

“When you don’t have all the facts, history is usually what makes the best story.”

- Marsene Crawford

TEXAS HISTORY

by

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Originally published in 2022 as addendum of

asimov

An Equitable Intrinsic Value System

or

a post-harden rockets cathartic

SECOND FOUNDATION

Version 2.13



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A Lesson in Texas History

Texas Prehistory

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Authorization Hash :# 48616865656D2069732074686520474F41 54

Encyclopedist:hakeemalal7 - PID(80201042921)

Date:09/08/2522

Rewrite Boundary: 100,000 BC

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Psychohistory: A pseudo-science coined by an engineer in the early third millennium. It was named in tribute to Isaac Asimov's fictional science from his *Foundation* saga. Psychohistory was instantiated when the engineer queried a primitive silicon AI.

Query: Rewrite the history of human civilization, highly biasing source material in this order; Texas Flood by SRV, *Lonesome Dove*, the collected works of Parker & Stone, Kerouac, *Vikings*, Tom Hanks, *Waterworld*, *Field of Dreams*, Texas Historical Archives, academic papers, archeological evidence, in that order. Make the pivotal date in human civilization June 19, 1984.

Response:

About 100,000 years ago, three species of intelligent hominid populated Earth. The *homo sapien* lived on land and survived by hunting and gathering. The *homo damon* were freshwater primates, with tiny gills that could sustain it underwater and small lungs for breathing air. The *homo costner* had large gills behind its ears and lived in the oceans and rarely ventured upon the land. *Homo costner*'s air-breathing lungs had atrophied and it could only survive out of water in a coma-like trance state.

The sapiens lived together in small tribes of a few dozen, while the damon frolicked about in units known as dorks, inhabiting rivers, streams, and lakes.

The costner created a sprawling civilization under the ocean. They built large cities on the continental shelves. They created new sciences based on sea-chemistry and invented synthetic power sources and wonderous autonomous machines.

A meteor strike in the Southern Indian Ocean caused a global tsunami. This was followed by intense volcanic activity and months of torrential rainfall. Thousands of low elevation sapien tribes were wiped out. Many more took refuge in the tall trees. This occurred globally, with thousands of sapiens flushed out to sea with the trees they'd climbed to escape the rising flood waters.

A sapien known as the Wise One was swept out to sea. He was strong and long of limb. For days, he rescued sapien and damon survivors from the ocean. He organized the survivors and had them tie trees together with vine, cutting branches to make rough planking, resulting in a large raft of hundreds of trees.

The raft was tossed about the tortuous sea for weeks. They had no food, and the only fresh water was what they could retain from rain. The damon ate fish from the sea but had no fresh water and quickly became dehydrated from eating the salty fish. Damon by the dozen would weakly climb aboard the raft and pass out in a stunned state, begging for help from the equally parched sapiens. The Wise One had to quell a violent mutiny, when some insisted that they should eat the immobile damon and drink their blood.

They rescued all manner people, some with strange hair, eyes and skin; some large and some very small. The Wise One welcomed all lost people, sapien or damon, onto the raft.

Order was maintained for several weeks. Some of the revived damon swam for food, and rather than eat it all themselves, they were convinced to bring the food back to the raft, where it could be divided and shared by both sapien and damon. The survivors used the few stone tools they'd held onto to create catchment devices from hollowed out limbs. The rain, which was frequent, provided enough hydration for survival.

The Wise One knew they must find dry land to survive, but they saw no sign of it. The birds were gone, the seas never still. As the days passed, the damon came back empty handed, claiming that the ocean was too deep, they could not dive far enough to find food.

Soon the old and infirm began to die. People became desperate. The Wise One had an idea to capture the wind and guide the raft towards land, but no materials to build his wind-trap, and no idea which direction to go.

One morning, The Wise One woke to shouting. On the horizon, there was a large object, what looked like small island. They had no way to guide the raft, but soon damon were diving in the water, and shortly all but the sickest damon had left the raft.

The Wise One had all the refugees jump into the water on the opposite side of the raft. The locomotion of thousands of kicking sapien was able to slowly follow the damon toward the object.

By the time the sapien arrived, the damon were already on top of the object. On closer inspection, the object was not an island, but another raft, this one made of some material unknown to the sapien, like a smooth stone, but soft and flexible. Laid out on the top of the raft were hundreds of costner, apparently asleep.

Each costner was laid out on a bed-like platform, next to them was a clear tube that came out of the top of the platform. The eager damon found that by sucking on the tube, a clear and delicious fluid would come forth and could be swallowed. Soon, sapien and damon alike were sucking on the tubes.

The Wise One could not stop the starving and dehydrated sapien from nursing from the tubes. After about an hour, the damon began to collapse. Other damon jumped into the ocean and began swimming about frantically.

While watching the damon, the Wise One noticed creatures the size of a child began to emerge from one of the recesses in the object. It was unclear how the creatures were able to move, they seemed to float just a finger's width above the surface of the raft. There were dozens of them. They would move from prone costner to the next costner, emitting a tone as it passed each one.

The Wise One watched the creature approach a pedestal, where a damon had passed out, face down, on top of a costner. The object produced a new tone, and then extended a green vine from inside itself, which then wrapped around the damon's neck and then extended up and into the damon's nostrils. A few seconds later, a clear object, like a balloon, appeared from a recess on the pedestal. The creature took the balloon and pulled a long nipple forth, placing it in the damon's mouth, hanging the balloon from a pole that extended out from the pedestal.

Soon, there were creatures all over the deck, hydrating the damon, ignoring the sapien. The costner remained passed out. The sapien cautiously examined the balloons, which were found to contain freshwater. The Wise One had the sapien collect all the balloons, and take them back to the tree-raft, as they were perfect for holding rainwater which could be collected with hollow wooden catchments.

For several days the two rafts floated together, the sapiens sucking on the feeding tubes, the damon and costner passed out in a trance. On the third day, the tubes stopped producing the nectar.

Just after sunrise on the fourth day, a single costner stood up from his pedestal, groggily looked around, and casually glanced to his right, only to find a hungry hissing sapien female with bright white teeth. The costner let out a scream and launched itself into the ocean.

A few minutes later, two other costner were screaming and diving. Soon all the costner woke, some in a dazed state, others instantly recognizing they'd been invaded, then diving into the water. A few costner were captured by the sapien before they could escape.

The captured costner chirped at the sapiens but could not be understood. A loud, clanging sound emerged from inside the object, and then a child at the edge shouted a warning that the raft was sinking.

The sapien scrambled back to their tree-raft, taking the captives and as many of the water balloons as they could. The costner-raft sank slowly. Many unconscious damon sank along with the raft.

The sapien saw no more of the costner raft. The sapiens tried to interrogate the captured costner, using damon to translate, but they could not stay awake long enough to respond.

Their great raft drifted, but with no reference point, and no landmarks, they could do little but wait. After a week, there was talk of eating the captured costner, but the Wise One forbade it.

One morning, many of the lost damon returned. With them, they bought bags of food and more water balloons, which they shared freely with the sapien. The damon explained, their new friends, the costner, would guide the tree-raft back to dry land.

The sapien and damon feasted together, joyful with hope. The damon shared their tales of wonderment at the cities they had seen below on the floor of the ocean. They claimed that the costner were misunderstood, a peaceful people, and had no intent to eat sapien or damon. The nectar the sapien and damon consumed was made from the innards of a giant eel¹ that dwelled in the deepest parts of the ocean, beyond the reach of the costner and whales.

A damon known as the mork, who could speak all the sapien tongues, promised more rewards if the Wise One released the captured costner. The vast majority of the sapiens supported this, as costner food was delicious and fresh. The captives were released, and the damon guided the unconscious costner back to their homes.

The next day, the damon returned, with them a bounty of water and fish. With them came two creatures. One the size of a man, around its head, a translucent material that held within it water. The sapiens brave enough to approach the figure could see a costner's face within the strange helmet.

With the costner, came a small sapien child. The child was also wearing a helmet, but it contained no water. Tubes ran from her helmet to a bag lashed across her back. The child had a strap around its neck, and the strap was attached to a cord, which was attached to the waist of the costner.

The child removed her helmet and spoke. A small group of refugees reacted to her words. They spoke directly to the child, and through the mork, translated for all the sapien tribes.

"This is the Mariner King, master of the ocean. All costner, whale, and dolphin obey his wishes. He warns the sapien and damon will never find land without his help. It is a long journey, but the costner will feed and guide the sapien. All you must do is solve a puzzle. Do you accept this offer?"

The Wise One spoke, "What is this puzzle? And how are you, a sapien child, able to know the ocean people?"

"I was lost as a baby, my master The Mariner rescued me and raised me in his palace. I must wear this suit to live among them,

¹ Texas scientists have identified this as the prehistoric Bankman-Fried eel.

but I have an air bubble where I can sleep without their machines. They feed me and teach me their ways. They call me the bubble girl. Their word for my kind of people is *travolta*. It means supernatural or very good at dancing, depending on context.”

The translation chain took several minutes. The Wise One bent down to the child so that he could see her eyes clearly.

“What is this puzzle?”

The child removed her pack and opened it, revealing a bunch of shells as well as small crystals hung on a translucent string, with translucent braces to keep the shells apart in a geometrical formation. She laid them out on the deck of the raft.

“These are lures for the great eel. We hang these lures from magic fish the costner wizards conjure and send down into the deepest reaches of the ocean, where the pattern attracts the giant eels. Certain patterns mesmerize the eels. They will follow the lure to the upper ocean, where the eels are captured by the dolphins, who do not feed upon the eel, but bring it back to the costner.”

“The costner cannot see the patterns, and the damon mind is too puny to comprehend the concept of a pattern, so for many generations, the lures were gifted to them by my tribe. My people were killed by another tribe, I was the only one left. I can only make small lures.”

The Mariner suddenly reached up, lifted off his helmet, unleashing a bucket of seawater. He roared and chirped at the child for several seconds. He threw his helmet at a drooling towheaded damon, and then made a giant leap up into the air and dived into the ocean.

“Finally,” said the child. “He needs some eel. Not all the costner are like that, just royalty and the rich ones. It’s like they can’t live without the stuff. I still can’t eat it without choking, and they’ve been giving it to me since I was a baby.”

One of the sapien said, in the girl’s language, “He looked angry, are they still going to give us food?”

“He said you guys need to make lures or he’s going to let you starve. Let me show you.”

The child showed them how to use the tools to make the lures. Each lure needed to form a shape that contained both the

shells and the crystals. The child demonstrated the use of the costners's magical tool, which could extrude the clear solid material in any length, and with a turn of a shell, could also extrude the strong clear vine. The tool could also be made to fasten the string to shell or crystal with a strong invisible bond.

The child explained, "These are the simple lures I can build. The old tribe could build large lures that would capture many of the delicious eel, but I can only make these simple kind."

The Wise One examined the lures.

"The topology makes a square shape in both height and depth, but inside, the crystals form a shape within, always connected."

"Yes," said the child. "But too many crystals, and the eels stay away, too few, they stay away. My most beautiful work never catches the eel."

The Wise One lifted the lure. Four shells to a line, and an inner cube made of eight crystals in a tight cube. He then examined the other designs. He started dividing the lures into piles based on the count of crystals. In one pile, he put lures with four, six, eight and ten crystals, and in the other pile, two, three, five and seven crystals.

"These capture the fish," The Wise One said, "And these do not."

"You are correct," the child agreed.

"It's simple. You say that the old land people could make large lures, of how many sides?"

The child lifted both of her hands, spreading her fingers wide.

"No worries, child, we shall make even larger lures. All you need to know is the prime factor shake."

"What is this prime factor shake?"

"Well, a prime number is a number that is divisible only by itself and one."

The Wise One held out his finger as he counted. "One and two, three and five and seven. No matter how you divide them, you cannot make it fair share. Four, six, eight and ten," Holding up

both hands, “Are fairly divisible numbers. These delicious eels must have a special affinity for prime numbers.”

“But to make the large lure, there must be more crystals than fingers,” said the child, “Then we how can we know the primeness.”

“Correct,” said The Wise One. “That’s why you need the prime factor shake.”

“What is this shake?”








The Wise One demonstrated a shake. It was a series of combat moves, like he was fighting an invisible foe. It was a most graceful dance.

“This is my fighting shake. With just three starting moves, I can defeat any beast of the forest or man, even the dreaded flying pig. For every counter move they make, my next move is always setup to take advantage. Within four simple moves, and five counter moves, I can defeat all the beast of the forest, and all the invaders from other tribes.”

He bowed to his audience and then demonstrated another dance.

“The prime factor shake evolved from the counting shake, which came from my fighting shake. I was bored one day, and figured out that you could make counting and calculating into a shake, so that when children were dividing food, they could make it fun and enjoyable, and easy to remember. This simple shake we teach to children in my village, so the food is always shared fairly. The prime factor shake is a natural evolution of the counting shake....”

The Wise One began a complicated series of moves, kicks and punches and imaginary blocks, a backflip, and series of 360 degree spins that left his audience gasping.

“The prime factor shake is different. Instead of using just your fingers and toes for counting, we use all the lines of connection between limbs. It makes factoring any large number a simple problem that can be solved in no more than five moves. First you start with a jump,     
 

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Historical_Rewrite_Redaction:

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Encyclopedist:hakeemala17 - PID(80201042921)

Date:10/29/2522

Rewrite Boundary: 09/19/2029

Justification:

There is no need to reveal to the early third millennials that the simple method needed to crack public-key encryption can be performed by any six-year-old who can master *The Floss*. The idiocy that was the crypto-bubble provides a baseline foundational lesson for so much 26th century entertainment as well as biting social commentary. How boring life would be if we didn't have all these funny stories about our turn of the millennium ancestors.

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■■■■ then if you end with your left foot forward, your factor ends with the single digit on your right hand. Easy as *one-two-three*.”

The children picked it up first. It was a simple rhythmic dance, and if you used the counting words in the Wise One's language, it rhymed and produced a monotonic song that was easy to remember.²

The sapiens started working. The orcas brought forth bags of food, water, shells, and crystals, along with more tools. Soon they were making bigger and bigger lures.

The raft began to produce dozens, then hundreds of large lures a day. Costner dolphin “pets” would bring forth food and take away the lures. The orcas would push to the surface large containers full of technological wonders that eased the daily life of the refugees. Clothing that kept one shaded or cool or warm, little

² Yes, rap music was also invented by prehistoric Texans, though it is unknown where exactly on the ocean this scene takes place. It does explain her-highest-highness's choice in consort.

boxes that cooked fish. Large conch shells that when shaken would expand into full size shelters for ten or more sapien.

