This will explain everything

Jeff Duff

Bonus Chapters

Stop the Train, I've Busted the Band 2

In the belly of the Nullarbor

Adventures in Brisvegas 18

Orgy / n. an event at which
indiscriminate sexual activity takes place

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MELBOURNE BOOKS

Bonus Chapter

Stop the Train, I've Busted the Band

In the belly of the Nullarbor

Not long before the release of their debut album, *Snow White and the Eight Straights*, Kush had a minor hit with a powerful arrangement of the Henry Mancini instrumental 'Peter Gunn'.

The B-side of this vinyl single was one of our own songs, entitled 'Can't You Hear Me Calling', a song about a couple of hipster lads out on the prowl. This song, with its overtly homosexual lyrics, became a catalyst for many of the homophobic taunts that were thrown my way.

It must be noted that I had nothing to do with the composition of the song, but it was written very much with me in mind. Our pianist Ian Mason, who wrote the song, understood the dilemma that I was experiencing each time I walked onstage. Remember, this was the early seventies in conservative Melbourne when being gay was considered a sickness. We had no idea we were delving into taboo territory, we were just doing what we do, and making music — after all, it was only a song.

On the strength of this recording many touring opportunities were offered to the band. We were all very keen to broaden our audience base and take our live show on the road. The fact that we were one of the largest rock bands in Australia at the time, with ten musicians, made touring an expensive proposition, but we were prepared to economise. We were receiving a lot of airplay and plenty of positive feedback from all over the country. Radio stations, particularly in Western Australia, were getting behind our debut record, and quite a few well-known Perth venues were offering us healthy deals to perform live. Obviously with the airplay and frequent television appearances the local promoters were keen to get us over there to cash in on our popularity.

Apart from the obvious appeal of the band's music and trashy costumes, there was also a curious fascination for the frontman — namely, the feminine-looking guy with the wharfie's voice. The local press in Perth were quick with predictable, if not humorous, headlines. My favourite from one of the music papers: CLOWN PRINCE OF ROCK RETURNS WITH MORE MUSICAL MAYHEM!

Prior to this interstate interest all of my colourful television appearances had been screened nationally, and I guess the folks from the West had drawn their own conclusions about my sexuality. It didn't help that on most of these shows I was seen camping it up on stage dressed in drag. The hosts of these TV shows would either refer to me as a gay icon or a trailblazer of camp rock.

Because I've had to deal with similar questions about my sexuality for most of my life, I've become completely immune to any disparaging remarks, humiliating put-downs or physical confrontations. When I was told about the possibility of performing concerts in Perth I was eager for the band to tour as soon as possible. Our management negotiated a deal with a Perth promoter for the band to travel from Melbourne to Perth by train on the Indian Express. I knew this would test the patience of everyone in the band, especially me. There was no way of cushioning the blow of what we had to endure. Back in 1973, it involved a four-day journey across the

Nullarbor Desert, confined for most of the time with one other person in a small compartment! Bring on the cabin fever, throw in the compulsory claustrophobia.

The band stocked up on alcohol, marijuana and the odd amphetamine, while I packed a vegetarian banquet with my very own homemade wholemeal scones for whenever we had a drug-induced munchies attack. Even though we would have preferred to fly, we hoped whatever money we saved on airfares would go directly into our band kitty and not the promoter's pocket. The Indian Express, fashionable as it was for the time, was not equipped with any of the modern conveniences we were accustomed to. The train was not our preferred form of travel, but we were determined to have as much fun as anyone could possibly have on a rattler.

One of the first problems we encountered when we arrived for cabin allocation was the sleeping arrangement. It wasn't so much a problem for me as I was never going to sleep anyway, but my insomnia became a smokescreen for the real issue. The band member who drew the short straw would have to bunk up with me. As my perennially insecure band regarded me as a highly suspicious roommate it was decided that no-one wanted to chance my bedside manner, especially with the lights out in such a confined space. Just as I had become immune to any snide remarks from ignorant punters regarding my appearance, so too had I become immune to homophobia within the music industry — and this sometimes included my own bandmates.

I have learned to accept the fact that everyone is entitled to an opinion. I have also learned to ignore most opinions. I have no hard feelings and I'm not bitter in any way; I'm simply annoyed that people judge on appearances. If only folks had the same outlook as Milton, my local Elizabeth Bay postman. Anytime I would bump into him at my post-box he would greet me with, 'Jeffrey, you ain't weird, you just different, that's all.'

The accommodation was soon sorted, and like good little boys my musicians paired off with whoever they felt most comfortable. They excitedly went in search of their cabins, which were grouped together in the carriage next to the dining car. I found myself in a cabin of my own in a separate carriage, which was a great relief to me and probably the best result for the other guys in the band. My little hideaway was far enough away from the other band members for me to practise my nocturnal routines unperturbed.

I settled into my cabin, rolled a joint, put on some music and enjoyed the laidback atmosphere. My mood changed quickly when I was disturbed by a knock on my door. 'Tickets please,' was the call from an authoritative voice outside my cabin.

I quickly flushed the last of the joint down the cabin toilet, but unfortunately the huge cloud of marijuana smoke that was wafting from

under the door enveloped the ticket collector, triggering a coughing fit. When I eventually opened the door, the sight of the guard struggling to breathe during his frantic bout of coughing instantly sobered me up. I helped the guard regain his composure, gave him some water and quickly showed him my ticket. He was out of breath and a little too embarrassed to ask any questions. I told him he needed to see a doctor and maybe should take some time off. I don't think he realised it was my marijuana that had caused his attack. The train hadn't even departed the station and I was already killing off the guards!

I decided to check on the other guys in the band. As I walked along the narrow corridor of the carriage on my way to my bandmates' cabins, the pungent aroma of marijuana gently drifted through the train. Oh yes, it seemed as though it was going to be a very stoned journey.

By the time I arrived at band HQ the boys were totally ripped. They were huddled together in two cabins, with towels covering the ventilation ducts so as not to let the precious fumes escape.

It was not yet eight in the morning, the train hadn't moved an inch and we were all off our faces. Some of the late arrivals were shuffling into their cabins so we all headed for the dining cabin for breakfast. As we sat down at our tables we realised that we were the only diners. We looked at one another and began laughing. A kitchen-hand heard us and, wondering what the commotion was, came over to our table and asked us what we were doing in the dining cabin. When we told him we were waiting for breakfast, he could not disguise his laughter. He then told us one of the guards would notify each carriage separately when it was their respective time to dine, beginning with the carriage furthest from the dining cabin. As our compartments were closest we would eat last. We were pissed-off but there was nothing we could do about it, unless we exchanged our tickets with passengers from the first couple of carriages.

As we headed back to our cabins the train finally pulled out from the station, beginning its long trek out west. We were already experiencing extreme boredom, and as I looked out the window of my cabin I wondered how I was going to keep myself amused for four days and nights. The train was completely booked out, with some passengers boarding further down the line from the few allocated stops along the way. I figured that as the train was so full I was going to have to behave myself a little more than if the train was half empty or, if you prefer, half full. My logic behind this was that with more people on the train there would be more people complaining about my night-time activities. Having a cabin of my own would be enough encouragement to search for new adventures during the wee hours, which could lead to trouble.

