

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

# **I Killed Marilyn**

**a confessional novel by**

**Anthony Anchor**

*Copyright © 2007 by Author*

## **Table of Contents**

CHAPTER 1. MY OCCUPATION.  
CHAPTER 2. JEWS, THEIR CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS.  
CHAPTER 3. ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAST.  
CHAPTER 4. NAOMI.  
CHAPTER 5. THE VOLKSWAGEN AND THE LINCOLN.  
CHAPTER 6. EVERYTHING ALREADY FEELS FAMILIAR.  
CHAPTER 7. MARILYN.  
CHAPTER 8. THERE IS ALSO A THIRD EXISTENCE.  
CHAPTER 9. PEOPLE ARE VERY FOND OF MONEY.  
CHAPTER 10. WHAT IF I'M A WRITER?  
CHAPTER 11. NO. I'M NO WRITER.  
CHAPTER 12. THE END OF MY SYNAGOGUE.  
CHAPTER 13. ME AT THE OPERA.  
CHAPTER 14. YET ANOTHER EXISTENCE.  
CHAPTER 15. ACCOUNTS, GOD'S AND MINE: CLOSURE.

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

Note:

This novel is a work of fiction. All of the names mentioned and events described in it are nothing more than the product of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to real life names, persons, and events, including the author's name, is therefore purely coincidental.</b>

## CHAPTER 1. MY OCCUPATION.

I don't like poor people. It's not a social issue, it's an occupational hazard. Ask anyone in my line of work – none of us have any sympathy for the poor.

Before I got the job I have now, I spent some time driving a cab, which was a natural choice for someone in my situation. My papers were in order. I knew the streets pretty good. After getting a hack license, which was pretty easy, I had no problem finding an opening at one of those big downtown taxi lots. I was pushing thirty, which was in keeping with what my papers said. A two-year difference is hardly noticeable at that age.

===

It didn't take me long to get the hang of it. I'm a reasonably good judge of character. Pretty soon, one glance at a customer's face would tell me what kind of tip I could count on at the end of the trip.

Even though you get your fares where you find them, every cabdriver has his favorite pick-up location. Mine was Lincoln Center at let-out time.

You can pull over at the curb, or drive up the ramp. Folks hailing cabs up on the ramp are usually couples – smart, well-mannered middle-class types. The affluent, they either have their own cars parked in the big lot underneath the plaza, or just walk home if they happen to live in the area. It's pretty safe. Every so often you'll see a well-preserved lady dressed to the nines, clusters of genuine diamonds hanging from her neck, strutting down the street. Why not? Harlem's too far, and Brooklyn even farther. As for the poor, they have two options. They can

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

either use public transportation or trudge over to their beat-up jalopy parked many blocks away in a spot they spent hours looking for.

One night, swinging onto the ramp, I picked up this black family, kids and all, going home to Harlem. It must have been a Tchaikovsky night. Intellectuals always drag their kids to see ballet. They figure it's good for the kids. The husband treated his wife very politely all along, and the two kids had good manners and talked quietly, discussing the performance they had just seen. They sounded pretty knowledgeable, too. There aren't many such families in the city's non-affluent sections. After giving me a very good tip, the head of the family warned me not to pick up any fares in his dangerous neighborhood. Getting out, all of them said thank you – the kids didn't even have to be prompted. Now that's proper upbringing for you. Speaking of dangerous neighborhoods, getting mugged was hardly an issue for me. I had my skills, my reflexes were as good as ever, and if some clown with a death wish figured it might be a good idea to stick a gun to my head, asking me to hand over the day's earnings, the poor bastard would have ended up on the roadside with a broken neck. I'm not a particularly violent person, but when someone really insists on getting his ass kicked, I don't mind obliging them. Just in case, though, I didn't normally pick up any suspicious characters. Unlike the police, I know a suspicious character when I see one. I have no use for that kind of bullshit, even though they can fine you, or even take away your hack license if they catch you turning down a passenger. They have this group of agents dressed like thugs, hailing taxis. If you turn them down, they show you the badge and write down your info, and you have to pay a fine. That's, like, to prevent discrimination. Discrimination, my ass. Trying being a cabby. The cops will discriminate you no matter what color your skin is.

It wasn't a bad job, though. Some passengers can be pretty entertaining.

Anyway, I spent three whole years hacking. The money was decent. Now and then I took time off, and even got some tan down in Florida without breaking the budget. I didn't have to touch my secret savings even once.

One day, I was taking a fellow to the airport, and his face looked kind of familiar, but, man, I'd seen so many faces

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

over the years I had a problem associating a face with an event, or events. The fellow got chatty all of a sudden. He asked me where I'd gotten so tan. I said, Miami. This got him enthusiastic. He said he'd studied at DeVry. He said he hadn't been down there in a while. He asked about the new hotels, and wanted to know if they'd finished building up the embankment, and what were the improvements on Villa Viscaya, weren't they supposed to be adding an extension, and on and on. I kept my replies short, but some folks just can't be contained. Midway through the trip, he asked, "Don't you have a brother?"

At that point I suddenly realized who he was.

I said, sounding indifferent, "Nope."

"You don't have a relative whose name is William?"

I made like I was trying hard to remember. I said, "William? No. I don't think so."

"Thing is," he said, "that's a pretty unique voice you have there. I only used to know one guy who had a voice like that. I thought you might be related. Although, come to think of it, timbre isn't a genetic trait. I once spent two hours talking to Richard Tucker's son. You know, the one he had out of wedlock? He's got this deep gravely basso voice, imagine."

I swung onto the Van Wyck. The loquacious customer complained the airport wasn't conveniently located.

After dropping him off, I filled the tank and returned to the lot without finishing the shift. Popping into the office, I told the owner I was quitting. He tried to talk me out of it, but I told him I'd been having dizzy spells lately.

