

55. Then they brought me to Reed and when I came in there, I was terrified. It's like 2 o'clock in the morning by now. They put me in this pajamas with a big hole in the crutch, my dick hanging out, and I'm sitting in this waiting room filled with completely psychotic people running around me, talking to themselves and gesturing wildly. I'd told the intake worker at Northwestern that this was exactly the reason I didn't wanna go there. I'm sitting there in this pajamas, behind locked doors, and I'm putting on a real face, just making sure that I act perfectly and appropriately. I said "Hi," smiled and read the newspaper, regardless of how terrified I was 'cause I thought to myself, "This is my only chance to get out of here." That way, even people like that fat-ass worthless security guard, who sat there and made fun at the real schizophrenic people running around, were nice to me after a while. When I finally saw the intake worker, she goes, "You don't need to be here," and I said, "I *know*, I don't need to be here. The staff at Northwestern told me I had to come." She repeated, "You didn't have to come," and I said, "What was I gonna do, what if I had resisted the security guards?" And she smiled a bit, "Yeah, you're right, there's not much you can do." Then she said, "Well, talk to a psychiatrist and talk to me, and I'm sure we can work something out. They are completely wrong about your Public Aid, it's perfectly good." I said, "All right." I waited and waited and finally I talked to the psychiatrist, a dour faced Indian woman who treated me like I was a psychotic moron, of course. She asked me what I'd already answered 10 times, like, "Do you feel like hurting yourself sometimes?" Very condescending. I was thinking, "I feel like hurting *you* right now." I prefaced my answer by saying, "I want you to know, before we proceed with this interview, I'm here against my will. There is nothing cognitively wrong with me, and I'm not gonna jump out the window and kill myself. The reason I'm here, is because these people at Northwestern said my insurance was no good and I told them, I wanted to wait until Monday when Public Aid opens. If I was imminently suicidal, I wouldn't have sought out help anyway, would I? I would have just killed myself. I've just been sad lately." She sneered that she had to get back and read me the same 20 questions, she gives every other moron that comes in there. My favorite one was, "Do you see things that aren't there?" I replied, "Do you mean: do I hallucinate? I know these big words. No, I'm not hallucinatory. Again, I will tell you, I am seeking treatment because I'm sad and I have an alcohol problem." Then she asked, "Do you think sometimes that you are a great man?" And I said to her, "Do you mean if I have delusions of grandeur? No, I don't." It was like, "Do you get it? I'm not crazy, just sad. Do I have to repeat this all night long?" How could this person possibly understand my participation in the boho life of Wicker Park and the non-traditional relationships I enter into with people? If you don't know anything about it, you can't understand it and the thing is, they don't even attempt to think about the cultural context, people are coming out of. My idea of love and friendship, especially since my friends are my family, are not the same as somebody who lives on a farm, in a unit, with no contact outside their nuclear family or extended family, or somebody who is from the North Shore, rich and interested in business and money, rather than art and politics. I could just see on her face, she didn't understand and she had these fixed notions of what is crazy. For example, me and Mick like to go to Goose Island and build a campfire, sit around and drink beer by the river, just like we're 10 years old. We like to go exploring old factories and climb towers. That's crazy, isn't it? Really! She asked me, "If you could leave here right now, what would you do?" I said, "Well, the first thing I would do is to take a long walk 'cause I love to walk." She said, "It's *cold* out." So that meant I was crazy because I wanted to take a walk in the cold. What if I *like* to take a walk in the cold!