

**Notes on the writing of
a novel,**

Make Nice

by Mark Pritchard

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Foreword

In 1996 I was coming to the end of a ten-year period in which I wrote short stories. Many of the stories were erotic and were subsequently published in two collections, *Too Beautiful and Other Stories*, and *How I Adore You*. Wanting to break out of the erotic short story mold, I decided to write a novel, one that wouldn't be about sex.

This document is the notes I kept during the project, from my first notes about the idea, through research and writing, and during a long coda in which I did a rewrite and tried to get a literary agent for the book.

This book is set in 1960, and is about Hollywood, Las Vegas, politics, beatniks, Jewish comedians, the blacklist, the Mafia, and above all, about the mysterious world of adulthood, from two perspectives -- a middle-aged Jewish comedian, and the 20-year-old would-be beatnik he hires as a driver.

These notes outline my research and my process as I went about figuring out how to do what I had never done before: write a full-length novel.

Mark Pritchard

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7 Jan 96

I read something in the NYT arts section about Dean Martin, who died recently, and the "Rat Pack," the group of performers linked to both the Kennedys and the Mafia back in the late 50s and early 60s. People like Peter Lawford and Joey Bishop--who says the phenomenon of marginally talented celebrities is a new thing? The article mentioned how they would film a movie, "Oceans 11" I think, in Hollywood during the day, and then play the Sands in Las Vegas at night. Presumably they took a plane to Las Vegas, but I got the image of them driving from LA to Vegas every afternoon and back to Hollywood at dawn just in time for makeup. That couldn't have happened back then before freeways, they would have had to fly. And besides themes having to do with life nowadays kept coming to mind, so I guess a story would have to be set today rather than 35 years ago. Certainly sleazy entertainers who play Las Vegas are around today; who's to say they wouldn't do both films and Vegas? And they might drive if it was some kind of macho thing or if they wanted to smoke -- that's it. They want to smoke so they have to drive.

I was wondering who the narrator would be. I thought of it being like one of their chauffeurs, or hangers-on, whatever they had -- their entourage. But I don't think that would work. Or it could be a reporter who's pals with them. Someone who's of similar character but just not a celebrity. A typical Nathaniel West/F. Scott Fitzgerald character. That might work.

Later when I was out walking on the hill, as the sun set behind the clouds, I realized that I never start out with a beginning, middle and end. I never have an idea when I sit down to write a story -- usually just an idea for a scene. The story grows as I approach that scene and then go beyond it. I remembered how, when I taught English class, I used to tell kids how easy it was to write a story, at least a bad story, if you just think up a beginning, middle and end, and flesh it out the bones. Maybe I should try coming up with a beginning, middle and end once a day until something clicks. And if I get really fancy I can start putting in things like a complication, turning point, and climax. Ooo.

5 Nov 97

Here is the idea as it sits now.

Setting: 1961 -- in order to take advantage of the JFK ascension.

First person: a young kid who chauffeurs the protagonist back and forth to Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

Protagonist: A Joey Bishop-like character. He would be fictional, a composite.

Celebrities: They would be Martin, Sinatra, Lewis, Davis, etc. and identified as such. We don't see them that much because the book is from the POV of the kid driver.

Other important characters: don't know.

Many scenes: happen on the road

Other scenes: happen in Hollywood restaurants and clubs, backstage, etc.

One of the themes: American popular culture and civil culture, and how it was *not* simpler back in 1961, but in many ways less formal, with not so many lawyers, not the same kind of politics *at all,* many things done in the good ol' boys backroom.

I need another theme, like a moral or psychological theme: but I don't know. It must have something to do with the protagonist, the Joey Bishop character, or with his relationship with the kid driver. I am really cautious about this because I can't think of anything in this realm that doesn't sound cliched.

Yet I feel that if I could just come up with this piece of the puzzle, all I would have to do is research the physical and cultural details because the story would fall into place.

13 Nov 97

I thought I could have a Flannery O'Connor-like theme of grace. I stole this idea when I read a review or interview of Don DeLillo's new book *Underworld* in which someone says there's an ending where grace is present. And I thought, hmm, maybe this Joey Bishop-like character, who's all pissed off because his career is going down the drain, and who sometime during the book commits an act of cowardice or cruelty, is redeemed at the end not by any action but through a sheer deliverance of grace.

So the outline of the book would look like this:

I.	Introduce characters, situation, and lay groundwork for the early climax, i.e. the betrayal or whatever the character has to suffer for during the story.	
Ia.	Early climax.	
II.	Have the characters and events react to what the character did. Rising action throughout this point as his career begins to slide.	
III.	Climax in which moment of grace happens.	

One of the main ideas I've had rolling around in my head is that Joey is all pissed off because he was included in an earlier Rat Pack film but wasn't included in the one they're about to make. This worries him sick, he feels he's being shut out. There's a new guy on the scene with whom he feels competitive (perhaps completely unjustifiably -- maybe somebody in a different milieu, maybe even Elvis or someone, but he's afraid this new guy will somehow muscle in on his, Joey's, place in the scheme of things.

Not Elvis but maybe more of a Ricky Nelson-type person. After all, Ricky Nelson appeared in "Rio Bravo"!

I wasted some time looking for some journal entry where I wrote about that David Siegel guy's "nine point movie plot," but I couldn't find it.

I need some character names. The Joey Bishop character I'll call **Bobby Blaine**. The kid chauffeur I'll call Eugene, he calls himself **Gene** but the entertainment types change this to Gino because they think it swings.

The person Bobby feels competitive with is **Donny Timson** -- make him a Brit! It's not too early for that ... He's like one of those hapless young music hall singers who got completely flattened by the Beatles a couple of years later. That'll be good because the reader will sense the irony of Bobby being threatened by this guy who, it's clear, will be dogmeat in a couple of years.

A color I associate with the early 60s -- the time is 1961 -- is red. Red Ford Fairlanes, red lipstick, the red granite of cuts for new highways. Also cream, which often accompanied red in cars and in advertisements, and brown, especially wood panelling.

I need to go out and get lots of old magazines from 1960-62, especially Look, Life and the Saturday Evening Post.

I'm going to start a new file, a spreadsheet called research ideas.

15 Nov 97

I got a lot of ideas for this while I was lying in bed in the morning and, later, taking a shower.

The moral struggle the kid, the narrator, Gene, has, is that he's a liar, and he gets through everything in life lying. Not a compulsive liar so much as he does it consciously, to survive. He lies to get his job, he lies to girls to

impress them, and he also presents boy facts as total truth. Like he gets into some big discussion of Vietnam and he says Vietnam is an island near Japan.

This whole lying thing will be a subplot to the book -- Gene's not the main character, Bobby is. But the subplot will be resolved at the same moment as the book's main climax, and it will be resolved because Gene finally tells the truth about something.

Things that Gene lies about: his family background, naturally, and having been in the military, and having gone to Harvard or something -- he gets the location of Harvard totally wrong, and gets away with it because these people in California have no idea of east coast geography anyway. He lies about his girlfriend and how much they fuck, when in reality she is a virgin, in fact Gene has little idea of female geography either. This is corrected when Bobby arranges -- or maybe it's more of a coincidence -- for Gene to sleep with a showgirl. The showgirl teaches Gene what's what.

Anyway, sometime during the story it comes out that Bobby knew Gene was lying all along when he's been telling these tall tales about his girlfriend, his family, etc. but it's okay with Bobby -- he now thinks Gene's capacity to lie means he has the potential to be an actor. Perhaps this is at a point in their relationship where Bobby has to talk Gene into staying on the job, he wants to quit for some reason, because Bobby has done something shitty to him, let's say -- so Bobby has to convince the kid that not only does he have the talent to be an actor but that he can get him contacts in the business. This forms an interesting twist in the moral plot because it represents the further descent of Gene morally, that he is tempted by this whole notion of getting into movies.

Of course the whole notion is itself a lie that Bobby is telling Gene, but we see Bobby lying to himself all the time, telling himself he has the talent to be in the same league as Sinatra and Martin and Davis. Bobby has done completely to himself what he is tempting Gene to do -- delude himself into thinking he has talent to the extent that it gives him confidence and allows him to delude others into the same belief.

Of course Bobby has craft, because you can't spend 25 years in show business without learning your craft. He has his shtick and he can do all the requisite things that you're called on to do in show business, including singing. (The idea, today, that Harrison Ford or Tom Hanks or Dustin Hoffman or any of the top actors would be called on to sing is incredible, but in those days, being an "entertainer" meant you had to do some singing and, if possible, dance. Perhaps the closest we come today to this kind of well-rounded "entertainer" is Steve Martin.)

So lying is one major theme of the book.

The book ends, for Gene, by him deciding to become not an actor but a writer, because writers are also professional liars. They just do it with a net.

	Bobby	Gene
	Needs a driver	Gets the job through lying
		Scene with his girlfriend which shows how much he's lying about her
	Bobby is helped by this	Scene where telling a big whopper really seems to work
		Comes out that Bobby has known all along he's been lying
		Bobby gets a showgirl to sleep with Gene
	Bobby does something that really pisses Gene off and makes him want to quit, but gets him to stay on by assuring him that his talent for lying means he can be an actor.	

But like I say, Bobby is the main character, not Gene. I don't have so many ideas about Bobby yet, but let's try to work on that and not simply wait for inspiration to hit the way it has for Gene. (One of the reasons I don't want Gene to be the major character is that then the whole thing seems like a coming-of-age story, and I don't want to write a coming-of-age novel.)

By the way, Cris came up with an idea that makes a lot more sense than Bobby can't afford to fly back and forth from LA to Vegas. He drives because *he's afraid to fly*. That's all there is to it.

Bobby: The main goal that Bobby has is to increase his standing in Hollywood by developing his contacts and friendships with Rat Pack figures and, specifically, getting into the new movie they're casting. In the meantime he's finishing up "Oceans 11" for which he has to go to LA for interior scenes, and he's playing Las Vegas, so he has to go back and forth. The thing is, his part in "Oceans 11" is coming out smaller than he expected, and it doesn't even look like he's going to be cast for the new movie, so he's sweating, he's afraid his big chance is slipping away.

Scene: Frank Sinatra tells Bobby, "This isn't your big chance! You're 40 years old! Your big chance was probably when you were 25, and you blew it, I don't know what it was but you must have blown it, because here you are at 40 still playing the Lounge at the Sands and still getting shit parts like this one. No, a big chance would be if I pick this kid here" and he turns to Gene "and put *him* in the movie. That'd be his big chance. Your big chance happened so long ago that you'd need a history book to see it."

Gene: "Will you really put me in the movie?"

Sinatra: "No, kid, that was just an example. Who are you anyway?"

"I'm Mr. Blaine's driver."

"His driver! Get outta here!"

Dean Martin, laughing: "Looks like you just blew your big chance, kid."

18 Nov 97

The highway between Barstow and Las Vegas was U.S. 91/466, while I-15 was under construction during the years 1959-63. The first significant section completed was the "Baker grade" which replaced a treacherous grade in July 1961. Also in 1961 a section of the bypass around Barstow was completed. It's 400 miles from LA To Vegas and I don't know how long the trip takes. Maybe at night it takes 8 hours or so, because you can go really fast between Vegas and Victorville, at least.

I need to think about my characters' motivations and conflicts. Gene wants to grow up, be sophisticated, learn how to be cool, and get laid; down deep, he wants to avoid facing the bit of history or character that makes him lie. Bobby wants to prolong his career, which is at its critical point; after early success he has been coasting and fading and his career needs a big lift; otherwise he could wind up a has-been in a year or two. He envies Gene's youth and Gene envies Bobby's maturity and sophistication -- that's a potential area of conflict because ...

Gene is avoiding the thing that makes him lie (which I don't know what it is yet) and Bobby is avoiding age and failure; Bobby is caught between caring for Gene, treating him as a younger version of himself, and resenting Gene's youth and the fact that his whole life is before him.

I think it's obvious that Gene is, in some ways, a younger version of Bobby.

19 Nov 97

On the way back from Vegas to LA one night -- and they make this drive in the night, often, because Bobby's show at the Sands ends at 10:00 and he's supposed to be at makeup by 7:00, except when he's not -- they stop as usual in Victorville, which is the halfway point. In a diner or something they pick up two women. These women are mature, in their early 30s -- divorcees, natch -- wearing very nice outfits, maybe one has a fox fur. The boyfriend or husband of one of them is drunk or has gotten into a card game in the back, some reason he can't or won't continue driving, so the women are stuck. They hitch a ride with Bobby the rest of the way to Hollywood.