===

My apartment is the kind of place a man in my situation needs: a studio in a six-story brick building on a quiet street in the middle of Brooklyn. I'm on the third floor, so I don't even have to use the elevator. The living room doubles as the bedroom. Outside, the courtyard features sickly-looking trees, bushes, tufts of grass, and a well-trodden patch with three decrepit benches and a crooked table. Some of the tenants gather outside pretty often, especially when the weather is good. They're

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

mostly blacks, Jews, and, naturally, there are lots of kids whose racial and ethnic origin is hard to determine – they're Brooklyn kids. Once in a while I get out there myself, armed with a book or magazine. I just sit on a bench and read. In my previous existence, prior to the plastic surgery, I never read anything. My prominent superiors had no use for books either, even though they were, in fact, very well educated, and could speak foreign languages fluently, and what not. It simply never occurred to me back then that a fellow can pick up a book and just read it.

The first book I ever read in my new life, this life – I picked it up from the window sill out in the hallway, just outside my studio apartment. It was about this young woman who stole someone's car and went adventuring in it until she discovered a corpse in the trunk. She was about to dump the car when suddenly she hooked up with a guy and fell in love with him. Not until I finished the book did I realize it was a mystery, i.e. the most popular literary genre ever. At the local thrift shop, I bought another book of that category. It turned out to be less entertaining. There was no point in having my new name listed in yet another file, so I didn't get a membership card at the local library. Instead, I started to buy, or pick up from trash, used books of all kinds. Some of them had no covers anymore. Soon I lost interest in mysteries. Turned out, they were all written after the same pattern. The plots varied a little, but almost from the start you suddenly found you didn't really give a shit who killed or robbed whom, or why. Some time later I started reading a coverless book that turned out to be historical – a classic, in fact. Not until I got halfway through it did I realize I had already read it before – back in high school. It was a novel by Charles Dickens.

===

Because there were a lot of Jewish tenants in my building, I figured it might be a good idea to make some friends among them. I asked the fellow in the bookshop what Jewish folks read nowadays. He offered me *The Chosen*, a recently published novel, brand-new and expensive.

I started reading it out in the courtyard. After a while, I put the book down beside me and lit up. Soon an old Jewish fellow from the fifth floor joined me on the bench.

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

Glancing at the title, he said, "Everybody's reading Potok now."

"That's right," I agreed.

"You, too."

"I wouldn't want to feel left out."

"You're not Jewish, though?"

"No, I'm not."

For a while we just sat there in silence.

"Still looking for a job?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Nothing so far?"

"There's a few delivery jobs available. Nothing permanent, though."

He pondered.

"Anthony, are you sure you're not Jewish?"

"Pretty sure. Why?"

"Your mother wasn't Jewish? Are you sure?"

"I'm positive."

"Good."

This puzzled me. Having lived in Brooklyn for a while, I thought I knew for a fact there was nothing more unfortunate in a Jewish man's view than being a non-Jew.

David (that was his name) paused before saying, "You know the synagogue over on Tenth Street?"

"I've seen it."

"They're looking for someone who's not Jewish. They need a new custodian."

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

"Custodian?" I said.

"Like a janitor. I don't think it's the kind of job you want, though."

"Why not?"

"It's a lot of dirty work. The money isn't very good either."

"I'm not looking to get rich. I'm just looking for a job."

"I'll bet you made a lot more driving a cab."

The following evening, David took me to the synagogue at the end of Tenth Street. I had seen all kinds of places in my life, but this was my first time in a Jewish temple. Even though the building was new, you could feel the spirit of ancient times inside. At least I did. I couldn't have explained it.

===

Judaism is the oldest monotheist religion.

===

Right after the evening service, Shali Stern, the temple's president, asked me to step into his office for an interview. His corpulent youngish secretary, called Chaya, smiled at me. The biographical facts I gave them were in line with what my papers said and could not arouse suspicion. The following day they gave me a more formal interview in the presence of the synagogue's chief rabbi, two members of the board, and the previous custodian, a non-Jewish Pole called Zbigniew, who spoke English fluently. At that point I finally realized why they needed a non-Jew. Saturday is one of the busiest days for the custodian. Jews are not allowed to work on Saturdays.

The Polish fellow turned out to be an artist. Unknown artists always have a hard time selling their work. To make ends meet, Zbigniew had spent the last ten years working as a janitor. Now he had finally found a good agent. His pictures were selling well.

Folks living in that quiet section of Brooklyn were mostly

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

religious Jews, a demographic entity with which I had had no previous contacts. As a refuge, this was ideal.

===

Zbigniew's task was to supervise my efforts for a week, which would hopefully give me enough time to grasp all the nuances of the synagogue's life.

"Those are the toilets, and here's the brush," Zbigniew lectured. "Watch this. Once you've flushed a toilet, see, you have about ten seconds to go over the edges. Once in a while someone shits all over the bowl. When you see that, you've got to flush two or three times. In the ladies' room, make sure you flush at least twice. Women are real pissers. Major league, man. I ain't kidding you, either. They splash all over the place. I'll bet they're more careful at home. It's an outrage, I swear. They have no respect whatever for the holy place."

Describing the ways of some of the board members for me, Zbigniew said, "Here's what President Shali does. Watch." Passing two fingers along a bookshelf, he showed them to me. "That's the way he checks for dust. Chaya, the secretary, insists there should always be paper towels in the dispensers. The guy in charge of the kitchen is called Yitzhak. He'll tell you it's your sacred duty to keep the fridge clean. After that, he'll tell you you can't rinse the mop in the kitchen sink. Use the sink anyway, just make sure no one sees you doing it. Here, look. See the partition? The right-hand section is for meat utensils. The other one is for dairy utensils. You're going to wash everything in the dairy section. It's handier. Just make sure no one catches you doing it. They'll be picking on you all the time, for every little thing. Don't bother arguing with them, it's pointless. Just say, Okay, I'll do it, and then just go home."

At the library, Zbigniew continued: "Those books with the black covers, see? They're the Torah. The blue-cover ones are the Torah too, but you should keep them separate anyway. Those tiny ones are prayer books. They go on the lower shelves. The large red and black ones over there are the Torah with some commentary from the Talmud. They're all in Hebrew. You don't know Hebrew, so just sort them by their jacket color."

