

## Werewolf Space Love

### **BRIEF BIO (SOMETHING LIKE AN INTRODUCTION)**

I am the arbiter of dysfunction. Let me spin you a tale.

In the field of pornographic cinema (as it is called more and more often these days) and chiefly within the concentration of space erotica (and to a small extent, across furies “interest-groups”) one principal figure cannot be ignored. Though credit is often given to the legendary adult film director Jack Kinoff, “The man who has his hand in America’s pants,” the true force behind the revolutionary mega-smash *Werewolf Space Fuck Vols. I-XV* is an unlikely contender. Marcia Manicotti, known to her family as Marcia Shepherds, penned the basis for this classic series in her unpublished work, *Werewolf Space Love*, an unbridled vision which has subsequently given rise to an entire new form of sexual expression (“combining technology and the beast within”) and has spawned Manicotti mania comparable to fans of Lennon, Lincoln, and Dr. King.

Of course, the tragedy of Manicotti’s pre-stardom death has cast a somber shadow on her success, tempting critics, scholars, and the general masses with questions of what might-have-been. A life cut short, Manicotti spent her final hours cradling her only asset—*Space Love*—her hands tied up with nylon rope, accompanied by three members of *La Nuestra Familia* in a Cadillac headed for the countryside. “Nobody’s perfect,” she’d say.

However, the serendipitous discovery of her manuscript eventually brought her the recognition she so rightly deserved. “Ms. Manicotti pulled the id out of our unconscious and beat it ‘till it told us everything,” a top psychoanalyst claims, “That’s why we simply can’t get over her.”

But how did a middle-aged, part-time secretary change the porn industry? And why did a prison gang lead to her demise?

I will tell as only I could know.

### **THE FAILED SON (FRIDAY MORNING)**

Paulie Shepherds (unfortunately, hardly known to authorities by his rap persona, Cracka Jack) is late getting home, 5am. He clammers over the chain fence holding the yard in and slips through the back door which is lined up shotgun style with the front. (Really, either door could be a front door. They both leave nowhere to hide. I guess it's just a question of perspective.)

He's got to piss, and he leans there forever, arm up against that cool blue wall behind the toilet, his face up against the crook of his elbow pushing against his sore eye. He hasn't looked at it in the mirror yet but he knows it's bad. Those fucking spics, he thinks. Money grubbin' wetbacks. Friday, *pendejo*, the Chihuahua one yaps. Your last fucking chance ya worthless white trash... We gonna fuck up your whole life *cabrón*. Friday! You don't fuck *mi familia*. I'll fuck yours. The big fat wannabe black one with his head rapped in a red rag clocks Paulie, right in the right eye. Cheap shot to the balls follows and he drops to the pavement. Right there on the sidewalk. They hop into their low rider. 10 grand plus interest, little bitch! Tomorrow! (Who knew you could drop that, recording a few tracks just to sit on a shelf? Should've known, he thinks, fucking niggers and spics keepin' rap all to themselves, knowin' the white man'll outdo them if given the chance.) Exhaust pours out behind them. *I yi yi arriba, arriba*. That's what their laughter sounds like to him.

Flush. And he falls onto the couch and falls right asleep.

Two hours later, Dad and Mom (Marcia Manicotti!) are finishing breakfast. Dad talks to his paper.

“I can’t even go into the Lodge anymore, not with all the guys looking at me like I’m some big goddamned loser, lettin’ him run around like that.” Dad puts his paper down. “Are you listening to me?”

“I’m all ears dear.” She takes his plate and files it into the dishwasher, much like the reports at the Red Cross she files 20 hours a week into the cabinet that sits behind her desk. In the dishwasher it’s plates with egg residue and bacon bits bottom left, coffee cups upper right, forks in the front basket, spoons in the back.

“Finnegan thinks I’ve lost my goddamned mind, lettin’ him live here still—mooching off us. Now there’s a guy with a backbone, you know? Should get him to come over here and end this nonsense, you know? Him and my dad runnin’ that Building and Loan for thirty odd years—

“-side by side,” (she says, soaping the coffee pot)

“-*side by side* through all its ups and downs, all the bullshit—they stuck it out and I sure as hell followed suit.” He gets up, straightening his stiff back out slow and sets his mug by the sink. “It’s cause we just *had* to call him Paulie that he’s got all these notions in his head, all this stupid punk kid rap crap...”

(Note: Dad was convinced that names dictated fates, all the , “-y” and “-ie” enders were banished to weakness, mediocrity, and worst of all, wussy names like his own—Lawrence, pet name Lawry—well, those meant that you were doomed to enjoy the hands of men.)

