't care much for TV shows. If it's not news, documentaries, or somehow nonfiction informative, I'm bored. Interesting, I feel like I'm watching my California suburbs teen years, well, the more wholesome, innocent side."

"I think it's cute."

"It has its charm, Sweetheart. Hey, hold it, realize what I just said, 'news, nonfiction,' in the same sentence? Hell, I have to laugh. 'Nonfiction News' is an oxymoron if ever there existed one."

"Honey, c'mon, let's watch the show."

"I agree."

I consented with a hand rub to the knee then the shoulder and peck on her cheek. I consumed my snack

as I watched ABC's *The Wonder Years* opening episode.

I liked having a T.V. show I could actually enjoy. I often commented to Julie how much I appreciated catching it and encouraging me to watch it with her. I think she sometimes thought I only watched with her to appease, but in the end, I'd watch it regularly over the years. Finally, a decade or so later, it took some expense and effort but I managed to purchase the complete series on DVD from England. However, our evenings presented other wondering issues. For one, I eagerly wondered,

"Julie, c'mon, you gonna do it or what? I wanna know," I asked as the TV broadcasted unneeded political news. Bush Sr. had already secured the White House. She knew what I meant, but opted to play me on.

"Do what?"

"The EPT. You gonna do the test or what?"

"Honey, it's an 'early' pregnancy test. I'm gonna get up 'early' tomorrow."

"C'mon, now, you know early means the stage. C'mon, go do it."

"Honey, no, I'm gonna do it in the morning. Really, it'll be fun."

"All right, well, wake me up. Okay?"

"I will."

Then in a seductive pose, she furthered, "Hey, Honey, maybe it didn't really take."

With a mischievous grin, "You want to try it again?"

"Well, if it'll make you happy, I'll sacrifice, yet, again."

Morning made its way with, "Honey? Okay, it's early. I'm gonna do it."

"Hey, I need coffee. Okay, you can pee?"

"I'm pretty sure. You wanna come see?"

"Ah, oddly enough, yes, I do."

"Julie, Babe, really, hold that as if it matters."

"George, I'm doing my best. You try sitting here holding this, coffee, cigarette and piss."

"Well, hell, give it to me. I'll hold it."

"Never mind. I think I got it."

"Damn, Julie, you look damn cute doing it. You are so sexy."

"Great, I'm sexy. For now, leave me alone."

I left her alone. I waited in the den. Finally, she appeared with a couple strips in hand and a smile.

"Honey, I can't say I'm pregnant, but according to this," she presented the strips, "I am."

I examined the strips and box color codes.

"Oh, man, ah, Julie, really? Ah, well, I don't know. Are you happy?"

"Yes, I'm very happy. Thank you, Honey," she expressed with a hug.

It felt wonderful feeling her beautiful self with it's soft persona holding me closely in gratitude of something I contributed. As I basked in her affection, I harbored concerns.

*A baby? Oh, man, I'm no one to father a child. Man, she looks so happy, though.*

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

As of last month, August 2013, I have lived twenty-four

years of those *Wondering Evenings*. My baby was due August of 1989. Not a single August birthday since 1989, not a single Christmas, not a single Father's Day has passed without my *Wondering Evenings*. Over the years, I have seen other parents' babies, toddlers, and teens. I always have a flash of imagination in wonderment as to how my baby grew. Then I quickly return the memories to the locked closet in my mind. I made the only healthy, responsible, decision. I chose to be Father rather than Man. If you want to know more, I will not present it. You will have to purchase *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*. If it is not worth the purchase price to you, your opinion is worth no price to me. I am the one wearing the scars. Earlier this year, January 2013, I finally learned the baby's gender and name. Now, on with the story. . .

As Baby-Dari squirmed, I reflected back to my final conversation with Julie:

With my apartment so conveniently located to Ma's, I spent much time at Ma's. Then, one day, the Jetta pulled into the driveway. Julie made way to Ma's door. I opened it for her without a greeting. I merely positioned myself on the couch then asked, "What's up? You go by the apartment?"

As I admired her beauty, she advised in unemotional, matter-of-factly fashion, "George, when you want us back together, there's some things you need to do or I'm not doing it."

"Julie, you're misguided. You're not laying any cards on a table here. I am."

Her facial expression suggested I skewed her

vision of approach.

“Julie, My Heartthrob, listen closely. I fathered that child in your belly. I’m not a flake shooting a load then walking away. I gave you what you wanted, a baby. I did it in loving responsible fashion.”

. . . “Julie, make a list of your changes you demand in me. I’ll do it. I’ll even lay down the beer. Julie, I’m voting *Black*<sup>1</sup>. I love you deeply. I’m excited at being a father. Head your list with beer then have your mother, sister, and you add more. I’ll do it. Now, there’s one stipulation. We, together, make my fix-ups **under the supervision of a trained professional**. If these fix-ups are healthy, we’ll know.”

“George, all you really need to do is. . .”

“Ah, ah, ah, I’m not through yet,” I interrupted.

“From here on, I’m the boss. I’ll handle that responsibly. I accommodated you in things that were against my better judgment. I wanted you to be happy, so I did it. Each time, though, I paid my feared price. We ain’t doing that, anymore. . . We have the insurance, the income, the time. This ain’t about us, damn it, Julie! It’s about the child in your belly. We gotta do this right. We need to vote *Black* for each other and for the baby. . . **you deal with Fran**. We’ll do it together under healthy supervision.”

“Mom just wanted. . .”

“This ain’t about her! It’s about the baby and us. See? Already, Fran enters. You need help with that. I’ll not stand for it. Julie, I had a lot of laughs with her before the marriage. We, together, had a lot of laughs with her. As Haggard sang, though, things aren’t funny, anymore.”

At a loss for words, undoubtedly because of my accuracy, she remained silent.

“If you can’t work with me that far, much as I love and adore you, and I’ll be miserable without you, I advise you don’t let Mammaw’s door hit your gorgeous derriere on your way out.

Now, if I have to file the papers, it’ll be ugly. You work in a law firm. They’ll help you. **If professional counseling is out of the question, I’m out of the equation**. File the papers. I’ll go through life as if it never happened. Well, other than being the best father I can under the circumstances you will have laid down for her and her father. I’ll be miserable if I have to go through life feeling I’ve fathered a fatherless child. I lived it. It ain’t pretty.

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

I stored a great deal of suppressed baggage to deal with from 1989. Dari unleashed it all.

<sup>1</sup>Voting Black was language we both understood. It came from the *Red-Black Game* we had learned earlier in a self-improvement seminar. Voting *Black* meant voting for your opponent. Voting *Red* meant voting for yourself. The lesson of the game demonstrated that when voting *Black*, both sides win; voting *Red*, both sides lose.

Age seven, 1966, escaping our father resurfaces:

Figuring a police precinct no place for proffering opposition, Ma consented. She assured she understood, agreed, and would prepare us for pick up the next day.

I had questions and fears about our new family order on the horizon. My brothers and mother put me at peace with their responses. As a result, I slept that night fairly well. While I slept, Ma pondered the Charybdis of resistance with the Scylla of compliance. Refuse them? That would inevitably lead to a hopeless battle. Give us up? Unthinkable. She chose Rick's earlier suggestion, "Let's go away, Mommy."