About an hour into the journey my carriage was summonsed to breakfast. Now, I say summonsed because of the very official and authoritative

manner in which the guards were beginning to behave. The train was beginning to feel more and more akin to being trapped in prison. Our cabins were rapidly transforming into cells, the guards were morphing into hardened warders and the corridors would now become our exercise yard. Any request beyond our ticket stipulations would be confronted by strict protocol and when assessed, dumped unceremoniously on the tracks, never to be requested again.

Out of curiosity I decided I'd check out what the nearby cabins had on offer. Oh, and I was also hanging out for a cup of tea. Back then it had to be English breakfast, please, and it had to be made with real tea leaves — no tea bags, thank you, or I would hold my breath until I turned blue. The dining carriage, which looked prehistoric, reminded me of one of those carriages from a Wild West movie.

Passengers were very polite, very conservative, but kept mainly to themselves. Most tried not to look in my direction, a few had a second glance, some smiled nervously, while others appeared a little startled when they caught a glimpse of me. I was dressed in a very old, battered pinstriped grandpa suit, which was about ten sizes too big. It was a beautiful woollen suit from the 1940s, with matching vest. I needed braces to hold up my trousers and I needed my old top hat and cane to complete the look. I always wore thick mascara and black eyeliner, so I guess my overall appearance was not dissimilar to that of silent movie star Charlie Chaplin.

I sat down at a table on my own and ordered a pot of English breakfast. I could sense that people were following my every move with great fascination. By the time I had settled into my seat a couple of young children came over to my table and asked me why I was 'dressed like a clown'. I asked them why they were dressed like they were, and they told me their parents had chosen their clothes. 'Will you still want your parents to dress you when you're older?' I asked. 'No!' came the cry in unison. 'Well then, maybe when you're my age you'll want to dress like a clown because you're sick of wearing clothes that your parents have chosen for you!' They went straight over to their parents and screeched loudly so everyone in the carriage could hear: 'We want to dress like a clown, just like him!'

I quietly finished my tea and headed back to my hideaway. Along the way I could hear loud snoring coming from the cabins that my fellow band members occupied. I was tempted to knock on their doors and wake them all, but soon thought better of it. Realising they had most of the dope, I thought I should try to stay in their good books for as long as possible. I would definitely need their weed to stave off the tedium of the journey at some stage, particularly when I knew I would finish off my own private stash in no time.

Later in the day we all met up in the bar, which was a separate licensed booze carriage. I figured this was where we would probably spend much of

our time. There was more space, it was certainly more casual and it didn't feel as claustrophobic as either the dining carriage or our prison cells. This carriage made the journey feel like a holiday, almost like day release. Unfortunately, some of the guys were getting stuck into the booze fairly savagely and were beginning to show the effects. Graham our drummer, away from his wife for the first time, had not fared so well with his first major stint of binging. He threw up severely after trying to keep pace with the serious drinkers. The warders made him clean up the mess himself, then sent him to his cell to sleep it off. The following day he had no recollection of the incident.

This first leg of the journey was going to set a precedent for what was to follow. We all knew that it was going to be an 'excessively excessive' train journey. If the boredom didn't kill us, then the weed and the booze definitely would.

A few other passengers began arriving for a drink, mostly married couples, but there were a couple of very attractive girls who caught my eye. As it turned out they were travelling to Perth for a holiday and were also big fans of our band, so they were very approachable. Fortunately, or unfortunately, they were sharing a cabin together in the same carriage as mine, so the three of us decided we'd meet for dinner that evening.

When I returned to my cabin I decided it was time to have a little fun, so I rolled a big joint and proceeded to get stoned in record time. The inflatable dolls, which I used as stage props, had been packed away in my suitcase, but now it was time to introduce one of them to the unsuspecting passengers. Who would it be, Bambi or Byron — girl or boy? I'd decided to name the dolls when I first purchased them. Bambi was a buxom blonde, while Byron was a well-hung black boy with a curly Afro. I had organised a long-term contra deal with a leading sex shop in Melbourne. They would supply me with the dolls as long as I mentioned their chain of adult shops, notably Kinks Sex Shop in St Kilda, if you're interested.

As I was already considered suspicious cargo I thought I'd play it safe and take Bambi on a trial run. After she was inflated enough to support my weight, I dressed her in her favourite little black dress. Bambi and I then decided we'd cruise down the corridor to the bathroom and freshen up. The adrenalin was pumping through my veins — a prankster's high!

As I closed the cabin door behind us we began dancing up and down the corridor. I was singing and I guess I was making a bit of a racket. A couple of inquisitive passengers stuck their heads out of their cabins, wondering what all the commotion was.

Peering down the corridor I noticed the same train guard I had nearly suffocated earlier, and he was quickly approaching. I was oblivious to anyone around me and danced straight into him. Startled and shocked at

first, he didn't know how to react. Before he could say anything I came out with an obvious and thoroughly acceptable explanation. 'Oh, sorry. I'm rehearsing for my shows in Perth.'

What could he say? I wasn't hurting anyone and I wasn't damaging any property. The guard was an older chap with a bit of an attitude. I knew he was itching to ask me a few personal questions, but before he could I excused myself and returned to my cabin.

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After dinner with the two girls we headed for the bar, where my musicians later joined us. The guys rolled a handful of huge spliffs, which we smoked openly in the bar lounge. The barman was the only outsider who knew what was going on, and as he was a pot smoker he shared our booty. In return we were served very generous amounts of alcohol — free! Probably not the smartest move from the very stoned barman, but one that was appreciated by the band.

By the time last drinks were called everyone in the lounge, including the girls and myself, were completely wasted. In fact, a couple of the guys from my band were so far gone that they lay totally prostrate on the carriage floor, almost devoid of any signs of life. Not surprisingly, they were found in the same floor positions, dead to the world, when the bar was opened the following morning.

I was keen to get back to my cabin and continue partying with the ladies.

When we finally staggered back and settled in, I rolled another joint. As the three of us were cuddled up closely together we decided to share the same bed. They were both very stoned and very comfortable, so they decided they'd stay in my cabin for the night — um, ok girls, but don't try anything!

And so ended the first full day on the rails. Well, that's not entirely true. In fact, I'd say most of our first day was spent very much 'off the rails'. As the train rattled on I quickly realised that's where we were headed.

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Time seemed to crawl along so slowly, and even though the train was rattling onwards we didn't seem to be going anywhere. The dry and barren desert outside our cabin windows remained unchanged for what seemed like years. One of the more exciting events on this mundane route happened when we'd stop at a station in some deserted ghost town to drop off supplies — to the ghosts, I presume. Passengers were encouraged to leave the train and stretch their legs for a few minutes.

By now the girls had taken it upon themselves to move in to my cabin

full-time. Kelly became a lover after the first night. Philippa, or Flip as she preferred to be called, came to some sort of arrangement with Kelly whereby she would join us for sex. I wasn't new to the *ménage à trois* arrangement, but in the past it had been at my instigation. In this situation I figured I was at the mercy of two nymphomaniacs, and I couldn't really reject their advances. Well, I could, but I was enjoying the attention so I figured I'd grin and bear it.