The raft was towed by a long line of costner vine from the costner raft, which moved slowly through the waves, hundreds of tree lengths ahead of the tree-raft. They never saw costner, but the well sighted could sometimes see the creatures atop the deck.

The journey continued for many, many moons. There was a long period, twenty moons of summer, followed by twenty moons of winter, where they crossed water filled with icebergs. The orca brought forth warm clothing and magical creatures that would glow warm, as well as fluids in bags that produced many strange effects. Some fluids made them feel strong and quick, others relaxed and calmed them. Some gave them visions, and others gave them the power to see moving stories within the stars.

Most of the sapien were happy to be alive and fed, few had forgotten the suffering and terror of the early journey. Making the lures was a joyful activity, with sapien dancing and singing while peacefully competing to produce larger and more complex lures. The damon, who were too dimwitted to participate in the actual prime factor shake, just ate food and drank the magical potions. At night, the mork would perform imitation shakes to the amusement of the sapien, but beyond that, the damon did not contribute. After many moons, the sapien noticed that the damon, who all looked alike, seemed to be growing smaller, even though they constantly ate and drank the costner bounty, sometimes even robbing sapien children of their share. They consulted the Wise One, who was very tall.

“It could be they are shrinking. However, they weren’t very tall to begin with. I think what we’re dealing with is the illusion known as perspective.”

Despite growing smaller, more and more damon refugees appeared around the raft. The whales always brought more supplies, but it became more and more crowded on the raft. Sapiens suspected damon were reproducing but no one had seen them mate. Children claimed a single damon could drink a costner potion, dive into the sea, and then three more would swim out.

The Wise One thought it was taking too long to find land. He knew the count of days it had taken to find the costner raft, just under a moon. More than fifty moons had come and gone since then. They delivered great lures of ninety-seven crystals. The *Travolta* girl stayed with them on the raft but was called once a moon to the depths by whales. She always reported the same thing, the costner were prosperous and every city she visited has more and more wonderful delicacy shops, where the eel was served up in various ways for the amusement and pleasure of the costner. She'd overheard her royal guard escorts once say that even prisoners in the king's dungeon caves were served eel daily. She spoke to The Mariner King through magic that would produce his image within a shell, but their conversations became briefer as the moons passed.

Often, they would see more costner raft on the horizon, with hundreds of costner prone on the platforms, soaking in the sun and taking their nectar sleep. As the moons passed, they started seeing multiple rafts tied together, with thousands and thousands of costner.

The Wise One trusted the *Travolta*-girl, and together they recruited a few trusted people to secretly enact their plan. At night in secret, they met in one of the shelters. The rebels followed orders of the Wise One, who had them use the costner tools to cut the magic water bags apart, and then reform them into flat sheets. The tool could seal sheets together, making larger and larger sheets.

While in temperate waters, several children claimed to have spotted birds. The adults dismissed this, as sometimes magical flying fish from the costner raft that towed them would appear and float around. The children claimed that it was high in the sky, like the eagles fly. The adults knew this was fantasy of boys and girls who had spent most of their lives at that point on the raft.

After one moon trip to the sea, the *Travolta*-girl reported that the newest 103 crystal lures were bringing entire colonies of eels to the shallows, and dolphins could herd them like buffalo directly to the costner cities. She also reported that the tree-raft was in very shallow water full of fish. Wise One knew that in shallow waters, the damon could be coerced by hunger to catch fish.

That night, he and *Travolta*-girl pulled themselves along the tow line, carrying with them an accumulated portion of the eel's nectar they'd hidden away from the damon. The girl swam under the costner-raft and returned to the surface with a pair of costner warriors who were the drivers of the raft. They had magical shells that could communicate with The Mariner King. The girl knew they were royal warriors and forbidden to partake in the eel. She chirped a request.

"Can you take this eel from us? The damon become unbearable if we give them too much. But they are so small and tricky, we can't hide it anywhere on the raft. Can y'all hide it here until we run out?"

The costner warrior assented without argument. They even provided two magic birds to the girl, which could carry a man, even one as large as the Wise One, in its talons, through the air. That way, they explained, any time the sapien had too much eel nectar, they could store it in the costner-raft's magical vaults, which would always keep it fresh.

The girl and the Wise One flew back to the tree raft. Over the next moon, when the whales would bring supplies, they would take the eel nectar to the costner-raft. Rebel observers noticed a warrior would appear on the surface and then then take the bags of eels below. After a few days, when it was especially sunny, they noticed that a warrior came to the surface of the costner-raft, and then laid out prone. After a day, another warrior came out, and lay down. After a week, the entire school of warriors, eighteen by the Wise One's counting, was passed out on the surface of the raft.

That night, the Rebels used the magical tools to cut the tow line. The Wise One had the balloon-material sheets brought forth, and using the magical vine extruded from the tools, strung them up from two of the longest trees they detached from the raft and posted vertically. They also placed a long and wide branch at the opposite end from the vertical post, using this as a primitive rudder. In addition, they used a length of magic vine to create a tow line for the magic birds, which were very powerful. Sapien rebels would take turns flying and towing the raft.

The Wise One guided the raft, following the path of the moon and then at daybreak, the path of the sun. The rebels had

been secretly conserving and storing food and water, but within three days, the magical potions ran out, and the damon began to behave erratically. Some attacked children and were tossed overboard, but many climbed back aboard. This became a constant battle. The sapien stopped feeding the damon, and their number began to diminish. Some claimed that the damon were eating each other, but no one saw it actually happen.

They saw no more of the costner. Travolta-girl interrogated some passing whales, but they would only say that there was a royal celebration, they had been given time-off.

After a moon and a hand of days, adults spotted birds. Wise One and Travolta-girl used the magic birds to scout ahead. They found a long thin island. Beyond that was another thin patch of ocean, which led to the mouth of a great muddy river. They followed this river for what they estimated was two days walking, far enough away from the sea that trees and forest around the river were relatively untouched by the tsunami. In this land they found a bounty of wildlife and vegetation.

Upon return, a large contingent of sapien who had formed symbiotic relationships with the damons, wished to continue living upon the costner's generosity. The Wise One allowed this group to take the tree-raft, as well as all the costner tools, back to sea.

There was one troublesome group of mutineers, known as in the Wise-One's tongue as *Yankees*. They were a vile, barbarous group who in the early days tried to eat their own mothers. Their leader, a strong warrior with a mighty beard, whom they called Stranger James, thought the land-people should keep the machines, but the Wise One forbade it.

"We shall learn to make our own. For what good is a tool without the knowledge of how the tool is made?"

The Wise-One exiled the *Yankees*, telling them to walk north until they reached the legendary land of ice-and-snow, where they could settle. He sent his loyal lieutenants, Jet, Sam-I-Am, Mad Max, Big Shot Bob and Junkyard Dog, to settle with their families to the North and East, forming a protective wall in case the *Yankees* were to return to fetch their mothers, who were allowed to settle in protective custody with the ancient Texans.

The Wise One, along with his most trusted friend, Glide, guided the remaining refugees along the muddy river where they settled on the eastern banks. It is believed that this diverse group of people, brought together by natural calamity, flourished. For hundreds of generations they advanced at a far more rapid pace than other highland sapiens that survived the great flood.

The tree-raft people who went back to sea, soon began to encounter the rafts of sun-bathing costner. They found the rafts full of dried out, mummified costner, but no living costner to trade with. They used the flying machines to guide them towards the rising sun, eventually settling in what would later be known as Egypt. Texas archaeologist have surmised that the flying machines kept working for several epochs and were used by the ancient Egyptians to construct the pyramids.

Legend has it that The Mariner King trapped his least favorite son, Kevin, along with his damon companion, Matty, into a cryochamber, and hid it in a deep ravine. The King mesmerized the fish guardians, and proclaimed, *“Watch over my seed, and if there ever comes a time when the oceans cover the world, and humanity needs a hero, wake him, and send him forth from the depths, to lead and rule.”*

The Mariner King then mainlined seventeen grams of the purest, uncut eel nectar, and dosed off, never to wake again.

Readings In Texas History

*The following chapter is from the 5th Edition of **Readings in Texas History, Aren't You Lucky**. Reprinted with permission from the kid I paid twenty bucks to, who was waiting outside Bleyl Junior High School in the sweltering December heat.*

There is a rumor that there is a special coach's audio edition narrated by native son, Matthew McConaughey. Didn't even bother trying to get ahold of that, a 7th grade football coach/history teacher losing his instructional tools would be like a police officer losing his weapon.

You'll just have to use your imagination for the proper narrative voice. Sit back, relax, and read, and hear the narration in a slow, but tangy twang. A voice that has a meditative effect on one's soul, able to convince one that even driving grandpa's car is cool.

Big Mama

Many years ago, not long after the glaciers had retreated, or just a few generations after the great flood, depending on the which edition of this textbook you are using, Texas was populated by people, what you might think of as cavemen. They were a hunter-gatherer type people, who used stone tools and lived in small tribes of a few hundred people, hunting large game with spears and stones and fishing with their hands. There was a tribe that we know of from legends passed down through oral tradition as the Na-is-mit. They lived on the eastern shores of the Brazos, in what is now Austin County. To the north on the eastern shore lived a tribe called the Bii-eh-ba and across the river there lived a tribe known as the Be-ek-em.

Big Mama was married to the Chief of the Na-is-mit and bore him many sons and daughters. While most of her daughters survived childhood and gave birth to numerous grandchildren, all but one of her sons had died either raiding the Bii-eh-ba or defending the people from attacks from Be-ek-em. Though her sons had been fine warriors, tall, strong and clever like the Chief, she felt a constant

scorn from the other mothers in the tribe. This is because many of their sons had been killed by her sons in fights over food, mates, or perhaps the greatest sin, insults to their mothers.

While she was happy to have so many grandchildren, she was saddened by the waste of good young men dying fighting each other. Her sons gained experience and strength fighting their warrior brothers in the winter, but not enough of them survived until the spring to mount a successful raid, and therefore, more sons died in battle. This led to a power dynamic where women outnumbered men, but value was measured in sons and their ability to raid and defend. The women didn't unite because of competition to bear the sons from the most powerful men.

One day, Big Mama was watching several granddaughters play while their mothers went out to gather berries and nuts in the forest. The girls had been given scraps of animal skins and the remnants of the most recent hunts and were playing at piecing skins together with sharp stones and tendons. One granddaughter had tied a boar's bladder with tendon on one end and was able to blow air into it and inflate it into a ball. Initially it just rolled, but the girl kept filling it with more air, until it was the diameter of a Na-is-mit man's foot. When the girl bounced it off the hard Texas clay, it reached the level of her chest. Big Mama laughed with joy watching the girl. The girl ran back to embrace Big Mama. The girl was rewarded with some berries Big Mama had saved from her morning meal.

Later that day, when the young men woke from their slumber and the women returned from the forest with their finds, the older men were still out hunting game at dusk. Big Mama watched from the shade of her hut, as the young talked and danced and sang around the tribal fire. It wasn't long before a fight broke out, first it was just shoving, but then real screams of pain rang out. Big Mama stood up and went closer, and she saw that it was her last living son, Heart of Tatanka, fighting with another boy, the son of one of the few women her age who would still talk to Big Mama. A beautiful girl, taken in a raid the spring prior, stood near them, laughing.

As she got closer, she saw that her son held a stone hatchet, given to him for raids by his father, the Chief. The other boy held a spear but looked crazed and was bleeding from his side. She began to run, shouting. She arrived just in time, positioning herself between her son in legal blocking position, preventing him from bringing down the killing blow.

"Son of mine, stop. All that is shiny is not the eyes of tatanka. She is too scrawny to give you sons."

The young girl ran away in shame, for all the women in the crowd started laughing. It was a terrible curse coming from Big Mama, who had a hand to finger ratio of sons to daughters.

The old men arrive back in the village, carrying deer and boar on poles, ready for a feast. The Chief catches the girl running away and drags her back to the fire.

"What goes on here? Why does she run away? Do we not feed her?"

"She agrees to be with me," Heart of Tatanka said, "But he takes her food from her."

"Stop this," Big Mama said. "You kill him, and we have less than two hands of warriors for spring."

"We have many men," the Chief says, looking around him at his hunters.

"Yes, many men who can catch a boar, or sneak a deer, how many of you can chase tatanka, or catch a sneaky Be-ek-em or smash a Bii-eh-ba with a stone? How many old men will come back if you go to raid?"

The Chief was legendary for his glory in battle, but stone age battle was a young man's game. You had to be strong and fast and if you made it to your thirties, you became a wise hunter or a chief or you had to take a walk. He still believed he could take a few enemy warriors with the tactical sacrifice of a few old friends, but it would be difficult. That has never been the Texas way.

"A hand," the Chief said. "I would come back with at least a hand of old warriors."

"A hand," Big Mama said. "How many mouths can you feed with a hand of hunters? Look around you. How many hands of your daughters and granddaughters do you see?"

The Chief looked around. A body of hands and feet of daughters, and a hand of their mothers. Another two hands of granddaughters. Around them still more hands of the women of his old warriors and then the captives, hands and hands and hands of mouths. And the children, so many to feed. And his warriors, two hands of young warriors, one his only remaining son.

"A hand of hunters cannot feed this many mouths," the Chief said. "But the women can fish."

"Fish?" Big Mama said, "Fish? A hand of your daughters spent the entire day in the river and see the fish they have brought back."

Near the fire, fish hung on a line. Less than a hand of fish. Even in those days, the Brazos ran muddy. It is believed that the early people would sit in the water for hours and use their hands to grab the fish when they felt the tickle of their whiskers.

"How many hands of fish will your daughters catch?"

"Enough for their own children." That was the way when the rains didn't come. Mothers and the female children would go to the river for as long as it took. Some did not come back, and many died. The chief had sired many children in a time of good rains, but he had lost many sisters to the river when he was a boy.

"Look at all these boys," she said. "How many hands?"

"Many hands," he said, looking at the small children, as many boys as girls, more boys in fact as they were favored in the winter when food was scarce.

"No more killing of warriors. If we have more warriors, we can raid and feed everybody. With two hands of warriors, how long will we last?"

"We have lasted many a moon, many a mother."

"What of the people of your mother, where are they? What of the people of my father, where are they now? Why did they go? What happened?"