Inside the garage, Zbigniew indicated the lawn mower

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

and the shovels and picks for clearing snow and ice in the winter. After that, he showed me the stock room where brushes, brooms, mops, trash bags, paper towels, and toilet paper were stored.

===

As a farewell gesture, President Shali offered Zbigniew to have an exhibition of his paintings at the synagogue. He said Zbigniew could use the large hall where conferences and private parties were held. They called it the gym, apparently because there was a basketball hoop in a corner. Using his van, Zbigniew soon delivered a whole bunch of paintings and hung them up along the hall's perimeter. According to the agreement he had with Shali, all of the pictures' themes had to be biblical and only pertaining to the Old Testament. Shali invited the chief rabbi, whom everyone addressed as Rabbie, to take a look before others could see the exhibition. After inspecting the pictures briefly, the rabbi said: "This is hardly an appropriate place for nudes." He indicated one of the paintings.

"That's Adam and Eve," Zbigniew said.

"This is a temple."

Zbigniew bulked at this. "Should I dress them in Levi's?"

After giving it some thought, Rabbie said, "No offence, but as I understand, God himself is depicted in one of the works."

"That's right," Zbigniew said.

"Also in the nude."

Zbigniew offered, "I could put a tuxedo on Him, if that's the way you see Him."

Rabbie countered, "No one can see Him."

Zbigniew refused to budge.

"Look, I know," he said. "Jewish tradition says you're not supposed to depict humans, never mind the Creator himself. I mean, even Christian priests used to frown on painted images of the Lord. All the same, artists go on

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

painting Him, including Jewish artists.”

“I’m aware of that,” Rabbie said. “Even so, to the best of my knowledge, no artist has ever painted God in the nude. Besides, the lanky youngster you have in that picture is not quite in keeping with the generally accepted tradition of depicting the Creator, is he?” He indicated Zbigniew’s painting.

“Good point,” Zbigniew agreed. “Most folks think of Him as a flabby old geezer. That’s just ignorant, though. No, let me take that back. It’s blasphemy, pure and simple. Look at the painting. Seriously, look at it. False modesty aside, the fellow in that picture, my picture, is brimming with energy. You see? He’s got good reflexes. He’s quick-witted. He acts fast. He’s full of life. And that’s the only way to depict the Creator. No offence, but the senior citizen in Michelangelo’s fresco you probably have in mind – he just doesn’t fit the bill. Oh, so you think it’s funny.”

Rabbie chuckled a little.

“Listen,” he said. “The bottom line is you can’t show that picture here. Okay? Why don’t you hang up something else instead, a landscape, anything. I remember seeing one of your landscapes. The one with the horses? I thought it was very beautiful.”

“I sold that one,” Zbigniew said. He added: “Fine. I’ll bring something.”

Now Rabbie moved on to a painting depicting a completely naked adolescent David in a full-frontal view, aiming his sling at Goliath.

Rabbie said, “That’s historically false. Our religion does not allow people to go around naked in public.”

Zbigniew disagreed, “David was just a country boy. There were no synagogues in the countryside. Religious rules could only be observed in the city.”

Rabbie said confidently, “All of the Jews back then were familiar with the Law.”

“Oh really!” Zbigniew could not be contained. “Would you mind telling me how that was accomplished? I mean,

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

come on. Rabbis didn't just wander from one town to another like a bunch of missionaries. What do you want to bet David wasn't even circumcised? There may have been no rabbi available when he was born."

Now Rabbie disagreed in earnest. "God made him King of Judea."

"So?"

"He wouldn't have done so had David not been a strict observer of the Law."

"Oh, please. We're talking about David, aren't we? The fellow whose entire reputation is built on shattering the Commandments?"

"What are you talking about?"

"He seduced Bathsheba, who was married, and had her husband killed, and that's just in his old age."

Behind Rabbie's back, Shali the President suppressed a laugh.

Rabbie said, "All right, listen. The bottom line is you can't hang up a naked David in here."

"Fine," Zbigniew agreed wearily. "I'll make a loin wrap for him."

Now Rabbie approached the next picture which depicted Moses preparing to climb Mount Sinai. Moses himself, his brother Aaron, and Aaron's sons wore long white shawls. Moses' own kids, kneeling and begging their father not to go, were completely naked. Moses' face looked very inspired. Zbigniew must be a very good painter. Rabbie inspected one of Moses' sons closely. The youngster's balls were painted very precisely.

Foreseeing further objections, Zbigniew remarked: "Yes, I know, those two fellows, Moses' kids, they're naked. They don't have the Commandments yet, though. Note that Moses is only preparing to get the tablets. Once he gets back from the mountain, they'll drop by the nearest Barney's and get tuxedos and bow ties."

Saying nothing, Rabbie moved on to the next picture,

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

which depicted David as an old man. Gazing down at the city from the roof of his palace, the king, wrapped in a white toga, had just spotted Bathsheba bathing in the pool in the enclosed backyard of her house. Though far below and barely visible, you could tell she was naked. Putting on his glasses, Rabbie brought his face very close to the picture, inspecting the tiny figure. You could tell by Zbigniew's expression suggested he was prepared to stand his ground. Without saying a word, Rabbie moved on to the next picture.

It was titled, simply, Masada. Zbigniew had explained it to me earlier. Armed with lances, swords, and rocks, the inhabitants were fending off Roman legionnaires scaling the city's wall. Some of the Masada warriors were naked. Without food or water, mustering whatever still remained of their strength, destined to die soon, they fought on. No time to think of proper attire. Rabbie raised no objections.

The next painting showed young Samson tearing apart a lion's snout. I remembered reading the story as a kid. In Zbigniew's picture, Samson wore a loin wrap made of leopard skin. Rabbie only asked why Samson was so skinny, like an ordinary teenager. Wasn't he supposed to be a powerfully built man with huge biceps? Zbigniew explained that according to Scripture, Samson's strength was in his hair, and not his muscles. In the painting, Samson's very fair hair reached down to his waist. Next came a landscape depicting a group of camel riders dressed like bedouins traveling through a desert. Maybe Zbigniew implied that they were Jewish, even though back in ancient times all Middle Eastern fashions must have been alike, I guess.

