



FANTASTIC FLORIDA FUN

TIMOTHY LOUIS BAKER

**FANTASTIC
FLORIDA
FUN**

by

Timothy Louis Baker



Eloquent Books

Copyright © 2010

All rights reserved – Timothy Louis Baker

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the permission, in writing, from the publisher.

Eloquent Books
An imprint of Strategic Book Group
P.O. Box 333
Durham CT 06422
www.StrategicBookGroup.com

ISBN: 978-1-61204-429-3

Printed in the United States of America

Book Design: Bonita S. Watson

CONTENTS

Chapter One	1
Chapter Two	11
Chapter Three	19
Chapter Four	27
Chapter Five	35
Chapter Six	45
Chapter Seven	53

CHAPTER I

Four teenage boys rode around town in North Vernon, Indiana, drinking open beers and passing a joint around. The driver of the white 1967 Chevrolet Chevelle was Mark Matthew Mitchell; he and his three buddies that spring day in 1974 were getting high and drunk. Mark had a bag of pot, and what was left of a case of beer sat behind the back seat on the floor on the passenger side.

Mark sat with a beer on the seat between his legs and took the joint from the boy next to him in the passenger seat. Mark took a toke then offered it over the back of his seat with his right hand to the boy seated directly behind him. That boy took a toke then passed it to the boy seated on his right. After taking a hit, he passed it to the passenger in front, and it went round and round like that until it they had smoked it down to a roach and put it into the ashtray underneath the dashboard by Mark.

Mark took a drink from his beer and drove the car, steering with his other hand. He put the beer back onto the seat between his legs and lit a cigarette with his free hand. He turned to the other three boys and asked, “You guys get a buzz yet?”

They all replied that yes, they were high and drunk saying, “Yeah, I copped a buzz Mark.”

“I’ve got one too.”

“I got off on that, Mark.”

Mark drove them around until all of the beer was gone, smoking more pot with them. The boy on the front passenger side rolled the joints up individually at Mark’s request, and he kept rolling them until the beer was gone. They spoke about things pertaining to girls and drugs and the town of North Vernon.

They drove around a few more minutes and Mark said, “Well, I’m going home. You guys want me to drop you off at your homes or what?”

They all replied that they would prefer to be let out at their separate homes, and so Mark dropped them off one at a time. Then he drove himself home and parked in the street out in front of that house as was customary, right in front of where his stepfather would park when he got home from work. That would be in a few minutes.

Mark opened the driver’s door and stood up looking around for something or that something was about to happen that he needed to be prepared for although he wasn’t sure why. He shut the door and walked around the car, up onto the sidewalk, to the door of his home, and into the living room where his mother sat on a couch in front of the television. He strode through that room, up the stairs, down the hallway, and into his room, shutting the door behind himself and sitting down on the edge of his bed.

His black hair was on the verge of long, and he had brown eyes. He would normally go to work where he pumped gas part-time at a filling station in town in the morning. The car, the smokes, and the alcohol he and the other boys had just partied on had come from money he earned from that job. He had graduated high school the year before.

His mother’s name was Becky, and he had his real Dad’s last name. His stepfather was named Frank Rose, and she bore that last name now. Mark’s real father had been killed in Vietnam in 1968 in the service, and she had remarried in 1971. Mark and Frank didn’t get along well together, and there always seemed to be some strife between the two of them whenever they were together. They often argued, which even led to arrant heated disputes, and twice Frank had even hit Mark with his fist.

Frank didn't like Mark getting high and drunk while riding around in his car with his buddies. He often threatened to call the police when Mark came home stoned.

Mark's mother always took Frank's side on issues between the boy and the man, which served to make Mark hate his stepfather even more. What he hated most was when Frank hit her. He slapped her with an open hand, backhanded her, and hit her with his fist. He said he brought home the bacon so she could put up with it or get out. Lately he had said he didn't know what he was capable of, taunting her to do something about his behavior like he thought intimidating her made him a big man.

Mark lay down on his bed and enjoyed the buzz he had for a few minutes. Then he heard his stepfather pull up, park out front, and shut off the car engine.

After about a minute he heard him come in downstairs and slam the door behind him. Mark knew something was up, so he sat up on the edge of his bed and waited for the man downstairs to begin to holler. He didn't have long to wait. Frank hollered, "Where's that boy? He's parked too close to my spot again. Tell him to get down here; I want to talk to him. He's in big trouble. I've told him about it enough. You go get the bastard."