The one without the husband or whatever sits in the back with Bobby; she's a little older and more of a fan of Bobby. Right away he starts putting the make on her and soon they're making out in the back. The other woman -

- her sister-in-law, I guess -- sits in the shotgun seat turned more or less to face Gene, smoking and casting a glance from time to time at her sister-in-law's behavior in the back seat. She engages Gene in conversation. This conversation is about the first time he's ever had a calm, friendly conversation with a grown woman who takes him seriously, and he reacts in a mixed-up way. He doesn't know if she's coming on to him or what. Then he reacts to her womanly interest and encouragement as if she were a sort of older mentor figure, like a teacher, yet underneath this there's also a sexual tension.

When they get to L.A., of course, the women get out of the car and go into an apartment building and that's it. Bobby and the woman in the back seat have managed to fuck and are practically in love by this time; the front-seat woman has to practically drag her off him (she's been taking swigs out of Bobby's flask).

Then maybe on the way to the studio there's a dialogue between Bobby and Gene in which Bobby teases Gene for not getting any, even though he was driving. He taunts Gene that he could have had the girl blow him, or at least jack him off. This eventually puts Gene in a foul mood, and when he drops Bobby off at the studio, he's plenty pissed.

By the way -- it's Bobby's car, of course. It stays at the studio with Bobby while Gene has to go back outside and catch a bus to his apartment.

20 Nov 97

Gene drives the car up by himself during the day, after sleeping all morning. He has from 7:00 to 2:00 to sleep and until 9:00 to get back to Vegas. Then they have from, say, 10:00 or 11:00 to 7:00 to get back to Hollywood for makeup.

I realized that there's no way Bobby can be driven back and forth every day. He can't drive both ways, so let's say he takes the plane, along with the other Rat Pack guys, from Hollywood to Vegas in the afternoon to do his gigs, and then he's driven back at night because he really hates to fly.

Besides, Bobby's part isn't that big, so he's not shooting every day. But he goes to Hollywood to schmooze on days when he's not shooting and he doesn't play in Vegas.

LA - Vegas	
Bobby flies from LA to Vegas and Gene drives to Vegas alone	after shooting a scene that day
Bobby drives from LA to Vegas	if they have all day to get there or if something has happened to prevent him flying
Vegas - LA	
Bobby flies from Vegas to LA and Gene drives to LA alone	if he has a gig at night and has to shoot a scene the next morning
Bobby drives from Vegas to LA	if they have all day or all night to get there or if something has happened to prevent him flying

All things being equal, Bobby prefers to drive, because he needs his car, especially in L.A., and he dislikes flying. I think that makes sense.

And sometimes Gene has to drive the car by himself when Bobby flies ahead. I think this is an important idea, because it allows Gene some time alone, allows him to play the big shot, etc. and to pursue his own subplot. "On the Road" has been released and Gene is allowed to fancy himself a character in "On the Road."

I wish I knew what that book was that I read when I was a teenager, in which the protagonist, a young man, hitchhikes around the West and meets up with a number of unsavory characters. I still remember this bit of dialogue:

"Terry, you've been smoking marijuana!"

"Oh man, only one stick."

Research questions:

To what Hollywood restaurants and bars did celebrities and producers go in 1961?

How does Gene live? In a hotel, an apartment? What neighborhood?

How does Bobby live? He probably has a nice house, but where exactly?

What is the location of the studio -- MGM I think -- that produced "Oceans 11" and how do you get there from Bobby's house?

25 Nov 97

Maybe the first scene in the book depicts Gene waiting outside in the hot sun for something. I think he's parking cars someplace in L.A. and Bobby comes out and hires him as a driver. That's plenty simple.

Why *can't* I make everything just simple? Because I have this fear that "simple" coincides with "the easy way out," that cleverness, on the other hand -- something that strikes me as being a really cool idea -- is what's called for. And cleverness is what gets me in trouble when things get too funny and satirical. As in real life, it's hard for me to be serious and sincere about anything emotional.

Plots still impress me, but I suppose if they didn't, I would be blasé about them and want to do something plotless.

Maybe the first scene is Gene waiting, parking cars, he briefly meets Bobby but Bobby leaves, and the first chapter or two shows Gene's life wasting time and trying to get laid in L.A. Narrated by Gene some time after the fact, so that I can have him say "I didn't know yet that Bobby Blaine was fighting for his life, career-wise."

I dunno.

27 Nov 97

I got a Dean Martin biography (the definitive Nick Tosches book "Dino") and a Marilyn Monroe biography and learned a few things.

First, "Oceans 11" was made in 1960, not 1961. It was shot in February and March and released in August. "Dino" has the exact dates of the Las Vegas shooting: Feb. 16-27, after which they went to LA and shot interiors at Warner Bros. (not MGM as I had thought).

That makes the whole issue of when the freeway was put in more or less moot. There was definitely no freeway north of the immediate San Bernadino area in the winter of 1960.

Second, the book made clear that the Rat Pack appeared at the Sands before and during the above dates, and then closed their act and went to LA to shoot at the studio. There was no back-and-forth. However, I think it is believable that a second-rater like Joey Bishop would have made a long-range commitment to perform in Vegas for a certain period of time even before the movie came up, and since he doesn't have enough pull to get out of it, he has to go back and forth to Vegas even after the filming has moved to LA. And since Sinatra and Martin are not flying back and forth in some kind of private plane, that makes it even more believable that Bobby would not find it convenient to use a plane. But face it, he just doesn't like flying and in any case he needs his car, maybe he even loves his car, **maybe it is some kind of unusual car that he puts a lot of emotional investment in.**

Third, the movie "The Misfits," featuring none of the above, shot in Nevada July to about October the same year. But since Sinatra and Monroe were mixed up with each other, I think it would be possible to develop a plot that had to do with the fact that they're filming another movie out there in the middle of nowhere.

But I don't want to get involved in making MM a big part of my book. She should just be in the background. In fact, I intend to rarely show Sinatra or anybody famous. It wouldn't be logical for these really famous people to be driving around much with Bobby Blaine anyway.

The thing is, I have to pin down the scope of the book in time. My original idea was to have it take place during and immediately after the filming of "Oceans 11" (although of course I was never limited to the facts about that film), and now I'm thinking that that's too limited and I need to open it up.

Another fact -- the next Rat Pack movie was "Sergeants 3" and was shot in 1961. I don't think "Sergeants 3," whatever it is, is interesting enough for Bobby to want to be in, so I have invented a movie called "Make Nice" (or maybe "Make Nice for Daddy" which sounds really sick given the Danny Thomas show that was on at the time -- maybe the gag will be that the original title is "Make Nice for Daddy" but now they can't call it that, because of confusion with the Thomas show, so it's just called "Make Nice"). Bobby really wants to be in "Make Nice" because it stars -- here it comes -- Marilyn and Sinatra. And he wants a part in it to cement his association with Sinatra, and for other reasons that we'll develop.

There's something I have to remember: I can't let myself be limited to the facts about what happened and who knew who. I have to let my imagination take the characters and events wherever I can. What I *do* need to get right are the facts about the setting and the time. Not the events of the time but the flavors of the time, the artifacts and ways of speech, the things that people were talking about, including the side events that might have come up, and the pop references and products and so forth. That's the stuff I really need to concentrate on capturing, in terms of research.

I was only 4 at the time and of course don't remember anything about what I really need to know. Ha.

I still don't understand what this book is supposed to be *about*. I could just start writing using the setting and characters that I have, but anything I produced would just meander until I found a subject.

What about lies. I already have this supposition that Gene uses lies frequently to his advantage. He's not a pathological liar though, I don't know anything about that and I don't want to get into it. But consider: the entertainment industry is all about fiction, a.k.a. lies, and even more so, all the self-promotion and bullshit that goes on is just so much lying. And Bobby is -- has to be -- heavily into all that.

Bobby is trying to promote himself to a certain level of entertainment and so forth. What is Gene trying to promote himself into? Adulthood, but also coolness -- don't forget it's the time of beatniks and "On the Road," and he's got a wonderful "On the Road" job, to a degree. Especially the times when he gets to drive Bobby's car alone to or from Vegas.

Ha, the Beat people were searching for *truth*. And so is Gene, only the whole time he is lying.

28 Nov 97

This book idea is like an attractive bird flying around my head, trapped in the room. I can't pin it down and I can't ignore it. Actually I could ignore it but I'm afraid to. I'm also afraid to confront the whole book and pin it down, but I'm more afraid that I'll just let it slip away, proving another failure.

I have to do some thinking about Gene. Why does he lie, or what "secret history" does he need to hide?

I imagine some family loss, a father or older brother missing or killed. That's why he initially develops some kind of transference with Bobby. But to hide the pain of the missing older male, or maybe just to deal with the fact of being different from all the other kids when he was a kid in the 40s and 50s, he created an acceptable world through lies and tales.

I get it, he's different because he's Jewish. But he lies to the other kids to establish his gentility. And Bobby is also Jewish but has a non-Jewish name, natch, because all Hollywood entertainers who were Jewish did.

Now in his mid-twenties, a few things have happened to Gene that make it both possible and necessary for him to move beyond that phase into a phase which requires him to tell the truth, but only to himself. He is in the process of reconstructing the world into truth. But out of habit and caution he still tells lies to others, attempting to tell truth to himself.

Does that make sense? I have no idea.

6 Jan 98

What's an old road like? Two lane or four, it has cracks patched with asphalt. You approach the summits of rises going straight up, with no hint of what's on the other side -- usually another drop right back down. There are embankments nearby, and they may have small handpainted signs on them, small relative to a billboard anyway, advertising local businesses. Even if it's an ad for a service station that's part of a national chain, they have their own style of small billboard, and it always says: "6 mi." or however long it is til the station. Streets and driveways, of course, go right up to the highway; you have to be alert for people slowing down and turning.

Then there's the passing, the endless responsory of "Do Not Pass" and "Pass With Care" and the anxiety about whether that guy coming straight at you at 65 mph will get back in time. In Texas people used to get off on the shoulder for you to pass; I've never seen that out here. The assumption was that otherwise somebody would never get around. I remember drifting off onto a gravel shoulder in a driving rainstorm going 55 mph so somebody could pass me -- me being too deferential. You're expected to not only get over but to maintain speed and get right back on after the guy passes. Or maybe after 6 guys pass. I had a mind to do that once this past trip to the desert, but the urge wasn't strong enough to actually go ahead and do it. And I've never seen anybody else do it in California. I think if somebody went to the shoulder here, you'd think they either had a breakdown or were trying to use the shoulder to pass on the right!

Old roads seem usually to be lower than the new roads, which are graded straighter and more level and thus are usually on embankments. So the old roads are more twisty and go up and down. And I think the surface tended to be different -- concrete, it seems, which got patched with asphalt. Whenever you see one of those old roads, they seem usually to be concrete. (Perhaps the asphalt ones get grown over and destroyed and erased easier.)

Gene: God, I'll be glad when they open that freeway to replace this road.

Bobby: Don't be too eager to see the old things pass, kid. A road isn't like a cigarette lighter that you toss out when a new one comes along -- it's like a living thing with history.

Or is that too much like something that would be on "The Simpsons"?

How do Gene and Bobby meet? I think my idea now is that Gene is parking cars and Bobby hires him on the spur of the moment.

What is the point of him hiring Gene? After all, most performers his stature don't have drivers -- not even Frank has a driver, he flies anyway. The point is that first, Bobby has this period coming up where he has to perform in Vegas and shoot in LA -- like a fairly short three-week period at first. And he wants to sleep while somebody does the driving. And he's afraid to fly, that's another thing. (Although of course he flies anytime he's with Sinatra or anybody else, he doesn't want to make a big deal of it.)

He has like five trips planned back and forth in the three weeks. Then the period gets extended because of this whole involvement with the Marilyn thing. They go out to Henderson and maybe they go up to Tahoe too, I don't know. (Where the hell is Henderson?)

I'm playing fast and loose with the actual historical timeline. In reality, "Oceans 11" finished filming in Vegas at the end of February, 1960 with shooting in Hollywood for the next month, and "The Misfits" started filming in July. What I'm going to do is move the filming of "Oceans 11" and the filming of "The Misfits" toward each other, so that "The Misfits" starts a month or two after they wrap "Oceans 11" in Hollywood.

I think this will give me the chance for a middle section of the book which is mostly about Gene. Bobby doesn't need him as a driver so much once his Vegas gigs have stopped, so he lays him off. This gives a chance for a bunch of stuff to happen with Gene. Then there will be a third section of the book in which he's driving with Bobby again, and they're doing this weird errand for Sinatra - Kennedy - who knows. So:

Outline I had before	What I just thought of, against this outline
I. Introduce characters, situation, and lay groundwork for the early climax, i.e. the betrayal or whatever the character has to suffer for during the story.	Bobby meets Gene and hires him. We have all the scenes where they go between LA and Vegas during the time when O11 is shooting in Hollywood and Bobby has gigs in Vegas.
la. Early climax.	Don't know what this is yet.
II. Have the characters and events react to what the character did. Rising action throughout this point as his career begins to slide.	This could be the section where Gene is on his own.
III. Climax in which moment of grace happens.	Bobby rehires Gene and they do whatever weird errand Frank wants them to.