The opening took place the following day.

All of the parishioners, or congregants, as they preferred to be called, and even some outsiders, showed up. In the middle of the hall, Zbigniew and I set up folding tables laid with éclairs, coffee, juice, and wine. The food was strictly kosher. Zbigniew had ordered the treats through Yitzhak, the fellow in charge of the kitchen.

Thus began my acquaintance with the rules of kosher. As it turned out, Jews cannot mix meat and dairy, not even a little bit. They can't have a turkey sandwich or meatcakes and chase the meal down with coffee if there's any cream in it. Only vegetable oil can be used for cooking. It's

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

supposed to be sinful even just to put meat and sour cream on the same table. That's one austere religion for you.

This being a real formal presentation and all, some folks made speeches. Kenny, a tall elderly man with a goatee, went first. Back when he was still a yeshiva student, he made money on the side working as an extra at the Metropolitan Opera House, which was probably why he still retained a soft spot for the arts even now, many years later. In his speech he pointed out that in all epochs the first and best works of art were dedicated to religion. Even the primitives sketching hunting scenes on the walls of their caves did so in order to invoke a higher power: their paintings were supposed to bring them luck in their hunting endeavors. Their religious instinct manifested itself in their superstition. This instinct, according to Kenny, was everywhere. Everyone had it. Pagan sculptors created images of their numerous gods. Once monotheism had taken hold, the most gifted architects and masons started to erect temples which we still view as great works of art today. Religion and art have one thing in common: spirituality.

Kenny's solemn conclusion was: "Talent is the highest gift, a gift from above, self-evident and self-manifesting. We should always remember that. It's a great honor to be here today, witnessing the launch of an artist's career. Last week, I stopped by Cohen's Gallery where one of Zbigniew's pictures is on display. I saw professional critics stop in front of that picture. Zbigniew, I wish you every success an artist can hope for."

Everyone applauded. Kenny sipped from his plastic cup. Glancing at Zbigniew, I saw he was smiling contentedly. Most people are conceited, no matter who or what they are, I guess.

Rabbie's wife made the next speech. Jews call rabbis' spouses rabitzas. The rabitza talked like a typical woman, using typical woman words, such as wonderful, beautiful, brilliant, astonishing, and on and on. Immensely flattered, Zbigniew beamed at her. When everyone was finally done congratulating him and the wine ran out, a man in a sports jacket approached Zbigniew. The two of them conversed quietly for a few moments, after which I heard Zbigniew raise his voice suddenly. He had two drinks in him and was getting red in the face. Later he explained to

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

me the fellow was a small-time art dealer who wished to buy some of Zbigniew's pictures.

"He didn't offer you a very good price," I suggested.

"Price!" Zbigniew scoffed. "Who cares about the price! I hate the fucking bastards, that's all. Stupid jerks. Back when I was still taking part in street shows, not one critic or agent ever came up to me. I once got into this very expensive show at the Coliseum. You know, the big silly-looking building on Columbus Circle? Cost me a fortune to get a spot. I had to put up pretty much all the money I had back then. All the fucking critics and agents just sauntered by my section without so much as a glance at my stuff. They only had eyes for big names. One of the dailies published a review of the show. Only well-known artists got mentioned."

"Are they any good?"

"Who? The ones that got mentioned?"

"Yeah."

"They suck. So-called avant-garde. Bullshit rules, man."

===

Jewish folks call Saturday Shabes. Doing any kind of work on a Saturday is against the Jewish law. If you're Jewish, all you can do is pray.

As my new employers and I had agreed earlier, I came in at 7 a.m. to make sure the lights were on in all the right places. Touching a light switch on a Saturday is considered doing work.

Most of the congregants at the early morning service were old. The rest of the parishioners showed up an hour later. By 9 a.m., not just the main praying hall, but every room in the building was packed. The women arrived dressed to the nines, as if this were a theatre night or something. Many brought along their kids. Straddling a chair in a corner of the gym, I started reading the Torah, i.e. the first five books of the Old Testament, in English translation. It seemed pretty curious at first (a lot of my childhood lectures suddenly came back, or maybe I'd read some of it at some other time, I can't remember),

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

but when I got to the part with all those genealogical lists, like, who begot whom and so forth, it got kind of dull. A lady wearing a lilac evening dress and an enormous hat came over, saying quietly, "Anthony, I'm sorry to interrupt your reading. Someone locked all the stalls in the ladies' room."

Setting the book down, I headed for the ladies' room. A number of very annoyed-looking women crowded just outside the door. I knocked. A woman in a sequined dress came out, saying irritably, "Anthony, all the stalls are locked. There's no one inside."

Entering, I knocked on the door of the first stall. No answer. Pulling myself up on the crossbeam and hanging on my stomach on the edge of the metal door, I reached down and drew the latch. In this manner I opened the rest of the stalls. The women started getting into them even before I got out the door. Just in case, I dropped by the men's room. This turned out to be a very good idea – someone had locked every stall in here as well. An elderly man loitered hopelessly in front of a stall, shifting his weight from foot to foot. After I unlocked it for him, he smiled, saying, "It's the kids. Thank you. Thanks a lot." Speaking of the kids – they were busy running all over the holy place, laughing, chasing one another, jumping over chairs, and so forth. Two boys amused themselves by swinging from the coat hanger bar.

Zbigniew came in. This was his final visit here. I told him about the locked stalls.

"Happens every Shabes," he explained. "The brats get bored. I don't blame them. They're not allowed to play ball or ride a bike, or have a chess game, or anything. They get desperate. Who wouldn't? They're just trying to have a good time, that's all. Locking stalls is just one of their tricks. Now and then they go through a chair-breaking or table-wrecking phase. They'll do anything. Don't worry about it, just make sure it doesn't get out of hand. Where's the broom? And the dustpan?"

"In the kitchen, I guess. Why?"

"That's not a good idea. You'll be lucky to get back either in one piece."