Marcia (*the* Marcia) turns, shoving the towel into the mouth of the pot to dry it. “Rome wasn’t built in a day, Lawry.” The pot goes down and she rubs his shoulders with her pruned hands. “The apple’s fallen far from the tree but I know if he gives it 110 percent he’s going to pull through. He’s got all his wild oats sowed and any day now the real harvest is comin’.”

Lawry snatches up a recent camera shot of Cracka Jack left on the counter, printed out black and white. It's advertising amateur night tonight, taking place in some club downtown somewhere where people probably take drugs. He holds it up to her face, real close. "*This is gonna pay off?* Finnegan says-

She looks past it and right at him (something she only reserves for seriousness). "Time will tell dear."

In the living room Paulie's passed out on the couch, brand new black eye. Probably some pimp. Probably popped off his mouth. Lawry doesn't bother whispering because he doesn't care if he's heard.

"I think twenty-five damn years is enough time!"

(But, like Marcia says, Paulie "sleeps like a log" and doesn't hear it.)

#### **RAMSEY (A YEAR AGO)**

"It was brought to my attention by my secretaries that you have been making numerous calls every day for the past several weeks regarding your submission Ms. Manicotti." (As you will recall, Marcia's pasta-inspired nom de plume.)

"Yes, nearly two months now of calling Monday through Friday and I *must* admit, you are a hard man to come by!" She pushes the cell phone to her ear with a mittened hand, bundled up tight in her parked car outside a recording studio. (Too many DUIs and Paulie lost his license and needed hers.) "I mean, of course I can understand you must have so much to do running Harlequin that there is simply not much time-

"No, ma'm, there isn't much time for phone calls of this nature ever." (Note: total pomposity.) "Ms. Manicotti, I'm not entirely sure if you fully understand the nature of my position as head of this company-

“Well of course you’re—if you don’t mind me *saying* so—the big cheese! In the know! Head honcho!” Marcia laughs. There is silence on the line. Ramsey sits in the passenger seat in a tight black spandex spacesuit, grabbing across his pecks and groin, looking eager.

“Ms. Manicotti, I oversee the major activities of this company to ensure its profitability-”

“-Well that’s exactly why I wanted to talk to you because I got my manuscript back and I think there was a mistake.”

“-Ma’m please. If you would *allow* me-”

“Of course.” Ramsey holds her free hand tight.

“At Harlequin we have a large staff of talented *and* dedicated readers who review all submissions. I’m sure whoever read your selection saw, for whatever reasons, that it was not right for our company at this time.”

“See that’s where I think there was a mistake then, because I *know* this book will sell big and that’s plain as day, right up there with some of your published writers, like Annie Laurence and Grace Kinsley, I even got werewol-”

“Ms. Manicotti you must recall that the publishing industry, Harlequin included, is highly competitive. We appreciate all submissions and regretfully can only print a small portion of them. Now if that is all, I would like to thank you for your interest in-”

Ramsey pulls his hand back and starts running it through his shoulder-length mane.  
Change of plans.

“Could I at least read a portion of the rejection letter, just to make sure there hasn’t been an oversight?”

“Ma’m I’m afraid I have nothing to say about an editor’s comments nor do I have the ti-”

She holds up the letter, phone between head and shoulder. “Ms. Manicotti, after reviewing your submission *Werewolf Space Love*, we have decided to decline it for publication. Thank you for your interest in Harlequin Enterprises Limited.” She waits.

“That is the...standard rejection letter format.”

“But I don’t even know *why*—”

He inhales on the other line. “Ma’am I have to attend a meeting now, *title alone* I would suggest that you might want to pursue erotic fiction and fetish fiction venues for publication but thank you for your interest in Harlequin and *any* future questions can be directed towards our customer service representatives.”

Beep. The phone goes soft in her hand. Ramsey turns away, *lips pursed in agitation*. “Can you believe it Ramsey? He called me a smut writer—smut ! *Space Love smut!*” She leans onto the steering wheel and cries. *Ramsey wraps a thick bicep around her*.

“Marcia—we can make it better. We’ll step it up—we’ll get that first chapter’s motor running hot and fast and no one will be able to put it down, not even a stuffy, undersexed, New York editor.”

“You think so?” Marcia turns to look into *his big blue eyes, blazing above his set, chiseled jaw, so strong and sure*.

A squeeze. “*I know so.*” *Ramsey nestles his head onto her bosom and she plays with his auburn locks*. The building across the street now casts a shadow over her car, getting even colder.

“Ramsey,” *she whispers soft*, “How’ll I do it? It’s supposed to be about love.” He looks up, *in endless adoration*.