I awoke in the wee hours of the night by Tony's soft nudge and whisper, "George, Georgey, wake up. We're going on a trip."

He tempered my confusion with something such as, "Everything is okay. We'll be all right. It's just a journey like when I go camping."

Boy, would that prove true, but without scout luxuries.

"We need to start early; we don't want to miss anything, do we?"

I responded, "Well, okay, right now?"

"Sure," he answered with staged enthusiasm.

Well, with Tony, everything would be fine. If he thought we better get going, though, we better. He, being all grown up, would protect us from whatever night's darkness held in store.

My family had been preparing our departure while I slept. With blankets in hand, the only clothes we wore,

and whatever else Ma and Tony could stuff into their clothes or an easy-carry sack, we walked our dog, Tiny, our cat, Thomasina, and a sack of baby pictures over to a neighbor friend of Ma's. Then we sneaked down a side street, passed a familiar coffee shop, and scurried like rodents out of the street lights, deep into the black of the woods. If fate would separate us, it would be some other day. . .

. . . Ahead of us awaited a long, rocky road to be traveled under torrential rain, against bitter wind, wearing worn-out shoes. Following our expedient exodus, many years would pass before we would see a blood relative again, even a photograph. Life, as I knew it, ceased. Our only escape from the Antone Medeiros evils would be to disappear from the face of the earth. In essence, we did.

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume One*

That haunting memory reminded me that I would never be normal. So far, I had done nothing wrong, though. In fact, I did everything right. Yet, I remained open to change. I had to, for The Baby. We talked on:

I'll change to prevent it. Please, Julie, vote *Black* with me. I beg you, please, vote *Black* with me. I beckoned my opponents back at Omega. They didn't get it. Granted, I lost less, but I'd rather our baby and us come out *Black*. Professional supervision is my way of voting *Black* and being a responsible sperm donor. Julie, My Heartthrob, things aren't funny anymore."

Viscerally, I knew she told me the truth on our first date that I got more out of the *Red-Black Game* than



she. She left prepared to play the *Red-Black Game* in a way I did not imagine. In the end, all parties involved lost big time. Julie would vote deep *Red*. No, things were not funny, anymore.

She turned to the door and carefully saw that it did not hit her gorgeous derrière on the way. As I admired her beautiful self enter her Jetta, I viewed my final view. I would never see her again.

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

With my suppressed memories flashed before me, Dari squirmed on. . .

I wondered something new about babies. I wondered. . .

Softly, almost in a whisper, I called, "Melinda?"

"Yeah, Babe? What's wrong?"

"I'm pretty sure nothing's wrong. I think you might want to come in here."

Understandably, she assumed negative.

"Oh, no! I'm coming!"

"Shssssh! Melinda, slowly, quietly, come here."

She stepped around the doorway.

With a finger on my lips, I advised in a whisper, "I'm not sure. I don't have experience in these things, but I wonder, is little Dari trying to sit up?"

She assessed the scene.

"Jordan, I think so. I think you're right."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Cool. I wonder, can he do it? Is it too early?"

I do not know exactly what happened. As I witnessed his struggle, I felt what seemed the adrenaline of someone watching a sports event in final innings, touchdowns, baskets, whatever it is they do with those needless play-balls.

"If he's trying, Jordan, he probably will."

He lifted again, all of halfway.

"C'mon, Dari. . . You can do it, Bud," I urged.

*"Bud?" Not "Creature?" Not "Organism?" Not "It?"*

*How did "Bud" surface?*

Finally, after a few attempts, he sat straight up.

"Darius! Look at you! Melinda! Look! He's sitting up!"

"He is!"

Out of my desk chair, straight to him, offering him a kiss, I praised, "Look at you! You look like a full grown man!"

*Smile, drool, nose drop. . .*

"Darius," I crooned with a kiss to the top of his head, a hug about as hard as the one I first received from Miss Walker, "that's the most fun I've had in a long time. The Olympics have nothing on you, Champ!"

*Smile, drool, nose bubble. . .*

I did not fully see the drool and nose bubble. Yeah, though conscious of it, I only really experienced the feel of his smile.

The Jordan-Baby-Children bubble finally burst after a decade and a half. All the affectionate baby dreams of 1989 flowed out. Again, my memory traveled:

I felt great excitement as the wedding day neared. I found myself amazed that such a creature as Julia Bolliger would commit a life to me, that she would have me father her a child. As her tummy grew, so grew my anticipation.

As she lay on her back in shorts with reading material before her eyes, again, I admired her. I stretched out on my stomach with a hand on her tummy, my head against her chest's side.

"Julie, Babe, you think the baby's bored in there?"

"Huh?"

"Well, I heard this Bill Cosby thing once about babies being bored. Maybe he's right."

"About what?"

I shifted my focus to her tummy.

"Hey, you in there, you need some string? Maybe some crayons or chalk?"

"George, you're silly. What are you doing?"

"Hey, she might be bored. She might could use some crayons or chalk so she can write on the walls. You know? Like delinquents spray painting graffiti. You mind swallowing some crayons?"

Sharing my laughter, "Honey, c'mere," planting me a kiss and head rub, "What makes you so sure she's a girl?"

"Because that's what I want. I want to buy some lacey dresses and shiny shoes."

Rubbing her tummy, she advised, "We'll know soon enough at the ultra-sound."

"Yeah, what day is that, again?"

"You're coming, aren't you?"

"Of course, I wouldn't miss it for anything. I'll call in sick to work if I have to. Well, it'll be true. I'm love sick over you."

Then, again, to her belly, "And I'm love sick over you in there."

*Kiss, kiss on the belly.*

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

Next Dari chapter. . .

## 215 Daffodils

*When you receive a child,*

*I receive you as a child.*

*When I receive you as a child,*

*My Father receives His children.*

*Scripture As I Hear It*

Scriptural Reference: Mark 9: 36, 37

"Jordan, please!"

"What?"

"Make him stop!"

"Who?"

"Darius!"

"What's he doing?"

"All that banging, Babe, really, I'm trying to watch TV."

"Melinda, he's not 'banging' anything. He's familiarizing himself with a keyboard. He wants to grow up to be a writer, just like his 'Pap-Pah,' only better than Pap-Pah."

I looked to Darius on my lap.

“Dari-Dude, really, don’t listen to her. Really, she doesn’t mean it,” *kiss*.

“Yes, I do!”

The table turned.

“Why?”

“Jordan, you wouldn’t allow Monika to touch your computer. You put in sign-in codes to keep her out. Now, you have Darius on your lap banging on the keyboard while making all that ‘noise’ you said you hated about a baby. I thought you had to concentrate?”

“I am concentrating. C’mere, Melinda, if you can put that Geraldo, Walters, Roseanne, whatever BS aside long enough. . .”

“What, Babe?”

“Monika, supposedly, arrived here grown. She behaved like a baby, though. He is, in fact, a baby. He’s supposed to behave this way. It’s only a keyboard. They’re just a few dollars at a second-hand store.”

“So, whatever he does is okay because he’s a baby?”

“Well, ah, yeah. Why not? You complained I hated babies. Now, you complain I have a Dari buddy who just so happens to be a baby. Man, really, show some consistency other than consistent inconsistency!

“It’s not right.”

“Hey, I never asked for a step grandbaby. He just sort of,” looking down to him on my lap, “well, ah, just kind of landed on my lap, so to speak.”