Maybe this moment of grace at the climax is more a moment of grace for Bobby. Maybe Marilyn does something or says something to him, or vice versa, that really redeems him. The question is, what does Bobby have to be redeemed from? We already know what Gene has to be redeemed from -- the lying.

Yes, and with Bobby it's also lying, but he has to reconcile his urge to deny his ethnicity with the truth, and to reconcile his delisional pursuit of stardom with a more realistic approach in which he accepts something he's always thought of as lesser (television perhaps?).

Outline I had before	What I just thought of, against this outline	Scenes I've thought of so far	Motivations, background
I. Introduce characters, situation, and lay groundwork for the early climax, i.e. the betrayal or whatever the character has to suffer for during the story.	Bobby meets Gene and hires him. Scenes driving between LA and Vegas	I.1 Bobby hires Gene I.2 First drive to Vegas, Gene's impression of Vegas I.3 Drive back to L.A. in which they meet the two women	They're shooting "O11" in Hollywood at Warner Bros. and Bobby has nighttime gigs in Vegas. Bobby is worried about getting into "Make Nice" -- that's the overarching motivation for him during this sequence.
la. Early climax.	Don't know what this is yet.	la.1 Maybe this is the whole showgirl sequence, during which Bobby has to convince Gene to hang around -- but only to lay him off when the Vegas gigs are done (the climax is more <i>emotional</i>)	

		<p>la.2 Back in L.A., there's a climactic (and unexpected) confrontation between Sinatra and Bobby in which Sinatra says he won't support Bobby getting hired</p>	<p>Maybe the emotional climax here is akin to that bit of dialogue I wrote above about Bobby having missed his big chance -- so he's not going to get the part in "Make Nice"</p> <p>But the redemption is prepared for even here, because Sinatra makes some comment about how Bobby is just a straight man, setting up lines for the stars to say</p>
<p>II. Have the characters and events react to what the character did. Rising action throughout this point as his career begins to slide.</p>	<p>This could be the section where Gene is on his own.</p>	<p>II.1 II.2 II.3 II.4 II.5</p>	<p>Interlude where Gene is on his own -- maybe we see sort of impressionistic scenes of Bobby from time to time -- whatever he's doing -- there's a series of scenes here</p> <p>A lot about Gene here -- he's sorting out what happened between him and Bobby -- maybe dealing with his girlfriend, whatever</p>
<p>III. Climax in which moment of grace happens.</p>	<p>Bobby rehires Gene and they do whatever weird errand Frank wants them to.</p>	<p>III.1 Bobby rehires Gene III.2 They drive to Henderson III.3 Bobby has his moment of redemption</p>	<p>Bobby is still looking for ways to patch things up with Sinatra, so he's doing him this favor.</p>

This outline seems to work if I tell the book from the first person of Gene, but I'm not sure about that. Right now I'm planning on doing it 3rd person.

4 Jun 98

Perhaps Bobby's redemption will come through television.

He's always spurned television and particularly talk shows. People keep telling him he'd be a natural to be a Jack Paar type because he's such a kiss-ass and plays the straight man to stars -- they intend this as an insult. And in general the view of movie people toward television is that it is a lesser, degraded medium. Jack Paar was never in a movie!

Then at the end of the book, Bobby is reconciled to television. He accepts an offer to do a late night talk show. And the reader can see that he'll be successful doing this.

<p>III. Climax in which moment of grace happens.</p>	<p>Bobby rehires Gene and they do whatever weird errand Frank wants them to.</p>	<p>III.1 Bobby rehires Gene III.2 They drive to Henderson III.3 Bobby has his moment of redemption</p>	<p>Bobby is still looking for ways to patch things up with Sinatra, so he's doing him this favor.</p>
------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

IV. Denouement	Bobby is offered talk show		This is Bobby's redemption, or rather his reward - he finally will be successful
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Compress things rather than draw them out. Don't make things too complicated.

Gene reveals in a scene in part II, I think, to his girlfriend in an intimate moment, the factoid that his older brother died. Dunno how. But it is at this point that the reader goes, aha, he sees Bobby as his older brother in a way.

Just what is the favor Bobby is supposed to do in Part III? Well, Sinatra, despite himself, is worried about Monroe. And Bobby is supposed to go to Henderson and see, basically, if she's okay. But Sinatra's motive is that he wants to deliver Monroe to the Kennedys, and so he wants to get in good with her so that she will trust him long enough for him (Sinatra) to hand her over.

5 Jun 98

The first chapter: Gene is parking cars, after the manner of Cody in "On the Road." Bobby appears and eventually offers him a job. Gene wavers on whether or not to take the job but eventually does.

Date: Fri, 5 Jun 1998
From: Mark Pritchard
Subject: New project
To: mjaye@akula.com

I started working on a new project today. I mean really writing it. It's something that I've been developing for a while -- the Rat Pack thing. I have a superstition about talking about things while I'm working out the first draft, though, at least until I feel I'm well into it, so I might not mention it much in the next few weeks. ...

20 Jun 98

From now on I'm going to put the outline in a separate file rather than continuing to repeat it here.

But note, clearly the I.a1 section, which builds up to the "early climax," has to involve the latter 4 trips between LA and Vegas.

22 Jun 98

Okay, what happens exactly in this scene, chapter one, about to be some kind of disturbance between Sinatra's party and the parkers?

Sinatra is in a bad mood anyway. Now he's pissed off because it took so long to get the car there.

In fact let's have Tom get in a fender bender on the corner by the restaurant. Raise the stakes.

Sometime during the fight Bobby is trying to cool things off and Gene ends up next to him. For a moment they are sort of working in tandem to stop the fight -- that's how Gene comes to the notice of Bobby. And Gene does something that actually brings the fight to a stop and so does Bobby. It has to be something they SAY. Gene

says a straight line and Bobby follows up with a yuk -- this cues Martin and Davis to laugh the whole thing off, which enables Sinatra to save face and step away.

But it turns out that Gene is really upset by the fight -- Bobby ends up going, hey kid, what's the matter? Did you get clocked? What the hell?

Bobby et al go away but then it ends up both Gene and Tom get fired for the incident, even though it wasn't Gene's fault. And Bobby gets wind of it and hires Gene.

24 Jun 98

Okay, that worked. I wrapped up the first draft of the first chapter on Monday. Yesterday a wasted day in which I did a lot of tai chi and errands. And went to the Opera House to become a supernumerary for "Turandot" which I might not be selected for anyway.

I extended the chapter past Gene's firing, farther than I expected to. But now for the second chapter -- I want to make it from Bobby's POV, go back and recount the day briefly:

a. That day's filming on "Oceans 11"	
b. A scene in Chasen's	
c. The scene in the street, from Bobby's POV	
d. The rest of the evening	Here we find out that Bobby will have to drive back and forth from LA to Vegas At the end of this scene Bobby goes back to the parking lot and leaves his card for Gene, who has already departed -- no, it's the next day and the lot is just opening
e. Bobby calls Gene and hires him	

2 Jul 98

Okay, that worked too. I've finished the first draft of the second chapter. I've now written about 12,000 words of the first draft. Judging by my usual pattern, this will result in about 50 or 60 percent of that being cut. But I've made a start at least. Now it'll be hard to stop.

What I'm really pleased about is, every time I've sat down and told myself seriously that I'm going to write -- one morning after goofing around for 90 minutes I said, "All right, you have to sit here til noon, whether or not you get anything done," and within five minutes I was off, and I did 2500 words in three hours -- I do actually turn out about 2000 words. That seems to be my natural quota for the time being. It would be exhausting to try to double that.

So what I have to do now is plan the third chapter, which will be the first trip to Las Vegas with Gene driving, and which may or may not include what I've designated as I.4, the scene in which they return from Vegas, picking up two dames in Victorville.

Well, I just looked back and saw:

Bobby	Gene
Needs a driver	Gets the job through lying
	Scene with his girlfriend which shows how much he's lying about her

Bobby is helped by this	Scene where telling a big whopper really seems to work
	Comes out that Bobby has known all along he's been lying
	Bobby gets a showgirl to sleep with Gene
Bobby does something that really pisses Gene off and makes him want to quit, but gets him to stay on by assuring him that his talent for lying means he can be an actor.	

I think I need to remember this theme. Right now I don't have Gene getting the job through lying. I need to keep that at the forefront. So maybe I do need to write that scene.

What happens	What is revealed
Bobby talks to Gene about being his driver and Gene does a lot of creative interviewing and basically lies about his experience	Bobby's basic schedule Gene's background and lack of it Gene's need to have people believe (lies about) him
Interlude between hiring and the first trip -- <i>Scene with his girlfriend</i>	The truth about Gene's girlfriend (whom he lies about in ch. 1) and the extent of his lies
The first trip -- impressions of Las Vegas	

This means I also need to go back and play up:

- Bobby's desire to get into Slovik, which makes the scene with Maltz and the subsequent scene with Frank in the car more interesting
- Gene lying about his girlfriend

3 Jul 98

I wrote the first draft of chapter 3 yesterday and today, total of 3300 words, much shorter than the first two chapters, which is fine.

Then I went back to the outline and updated it. The outline -- which is really a table with columns labeled Section, General drift of section, Scenes, POV, and Motivations and background, is proving to be a really useful tool. I use it to plan my work on the next or current chapter, and when I'm done with the chapter I go back to the outline to see if I missed anything. Today I see that I need, in ch. 3, to play up the "need" Gene has to lie and to make people believe his lies. Right now, for example, Bobby seems to be ignoring most of the lies. I should make them more important to the action so he can't ignore them.

I think another thing I need to do is make the character of Dana (Gene's girlfriend) more vivid *before* she shows up, so that when she does show up in ch. 3 she will be more alive. I can do this by adding some stuff to ch.1.

But everything isn't planned. The scene in ch. 2 with Maltz, for example -- I had no idea I was going to do that until right before I wrote it. But it perfectly sets up the occasion for Bobby to find out about Frank's next movie (the putative "Make Nice for Daddy") and start scheming to get into it.

Something I thought while writing today and also later while taking a walk: visualizing the setting and the mise-en-scene more as I write (or perhaps rewrite). Remember what M. Gaitskill said last year about the importance of knowing everything in the room, everything about the characters, etc. But things are going fairly well now, and I thought about maybe doing that more for the re-write. If I have the discipline to rewrite the book when I'm done with the first draft. Listen to me, talking about being done when I've written about one fifteenth of the first draft.

6 Jul 98

Still have to figure out what the events are in ch. 4, the first trip to Las Vegas. The first layers of the core of the original idea.

So what's logical to happen?

It's daytime on Friday. It's from Gene's point of view. Seems logical to have Bobby actually pick him up. Then there's a short moment when Bobby is checking out Gene's driving. Reassured, he settles in with some paperwork or studying -- a script, perhaps, or some material he's writing for the act.

Yeah, yeah. But what do I want to show during this part?

- Bobby's desire to get into "Make Nice for Daddy"
- Aspects of Bobby's character: Decent chap. Sees through things, but plays cards close to vest -- doesn't yak about all he sees.
- Bobby's attitude toward Sinatra et. al.
- Something about mobsters

7 Jul 98

- Build up the incidence of lies told by Gene, stuff that Bobby calls him on later. Something about Kennedy -- Bobby repeats lie that he met JFK; Bobby, of course, actually has met him.
- Bobby finds out Gene is reading "On the Road" and teases him about the Beatniks -- *maybe sets up some character growth in Gene by having him go from a fascination with Kerouac et al to a fascination with Sinatra et al, then back again, or to something else. Maybe Gene undergoes this whole movement from a life of movement (parking, driving cars) to a life of stability.*
- Have to set up the next scene on the way home -- the scene with the two women -- somehow. Introduce Bobby's attitudes towards sex and women

Gee, I'm thinking I should make this chapter from Bobby's point of view instead of Gene's. I'll show the arrival in Las Vegas and the rest of the trip from Gene's point of view. That'll be good because it'll mean they're alternating chapters.