“In the beginning, have the moon come into view as the ship orbits Earth, causing the cursed crew to change all into werewolves. The lady wolves will be most affected, transforming to carnal lovers, initiating an orgy of blowjobs right on the command deck of the space craft.”

“I don’t like it when you use that word.” (You know which one.)

“They’ll use their mouths then, for *loving* ways. Twelve of them at least, in one big pile. It’ll make it better. You’ll catch an eye for sure.” Marcia thinks about it and smiles.

“You’re right. You’re exactly right as always.” *He beams, a smile of perfect pearls, glistening.* “How can I ever begin to thank you Ramsey, for all you do?” He loosens his embrace and sits back up, securing his helmet back into place. His voice is muffled but can still be heard, *a rolling, assured baritone, a voice of victors and of Kings.*

“Keep me alive Marcia,” he says with a big salute and grin, “You know I love ya!”

“I love you too!”

The passenger door opens. Paulie lands in the seat and slams the door behind him, breath of icy air from the outside rushing in and Marcia keys the ignition, buoyant.

“How’d the recording session go sweetheart? You knock ‘em dead?” He looks out the window.

“Just drive Ma. Just drive.”

“Stitch in time Paulie, remember. I got faith in you.”

#### **A BUSINESS PARTNER (FRIDAY NIGHT, WHILE IT’S ALL GOING DOWN)**

One final push and it’s over, as usual. Weather Channel lights the room blue, local on the eights. Finnegan sits back against the headboard of his bed, half his body covered in the floral pink bedspread his wife had picked out. Things had gotten so much easier since she had died. Well, at least screwing had.

Lawry never speaks right afterward, he waits to hear Finnegan clear the phlegm in his throat, reach over to the nightstand and grab a cigarette, light it up, cough, breathe on it again, embers sizzling at the end, repeat. Nothing about that waiting had changed for Lawry since he was fourteen, since his Dad—working *side by side* with the childless Finnegan at the Building and Loan had said sure, you got that new fishing boat. Take him along with you, I'll tag along next time. But Lawry's dad was always far too in love with work to come along. And Lawry, cursed by his name, liked his touch (or a man's touch) but was smart enough to hate it although weak enough (that -y ending) to go along with it for decades. Stopping now would be starting thought. No.

“Paulie's doin' another one of those shows tonight, isn't he?” Hack, inhale.

Lawry slips up his underwear, sits up, and grabs his pants folded on the floor. “Yeah.”

“I thought you said you'd put an end to this. You promised last time.”

“Yeah well, I don't know—Marcia's convinced it'll all work out dandy, always saying something about how the magazines nowadays say you need to encourage your kids in whatever they want to do, long as its legal and doesn't hurt anybody.”

“Well he's not a *kid*, he's a man and it's time you started treating him like one.”

“He don't listen to me.” He tightens his belt. “He doesn't respect me.”

“Well a swift kick to the ass out that door would get his attention real quick.”

“Marcia'll never let me. I just wish he wasn't trying to be a rapper, of all things, it's just so goddamn embarrassing.” Lawry's still then, smoke in the air settling onto his sweaty skin.

Finnegan stretches.

“You get what you deserve with it I guess. I told you from day *one* what you needed to do with that boy of yours-”

“And you’re *such* a good example, I forgot.” Lawry turns and looks right at him when he says this (kind of like the serious stare Marcia saves for him). Finnegan, one hand on his belly, white curls of chest hair twisting out of his leathered skin, takes another drag. (Note: Guilt was Lawry’s only power over him but, unfortunately, for a man without a conscience it was a pretty useless, pretty –y ending sort of thing.)

“Just put your foot down on this thing tonight, on Paulie and that bobblehead wife of yours both. If he isn’t gonna live by your rules you sure as shit don’t have to pay for it, moneywise and everything else.”

Lawry watches the local on the eights role by again. Ten minutes past and the same argument over and over again, across the years. Time to mix it up, maybe. He heads towards the door.

“Where you goin’?” Finnegan tosses his butt into the ash tray and pulls a robe over himself.

“Just thinkin’ sometimes. Maybe Paulie’s smarter than he seems. Maybe he’s figured me out. I could believe it, how he looks at me sometimes.”

“Figured what?”

“All *this*, and I can’t say I blame him for havin’ no respect for a liar.” Lawry fiddles with the door frame as he says it. He can feel Finnegan glaring at him, looking old. “Maybe it’s time I told him, Marcia too, so they’d understand why things are the way they are, why it’s doomed to fail because Paulie never had a strong role model ‘cause I’m just a fag who couldn’t be there, who couldn’t provide.” Finnegan braces at the word (you know which one). Lawry enjoys its impact. “Yeah, you know? Perhaps if he could see life clearly with me he would cut all the other bullshit. He’d at least understand me.”