We found the broom, or at least its lower part, behind the

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

refrigerator. The handle was missing. A short while later I found it in the foyer. A boy with very fair sidecurls was using it, trying to knock down a bud from a palm tree growing in a tub. The moment I put out my hand, he surrendered it to me and ran off. Kids are hardly naïve. When they're doing something they're not supposed to, don't think they don't know. I was the same as a kid, only worse. As for the dustpan, I soon discovered it in the library (a small room where elderly folks gathered sometimes to study the Torah).

Zbigniew resumed the lecture: "Keep all of your stuff in the stock room. Kids leave it alone most of the time." In the meantime, the parishioners, or congregants, were everywhere, socializing – women in smart dresses, mostly. The men were busy praying in the large hall called the Main Shul. The kids were running around screaming, enjoying themselves. Not once did I see anyone try to stop them or scold them or interfere in some other way with their activities.

On the oblong metal table in the kitchen sat a coffee jar, paper cups, and paper plates with cookies and potato chips.

===

When they take a break from praying, some folks like to come into the kitchen to have some coffee. The place doubles as the smoking room. A Jew cannot light a fire on a Saturday. I always set a lit candle on the tiny ledge attached to the sink so that the smokers could light up. Most of them are men, although some women drop by too now and then.

===

Zbigniew and I lit up. A solid-looking gray-haired fellow entered, saying hello. Indicating me, he asked Zbigniew: "Is that our new Zbigniew?"

Zbigniew grinned. "Yep. Some people like to call him Anthony, though."

Smiling, the man extended his hand to me.

Zbigniew said: "Akiva here is in charge of the library and all the holy books."

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

Lowering his voice, Akiva reported: "The men's room is flooded."

Zbigniew and I headed for the men's room. President Shali was already there when we entered. Water was gushing from one of the stalls, spreading all over the floor. Bending over the bowl, Zbigniew twisted the stop valve. He turned to Shali. "Tell Chaya to call the plumber on Monday."

Squatting in front of the valve, I touched the pipe underneath. Still dripping. I said to Zbigniew, "All it needs is a new gasket, and maybe a stop valve, too. I could do it myself."

"You got tools?"

"Some."

Someone announced there was a leak in the ladies' room as well.

Shali said, "Anthony, you know plumbing?"

"I used to work in a repair shop."

That wasn't just something on my resume, it was actually true. After leaving Argentina and landing in Cincinnati, I enrolled in a technical school, taking a practical mechanics course in order to occupy myself with something. After that, I spent a year working at an auto repair shop.

===

Dropping by a hardware store on my way home, I picked up a vise, a monkey wrench, a stop valve, a suitable elbow, a set of gaskets, and some other odds and ends. I entered my building and was walking up the stairs when an apartment door on the second floor opened and Rose stuck her head out. I slowed down.

"The Giants are on tonight," she announced in an undertone. "Care to stop by and watch the game with me?"

"I might."

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

"It starts at eight."

"I'm getting off at eight-thirty."

"You could catch the second half."

"Okay. I'll drop by. Thanks."

"How's your new job?" she asked.

At that moment, a door slammed somewhere. Rose disappeared into her apartment, closing the door soundlessly.

Rose the dyed blonde is my current woman. I drop by two or three nights a week. We watch TV together. I don't have a TV. Once in a while I spend the night. She takes every precaution to keep the neighbors from knowing about our trysts. I'm sure the entire building knows.

===

I still had a couple of hours before the evening service, so I took the subway to the beach, where I normally go in the summer when I have some free time.

Once on the beach, I undressed, bundled up my clothes, and headed west along the surf, homing on my favorite spot, somewhere between Brighton and Coney. The sand doesn't scorch your soles anymore in August. There weren't too many people around. Getting level with the beach café over on the boardwalk, I untied my bundle, opened Potok's book, and stretched out on the warm sand. Reading in the sun can fatigue you pretty quickly. Soon I dozed off, pressing my nose into the open book. Some time must have elapsed. Feeling a burning sensation on my back and thighs and beads of sweat forming on my face, I sprang to my feet. At that moment I locked eyes with a youngish woman walking slowly towards me.

I recognized her instantly.  
Gloria.

Making like there was nothing about her worth reacting to, I headed for the water. After wading through the surf for a while, I dived in, surfaced, and proceeded further

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

out. Turning around to look at the shore, I tried to spot Gloria, but there were too many people in motley swimsuits. Suddenly the guard rose up on his elevated bench, blowing the whistle and waving at me. I headed back.

A good swim is always refreshing.

Up until that moment, I had periodically felt anxious about meeting someone from that previous existence of mine. Now it finally registered that no one was looking for me anymore. So many years had passed – pretty much everyone I had had to watch out for had long been dead, and I had a new face.

I still had the same voice, though, and my body, posture and gait had not changed either, and now they had drawn Gloria's attention. No matter. One look at my face, and we would become strangers. I was different. I was new. As I got out, a little black boy accosted me.

"Hey, Mister, are you a lifeguard?"

I had a red thong on, similar to the ones the lifeguards wore, only brighter.

"No," I said. "You mean, the swimsuit? I just pulled it off of one of the guards when he wasn't looking."

The boy laughed. All of the lifeguards on that beach were well-built blond men. There are many similar bodies and postures and gaits out there. Bending down to get my cigarettes from the shirt pocket, I saw Gloria out of the corner of my eye. She wore a bright-colored bikini suit. Lighting up and straightening, I locked eyes with her again. She lingered, hesitating, looking me in the face.

"Hello," she said. "How's the water today?"

A perfectly trivial introductory question. Her voice hadn't changed either.

I replied without bothering to alter my voice: "It's pretty warm. The tide's in."

Still staring at my face, she said, "You look almost exactly like someone I used to know in the past."

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

"Did he have two eyes, like I do?" I asked facetiously.  
"Yes. And they were the same color as yours," she replied, very serious. "It's very odd. Even your voices are the same."

"Maybe our names are the same too," I suggested in the same jocose tone.

She continued peering into my face. I could tell she had no idea who I was. The feeling of relief was pretty powerful. I was free at last. In front of me was a woman of the same age as I, whom I had loved once, and there wasn't a shred of recognition in her eyes. I felt playful, the way any normal man feels when there's an attractive woman around. I asked, "Was he your boyfriend?"