Things to show	How to show it
• Bobby's desire to get into "Make Nice for Daddy"	Start with this.
• Have to set up the scene with the two women. Introduce Bobby's attitudes towards sex and women	Have this early -- starts when Gene ogles women from car
• Bobby's attitude toward Sinatra et. al.	through dialogue
• Aspects of Bobby's character: Decent chap. Sees through things, but plays cards close to vest -- doesn't yak about all he sees.	Interior monologues
• Something about mobsters	ditto
• Build up the incidence of lies told by Gene, stuff that Bobby calls him on later. Something about Kennedy -- Bobby repeats lie that he met JFK	dialogue
• Bobby teases Gene about "On the Road" and the Beatniks	dialogue -- starts how?

12 Jul 98 -- Last day of sabbatical before going back to work at Sybase

Still having trouble getting this finished. My first real instance of getting bogged down. I've written a whole scene where Bobby picks up Gene, they drive through L.A. and Pasadena, they're on their way. Bobby has this fairly boring internal monologue about getting into *Make Nice for Daddy* but even that part has to be much better. And now that part is finished and it's time for them to talk to each other and I find myself really bogged down.

One possible solution: change POV at this point. Show most of the driving from the Gene POV which is also third person (Bobby's stuff is always 1st person). Don't have to change a chapter number, just have a break. Whether or not chapter number changes is completely insignificant of course.

The only other thing I can think to do is to sit here in the notes until I get a really decent idea about this chapter.

As I said before, this is the part of the book that is the original idea -- the driving. So it's ironic that this is where I first bog down. Of course I had the original idea quite some time ago -- January 1996, two and a half years ago!

Let me try to get a handle on what should happen next by looking at earlier notes:

And I thought, hmm, maybe this Joey Bishop-like character, who's all pissed off because his career is going down the drain, and who sometime during the book commits an act of cowardice or cruelty, is redeemed at the end not by any action but through a sheer deliverance of grace.

There's a new guy on the scene with whom he feels competitive (perhaps completely unjustifiably -- maybe somebody in a different milieu, maybe even Elvis or someone, but he's afraid this new guy will somehow muscle in on his, Joey's, place in the scheme of things.

Not Elvis but maybe more of a Ricky Nelson-type person. After all, Ricky Nelson appeared in "Rio Bravo"! The person Bobby feels competitive with is Donny Timson -- make him a Brit! It's not too early for that ... He's like one of those hapless young music hall singers who got completely flattened by the Beatles a couple of years later.

He lies to get his job, he lies to girls to impress them, and he also presents boy facts as total truth. Like he gets into some big discussion of Vietnam and he says Vietnam is an island near Japan.

Things that Gene lies about: his family background, naturally, and having been in the military, and having gone to Harvard or something -- he gets the location of Harvard totally wrong, and gets away with it because these people in California have no idea of east coast geography anyway.

His part in "Oceans 11" is coming out smaller than he expected, and it doesn't even look like he's going to be cast for the new movie, so he's sweating, he's afraid his big chance is slipping away.

Scene: Frank Sinatra tells Bobby, "This isn't your big chance! You're 40 years old! Your big chance was probably when you were 25, and you blew it, I don't know what it was but you must have blown it, because here you are at 40 still playing the Lounge at the Sands and still getting shit parts like this one. No, a big chance would be if I pick this kid here" and he turns to Gene "and put *him* in the movie. That'd be his big chance. Your big chance happened so long ago that you'd need a history book to see it."

Gene: "Will you really put me in the movie?"

Sinatra: "No, kid, that was just an example. Who are you anyway?"

"I'm Mr. Blaine's driver."

"His driver! Get outta here!"

Dean Martin, laughing: "Looks like you just blew your big chance, kid."

He envies Gene's youth and Gene envies Bobby's maturity and sophistication

Bobby is trying to promote himself to a certain level of entertainment and so forth. What is Gene trying to promote himself into? Adulthood, but also coolness -- don't forget it's the time of beatniks and "On the Road," and he's got a wonderful "On the Road" job, to a degree. Especially the times when he gets to drive Bobby's car alone to or from Vegas.

Ha, the Beat people were searching for *truth*. And so is Gene, only the whole time he is lying.

I like that last one. I can take that and turn it into some dialogue in chapter 4.

27 April 99

I've been working on this book again for the first time in several months. As a way to mitigate the horror that is the phone company, where I have my new job. Oh, it's not that bad yet. In fact, there's this very attractive woman in the department. She's way too intelligent and outgoing to be working for the phone company. I want to find out why she's there instead of working in some high-tech firm.

Okay, so back to the book. I just had a brainstorm I want to get down.

I have been working for the last few days on the first draft of chapter 5. I have drafted the first drive from L.A. to Vegas. Now from the outline I see I want to add:

- Something about mobsters
- Build up the incidence of lies -- Bobby repeats lie that he met JFK

And I was listening to "This American Life" a few weeks ago and it was about compulsive liars -- great background information. Practically the only useful information I've heard on the subject. And one of the ideas I got from that show is that compulsive liars build up a kind of pressure in their relationships, a pressure that builds as the lies get bigger and they take greater chances. The lies become bigger to cover past lies and the pressure builds.

And it occurred to me this morning that this is similar to gambling. The gambler is on a binge and may be losing everything but he is telling himself that the next bet will make it all worthwhile. And this comparison is perfect because of the setting. Of course I can't make the parallel explicit.

There are other various points of exposition I need to work into their trip in chapter 5, and I've put these in boxes at the beginning of the file so that I'll remember it tomorrow when I go to open it.

6 May 99

I've been working this week (at the phone company) on fleshing out the first part of ch. 5, the latter part of the trip to Las Vegas. On the 4th I decided to pick it up the next morning, i.e. the first Saturday Gene has to himself in Las Vegas, and bam! the character of Dolores the Mexican motel maid came barging in out of nowhere, waking up both Gene and me.

I instantly saw her as a sharp, sarcastic (but she has to be sarcastic in a 1960 way, not in a 90s way) Larry McMurtry-type of character, and I knew that Gene would eventually try to make time with her and would never succeed. Their relationship will be a little bit like that of the restaurant owner and his Latina manager, as depicted in that never-completed story I started (in 1995 I think) -- she a lot more complex than Gene imagines. He makes a million assumptions about her and is totally off. Maybe only toward the end does he realize how off he is.

This is essentially a subplot, but I think it will enliven his character greatly. He needs it.

I.5 a. Arrival in Vegas	Omnisc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something about mobsters • Build up the incidence of lies -- Bobby repeats lie that he met JFK
b. Weekend in Vegas: - Gene on Saturday - Bobby on Sat. night - his act - Donny Timson - Gene on Sunday	Back and forth -- Omnisc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Dolores • Bobby's anxiety about Donny Timson • Something about Gene on Sunday

I'm now in the part of the book that I never conceived clearly. I've established the situation and the characters, but I didn't really know what they had to do during this part (or indeed what they did in most of the book). Now that they're fleshed out for me a little more, I realize I can rely more on them to guide the action. I don't have to push them around on the board like a bored god.

But I do have to remember that each scene has to exist for a reason. Like I can't just have Gene wandering around L.V. and not use whatever incidents occur -- once I think of any - to advance the plot and the themes.

So here's something -- I could use the "Gene in LV on Saturday" bit to talk about his lying. And I could use the "Gene in LV on Sunday" bit to further the Dolores subplot.

I need a handle on Gene other than his lying though. There's got to be more to his personality.

Fleshing out the personalities of somewhat clueless young males is always my biggest challenge. In fact, I almost never do it sufficiently. Look at what Mary Gaitskill said about the protagonist in "Exploitation." What did she say, that he was "blank"? And that that was all right but the blankness had to be about something because every part of a person's personality is there for a reason -- and if it's simply arbitrary instead, then the character and the whole work suffers.

18 May 99

I wrote the scene where Bobby is onstage at the Riviera, and notices Donny Timson in the audience, over the last week. Had a lot of fun with it. Improvising while writing allows me to create -- I think -- something that resembles an improvised comedy routine. I'm a lot more comfortable with the "improvised" part of his act where he slags the British in order to get to Donny than I am with the "scripted" part about the eskimos. I have to write a better eskimo joke and also a better joke that ends the "microphone for my friend" bit. Singing "The Man I Love" is just too weird. Joey Bishop wouldn't do that in the 60s. Maybe Shirley MacLaine would, but not Joey Bishop.

I had an epiphany over the weekend. I rented "Let's Make Love" and found that not only was it basically the movie I had imagined "Make Nice for Daddy" was, but *it was written by Norman Krasna!* Whom I had already identified as the writer of "Make Nice for Daddy." Wild. But what was even stranger was that there was a British twit music-hall singer in it, just about as I imagined Donny Timson. But he wasn't in the Joey Bishop part; that part was done by Tony Randall. Very funny too, but he faded away in the last reel. It's an odd movie -- there's a lot that doesn't work, like the relationship between the Yves Montand character and his older retainer, and the conflict between Yves Montand and Tony Randall over, I guess, his ethics. (The Randall character isn't well-developed enough to make the confrontation matter.) But there's a lot that still works, almost 40 years later. The way the basic situation is set up -- an "off-Broadway" company puts on a Beach Blanket Babylon-type review sending up famous figures, and Yves Montand is mistaken for a guy who comes down to audition for the part of the billionaire, though he actually is the billionaire -- is very well paced. After a somewhat tedious opening sequence about the billionaire's randy ancestors, the whole first 40 or 50 minutes works great.

So it was very strange to realize that "Let's Make Love" is not only pretty close to the film I imagined as "Make Nice for Daddy," but it was made at almost precisely the right time. It opened in Sep 1960, I know from the Internet Movie Database [actually 3rd week of August 1960]. Since I'm already playing a little loose with the time continuum, it won't be any stretch to have it still in development in Feb. 1960, with "The Misfits" still to shoot.

The "Donny Timson" in "Let's Make Love" was a fellow named Frankie Vaughn. He was described in the trailer for the movie (which was appended on the videotape) as a "British singing sensation." I think the key word was "sensation." He was so terrible, loud and obvious and not a good actor, and he too fades away at the end of the picture. I looked him up too, and it turns out to have been his last movie. I suppose he received devastating reviews and went back to the U.K. only to be smashed flat when the Beatles came along. He'd be an interesting one to research. I almost feel I should have written a book about *him*.

Norman Krasna is someone else I'd like to find out more about. From the IMDB you can tell that he was a playwright who turned a number of his scripts into movies; he celebrates the "off-Broadway" milieu in the "Let's Make Love" script. He worked with a lot of the stars of the 50s and early 60s. There's nothing after 1964, though, and it seems he faded out and never adapted to the New Hollywood of the 70s. (Didn't die til 1984.) But I'd like to find out more about who he hung out with in Hollywood. Fortunately there are many, many biographies of Sinatra and Monroe; there ought to be plenty in those.

24 May 99

I'm not working on the book often enough -- one or two days a week. But my boss at Pac Bell, avuncular Pius Ruf, is out for two weeks on vacation, and I'm going to take plenty of time to work on my book.

The next scenes I have to work on to finish the first part are:

Ch. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gene on Sunday <input type="checkbox"/> Drive back to LA starts -- Bobby is pissed because he struck out sexually; Gene brags about a sexual conquest but Bobby realizes he's lying, explains how you really do it. <input type="checkbox"/> They meet the two women in Victorville and take them back to LA
<p>Ch. 7-- Ia.1</p> <p>(but of course she never will sleep with him)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bobby comes back to L.A. and picks up the script for Make Nice for Daddy, sees there's a part for him. Good deadpan comic part. <input type="checkbox"/> ? need some kind of transition here <input type="checkbox"/> Another trip to Las Vegas -- ellipsis here skips one or two trips -- the rising action is mostly about Bobby's machinations to get a part in MNFD <input type="checkbox"/> But there is also at least one scene between Gene and Dolores -- perhaps something that gives him the idea that she'll sleep with him the <i>next</i> time he comes up - this builds tension for the next trip for him <input type="checkbox"/> Meanwhile we set up tension for the next trip up for Bobby
<p>Ch. 8 -- Ia.2 The equil'm is broken by some kind of betrayal of trust -- Bobby does something to Gene and has to win back his good graces. So he arranges for him to get laid by a showgirl.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> asdf <input type="checkbox"/> asdf <input type="checkbox"/> asdf

<p>- only to lay him off when the Vegas gigs are done</p> <p>Maybe the emotional climax here is akin to that bit of dialogue I wrote above about Bobby having missed his big chance -- so he's not going to get the part in "Make Nice"</p> <p>But the redemption is prepared for even here, because Sinatra makes some comment about how Bobby is just a straight man, setting up lines for the stars to say (or maybe cynical Martin says it)</p>	<p>lb Back in L.A., there's a climactic (and unexpected) confrontation between Sinatra and Bobby in which Sinatra says he won't support Bobby getting hired</p>
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Cheez, that's at least 10 scenes. I'll bet it's as much as I've already written. I sure hope it doesn't take me as much time.