The band had congregated in the lounge bar again, drinking and getting stoned. I hadn't seen much of them since I'd met Kelly and Flip, so I figured they deserved the pleasure of my company. Their dope seemed to be holding out, and still worked exceptionally well. Getting 'out of it' was their only solution to the tedium. Ever since the scrutiny I received in the dining cabin on the first day I was eager to give passengers something to think about. I gathered most of my musicians together over a drink, and told them of an idea I had to relieve some of the boredom, for both themselves and the passengers. Eventually three of them were willing to get involved in my planned naked streak.

The other guys were not convinced and John, our leader, thought the whole idea was juvenile, threatening to leave the band if I went ahead with the prank. I wasn't his idea of the perfect front-man for Kush. He disliked so many areas of my performance, from my overt campness to the way I abused audiences. I was always being reprimanded for doing my own thing onstage, although he did approve of my vocal abilities.

We all disappeared into our cabins and rolled very large joints, at least everyone but John. I guess he was trying to set a more mature example for the rest of the band, and besides, he was much more of a lush than a pothead.

I had noticed very early on that the air-conditioning ducts in each cabin were connected to one another, which meant that if we exhaled our marijuana smoke directly into the vents, everybody on the train would get stoned! What a cool idea. We would first pacify the passengers, then go loopy. They'd be so blissed-out we'd get away with anything.

We locked ourselves in our cabins and began blowing the smoke into the ducts, then immediately covered the vents with towels. It was a shame seeing all that beautiful smoke disappear into the ducts, wasted on passengers who probably wouldn't appreciate its magical powers. We then waited for about half an hour before it was time to attempt the next step in my plan. This was when the real fun began.

It was about 7pm and the dining cabin was full with hungry passengers, unaware they were getting a little stoned. I'd already organised Kelly and Flip who, along with my three carefully selected musicians, were ready to put the plan into action.

The six of us headed for the dining cabin and took up our position in the area between the carriages. We checked that no-one was coming. As we hastily removed our clothing we all began laughing. Observing one another's reaction to our naked bodies was funnier than the actual situation. Kelly hid our clothing in the ladies bathroom in case we had to backtrack quickly.

'Okay, this is it. Let's go,' I said, imitating a military commander. As I opened the door of the dining carriage my naked comrades fell into line behind me. There was no hesitation; we were on a mission! We marched slowly but confidently up the centre aisle, completely in the buff, singing 'I Feel Pretty', as horrified passengers choked on their pudding. We were still very stoned, but I'm positive we would have gone through with the same exhibition if we were stone-cold sober.

I began laughing, which triggered laughter from Kelly and Flip, which in turn set off the other three guys into hysterics. By the time we'd paraded our way to the end of the carriage every diner had stopped eating, and most passengers were giggling, unashamedly enjoying the parade of naked flesh. Even the waiters stopped serving. Nobody said a word.

As we turned around to commence the march back to our starting positions, the entire carriage stood and began applauding. I looked behind me to check on the troops, and to their credit they held their line proudly. The girls were still laughing and obviously getting most of the attention; they knew they were in the spotlight and loved it.

When we reached the end of the carriage we turned around to face the smiling passengers and bowed politely. I think most of them were stoned from inhaling the marijuana escaping from the ventilation system. The applause continued until we disappeared into the corridor between the carriages.

Unbeknown to us, my favourite grumpy-arse guard was on patrol and heading straight for the scene of the crime. As I scurried into the corridor I was laughing hysterically. Unfortunately, I collided head-on with the grumpy guard, who was furious. There I was, standing before him in the most vulnerable state, completely starkers. In a fit of uncontrollable mirth, I lost control of my bladder and began urinating all over his leg. It's the first and only time I've ever pissed myself laughing, and on this one occasion grumpy happened to be in my line of fire.

After having a good ol' perv at the girls he ordered all of us to get dressed and said he was going to put in a report to the railway authorities. What else could he do? He stood there watching us as we quickly put on our clothes. Well, let me re-phrase that: he stood there watching the girls get dressed.

I knew this wouldn't be the last we'd hear from the head warder.

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My entourage took no time in getting back into their excessive routine, unperturbed by any threat of punishment from the guard. We continued to share our dope with other passengers via the ventilation ducts in our cabins. Our favourite guard seemed to have swept our little indiscretion under the mat for the moment.

Flip moved out of my cabin after a disagreement with Kelly over lover's rights. This basically meant that Kelly had become my mistress for the remainder of the journey. I had no say in this decision; it was a girl thing. I'm trying not to sound chauvinistic when I say this, as I've never really considered myself worth fighting over. I believe the girls struck some sort of deal between them. For whatever reason, Flip decided she should get out of our space and Kelly should continue as my lover. I was more than happy with this arrangement.

The train was halfway across the desert, literally in no-man's-land, when it suddenly came to a screeching halt. Everyone on board had been subjected to the same relentless tedium of an unchanged landscape for the last few hundred kilometres. I know it must sound like a pathetic excuse for our continuous marijuana abuse, but I'm confident even the Good Lord would find justification in our smoking in order to alleviate this unbearable monotony. It was excitement enough alone that the train was merely stopping, without even knowing the reason why.

Passengers moving toward the exit points were stopped in their tracks by an announcement booming out of the train's distorted public address system: 'Please remain on the train — stay in your cabins, do not alight!'

After a couple of minutes there was a knock on my cabin door: 'Mr Duff, open the door now.' As I sheepishly opened the door I was confronted by two very official-looking police officers. They stood there for a moment, checking out the topless Kelly, eventually directing their attention toward me.

'We'd like to ask you a few questions Mr Duff,' the older, stern-looking officer boomed. 'We received a report from a distressed guard on this train, suggesting that you and some of your entourage have been acting offensively. Mr Duff, is it true you paraded naked through the dining cabin, and when confronted by the guard you almost urinated on him?'

I was a little unprepared for this confrontation, particularly considering it was in the middle of the desert. The sight of two burly police officers at my cabin door caught me completely off guard. It never ceases to amaze me how the slightest contact with police is enough to straighten up even the most unruly rock musicians. 'Well, officer,' I said, 'we are performers and

have been rehearsing a particular part of our show, which involves a little nudity. It is in no way offensive, and is performed in a very tasteful manner — after all, it is art. I'm confident you could ask any one of the passengers present at the time of our parade and they would agree.'

As for me urinating on the guard, all I can say is that it wasn't entirely my fault. I was on the way to the bathroom after our little parade and the guard wouldn't allow me to pass. He insisted on scolding me. When I told him I had a weak bladder and desperately needed to take a leak, he told me not to move until he had finished with me. He moved right up close, eyeballing me, and continued to shout in my face. I was busting to relieve myself and I just couldn't hold on any longer.

'I'm sorry officer, but that is the truth,' I said. 'While I won't deny the allegations, I honestly don't feel that I've offended anyone.' Stoney-faced, the officers then said they would question passengers before they'd decide what action should be taken.

It wasn't long before a few of the guys in the band came to my cabin to find out what was going on. When I told them the police were questioning passengers they frantically ran off to hide their dope. Meanwhile, almost all of the passengers who were in the dining carriage at the time of our 'performance' had heard that the police were considering laying charges against everyone involved in the strip. The concerned passengers gathered together, ambushing the officers, convincing them that we strippers not only entertained, but also helped relieve the boredom of the journey. They also suggested that the guard making the complaint was not even in the carriage when the 'tease' took place, and was overreacting. The officers were amazed at the support I had from the passenger committee, but seemed a little suspicious.