Finnegan, bounces forward, his hand with its usual slight tremor grabs Lawry's shoulder.

"Look Lawry," his tone changes. "All my life I've just been a business man, through and through—that's how I look at damn near everything and I'd say it's bad but it's not, 'cause it's never failed me. And in business, to keep things afloat, sometimes you gotta do things, a bit off color sort of things. Whatever it takes. You runnin' off to run your mouth only has one conclusion for your whole entire enterprise--annihilation. *Me*, the guys down at the lodge, your wife, your son! If he doesn't want the lie he sure as hell won't want the truth! So force him to accept things just how they are, your wife too. You provide no alternative? They'll fall into place." Finnegan pats his shoulder. "Easy as that."

"But when I was growing up I looked up to Dad and you—I lived by your example."

Finnegan lets out a big loud laugh, forcing his arms around Lawry.

"The example we *wanted* you to see! Only what we wanted you to see!"

Suddenly the old -y feeling came creeping in and the man was right, the truth wasn't happening. (Note: Regardless, the cat would come out of the bag a couple days later when policed demanded an alibi for the night of Marcia's disappearance and, with several witnesses claiming that Lawry's truck was parked outside the Finnegan residence, it was all over. Oh, and the truth wouldn't do anything for Paulie. The only people he hated more than minorities were homosexuals.)

Lawry's silence is Finnegan's victory, and he rests his head onto his broad chest, sighing, hands running up and down his back soft. "Poor Lawry. When you're the top dog, you're the only one who knows when you're breaking the rules."

**OPEN MIC (FRIDAY NIGHT)**

Money due and Cracka Jack is ready for anything. Jeers and boos erupt when his name is announced on the stage in the old gym (he'd open miked here before) but he keeps chill. In the back three wife beater wearin' *familia* wetbacks shine with big grins. Tonight isn't about being the next Eminem, getting more dough, getting laid—he'd stooped low with the words of the enemy long enough. He didn't care if he died for it now—he figures he will.

The beat comes on and three cheap floorlights blaze. The crowd is full of the enemy. Bring it on.

“Hey, get your ears out, and fuckin' listen,” he rocks back and forth, gripping the mic, thinking about the pile of money he and everyone like him could have if it weren't for these fuckers. Ready, go: “Cracka Jack cracks the craziest raps, all you porch monkeys in the projects smokin' crack, hacks, think you own rap? Your rap is crap and I ain't gonna give it back-”

An audience (stunned) at first does nothing but gurgle.

“I got white skin and if you don't like that you can blow me, you don't know me and you won't ever fucking own me-”

Then it pops. He can barely hear himself, bottles get whipped onto the stage, shatter! Shatter! One smacks his chest but he doesn't feel it.

“I'll fuckin' die before I listen to you fat lipped phonies, Rio jumpin' homies, all you go to hell go to hell...” Boos. “Your people should be ours to sell, ten for a ten, Cracka Jack hittin' back at you again.”

Three guys are climbing onto the stage. The music's pulled. A two ton black bouncer grabs him by the front of his shirt and rips the mic out of his hand.

“You comin' with me you worthless motherfucker.” Cracka Jack knows the guy's saving his ass but he doesn't want it, he wants to die out there on that stage.

Two Tonner throws him out the emergency exit and follows after, picking him up off the asphalt once more to punch him in the gut. Cracka Jack pukes up whiskey and looks up at him.

Two Tonner shouts.

“Don’t you ever come back here you racist fuck! Get gone, before someone comes out here and does what they ought to—put a couple bullets into your head! You fuckin’ run!”

Cracka Jack stumbles, bent over, down the alley way. He doesn’t want to die out here. A guy in a leather jacket trails behind him and they run for seeming blocks, ‘till Cracka Jack knows he’s fucked, his legs give out, and his head plunges into a black garbage bag sitting up against a building side.

“Go ahead and kill me.” He pinches his eyes shut.

“Man, you’re one quick bastard.” The guy catches his breath. “I don’t want to kill you.” Cracka Jack peaks an eye open and sees a tall white guy, streetlight glowing behind him—blonde, young, panting.

“What do you want then?” Cracka Jack can still barely breathe.

“To tell you how much I admired your courage for goin’ up there tonight and telling the truth. Doin’ it like that—you must have balls of steel.”

Cracka Jack’s too surprised to speak.