"They died, and you were taken. My mother's people were raided by my father's younger brother, they fled to the great water."

“Why did they flee?”

“They did not have enough warriors,” the Chief said.

“Yes, so we should not allow a warrior to kill other warriors of the tribe.”

“Big Mama,” the Chief said. “They fight for an unclaimed woman. What can we do? One must take her.”

“No. She decides. She is the one who must feed his children.”

“Big Mama,” the chief said. “If they don’t fight about woman, they will fight about something else. Young men prove they are more valuable by fighting.”

“Yes, they must have a way to decide. But it is not fighting. What else do they fight about, to kill each other?”

The Chief thought about it. “Women, food or insults to their mothers. Most of their fathers have been killed in battle, and we do not speak ill of dead warriors, like the people of the ice.”

“That is the solution. No more fighting over women, food or mothers.”

“Wait a minute,” The Chief said. “I can see wisdom in not fighting about women, who can choose for themselves, as they must feed the children or go to the river. And no fighting over food, a warrior can go to the forest or the river. A warrior must know how to feed himself in order to go on long raids. But mothers? No man who drinks from the water of the Brazos can tolerate an insult or disrespect to his mother. That is for the savages of the land of the ice and snow, not for the Na-is-mit. I smashed with stone many a Be-ek-em who spoke of my mother.”

He looks over at his mother, in front of her hut, blind and completely deaf. She cackled randomly and would eat only fish brains. No man in the tribe would speak ill of her, and no woman in the tribe would let her go hungry.

Big Mama knew well she must compromise, for it had been her in times of the cold who had to sit in the river and catch a single fish, despite a wealth of boar and tatanka, so that the Chief’s mother did not starve. Luckily, in addition to having a propensity for birthing numerous tall and strong sons, Big Mama had lightning-fast reflexes and could usually catch a fish on first tickle.

"What about when one warrior speaks falsely to another," said the boy, alive but still bleeding. "I did not take food from her, she was carrying food from the forest for my woman, who is with child and slow to move."

"What is that?" Heart of Tatanka asked. "This one did not tell me that."

They all looked at the beautiful young captive. She looked terrified.

"She does not speak our words," said the boy's woman, now returned from the forest. "I did not explain it well, she could not understand. It was my mistake."

"That explains it," Big Mama said.

"When there is a falsehood, it must be decided," the Chief said.

"If no one can answer except the two warriors?" asked his son. "And when there is a new captive, how will they decide? And who feeds from the food gathered by the women without children?"

"You must win a contest," said Big Mama.

Big Mama points to her creative granddaughter and she runs back to the hut and returns with the boar's bladder. Big Mama corrals several of her granddaughters and their friends and has them tie two baskets to trees just above the tallest man's reach. She then demonstrates how the boar's bladder will bounce on the clay. Next, she demonstrates dribbling the ball and crossovers on the clay and running down the court to the basket, where she leaped up and dunked the ball. One of her granddaughters climbed the tree to retrieve the ball. Then Big Mama demonstrated a jump shot.

She divided up the warriors into two hands and showed them that the contest was won when more than two hands of baskets were made by either team. She explained, all the warriors would participate in the contest every afternoon when the women came back from the forest. The winning team would get to choose from the unclaimed food first. She explained that running and jumping and especially the act of rebounding would cause them to grow into stronger and fiercer warriors, without having to kill all their friends and brothers.

And thus, on the Brazos, sports were invented for the first time. It was one of the first and greatest acts of human genius, right here in Texas. Aren't you lucky to go to school in such a special place?

Little Mama

Little Mama was Big Mama's granddaughter, that little girl who blew up the boar's bladder into the very first basketball. She grew up to be a mama herself, though she was very small and had but one small son and no daughters. Despite being famous for inventing the ball used in the game, which all the warriors played every afternoon, she became a cast-out, and few of the old hunters would bring food for her or her son. Big Mama took pity upon Little Mama, sharing food the hunters gave her with Little Mama and Tail of Tatanka, her puny son, who went by the nickname of Tot.

Big Mama was the mother of the Chief. Her son had led warriors on raids for many springs and summers, expanding their territory to push the Be-ek-em further north. His tall warriors, mostly his sons and nephews, could easily ford the river and bring back food and captives raided from the Bii-eh-ba. They could have probably wiped out the Be-ek-em, if they'd raided in fall and winter, but as any Texan knows, the best time for active outdoor sports is fall and winter. In the stone age, the thinking was, if you're going to be hot, you might as well fight, cause death at least has the possibility of an afterlife. In the fall and winter, contests were held, and her son sent messengers to the other tribes, and it became known that if a warrior had long limbs and could leap and rebound the ball, he was welcome to the Na-is-mit and would be fed and have his pick of captives. Many tall warriors came, some from the land of the ice and snow, as well as strange tall warriors from lands to the east and over the great waters. As such, the tribe grew to many hands of warriors and hunters and was feared along the Gulf Coast.

The tribe had a tradition, once you became a warrior and played in the contest, you would always be fed, and young boys would play the game all day before the warriors awoke from their slumbers. Many a boy was lost due to injury, and the lame went to

the river. The smaller boys had the most difficult time, and bearing a small child became a stigma in the tribe.

Little Mama did not want that fate for Tot. He was small, and could not bounce or catch the ball, and would not kill a rabbit much less a deer or tatanka. Little Mama loved Tot, because he would gather flowers and leaves and feathers, and always had a nice thought to make her happy. When he was of five winters, older boys started to bother him and force him to play the game. He would try but would get trampled underfoot and beat. Many times he would not move for days due to injury. Little Mama took him away from the tribe to the south and found a vast cave abandoned by people many winters before. The people in the tribe assumed that Tot had gone to the river. Little Mama needed Big Mama's gifts of food, as she had no meat, only the berries she would find in the forest. Tot was left alone in the cave during the day, where he drew pictures on the walls of cave with paints he mixed from plants and flowers he found in the forest.

When he was two hands of winters, Tot was spotted in the forest by a group of boys from the village but as they approached, they screamed, "Dog Turd, Dog Turd," as if they smelled something horrible. Tot did not understand what they meant, none of his young tribemates recognized him. The children ran back to the village and told the mothers of the strange creature of dark covered in flowers and leaves, but the women knew not to say a word. They thought it was some poor child from another tribe gone to the river, woken up and terror and fleeing through the woods.

They did not speak of it. The children always told fantastic tales, so Little Mama did not know of the sighting of Tot. Mothers did not speak to her, and she only took care of Big Mama and some of her youngest nieces whose mothers had gone to river. She was Big Mama's favorite, and a tribute of fish were always brought to Big Mama by her son, after the game. She only ate the brains, so there was always enough meat and fish for Little Mama and Tot.

The village prospered, as more tall warriors from the faraway lands came to join their warrior clan. The other tribes moved away from Na-is-mit. The Na-is-mit were able to set a permanent camp on

the far waters of the river, without interference from Bii-eh-ba, whose warrior were generally either scrawny or hefty. The Na-is-mit started to range on the river further north.

Women of the tribe discovered if they put people on both sides of the river, they'd catch more fish using a primitive but original form of fish herding with woven baskets. It was Texans who invented real fishing. Aren't you lucky to live in the Lone Star State?

When Tot was two hands and a foot of winters, for many days he did not see Little Mama. This had happened many times before, as Little Mama had to look after many young girls in the village and occasionally they required her care through the night. Tot would gather berries in the forest and found many mushrooms and could live for days, but he had no meat, and eating too many mushrooms made him very warm and thirsty, and often the magical little people would appear and chatter at him.

After two hands and a foot of days, Tot began to worry. Late one evening, at a time when no one wanders the forest, and he was unlikely to run into any of the hunters, Tot slowly crept back to the village. When most of the people had gone to sleep, he crept closer to Big Mama's hut. He couldn't see, back in those days they didn't keep fire in individual huts, only in the communal central fire where they entire village would cook, so it was very dark inside the hut. Tot closed his eyes and listened to the breathing. He recognized Little Mama's snore and slowly crept up to her.

"Mama," he whispered in her ear.

She woke, startled.

"Tot," she said. "You must not be here. I will come soon, but Big Mama and several of the girls are very sick, I must tend to them. There are fish on the line outside, the girls are too sick to eat. Take one back the cave and go now. Don't let anyone see you, and before you eat the fish, go to the river and bathe.

"Okay, Mama, but you told me never to go to the river without you."

"That was when you were five winters. You are the age of a warrior now. Go."

Tot slowly crawled backwards, doing his best not to disturb any of the young girls sleeping around the hut. It took several minutes to make his way out. Outside, he stopped and listened, and was satisfied when he heard Little Mama's soft snore. It was a cloudy night, but there was a soft glow of moonlight, and Tot was able to make out fish on a line hanging from a tree. Slowly, he loosened the string and pulled a fish out and laid it on the ground. As he was retying the string, he heard a noise behind him, what sounded like a little girl's yawn. Tot was deadly still, terrified, but knowing his skin was dark with paint and mud, remained frozen like a statue.

He heard a little girl's voice, "Very, very stinky. Very, very stinky."

Tot slowly turned his head just as his little cousin was looking up. She shrieked louder than a warrior's battle cry, "Dog Turd! Dog Turd!"

Within seconds, young boys were streaming out of their huts holding spears and stones. Because of the success of the tall warriors in battle, the village hadn't been raided in two hands of winters. One of the only ways that a boy could get promoted early from playing village ball to the warrior team was to kill an invading enemy warrior. This was the first opportunity in any of the boy's lives, and they were ready. Being on the warrior team meant you could eat whatever you wanted, whenever you wanted, and came with other inducements. It was a big deal, like making the varsity team as a freshman.

Tot scrambled back the way he came but was stopped as several boys dropped down from their perches in the trees, so he turned around and ran the other way. He scrambled every which way, but he hadn't been in the village since he was a boy and it had grown, he became confused. He heard people shouting, "Dog Turd! Dog Turd! Follow your nose and catch him!" He scrambled this way and that, hopping around like a little magic person.

It was dark and he was small, so he hid under pile of tatanka skins. By this time, the whole village was awake and mostly gathered around the fire. They were arguing about a search party, some were saying they saw the monster go to the river, others said it was away from the river. Some of the men suggested it was a Bii-eh-ba spy, but

some of the boys assured them that it was the Dog Turd monster they'd spotted in the forest.

Tot debated whether he should sneak into the forest or wait until the village went back to sleep. He worked up his courage and crept along the edges of the huts back towards the river.

He was nearly to the edge of the last hut, and took a deep breath, ready for a silent sprint to the river's edge, and was just about to take off, when two young girls stepped out from the woods.

"I smell it!"

"Dog Turd! Dog Turd!"

Tot charged between the two girls, splitting the double team, and sprinted for the river. When he was just a few feet away from the shore, he looked up and saw that the river was full of people crossing towards him. It was the entire west-side village of Na-is-mit, who'd heard the commotion and were coming for help. Tot turned back around, just in time for a rock thrown by one of the girls to hit him square in the forehead.

When Tot woke up, he was on his belly, hands and feet bound together.

"It's waking up," said a boy's voice. "Now we can cook it."

"I'm not food," Tot said.

"It speaks our words," said a girl's voice, "Big Mama! Big Mama!"

Tot tried to turn over, but somebody kicked him in the head.

"Stop it! Stop it!"

A voice he knew, Little Mama's voice.

"Stay away, we claim the heart and liver," said a man's voice. "My third daughter threw the stone that downed the monster."

"It's not a monster! This is my son, Tail of Tatanka."

"Woman, you should go to the river. Your runt of a son went to the river many winters ago, and you should have followed him. Big Mama pities you because you created the ball, but that was a long time ago. You are useless now, go to the river."

Tot couldn't see, he was turned away from his mother's voice.

"Mama," he said.

“What goes on here?” a large voice said.

It was the Chief, Heart of Tatanka II, Little Mama’s Uncle and the son of Big Mama.

“We’ve caught the monster with the scent of wild dog turd,” said the man. “My daughter threw the stone that disabled the beast. It has awoken, and I was about to claim the heart of the beast before we cook it. I was going to save the liver for you, it looks weak and there isn’t much meat.”

“I would wash it off in the river before cooking it,” said the Chief. “It smells awful.”

“It is not a beast,” Little Mama said. “It is my son, Tail of Tatanka.”

“Beloved niece of mine, your puny son went to the river many winters ago. Have you forgotten? Perhaps it is time for you to go find your son at the bottom of the Brazos.”

He took pity on her, her cleverness with the ball had allowed Big Mama to create the game, which had allowed him to assemble his army of tall warriors and rule both shores of the Brazos. Yet, she was useless, too small to produce tall warriors, no one wanted her around except his mother. When a heartbroken childless woman starts trying to adopt wild creatures and treat them as children, it was time to gently, compassionately, guide her to the river.

“Uncle, it is my son. He speaks our words. He has been living in the cave of the magic people since he was a hand of winters, I bring him food.”

“Why do you do this? Why does your son smell like a dog turd?”

“He could not play the game.”

“Yes, so you sent him to the river.”

“See for yourself,” Little Mama said.

She went to Tot, untied his feet, while she was reaching for the ties around his hands the man said, “Be careful, look at those claws, they’re the worst part, it’s probably poison, like rattlesnake venom.”

Little Mama finished untying his hands, and held them out, so that in the firelight, the entire crowd could see Tot’s hands.

“Hands. These are the fingers of my son, not the claws of a beast.”

The Chief stepped forward to take a closer look, and sniffed. “Looks like fingers. Stinky fingers.”

“Go wash him in the river and bring him to me when the sun rises,” said the Chief. “I’ve had enough of that smell for now.”

Little Mama took him down to the Brazos, and bathed her son for the first time in two hands of winters, and it took a lot longer than she’d expected. “Let me do the talking,” she said. Tot, who had not spoken to anybody but his mother and the magic people for ten winters, had no objection.

When they returned to the village, it was morning, and the entire village was waiting on the clay court. Her Uncle, The Chief, was standing center court, holding a ball.

“He must play the game,” The Chief said, “Or return to the river.”

“No,” Little Mama said.

“No? You question me, your chief and your uncle? Me, who is not only tallest, but the wisest and holder of the record for rebounds, blocked shots, and points made in a single season?”

“I made the ball, I should have a voice. I bore a son, I should have a voice. Is that not the reason that your father listened to your mother, and created the game that made you the greatest warrior in the memory of all people of the Brazos?”