By the time they arrived back at my cabin they had come up with a deal that they said would satisfy everyone. Looking pleased with himself, the officer in charge approached me with a confident smile. 'Okay Mr Duff, according to your loyal followers it seems that if you're guilty of anything then you're guilty of having a little fun. Now, we can't possibly press charges for that, but at the same time we can't allow the little problem of you relieving yourself in public to go unpunished. It is an offence to urinate in public and, taking into consideration your weak bladder, I think an apology to the guard is all that's required.' The guard in question was standing in the corridor, listening attentively to the officer's verdict, while a crowd of passengers had also gathered to hear the outcome.

I stepped out of my cabin and walked over to the guard and offered him my outstretched hand. We shook hands firmly and I smiled without uttering a word. With that the passengers broke into a polite applause, and the police departed from the train.

Flip moved back into my cabin, which was encouragement enough for me to continue my decadent lifestyle.

My escapades on the train would later prove to have set an ugly precedent for my overall behaviour in Perth. As I write now there is strong evidence to suggest that these incidents follow familiar patterns, which have continued throughout my career. It seems whenever I'm confronted by authority, restrictions or rules I immediately rebel, and usually end up suffering the consequences. No-one ever seems to get hurt, though. In fact, the incidents always seem to evolve from offensive behaviour to inoffensive farce. The price I pay is usually only a blow to my dignity.

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Our debut gig in Perth was at a venue called Beethoven's, which was a very groovy club in the heart of the city, widely known for its cool but often whacked-out cliental. It was one of those clubs that was very reminiscent of London's iconic sixties rock clubs, with the Marquee Club coming swiftest to mind.

There was definitely an air of expectation surrounding our first gig. There had been a strong media build-up, mostly cantered around our stage act and the conflicting reports about my sexuality. Shock-horror, it was the early seventies and most folks would prefer to believe haughty queens such as myself didn't even exist, let alone parade around in public. There was very little mention of our music. I guess they knew what to expect, having already heard our records and having seen most of our flamboyant television appearances.

Beethoven's dressing room was upstairs above the stage. This would become the scene of many of the band's infamous indiscretions.

The club was jam-packed for our debut, and in our first set we blew the place apart. In the break we ventured upstairs to chill. Waiting for us were the local dealers we had encountered at our hotel. Their very presence implicated everyone around them, but I guess they were a necessary evil. They were cool when we needed a little extra dope, but they were occasionally shadowed by the suspicious hand of the law.

I don't know what it is about getting wasted that makes me want to run around naked, but that seems to be exactly what happens. Once again I persuaded a couple of band members to join me in an excursion of blatant exhibitionism.

Back onstage we played a couple of wild American soul-funk tunes, and once again the crowd went berserk. When the rhythm section went into extended solos I signalled to my three band allies, and we quickly departed from the stage. Upstairs in the dressing room we undressed.

I painted my penis first, and the other guys quickly followed suit. Within a couple of minutes the four of us all had orange, iridescent, glow-in-the-dark penises. We wandered down to the side of the stage and turned off all the stage lights, except for the neon blue lights, which needed to remain on for the full effect. The remainder of the band were still indulging in long drawn-out solos and the crowd was still diggin' it but we were about to give them a little something extra.

I was first in line. As I led my fellow exhibitionists to centrestage we broke into a ridiculous dance routine. It was something I called the rubber-man dance, and it involved a lot of penis shaking and occasional penis stretching. I didn't realise at the time, but we were definitely blazing the trail for shows such as *Puppetry of the Penis* that manifested thirty years later. The music was getting faster and faster, so we danced more frantically, trying to keep up with the tempo of the band. With the stage lights turned off, all the audience could really see was the neon glow of our gyrating members. The effect was hysterical — four wiggling penises glowing in the dark!

Word quickly spread about our outrageous debut gig at Beethoven's. By the time the distorted, extremely exaggerated reports came back to our camp, we had apparently been involved in lewd sex acts with one another onstage. The reports also described a series of shocking post-gig celebrations, which included a wild orgy in the dressing room in which many of Perth's trendy permissive society had been invited. Of course, this resulted in every gig that followed completely selling out. It didn't hurt that the band had discovered a renewed spark musically and were, in my opinion, playing better than ever.

There was one major drawback starting in a new town with a controversial gig. We would have to try and top each new gig with something more over-the-top! It would prove challenging and put more pressure on me. I knew it was going to be difficult, considering Perth audiences would be expecting a group of sexually charged musicians repeating the hi-jinx of opening night.

At the following gig I raffled off a beautiful potted marijuana plant from the stage, not realising a couple of the local constabulary were in the audience. They paid me a visit backstage, I gave them an autographed album and they gave me a polite warning.

As the gigs progressed I became increasingly distant from the band. It wasn't a conscious move and the gap just kept on growing. I knew audiences were coming to our shows more out of a perverse curiosity than anything else, waiting for me to partake in some kind of crazy onstage debauchery. They didn't know what to expect, and I had no idea what prank I was going to pull next. It was fun but it was also very stressful. By this stage most of my band were convinced that audiences were no longer interested in our music, and I was feeling responsible. Even when I'd consciously make an effort to try and curb my behaviour, I would eventually succumb to the

whims of my inner lunacy. I seemed to have lost focus of the band's main priority, namely the music. The sensationalism had completely eclipsed the music, and I had to get back on track or I was in danger of losing my band.

Ray, who had always encouraged me to freak out every audience at any cost, suggested I put the freak show on the backburner and concentrate on the music. He'd been a big influence on me since the first day I'd met him and I valued his opinion more than anybody else connected with the band. For the next couple of gigs I did as Ray suggested and really started to get into the music. I just stood onstage and sang, no hysterics, very little showbiz, and it felt good. I began to sing with more passion and conviction, and the audience reaction was just as enthusiastic as when I was being their favourite *enfant terrible*.

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On our return train journey to Melbourne the band found themselves sharing a carriage with a female softball team from Perth, off to the eastern states to compete in the national softball finals. Apart from getting moderately stoned every night with the girls, I remained intoxicated for the entire trip. Some of the girls were getting stoned for the first time and were thoroughly enjoying the experience. A couple were experiencing their first taste of freedom with alcohol, and were quickly becoming liberated women. Our band members were only too willing to help head them in the right direction.

The guards knew what was going down in our carriage, but allowed us to continue fooling around as long as we didn't interfere with the comfort of the other passengers. There was little chance of that, as we seldom left our cabins apart from sending out for rations. Yes! There was much bed-hopping, and although I was definitely in need of some serious sleep, the unexpected excesses of sex, drugs and rattle'n'roll made the long trek home very pleasant indeed. Apart from this excitement, the remainder of the trip concluded without further incident … thank you, God!

Over the next few years I returned to Perth on a number of occasions, either with Kush or as a solo artist. On each occasion I was constantly reminded of that first notorious tour, both by the press and occasionally by the public. I enjoyed the notoriety for a short time, and although my stage performances were always a little left-of-centre, I began to tire of people's expectations. I ceased performing in Perth after a while for fear of being typecast. I was commonly known as 'the clown prince of rock', and I found this tag difficult to shake.