"Yes."

"Were you in love with him?"

"Yes."

"Well. Since you think I look a lot like your former boyfriend, we might as well get acquainted. Name's Anthony. What's yours?"

"Gloria."

We shook hands. Her features contorted. Blind folks can recognize you by touching your hand. Gloria wasn't blind, but ... Well, who knows. Some touches might feel identical.

"My name doesn't tell you anything?" she asked.  
"I used to know two Glorias. Neither was my girlfriend at any point."

I offered her a cigarette and gave her a light. For some time we smoked in silence, watching some youngsters frolicking in the sand.

"How about a swim?" I offered.

"I'd like a drink first," she said. "That café's open."

"Mind if I join you?"

She was going to put on her dress, but I assured her she

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

did not have to. Swimsuits are pretty common in beach cafés. My red thong was still wet. I slung my shirt over my arm. The pockets contained my keys and money. At the café, I ordered fried shrimps and a soda. Gloria turned down the shrimps, explaining she was on a diet, and only had a Coke. Maybe she really was on a diet. Needless to say she was nothing like the girl I had known twelve years ago, but for a woman of her age group she looked pretty good. Well-preserved. Good body. Getting back to the beach, we headed for the water right away. I have this habit of sprinting, instead of walking, into the waves. I plunged in. Surfacing, I saw Gloria keeping pace with me, seemingly without effort. She had always been a good swimmer. Reaching the line beyond which you couldn't venture without pissing off the lifeguard, we changed our course, heading east along to the shore, me in the lead. Turning abruptly, I swam up to her, touching her hand. Another touch, another telltale sign. Suddenly I saw fear in her eyes. It was there only a moment, and then it was gone. She smiled.

"You were right. It's pretty warm," she said, turning and heading in the opposite direction. I followed. Turning her head to me, she said, "I wouldn't want to get too far from the lifeguard. He doesn't look very dependable. I left my stuff near his bench. I wouldn't want any teenagers getting ideas about walking away with my pocketbook." We took a stroll along the surf, allowing our swimsuits to dry in the sun. Yes: she was still very good-looking. I wanted to ask her if she was married, only I didn't wish to sound tactless. Had she said no, my next question would have been, naturally, "Why don't we spend the night at your place?" Not a good idea, not on the first date. And this wasn't really a date, either.

We exchanged some trivial remarks. I asked what she did for a living. She said she worked as a programmer at some insurance company. I told her I was a custodian at a Jewish club, which was true: I already knew that the synagogue was not just a temple, but also a club where folks convened on any old pretext. Later, I accompanied her to the outdoor municipal lot where her brand-new Volkswagen was parked.

Before leaving, I offered, "Why don't we have dinner at some decent place tonight?" Decoded, this standard line means, "Why don't we have sex?" Naturally I wanted to have sex with her.

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

Twelve years ago she would have turned down a stranger.

That was then.

Her reply was still kind of evasive, though. She said, "I'm busy tonight."

"Tomorrow night, then."

"I'll be busy the rest of the week, I'm afraid."

"Next week? On the twentieth."

"Twenty-first would be better."

"Done. Where do I pick you up?"

"Do you have a car?"

"Yes."

"I'll just wait for you . . . let's see . . . Do you know the flower shop across the street from Borough Hall?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. The one on Court?"

"Yes, that's the one. I'll just stand outside the shop."

"Good. What time?"

"Around seven?"

"Sure. Got a phone number?"

"No point," she said. "Everything's settled, right? We meet outside the flower shop."

"Are you sure you're not going to forget?"

"I'll try not to."

Since the awkward part was already behind us, I went ahead and asked, "Are you married?"

"No. You?"

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

"I guess I value my freedom as much as you do yours."

We said good-bye. She drove away.

===

When I came in, the service was still in progress. Have you ever seen Jewish folks pray? They're a lot like Catholics, only more organized. They read their texts in chorus, bowing down from the waist after each line. Those who have a problem bending, they just nod, as if agreeing with what it says in the holy book. All this nodding and bowing becomes a habit. I've seen young Jewish guys sway back and forth even when they're just flirting with girls. Someone explained to me once that the bowing helps the meaning of the text to penetrate right into one's soul. They start practicing early on, when they're still kids.

I popped into the gym to take another look at Zbigniew's pictures. Instead of painting a loin wrap for David as he had promised, the stubborn Polack had used bond paper, cutting out a shape resembling a loin wrap and painting it to look like leopard skin, and pasting it onto David's balls so that he could remove it after the exhibition. Something looked wrong. Getting closer to the picture, I discovered that the loin wrap had been removed from its proper place and stuck to David's head instead. David's dick and balls were once again exposed. No doubt the partitioners' kids, whose behavior patterns were familiar to me now, had done this. The little vandals must have been studying and pawing Zbigniew's pictures for a while until they realized that the loin wrap was, not painted, but glued on.

I was alone in the gym. Everyone was still in the Main Shul, always used for the final Saturday service. Carefully removing the loin wrap from the unfortunate David's head, I restored it to where it belonged.

Those boys were a handful, but how could I blame them? As a kid, I would have done the exact same thing. The kitchen was a mess. Someone had splashed the metal tabletop all over with coffee and Coke, topping it off with soggy cookie crumbs. Whoever had done it had also strewn the floor with soaking-wet trash. In a corner lay a broken bottle in a purple pool of wine. The kids, again. Nothing to do on Shabes. A rank of plastic cups containing a kind of coffee porridge stood on the table.

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

They must have filled the cups with instant coffee powder and poured milk and wine over it, pretending they were cooking. The coffee jars themselves turned out to be filled with something that could have been either wine or Coke. I had no choice but to discard them.