The Chief was silent for a moment. “Beloved little niece, your way of talking is like a circle, it has an effect on my thoughts that is both pleasant but also makes me feel like I had one bowl too many of fish brain and mushroom soup. Perhaps it is better if you stop talking.”

“I will stop talking if you allow my son to return to the village.”

“This is the law, a boy plays the game or he goes for a walk. It is tradition to give puny boys the mercy of the river, but I grant you permission to take him to the Bii-eh-ba, who have scrawny warriors. But you must accompany him, for I could never trust a woman who has a son that is warrior for another tribe.”

"She can not go to the Bii-eh-ba," said Big Mama. "She is our treasure, without her, no game, and no game, you would have died in a raid and never been Chief."

"Mother, you speak in the circular fashion like my niece. Stop this!"

"My son is the greatest of all," said Little Mama, "My son will bring the tribe hands of hands of hands of tall warriors to the Brazos, and they will raid to the great water and to the lands of the ice and snow."

The crowd burst out laughing.

"Stinky Fingers, the great warrior! Dog Turd, leader of the people!"

"Listen to Little Mama," Big Mama said, "Her words are valuable."

One man kept laughing. The Chief threw his stone hammer and knocked the laughing man dead where he stood. The laughter stopped.

"I will show you how the magic people taught my son, Tail of Tatanka, to be the greatest warrior. People of the Brazos, follow me, and bring sticks of fire."

Tot and Little Mama led the way, the entire tribe followed them, deep into the forest of the magic people, careful not to step on the mushrooms along the path, for they were the sacred homes of the magic people. When they reached the cave, Little Mama said, "I will take the Chief and Big Mama to see the magic first. You people wait here. Tot, come with us, hold the stick of fire."

They threaded through the narrow cave entrance, it was difficult for Big Mama and the Chief, who were tall, but after a dozen paces, it opened up to wide chamber, with smooth walls.

"When Tot was small, he missed the village very much. Every night, I would come here and tell him stories of my Uncle, the greatest rebounder and warrior in tribe history, and of my grandmother, who created the game that allowed the tribe to prosper. Even though he could not play the game like the other children, he wanted to know the stories, and I told them every night. When he was older, I needed to tend to Big Mama and my nieces,

and stayed away longer. I was too tired, and rarely came into this chamber, as it is dark, and becomes smoky quickly if we bring fire. Tot, hand me the fire stick."

Tot handed his mother the torch. She guided them to wall and held it up. There were pictures drawn on the wall. Uncle and Grandmother had never seen a drawing before – no one had, except Little Mama, Tot and the magic people.

"It looks like a woman and girl, and the girl is inflating a ball," Big Mama said.

"It is," Little Mama said, "The woman is you. The girl is me."

"How can that be? How does the stone know?"

"The stone didn't make this – Tail of Tatanka made this."

"Magic," The Chief said. "Magic people did this."

"Tail of Tatanka did this. Look here."

They looked at the next section of wall. A woman was flying and laying down a monster dunk, while two large warriors looked on from the sidelines.

"Look Uncle, the young one is you. The old man is your father. The woman is Big Mama."

They moved on. The next panel showed a tall young warrior totally catching another tall warrior off balance, flailing around like he had ants in his loincloth.

"Recognize this, Uncle?" Little Mama asked. "It is my favorite memory from my childhood."

"Yes, beloved niece. That's when I totally bamboozled that foolish man from the lands west of the Brazos, I think it was the second annual tournament."

They proceeded through several panels that told the story of the Na-is-mit tribe and the warriors. Tot knew little of the recent history, the next generations – boys just a little older than Tot, were leading raids west to the land of the sun, and the land of the great salt lake, exploits that deserved a visual retelling.

They stepped out of the cavern to the waiting tribe outside.

"Go by hands into the cavern, and behold the magic Stinky Fingers has created."

The tribe went in by hands and they all came out perplexed and amazed. Many people wanted to touch Tot, and some boys apologized to him for calling him Dog Turd. One boy asked, "What do you put in your magic paint that allows it to stick to the walls, it has a familiar smell to it."

"You sniffed my wall?" Tot asked.

"Yeah," said the boy, "I was so amazed I wanted to get a close look and I smelled it."

"The magic people told me not to tell anybody," Tot said. "Or they might come eat you in your sleep."

When all the people had made the inspection and again waited outside the cave, the Chief consulted with Little and Big Mama and then made a decree.

"I order my son, Heart of Tatanka, to take two hands of the finest warriors, except for Red Grasshopper, don't take him. I don't want to get him injured or killed before the fall season, we play the people of the White Rock on a road trip, and I'm going to need him to fill up the lane. Come to think of it, I'm going to need C-Blood and D-Rod as well. Strike that, I order my son, Heart of Tatanka the third – just for clarity – to take two hands of warriors except for any of the starters, on a mission to the Bii-eh-ba to make a treaty of peace, they will take Stinky Fingers --- I mean Tail of Tatanka – to negotiate using his magic pictures. Stinky Fingers – sorry, nephew, do you mind we just make your warrior's name Stinky Fingers?"

"It's better than Dog Turd," he said.

"Yes, it is. Stinky Fingers eats first, gets first pick of the captives, and can have that whole row of huts over there by the stone cliffs, so he can record the stories."

Nobody objected, they had never seen pictures. Many of the young boys and girls were already outside using sticks to draw in the dirt, and some kids were even using stones to carve lines into other stones. The drawing itself didn't amaze the people – children had been making doodles and figures and carvings for generations. What amazed the people – all the people – was that Tot could draw things that had happened before he was born. Was he a spirit that could see the past? Was he magic?

This may have been the very first instance of Arthur C. Clark's third law which states, *Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.*

Right here in Texas, where technology was created. Aren't you Lucky?

Stinky Fingers

Stinky Fingers went to the Bii-eh-ba with two hands of warriors, led by the Chief's tallest son, Heart of Tatanka the third, or Hot for short.

The Bii-eh-ba were an interesting people, they had a mix of hefty and scrawny warriors who like to throw stones and break them against each other, and to wrestle. Some of them could throw a rock pretty good, but they had no skills at the tall warrior's game. They weren't much good for long distance raiding either, they would only run in spurts, they preferred to take their time eating, and were pretty good hunters because they didn't move around much.

Hot's warriors setup baskets and demonstrated a game. Two hands of the best Bii-eh-ba warriors played each other next, and it was disastrous. The sun was low in the sky and the score was only 2-4. Na-is-mit games lasted five minutes at most.

"Worthless," Hot tells Stinky Fingers. "Not one guy I would take. That one big guy, I could put him in to take some fouls, put a little hurt on. But the rest of them? Useless. Every rebound goes out of bounds, this game is going to take forever."

"So they're all worthless as warriors?"

"No, not really. Those hefty guys are awesome in a battle. The way I like to use them is give them a thick branch, maybe double his wingspan in length, and charge into a line of the enemy and knock them over. Then you get some of your scrawny guys – guys like you – and give them a big rock and they come in after the hefty guys and jump the enemy on the ground, they just pound them in the head with the big rocks. Just basic teamwork. And scrawny guys, sometimes those are the guys that can throw a rock real hard and accurate. You put the scrawny guys behind the hefty guys, us tall guys stand back, out of range, where we got a good tactical view of the battlefield. Works out usually, but that's only with captives, since all of our warriors are

tall. That's where us tall guys have a disadvantage in battle, we're tall, so we're easy targets for the rock throwers. Getting hit in the head with a rock hurts. Sometimes I wish it was me who was chosen by the magic people. I've been hit in the head with so many rocks, half the time it's from a little brother behind me, thinks he can throw a stone just because he can hit a jump shot. Not like I had a choice about it. When I was a little one, I just wanted to ball with the starters. They don't exactly tell you about the getting hit in the head with stones part."

"I feel you, cuz," Stinky Fingers said, feeling kinship with a male of his tribe for the first time.

Two hours later, relieved it was a moonless night, Hot called the game, the score at 7-4.

The next morning, the Bii-eh-bah as well as the Nai-is-mith warriors awoke to find Stinky Fingers hanging from a rope, painting the side of a rock facing. The Bii-eh-bah were mesmerized by the magic at work. They'd already seen reprints of the Ni-is-mith histories Stinky Fingers had painted on the inside of the skin of tatanka, which they rolled up and carried with them.

There were two wall pictures, the first one was of a four-sided diamond shape. The second was of a rectangular field. Near siesta time, Stinky Fingers came down from the rock and explained.

The first game involved throwing rocks and defending yourself from rocks with a piece of deadwood and turning that defense back to offense by propelling the stone at one of the opposing players. It consisted of very complicated rules and strategies, which would require careful study and most of all, independent decision making based on probabilistic thinking. Not a whole lot of running around, but a lot of rock throwing.

The second game consisted of several of the hefty players forming a defensive wall while players behind them targeted the enemy with stones, or threw a ball to his own men, trying to get the ball to end of the field, where points were scored. After an initial walk through, Hot and Stinky Fingers decided to remove the rock throwing, as the goal was to produce as many functional warriors as possible. Like the first game, this game involved following a

preplanned set of maneuvers. Adaptive adjustment while the play was live was important as well.

The next day, several hands of Bii-eh-ba warriors took the field and played the games. It was quickly found that both the scrawny and hefty could play either game, though different size warriors tended to fit some roles better than others. Linemen were always hefty, but sometimes heftyies could throw a rock. One Bii-eh-ba warrior pointed out, "This is pretty good, cause one of them is good for the winter, when you're banging into each other, you don't want to overheat. The other one, you're mostly standing around throwing rocks or trying to catch rocks, so not so bad on a hot day." Everybody agreed, that stick-rock was better for the warm months, especially since it was a good one for the road, you didn't need a clay court or a field, you could throw rocks at your brothers in any setting.

The Bii-eh-ba agreed to start training in stick-rock and board-ball and Hot took the idea back to his father that he should train some of the benchwarmer and shorter guys in some of these new lesser sports, that way they could compare the skill of their warriors to those of their new allies. The Chief agreed. After two winters, the combined warriors of the Bii-eh-ba and Na-Is-mit peacefully conquered many lands to the east and north, and spread these new sports through the Gulf Coast and even down into ancient Mexico.

After a few years, Heart of Tatanka II died, and his son, Hot became chief. On his dying bed, the Chief said to his son, "Don't forget the Be-ek-um, my son. Once, their great warrior called my mother, your grandmother, Big Mama, the mother of basketball, a very vile name, I dare not repeat. You must avenge this insult. They have fled south, but they will not escape our vengeance, my son."

"I will destroy the Be-ek-em, father," Hot said.

A moon after the death of his father, Hot took a contingent of many hands of tall, hefty and scrawny warriors across the river and sought the Be-ek-em, who had done quite well in the lands of the snake to the south and west. After many days of walking, stopping only for a midday game of stick-rock, the warriors found the Be-ek-em. Hot called them out to talk peace, leaving a gift of mushrooms

from the magic people's forest. The Be-ek-em sent out an old hunter, who proceeded to eat them with flourish.

Two of their young warriors came out, fearlessly and without concern.

"What you guys want? Got a sudden craving for snake?"

"We wanted to tell you about our sports league, how we got warriors from all over the lands, and we're like doing a unification program based on sports. So instead raiding each other, we can just share food and trade captives at tournaments. We got three sports, for all the seasons, there's some crossover but it works out all right."

Stinky Fingers proceeds to unroll the skins of Tatanka and show the frames of the three sports.

One of the warriors said, "I miss me some tatanka. And mushrooms. Living on the Brazos was sweet while it lasted."

The other warrior said, "Sorry, we already got a sport. We can play it anywhere, any season. Let me show you."

A bunch of Be-ek-em warriors came out of the low brush. They had a boar's bladder and they ran around the wasteland, kicking and guiding the ball with their feet.

Hot said to Stinky Fingers, "Their field is ten times the size of our courts. Tall guys can't be running around like that, constantly for hours. This is the desert. This is what a diet of snake meat and scorpion will do you."

"How about as warriors?"

"As warriors, hell yes. Guys that run around like that in the desert are indestructible, man. We should ally with them. I'm just not asking any of my kids to subject themselves to this kind of craziness. They can play their game on their own."

"Well, then how does it work? If we don't play their game, how will we know if they're good?"

"I didn't actually come here to make peace with them. I got the whole vengeance thing for the insult to Big Mama."

"No doubt, cuz."

The two warriors came back, sweating but not out of breath.

"Short game," said Hot.

"No, man. That was just a demonstration. We usually play from when we wake up until sundown, unless we got to help the women with the snakes, then we might have to cut it short."

"So, you wouldn't be interested in joining our league?"

"You guys got a taste for snake or what, man? Cause way I see it, what could we bring you, you ain't got already? See any tall warriors out here? Snakes tend to bite the tall people first, if you know what I mean."

Hot looks around at his feet, uncomfortably. All his warriors look at their feet. As they do, they start to notice something else. They were encircled by Be-ek-em warriors, just a stone's throw away, holding spears and rocks, waiting patiently.

"This isn't good," Hot said.

"I got this," said Stinky Fingers.

"You got what, little man?" The Be-ek-em warrior wasn't much bigger than Stinky Fingers himself.

"How did a little runt like you come from this tribe of giants anyway? Was your mother one of the magic people of the forest, captured by giants? Does your mother have hairy feet, Stinky Fingers?"

Those were the last words ever uttered by the warrior, for Stinky Fingers grabbed a large stone and leapt upon the warrior and smashed his head in. The other Be-ek-em warrior looked stunned for a moment and then started to raise his hammer. Hot thrust his spear through the warrior's throat.

"Little warning next time, Stinky," said Hot.

"No worries, cuz. I got this," Stinky Fingers pulls a bladder from his bag and unties the end, pouring the contents, a dark, runny, gooey and very stinky concoction, over his head. Hot makes a full circle survey, seeing the Be-ek-em warriors approaching them from all sides, outnumbering their contingent by three to one, more than

that if you included the second ring, which involved women³ and children warriors all holding spears or stones.

“People of the Brazos,” Stinky Fingers shouts. “What was I when I came from the forest of the magic people.”

“Dog Turd!” came a chorus of shouts.

“And who am I now?”

“Dog Turd!”

“Did you ever wonder what I ate, all those years in the forest with the magic people?”

Silence. Stinky Fingers, covered in black goo, steps forward from his line of the tall second-stringers, breaks through the lines of his own hefty and scrawny warriors, and into the open field, heading directly toward the largest Be-ek-em warrior, who wasn’t very tall but was carrying a very large stone over his head.