I checked out from the library a number of books including a biography of Peter Lawford and "The Making of 'The Misfits,'" which should be invaluable. And Sara gave me a book on Las Vegas that has a lot of historical stuff in it. I'll still probably need to go to Las Vegas and do research. Sara and I talked about doing that in the fall. Road trip! Except for me, it would mean working in the library or the historical society all day long. I guess she could use the time to finish her book.

I have to go back and fill in the part of ch. 5 I haven't done -- what happens to Gene on Saturday.

Here's a remarkable quote from "Goddess: The Secret Lives of Marilyn Monroe" by Anthony Summers:

[Soon-to-be husband Arthur] Miller told *Time* reporter Robert Ajemian, "She is the most womanly woman I can imagine. Being with her, people want to die. This girl sets up a challenge in every man. Most men become more of what they are natively when they are around her: a phony becomes more phony, a confused man becomes more confused, a retiring man more retiring. She's kind of a lodestone that draws out of the male animal his essential qualities."

That gives me a great clue for the action in the climax!

25 May 99

Another note from that Marilyn book ("Goddess") -- During the filming of "Let's Make Love," she got a new psychiatrist, a Dr. Ralph Greenson. *He was also Sinatra's psychiatrist*, according to the book, and had "numerous show-business clients." Dead now, it says, but check.

The book avers that "Let's Make Love" has a poor script and is not in the league with the other "fine films with which Marilyn ended her career." I disagree; I thought the script had long sections where the story and characters are extremely well-developed. The only problem is that the Frankie Vaughn character is hardly developed at all until a late tantrum when he complains that his career has been a series of disappointments. Could be that the original script had more development but that it was cut. If so, I'm guessing that the reason is that Frankie Vaughn was a lousy actor and the scenes featuring Tony Randall were much funnier.

In any case, the biography gives short shrift to "Let's Make Love," treating it mainly as the occasion for a romantic affair between Monroe and Yves Montand. It doesn't mention Vaughn, Randall or the screenwriter Norman Krasna at all. I'm really curious about what the reviews and articles of the day said about the film.

The other book I have, "The Making of 'The Misfits,'" says filmmakers had planned to make "The Misfits" in 1959 but instead Marilyn signed to make "Let's Make Love." The latter film seems to have been made starting in January 1960, according to "Goddess." So it was going on while they were making "Oceans Eleven."

However, for my book, I'll have to twist reality a little. I'll have to have it scheduled for something like April. I can't put off the filming of "The Misfits" from when it actually happened during the summer and fall of 1960, because everybody knows when it happened and everybody knows it was Monroe's last film. So I'll have to have the incidents in my book be like this:

1. Early March: part 1 of the book where Bobby is trying to get into "Make Nice"
2. Mid-March -- Sinatra decides not to do "Make Nice" and Bobby fails to get into the movie (obviously trying for the Tony Randall role)
3. April-June -- Part 2 of my book takes place as "Make Nice" films.
4. August -- Climax of my book takes place during the filming of "The Misfits" (real time line)

That'll work.

I realized I now have to think about exactly what date it is, so I did something I've been putting off for a long time -- printed out a 1960 calendar. From this, and from the statement in "Dino" that the filming on "O11" in Vegas happened Feb. 16-27, I can see that my chapter 1-2 takes place on Monday, March 7, and Gene's first trip to Vegas happens the following weekend, March 11-13.

So I would have to change no. 2 above to the last week of March, not mid-March. They're already in mid-March.

However, there's no need to keep to the actual Vegas filming dates of "O11;" it's not tied to any specific events that took place that anyone remembers. I can easily move them back a couple of weeks. That gives the action a little more time to happen. After all, I already have Dana saying in ch. 1 "Nobody goes to the beach in February." So I'll move everything back 2 weeks. What's the diff.

As for the discrepancies between the plots, casts, etc. of "Make Nice for Daddy" (the plot of which Sinatra discusses in ch. 2) and "Let's Make Love," I think I'll just keep the fictional film going and not try to make it the same as "Let's Make Love." If I try to make it too much like reality, I'll keep running into timeline and action discrepancies. I think the filming schedule is the main thing I have to worry about -- having it shoot after "O11" so that Sinatra can consider (and eventually reject) being in it, rather than having it shoot at the same time as "O11" as "Let's Make Love" did in reality.

So we have:

February 1960						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			FILMING ON O11 STARTS IN VEGAS			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
						FILMING ENDS IN VEGAS
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	CH. 1-2 OCCUR				CH. 4	CH. 5
28	29					
CH. 6						

March 1960		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
CLIMAX OF PART 1 HAS TO HAPPEN NO LATER THAN THIS WEEK						
April 1960					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	FILMING OF "MAKE NICE" STARTS					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Later -- I wrote the first scene in ch. 6, Gene walking around town and seeing Dolores in the church. Before they leave town he'll go to the office and ask her name. Now I need to go back and write the last scene in ch. 5 (which is already really long), in which he strikes out romantically. Thus when Gene starts bragging in ch. 6 of his sexual success, the reader will know before Bobby does that he's lying.

I still should put a lying episode in earlier, during Sat. afternoon.

27 May 99

Let's see, if Bobby was "on stage at 16" and "finished high school in the Army," and let's say he's 45 in 1960, which would make him 25 in 1940 -- that's too old. Let's say he's 21 in 1941 when he's drafted, so that makes him 40 in 1960 and 16 in 1936.

1 Jun 99

I finally made it to the library on Saturday and looked up the two existing magazine profiles of Joey Bishop -- one in the *New York Times Magazine* dated Jan. 1, 1961, and one in *Esquire* dated Sep. 1961. They each contained a lot of information which I didn't know, and also information that I had either known or guessed -- like the thing I wrote in the last entry above, guessing he'd first gone on stage in 1936. Bingo! And he was drafted in 1942, not 1941, and actually never finished high school, but it makes no difference.

One interesting effect of finally reading those articles is that I'm now starting to resist learning some of the facts of the people and the times, since the facts are starting to conflict with the fiction I'm creating. From now on, I'm going to be careful to protect my fictional creation and not confuse it with the facts.

But there are plenty of discrepancies between accounts. For example, upon reading the script for "Ocean's 11," Jack Warner is supposed to have said, "Forget making the movie, let's just pull the robbery." But the statement is also attributed to others, including Sinatra. So I don't have to worry about too many p's and q's -- just the ones that are common knowledge.

One major fact which I've missed til now, though, and which will actually help me with the ending, is the fact that the Democratic convention occurred in Los Angeles in July 1960, and Marilyn and JFK did a lot of fucking there, and *then* she went off to shoot "The Misfits." And the Rat Pack was all over the place, they even sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" to open the convention. I ought to be able to make a lot of hay there, although I may have to alter the time line a little. I'm still planning on the central event of the final act being that Bobby and Gene pick up Marilyn from the set of "The Misfits" and take her by car back to L.A. -- some ostensible mission of mercy which Sinatra has sent Bobby on. Invaluable to this whole section is the account in "Peter Lawford: the Man Who Kept the Secrets" by James Spada:

In July, (JFK) came into the Democratic National Convention with victories in all seven of the primaries he had entered, and he was just sixty-one votes short of the nomination. Serendipitously, the convention was held in the Los Angeles Sports Arena, putting Kennedy's show business supporters smack in the middle of the action. The night before the convention's July 11 opening, the Democratic Party staged a hundred-dollar-a-plate fund-raiser at the Beverly Hilton Hotel attended by twenty-eight hundred people. The Rat Pack and other of Hollywood's biggest names were present -- July Garland, Angie Dickinson, Milton Berle, Joe E. Lewis, George Jessel, Mort Sahl, Janet Leigh, and Tony Curtis among them.

Judy Garland sat at the head table next to the candidate; Frank Sinatra sat a few chairs down with some of the other presidential hopefuls -- Senators Lyndon Johnson of Texas and Stuart Symington of Missouri, and the potential draftee Adlai Stevenson.

The next day, Frank, Sammy, Dean, Peter, Janet Leigh, and Tony Curtis led the hundred thousand people jammed into the Sports Arena in a rousing rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" to open the convention. A few bars into the song, members of the Alabama delegation, seated close to the stage, began to heckle Sammy Davis with vicious racial epithets. His face burning with hurt and anger, Davis forced back tears. Sinatra tried to buck him up, whispering, "Those dirty sons of bitches. Don't let them get to you, Charlie!" Davis finished the song, but he didn't take his seat with the others once the convention was gavelled to order.

Alabama was one of the uncommitted delegations that Jack needed to guarantee a first-ballot victory. It was left to Peter to swallow his anger two days later and try to charm a group of men he considered bigots.... Throughout the week, Sinatra and the Rat Pack roamed the convention floor, ignoring barriers and restrictions, and cajoled recalcitrant delegates to join the Kennedy cause. Conscious of the cameras, Sinatra painted his bald pate black so it wouldn't be obvious under the TV lights.

After the first convention session, Jack Kennedy retired to his suite at the Beverly Hilton Hotel and spent some time with Judy Campbell. (Jackie had stayed home because she was six months pregnant and had a history of problem pregnancies.) Apparently Jack had never compared notes with Sinatra about Judy, because he tried, as Sinatra had, to talk her into a three-way -- "with a secretarial type in her late twenties," as Campbell recalled it. "I know you," Jack told her. "I know you'd like it." Just as she had with Sinatra, Judy refused.

For the rest of the convention, Jack Kennedy's sexual amusement was provided by Marilyn Monroe, who was preparing to begin work in Reno on "The Misfits," written by her husband, the playwright Arthur Miller.... The marriage had been in trouble for several years, and Marilyn was just emerging from an affair with the French singer and actor Yves Montand, the costar of her most recent film, "Let's Make Love."

... Now, with her marriage on the rocks, Marilyn was in Los Angeles without Miller, and Kennedy's large contingent of Hollywood supporters made her far less conspicuous in Kennedy's company than she might have been. The second night of the convention, Marilyn dined with Jack, Peter (Lawford) and Kennedy aide Kenneth O'Donnell at Puccini [restaurant co-owned by Sinatra].

Before dinner, Marilyn and Jack had apparently been intimate, because Marilyn giggled to Peter that Jack's performance earlier had been "very democratic" and "very penetrating." ...

As JFK was nominated:

The hall erupted once again, this time in acclamation for the nominee of the Democratic Party. Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack celebrated wildly, patted each other on the back, glad-handed strangers. "We're on our way to the White House, buddy boy," Sinatra yelled to Peter....

What's interesting in all that is the lack of mention of Joey Bishop, but the book is about Lawford, and the author clearly doesn't think much of Bishop. And in fact, it's better. I can put Bobby anywhere I want him in all those events. The scene between Davis and the Alabama delegation is unbelievable! You can't make up something like that.

But I'm getting way ahead of myself. I'm still in the middle of ch. 6 and I won't write about those events for weeks, if not months.

2 Jun 99

I finished the first draft of chapter 6 today -- the return trip from Las Vegas to L.A. including the central incident in which they pick up the two women at a diner in Victorville. I've been looking forward to writing that for a long time, and finally I wrote that whole part today -- about 2000 words, an excellent rate of production. (I consider 800-1000 words a good day, but in fact what I tend to do is write a whole scene, no matter how long it is. It's hard to go on to the next scene after that, even if I know exactly what the next scene is.) I never quite had it in mind how they would meet the two women and get them away from their husbands, but I figured it out today -- have them crash their car outside the diner in Victorville where Bobby and Gene are having coffee. The driver (one husband) is arrested, the other stays behind to deal with the mess, and the two women go home to Orange County with Bobby and Gene. It still needs a lot of work, but the important thing is to draft it.

I looked back at my entry for 19 Nov 97. It's amazing how faithful the scene I wrote today is to the original idea. Even the fur piece worn by one of the women is in there.

It feels like I'm working quickly, but reading these notes I find that it's taken me more than 5 weeks to write two chapters. They're long chapters, totaling more than 10,000 words, but compared to the rest of the book, it's not as much as it's felt like. In any case, I'm working well, and if I can keep writing 10,000 words every 4 or 5 weeks, I'll finish the first draft of the book by the end of the year.

But I'm done with the first half of the first part! Hooray. The second half of the first part will be more difficult, though. I'll have to really get into the relationship between Bobby and Gene, raising the stakes and preparing for the early climax.

Sara came over last night and I read to her and Cris the part I quoted above from the Peter Lawford biography. She thought it was hilarious that the Rat Pack sang the national anthem at the Demo convention. It's really hard to top reality when you're writing about real people.