We talked further.

“Melinda, let me tell you what’s sad.”

“What, Babe?”

You’ve read the early pages of my manuscript. You know my life started out replete with sad good-byes. Now, in my forties, it remains so. I consider I’ve adjusted well to that reality. I’ve learned to not get attached; not get attached to friends, lovers, victories, and, gratefully, failures. They’re all like Georgia weather: If you don’t like it, sit tight, it’ll change in an hour. If you like it, don’t get comfortable, it’ll change in an hour.”

“All right, you’re being Jordan. You can’t just say something.”

“Tunshia is going to show up, someday, out of the blue. She’ll take him back.”

“Now, you want him to stay?”

“Yeah, I do. I’ve never had a child. I’ve always wondered, though, if I’ve missed out on the things I’ve been told. Perhaps I have. He’s been different since that day he first sat up. It hit me. I felt it. I understand it now. In fact, with my inheritance check just about written and signed, we could care for him. If she’d sign the papers, we could maintain custody. He could have real grandparents.”

“So now you’re a baby lover?”

“I didn’t say that. I love Dari-Dude, I repeat, Dari-Dude. You see, Melinda? I’m reminded of one of my favorite movies, *Harold and Maude*, where Maude likens people to daffodils in that people are individuals rather than a mass. I’ve noticed that when we’re out and you ask me about babies we encounter, they remain all look-alikes to me. Dari, though, I could spot among all the countless others, even all the other Black ones. To me,

they're just a field of daffodils. However, there are countless observable differences between Dari and the mass of others. I know his smiles, frowns. I see where he has a pedal here to the left, one there to the right. Dari is an individual daffodil. Now, he's his Pap-Pah's daffodil."

And to think that our Heavenly Father sees us all like that? Wow!

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Three*

With a baby not only in my home now, but also in my heart, 1989 remained alive as real as if the day before:

Well, with our bit of humor enjoyed, we continued our work. As all went well in my office, Dawn appeared in front of my desk. She appeared secretive and a bit cautious. She didn't want others to hear.

"Yeah, Dawn, what's up? You look concerned."

"George, there's someone up front asking to see you."

"Okay, well, I'm caught up. I can't imagine who would bother me at work, but okay, I'll go see."

"George, he has some papers for something. He won't say why he's here."

"Ah, okay, I promise I won't make it long. I'll just tell him I need to schedule whatever he's needing at an off time."

"Maybe I should just tell him to leave a message. I can tell him you can't be interrupted during business hours for non-business related matters."

"Well, thank you, Dawn, but whatever it is, I probably ought to handle it. It's not a bill collector. I don't

have any bills. It's not a cop. I haven't committed any crimes."

"Well, okay, take your time."

I appeared at the front to find a young man clad in casual clothes holding his papers.

"Hi, I'm Jordan. You need to see me?"

"Yes, Sir, are you," he glanced at his papers, "George Zeineldé Jordan?"

"Yes, what's up? Do I owe you money?"

As he handed me the papers, I, in reflex, instinctual fashion, extended my hand. His packet landed in my hand. He advised, "Mr. Jordan, you have been served."

. . . I opened a packet to find papers from a COHEN and FROMM, P.C.

The document's title read:

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF ARIZONA  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA

I scanned the documents over in a cursory reading. Not all had digested, but I read enough to reenter my office area.

Dawn awaited my return. As I reentered, she looked in my direction in wonderment. I held the packet in the air as I pointed to her office and walked its way.

"George, what is it?" she asked in caring, even worried fashion as she closed the door behind her.

"Divorce papers."

"No, oh, no, please don't tell me that."

"Well, it is."

“George,” hug added, “ I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. I know what had happened but I hoped it wouldn’t go to this.”

“I expected it would,” I furthered as I failed in my attempt to keep my eyes dry, “And it did.”

“George, there’s little I can say,” she replied while handing me her Kleenex box.

“I know, Dawn. I know. There’s a hell of a lot Julie could say!”

“George, it’s going to be okay, somehow. It’s not good, but you’re going to survive this. What does she want?”

“Bless her heart, nothing. On paper, she wants nothing from me. In practice, she wants everything from me.

“Dawn, the suit claims someone other than me fathered her unborn baby. She wants full custody. She doesn’t want any child support, just full custody. . . Dawn, from her last cycle to the early pregnancy test, we were together night and day. If she got laid elsewhere, she did it at her office on a desk or in a broom closet.”

“George, it’s a legal tactic for custody. You need to go home for a while.”

“I’ll be all right.”

“No, you shouldn’t work like this. Really, go home. You’ll have the weekend to think things over.”

“You really don’t mind, Dawn? I don’t know when I’ll be back, maybe never.”

“Oh, yes, you will. Just take some time. You need to cry a little more.”

“Thanks, Dawn, I appreciate it. I see Matt out

there wondering what’s up. Would you tell him discreetly what’s happened? I can’t talk, right now. Let him know it’s okay for him to come by.”

“I will, George. We love you here. We’re gonna do what we can. At least you have your employer’s support through this.”

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

Back to Dari-Dude. . .

## 216 Pap-Pah Jordan

*That’s when life begins,*

*When life begins.*

*That’s when life begins,*

*When life begins.*

*Life begins when we let children in.*

*I’ll be danged, but,*

*That’s when life begins.*

*When Life Begins*

G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

“Rick, you really have handled this expertly. I know Tony agrees, neither he nor I could have done it.”

“As I said, Jordan, a childhood can’t be replaced. Damn it, our family cheated us from the start. There’s no way I’d let our cousin cheat us. We may have missed out on a childhood, but at least you have a chance at a retirement, now.”

“Yeah, I’ll handle it as responsibly as a recluse such as I could.”

"You're not so much a recluse. You've really done a lot for your life."

"Well, thanks. Anyway, what started all this is the home movies of Ma and Tony."

"Jordan," Ma interjected, "they're not just me and Tony. There's some of Rick, and even you as a baby. I'm sorry there's so little of you, but we divorced."

"Ma, I wanted the movies of my mother. I'm okay. That's all I wanted."

"Jordan," Rick assured, "they're safe. They're at the recorder's. I'll have them on DVD, shortly."

"Good, great, anyway, Ma, give me a hug."

"Be careful. Love you."

Of course, Mammaw walked us down to the drive. She stood waving until we disappeared from sight.

"Melinda, used wisely, we and Darius need never have a financial worry for life."

"Darius?"

"Yeah, Darius. He's my step-grandson. This is a fine time to think of him. We can make sure he has none of the setbacks we've had. We can secure him a real education, financial security, everything neither of us had."

"This ain't about me, is it?"

Now I'm more secure, and we have Dari to consider."

"You're such a phony, Jordan."

"I'm a phony because I love your grandson whom I didn't even want?"

"Never mind. I have to drive his drunk Pap-Pah home."

"Yeah, screw you, too," I added, then sarcastically, "'My Love.' All we lack now, is a Shanty."

"You can forget it. John will never give her to us."

"No, he'll give her to us."

"Why?"