Bonus Chapter

Adventures in Brisvegas

Orgy / n. an event at which indiscriminate sexual activity takes place

Early in my career, a notable music journalist wrote an article suggesting my ‘blatantly androgynous façade’ had overshadowed my blatantly androgynous music.

He was probably right, but I had no control over the public's fascination with my genderless persona. This character feature helped attract a large gay following. I like to think the appeal was because of my cute arse, but it probably had more to do with my penchant for frocking up.

Mind you, the attention gained from my unusual stage attire would mean very little if the music wasn't creating an impact. Kush wouldn't have been invited to perform at many of the colourful gay-friendly events in Sydney and Melbourne if we weren't cutting it musically. Although I was fast becoming something of a gay icon, the success of these nights still depended on the quality of the music, and we always delivered a top show.

I was as much delighted with our popularity as my musicians were annoyed with it. They had no choice but to accept the irony of this double whammy. On one hand, these gigs were extremely high-profile and very well-paying, but on the other hand my musicians had to suffer the humiliation of being labelled a 'fag band'. The anxiety of this must have been an uncomfortable burden for these conservative married boys from the suburbs. In my humble opinion, there was nothing wrong with the public assuming we were all gay.

It goes without saying that I loved the attention we received at these gay-friendly gigs. Now, aside from the camp nature of my performance there were a couple of other very obvious reasons why my band had such a healthy gay following. I do recall our very first original recording being a song about a couple of lads cruising the local hotspots looking for boys. It was called 'Can't You Hear Me Calling'. This was followed shortly after by a song titled 'Easy Street', our most successful single, in which I had changed the lyric from the classic boy-meets-girl, to boy-meets-boy, with a girl thrown in to keep things interesting. Both these songs were written within the band, but no-one at the time seemed concerned enough to question the content. Kush was more concerned about the quality of the music than they were about the subject matter, though they were certainly apprehensive about the direction in which I was taking the band. I must admit, I was so caught up in my own little world that I had no idea where the band was heading.

On a visit to Sydney to play one such gay-friendly event with Kush, we were booked to appear at a club called the Whiskey in Kings Cross later the same evening. Let me tell you, I had some wild wardrobe changes happening. My beautiful yellow embroidered kimono complemented my spiky orange hair, and when I moved in a certain way my high-cut Lycra bikini could be seen shimmering beneath the kimono. It was perfectly coordinated with fishnets and stiletto heels. This was a long time before the likes of *Rocky Horror* confronted our senses, so I guess folks had never really seen anything like me before, even in the decadent Kings Cross clubs.

I remember at the time thinking how handsome I looked. Never at any stage did I feel as though I was dressed as a woman. I was a little feminine perhaps, but I was merely expressing myself. I often dressed like this. I felt comfortable; a certain inner strength permeated my subconscious whenever I was dressed in drag.

I arrived at the Whiskey ahead of the rest of my band, and wandered over to the bar to order a drink. The area was crowded with what I'd consider conventional-looking punters. There were a few denim-clad hippies, but nothing out of the ordinary, so I guess I looked conspicuous in my kimono. I sat down at the bar, taking in the laid-back atmosphere. The house band, who were mostly black guys, were playing sixties soul music. They created such an incredible impression on me. It was the first time I'd ever seen black musicians performing live, and I can still remember how cool they were.

Suddenly, a huge heavy hand came down on my shoulder and lifted me from my seat. I turned around and was confronted by two giant security guards, looking at me as though they were ready to knock my head from my shoulders. They reminded me of those mafia hitmen you see in *Godfather* movies.

'Would you mind coming with us?' one of them said. 'The boss wants a word.'

'Why?' I asked. 'Is there something wrong?'

There was no reply. With one guard on either side of me, they frog-marched me down a corridor to an office quite a distance from the bar. One of the guards grabbed me by the shoulder and bellowed, 'Sit down and shut up until the boss gets here.'

I was beginning to freak out. I was obviously in some sort of trouble, and maybe they had mistaken me for some kind of criminal. 'What have I supposedly done?' I sheepishly inquired.

Big mistake. The burly security guard clenched his fist and thrust it in front of my face. 'Ya want this rammed down ya fuckin' throat? Shut the fuck up, faggot! One more word and you'll be spittin' teeth.'

I was in a highly vulnerable position, wondering if I should make a mad dash for the door. I didn't feel safe any longer and I really wanted to get the hell out of there. I glanced around the room looking for a comforting sign, anything to stop my heart jumping. I noticed many photographs and posters of bands hanging on the walls, and there, right behind Mr Security, was a smiling photograph of me. Unfortunately, it was a fairly conservative band shot, and in my current guise I would have to say I was unrecognisable.

I was wondering what I'd done to deserve such aggressive attention. I know this sounds dramatic, but I really felt like I was on the verge of being beaten to a pulp. I nervously pointed to the photograph of Kush hanging on the wall, too afraid to say anything. Mr Security began to fume — he obviously thought I was making fun of him.

'I told you to shut up, faggot!' he said, and with that he lunged towards me, picked me up from my seat and pushed me against the wall. I began to tremble like a frightened puppy — my legs felt like marshmallow, unable to support my body. As I collapsed to the floor, the door opened.

'Hey! What's goin' on here?' It was the boss. 'Get up,' he ordered, and with that I struggled to my feet. He looked me directly in the eyes like a cop about to interrogate a murderer. 'We have a strict policy here at the Whiskey. No bloody prostitutes! Unless we supply them!'

Oh my God — they thought I was a sex worker! I began to laugh, nervously, holding it in as much as possible, until I couldn't suppress it any longer. I finally burst into a fit of chortling. Meanwhile, the boss was getting very pissed off with me. 'What the fuck are you laughing at, whore?' he said.

By now it was getting late and my band members must have been wondering where I was; we had been due onstage ten minutes ago. There was a knock on the door. Enter Mr Security number two. 'Hey boss,' he said, 'the band from Melbourne are ready to go on, but they can't find their singer.'

I could see John Ellis, my saviour, my captain, my band leader, standing at the door. 'Hey! John, I'm here,' I screeched. He popped his head around the door, walked into the room and looked at me as if nothing had happened. 'C'mon Duffo, we're onstage in a minute.' Without saying a word, I made a hasty retreat through the crowded club to the stage.

As if to make a point, I sang like a man possessed. Kush blew the place apart with a combination of powerful funk music and my peculiar theatrics. We were on fire. The club had never seen or heard anything like Kush before —the audience wouldn't let us leave the stage. Four encores later, we had finally run out of material and I was exhausted.

When the boss confidently approached me at the end of our dazzling performance to congratulate the band, I turned my back and walked away. He followed after me, saying, 'You guys were amazing, and I'm sorry about our little problem earlier. We'd love to have you back as soon as possible.'

The gall of this guy! I couldn't believe he'd dismissed the roughhouse tactics of his henchmen, and forgotten about his own aggressive interrogation methods. I really do feel sorry for people who judge others purely on appearance, as I'm often judged. I looked him in the eye, just as he'd done

to me earlier, and gave him a sympathetic smile. 'Thanks, but I'm not interested in playing here again.' I said. 'I don't think your club is suitable for my band, and I doubt you could afford the services of a classy lady like me.'