Brainstorming about the next chapter:

			Key to the scene
--	--	--	-------------------------

<p>Ch. 7-- la.1</p> <p>29 Feb 1960</p>	<p>□ Bobby comes back to L.A. and picks up the script for Make Nice for Daddy, sees there's a part for him. Good deadpan comic part.</p>	<p>Really have to establish a close relationship between Bobby and Gene, in which we see Gene really doing his transference. This is sort of the core of the original idea -- the trips back and forth, anecdotes told by Bobby, etc.</p> <p>This is the relationship that Gene mourns during part II.</p> <p>Somewhere in here: Gene tells a big whopper that really seems to work, and Bobby is aided by it.</p> <p>Later it comes out that Bobby has known all along that Gene has been fibbing left and right.</p>	<p>I ask for a copy of the script. There's a perfect part for me, a good deadpan comic part, but I get drunk and it causes a complication. Later I'm instrumental in helping the hero get the girl (pimp role again). A really memorable role!</p>
<p>Mar 4-7 ~ Mar 11-13</p>	<p>□ Gene is driving Bobby around this time in L.A. and then to L.V. They discuss the Victorville women.</p>		
<p>28 29 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19</p>	<p>□ Then another trip to Las Vegas -- ellipsis here skips one or two trips -- the rising action is mostly about Bobby's machinations to get a part in MNFD but also in the relationship.</p>		<p>The "big whopper" should be something about a movie role Bobby either was in or will be in -- probably will be in. Maybe this helps him secure a meeting with someone or gets him out of a potentially embarrassing situation. Probably happens in LV.</p> <p>Nice bluffing kid, maybe you should be a poker player. Of course I've known you were lying all along!</p>
<p>Mar 12 -- Late Saturday afternoon March 12 after Dolores gets off work?</p>	<p>□ There also has to be at least one scene between Gene and Dolores - - perhaps something that gives him the idea that she'll sleep with him the <i>next</i> time he comes up - this is part of the rising action in the section for him</p>	<p>(but of course she never will sleep with him)</p>	<p>She comes back to Gene's room pretending she forgot something. He puts on a play for her appealing to her sympathetic nature. She acts all sympathetic and comforts him. He thinks it will lead to their sleeping together.</p>
	<p>□ Meanwhile we set up tension for the next trip up for Bobby</p>		<p>Frank has to make a decision by this week.</p>

			Then find out the Frank's already decided, won't even be involved? -- leads to climax.
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3 Jun 99

I'm thinking that each chapter, from chapter 5 on, is getting really long and complicated, and that this might rise up to bite me somehow. But I can't figure out how, or what this problem might be, so I'm just going to keep pressing onward.

4 Jun 99

I wrote the first scene in ch. 7 this morning. Then I really wanted to press on, but nothing seemed right and I'm stuck. But I did realize two things:

1. I can write this chapter so that it can, with minor modifications, stand alone as a short story.
2. If I do that -- think of ch. 7 as more of a short story -- I can keep this whole first part from getting out of hand. I might be able wrap up everything that I listed above on May 24 for chapters 7 and 8 in one 9000-word story -- and it'll seem long at that length.

Well, maybe not everything I had planned for those two chapters. It would seem hard to fit in all the subplots that have to do with Gene. Perhaps I should just write the Bobby parts, define those as a short story, and then go back and work in the Gene material, much of which happens out of Bobby's presence anyway.

This is scary for a couple of reasons. One is that I can just write about Bobby and kind of forget about Gene, and that that means Gene is extraneous to the book. The other is that if that were true, I'd end up throwing out half of what I've done so far.

But I shouldn't be scared of that. I've always known I'd have to cut at some point. I just didn't envision reducing a major character to a sidelight.

7 Jun 99

I figured out what to do for ch. 7, the "self-contained story." Getting the part entails a choice. Bobby has to decide whether or not to bad-mouth Timson. He also has to prove himself by doing an unpleasant favor for Sinatra (this foreshadows the Marilyn errand). He eventually decides to do this but he won't bad-mouth Timson. It turns out Sinatra has decided (unbeknownst to Bobby) not to participate in the project anyway, so the errand he did for Sinatra doesn't figure in things.

Bobby finds out something about Timson -- that's it. Maybe that Timson is a pinko? Maybe even somebody like the FBI approaches Bobby asking for some information on Timson, and Bobby has the opportunity to get rid of his rival. But he won't do it.

I can also play up here the contrast between Bobby's truth-telling and Gene's lying.

Okay, here's what I worked out, using post-it notes. It makes for an awfully long, complicated section, but here it is.

Ch. 7a	Bobby picks up the script for <i>Make Nice</i> , sees a part in it for him.		
Ch. 7b	Bobby discusses the script with Sinatra's agent or producer, and the producer asks him to do a certain favor for Sinatra in return for favorable consideration.		
Ch. 7c	The FBI approaches Bobby and asks him to libel Timson.		
Ch. 8a	Trip to Las Vegas on March 11. Dialogue between Gene and Bobby touches on the lying/truth theme.		
Ch. 8b	Scene between Gene and Dolores on March 12.		
Ch. 8c	Bobby does the certain favor for Sinatra.		Somewhere in here: Gene tells a big whopper that really seems to work, and Bobby is aided by it. Later it comes out that Bobby has known all along that Gene has been fibbing left and right.
Ch. 8d	2d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby.		
Ch. 8e	Setting: _____ Bobby finds out Sinatra won't be involved in the film , negating the influence of his "favor."		
Ch. 9a	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?)		
Ch. 9b	Next trip to LV -- Mar. 18. Maybe this is the one that Gene drives by himself.		
Ch. 9c	Bobby finds out Timson has definitely gotten the part. Unless, that is, he betrays Timson.		
Ch. 9d	3d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby. Bobby decides once and for all not to betray Timson.		
Ch. 10a	Sinatra-Bobby conversation, plays up Bobby's low status. "You blew your chance a long time ago."		
Ch. 10b	Bobby does betray Gene somehow -- perhaps to look good for Sinatra -- "Get out of here."		
Ch. 10c	To make it up with Gene, Bobby gets him laid by a call girl.		
Ch. 10d	Bobby on stage, Fri. Mar. 19		
Ch. 10e	Sun, Mar 20 -- end of LV trips.		

Gee, you think that's enough content for the first-part climax?

10 Jun 99

I've been having a lot of second thoughts about that complicated section. It just seems way too long and complicated, for one thing. But I also realized that having Bobby *not* betray Timson weakens the whole book. If I want Bobby to make a courageous stand, the time to do that is at the end of the book (at least that would be the traditional Hollywood redemptive moment, and is that what I want?). So I would have him betray Timson here at the end of the first part, *and it still doesn't get him the part*. But it sets up the need for him to be redeemed.

And harking back to my early ideas, which are still mostly what I'm doing except for a few details, the idea of him receiving grace and forgiveness at the end doesn't depend on him doing anything; otherwise it wouldn't be grace. However, Marilyn acts as the vehicle for this grace.

Did 1750 words today -- the part of ch. 7 right up to where Sinatra is going to ask Bobby to do him the favor. But I don't know what the favor is. I'll take a walk and try to think of it.

14 Jun 99

The favor, I realized, is to take a suitcase full of money from LV to LA. The point is that the suitcase full of money is mob funding for JFK's campaign, although that doesn't come out until a little later.

I wrote today the rest of the scene between Sinatra and Bobby, and then started ch. 8, writing the first scene with the FBI agents. Then I looked at the outline and regrouped the scenes, putting all the Bobby-narrated stuff in ch. 7, with ch. 8 still left to begin. For the rest of the first part, I'll try to divide chapters by narrator.

I printed out chapters 1-6 and gave them to Sara.

16 Jun 99

Met Sara last night. She was very enthusiastic about the chapters I gave her (ch. 1-6). Her suggestions:

- Don't have Sinatra get mad and beat up Maltz in the restaurant; save his violence for the scene in the street. This builds better and would make both scenes scarier.
- Don't show the accident twice. I'm not so sure how to solve this because I feel there is new information in both points of view. But Sara says showing it twice puts too much emphasis on the event, that it calls out too stridently that it's the event that kicks everything off.
- Don't alternate between the points of view so predictably -- don't alternate chapters. This creates weariness in the reader by making things too predictable -- it actually could create the impression that time's moving backwards. (Note to self -- save that technique for some other work.) It's a good thing she said this, because I was just about to go ahead and do exactly what she warned against (see last entry).

Other than those things, she seems to have had a great time reading it. I'm so pleased and encouraged. Now I need to go back and redo the outline of the next few chapters *again* and de-emphasize the alternating-voices technique.

Another 1800 words today. I wrote the first part of ch. 8, a scene between Gene and Dana, and other between Gene and Dolores. Then I started off the drive back on March 6. I'll pick it up with the crucial conversation about truth and lying. However, I haven't done the scene where Gene tells a whopper that gets Bobby off the hook. I think I need that to emphasize the theme.

1 July 99

The outline for the part I'm working -- the last half of the first part of the book -- now looks like this (blue parts are already done):

29 Feb	Ch. 7a	Bobby picks up the script for <i>Make Nice</i> , sees a part in it for him.	Bobby
	Ch. 7b	Transition to next section	"
Thu 3 Mar	Ch. 7c	Bobby discusses the script with Sinatra, who asks him to do a certain favor in return for favorable consideration.	"
29 Feb - 3 Mar	Ch. 7d	Gene and Dana	Gene

4 Mar	Ch. 7d	Trip to LV--Bobby tells Gene a little bit about the "errand." Bobby internal monologue about gangsters. Backstage at the Riviera, the FBI approaches Bobby and asks him to libel Timson.	Bobby
5 Mar	Ch. 8a	Scene between Gene and Dolores on March 5.	Gene
5 Mar	Ch. 8b	Bobby gets the "package" Trip back to LA. Dialogue between Gene and Bobby touches on the lying/truth theme.	Gene
6 Mar Mon 7 Mar	Ch. 8c	Bobby returns home with the package and Gene Gene wakes up	Gene
	Ch. 8d	Gene and Dana at Bobby's house	Gene
7 Mar	Ch. 8e	Peter Lawford picks up the package from Bobby that evening. Gene and Dana are present.	Gene
Wed. 10 Mar	Ch. 8f	Gene and Dana again ??????	Gene
10 - 12 Mar	Ch. 9a	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?)	Bobby
Fri 12 Mar	Ch. 9b	2d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby.	Bobby
Wed 16 Mar	Ch. 9c	Setting: _____ Bobby finds out Sinatra won't be involved in the film , negating the influence of his "favor."	Bobby
16-17 Mar	Ch. 9d	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?)	Bobby
17 Mar	Ch. 9e	Bobby finds out Timson has definitely gotten the part. Unless, that is, he betrays Timson.	Bobby
17 Mar	Ch. 9f	3d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby. Bobby caves and betrays Timson.	Bobby
	Ch. 10a	Last trip to LV on Friday, 18 March.	Gene
18 Mar	Ch. 10b	Sinatra-Bobby conversation, plays up Bobby's low status. "You blew your chance a long time ago." Bobby does betray Gene somehow -- perhaps to look good for Sinatra -- "Get out of here."	Gene
19 Mar	Ch. 10c	To make it up with Gene, Bobby gets him laid by a call girl.	3d person
19-20 Mar	Ch. 10d	Bobby on stage, Sat. 19 March	
20 Mar	Ch. 10e	Sun, Mar 20 -- end of LV trips.	

Looking back on chapter 7, which I thought a few weeks ago was going to be a "self-contained story," I can see it hasn't worked out that way, but it could still be turned into that. I just want to make a note that what I said on 2 June about "chapter 7" actually pertains to what is now chapters 7-9 at least. I'm not sure when the "self-contained story" stops.

I also see I've expanded what I thought was complicated in the first place. But that's okay, it's just the story fleshing out. For instance, I came up with the idea, this morning, of having Gene and Dana over at Bobby's house enjoying his pool when Peter Lawford comes over to pick up the suitcase. And I'll have Lawford come on to Dana big time. Ha ha!

I'm happy about my progress, even though I didn't work on this for more than 10 days, because every time I sit down and work on it, I do one or two thousand words. A month ago I said I need to write 10K to 12K words every 4 or 5 weeks to finish by the end of the year, and counting what I did in June (chapter 7 and 8 up to 8c) I see I did about 8100 words in June. So June was a good month, especially considering I took off a week on vacation. I'll write 8d today and try to do 8e also.

I haven't run up against very many research details, but that's probably because I simply don't know much about the time or place.