Mark got up off the bed, fully intending to go downstairs and give the older man a piece of his mind. His mom was at the foot of the stairs looking up at him when Mark reached the top of the flight. She announced, "Mark, Frank wants you to come down here and talk to him."

Mark walked down the stairs, preparing for who knows what. He faced his stepfather at the other end of the room where Frank stood with a sordid look on his face. Frank lashed out in a dour tone of voice, "Boy, I've told you and told you not to park where I'm going to park when I get home." There was a frown upon his countenance; all he wanted was to make Mark a little more miserable.

Mark began speaking to the man, "I am parked ... I mean ... I did. I parked clear up in front of the spot of yours." He was unnerved and quite uneasy in his present condition.

Frank continued, slyly trying to work the situation to his advantage, saying, “Well you didn’t do it like you’re supposed to boy.” He eyed the boy with a mean glare and waited for a few moments before continuing, “That’s what you are: a boy. Any grown man with a little respect would know his ass from a hole in the ground and park up where he’s supposed to.”

Mark opened up his mouth raising his voice, saying, “I am parked up in front of where you park, and I am a man not a boy. I’m eighteen years old, white, and free. You’ve got no reason to bitch at me for something I didn’t do, and don’t call me boy again.”

Frank shot back, “Son, you’ve got a lot to learn. Look out there at that car. It’s not pulled up in front of mine far enough, boy. You hear that? It’s not far enough, boy.” He put a smirk on as he said the last word, really getting ugly on his face and in his speech.

That was all Mark could handle without getting angry so he began walking to the front door to see that his car was within the space he was supposed to park. He knew the man was just saying things to start an altercation. That’s the way it always was.

As Mark approached the window, the man blocked his view. He said coldly to the man, “I told you not to call me boy ...”

Frank unleashed on him, “I’ll call you anything I want to. Boy, you’ve got a thing or two to learn about life yet, and I’m going to teach you some of it.” He swung at Mark who was then within striking distance. His fist caught Mark on the side of the head and sent him spinning toward the ground, his body performing a sort of spiral as though someone had knocked his legs out from underneath of him.

Mark felt the blow but nothing else. His body went limp, and he was unconscious. He sprawled out on the floor and didn’t regain consciousness for some thirty minutes. When he did, he came to with a start and remembered everything with vivid clarity. His stepfather was sitting on the couch with his mother. They were talking and neither of them were paying him any attention whatsoever.

He saw red and rushed the man, lashing out with his fist as hard as he could. Frank’s body twisted and bent at the waist. The

upper portion of his torso itself rolled off to the side and onto the seat of the couch, just short of where his mother sat. Her legs sprawled out in an ungainly sight. Now Frank was unconscious to Mark's surprise.

Mark's mother let out a whimper and said, "Oh, you shouldn't have done that. You really shouldn't have done that at all. You better go to your room, get your things, and leave. He'll want you out of this house." She rose and headed to the kitchen to fetch a cup of water to pour on Frank's face. Little did Mark know, but she had thrown one on his face likewise when he had lain unconscious.

As she proceeded toward the kitchen, Mark looked down at the limp body and then at his mother's receding figure. He came to a sudden decision. He gathered his clothes and other personal items and packed them into a duffle bag. He slung the bag over his right shoulder went down to the living room where his mother stood looking over Frank's body, still quite unconscious. Mark left the wide open behind him as he left, put his bag into the back seat, and pulled away.

He knew he would never be allowed to live in that house again, and he didn't want to. He was angry with his stepfather and knew the man had provoked him on purpose so he could kick him out. Well he'd gotten his wish, but he'd gotten a little more than he had bargained for. It made Mark feel successful.

He had a decision to make, and he made it hastily. Since tenth grade, he'd wanted to travel to Florida and start out fresh in life. He just had to have a reason to do it, and now he did. He couldn't feel good about staying at a friend's house, and he didn't want to stay in North Vernon in an apartment anyway. He didn't work enough hours to support himself and still afford to party at that time anyway. He wanted something fresh, some new territory to lay claim to and make into his stomping grounds.

He headed out of town with the radio playing rock and roll. He got on Interstate 75 right across the border into Ohio and could take it all of the way to Florida where there were orange groves and jobs waiting.