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During the early seventies, the lucrative club scene in Queensland became a mecca for local and international musicians. It was also an ideal opportunity for Kush to travel further north than Newcastle for the first time. We accepted a three-month residency in Brisbane at a new club called Chequers. As we were booked to officially open the club, the stage was being especially constructed to suit our ten-member ensemble. I requested my own little podium out in front of the band.

We all agreed we would try utilising our time away from home to write new material and tighten up the band. There were a few conditions stipulated, which didn't really mean much until we were ensconced in our Brisbane hotel, but by then it was too late. Three months in Brisbane is like a year in any other place. Hey, there's a song in there somewhere!

The sleeping arrangements are one of the most significant areas of contention during a long spell away from home. A good bed can aid current intentions for future relations, but a bad bed can destroy future intentions with current relations. Now, if that sounds like a load of cobblers it's because it is, but I know what I mean so just pretend you know where I'm coming from, okay? By then I no longer needed to justify why I needed a room of my own — apparently only a fool or a deviant would share a room with Duffo!

The infamous Kangaroo Point Hotel would become our playground for the next few months. It was an old-style hotel, more of a motel actually. The rooms were spacious, with a number of single beds in each, plus a small kitchen and a pokey bathroom. A couple of the guys in the band had been conned into bringing their wives with them, so that eliminated a couple of the larger rooms. I grabbed a room far from the madding crowd for a number of reasons, all of them selfish. I don't mind compromising my privacy if I'm going to have more fun, and I don't mind forfeiting a little space if it still means being on my own. Nobody in the band really cared where I crashed, as long as it wasn't anywhere near where they put their heads down.

I had a feeling Brisbane was going to be very eventful for me. On the day we checked in to our hotel we were met by our promoter, a likeable guy named John, and his beautiful female assistant, Kerrie. We hit it off instantly, but I told myself I'd try to keep my hands off the boss's secretary.

Prior to leaving Melbourne we'd heard a few nasty, but unconfirmed,

reports about our Brisbane promoter's competitive work ethic. 'Mafioso', 'standover merchants', 'gangsters' and 'hitmen' were among the many colourful terms used to describe them. There were reports from other touring bands of them not being paid, and being threatened or roughed up if they refused to co-operate. We were more than aware of the battle between nightclubs in the Valley, a highly aggressive precinct that often saw rival clubs come to blows. Apparently, it was a warzone. Ongoing feuds between club management resulted in many spats. At the time I didn't really care what happened, as long as we were treated like royalty — and I was given a good shot with Kerrie.

The guys had barely settled into their rooms before we were told a rehearsal had been organised with an unknown American superstar. As part of our contract we were expected to support guest artists a couple of times a week. This would often involve lengthy rehearsals with temperamental artists, who often expected the band to cover for their own inadequacies or, more to the point, their lack of talent.

I believe this unscheduled rehearsal was a ploy to show off the club during the daylight hours. The promoters were very proud of the brand new club, and with good reason. Chequers boasted the latest in high-tech sound systems, lighting and staging, and apparently the interior was more sophisticated than any other club in Australia at the time. Plush red carpet and mirrors seemed to be growing everywhere, including the bathrooms. All this and it still reminded me of something Queen Elizabeth might have used as her royal water closet. I guess this was the trend during the seventies — more is less, more or less!

My bandmates were more impressed with the well-stocked bars than the décor of the club. Our unexpected rehearsal was a great opportunity for the band to sample some of the imported beers and pricey spirits. Bobby, the American crooner, went all-out during rehearsal; I think he was blown away by how well the band played. After about an hour he lost his voice completely and rushed off, looking for a doctor. He didn't return. What were we to do? No supervision and unguarded bars loaded with the finest booze.

Kerrie arrived to see how things were going, but when she saw that everybody in the band was inebriated and there was not a note of music being played, she freaked out. 'Where is Bobby Jenner?!' she yelled. 'You guys are being paid to make music, not cocktails. You're all so wasted!'

I pulled her aside and explained that Bobby had lost his voice and gone off in search of spiritual guidance, whereas the band had gone off in search of spirits. 'I'm afraid your Yankee superstar drove us to drink,' I said. Luckily, she saw the humour and laughed out loud. I told her we always had a drink when we rehearsed. 'It's what we do down south,' I said. 'It relaxes us.'

I honestly thought the promoters had pulled off a major coup convincing us to perform at Chequers for three months, but the promoters seemed to think it was a great honour for any band to be invited to open such a prestigious club. Nevertheless, I had a feeling the next three months were going to prove a fairly testing time for everyone in the band. We'd either turn into alcoholics or confirm that we already were.

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If I never see red fluffy carpet again it'll be too soon. Hundreds of metres of the stuff lined the pavements of Brisbane's streets, leading to the entrance of Chequers for the grand opening night. Local dignitaries, socialites and A-list schmoozers walked the walk along the red stuff, trying desperately to catch a photographer's eye. I loathe opening nights, but I seem to have been implicated in my fair share over the years. They always seem to attract the socially desperate, including the inevitable pretty young things looking for free champagne, caviar and lots of attention.

This club certainly knew how to throw a party. We played a couple of sets of our finest Blood Sweat & Tears covers, but Bobby Jenner was a no-show. He was having trouble talking, let alone singing. I apologised on his behalf and sang a couple of the Frank Sinatra songs he had rehearsed with my band. While I was singing I noticed three girls to the left of the stage, watching my every move. As I walked offstage they called me over. 'What's your name?' they asked me in unison. 'Well,' I replied, 'I'm not Bobby Jenner.'

They asked whether I'd be interested in joining them for a reefer. The four of us disappeared outside for what turned out to be a very strong spliff. I soon became very stoned, and wondered how on earth these girls managed to function with dope of this potency. I couldn't possibly go back to the club, so they offered me a lift to Kangaroo Point.

The girls insisted on rolling another joint, so we decided to christen my room, the first of one too many spliffs in my private smoking room. I was having trouble keeping my head together — the best I could muster was to vegetate in front of the television. Eventually I crashed out, unable to move, drifting into a comatose state for a couple of hours. When I finally snapped out of it, the girls were gone and I was left with a hashish hangover.

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Early the next day, Kerrie made a surprise visit to my room. If Kerrie didn't already have a handsome beau in tow, I imagined every guy in town would have been in hot pursuit, as she was a stunning girl. But, for the moment at least, she had invited herself into my playground. Maybe this call was intended as a formal visit to check we were all cool with the gig and the

accommodation. Whatever formalities were originally intended, they were soon cast aside. It wasn't long before we were acting like a pair of randy rabbits. Some folks have instant sexual chemistry and very little else. Kerrie and I were definitely from that particular school. She had an insatiable appetite, which made me think she wasn't being satisfied elsewhere.

After this intimate introduction, her visits became regular — daily, then twice daily. Then one afternoon she came clean and told me she was engaged to one of the directors from the club. She was upset; she didn't really want to marry him, but she felt pressured. They hadn't had sex with one another for almost twelve months, and were having a communication breakdown. He was the jealous type, and anyone caught making a play for Kerrie's attention would suffer the consequences. Lord, I wondered what he'd do if he found out I was shtupping his fiancée.