2 July 99

300 words today added to the 1800 from yesterday finishes up the last part of chapter 8 -- the scene with Gene, Dana and Peter Lawford by the swimming pool. I think it worked out great. "Elizabeth Taylor's first screen kiss!" (I think I lifted it from an actual incident in one of the books I read for research, but it was about a different pair of actors. It doesn't matter.) I don't know how I'm managing it, but things are going so easily with this book. I think of something and just make it happen. It really builds my confidence.

14 Jul 99

Another hiatus -- I wasn't at the phone company last week, instead I was at Sybase teaching the internal auditor class. Then I actually had a couple of things to catch up on at the phone company, so I haven't been able to get back to this until today, Wednesday. And in fact, I have something else I need to do at the phone company, where I am now. A document I'm working on, an implementation plan for my project. But let's keep things in perspective, it's much more important for me to work on my book.

As I thought about it in the last day or two, I realized that there needs to be some reaction by Bobby to the first visit of the FBI men. The way it is now:

4 Mar	Ch. 7d	Trip to LV--Bobby tells Gene a little bit about the "errand." Bobby internal monologue about gangsters. Backstage at the Riviera, the FBI approaches Bobby and asks him to libel Timson.	Bobby
5 Mar	Ch. 8a	Scene between Gene and Dolores on March 5.	Gene
5 Mar	Ch. 8b	Bobby gets the "package" Trip back to LA. Dialogue between Gene and Bobby touches on the lying/truth theme.	Gene
6 Mar Mon 7 Mar	Ch. 8c	Bobby returns home with the package and Gene Gene wakes up	Gene
	Ch. 8d	Gene and Dana at Bobby's house	Gene
7 Mar	Ch. 8e	Peter Lawford picks up the package from Bobby that evening. Gene and Dana are present.	Gene

... there's this long section right after that scene where the whole focus is on the suitcase full of money. The FBI visit is practically forgotten.

What I'll do is put an internal monologue at the beginning of 8b. in which Bobby reflects on the FBI's proposition. No, wait a minute. 8b. doesn't happen in the dressing room but in the driveway, and it's from Gene's

p.o.v. Well, maybe I'll put it at the end of 8b. instead, or as an interlude during the day of 7 March, in the middle of what I have as 8c.

This is what happens as the book goes forward. Things get complex and have to be inserted into the existing structure like a carpenter trying to put a bathroom in a Victorian. The rewriting process after the first draft is finished will be all this carpentry work.

I met last night with Sara for the first time in a couple weeks and we talked about this process. The way she writes an article, she says -- most of what she's written in the last several years is 5000-word magazine features -- is to write it all out laboriously, perhaps in chronological order, and only when she's reread that does she understand "what I'm trying to say." Then she goes back and rewrites the piece with that in mind. She can see where she's going.

For her nonfiction book that she's working on, she says, she has a much more difficult process. She's trying to tell a true story that goes over several years. She says the basic chronological historical fact stuff is that hardest -- "I'll work all day and bleed out 300 words, find I've only gotten from March 12, 1996 to March 20, 1996, and I'll feel like crying." To get through such sections, she rewards herself with being able to write a "fun part" of the book, such as the account of the recent visit of conservative Demo. House members to Silicon Valley, in which they got drunk on a bus tour of wineries and entertained themselves by singing 70s oldies over the on-board microphone, and from bus to bus using cell phones.

Sara is often the only reporter allowed into such events because she's working on a book and has signed an agreement that she won't report stuff in newspapers or periodicals, but only in her book. Remarking on her exclusive access, some handler said to her, "You're the queen of carte blanche!"

Okay, after all that, I wrote a scene between Bobby and Sammy poolside at the Sands, right between 8a and what was 8b, the scene where they depart LV on 6 March. So that keeps the flow of the remainder of the chapter and gets discussion of the FBI up close to their first entrance. Chapter 8 now looks like this:

date	scene	description	p.o.v.
5 Mar	Ch. 8a	Scene between Gene and Dolores on March 5.	Gene
	Ch. 8b	Bobby and Sammy discuss FBI	Bobby
5 Mar	Ch. 8c	Bobby gets the "package" Trip back to LA. Dialogue between Gene and Bobby touches on the lying/truth theme.	Gene
6 Mar	Ch. 8 d	Bobby returns home with the package and Gene	Gene
	Ch. 8e	Gene wakes up Gene and Dana at Bobby's house	Gene
	Ch. 8f	Peter Lawford picks up the package from Bobby that evening.	Gene

1000 words in that poolside scene (8b).

Now I'd like to go on and work on the first scene of chapter 9. This will be tough because I'm not sure how it starts at all. I think I should at least be able to get a handle on it.

I've been delaying this "big whopper" business from chapter to chapter and I have to do it now or never.

8 - 12 Mar	Ch. 9a	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?)	Gene	Somewhere in here: Gene tells a big whopper that really seems to work, and Bobby is aided by it.
Fri 12 Mar	Ch. 9b	Gene drives alone to Las Vegas ?	Gene	
Fri 12 Mar	Ch. 9c	2d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby.	Bobby	

Wed 16 Mar	Ch. 9d	Setting: _____ Bobby finds out Sinatra won't be involved in the film , negating the influence of his "favor."	Bobby	Bobby also realizes how he's been manipulated. This provides him with a rationale for betraying Timson.
16-17 Mar	Ch. 9e	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?)	Bobby	Later it comes out that Bobby has known all along that Gene has been fibbing left and right.
17 Mar	Ch. 9f	Bobby finds out Timson is about to be signed by the studio , making it a sure thing he'll get the part. Unless, that is, he betrays Timson.	Bobby	
17 Mar	Ch. 9g	3d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby. Bobby caves and betrays Timson.	Bobby	This sets up the next scene -- now Bobby needs validation from Frank.

All I really have clearly in mind are the things marked 9c onward; 9a and and 9b are really vague. But I think the key is that 9a. is from Gene's point of view. And that the main function will be to set up 9d and e.

15 Jul 99

No luck yesterday trying to figure out what happens in 9a, although I feel so confident, based on the way I've been able to work up to now, that it won't take much to solve the problem.

I'm thinking that the scene begins in the car, driving up Sunset Blvd. Bobby has a few days off from filming and he's going to spend them drumming up support for his inclusion in *Make Nice for Daddy*.

There has to be a certain amount of informational exchange between Bobby and Gene, because it's from Gene's p.o.v. and because he needs the background info to be able to come up with the "whopper" sometime in the chapter. Bobby has to explain the situation to Gene and what he's trying to do.

Where are they off to? Bobby has an appointment with someone -- who? Or is he simply trying to catch somebody without an appointment? The thing is, if it's an appointment then Gene is obviously not going to be present, but if he runs into someone outside a restaurant, then Gene may be present.

So who? Obviously someone in a position to influence casting, either directly or indirectly. Who is directly responsible for casting? The producer, in 1960, and also the studio. Less directly, people to whom the producer owes favors, money men, etc.

Now my problem is that this producer is a total blank. Jerry Wald, who the hell cares about him? Probably there are 20 people in the world who remember the guy and what he was like to work with, and probably nothing has been written about him except his obituary, if he's dead. So if I'll never find out anything about him, what should I do, just make up a lot of stuff, or invent a fictional producer? Clearly the latter, since it doesn't actually matter who he is. He's a flat character and it doesn't matter whether it's a real person or not.

So there's this producer, call him Richard Overbeck. (Check IMDB to see if there ever was such a person.) Does Bobby go directly to him, or would that be too gauche? Would Bobby prefer to work indirectly? Somehow I think he would try to influence indirectly. So he wouldn't go directly to the guy, but to other people who work for the studio, other Hollywood people.

His agent is also working on it, no doubt. Maybe he has a conversation with his agent about what the agent is doing, but that's on the side. We're focussed on what Bobby is doing.

He's already talked to Sinatra, because he thinks Sinatra is basically running the show. Unbeknownst to him, Sinatra is not. In fact, not only will Sinatra have nothing to do with the movie, the studio is actually considering doing *Let's Make Love* instead of *Make Nice for Daddy*.

Probably what should happen is that Bobby gets wind of *Let's Make Love* before he finds out Sinatra won't be involved. He hears about it but he doesn't know what it means. He gets the feeling that everybody knows more than he does -- which is true in a way. He may be the last to know that that it's *Let's Make Love*, not *Make Nice for Daddy* being made.

27 Jul 99

Almost 2 weeks later. No work on this while on Boston trip and later, catching up to work.

Can start chapter 9 with Bobby and Gene in car on way someplace, but have to remember what just came before. Bobby and Gene took the suitcase full of money back to LA and Peter Lawford almost seduced Dana at Bobby's house. So Gene is not really a blank slate here. I have to show him developing based on events! I can't let him remain static, a naïf.

Maybe I should write more at the end of ch. 8 -- showing Bobby and Gene dropping off Dana and then Bobby dropping off Gene... Maybe the reason I'm stuck is that I'm not done with ch. 8. I guess I'll try to do that. I don't have to keep it. Maybe it's not necessary to keep it, only to know what happens in the scene.

Only I don't have a copy of any of the chapters with me today at the phone company. I only happen to have the outline and this "notes" file.

The more I think about it, the more I think a scene between Bobby and Gene in the car after dropping off Dana would be a good idea.

All right, I wrote that this morning -- 975 words that don't really move the story forward except to the degree that they get Gene and Bobby more or less on the same page with his idea to get a part in MNFD. I like parts of what I wrote; it needs work though.

Now I'm just going to plunge in to chapter 9. I'm not going to fuck around.

Ha, it's an hour later and I did nothing. I got involved in locating and typing the audit non-conformances from our trip to Boston last week.

Oh, by the way. I had a thought in Boston. The FBI agents as I've written them are way too stereotypical. I should make at least one of them a would-be comedian. And the other guy rolls his eyes and tries to get on with business, but not in that "The FBI has no sense of humor that we're aware of" manner that's been satirized so many times it's not funny anymore.

God, I'll try starting chapter 9 one more time.

28 Jul 99

Wow, I *finally* got off the dime on the beginning of that chapter -- and wrote 3200 words yesterday and today (mostly today). I solved the problem of the "whopper" and everything else by having much of the scene start in Bobby's agent's office. Then Philly follows him out to the car and makes a joke about Bobby getting interviewed with Gay Talese, which becomes the "whopper" that Gene parrots back a while later in front of Sinatra and the putative producer of "Make Nice." And I foreshadowed the cancellation of the Make Nice project to boot. So it was a very productive day.

Now I don't know what I'm going to do next, exactly. I hope it doesn't take me another week to figure it out, because tomorrow (Friday) I have a free day. The phone company's Pius Ruf is absent (as he was today) so I have had to do exactly no thinking about work, just about my book.

By the way, it looks like I have only a month left at the phone company. That's about what I expected, to leave around Labor Day. But I have to make the most of the days here, since they've been so productive.

I've written about 7000 words so far in July. Of course I haven't gotten nearly as far as I thought I would -- I thought I would be almost finished with chapter 9 by now, and I've just started. And the next scenes are the same way -- I know what plot points have to happen, I just don't know the settings and how things happen.

The other trouble, I realize as I look at the existing outline of the rest of Part I is that it's almost all about Bobby and his plot thread and not much about Gene and his plot thread. That reveals the continuing state of weakness of Gene's character, and the fact that I just realized it shows how much I've been concentrating on Bobby. Sure, Gene wants to get laid, so what. While I think it's all right for Bobby's character to be stronger and clearer, and I certainly don't want Gene's character to overshadow Bobby, I think I should try as hard as possible to find out who Gene is and what he wants.

I guess the most obvious thing would be to show Gene's attempt to restore his relationship with Dana. But actually I've already done an interesting thing. I started with the relationship stable, and things keep happening to it that make it unstable. Perhaps, if I want him getting laid by a showgirl to be a key scene in chapter 10, I can weight the scene with meaning by making it a turning point in his relationship with Dana.

Meanwhile I could save the whole relationship with Dolores for Part II.

I've been re-reading Larry McMurtry's "Moving On," which I first read when I was 15 or 16. (I remember that I didn't enjoy it all that much then, but I kept on through all 900 pages. I didn't enjoy it because I didn't understand it really. I didn't realize it then, but the true content of the book, which is the subtle emotional changes that two of the female characters go through, was simply too subtle for me to understand. I'm getting a lot more out of the book at age 43. I wonder what other books I didn't understand back then, seeing as how I read voraciously. There must have been all kinds of things in any number of books that I didn't really get.) It's influencing my writing of this book. Dolores and the way she entered the book is definitely a McMurtry influence. And "Moving On" is a road novel, too.

2 Aug 99

After that big spurt to start chapter 9, I didn't work any more that week, a pity. I didn't know quite what next to do, having polished off two minor milestones in that chunk. Now I need simply to turn to Gene and let him take us up to the series of events that constitute the mini-climax of the first part.