"Because he's a flake, a con-artist, a cheat and, a loser, by your description. By what I've witnessed myself, I concur. He'll call. I regret if it upsets you, but the most, if only," I added with a lift of my brow and an accusing smirk, "beautiful thing you've brought into my life in this union, is Dari-Dude. Earthily speaking, with Dari and a beer, all I lack is a Shanty. I'm reminded of Tom T. Halls' *Old Dogs and Children and Watermelon Wine.*"

## 217 Dogs On A Chain

*Dogs on a chain have killed more children than have handguns each year.*

*. . . A dog needs to be walked at least twenty minutes per day to satisfy their roaming instinct. . .*

*A dog on a chain is not a good idea.*

John Tesh Show  
J93 Radio, Atlanta  
September 09, 2009

"Yeah, Art, we'd love to. I'll check with Melinda on when's a good night for it."

"Great, I'll tell Carol you two are coming."

"Two?"

"Huh?"

"Of course, we'll have Dari-Dude with us. I really

don't trust having a babysitter. That is okay, isn't it?"

*Laughing*, "Of course, it's okay. It'll be nice to have a baby in the house during dinner. We rarely see our grandbabies and great grandbabies. We'll love it."

"Good, good, as I say, I don't trust a babysitter. You know how I distrust Melinda so much. . ."

*Laughing again*, "Yeah, yeah, we know. We don't, either."

"I admit, though, she's a far better grandmother than, well, other things. He's really in the best hands with her, better than his mother. I try to not think about her. . ."

*Interrupting*, "Melinda or his mother?"

*Sharing his laughter*, "Well, actually, both. Right now, I referred to his mother. I'm often reminded of her because I see traces of her in his face."

"I thought they all looked alike to you?"

Okay, Readers, times changed. Go figure.

"Art, 'they,' do. He's not they. He's Dari. That's different. Anyway, the other line is beeping. Let me get it."

"Bye, Jordan."

"Hello? Jordan."

"Heh, heh, I reached you."

"I'd recognize that voice, anywhere! Temy, My Friend! How are you?"

"Well, I'm hanging in there," he mumbled as usual. How are things there? Melinda? Work? Whatever?"

"They're well enough, Bud. Melinda's still mean to me, and remains frisky. I've had ample work, but that California ordeal finalized. I should be even better for a while; ideally, for life. I'm looking into ways to utilize it;

invest, whatever. Anyway, how are you? What number are you calling from? I didn't recognize it. You're on the road?"

"No, I'm at home in Ariton. It's a new cell phone. I wanted you to have the number."

"Good. I'll lock it in. How long you going to be there?"

"A little while; that health issue I had has come up. I need to get some medical paperwork."

"Will it work out?"

"I think so."

"Does that mean you're out of work?"

"For a bit, it seems. I have things to do here, anyway, for Philis."

"Temy, I've never repaid you the Western Unions you sent me."

"You weren't supposed to. You're my friend."

"Look, Temy, let's play it safe. I'm going to Western Union now. I'm sending some money. I insist. If you don't need it, give it to a nonprofit organization; hopefully, not an atheist or Christian one. I mean one we share in, animals or something."

*Chuckle*, "Maybe it wouldn't hurt, just in case."

"It wouldn't hurt, My Friend."

"Thanks."

"You're welcome. Anyway, on another note, I've been working on finding a foreclosed property in which to invest."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, it's not as easy as some claim. Anyway, after placing bids, I snagged one downtown in LaGrange.

I'm already renovating it."

"No?"

"Yeah, I did. My friend, Mike, is overseeing the painting. My friend, Dennis, is overseeing the contractors. I wish you could meet them. Are we going to be able to get you over here for a visit?"

"I don't know. I hope so. I'm due back up in Atlanta next week for more paperwork and another heart test."

"Anyway, I'm on my way to Western Union. I'll feel better if you have cash."

"Okay, thank you. You know you don't owe me?"

"I know. I also know I owe me. I owe me knowing my friend's okay. Bye, My Bud. Love ya."

"Love you, too, Jordan."

"Melinda?"

"Yeah, Babe?"

"Hey, I'm running to Western Union real quick. You need anything?"

"No, Babe, I don't think so. Dari's going to need some diapers. Do you mind while you're there?"

"No, but Melinda, you know I don't know how to buy the right ones. Come with me."

"You're going to drive like that?"

"Drive? You crazy? I just had two beers. Hell, no, I'm calling a cab."

"Oh."

"You coming?"

"Babe, he's sleeping."

I walked in to see. Sure enough. Head tilted, knuckle in mouth, feet swaying. I walked over, stretched

out next to his bassinet, offered a soft kiss to his cheek and whispered, "I love you, Dari. Pap-Pah will be right back. "

"Jordan, don't wake him."

"I'm not. I'm just giving him a kiss."

"Be quiet."

"Yeah, anyway, I'm calling a cab."

"Why are you going to Western Union?"

"Temy's going to be out of work awhile. I'd feel better if he had money."

*Sarcastically*, "Oh, your precious friend, Temy?"

"Yeah, Temy, and he is a precious friend."

"Jordan, you can't be the world's financial savior."

"I don't remember you giving him that speech all those trips he made to Western Union for us."

*No comment.*

As I finished preparing for my cab, I checked on Dari. He remained peacefully sleeping.

*Toot, toot!*

The cab delivered an aged man with thick eyeglasses, long, scraggly beard, and balding head.

"Hi, I'm Jordan. I'm going to Western Union on Commerce. How you doing, tonight?"

Mumbling through his beard and cigarette, "I'm Larry, Number Three. I'm doing okay. Just trying to survive another day in the cab business.

Commerce, you say?" he asked as he lowered the radio's country music broadcast.

"Yeah, I'm in no hurry. If you have another fare along the way, I'll be okay for you to snag it."

"No, it's a quiet night. I'm happy to have just one



fare at this hour.”

We talked about my cab driving years up in the metro and my driving time in LaGrange. I found him a quite likeable sort.

Upon my exit, “Hey, Larry, first, here’s your fare and a tip. . .”

He interrupted, “A tip?”

“Oh, yeah, I know. LaGrange riders don’t tip. I’m from the city, though.”

With eyes wide, “Thanks.”

“You’re welcome, Bud. Anyway, here’s my return fare and another tip. I’m just getting my grandson some diapers and sending a wire. If you want to park out front, here, to snag a flag, I’ll be fine. If you get a fare, I’ll just call the cab company and ask for. . .” looking his calling card over, “Larry, Number Three?”

“That’s right. I’m Larry, Number Three.”

“Good deal.”

Larry became my steady cab driver from there on. I arrived home to find Melinda on the telephone.

“Oh, Jordan, hey, Babe?”

“Yeah, Melinda? Here’s his diapers. He awake?”  
as I turned his way.

*Smile, drool, sit up.*

“There’s Pap-Pah’s Dari-Dude,” I smiled out.

“Come sit with Pap-Pah.”

“Jordan, it’s my brother.”

“Which one?”

“John.”

“Oh? What’s up?”

“He wanted to talk to you.”

“Okay, just a minute. C’mon, Dari. Come sit with Pap-Pah. If you don’t sit with Pa-Pah, you’ll make Pap-Pah c-wry. You don’t want Pap-Pah to c-wry, do you?”

*Laugh, drool.*

Wiping drool with the back of my hand onto my pants, then planting a kiss on his cheek, I answered for him, “Of course, you don’t.”

With Dari on lap, “Okay, Melinda, I’ve got this phone,” I announced into my desk handset. She said good-bye, then disengaged.

“Yeah, John, what’s up?”