Yitzhak, the curator of the kitchen, came in. After complaining about the kids, he looked dolefully into the trash can with the wasted coffee for a while, sighed and would have made a comment had he not been interrupted by the arrival of his very irritable wife, Ruth, with two of their children in tow, who demanded he come home immediately. Before leaving, Ruth, smiling cordially and thanking me in advance for tidying up, assured me that her own children were different and never messed up the kitchen. Pushing the damp paper plates off the tabletop, I wiped it off with a wet kitchen towel. After sweeping up the trash, I mopped the floor. Making sure there was no one around, I rinsed the mop in the kitchen sink.

When all of the Jews were gone, I started in on the Main Shul. As Zbigniew had explained to me, the front pews were for the rich. The poor, whose monetary contributions to the synagogue were negligible, had to sit in the back. As in a Christian church, there were boxes attached to the backs of the benches. In the front rows, the boxes were empty. Wealthy Jews had good manners and took their books back out, placing them on the shelves in the hallway outside the Main Shul, once they were finished with them. In the back rows, though, all of the boxes were crammed with books and trash: discarded napkins, scraps of paper with notes scribbled on them, crumpled brochures, candy wraps, half-consumed candy, and such like. It was at that point that I started to realize how much harm the poor inflict upon the world. Many poor folks read magazines and newspapers on the subway, but few of them will think of depositing a paper in a trash receptacle once they're done with it. Out in the street, you often see poor folks gobbling up hot dogs, chips, doughnuts, and other junk, and the wraps, paper napkins, crumbs – everything gets tossed on the ground. They use Kleenexes instead of handkerchiefs, and how do you think a used Kleenex is disposed of? Poor folks' children are always munching or sucking on something – chips, candy, doughnuts, lollipops, chewing gum, or whatever – discarding the wraps, candy sticks, and ice cream sticks all over the

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

place, spitting out the gum, and the shit sticks to people's shoes. The rich – they read their newspapers at work, or at home. Outdoors, they don't stuff their faces with doughnuts or hotdogs or pizza. They hardly ever buy their kids chips, cookies, or candy. Seldom do they allow their kids to purchase chewing gum or brownies. Come to think of it, the rich do not allow their children to consume any food outdoors. Wealthy folks do not contribute to the accumulation of outdoor trash because, really, there's nothing they could possibly do it with. All the garbage you see in the street is there thanks to poor folks, and that is why no garbageman and no janitor can honestly say he has no problem with the poor. It's true. We don't like them. Unfortunately, there are many more poor folks than rich folks in the world, which is why there's so much garbage everywhere.

===

There are three restrooms in my synagogue: two on the first floor, and an additional ladies' room on the second floor – eight toilet bowls altogether, plus the three pissoirs in the men's room which are referred to as urinals. The French word pissoir is not very popular in New York. Two toilet bowls out of eight had shit all over that afternoon. Following Zbigniew's instructions, I flushed twice as I cleaned them, using chlorine liberally. Altogether, it took me about half an hour to take care of the restrooms. I spent two more hours tidying up, mopping up here, vacuuming there – nothing overly complicated. After checking all of the rooms and halls once again just in case, I locked the place up using the key from the chain issued to me earlier by Shali, and left.

===

That night I arrived at Rose's apartment armed with a can of Danish cookies. Poor Rose, she was very fond of them but never bought any herself, imagining she was on a diet. She came out to meet me wearing a loose-fitting blue robe she referred to as her peignoir. The Giants had just scored. I planted myself in front of the TV. It was a humid night. The players appeared to be exhausted. In the end, the Giants won by just one point. During our traditional tea time, Rose complained about her daughter's flakiness. The girl lived in Boston. Dropping out of college, she married early and was now working at

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

the zoo with her spouse, a veterinarian specializing in sick predators. Rose herself had divorced her second husband five years ago. Now she was a highly qualified nurse in some hospital. She too had dropped out of school in her time, abandoning the idea of becoming a doctor one day. Holding the coffee cup in one hand, I passed the other underneath Rose's robe, squeezing her thigh gently with my fingers. She just went on talking, discussing her daughter who had had to administer a shot to a panther once. In order to do that, you have to chase the panther into this, like, very tight cage, throw a net over him, and tie him up with some kind of special straps. You need two assistants to accomplish the task. You can't lure the panther into the cage using meat as bait, either. You're only supposed to give him some afterwards to offset his wild anger, even though panthers remember the shots far better than they do those placatory slices of meat, and go on loathing the vet for quite some time.

I passed my hand along the taut feminine thigh. The skin wasn't smooth at all. Rose moved on to the story of her getting that job at the hospital. There are plenty of doctors, but nurses are always in short supply. She had had her pick of job offers. She had not loved her second husband. She had married him in order not to be alone. That part of her monologue was loaded: she was trying to get me to be more open with her. If you allow yourself to be sincere with a woman, it'll give her grounds to expect a serious relationship. Why give anyone false hopes? My hand went up to her groin. The skin in that area was pretty smooth. Lace panties, probably pink. Last time they had been black. Suddenly I recalled the earlier encounter at the beach. Pretty odd – I seemed to have remembered Gloria all these years. I hadn't actually been thinking of her, but all the same, I had managed to preserve the memory. Now Rose shifted away from me, removing my hand from her thigh and wrapping herself tightly in her robe. I poured the brandy. Lighting up, we watched a soap opera for a while in which all of the actors acted in the exact same manner. Maybe they were just copying the director who had shown them how it should be done. Rose said that even though all soap operas were pretty dumb, they were good for taking your mind off problems. Like all women, she was under the impression she had serious problems. I decided to spend the night. In Rose's bed, I remembered my earlier encounter with Gloria once again, going over our

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

conversation in my mind.

In the morning, Rose spent quite some time listening intently at the door, making sure no one was lurking out there on the landing, before letting me out. Arriving at my own apartment one flight up, I made coffee and, sipping it, opened one of my secret caches, shaking the jewels from the plastic pencil-case onto the kitchen table: high-standard gold chains, rings with good stones, brooches, earrings, cuff links, and the like. Selecting a ring with a sizable emerald and slipping it into my pocket, I put away the rest.

===

I have other kinds of savings, too –blue chip stocks, bonds, and all. I keep them in other places, though. The good thing about jewelry is it can be turned into cash quickly and, unlike cash, it's not affected by inflation. Should I tell you who taught me this about jewels? Jacqueline did.