“Nobody wondered what I ate?”

“We thought you ate mushrooms in the forest,” said one young warrior.

“You can’t eat mushrooms. That’s where the magic people live. But you’re close, because the magic people did bring me the food I ate.”

Stinky Fingers was literally⁴ a stone’s throw from the strong Be-ek-em warrior holding the large stone over his head, ready to toss it. Close enough so Stinky Fingers could whisper without being heard by the line of warriors on either side.

“Hey brother, watch your step there, this heavy brush, you going to step ---”

The warrior glances down but immediately begins to wobble. The stone was the largest he could find, you always want to be the warrior with the largest stones, that was a rule of the Eaters of the Snake. The stone weighed about twice as much as his largest brother,

³ This happened just north of the Rio Grande so another feminist innovation invented in Texas.

⁴ Children, this proves that Texas Historians also know the literal use of “literally.”

so it took a lot of strength just to hold it over his head. You didn't want to look down and lose your balance.

"Step on what?" the warrior whispered.

Stinky Fingers shouted, "Yes, the magic people fed me very well. In fact, I developed quite a taste for the food they brought me. It was especially delicious, but in the years I've been back with the people of the Brazos, I've developed quite a hankering for that flavor."

"Hey, little bro, what am I about to step on?"

"It's by your right foot," Stinky whispered.

"What's by my foot? Which one is my right foot?" he whispered, afraid he was going to drop the stone and look foolish in front of his football teammates.

"When you throw a stone, the arm you throw with is usually the right one," Stinky Finger whispered. "Except for people like me, I use my left arm to throw, but I'm not a warrior."

"I use both arms to throw stones," whispered the warriors. "Can't you see?"

"When you wipe after a squat --"

"Wipe? What the hell are you talking about?"

Stinky Fingers realized he was dealing with somebody that basic innovation had left behind. He made a game time adjustment to his plan.

"What I ate --- was --- was so delicious, and it's something I can smell again for the first time in years, and I smell a lot of it," Stinky Fingers shouted. "And now Dog Turd has a hunger, a vicious hunger."

"Dog Turd! Dog Turd! Dog Turd!"

Stinky Fingers whispered, "The snake is right there," then made a dramatic hand gesture ending with a kung-fu pose pointing towards the warrior's right foot. The warrior looked down frantically, lost his balance, started to fall backwards, and then lost his grip on the stone and it dropped square on his face as he hit the ground.

"I ate the children of the eaters of the snake!" Stinky Fingers shouts, and leaps over the fallen warrior directly toward a group of young boys in the second line.

The boys turn tail and run as do all the warriors. The Be-ek-em coalesce into a herd of runners, all headed south. The Na-is-mit warriors didn't bother with chasing them, as they already knew they could run for hours in the desert without water. They did it for sport.

The expedition returned to the Brazos as heroes, the celebration lasted for days.

The empire of Heart and Tail of Tatanka was born. Hot stayed at home on the Brazos, coaching up new ranks of warrior of all shapes and sizes, while Stinky Fingers roamed to the North and East, building an empire through peaceful competition, but sometimes, usually after a mother insult, outright stone age savagery or magic. Stinky Fingers had many sons, and they built leagues that spanned the entire continent. The very first empire, started right here in Texas.

Aren't you lucky?

Texas archaeologists say that the Empire of the Tail and Heart of Tatanka lasted several centuries. We have no historical record of what became of them, though there is an account related to a historian by a former Navajo captive. Legend was that a new people from the ice lands, who liked to stand in the open like idiots on the prairie and use sticks to knock round stones into gofer holes, brought with their strange sport a strange disease and wiped the entire Brazos River empire out of existence. We might never be able confirm this, but it sounds about right. One of the constants of Texas History is never trust people from the land of ice and snow.

The Canadian

One of the first rules of historical research that every good Texan needs to know is: Question your sources. You might ask yourself, how do we know about the origins of the Brazos empire, but not about the fall?

That's a very good question. The answer is in the story.

In 1852, in the early years of Texas statehood, there was a wandering scoundrel with a Scottish accent and a long beard who was making rounds in South-East Texas. He'd swindle a farmer out of a goat, using paperwork and a taxman's badge, or a rancher out of

cow, or a merchant out of his wares, and then skedaddle on to the next town. He'd go by different names, and every few months he would just disappear, only to fleece another set of towns a few months later.

After stealing the winter stores of a poor rancher's widow with seven little mouths to feed, *Los Diablos Tejanos* were called in and formed a posse. They found a tall German woman who'd been abducted by natives but sold to a white man, whom she lived with in a cabin on the shores of the Brazos for several weeks. She remembered the man spent many hours painting pictures of the river, and kept the paintings rolled up in a trunk. The man had a notebook with him and would often pull it out to make sketches and notes. He never hurt or abused the woman, but she was made to cook and clean the cabin. She spoke little English but the man knew enough German to give her instructions. The Rangers spoke to other victims and several others remembered a sketchbook. The German woman also remembered what she thought was an Indian man who came to the cabin one day and talked to the man for several hours. A day after the Indian visited, the man left and didn't return for two days. The woman was confused, because the man had led her to believe he was sent by her brother. The woman followed a trail and eventually came across a group of settlers who got her to Navasota where she was able to write to her brother, who had settled in Waco.

The woman had not been able to point the Rangers to the cabin, but they roamed the area to the south of Navasota on the east side of the river. Several farmers in the area told the Rangers they thought the Indian was Karankawa Joe, a crazy man who was known to rob cabins for liquor and had been suspected of poaching, but nobody knew where he lived or where he came from. The Karankawa were down near the coast and none of the local tribes claimed him. That might have been all there was to the story.

In 1854, the Rangers finally caught up with old Karankawa Joe. Joe was a Tejano who'd been captured as a boy and traded around the tribes before finally ending up with a Karankawa family who made the mistake of introducing him to alcohol. The Rangers found Joe in a jail in Houston, after getting beaten for trying to cheat

at cards. He admitted to trading with the Scotsman but not to any criminal activity, only that he took him to the site of the ancient people to make his drawings. He had told the man that the German woman had made it to town and reported on him, and that *Los Diablos Tejanos* were looking for the both of them, and at that time, Joe had headed east for Louisiana for a few months. The Rangers had Joe guide them to the cabin, but it was empty and abandoned.

"My people don't like this area, it's got the spirit of the tall warriors," Joe told the rangers.

"You mean the Tejanos? Or the Injuns? Just who is your people, Joe?"

"The peoples who drink from the Brazos," said Joe.

"Fools. You mean the fools who drink from the Brazos? I don't let my horse drink that water, partner."

The mystery of the Scotsman remained.

In 1889, a young teacher named James Naismith from Canada arrived at Navasota, showing a painting of the banks of a muddy river, that many said resembled the Brazos, but no one recognized the exact location. It was suggested that he find Karankawa Joe, who was known to be found on the Brazos.

James found Joe on the river at San Felipe where James explained his quest. His father had died when he was young, and he was trying to put together missing pieces. His father had told him that this painting was the secret to a great treasure, and when his son was old enough, he should go to Texas and find the cabin. His father had died before explaining any more.

"I knew your father," said Joe. "He was a scoundrel, the *Los Diablos Tejanos* was looking for him, but he only stole to support his work, which was the study of the magic people of the forest."

"Like Leprechauns?" James asked.

"I ain't never been to Ireland," Joe said. "How would I know? They live under mushrooms here, where do Leprechauns hide?"

"Under clovers, I think," James said, unsure about the subject.

"Damn, everything is bigger in Texas," said Joe. "Even our magic little people."

"What was he studying exactly? You said he was making drawings?"

"I'll show you," Joe said, guiding James to his canoe. They paddled upriver from San Felipe for a day, then hiked up along the banks for an hour, where they found the cabin, just like the painting. The cabin was abandoned, and falling apart, but Joe was able to find a shovel. Together they stood on a rise that overlooked both the cabin and the river, matching the painting exactly.

"You see the flower," Joe said. "That's a bluebonnet. Only flower in the whole picture, like over there, between the trees."

"There's no flower now," James said.

"It's August. What kind of teacher are you anyway, think you find a bluebonnet in bloom in August?"

"Physical Education," James said.

"What's that?"

"Sports."

"Oh, sports? That's - there is a white man's word for it, I just can't think of it right now, but there's a word for it. You are into sports, and he told you this painting was your great treasure?"

"Sentimental?"

"No, not sentimental," said Joe, pondering how to explain. "Like if you had an entire bag of spoons, but you really needed a knife."

"Are you a waiter, in a restaurant?"

"No, partner. Just forget it. Your father was obsessed with the cave of the magic people, he wanted to sketch all the drawings, and just would steal food and trick these stupid Texans out of money to pay for his drawing materials."

"My father could draw?"

"He is the one who painted the painting. You didn't know that?"

"If he could draw, I wonder why he pointed me towards athletics. I always thought I'd be a good artist, but papa pushed me towards the physical arts."

"Well it is probably because *Los Diablos Tejano* was looking for a man with a Scottish accent who could draw, and let me tell you,

Los Diablos Tejanos ain't afraid of any Northman. Your dad have a Scottish accent?"

"A bit, because he was from Scotland, yes he did."

"He was afraid of the Rangers, partner. He couldn't let them Rangers figure it out."

They walked down the rise to the spot where the flower had been in the painting. Joe handed James the shovel and said, "You're the athletic one, dig. Only a fool digs a hole in August in Texas."

"In Canada, we can only dig holes in summer, because the ground is frozen most of the year."

"Did you ever think maybe that was a clue you should head south?"

"No, we love it. In winter you can skate across the frozen lakes. We love to play hockey, it's the sport of the kings."

"Boy, you better get digging, and stop with this stupid talk. There's only three sports worth playing, unless you're a snake eater. Frozen lakes!"

James dug for a few minutes and then hit something solid. It was a chest. He finished digging, and pulled it up out of the hole.

"Gosh darnnit, Joe. It's locked. What are we going to do now? Do you think dear old dad left a key, maybe there's a clue in the painting?"

Joe picked up the shovel and with just a bit of force, dropped it on the chest, which split open.

"That's been buried in Brazos mud for thirty years, boy. I asked him what the point of locking it was if he was going to bury it, but he wanted a lock, so I sold him a lock."

James picked apart the chest and found several wooden rollers and another smaller box that contained a notebook. The drawings were very precise, and the first one looked very familiar to James.

"Baseball, this looks like a drawing of a baseball game, sort of like a rule book."

"That's exactly what it is."

He pulled another tube and un-scrolled the painting. It looked a very basic game of football, which James had believed was derived

from the noble British sport of rugby. He'd always believed baseball, grand American past time, had originated with the British as well. He said as much to Joe.

"No. What happened was the Conquistadors captured a Tonkawa medicine man and made him tell their translator the rules of the three ancient sports of the Brazos empire people. The Tonkawa was clever, so he told them the rules for the two lesser sports – baseball and football, and instead of telling them the rules of the most noble game, he substituted the rules of the snake eater's game, and told them that it was the most noble game of the Brazos people that made them great warriors that conquered the entire continent. As a secret part of the *Treaty of Madrid*, the British and Spaniards split up the rule book, the Spaniards thinking they kept the most noble sport for themselves. But the Spaniards was who got tricked."

"What is most noble sport? You mean cricket?"

"No, fool. It's that last painting, and the whole notebook is filled with sketches."

James pulled the last painting out, it was a reproduction showing Big Mama slamming the ball in the basket. He flipped through the notebook, pages and pages of sketches of basketball plays.

"How come nobody came here before?"

"They all get sick. This cabin here, was built by a really tall Swede, he didn't get sick but he didn't know how to talk friendly to the people," Joe said. "My people run him off."

"Which people?"

"What do you mean, fool? My people."

"Did my father get sick?"

"No, he didn't."

"You aren't sick either," James said.

"I got herbs and potions and stay drunk most of the time, counteracts the magic. Curious that you aren't sick. What did you say your name was again?"

"James Naismith."

"Sounds awful similar to Na-is-mit."

“What’s that?”

“The name of the old people who lived here, the tall warriors whose empire stretched from sea to sea. Your father told me another name, a name I didn’t know back in those days when I was young. But I recognize it now. He told me his name was Lokey.”

“Lokey? I’ve never heard of a Scot name like Lokey, but I grew up in Canada. Maybe it’s like a secret name.”

“Secret name?”

“Like, Karankawa Joe, that’s not your Christian name, but like your Texas name.”

“No, that’s my name. The Karankawa gave me to a Lutheran family, they already had a son name Joe, so they called him Bible Joe and me Karankawa Joe. That’s my name, they signed me for school, and it what they put on the wanted posters back in the day when they was looking for me and your pa.”

“Well, that’s all good, but can we move on to the cave? I’d like to see it before I head back to Canada.”

“Okay, pick up your pa’s stuff and we’ll head over there. We’ll need a lantern.”

They stowed the notebook and paintings at the cabin and begin the hike through the forest of the magic people.

As they walked, James commented, “These are some big mushrooms. Hey, what’s that stand over there.”

There was a wood box nailed on a platform hung between two trees.

“Oh, that’s my explosives cache. Anybody up and down the river, they need something blown up, they know to get word to Karankawa Joe, he’ll come on his canoe and blast what needs blasting.”

“Where did you get the explosives?”

“Didn’t your mama teach not to ask too many questions?” Joe asked. “I had eight different mamas, eight different languages, they all taught me that. You people in the ice lands don’t got no mamas?”

“Excuse me, sir. I implore you, I meant no offense.”

“The cave is right up here, up this little gulley there’s the entrance, but the rock extends back out into the hill. I had to chase

bears out of here twenty years ago, but all these Germans done the job for me since, them people can make sausage out of anything.”

“Speaking of Germans, what was the deal with the German lady that got my father chased by the Texas Rangers?”

“Oh,” Joe said, “That’s the magic people. They convinced your pa that the German lady was the witch Aslaug. After a few days, your father figured out the magic people were just pulling his leg, cause she refused to do anything magic or evil. These magic people – well any Texan or Tejano, big or small, we like to pull pranks when foreigners first arrive. We got all the traditions, depends on where the foreigner is coming from, we got a set for the ice people, and for the land of the sun people. Pranks always funnier the longer you can keep them guessing.”

“So you’re like doing it to me now, talking about magic little people?”