After his usual superficial praises to the Lord and his other superficial BS, he got to the point.

“Jordan, you still think you can find Shanty a home down there?”

“Shanty? A home?”

“Yeah. Can you find her a home, still?”

“Find her a home down here? She already has a home down here, right here, 113-A Wynnwood Drive. When can I get her?”

“Soon, I hope. Animal Control’s been looking for her. Neighbors are complaining about her roaming the neighborhood when we let her run. Her barking out back on the chain has neighbors complaining.”

*No kidding, Idiot. How’d that happen?*

Back to my gentlemanly composure, “Yeah, John, these things happen. I don’t know exactly what’s going on at my Alford house. Anyway, I’ll let Mike and Dennis know I had to leave town. If I can have her, I’ll have to be there during the rush hour. I’ll set the alarm so we can leave by five in the morning. You have a leash?”

“No, but there’s a rope and. . .”

“That’s all right, John. Don’t worry about it. Just make sure she’s safe in the garage. I’ll handle it from there.”

“Jordan, I really tried to. . .”

“John, don’t concern yourself over it. This happens, as they say. When you get home from work tomorrow, she’ll be gone. She’ll be safe down here. I knew we’d be together. She belongs with me.”

We disengaged the call. With a kiss to his head and tap on his chest, I informed my lap rider, “Dari, Shanty’s coming. This is going to be so cool, Bud. You’ll love her. I love you, Dari,” *kiss*.

“Melinda?”

“Yeah, Babe?”

“We’re going to Acworth in the morning. We’re picking up Shanty.”

“Shanty? Babe, we can’t have a dog. She’s an outside dog.”

“Not anymore.”

“Babe, really, that’s a long ride.”

“It’s been a long ride since Bear-Dog passed nearly a decade ago. I told Shanty we’d be together. Either we, or I, am getting her in the morning.”

Looking up to the ceiling, *Shanty, I told you. We’re to be together. Sit tight in that garage, Girl. Daddy’s coming.*

“Jordan, Babe, really, she’s an outside dog. Where’s she going to sleep?”

“She’ll sleep inside with us, of course; ideally, on the bed.”

“No, Jordan, that’s not right. What about those awful smells?”

“She’ll get used to me, same as you did.”

## 218 Hearts’ Foundations

“The last time I talked to my mother, she hung up on me.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. I called to complain about you. She told me if I had a problem with you, it was my fault.”

“A mother-in-law said that?”

“She said that you have done more for her grandchildren in our time than their father ever even thought about doing in their lifetimes.”

“Interesting.”

“She’s right.”

“I know.”

“She told me I should just leave her son-in-law alone, and hung up on me.”

“Well, kudos to her.”

“You really are very good to them, her, too. Like her prescriptions and when Brandon broke down in Peachtree City. You rode all the way up there, then paid a lot for his car to be repaired.”

“I remember. I did not feel happy over paying Interstate repair prices. By the way, that’s coming out of your car budget.”

She ignored that.

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Three*

That conversation about my mother-in-law sailed me back to my first brother-in-law in my suppressed past:

## 74 Berlin? May I borrow Your Wall?

*Even in this scorching desert  
Long before its short winter freeze,  
I shiver from a chilling unease.  
Without even a breeze,  
I still feel the freeze.*

*Whispering Verse*  
G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

“Ron,” I asked my newly acquired brother in-law, “Do you believe I love your sister?”

“Yes, I do. I’m happy she has you. If I thought you meant her harm, I’d kill you, myself.”

“Yeah, well, big, burly male that you are, you could do that easily. That’s not the issue. Your insight is.”

“What’s up?”

“Man to man, Ron, I think the world of your mother. In the time I’ve known Julie, I’ve always enjoyed Fran. Hell, we met together. I visited with Fran while Julie danced.”

“I already know where you’re going, George. You’re right. Our mother is overbearing. Probably more, now that you’re married.”

“Well, that’s not how I would have phrased it, but, well, yeah, I suspect so.”

“Don’t suspect. She is.”

“Hell, Ron, ah, I don’t know what to do.”

“Do like I did.”

“What’s that?”

“Move across the valley. George, I love my mother, but she will control every aspect of your life. The family accepts it. As for me, I get to see enough of my mother to love her, but, when she starts, it’s, ‘I love you, Mom. Wish we could talk, but, well, we have to cross the valley.’ I get the hell away from it.”

“Julie’s admitted that her mother is controlling. She told me it’s wrong that the family accepts it. Julie wants me to give in to it. I’m not.”

“Good luck. It’s a force greater than you, I think.”

“I think your mom will win.”

*Facial expression*, “I don’t know. I share your concern. I keep her away from my wife without my supervision.”

We shook hands in respectful, shared concern, manly fashion.

I considered, *a tall, cement wall would be nice.*

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

As I reentered the family social, I recalled my earlier talk with his sister, Julie, Mrs. Jordan:

“Julie, really, I fear your mom might not be acting in our best interest.”

I shifted my attention to my sweetheart’s belly.

“Hey, you, we have an ultra-sound, real soon.

We’ll confirm you’re a dainty, pure, daddy’s girl. Julie, I can hardly wait. This must be a girl.”

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Two*

Here is a classified ad some humorist actually placed in a Phoenix newspaper shortly after my divorce:

Like New! Full Volume Encyclopedia Set!  
No longer needed! Must go! Just married!  
Mother-in-Law already knows everything!

Well, with that, back to *Chapter 218*:

“Jordan, I do my best to mind my own business,” Dennis commented as he measured across the Alford driveway, “Hold that end of the tape, would you, Jordan, please?”

“Yeah, where do you want it?”

“The inside edge of that post.”

“Got it.”

“On the other hand, when we talk, I don’t want to lie to you.”

“There’s no need to, Dennis. I respect your views, even if I disagree. So far, I haven’t really disagreed with you about anything. What were you saying about Melinda?”

Before answering, he stepped back, eyeballed the driveway and pondered as he confirmed his measurements.

“I priced the gates, yesterday. They’re within reason, but really, Jordan, I could build one a whole lot cheaper. I think I’m going to. It’ll be quick.”

“That’s your call. You’re in charge here, Dennis.”

“Yeah, we’re going to have extra lumber. We don’t want to waste it. Anyway, yeah, about Melinda. . .”

“Yeah. . .”

Extending measuring tape up the windows, “Personally, I like her just fine. She’s always proper with me. I even like her. I understand your physical attraction, and she has a sense of humor unequalled. As your friend, I say, I don’t trust her intentions with you.”

“Me, either. What, exactly, is your concern?”

“You’re just sex and money to her. I know she stuck with you through the hard times. Really, though, you remained more stable, even then, than she would’ve on her own.”

“You’re not offending me, Dennis. I already know this. It feels good to know someone else sees it. Apparently, it’s not a groundless suspicion.”

“Has she been any different since you married?”

“Yeah, a day or two.”

“I didn’t even know you did it.”

“Well, I didn’t make a big production of it. It served more for the formality than anything else.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. I mean, I took her to Ruby Tuesday for dinner. Then, I presented her an engagement ring and a formal proposal. I thought I should offer her some dignity, and actually propose to her.”

“How’d that go?”

“Well, Melinda will be Melinda. She’s really not the issue. Jesus is. We should be married. Besides, Darius is formally my grandson. I really don’t want to lose that. He’s the only good thing she’s delivered.”