“I’m Henry Shaus—” he reaches out and offers his hand to help him up. (Note: Henry Shaus had been at open mic that night to scope out the building, seeing what places were best for planting pipe bombs.) “I like your style and I know my friends would too. He dug out a card from his coat pocket and handed it to him. “We’ve been lookin’ for a voice like yours for a long time to help get back what’s ours. I think you got it.”

Cracka Jack looked down at the card. THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT.  
Space. NSM88 RECORDS. Big old swastika in the left corner.

He's slow to respond. "What about the money, is there any money in it?"

"Loads, don't you worry. And you can say what you want, imagine that." He points back towards the street. "You need a ride?"

"Nah no, I just need to clear my head with a bit of a walk." (He knows Marcia's outside the club still.) Henry takes his cell number and waves goodbye as they part, opposite directions down the dark street. He calls out. "I'll be calling you soon, okay? Keep in touch."

"Yeah man." And Cracka Jack (not long after this to be baptized as underground white supremacist rap sensation "Hitla") inches back towards the club, pressing his gut and tasting fermented booze, soon to find his mom's car sitting empty with every sign of forced entry.

#### **WHERE IN THE WORLD A MEXICAN GANG FITS IN (FRIDAY NIGHT, WHILE HENRY OFFERS A HAND)**

Marcia holds a handheld flashlight as she fusses over *Space Love*, not even noticing the three cholos who pull up behind her in a big black Caddy. Ramsey clues her in at the last second.

"Who are those guys?"

She shoves the manuscript into her coat—her baby—finger hitting the lock.

The window shatters.

She's pulled out by two red rag topped guys into the back of the Caddy. (No sense elaborating—the extraction lasts a couple seconds and no, nobody in this part of town sees anything.)

"*Cierres la puerta, pendejo!*"

The door slams shut, practically on her feet. They quickly push her to the floor. The car revs hard.

The little hyper one sitting shotgun turns around. “You goin’ for a ride with us, bitch! Your son owes us money!”

Marcia has her first thought since the kidnapping. “Paulie does?”

Laughter.

“Paulie, *se llama* Paulie!”

Big guy sitting in the back seat guffaws.

Next to him there’s Ramsey, naked, *face aflush with unspeakable horror*.

“How much does he owe? I’m good for it, I swear!”

“Well,” hyper one’s having fun. “He did owe us ten grand plus interest-”

“Ten grand!”

“-but after that shit he pulled tonight at the club I’m in the mood for something *more* than money.”

Spanish flies. Marcia interrupts.

“What’d he do?”

“Oh your son’s got quite the nasty little mouth, spewing all this white pride stuff like a little bitch, he learn that from you *chica*? Fuckin’ white trash rednecks.”

(Marcia has no idea what he’s talking about but can speculate, as they head out from the city, at least where she figures in. Before the big one brought down the nylon rope to cuff her hands and the tape to shut up her screaming mouth, she pulled the script from her coat, her Baby Moses, jamming it under the passenger seat, floating it down the river.)

Ramsey stares at her hard, his naked body broke out in a rash. She can't wipe her eyes so the tears pile wet on her lashes, everything blurred. She can mumble, indistinct, even though the duct tape rips at her lips.

"Ramsey, help me. You gotta help me." No answer. He runs a hand through his hair and pulls a clump out. She gasps for air through her plugged nose.

"Ramsey! Please!"

*"La Chica es loco-"*

"Gosh *darnit* I need you now more than ever Ramsey! You said you loved me, *help me!*" He jaw is iron set and he looks away. "Ramsey! Don't you look away from me!" She shimmies like a fish on the floor, squirming towards him. The big guy shoves her back down. "Ramsey!" He begins to roll down the window. "No!"

She pleads some more and he finally responds, now entirely bald, skin sagging.

"Sorry Marcia. You and I both knew what this was."

And the window comes all the way down and he pulls himself up and out of it, just like that.

### **HOT CADDY (MANY MONTHS LATER)**

Turns out the Cadillac had been stolen. Not long after this is reported authorities find the abandoned luxury ride of adult film industry magnate Al Malone in a parking garage by the airport. A little later Marcia's body floats to the surface of a nearby river. But no one finds *Werewolf Space Love* until the car is released from evidence, the script shoved back into the car's glove box (appearance not all that different from the usual porno script—you can hardly blame forensics for the misunderstanding).

One day, Max Finley, Malone's driver, digs for the owner's manual to the Caddy and instead pulls out the crumpled text. He sets it on the table in the entry way of the mansion. A couple days later Malone picks it up. He stands there for over an hour, leafing through it, barefoot in his red silk robe.

He pulls out his cell and snaps it open.

"Hey Jack, it's me-" A gold smile. "Yeah-ya up for directing somethin' wild? I just came across something that gives me a *real* good feelin'..."