My thoughts immediately spiralled towards a brutal finale for yours truly. I visualised being thrown off the Storey Bridge, bound and gagged, and wearing concrete slippers. Or, at best, sent packing back to Melbourne minus a few teeth, with my head resting shamefully between my legs. Either way, I was convinced she would say something and I'd suffer serious physical damage. Even if she promised not to utter a word, how would I know? I decided I'd ask that she keep her distance for a while. I'd only been in Brisbane a few days and I already feared for my life!

By now Kush's music was becoming pretty popular around town, while I was beginning to gain a reputation in other areas. I was doing quite well with the local gals. I found them to be more adventurous than their southern counterparts. I was venturing into unchartered waters, doing things I'd only read about. Finally, I was tasting forbidden fruit — literally. One convoluted story doing the rounds involved half-a-dozen wanton girls, a basket of fruit and myself. I don't know why these myths are invented. Well, actually, I do — there has to be a trace of smoke before the fire kicks in. Yes, I admit to doing the odd thing with a banana, but who hasn't?

It wasn't long before the first couple of rows in front of the stage were lined with young girls clasping various phallic-shaped fruits. The odd bucket of yoghurt was sensually smeared over lips, while eager tongues licked the creamy residue. I was finding it difficult to concentrate on singing with the girls in front of me. The first time it happened, I avoided making contact with any of the girls during the band breaks. I remained in the dressing room and tried to explain to my band what was happening. Of course, they all wanted to get involved, but it wasn't that simple. These girls had their minds firmly set on corrupting just one already corrupted mind. It was a test of restraint on my part.

After a while it became apparent the girls weren't going away, so I was forced into a period of shameless gratification. For roughly four weeks I traded my partners against each other. I really think the girls enjoyed the

bed-hopping more than I did. They certainly enjoyed the side platter of fruit!

Three months in one club puts a lot of pressure on a band — six nights a week definitely put a lot of strain on this poor bastard's vocal cords. And so it came to be that the band had many a dispute, and I lost my voice. This caused even more friction in the camp, but there was nothing I could do but take it easy and try to get some sleep. The band blamed my loss of voice on too much shtupping and not enough sleeping, which was probably true. A combination of heat, humidity and ladies made for impossible bedfellows. Unless I completely wrote myself off with either alcohol, dope or both, there was little chance of me sleeping. I guess that's why I was so preoccupied with other nocturnal activities.

One day my girlfriend unexpectedly arrived from Melbourne. Oh, how remiss of me, I forgot to mention the girlfriend. I met Gail when we were both very young. We were close, but not in a physical way. We'd been hanging out together for years, but had never actually managed to have sex. There was no reason why, we just never got round to it. There was an unspoken understanding between us, however. I knew she had lovers so it wasn't as though we were venturing into unchartered waters, it's just that I preferred to avoid confrontation with her in Brisbane. She was only in town for a few days, and even though I wasn't prepared, I wanted to make her stay as enjoyable as possible.

If only that had been the reality. The next morning Gail opened the hotel door to a tearful Kerrie, who literally jumped on top of me. 'Can we make love, Jeff?' Kerrie said. 'I've missed you so much.' What an entrance!

What could I do? I had to come clean. Gail was upset, but remarkably cool. I thought she handled it pretty well. I was praying none of the girls from the fruit shop were going to turn up at Chequers while Gail was around. Unfortunately, they did, and in full force.

During the next performance, the girls took their positions directly in front of my microphone stand and began practising erotic gestures with the fruit. One of the girls from my harem slowly peeled a banana and sensually slipped it in and out of her mouth. Gail couldn't help but notice the girls at the front of the stage.

In the break I nervously went over to her. 'What are those girls at the front of the stage doing with all that fruit?' she innocently asked.

'Dunno, never seen them before,' I said. 'Maybe they don't like the menu here.' I quickly changed the subject. 'Hey, the band sounds pretty hot tonight, what do you think?'

Just then Helen, the girl who was had been fellating the banana, came over.

She was the self-proclaimed, but unchallenged Queen of Fruit. 'Hi Jeff, I brought some of my girlfriends to meet you. They've got lots of toys. Is it gonna be happening in your room again tonight?'

I had nothing to say. I thought about trying to explain, but I realised I would only implicate myself even more, so I promptly shut up. Sadly, Gail was on the first flight back to Melbourne the next morning. I felt uneasy about her having to deal with the girls, but I decided to put it behind me and get on with what I do best. I figured I was having more fun than I'd ever had — actually that should be I was having more sex — and nothing lasts forever, so I might as well make the most of it.

Later, when I reflected on what had gone wrong, I came to the conclusion that Gail had become more like a sister than a girlfriend. That realisation alone made the drama of the previous night seem far more insignificant. With the benefit of hindsight I can reflect on this logic, and it makes me realise how insensitive and chauvinistic I was. What a bastard! Sorry, Gail!

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Halfway through our residency, the full impact of the war between the nightclubs hit home. One night while we were on a break at Chequers, we were told a bomb had gone off at a club in the Valley. Fourteen innocent punters were killed inside the Whiskey Au Go Go! My God! Someone must have had a serious vendetta. I can only assume Whiskey management had been involved in the feuding, but maybe they were just unfortunate.

As you can imagine, this became an enormous deal with local media. The story occupied front pages, editorials and columns for months after the event. In fact, it was major news all around the world at the time. This horrific incident also made me feel unsure about continuing at Chequers. Not least of all because of my dalliance with the boss's fiancée, I decided I would keep my suspicions regarding who was responsible for the killings under my hat. I wasn't involved and I wanted to keep it that way. The guys in the band were concerned a similar tragedy could happen at Chequers. After all, one of the fourteen victims killed in the Whiskey bombing was a musician playing at the club at the time. We had a band meeting, and reluctantly decided to continue.

The substandard floorshow acts continued to flood in from Europe and America, where I imagined they struggled to get any work. Vocalists, comedians, jugglers, magicians, hypnotists — you name it, we had to endure it. I found that most of the guest artists broke the momentum of the Kush playlist. The band became increasingly annoyed with the disruption to our program. We had a proven formula for revving up the audience. It was all about pacing the night, beginning with standards and ballads, constantly building to the final heavy dance music onslaught. This was our proven attack plan, and we weren't happy when it was interfered with.

I wasn't required while the floorshow was taking place, so I was always delighted to see one of the fruit girls during this break. The girls knew the drill and they worked it well, utilising both time and circumstance. The band's dressing room became the setting for many of my sexual encounters. The fruit girls had a roster system organised to fit in with my performance schedule. Helen, Queen of Fruit, held court, and she usually had someone waiting outside the dressing room for me.

One night, just as the floorshow began, I wandered over to the dressing room to be met by a set of beautiful twin sisters. They introduced themselves as Victoria and Adelaide. I remember laughing when they mentioned their names. 'I've had sex in Victoria and Adelaide, but never with Victoria and Adelaide in Brisbane,' I said. They wore skimpy skirts and very little else, and they looked sublime.

The dressing room was situated to the left of the stage, with the front door facing the audience. This enabled the spotlight operator to follow the guest artist's entrance and exit from the dressing room to centrestage; very Vegas, very showbiz, and very effective!