“You sure did make an about turn on that baby issue. . . Hey, Jordan, I really need to go to Home Depot. You have time to go?”

“Yeah, let’s get Shanty and check on the crew first.”

Stepping to the backyard, “Shanty?”

As she ran to us, “Dennis, that retractable up there has her not even knowing she’s on a lead. Look at that. She’s been sniffing, peeing, pooping. She hasn’t stopped. You really did well.”

*Pant, pant, wag, wag, sniff, lick face.*

“Shanty, Baby, Daddy’s got an errand to run.

Uncle Tim’s coming out to fix that store shed floor. He’s kind of a ‘scared-ey-cat.’ He’s afraid a bird, a squirrel or some other ferocious beast might attack him. Can I get you to stay with him? Protect him?”

*Lick, lick, wag, wag.*

“Thank you, Shanty. I love you, Girl.”

“Jordan, she really is a beautiful dog, and sweet.

Amazing they didn’t keep her,” as we walked to the front.

“I know. I knew the first time we met, we belonged together.”

Walking inside, “Mike? Tim? Clay? Charles? Can you break away a minute?”

Crew gathered. . .” By the way, if my wife shows up, ignore her, or cuss her out. Do not feel intimidated by her. You don’t work for her. You don’t even work for me. Rather, you work with me, and well. I appreciate it. I couldn’t get this done without your skills and energy. I need you more than you need me.”

Judging by nods of understanding, they appreciated knowing they need not take Melinda’s, well, let us call it ‘stuff.’ That’s a polite word. . .

“Dennis, you mind driving? I’d like a beer.”

“No, fine. Let’s go in your truck, though. I have equipment in mine.”

“Anyway, Jordan,” checking the rearview, “what I started to say is that you really took a turn on babies after Darius.”

“Not babies, just Darius.”

“Is he going to be with you permanently?”

“Ideally, yeah, but his mother’s in LaGrange now. I forget what you were up to at the time, but she showed up out of blue. I let her stay with us. That turned into the same nightmare as Monika. Finally, after 911 arrived, I offered to put her up at Town and Country. I’ve been paying her motel fee every Friday. If just her, I’d let her rot in the streets. It’s just that, well, much as I don’t like her, she’s still my grandson’s mother.”

“He’s with her then?”

“Yeah. She dumps him on Melinda a lot. That’s okay. I prefer to have him with us, anyway, rather than the trash with whom she commingles.”

“Isn’t that expensive?”

“Not really. Melinda’s paying for it. I make sure he has diapers, food, transportation to doctors; pretty much anything he needs.”

“How do you figure Melinda’s paying for it?”

“I had ten-thousand budgeted for buying her a used car. That dropped to nine-thousand after I bought Felton’s Nissan. She insisted she could drive a stick, and wanted a stick. So, his came along at a bargain. I bought it for her. Then she couldn’t drive it and fizzled out on the idea of learning. So I’m stuck with a car I don’t need. She claims she’d do anything for her kids. Now that her twins

live a few buildings over from us on Wynnwood, they've been very expensive. I explained to her that after their electric deposit I made, she needs to enter the workforce."

"Is she looking?"

"No. She figures I owe it to her. Hell, Dennis, in this short time, I've already made up rent shortages for them to keep their apartment. Not only did I cover their electric deposit, it's already been shut off again. I had to go downtown and pay the city to turn it back on. As for them, I'd let them rot. There is the other baby, though, Wee-Mien. I don't have a relationship with him, but he's still an innocent baby and my wife's grandson."

"Jordan, they're stroking you."

"No BS there. So far, I keep a mental note of what they cost. I've made it clear to Melinda that it comes out of her car budget, except her mother's prescriptions. I just figure that's within reason. The rest of her family handles all the other aspects of her medical condition, so I help with the prescriptions. Anyway, we're here. Let's load up."

We did our shopping.

On the return, I dialed, "Hey, Tim?"

"Hi, Jordan."

"Have you guys eaten lunch, yet?"

"Not yet."

"After I stop at the liquor store, I'm calling for pizza and wings. Make sure everyone knows. Okay?"

"Sure. There's only one problem."

"Oh, no, what's that?"

"I might not be here; Shanty, either."

"Huh?"

"I might have to steal her. She's a wonderful dog," he laughed.

"Don't even think of it or I'll, ah, I'll, oh, I'm not sure, but it'll be bad and make you c-wry," I laughed back.

"I don't want to c-wry, so I guess we'll be here. No, really, Jordan, she's a wonderful dog."

"Okay. See you in a few."

... "On another note, I'm glad you told them about Melinda."

"What about her?"

"When you're not there, she talks down to them. She hasn't me, yet. Anyway, hey, you ever see a movie, *Overboard*?

That delivered me a laugh.

"Yeah. I surely have. I'm not a big movie watcher, but I have my own copy. I can watch it repeatedly. Why do you ask?"

"That's how she treats them."

"Why am I not surprised? Hell, Dennis, all we did is graduate to middle class. I've seen her uppity-ness. It disgusts me."

"She talks to them like they're trash."

"Interesting, considering her background."

... I entered Golden Liquors to find Wayne, of course, reliably positioned behind the counter. With a smiling smirk, he greeted me.

"Well, I'll be. Just when I thought it safe to come to work without some dredge, low-life, ugly no-account coming in, you arrive."

"Hey, you, really, if I want to be insulted, I could go home to my wife," I laughed as we shook hands.

"How are you, Jordan?"

"Doing good. There're half a dozen stores I could've shopped, but no one insults me so well as you. You really make me feel so 'at home.'"

"Good. You're so easy to insult."

*Still laughing*, "Your wife still lets you live there?"

*Laughter returned*, "Not by choice. The assets are in my name."

"What do you need, Jordan?"

"I need some beer for the work crew, O'Doul's for Dennis, one of Mike's whatever and a couple packs of his cigarettes."

"Got it. How's the house coming along?"

"Good. I'm happy with the progress."

"When are you moving in?"

"I'm not. This is merely an investment. My wife's pressuring me about moving into it. I'm comfortable at the apartment, though. I hope to turn a profit that'll allow me to get two more, one to live in."

"Good luck. Good to see you again."

"You bet. . ."

## 219 Now, I know

*I'd lie to claim it never cried.*

*I'd lie to claim it never pained.*

*I'd lie to claim it's no regrets.*

*But oh so true how it's been blessed*

*By every throbbing, stabbing pain.*

*My Heart Can't Feel Its Blues*

G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

"Carol, hell, I don't know. Here, let me put the phone down a second. I'll be right back."

I returned.

"No, Carol. I'm sure Melinda has everything. I guess I'm looking in the wrong place. Anyway, hold on another second. He looks like, well, I don't know. Let me talk to him a minute."

"Jordan, don't panic. It's just a wet diaper. It'll be okay."

"Yeah, sure, a wet diaper, now. Give it a minute; I'll have potty bombs shooting to the walls!"

"I'll hold on."

"Dari, Bud, I know you're uncomfortable. Auntie Carol's going to get us through this. Your Gramma had no business leaving you helpless and defenseless in my care. Here, lay back on this towel on the edge of the bed, like Gramma does you. Oh, man, you're soaking."

Back on the phone.