Within an hour he was on the four-lane highway heading south for Florida. When he crossed over into Kentucky, he pulled off into a rest area and rolled up a few joints to smoke. He got back onto the highway and lit up one of those joints to smoke as he went. He felt better. The THC coursed through his veins and into his brain. The radio still played.

Soon it was approaching nightfall, and he had to have gasoline so he pulled off at a filling station. When it was dark, he lit another joint and smoked it as he drove down the road, curving uphill and downhill as he progressed in a southerly direction.

He soon passed into Tennessee and while he drove, he looked out at the sky to his left and saw the moon coming up over the mountainside foreground. He drove across the border into Georgia and pulled off at a rest area to sleep.

In the morning, the sun filtering through the windshield and windows woke him up. He rose and started the car to warm it up. While the engine was running, Mark went inside the restroom and returned to the car already hot.

Once inside the car, he rolled down the windows; it was getting hot in there. He thought, why not have a joint for breakfast? That would keep him occupied until he came to an exit with a restaurant where he could get real breakfast of food. He lit the joint, put the car into gear, and pulled onto the four-lane Interstate. He took a toke off the joint, holding it between his forefinger and thumb, lowering it back down to the steering wheel in between drags. When it was a small roach he put it into the ashtray and let it go out by itself.

Soon he came to an exit ramp where there was a restaurant to eat breakfast of food. He ordered coffee and pancakes. The waitress brought the coffee in a pot and poured into his cup. After he'd drank the cup, she brought the food and poured him more coffee. He said, "Thanks." She smiled then left again.

He drank his coffee as he ate, then he used the restroom and headed back for his car. He listened to the radio on whatever channels would come in. When a particular song reminded him of partying, he lit up another joint and smoked it as he drove and rock and rolled.

The further south he drove the warmer the weather became.

Mark drove until it was dark, stopped at a rest area, and slept on the seat again. In the morning, he rolled more joints and smoked them as he traveled on. He stopped for breakfast in Southern Georgia then got back on the road, crossing into Florida.

He drove another one hundred some miles and then he noticed a car way off in the distance ahead of him pull over into the emergency lane and stop. The passenger door opened and a person got out. The car took off and sped up, then merged into the slow traffic lane and continued on.

Mark's car neared the person who turned out to be a beautiful girl. She stuck out her thumb. Mark thought he was lucky and pulled over and stopped for her immediately. When his car came to a halt beside her, she opened the car door and got into it looking at him and saying, "Hi!" Her hair was long and very dark—almost jet-black—and she had brown eyes like him.

He looked back at her and likewise replied, "Hi!" Then he looked in the rear view mirror and accelerated back onto the highway. As he drove, he gave her sideways glances and said, "What's up with the car ahead of you? Are you alright? I saw them stop and let you out there where I picked you up. Is something wrong?"

She replied, "Oh, that was an old dude, and he wanted some sex from me. When I wouldn't agree, he just stopped and let me out. I'm alright, I've just got to calm down you know?"

He stated, "That's too bad for you, but it sure worked out good for me. I have a pretty girl to travel with now. Before I was getting kind of lonely. I'm coming all of the way from Indiana."

She said, "Really? That's a long way from here. Where are you going in Florida?"

Mark replied, "I'm going to work in the orange groves."

Brilliance spread across her face, and she smiled, "Really? My Dad lives in a town near Tampa, and he owns a couple of orange groves. I could get you hooked up there!"

"Man what a coincidence!" Mark exclaimed then said, "Excuse me, my name is Mark. What's yours?"

She expounded upon his good-natured conversation and said, "I'm Melissa May Monroe."

Mark was floored. His name Mark Matthew Mitchell with three M's in a row and hers was also three M's in a row. He expressed the coincidence, "Melissa May Monroe. My full name is Mark Matthew Mitchell. Both with three M's in a row. Man, can you believe that?"

"Wow! Like, how totally uncanny. That's really cool Mark." she exclaimed. "Dig it man, for sure." Mark asked her, "Are you hungry? I was just going to stop up here pretty soon and get some lunch. I'll buy."

Melissa replied, "I'm hungry, but I've got money. You can buy if you want to, but I've got money."

Mark stated cordially, "That's OK Melissa, I've got money too, and I'll be glad to buy. How far is it to the next exit where we can get some food? Do you know?"

Melissa thought for a minute. "I think that it's just about another fifteen minutes to a really good place to eat. We're still further north of where I'm used to going, but it isn't very far."