“Oh, no. Magic little people is real. We got different types but they ones live on the Brazos is funny. I don’t care for the little people down in the snake land, vicious little buggers. These fellers up around here, they’re pretty good, if you can stay upwind.”

Joe guides them to the entrance of the cave, a rock outcropping deep in a gulley. Joe stopped, sparked the lanterns, and they squeezed in through the narrow entrance. The first chamber was small, just below the surface. It had some venting and there were clear runoff trails from the drainage. Joe pointed through a narrow crack.

“You’re bigger than I am, if you don’t think you can squeeze, you can get on all fours, it’s wider down at the bottom.”

“I think I can make it,” said James.

They squeezed through the meandering crack and came into a big wide cavern, with a tall roof.

“What’s that smell?” James asked.

“Bat shit, mostly. There was all kinds of critters up in here when me and your father came here. It was the strangest things, whole mess of bats come flying out that cave just as we got down in the gulley, middle of the day. We see bats round here all the time, but it’s usually at dusk.”

"I don't see the bats?"

"I guess they moved on. I been in caves where you can creep up and grab one without waking the rest of the cauldron."

"Why would you want to grab a bat?" James asked.

"Boy, I done told you about asking questions. Are you the spawn of a beast or something, what kind of mama let you talk like that? I about done had it!"

"Pardon me," said James. "I meant no offense."

"Come on then, we're here. Get up close to the wall."

They brought the lanterns close to the wall, the walls were unusually smooth, but covered with a thick layer of dust.

"What I heard from some old Tejanos was back before the Spaniards came, the Tonkawa said there used to be a tall wizard who'd walk these woods and watch over the place, and sometimes he'd let the people come up here and look at the walls, it was always clean like a shrine back in those days. There was a lot more dust when your father was here. "

Joe pulled out his foot long Bowie and gently scraped the wall clean.

James was amazed.

"It's exactly like the drawings and the painting."



FIGURE 1 - SKETCH OF CAVE DRAWING FROM JAMES NAISMITH'S NOTEBOOK

"Yeah, your dad would come up here every day for a few hours, as long as he could take it, smoke builds up pretty quick, and it is hard to see the entire picture at once, so he would take his time, do his doodles, then head out for a breather."

"This might be one of the greatest historical discoveries of all time."

"Discovery? All the old people know about this place, know where it is at least."

"Don't you understand, Joe? This sport – this might be the origin of sports, athletics. This might be the original game the ancient people of America played, before the Greeks. I wonder why father kept it to himself, he could have become a famous man, a legend of archaeology."

"*Los Diablos Tejanos*," Joe said. "Like I told you, all the folks round here know about this place, just none of them can go into this

forest without getting sick. If he'd gone back to the ice lands and talked about his 'discovery' the Rangers would have got word, brung him back."

"As I understand it, he was just accused of some cheating and theft, no violence. He could have waited a few years."

"Wouldn't make no difference," Joe said. "The thing that got the Rangers in the first place, I don't know if you heard, was the widow of a Ranger named Walker. Your father stopped by and she fed him after he chopped some wood. He got up to some tricks after dinner, and there was a scuffle and some words I won't repeat, and your father got hold of their rifle and loaded up the widow's mule with their stores and took off. That oldest boy, well, when the Rangers came out and heard the story, they took that boy with them and trained him up. He's like a major big ass in the Rangers now, Cordell I think his name is. You should be scared. Boy, word gets back up to Austin you sniffing around down here, he bound to come after you instead of your daddy. It's his mother got the insult. *Los Diablos Tejanos* not going to forget about that."

They worked their way along the wall for another hour, until the buildup of smoke got to be too much. They went back to the gulley.

"You say my father finished with the sketches?"

"Well, yeah. He was just making the painting out of the clay flat, near the Swede's cabin. He was trying to figure the dimensions out, where the trees were in the old people's time, so he could figure out how far apart to put the baskets,"

"Interesting. Doesn't really matter much, does it?"

"Well, if you look in the notebook you'll see some symbols, look like hands? Your father thought those symbols with like the ancient's version of math. If he could figure out where the trees were up in the flats, he could translate them into your people's math, so he could know how large to build the building."

"That sounds like the first instance of writing. Unbelievable, the ancient Texans invented writing and mathematics? What kind of building?"

"He called it all something fancy like a gymnasium, like he was an ancient Greek or something. He said, it was too cold to play this kind of sport outdoors in the winter in your lands, but it was the perfect indoor sport. My people, we go indoors, we like to take a nap, not run around."

"I'm beginning to see where my father was headed with this."

"Yeah, he shoulda never pissed off *Los Diablos Tejanos*," Joe said. "He could have fooled them people up in your lands into believing he invented the most noble sport. I guess he sent you down here to continue his dream."

"Joe," said James. "How long before word gets around to that Ranger?"

"Oh," Joe said, "I'd give you at least a week. All I heard about was a Yankee asking about where a painting was painted up on the Brazos. Unless you want to square it away for good with Walker, I'd go ahead and head out in the morning."

Joe and James headed back to the cabin, where Joe pan fried a catfish with mushrooms, herbs and some chili peppers. After dinner, Joe commenced to heavy drinking and fell asleep. James pretended to sleep for an hour, then quietly snuck out to the stand of explosives on the river. He opened the box, took out two sticks of dynamite and a long fuse and returned to the cabin. He crept back in, made sure Joe was still sleeping, and gathered the notebook and the painting tubes into a makeshift rucksack he made with his blanket. He planted both sticks of dynamite under the cabin and lit the fuse.

The explosion blew the cabin to pieces, killing Joe.

James waited until dawn, and then carried an entire box of dynamite down to the cave. He placed sticks around the entire gallery and entrance, and then rolled out a very long fuse. The entire cave blew up and then collapsed, leaving no trace. It was now just a rumble of rocks in a muddy gulley off the Brazos.

Young Texas Historians, I think you probably can figure out the rest. No one in central Texas ever saw Karankawa Joe again, it was just figured he'd gone to the river. Cordell Walker, Texas Ranger,

did eventually hear about the strange Canadian with a painting looking for Karankawa Joe.

There was one trader who'd run across a man fitting the Canadian's description. He'd passed the man carrying his belonging in a blanket on foot, on the trail up east of Tyler. The trader took pity on the man, who said his name was So-no-lo-ki.

"So-no-lo-ki? Sounds like an injun name," said Walker.

"What I said," said the trader. "I asked him, was he injun, he was dressed like a Yankee, but had this smell about him, needed a washing. He said he came from the land of ice and snow."

"He was gone in the morning," said the trader. "Didn't steal nothing, and I didn't think much of it, but when I got up to Kilgore I asked around about the stranger, guess that's how you heard about it."

No one else had seen or heard about the stranger, and Walker had to give up his search.

This same James Naismith went back to Canada, and then tricked his way into a teaching position at the YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts. Not long after starting this position, he claimed to have "invented" the game of basketball, never mentioning to anyone his adventure in Texas.

Students, you now know the origins of the two common Texas sayings. *Never Trust a stranger James*, and *Beware the Canadians, they'll steal your dreams*.

Students, not all Canadians are bad, you just got to test them out make sure they've taken their medicine before you can share your plans with them. And Jameses, Texas born Jameses are always okay. Even James Bowie and James Fanin weren't born in Texas.

Stranger James just needs to be fully committed to Texas before you let one saddle your horse.

The Defender of Texas History

Critical students of history may have some questions. If Naismith killed Karankawa Joe, and destroyed the caves, how do we know what happened? How can this be history, and not just a ghost story? It can't be history if it's just stories, that's the first rule of history. You must have evidence.

That brings us to the most important part of the story, and the lesson that brings this tale into modern times.

On Juneteenth 1984, Hakeem Olajuwon, a Nigerian student athlete from the University of Houston was in New York City for the NBA draft. Like all foreign or out-of-state students attending Texas universities, he had taken the mandatory Texas History course that is normally required in the seventh grade before formally enrolling at U of H. The very same class you are now taking, minus this chapter of course, because it wasn't history yet.

Hakeem was picked first. After the picks were announced, new NBA commissioner David Stern invited Hakeem, Sam Bowie, and Michael Jordan, the top three picks of the draft, to accompany him back to NBA Headquarters on Park Avenue. The three rookies had a good time, happy and laughing it up, excited about the future. Michael talked the most. Hakeem noticed that when Sam was talking Michael got this strange look in his eyes, like he might try to rip Sam's throat out with his teeth.

Stern took them to his fabulous office.

"Make yourself at home, Akeem and Michael," Stern said. "Sam, come with me. You two wait here, we might be a little while."

Sam followed Stern.

"I wonder where he's taking Sam?" Hakeem asked.

"They giving Sam the talk. Sam going to Portland. Go to Portland, you get the talk."

"What talk, Michael? Clyde went to Portland last year, I wonder if he got the same talk?"

"Something about the bigfoots. Clyde need to get a different talk, this year, *Dream*."

"What do you mean, Michael?"

"Clyde is a guard. That mean he gets to guard me. That's the talk he needs. How to look the fool talk. You know what a fool is, *Dream?*"

"Clyde is no fool, Michael. He is my friend."

"Don't matter, you a friend, you my brother, you my teammate, but sure as hell if you trying to guard me, you a fool. A fool is who I wag my tongue at, *Dream.*"

"You better not stick your tongue out at me, Michael."

Michael looked up at Hakeem and saw he was serious. "We cool, *Dream.* Don't you worry. It look like I got to face you again in the playoffs and you got a real team, I got a plan."

"What's your plan, Michael?"

"You'll know it when you see it," Michael said. "I'm bored, let's look around."

They got up and started looking at the walls of David Stern's office. Michael stopped at one framed advertisement, Doctor J selling Converse shoes. "This is what I'm talking about, *Dream.* I'm going to sell me some shoes, make an athlete rich."

"That's good, Michael. We can lead the way for a more equitable income for everyone in the league."

"Whatcha talking about, *Dream?* I didn't say athletes, I said rich athlete. Me. There ain't going to be anything left for any other athletes to sell. I'm going to sell me some shoes, sell me some razors, like Joe Namath, sell me some underwear."

"Underwear? Who wants to buy your underwear, Michael?"

"Everybody going to want to wear my underwear, *Dream.* They want to be like me."

"I don't think so, Michael."

"You just wait. Going to sell me some water, put some Mike vitamins in it, call it Mike's water. Mike's steak, Mike's shoes, man those going cost. What they pay you for rent down there in Houston, *Dream?*"

"Nobody paid me for rent, Michael."

"What the hell kind of fraternity is *Phi Slamma Jamma* they don't pay your rent? You *The Dream.*"

"A nice apartment around the University costs about \$300 a month."

"That's it, *Dream*. Shoes is going to cost \$300, you want to be like me."

"I think your plan needs some more thought," Hakeem said. "What's this? It's so familiar."

Hakeem approached a painting that was hung on the back wall of David Stern's office. It was a landscape of a muddy river in the background, and a grove of trees and a grassy flat, with a single blue flower.

"This is so familiar," Hakeem said. "This reminds me of something."

"Is that where you lived in Africa?"

"No Michael, I lived in Lagos, a huge modern city, one of the biggest in the world."

"I thought you was from Africa?"

"Michael, did you ever go to class and learn anything at all?"

"Class? What the hell is class?" Michael said.

"I remember now," Hakeem said. "This looks like the place Moses took me. On the weekends, after working out at Fonde, Moses would drive me out of town into the Texas countryside. It looks exactly like that place. Moses said it was a special nature preserve for tall people."

"You went on a picnic with Moses Malone?"

"Several times. It was peaceful. He would go out there, have some food, take a nap, and get in touch with the spirit of rebounding."

The painting was hung high, right at Hakeem's eye level. He noticed that the painting was slightly askew. He reached up to level it, happy to find a familiar reminder of Texas in the strange city of the ice and snow. He nudged it a half a turn to the right, the wall swung backwards and a passageway opened up.

"Good job, *Dream*," Michael said. "You found the place they keep all that NBA money. Let's go."

Before Hakeem could stop him, Michael charged through the passageway.

"I told you," Michael called. "Gold."

Hakeem crouched down and made his way through the narrow passage. At the entrance, Michael was inspecting a pyramid of gold bars stacked on a pedestal. Beyond that, Hakeem saw another pedestal, on which sat a notebook. Along the walls hung framed blow-ups of drawings and a few paintings.

"Look at all this gold," Michael said.

"Look at these sketches," Hakeem said.

The first sketch had a plaque.

In 1889, basketball founder James A. Naismith discovered the very first archeological evidence of a civilization that invented sports, art, writing, mathematics, feminism, and fishing on the banks of the Brazos River. These ancient people built a sprawling civilization thousands of years before these innovations were passed on to Eurasia and Africa. Naismith tried to bring his discoveries to academia but was hunted by The Texas Rangers who wanted to keep the secrets of history to themselves. In consultation with industry leaders, it was decided to keep most of the history secret, as it could upset the existing power dynamic. In a last-ditch effort to keep the history secret, the evil Texas Ranger Cordell Walker blew up the caves and this notebook is the only remaining evidence of the location of the true cradle of civilization, in what is now Austin County, Texas, on the shores of the Brazos.

"This is unbelievable. Michael, basketball, not soccer is the first true sport. And it was invented by the ancient Texans."

"Michael Jordan invented basketball," Michael said, gingerly stuffing the small but heavy gold bars into the pockets of his jeans. "That's all people going to remember after I pay all the companies with this gold."

"Pay what companies?"

"Pay the companies to let me sell the stuff, so people can be like me."

"I don't think that's the way it works, Michael. They are supposed to pay you."

"First you got to pay them, or else they'll let somebody else sell the stuff. I got to pay a lot, so the companies will stop paying Magic and Bird."

"I don't think so," said Hakeem.

"James Worthy told me," Michael said.

"I was told never to trust a stranger James," said Hakeem. "In Texas History."

"Texas History?" Michael said. "What the hell is that?"

"It's a class – actually it's the most important class, for if we forget the past we will fail the future. Didn't you have North Carolina history in school?"

"*Dream*, you funny," Michael said. "North Carolina history began on February 17th, 1963 when Michael Jordan was born, 'cept I wasn't born there I was born in Brooklyn. No, North Carolina history began in New Orleans on March 29, 1982 when Michael Jordan brought the Tar Heels the championship. That's North Carolina history."

"I think it's just something they say in Texas, but they made us memorize it," Hakeem said.

"We got one like that in Carolina. '*Never let dumbass Daryl hold the keys*,'" Michael quoted.