"Carol? Okay, he's positioned like when Melinda changes him. I'm pulling the sticky sort of thingy. Okay, off with the diaper. Carol, he's all wet. Hell, I can't give

him a bath. I don't know how to do that. Hang on. Let me lose this thing. Now, what do I do? I can't put another on him like that. He'll get rashes, infections, hell, I don't know, but something bad."

"Jordan, she probably has some baby wipes."

"No, Carol, I didn't find anything. I'm going to wet a washcloth with warm water and wipe him down. Oh, man! It's down his thingy, balls, and butt crack! This is a disaster!"

"Jordan, it'll be okay. Oh, my goodness! What on earth is Art doing? I think he's blowing up the kitchen! I have to go, Jordan! You'll be fine, at least until Melinda gets back. You think you have diaper problems? I have a Husband Art problem!"

By the way, that ordeal turned out fine, later, just a little extra smoke from the kitchen as Art burnt a meal. They survived it.

"Okay, Dari, it's you and me against the world. What's that look? Why are you laughing at me? This isn't a simple equation as in rocket science, community psychology, or Einstein's  $E=MC^2$ . We're talking changing your diaper! This is serious business!"

I applied a dry cloth to dry where I had wiped. I fastened a fresh diaper in the fashion of the diaper I removed. That proved the best I could do."

"Dari, that's got to be better than the wet one I removed. I love you, Dari, really. I'm just ignorant and incompetent."

Melinda arrived.

"Hi, Babe. Everything okay?"

"Sure."

"I'm sorry I'm late. My battery died. I couldn't call you. Dari okay?"

"Sure, he's fine."

Smugly I boasted with a knuckle brush to my chest as if it had been no big deal, "While you were gone, he peed himself."

"Oh, no. I'll change him."

"No need. I got it."

"Huh?"

"Yeah. It's just a diaper. What could that involve?"

"You changed it?"

"Sure. Well, at first, I almost dialed 911, but I called Carol instead. Feel him. He's dry."

"Really?"

"Sure. Melinda, please, don't ever leave me alone like that again," I laughed.

I suspect she thought I merely teased about actually changing it. As for me, I really felt like someone quite accomplished.

With that past us, more Dari issues continued.

"Jordan, Babe, help me out, please."

"What?"

"Put this jumper on Dari while I finish dinner."

"Ah, okay, I suppose."

I offered him a kiss as I instructed, "Dari? Time to get dressed, Bud."

As Melinda cooked, whatever, I examined the jumper.

"Okay, get your left foot into this one. Very good.

Get your other into this one. I think I can do this, Pal.

One thing I love about you is that you don't cry and whine



like baby's do. Okay, get on your stomach so I can button this up."

He did not complain or cry. However, something did not feel quite right. He smiled a lot. It seemed odd to me that his feet appeared stretched down and sort of tight. Melinda eventually returned.

"You get him dressed?"

"Yeah. It looks kind of cute. He may be outgrowing his clothes, though. I think it could fit better. His toes should have more room, and the arms are kind of tight, too."

She assessed the scene.

*Laughing*, "Fit better? Jordan, he looks like he's in a straight jacket!"

"Huh?"

*Still laughing*, "Babe, his toes are pointing backwards because you dressed him backwards!"

"Huh?"

"You put the jumper on backwards!"

"No?"

"Yeah!"

"Oh. So, the buttons go on the front?"

"Yeah, Babe. They go on the front."

"Well, now I know."

Dari produced memories to never forget.

## 225 Moronic Ironic!

*While you're laughing at me, all the fools I can be,  
I can't hear you laughing at all,*

*'Cause I'm laughing louder! You see?*

*No one's louder Laughing At Idiot Me than me!*

*No, no one's louder Laughing At Idiot Me than me!*

*A yodel-dee-dee-yodel-day-hey, yedol-dodle-day-hee-  
hee!*

*Laughing At Idiot Me!*

G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

"Yes, exactly," I informed the attorney. "Depending on his age when I die, he might need an executor to manage a monthly payout to him on any liquid assets."

I listened to the attorney's response.

"That's right; it's not community property. I purchased it by way of inherited funds. Her name's not on the deed. I do want that provision, though."

"About your wife?"

"Right, he has to allow his grandmother to live there until death, if she wishes."

"So, all cash assets go to your grandson, Darius? Correct?"

"Correct."

"Anything to your wife I should know about?"

"She'll have a fine paid-for automobile, a home until she dies, and a monthly life insurance check."

"Okay, Mr. Jordan, I think I have everything."

"How soon can we finalize it? If I were to

experience an auto accident or take ill soon, I don't want that property to land in my wife's or her children's hands."

"Probably within the week, you'll have a draft to approve. Until then," *chuckle*, "take your vitamins and drive defensively?"

*Chuckle returned*, "Very well."

I left my office, dead bolted its door.

"Okay, Melinda, the paperwork is in the making. My Will should arrive within the week. Ideally, we'll move this property in timely fashion, but the Will is current. Dari is squared away if I die."

"This house is half mine."

"No, it isn't."

"Yes, it is, Jordan. Georgia's a Community Property State."

"That's between you and the courts after you kill me, or we divorce. Melinda, I'm not doing this to start an argument. I have you covered. Rest assured, your kids will not take ownership of this property, or manipulate you if you own it. It goes to Darius via an executor. What are you disturbed over? You'll have a vehicle, a home for life, and a monthly income. That's more than Fredrick provided alive and married."

"It should be mine."

"No, your kids and family will con you out of it."

"F--- you, Jordan!"

"I love you, too, 'Sweetheart'."

I plugged in a Haggard disc. I waited for a certain number to come up. Eventually, it did as we talked; Haggard's *My Home Is In The Street*. . .

"Interesting song, wouldn't you say, Melinda?"

Clueless as to where I was going with that, "Great, Babe."

"Anyway, this Alford house may be a mute issue."

"Why?"

"Let me tell you in a minute. I'd like to hear the end of this."

I let the song finish.

"Sad, if you ask me, Melinda, what some people would give to have what God so graciously blessed us with. We have just the reverse. They had a home amongst themselves though in the street. They just needed a house. We have plenty of house. If only we had a home to put in it."

It did not register. She had no comment.

"So, what's a mute issue?"

"I have another call to make. My closing attorney advised I would receive the deed within four to six weeks. It's been nine. I'm worried."

"You worry too much. It'll be here."

"Let's see."

I reached my closing attorney.

"Mr. Jordan, this is odd, indeed. In all my years of experience, I've never seen this happen. We'll get it straightened out."

She performed her legwork. I performed mine. Weeks continued to pass, turning into months. I spoke with the seller's closing attorney, then the deed office. Neither were to blame. One insisted it had been mailed on a certain date. The other insisted it remained not received. My deed remained in limbo. After numerous go-nowhere attempts to secure my deed over a months-

long period, I gave up. Laying my head onto my arms on my desk, I felt I could cry; or, grow violently angry. As my head lay in my arms, I chuckled.

*This is amazing, even laughable. Nonconformist, nontraditional, non-establishment me, finally trusts real estate, lawyers, and government with my life's asset, only to experience a "fluke." I trusted establishment; I'm screwed. How sadly moronic ironic!*

I chuckled deeper at the absurdity. Then, I laughed. My options remained limited; laugh, cry, or get pissed. I laughed long and hard at my stupidity to trust real estate, lawyers, and government. With my head returned to my folded arms, I laughed more. That is, of course, until I cried.