Mark was inquisitive about what she was doing hitchhiking so far from home so he asked, "What's a nice girl like you doing out hitchhiking anyway? Were you hitchhiking from that last ride or was that just ..."

She replied, "Yes, I was hitchhiking from Valdosta, Georgia and that last ride was a ride I got by hitchhiking. I had some business to take care of there with my now ex boyfriend. I wanted to see for myself if it was over between him and me."

Mark drove on, thought of a diversion from where the conversation had led so that he thought he might ease her situation, and said, "I've got some pot. Do you smoke pot? We've just about got time to smoke a joint before we get to the exit."

She replied to, "Yeah, that sounds like the ticket. I'll let you know where to get off at."

Mark reached into his shirt pocket where there was a pack of cigarettes and grasped the top of a joint. He reached into his pants pocket for his lighter, took a toke, and quickly passed it to Melissa.

She took a long, gratifying drag then passed it back to him. He exhaled smoke into the sunlight coming through the windshield and took another toke.

This continued for the space of about five minutes, each taking a drag and passing it back and forth, holding in the smoke for a while until it was mostly smoked and Mark put it into the ashtray.

“Thank you.” Melissa said, adding, “It’s the next exit, Mark.”

He said, “OK, that’s quite alright Melissa.”

They got off at the exit ramp and went inside the restaurant. They found a table and ordered coffee and a meal. Mark thought the two of them should talk.

He began, “So, your father has some orange groves? What can a man make there a day?”

Melissa said, “Well you won’t get rich on the orange groves just picking oranges. However, I have something that may be of interest to you on the side if you’re interested.”

Mark sensed she was talking about something illegal and said in a low tone, “What’s that? Something concerning a little buying and selling some drugs or something?”

She was amazed at how sharp his mind was; he already knew where she was going before she had even begun. She lowered her voice and said, “Well not here but when we get back into the car, OK?”

“Yeah.” he replied.

They remained a quiet for a few minutes until the food came. They ate, Mark paid the bill, and they left the building. Once they were on the Interstate, he lit up a cigarette. He offered her one, “You smoke?” he asked, handing her the pack.

“Yeah,” she said taking the pack from his extended arm and lighting a cigarette.

Mark began the conversation where they’d left off in the restaurant, “So what’s this business I might get into to further myself besides just working in the orange groves of your father?”

Melissa began, “My Dad keeps a harbor house for drug dealers. He’s cool, he smokes pot, snorts cocaine, and he takes acid. He keeps drugs in his home where I live in quantities, and sells to dealers.

“That’s where I just came from; my old boyfriend in Valdosta is where my Dad gets some of his drugs delivered from. My ex boyfriend and I are over now, though.”

Mark was puzzled, “What were you doing hitchhiking if your Dad owns orange groves and stashes drugs? Can’t you afford a car?”

She had the reply ready, “I was hitchhiking because I’m only fifteen, and I don’t have a car or a driver’s license. I couldn’t get a ride with anybody, and I wanted to know right then if my boyfriend and I were over or not. So I hitchhiked there and found out he has somebody else for sure. We’re through.”

Mark wasn’t surprised about all of that, but he did know the details now of four things: A little about how he could make money and where it would come from, what Melissa was doing hitchhiking, how old she was, and that she was very beautiful.

She questioned him, “Why did you leave Indiana to come down here to Florida?”

Mark answered, “My stepfather and I didn’t get along. He hit me and knocked me out a couple of nights ago, and then I knocked him out. I had to leave. He never would have let me live there anymore.”

“That sounds awful,” she said. “Well you’re with me now, Mark, and I’ll take good care of you. You can park your car in my Dad’s driveway, and I’ll see if you can sleep in the house with me in my bedroom. He’ll probably let you.”

Mark spoke up, “You keep mentioning your Dad. Where is your mom?”

She looked across at him flatly, “She left Dad for another man. A couple of years ago she got involved with this guy, and she just abandoned Dad and I.”

He said, “Sounds tough. Well you’re with me now, Melissa, and I’ll take good care of you.”

They both laughed.

Buy the B&N ePub version at:-

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/fantastic-florida-fun-timothy-louis-baker/1022334751?ean=2940012868251>

Buy the Kindle version at:-

<http://www.amazon.com/Fantastic-Florida-Fun-ebook/dp/B0057H0LN2/ref>