===

The year was 1961. I drove Jacqueline to a Georgetown function of some sort and had to wait for her in the car. She must have run into a lot of friends inside – she stayed over an hour. On the way back to the White House, I asked her what was the best stock to buy right now, and she said she wasn't sure but would ask someone knowledgeable for me if I wished. And then she smiled, adding, "William, if your purpose is just to save money, there's a much better way to do it. Should I tell you?"

"I'd really appreciate it, ma'am," I said.

"Buy some jewelry." She continued smiling. It was unclear whether she was joking or not. She explained, "Stocks go down. There's always something, a recession, or a world war, or some other crisis. A bank can go under. The inflation goes on even in prosperous times, which is why piling up cash is not a good idea either. Jewelry, on the other hand, is always valuable. Good stones are a safe bet. Nothing can ever affect them. They don't burn, either, so you don't have to be afraid of suddenly losing your fortune to a house fire."

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

From that day on, I bought jewelry each time I had some extra cash.

===

That morning, all kinds of folks visited the synagogue. In the gym, a bunch of adolescents (I knew most of their names by now) were shooting hoops. The chief rabbi was busy receiving some very suspicious characters at his office. Some of them seemed to be Hassidic Jews. You could tell them apart by their clothes – fur hats, pants reaching down to the ankles, and white stockings. Some did not look Jewish at all. Armed with some kind of papers, they formed a line outside the office. One of them emerged from the office carrying a certificate adorned by a large number of stamps and his photo, and another one went in right away. Chaya the secretary occupied the office next to Rabbie's. Going in and saying hello, I announced to her that, even though it was Sunday, I was going to work on that valve in the ladies' room. Beaming, Chaya told me she was not going to use the ladies' room for a while; since there were no other women in the synagogue right now, I could have the ladies' room to myself for as long as I liked.

Out in the hallway, I opened my new tool box which I had purchased at the hardware store earlier.

At that moment a man and a woman entered through the front door. Both looked dirty and unkempt. The gray-bearded man had a black suit and hat on, the kind you see Orthodox Jews wear, only his clothes looked soiled and baggy. The woman, too, was dressed after the Orthodox fashion, a black kerchief covering her forehead and a baggy black dress her body. One of her stockings featured a sizable hole. Going up to the folks outside Rabbie's office, the pair posed a question in Hebrew. My tools drew the old geezer's attention. Suddenly bending down, he picked up a brand-new wrench from the box. I was just standing there, looking at him.

He said, "I could use something like this. I've got a leaky faucet in my kitchen. I'll bring it back today."

"Sorry," I said, looking into his pale expressionless face. "I can't let you have it. I'm sorry. I need it myself."

Putting the wrench back, the man said, "The rabbi's very

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

busy today. Do you have a secretary here?"

I indicated the office. The man nodded and went in. His woman was already inside.

One of Rabbie's Hassidic clients came up to me, asking in an undertone, "Is there a coffee urn in this place? We've been stuck in here for two hours. Some of us could use some coffee."

"I'll find out," I said, entering the office.

The gray-bearded one was standing in front of Chaya. The woman with the tattered stocking had already seated herself on the chair to one side of the desk. Spread on the desk were various papers, file folders, lists, checks, and certificates.

Chaya said to the visitors, "We don't contact other synagogues about such issues. I'm sorry."

I had an urge to throw those two out. Chaya was being very polite to them, though. Asking permission to use the phone, the woman started dialing without waiting for Chaya to reply.

The man asked, "Do you know the Basewater rabbi's name?"

Chaya swiveled in her chair to get the directory from the shelf. At that moment, the woman, the receiver still pressed to her ear, picked up one of the checks from the desk absentmindedly, giving it a quick inspection. Taking the check from her, I placed it back on the desk. Chaya saw. She said to the woman, "Please don't touch anything, my desk is messy as it is."

I just stood there looking alternately at the man and the woman. After getting the Basewater rabbi's name and address, the strange couple left the office. Chaya said to me, "Thank you."

Getting out in the hallway briefly to make sure the gray-bearded one did not pick up any of my tools on his way out, I returned to the office to ask Chaya if she knew either of the two visitors. She said she didn't. After pondering a little, looking for the right definition, perhaps, she explained, "They're professional beggars."

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

I relayed to her the Hassidic client's request for coffee. In an undertone, Chaya said, "Those people out there, they're ... needy. They're ... uh ... destitute. At least that's what their papers say. Rabbie looks at the papers to make sure everything's in order. After that he gives them certificates they can use to receive charity checks. It's the little extra the Brooklyn Community asks us to do. Once they get their certificates from us, it's, like, so long, there's the door."

"I see," I said.

"We don't owe them anything," she went on. "The coffee you put up in the kitchen on Saturdays is for the congregants. Yitzhak pays for it out of his own pocket."

Getting out in the hallway again, I announced to the needy fellow we didn't have any coffee right now. A different needy fellow remarked testily, "We've been to other places. If there's a line, you're supposed to have a coffee urn, and maybe some cookies too. It doesn't cost much. This place is very poorly organized. There's no waiting room. Everyone has to stand outside in the hallway."

I explained to him that, unlike some other places, our synagogue was poor, and we had to pay for the coffee out of our own pocket.

A number of people, including Shali the president, watched as I changed the valve and the elbow in the ladies' room, offering useless advice from time to time. Sunday was their day off. They had nothing better to occupy themselves with. Finishing up, I opened up the main valve and flushed the toilet. There were no more leaks. Shali said, "Thank you." I cleaned up, disposing of the old valve and elbow. Chaya came in. She, too, tried flushing to make sure I'd done a good job. She said, "Great job, Anthony. Thank you." From that point on, the staff and parishioners treated me with considerable respect. Maybe they had never seen a janitor who knew plumbing before.

===

My new occupation is janitor (custodian, according to the papers) highly valued by his employers. Like anyone else

**Order** a paperback copy of "I Killed Marilyn" by Anthony Anchor or **download** a complete pdf. version of this book.

in my line of work, I resent the poor.