*Like hard drink, Laughter masks hunger well.  
Drink and Laughter serve healthy hearts well.  
Drink and Laughter lead hungry hearts to Hell.*

*Scripture As I Hear It*

Scriptural Reference: Proverbs 14: 13

The governmental snafu eventually worked out but long after turning my life into misery with its aftermath. It ruined me for years.

The circumstance did serve one benefit. Melinda, being the superficial, materialistic person she remained, packed herself a satchel one Memorial Day weekend to stay with family, "just for the weekend."

Praise God!

I have seen her but once since then. That proved plenty.

Her satchel of belongings remained all she would

take away from the marriage; no half of house, no car, no furniture, no this, no that, no. . .no. . .no. . .anything.

Her extended weekend proved itself a lifetime, leaving me singing Roy Clark's, *Thank God and Greyhound!* Again, Praise be to Jesus! May that marriage rest in peace! She's gone!

*Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross? Volume Three*

However, Dari, too. . .

## Final Analysis

*Know Jesus, Know Peace.  
No Jesus, No Peace.*

Bumper Sticker

At the time of the Julie-Baby saga, I had established myself as philosophically agnostic (i.e., mankind lacks enough knowledge to know if a God exists or not); and practicing atheist (i.e., living life on the premise no God exists, living worldly). I describe Julie of that day as philosophically deistic (i.e., some spiritual deity exists somehow in some manner) and also living worldly. We did not have Jesus or our Heavenly Father's Word as our basis in our individual lives and interactions with others. We faced the failures that inevitably follow.

At the time of the Melinda-Dari saga, I had years long established myself as Christian Fundamentalist pursuing a Personal Walk with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I describe Melinda as a cultural Christian. She attended church on family occasions and holidays, prayed when in trouble. She tolerated my feeble attempt at my Personal Walk. However, whenever I attempted applying Biblical principles into our home and relationship, I faced her challenge that I had to wake up to the 2000's. "The Bible is so old," while she lived in her Oprah, Geraldo, Lifetime Channel, Roseanne, Stand-Up Comedy world. So, How did we wind up together? Answer: Read for yourself in your own copy of the *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* trilogy.

Suffice it to say in this succinct account that neither saga had Jesus as The Foundation.

As one historical quotation goes:

*The only thing wrong with Christianity is that nobody's tried it yet.*

H. L. Mencken

Did I miss Melinda? No.

Do I ever? No.

However. . .

## *Homeless House*

*As I step off of my homeless street  
As so many times before,  
I key my homeless key  
Into my homeless house's door.  
I don't hear my baby crying now  
Or heavenly playing on the floor  
After daring my step into  
My Homeless House beyond that door.*

*As I step into my homeless hall  
As so many times before,  
I step my homeless step  
Across my homeless house's floor.  
I don't see my baby smiling now  
For seeing me standing at the door  
After daring my step into  
My Homeless House beyond that door.*

*As I step back on my homeless street  
As so many times before,  
I glance my homeless glance  
At my homeless house's door.  
I don't feel my welcoming now,  
Asking me to stay as before,  
After daring my step into  
My Homeless House beyond that door.*

*I prefer to step my homeless streets,  
As so many times before,  
Than step into and sleep inside  
My Homeless House beyond that door.*

G. Zeineldé Jordan, Se.

*He got “saved,” loved a lot, got hurt but kept getting back up, growing in Christ. He is an exemplary friend, an inspiration to many. He is a bright soul, a favorite of God. He will live eternally redeemed.*

Mrs. Lee Murray  
West Cobb Church, Powder Springs, Georgia

### About the Author

G. Zeineldé Jordan (1959) is self-educated (Se.) beyond high school.

He is non-denominational Christian Pentecostal.

His full conversion story is available in his autobiography:

***Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?***

***(An Atheist’s Libertarian Trek to Christ).***

***Volume I (f.k.a. George Medeiros)***

***Volume II (The Resurrections)***

***Volume III (Christian Libertarian)***

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Printed Book-Bound Edition is undergoing 2015 revisions.

His conversion documents and debates files:

[www.jordanconvert.faithweb.com](http://www.jordanconvert.faithweb.com).

He resides in quaint LaGrange, Georgia, with his treasured canine, Shanty, and her feline little brother, Lil-Bro.

If you enjoyed *Homeless House*, you’ll enjoy *Lips or Hands?*, another *Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?* excerpts compilation.

Meet Marjorie, the nursing home resident who captured Jordan’s heart for the elderly. Reprint rights granted if proceeds go to nursing home charities.

Contact: [jordanconvertbooks@gmail.com](mailto:jordanconvertbooks@gmail.com), for reprint rights.

### Amazon.com Reader Review: Rating 5.0/5.0

*Unique and Thought-Provoking:*

*To read Jordan’s story from beginning to end takes you on an incredible journey. There is no emotion you will not feel, from sorrow over the fate of a small boy, to pride in the man he became. Along the way, your beliefs will be challenged, and you will want to know WHY you believe as you do, whether you are a Christ follower or an atheist, or somewhere in-between. Written in an engaging style, Jordan’s honesty is refreshing. A must-read.*

### Barnesandnoble.com: Volume I Five Stars: Highly Recommend

*Very Vivid. . . This writer had poured out his life experiences in these books, so much emotion, you will feel joy and tears and pain and WOW just about everything as you go on this journey with George [“Jordan”] as he finds his way to Christ through a sometimes turbulent life. Thank you so much for sharing your story with the world. I can’t wait to keep reading. . .*

### **Infibeam.com: A Must Read**

*Very Vivid, can't wait to continue reading Mr. Jordan journey...the writer pours out his life experiences in these books...His journey to Jesus is quite the story.*

**Amazon.com: 5.0 out of 5 Stars**, March 1, 2013:

*This review is from: Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?: (An Atheist’s Libertarian Trek to Christ) Volume I (Paperback) Holding his hand through his journey is how I feel.*

*As I am approaching page 631 of volume II, I can hardly wait for the next book so I can continue on this journey. This is a must read...it is lengthy but well worth the patience to take this life journey with this man.*

## Amazon.com

*As I complete the first volume I can hardly wait for volume two to be delivered, this is a story of a mans life that is so raw and true, and honest, you feel as if you know him and await the next the page with such anticipation...Encourage anyone Christian or not to read this incredible journey...Praise God he survived so far, do not know what the next pages will hold but I am holding my breath for the rest of the story. ...waiting with total anticipation for my order to arrive...can not wait to continue the journey with George, feel like he is telling the story to just me over a cup of coffee, it is amazing his writing style is so personal.*

## Booktopia.com: **FOUR STARS, What A Ride**

By: readingisoothing from Atlanta, Georgia

About Me: Everyday Reader

Pros:

Deserves Multiple Readings, Felt Like A Friend,

Inspirational

Cons:

Harsh Language But Ok

Best Uses: Gift, Inspirational, Travel Reading

Comments about Shiny Hats or Rugged Cross?:

*. . .opened his life in a way you feel like you know him...a wild ride to where he is today...left no stone un-turned just put himself out there in the buff so to speak...*

Bottom Line: Yes, I would recommend this to a friend.

## Other Jordan Titles

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(A Christian's Interaction with a Satanist)

You can be saved, too:

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Romans 10:9,10