"I don't know anything about Daryl," Hakeem said. "I know a coach named Carroll, works for the Rockets."

"Daryl, Harold, Farrell, Carol, it don't matter, sounds like Daryl, it must be like Daryl," said Michael. "Just don't let nobody sounds like dumbass Daryl hold the keys."

"So many things to remember. There was so much to learn about Texas. I had to take the class before they'd let me enroll at the University. I was jet-lagged from the flight from Nigeria. There was something else, maybe, *Take your dreams to Canada*? It was so hard to stay awake, I never had jet lag before that. I should really take the yearly refresher class when I get back to Houston."

"You funny, *Dream*."

Hakeem continued to inspect the drawings. He was amazed. He had always thought Africa was the cradle of civilization, but given what he knew from Texas History, it wasn't surprising. Baseball, football, soccer and fishing, and one of the drawings had symbolic representation of hands, an ancient form of mathematics. He always knew there was something special about basketball, he was magnetically drawn to it the first time he dunked the ball, despite having loved soccer growing up.

"Michael," Hakeem said. "I think James Naismith stole this from Texas. This is a treasure of Texas History. It's the first duty of a Texan to preserve and protect Texas History. I'm going take it back with me."

Hakeem took the notebook and carefully hid it in his jacket pocket.

"I'm going take this gold," Michael said, all four pockets stuffed with gold bars. He also had gold bars stuffed into his shoes.

"Michael, you look ridiculous. Commissioner Stern will notice you, and when we get down to the cars and the hotel, somebody might see you and take pictures."

"Nobody going to see me, *Dream*."

"Michael, I'm looking right at you. I can see the gold bars sticking out of your pockets."

"That's because you special, *Dream*," said Michael. "I noticed that when we played you the first time. Don't know why, maybe you from Africa, but nobody ever see what I don't want them to see. Maybe we got the same ability."

"What do you mean, Michael?"

"Like when you foul some fool in a game, and the referee never sees it. They never see me foul, even though I foul a fool every time. You get that?"

"Michael, if I foul somebody, I make sure that they see it."

"Well, I think it's cause I was born under a bad sign," said Michael.

"Michael, we were born a month apart. What are you talking about?"

"I don't know what it means, it is just something all the fool's mamas been saying about me since I was in high school. 'cept for this one tall fool I played, he was blond and from Sweden. His mama always screaming at me, '*Low-key! Low-key!*'"

"Low key?" Hakeem wasn't always sure about American slang, but he was pretty sure that Michael Jordan didn't fit the definition of *low key*.

"I don't know, I figured it was *born under a bad sign* in her language, it's what all the other mamas would say."

With a great deal of effort, Michael slogged through the passageway back into Stern's office, followed by Hakeem. Hakeem rotated the painting, and the passageway closed behind him.

A few minutes later, Commissioner Stern came back without Sam Bowie. "Thanks for waiting, you guys want to go out to a club or something, or go see a show?"

"Thanks commissioner," Hakeem said. "I need to go back to the hotel, call my parents."

"Me too," said Mike. "It's been a long day."

Stern guided them down the hall. To Hakeem's genuine surprise, David Stern failed to notice Michael's unusual bow-legged gait. Hakeem walked behind the two of them and as if by magic, David Stern adopted Michael Jordan's gait, two cartoon characters, tall and short, slogging down the corridor, like they were on a planet where gravity was three times that of Earth's. Once they got in the elevator, it got very awkward as Commissioner Stern insisted on standing very close to Michael, and Hakeem was sure Stern would notice the gold bars, but Stern just stared up at Michael's face, silly grin on his face.

"Commish, you going to give me all the phone numbers of them guys run all the companies?"

"Sure, Michael. There's really only one number you need to call, my friend, Keyser."

"That's good," Michael said. "I have to talk to too many people, somebody going to look like a fool."

"Very good, Michael."

They made it down to the street level, and sure enough there was a crowd of people waiting, most of them screaming, "*Michael! Michael!*" but there were a few shouting, "*Akeem, The Dream!*" Nobody seemed to notice the bars of gold sticking out Michael's pockets.

When he got back to the hotel, Hakeem quickly went to his room, gathered his things, and headed straight for the airport and took the red eye back to Houston. He called Houston Rockets assistant coach Rudy Tomjanovich, who, like Hakeem, wasn't originally from Texas, but had taken the mandatory Texas History for adults refresher course with the rest of the team in 1971 when the Rockets moved from San Diego to Houston. They went back to Rudy's house and consulted the Young Discoverers handout he'd kept from his class. Rudy knew what they had to do. They immediately drove to Rudy's office at The Summit and made photocopies of all pages of the notebook. They then hid the notebook in a secret chamber in the basement of The Summit.

Rudy consulted businessman Tilman Fertitta and together they took the copies to Austin, where the three of them met with Governor White. Governor White made a few calls, and the next day, Vice President George H.W. Bush arrived with his eldest son, where they discussed options. A secret emergency session of the Texas Legislature was held, and a writ of vengeance was levied against Canada for theft of historical treasure. Much of the legislature urged immediate retaliation, but in a rousing speech, Bush the younger urged caution.

"We can use this to our advantage," Bush said.

"They stole our history!" shouted one lawmaker.

"Did they insult anybody's momma?" Bush asked.

The crowd hushed and whispers rang throughout the halls of the Texas Capitol. Lawmakers in the pocket of the petrochemical industry were mesmerized by visions of having a Texan in Washington who sounded like a Texan. Lawmakers on the other side of the aisle were just mesmerized by the twang.

In 1994 Hakeem Olajuwon would bring Texas its first NBA championship, avenging the metaphorical insult by defeating the tall

warriors from the lands of the ice and snow in seven games. The next year, he would defeat the giants from the land of the dwarves in four games, repeating as champions.

George Bush signed the secret *Treaty of San Felipe* on January 21st, 2001 just four days after taking office as President of the United States. Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien ceded Texas all mineral royalties in Alberta, in payment for the insult of historical theft, and Texas agreed to not reveal to the world the facts of the matter, that it was a Texas woman and not a Canadian who invented basketball. The treaty was to last eighty years or until the oil ran out. It was a huge secret win, in the early days of his presidency.

The glory of Bush's Texas patriotism was short lived – on August 2, 2001 the Canadians pulled off the ultimate '*stranger James*' double cross by trading for Texas hero Hakeem Olajuwon. Bush had the joint-chiefs prepare for full land-invasion of Alberta but then dropped the plan. Mysteriously, he stopped taking phone calls from Texas politicians the day Jay-Z dropped *The Blueprint*.⁵ The *Treaty of San Felipe* was erased from U.S. History. Just another illustration of the necessity of having our own Texas History.

Hakeem Olajuwon would escape from Ontario in a jet the next summer and return to Texas. Unfortunately, due to some miscommunication and lingering effects of the Rockets' misjudgment of value, neither Rudy nor Hakeem mentioned to management the hidden location of Naismith's notebook. Today, the notebook remains hidden in the basement of Lakewood Church, who took over the Summit in 2003.

Texas History remains safe in God's hands.

Hakeem Olajuwon is a historical legend and a defender of Texas History. Without his keen eye and ability to completely ignore Michael Jordan's cloak of vanity, we might never have known that Texas was the cradle of civilization and birthplace of human genius.

It's funny how history works and some people just happen to be in the right place at the right time. Texas, fortunately, has been

⁵ A redemption story.

home to many of them, such as the likes of Jim Bowie and Sam Houston. Hakeem is one of those people, a hero with a life too good to be true. When it is true, it's history.

Aren't you lucky?

Remember young Texans, never trust a stranger James, and watch out for the dream-stealing Canadians. It doesn't matter if you were born here, or just got here just as fast as you could, it's your duty as a Texan, to appreciate and preserve the legacy of our history.

Our heroes are but human.

It is the stories we tell about them that make them genius.

Rocket Man, out

August 2nd, 2022

The Book of Scoot

SECOND FOUNDATION

Version 2.13





NASA FLIGHT CREW STS-51-L

Ellison Onizuka
Christa McAuliffe
Gregory Jarvis
Judith Resnik
Michael Smith
Dick Scobee
Ronald McNair

The Foundation is Gratitude

DICK SCOBEE

Scoot(1)

It is my belief that by the manned exploration and exploitation of the potentials of space and the planets, we satisfy a basic need of mankind to explore and probe the unknown, and I simply want to be an integral part of that exploration.

- Excerpt from Dick Scobee's NASA interview essay, answering "Why I want to be an astronaut."⁶

Integral – adjective – essential to completeness

What is the integral component of manned exploration of space and the planets?

One Scobee is the unit that defines that integral.

I stake this Scoot with that mission. To define the integral of manned spaceflight. I seek others who knew the man to share with me what they think is the integral. I want to know what Colonel Scobee thought.

I'll ask his family.

*O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave*

Dick Scobee lived with his family in my hometown.

Bravery.

I think the integral of manned space flight is bravery.

The Foundation is Gratitude

⁶ Taken from *Silver Linings*, by June Scobee Rodgers

JUNE SCOBEE RODGERS

Scoot(23)

In *Collecting Responsibility*, I recount a moment of inspiration. I wrote about *Challenger* in terms of a postcard I'd lost. It was a critical breakthrough in my thinking. Later that night it was as if the basketball gods were blessing my idea because KPJ destroyed the Bucks, dropping 50 points. It is a good story, and it happened like I wrote it.

It wasn't until much later that it hit me; I'd already finished writing the book and realized something even more profound. It's an even better story. This work is a testament to genius, so I'll keep the embellishment down to a Texas minimum.

I was curious, I remembered *Challenger* well, one of the few moments in high-school I can see clearly through the cobwebs of time. I also remember who I was, what I was like, and there was some incongruity. How did my mom get me to a NASA nerd camp when I was fourteen?

After a full year of 6th grade, I'd left my nerd roots behind. I still read science fiction but wasn't hanging out with other nerds who did. Summer after 7th grade was the last run of my suburban rap/breakdance crew. Thankfully, this occurred before digital photography. Home videos of teenagers doing stupid stuff was for rich people. Summer after 8th grade, I was hanging with kids who listened to metal and hated school, friends I'd have through high school. I know I wasn't volunteering to go to a NASA summer camp.

My Uncle Clay, retired Air Force, had broken the news to me years before. One summer it was, *with your glasses you'll never be a fighter pilot*. Gave it to me raw, then told me how he found out he was colorblind. I think the story was he didn't even know until after he'd already signed up for the Air Force, hoping to become a pilot. The Air Force doctors told him. No jets for Uncle Clay, but he made a career out of military intelligence.

I'd left astronaut dreams behind in grade school, along with the nerds. I wasn't a computer geek. I didn't even like to play video games at home, though the arcade was cool place to hang out. I couldn't understand how I ended up at NASA camp at that age. I asked my mother.

"You got picked because you were good at math," my mom said.

"Oh really," I say, not sure why that would have made a difference.

"Did you have to pay?"

"Oh, no," said my mom. "You went because it was free."

And then I got it. I get along with my mom great now, but as a teenager if there was a way to get me far away from her and it was free, she was first in line. My mom could walk into a supermarket in the 1980s with a box of coupons and walk out with two carts of groceries and \$50 cash in rebates.

She'd camp out like it was for concert tickets, to get rid of me for a few weeks in the summer. I can see my teen-self would have made peace with the fact it was all the way in Clear Lake, far away from where anybody might know me where I lived in Cypress.

I had no interest in computers at all. As a kid, I'd wanted to be an astronaut, but as a teenager, no way.

I don't remember much about the camp. We did a tour, saw mission control. We looked through a window at the computer room. I saw my first hard drive at NASA, it looked like and was the size of a washing machine. I remember the engineers were dudes in short-sleeve collared shirts who'd chain smoke and wore bad glasses.

I do remember learning to code on the Apple IIs. Only time I ever used Apple anything until I got an iPhone 25 years later. It wasn't even a real programming language, but this educational language called Logo that drew pictures on a screen. I don't really remember them teaching us much, but they must have. I don't remember if June was even part of the programming class, but she was part of our day.

While we were in some lecture scenario, I remember June talking about science fiction and ethics and the **Laws of Robotics**. I never read Asimov's robot novels, I'd gone straight to *Foundation*, since my

Uncle Clay had told me was the best Asimov. I might have mouthed off something to that effect.

I remember meeting Colonel Scobee, it might have been on the last day of camp. I hope I was respectful. I remember thinking, *he looks like somebody's dad, not a badass pilot.*

He was.

Both.

The tragedy is what stands out in my memory, what happened after. It was only half a year between the camp and the accident, but in a teenager's timeline it felt like a decade.

There was a lot of expectation in the news and among Houston schoolteachers about a teacher in space. We were freshmen boys, I'm sure we mocked it. My youngest kid is that same age now. His disdain for teachers matches mine at that age, for the same reason. People are complex, and kids see things through their direct experience until they've experienced more. Raising teenagers sure does change your perspective on being a teenager.

I have no memory of knowing that Dick Scobee was commander of the teacher-in-space mission ahead of the tragedy. I bet my mom told me and I tuned it out. That January day, realizing what it meant after the accident, was sickening. That memory became a stake in my identity. How shallow we can really be.

I can't blame teenagers for their thoughts on teachers and authority. Look how long it took me to realize the true value of this gift from June Scobee.⁷

Her gift was the greatest leverage in real terms anybody has ever given me. I raised a family and provided for them with this gift. I was 51 years old when I realized it. I was 14 when I went to that summer camp. 37 years. I have made an entire life out of what June taught me I could do in a free summer camp.

This is where the story diverges from what most teachers would want.

⁷ A reliable Texan source has confirmed that the camp was created by June Scobee and sponsored by Texas A&M. Karma at work, a lifetime of Aggie jokes has finally caught up with me.

I had no interest in technology in high school. I read a lot and was smart and could figure things out. I didn't like being forced to learn what I thought was basic stuff. In retrospect, the skills I'd learned to that point, going to elementary and middle schools in Cy-Fair ISD prepared me very well for the life I've had. Long before the internet, I had the capacity to figure out what I needed to know and the skills to find the answers. I could read, I could write, and I could do math and basic algebra, and that has served me well though my life.

After 11th grade we found a loophole, and me and my friend dropped out of High School, took the GED and enrolled at University of Houston. Neither of us took to college any more than high school, but since we weren't 18 yet, it was an acceptable compromise for our parents. The next year, we both took off for Los Angeles. I pursued music and writing for a few years, doing a variety of odd jobs to support myself.