The twins were eager to get inside the room, which was furnished with a large sofa, a table, half-a-dozen chairs, and, of course, red carpet everywhere. I opened the door and the girls came in, sizing up the room. Then they pounced.

I fell back onto the sofa. Victoria quickly made herself comfortable, lowering her body on top of me. I was now completely horizontal on the sofa. They knew exactly what they wanted and weren't leaving until fully satisfied. The three of us experimented with some very challenging positions.

We were so involved in our ménage à trois that we didn't hear the door open. It was too late to do anything about the bright spotlight that illuminated our debauchery. We couldn't move quickly enough to escape the startled gaze of the audience peering through the open doorway.

Unbeknown to us, as part of the guest artist's act, he'd organised a false encore, which entailed returning to the dressing room. When he saw what he'd walked in on he decided to leave the door open. As the audience erupted into hysterical laughter, the spotlight operator kept the light focused directly on my arse. For what seemed like a lifetime the three of us were lit up, with my rear end the subject of illumination. The audience were going nuts and Victoria was going ... well, I'll leave that to your imagination. I quickly lurched forward to the door, slamming it shut.

From inside the room we could hear the audience applauding wildly and chanting, 'More, more, more!' Despite the excitement outside the dressing room, the girls calmly rolled a joint. They remained incredibly cool, and I

appreciated their calm demeanour. The three of us smoked the joint, slowly dressed and casually walked out of the club.

Of course, the boss immediately reprimanded me, but explained that the 'extended' floorshow was one of the most successful ever staged at the club. Most of the audience had thought the threesome was part of the act, and wondered when the same floorshow would be returning.

My reputation as a rampant lothario became a burden that was difficult to carry, at least for a while. My bandmates were divided in their opinions; some thought I should be sent packing and replaced immediately, while others were obviously envious. Personally, I didn't give a toss what they thought. I knew the band needed me, and a healthy percentage of punters were coming to the club especially to see me. I thought this incident would only add to my appeal, at least to my notoriety. The Chequers' bar staff soon began a steady stream of light-hearted ridicule that would last for the duration of my stay in Brisbane. From then on I decided I would try to restrict my sexual activities to the privacy of my own hotel room.

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Kangaroo Point Hotel would soon become infamous. I was very young at this time, although I would never use youth as an excuse or justification for any of my actions. It might, however, explain my curiosity for adventure and my pursuit of almost anything in a skirt. As the final weeks of our residency approached, things were beginning to reach an interesting climax. Big John, who was one of the elder statesmen at Chequers, would become an unexpected key figure in my next adventure.

One night at the club, Helen mentioned there was going to be a little soiree back at the hotel. I'd had enough partying to last me forever, and was feeling the pinch from excessive humping, drinking and smoking, all without much sleep. I returned to the hotel to chill out in my room on my own for a change. I began to hear voices, more voices than normal, coming from a room across the parking lot. I peered through the curtains and saw a procession of women heading into the room. I recognised a few of them — in fact, I'd actually made out with quite a few of them. I must have been completely worn out, though, because I crashed out almost instantly.

My television was still blaring when I was woken from my sleep by banging at the door. It was Helen. 'Hey Jeffrey, we're all waiting for you, c'mon baby!' She insisted I meet some of her new friends. Against my better judgment, I tossed some clothes on and reluctantly headed over to room seventeen.

Outside the door was a burly guy who was acting suspiciously like security. He introduced himself as Rudy, and asked if I'd 'like some E'. Remember, this was the early seventies, and ecstasy wasn't usually on the menu.

'What the hell is E?' I snapped.

'I'll tell ya what, Mr Duff, without it you won't last long in there,' he barked back.

'Ah, c'mon then, give me a shot,'
I said.

Rudy opened the door. I almost fell over when I set eyes on what was going down in room seventeen. The lights were on — switched on, just like everybody in the room. There were twenty people, all completely naked and entwined in every imaginable position. My God, I was about to partake in an orgy!

There were six mattresses lined up alongside one another across the floor, with one giant 'love' cushion supporting copulating couples. I stood there transfixed, unable to move.

Every now and again someone would break from the action, go to the corner of the room where a man in a suit sat and carefully observed proceedings. Apart from myself, he was the only person who wasn't naked. Much to my surprise it was the Chequers patriarch himself, Big John. He was sitting very formally, taking it all in, armed with a camera and a large jar of liquid E. Nobody said a word — it was like a secret society for sinners respecting a code of silence. Everybody seemed to know the rules regarding changing or sharing partners. I was beginning to think that organised promiscuity was normal behaviour in Brisbane.

The only time I heard anyone utter a word was when Helen suggested I remove my clothes. She quietly introduced me: 'Everybody, this is Jeffrey.' A few people looked up, acknowledging my presence, and then it was quickly back to business, back to the silence, broken only by the occasional orgasmic moan.

I had a strange feeling that all of my previous sexual encounters in Brisbane were part of an initiation, a test leading to this very debauchery. Apart from my fling with Kerrie, Helen had instigated most, if not all of my current sex education and I couldn't help wondering why I had been chosen. Had I been set up? What if all my lovers had been chosen for me? What if I wasn't responsible for any of the encounters? I began to feel incredibly insecure.

Helen took my hand and introduced me to a couple of girls who had been getting it on together on the edge of a giant mattress.

Now, every male on the planet will have experienced the embarrassment of an unwanted erection in a public place. The throbbing bulge in tight swimming trunks on a crowded beach comes to mind. A moving bus is

another popular time for the dreaded stiffy to suddenly crave attention. And what about a woody in church?

But it's not until you've been in a situation where *not* having a hard-on makes you feel like a schmuk that you'll understand how it was for me in that moment. I felt so inadequate, so pathetic, and there was nothing I could do about it. I was half expecting to be shown to the door by Helen. Maybe I was stressed out, maybe I was more tired than I realised, but there was definitely nothing happening in
the toolbox.

Big John, who had noticed my unfortunate predicament, wandered over and thrust the jar of liquid E into my hand. 'This should do the job, Duffo,' he said. 'Take a big swig.' I quickly took his advice, and before I knew it I had polished off the contents of the jar.

For a moment I felt uncomfortably exposed, almost as though the entire population of Brisbane knew I couldn't get it up. I wondered how long it'd be before word spread of my inability to crack the proverbial boner. Then suddenly, just as I was seriously thinking of walking out on my first major orgy, it happened. With my confidence restored, I wandered over to Helen and thanked her for inviting me.

What followed was a furious feast of debauched decadence. Rather than try to compete with modern writers of erotic fiction, I'll leave the rest entirely to your imagination.

No matter how much I enjoyed it, there was no way I could've handled another night of frivolous sexual activity for the foreseeable future. That's how I felt anyway, as I strolled back to my room.

Thankfully, this feeling disappeared. No sooner had I closed the door behind me than I began to crave a repeat performance of the evening. Comforted by the pungent aroma of sex oozing from my body, I lay down on the bed and relived the orgy in fine detail. It wasn't long before I eventually fell asleep, quietly chuckling to myself.

As the Zen proverb goes, *Better to sit up all night than to go to bed with a dragon!*