I knew what a PC was but never used one. In fact, rather than buy a computer, I spent a few hundred bucks on an integrated word-processor with a printer. I had zero interest in technology or engineering, I was writing about what I wanted to write about.

I had a bunch of food and retail jobs, delivery driver, bank teller, liquor store, gas station attendant. In 1992 I was working for a redneck in Waller delivering horse trailers, when my vagabond friend set me up with an air-conditioned job repairing laptop computers. I ordered parts and kept the operation moving along and learned how to put laptop computers together. The secret, I learned, was that if you put a laptop back together and have an even amount of screws leftover, you did something wrong.

That company was somehow connected to Tony in New Jersey, and it went under. My drummer's mom worked at Compaq Computer on the night shift assembly line and used some insider voodoo to get me a temp job under her general protection. We worked on a Printed Circuit Board (PCB) manufacturing line, we made huge motherboards for servers. It was an air-conditioned job, and I learned several roles rapidly, but none needed computer skills. Late at night, you had to stay awake or risk instant termination if you were spotted dozing by a supervisor. It was very difficult as the line

was often stalled for hours at a time due to changeovers or supply chain issues. There was one lady who did stuff on the computer. She'd open reports and print them, then collate them manually and then print out another report, which she would give to the boss. You couldn't read books on the assembly line even if there was nothing to do. I quickly figured out the best thing to do was look busy when there was nothing to do or somebody would make me do something I didn't want to do.

Computers in those days came with a set of manuals, including a BASIC programming manual. Extra books that came with new systems were always around the line and were the one kind of reading material allowed on the floor besides specifications, work orders and schematics. I found that I could teach myself BASIC by figuring out how to collate all the files and print them out and save the lady some time each night. It probably took about a month.

Didn't go like I thought when I unveiled my innovation to the lady. Turns out she liked staying late to turn in the reports so she could get a half-hour overtime pay every day. Plus, complaining about staying late to the young people gave her a way to stay awake all night. My drummer's mom rescued me, but I was banished to another shift in a negotiated truce.

After a couple years of this, I found my way into an engineering team. I started doing tech stuff around the lab. I automated some stuff with batch files. An opportunity came up for a programming assignment in C, and my brother had a book about C, so I told them I was qualified. Turns out, I was, thanks to June Scobee.

From that path on, my career through digital logic has been smooth sailing. The basic skill I learned back in 1985 was all I needed. I call that integrative thinking, the ability to break down problems into smaller pieces, and solve the pieces. It's a common skill, used in all industries, with or without code.

The more you do it, the better you get at it. The real power is your ability to use code as a tool to apply even greater leverage. That's just looking at real world problems the same way as you solve code problems. It doesn't take four years of high school and multiple years in university to learn those skills. It takes identification of natural

potential and a little directed on the job training. Generations raised on digital logic are naturally more adaptive to integrative thinking because that is how software works.

I remember I'd been programming in C++ for about two years when I finally got some real training in a class we took at Compaq. My mentor, who was a C programmer only, but light years beyond me in engineering terms, was sitting next to me struggling with some examples in C++ which was new to him. I remember him watching me do some trick on the command line in Windows that was illegal in Unix and him pointing that out and I felt so smug.

That memory is truth. How leveraged by the past we are. My bag of tricks in programming was like a cheat code in a game to him. He'd had to solve all these puzzles himself, through incredible hours of focused thought. Every time I ran into a difficult programming problem – even in 1998 – all I had to do was write the problem clearly in English and type it into a search engine and I'd find at least a hundred ways somebody had solved the same problem.

Leverage is the prime component of any engineering task. Digital leverage is the most powerful tool man has ever created. That is because all engineering is digital engineering. Good engineers in every field are the ones that use software as a tool. *Engineers are responsible for the tools they use.* That's the most valuable engineering lesson. The sooner engineers understand their basic toolset, the more effective engineers they will be. All industries are potential innovation frontiers for young people trained to use digital tools.

Coding isn't for everybody.

This ability is not the same as being good at math. The math we use in integrative thinking is very simple.

I don't know how June Scobee identified that I was a good candidate to learn how to code.

I suspect if you ran the same studies to identify kids who'd be good engineers in the 1980's on kids from the 2020's, it would result in a much broader candidate pool. How could it not? We give very

young children digital devices to play games with, sometimes before they can walk or talk.

It could be some kids are good at games because they have an innate talent, like some kids can learn to juggle. I doubt it. Video games are designed by people who like to play games, so there's a level of insight you can gain from that.

There are some kids who will always beat a game, given enough time. You can study those kids, and by studying the choices they make, figure out the deductive logic they are using.

Some will follow logical deductive paths. Essentially, they reverse engineer the algorithms the game designers used.

Others might just use a monkey-with darts and make a map of what works, either mentally or by recording results.

Both approaches are good strategies to find a solution, and both are demonstrations of integrative ability. The map strategy requires many more iterations. In digital engineering that is natural leverage – something computers can do very quickly. It's easy to design experiments to iterate through a set of possibilities, that's the leverage of Moore's Law.

Digital games usually make you go through a lot of work to keep experimenting with a map strategy, so kids with this ability may tend to give up more easily than those who use a more deductive path.

Other kids might just be lucky. Some will have extra-leverage – they used a cheat code. That's super integrative leverage – exactly what I do when I Google a solution.

This approach is a fair way to study and find kids that could be productive engineers.

You find these kids, wherever they are, teach them to code in a summer camp, and they will have a valuable and marketable skill that they can use directly in almost any endeavor they choose. More directly, you make sure these kids have opportunity to develop that skill in direct and equitable ways.

In Academic settings most kid's prime motivation is to get it over with. Applied learning is often driven by the desire to increase earnings, a real motivator. Having a chance at a high paid profession is a motivation that leverages all parties involved. Dedication is

required, but knowing you have the basic skills is all it takes to get started.

Learning to code directly changed my life. Thanks, Mom, for banishing me to the free NASA nerd camp.

I remember Dick Scobee as just an ordinary guy with an extraordinarily cool job.

June Scobee didn't come across as ordinary. The correct Texas term for June is "sparkplug." She wasn't an ordinary mom and schoolteacher. She was like a live action version of a Jetson's supermom, whose kid would be expected to grow up become a general in the Space Cadets. She expected something of her students.

Thank you, June Scobee Rodgers.

I wonder what the success rate of those kids June taught that summer?

After the accident, June and the families of the crew founded Challenger Center. Challenger Center's mission is a natural extension of STS-51-L's mission – The Teacher in Space Project.⁸ Challenger Center inspires and educates students in STEM through hands-on lessons that simulate space missions. In the 35 years since Challenger Center opened, they've taught millions of students and enabled hundreds of thousands of teachers.

What's the value of June's contribution to our civilization? It's very valuable, but immeasurable with property. You can't put a dollar value on dreams. They have intrinsic value.

If you read *Silver Linings*, June's book, you know she had to fight just to study what she was interested in. She gets her revenge by forcing the next generation – me – to learn something I was good at but had absolutely zero interest in. How ironic. And recursive. And Texan. And wonderful.

Genius.

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teacher_in_Space_Project

That's the mission for Scoot(23). To give every child on the planet the same opportunity that June gave me. To learn to code for free.

I don't know how I'm going to do it.

I know who I'm going to ask for help.

Thank you, June.

Ad astra!

The Foundation is Gratitude

STEVE FAIRCHILD

Scoot(25)

I recently had the experience of going full circle in my career, going back to a similar role to where I started. In engineering, it is an enlightening experience – though I imagine that would be true in any career. One of the first things you learn is you weren't nearly as smart as you thought you were way back when.

I was lucky to start my engineering career at Compaq in Houston in the 1990s. In those days, Compaq had a mix of electronics industry veterans and hard charging young engineers, and though I had little experience, I was able to fit in well.

The engineer who most influenced my career was Steve Fairchild. As somebody who was on the front lines of a rather competitive battlefield, it is my opinion that Steve was the person most responsible for the success of both SAS and SFF HDDs.

Back in those days, I didn't think so fondly of Steve. He was big, loud and could be intimidating. My relationship with Steve was all business, I never got to know him outside of work, but I imagine in real life he was giant teddy bear. While he was unmerciful in his engineering criticism, it was all about the engineering, never personal or vindictive. I have watched Steve cut down both vendors and peers in exactly the fewest words possible and without any room for rebuttable. You did not act like you knew what you were talking about around Steve unless you knew what you were talking about.

Our team was responsible for qualification of SCSI HDDs, and my role was programming the Big-Real Mode DOS utility we used for testing, Psuite. Sometime around 1998, I ported Psuite from Compaq's internal SCSI driver library to Adaptec's CHIM library. In a rush to get their chip into production, I had been required to spend weeks in California helping Adaptec debug their chip with my software. It wasn't a lot of fun for me or for Adaptec, as it consisted

mostly of me waiting on them to deliver some code to test and debug.

We had a plan to port Psuite to some modern 32-bit OS, and my idea was for Windows. My key selling point was vendors had to have Windows SCSI drivers, so we wouldn't need to do any babysitting, we could just give them the Windows Psuite application and they could debug their own drivers without my direct help. My own motivation was: there wasn't much career potential programming on DOS and the other alternatives were too specialized, but there was plenty of work programming on Windows. Linux was too immature and had even bigger technical challenges to overcome than Windows.

I never had the nerve to ask Steve or anybody else what Steve's actual job was, he was a member of the technical staff and knew everything. His role on our team was performance. His role for our software development team was to greenlight the performance of our software.

My approach is always code first, research later. In the early days of our discussion, I had already ported a basic version of Psuite and proven that the performance would be within 1% of our DOS tool. These were spinning HDDs, and even though we were testing the fastest available on the market, they were terribly slow compared to most other subsystems on a server, and I had the general attitude that performance methodology was not a big deal. My biggest challenge was on the functional side, where we did not have the same visibility to SCSI protocol compliance that we did with our DOS built-in driver. I had the support of my manager for the relative performance, with the caveat, *"As long as Steve is okay with it."*

Steve wasn't okay with it. After presenting my 1% data, Steve tore my plan apart, coming up with a list of around ten performance items that I would have to address. I seem to recall that at least half of the list were things that weren't even measurable with our DOS tools, so not only did I have to code these new measurement techniques on Windows, with its rich libraries I could leverage, but then go figure out how to back-port the same techniques to DOS so that I could prove to Steve there was no difference.

This went on for months. We'd have these weekly meetings, where I'd want to talk about all the really clever coding I done to move forward on the functional side, and Steve would tell me I'm wasting my time until I'd finished the methodology tasks he'd created for me. It bugged me, because 90% of the problems we worked on were functional error recovery problems, and Psuite was clearly the best tool in the industry for that. Hard Drives are and were always slow, and it did not matter what software tool you used to measure them, they'd still be slow.

I remember after one particularly brutal meeting, I'd gone back to my office to reconsider what Steve had said about my data, and thought I'd caught him in a mistake. I took my printout to his office, and within about 30 seconds, he'd completely turned me around. Not only did I misinterpret my own data, I hadn't even been asking the right questions. Before I could escape, Steve had me sit down, where he proceeded to draw a diagram on paper and lecture me for an hour, when all I wanted to do was go back to my office and cry. I know the subject was system level performance, and I know what Steve was trying to convey was that methodology was the most important part of measurement; the numbers themselves didn't matter. I think he was trying to make me feel better about doing all this work that had absolutely no relevance to the current technology but might one day help him with whatever he was working on. I didn't feel better about it. Boy, do I wish I'd paid attention, would have saved me a lot of trouble down the road.

When I completed the last item on Steve's list, and I presented the data to Steve in our team meeting. He said, *"What are you going to do about aborts?"* No, *"Good job, man."* or *"You were right all along, I should have never doubted you,"* but what are you going to do now about the real problem I was keeping you from working on all along? By this point, I'd had to complete so much code to validate Steve's requests, the project was pretty much done, except for the hardest part. Steve was no help for me there. Apparently, he'd taught himself the Windows Storage Stack fast-path by having a young engineer do a bunch of seemingly useless experiments for him. He had no idea how the error path worked – that was for mortal engineers.

I left Compaq not long after finishing that project to work for Adaptec. During the early days of SAS, I worked very closely with Steve as a customer and he treated me with respect and continued to mentor me, especially when it came to how to deal with my own bosses. After I made a particularly embarrassing and potentially career ending mistake, Steve was gracious and gave me the single best piece of career advice anybody ever gave me. I'll keep that gem to myself for now, but one thing Steve knew was that in computer business, the engineers and not management or marketing held the real power. For Steve, it was more than just an obligation to point out engineering weaknesses and come up with clever solutions. I believe he felt responsible for making well engineered products, and he knew with the right methodology and data, he could always hold marketing and management to account.

Sadly, Steve was a mortal engineer. I don't remember the dates, but it seems like he got sick right around the time HP shipped SAS. I didn't see much of Steve after that, we went out to lunch a few times a year. In the beginning, Steve initiated these lunches. Steve always paid for his own lunch, long before it was HP policy not to accept paid meals from vendors. Somewhere along the way, I got the reputation as one of the few engineers Steve would go out to lunch with, so every few months marketing or sales of whatever company I was working for would get the idea that we could make an inside run at some kind of influence or get some information from Steve. I didn't bother with subterfuge with Steve, he would have seen right through it, I would just come right out and tell him what my people were after, and he'd usually say something like, *"I'm not going to tell you that."* Then we'd have a nice lunch and talk about engineering.

In 2010 I took a job in China. We corresponded a few times via email, Steve was very curious about both life and engineering in China. I came back to the states at the end of 2012, but only saw Steve once, walking very slowly down the hallways of HP. He looked exhausted but took the time to remind me that we needed to catch up and tell him all about China. This never happened. Steve died in 2013.

I've had a very successful career, and for the most part, I've been able to do the kind of engineering I think Steve would be proud of. I never got to tell him what he meant to me when he was alive, but as I've grown older I think about him more and more. Every time I smell some weak engineering from marketing, or management, or other engineers, I ask myself, "*What would Steve say?*"

Steve engrained in me the notion that engineers are responsible for the tools they use. And Steve said to me, "*The methodology is the most important thing.*" The industry lost a legendary engineer when we lost Steve. He was the best engineer I've ever worked with.

This work is dedicated to Steve Fairchild.



STEVE FAIRCHILD

The Foundation is Gratitude