I am just really not inspired this morning though.

Let's see, what's Gene dealing with? His relationship with Dana is no longer stable the way it used to be, and he's also sniffing around Dolores. I want to get to where his choice to get laid by the showgirl is really meaningful in the context of his relationship with Dana and with Dolores. Maybe I can try to work backward from there.

Can I have Dolores barge in and discover them somehow? Kinda doubt the showgirl would lay Gene at the tawdry motel, but where else would he go? Well, Bobby's getting him a piece, maybe he gets him a room, too. But there's no way Dolores would be in the picture then. Perhaps he wakes up alone the next morning in the big hotel room, goes down to his little motel, and has to deal with Dolores realizing he hasn't slept there. But the problem is that she doesn't work Sundays so how would she find out anyway?

Start over. First of all, what are the sexual issues with regard to Gene? He wants to get laid, sure, and at age 20, his desire is more important than any other factor such as Dana's feelings. This is a stereotype but I don't particularly feel like I want or need to go against. Whatever his higher feelings are with regard to Dana and Dolores, his lust overpowers them.

Does he *have* any higher feelings? Perhaps his reading of *On the Road* imbues him with some vision, however temporarily, that is vaguely esthetic or spiritual. He has Kerouac's rhythms ringing in his ears and vague ideas about what Kerouac is talking about. Like millions of fellow readers he wonders, Now what do I do? If I want to respond to this vision -- this Kerouacian meld of American rush and Eastern timelessness synthesized through language -- in a reasonably conscientious and conscious way, in a way that's somehow consistent with the vision and demonstrates that I've learned something -- what do I do? Besides, that is, sitting down and writing exactly like Kerouac. More to the point, does it affect his attitudes toward Dana, Dolores and sex in general?

Kerouac has completely conventional attitudes toward women and sex. The women are either mother characters (Sal's aunt, in fact every character seems to have an "aunt") or luscious floozies who are sort of loveable but whom no one can take seriously; some of the latter are also fearsome bitches. Only the narrator's

lover Terry, who appears and then, with a feeling of sad inevitability, disappears, in the Steinbeckian first part, synthesizes the qualities of caretaker and sex kitten. Significantly, she has nothing to do with any of the other characters, while all the other women are related in some way to the other characters. So Sal doesn't have any conflicts about having Terry as his lover; she's all his. Considerations about sleeping with any of the other young women in the book involve questions of loyalty to whatever friends of his they are attached to.

These attitudes would transfer to Gene as follows. Dana is his girlfriend-with-a-capital-G, no matter how she acts toward him (since Kerouac states the view -- no doubt generally held -- that women are bitches but remain desirable). There aren't any other women that "belong" to any friends he's loyal to, since getting fired from the parking lot he doesn't really have any friends. Now that his relationship with Dana has been disrupted and things aren't the same between them -- that is, now that he no longer feels he is on a steady pace to eventually sleep with her -- he is open to the prospect of Dolores, whom he sees as a potential Terry character, not that she's having any of it; he actually has no idea who she is.

So if he's going to have any feelings of loyalty, they have to be about Dana -- he doesn't have any male friends to be loyal to. But I have the feeling that he's already abandoned any such feelings since he's so ready to get together with Dolores. In his imagination, Dolores is practically his new girlfriend, and he's going to treat Dana the way Dean Moriarty treats Carolyn (I mean Marylou) -- trying to keep her reasonably copasetic while he plows a completely different field. So any conflict he might have about sleeping with the showgirl has to do with upsetting this new arrangement (which is purely in his mind) and fantasies about Dolores. In other words, there's not nearly enough of a conflict for him to turn down the call girl.

Is there any other reason for conflict? Some hesitancy or shyness on his part? It wouldn't be stretching things to assume it's the first time he gets laid. But what else?

The narrator of *On the Road* sees visions while starving in San Francisco; these get him to "the point of ecstasy I always wanted to reach, which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows, and wonderment in the bleakness of the mortal realm..." Clearly there's more going on in the book than a lot of driving cars, getting drunk and exchanging whorish girlfriends, but the narrator doesn't identify the Buddhist underpinnings of his visions, which means they remain vague to a naïve reader like Gene (or myself at his age). So the most you can do, with nothing but the book to go on, is to aspire to a vague spirituality and try to have visions, or go hang out with a bunch of beatniks.

The beatniks in 1960 were mostly a lot of wannabes by that time, I think. They had been popularized and satirized everywhere from television to MAD magazine, and being a beatnik in 1960 was probably like being a hippie in 1973. It was over. So if Gene tries to find the beatniks, he won't have much luck. (Maybe that's a subject for part II of the book.) But he doesn't know that; he might try. He certainly takes seriously everything he reads in the book.

Well, I'll try again tomorrow.

5 Aug 99

I know what I'll do. I'll have 9c -- the scene that follows the opening sequence of ch. 9 where Gene and Bobby run into Frank and Dick Overbeck outside Puccini -- be a scene where Gene and Dana go to try to find the beatniks. He's not relying only on *On the Road*, but also on a newspaper article about an upcoming poetry reading. They take the bus there and attempt to meld with the scene. But the scene is really a vehicle showing the state of their relationship. I have to make their relationship significantly different from other dates I've shown. Don't just say "things aren't the same," show it.

That said, I think I can skip this scene for the time being. I feel like I'm on a roll with Bobby's whole story. I have to maintain that forward direction. 9c is a scene I can go back and put in anytime.

8 Mar	Ch. 9a	Bobby in Philly's office	Bobby
	Ch. 9b	Coincidental meeting with Dick Overbeck	Bobby

Wed. 9 Mar.	Ch. 9c	Gene and Dana, on an expedition to find the beatniks, make an expedition to a poetry reading	Gene
Sat 12 March	Ch. 9d	Bobby monologue on stage, Saturday night	Bobby
Wed 16 Mar	Ch. 9e	Setting: _____ Bobby finds out Sinatra won't be involved in the film , negating the influence of his "favor."	Bobby
16-17 Mar	Ch. 9f	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?) Bobby finds out Timson is about to be signed by the studio , making it a sure thing he'll get the part. Unless, that is, he betrays Timson -- he thinks.	Bobby
17 Mar	Ch. 9g	2d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby. Bobby caves and betrays Timson.	Bobby

Thus I'll work on the scene after that, Bobby's monologue in front of Dick Overbeck.

6 Aug 99

Having said I would skip writing 9c, I promptly started writing it. I seem to have a lot of unconscious strategies for getting around roadblocks.

I'm not too wild about what I wrote; it seems a little clichéd, a little forced. But I did manage 800 words. I suppose I should be grateful for that and for not being stuck. I'll take it up again today.

The reason I went ahead with the scene, I think, is that I wanted to know what happens in it, and then transition into a dialogue between Gene and Bobby on the way up to L.V. This conversation would be the basis for part of Bobby's monologue in the next scene.

11 Aug 99

Not a bad day -- 1400 words. I finished up the scene in the poetry reading and I went right into the next scene, Bobby's monologue on stage the next Saturday. I invented a bit about a butcher whose beatnik nephew works in the shop. It sounds more like an idea for a sketch than a comedy monologue but it's okay. As for the scene in the poetry reading, I think it ends too fast. I'll probably have to go back and open it up a little.

It's Wednesday and I really do need to do more this week. My pace has fallen off in the last few weeks, only working about one day a week. That's not enough. July was only about 7500 words when I'm aiming for 10 or 12 thousand. August so far has been only 2200. If I really try hard and push myself a little, I can finish Part I before the end of the month (which is also the end of my Pac Bell Directory gig). I know I can.

16 Aug 99

So I'm here in the middle of 9d:

Ch. 9a	Bobby in Philly's office	Bobby
Ch. 9b	Coincidental meeting with Dick Overbeck	Bobby
Ch. 9c	Gene and Dana, on an expedition to find the beatniks, make an expedition to a poetry reading	Gene
Ch. 9d	Bobby monologue on stage, Saturday night	Begins by riffing on beatniks etc. Dick Overbeck is in the audience

Ch. 9e	After the monologue, Bobby goes to sit with Overbeck. Overbeck tells him Sinatra won't be involved in the film , negating the influence of his "favor."	Bobby also realizes how he's been manipulated. This provides him with a rationale for betraying Timson.
Ch. 10a	Additional attempts by Bobby to influence MN casting (?)	
Ch. 10b	Bobby finds out Timson is about to be signed by the studio, making it a sure thing he'll get the part. Unless, that is, he betrays Timson -- he thinks.	
Ch. 10c	2d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby. Bobby caves and betrays Timson.	This sets up the next scene - now Bobby needs validation from Frank.
Ch. 11a	Last trip to LV on Friday, 18 March.	See Bobby from Gene's POV as he goes from the FBI interview to the scene with Sinatra. -- Bobby tense. May refer back to the discussion about reds with Sammy.
	Bobby finds out that "Make Nice for Daddy" won't even be made. Instead they'll make another Norman Krasna script "Let's Make Love" with Marilyn and Timson.	Sure, there's a great part for you -- only Tony Randall's getting it.

... and I'm thinking, first of all, why not combine the two events listed above as 9e and 10b? Why not have it be part of the same conversation between Bobby and Dick Overbeck? Why draw it out?

Only two reasons. The weaker reason is that I want to use more scenes of Bobby and Gene driving around bonding. The stronger reason is that Dick Overbeck is literally a non-entity. A scene with him is a bore. For him to deliver two huge pieces of news doesn't make sense at all.

Then I thought, okay, why not have Sinatra walk in during the conversation? Or better yet, why not have him come on stage during Bobby's act? No, I think just have him come in during the conversation with Overbeck. Him and his entourage. Then Bobby, in a froth, can go backstage and give Timson to the FBI. So it would look more like this:

Ch. 9d	Bobby monologue on stage, Saturday night	Begins by riffing on beatniks etc. Dick Overbeck is in the audience
Ch. 9e	After the monologue, Bobby goes to sit with Overbeck. Overbeck tells him: □ Sinatra won't be involved in the film, and that □ Timson is about to be signed by the studio, making it a sure thing he'll get the part. Unless, that is, he betrays Timson -- he thinks.	Bobby also realizes how he's been manipulated. This provides him with a rationale for betraying Timson.
Ch. 9f	2d scene of FBI pressure on Bobby. Bobby caves and betrays Timson.	This sets up the next scene - now Bobby needs validation from Frank.
.....		
Ch. 11a	Last trip to LV on Friday, 18 March.	See Bobby from Gene's POV as he goes from the FBI interview to the scene with Sinatra. -- Bobby tense. May refer back to the discussion about reds with Sammy.
	Bobby finds out that "Make Nice for Daddy" won't even be made. Instead they'll make another Norman Krasna script "Let's Make Love" with Marilyn and Timson.	Sure, there's a great part for you -- only Tony Randall's getting it.

Ch. 11b	Sinatra-Bobby conversation, plays up Bobby's low status. "You blew your chance a long time ago." Bobby does betray Gene somehow -- perhaps to look good for Sinatra -- "Get out of here."	Sinatra is drunk? Why not..
Ch. 11c	To make it up with Gene, Bobby gets him laid by a call girl.	
Ch. 11d	Bobby on stage, Sat. 19 March	
Ch. 11e	Sun, Mar 20 -- end of LV trips.	End of Part I

In between the end of that chapter and the final sequence of part I, I would have to emphasize Gene's story and keep building the tension, if there is any, about his romantic relationship. Something tells me I'll have to completely forget about Sinatra and the gang while I write that part.

17 Aug 99

I was in a bookstore yesterday and picked up a MM bio ("Marilyn Monroe" by Barbara Leaming) that has an extensive section on the provenance of, and making of, *Let's Make Love*. This is more information than I need or want, of course, and it will not agree in any way with what I'm writing in "Make Nice." But I will try to get it at the library and read through it once. One thing I noted was that Jerry Wald was not, as I presumed, an anonymous drone (see 15 Jul 99 above), but the model for the protagonist of a famous Hollywood novel, "What Makes Sammy Run?" So I called Bernal Books and ordered that. It ought to have a wealth of detail for me -- lots of restaurant names, etc. -- unless it's set too early. (Later: oops, it was actually published in 1941.)

And looking at the changes to the outline I made yesterday, I think they're really right on. Chapter 10 will be mostly about Gene. The danger of doing this is that it interrupts the building tension of Bobby's plot line. But I have to develop Gene's plot line more, not to mention his character, and I can't think of any other way to do it right now. I'll worry about all this when I'm done with the big scenes in chapter 9.

18 Aug 99

I'm ready to write the turning-point scene between Bobby and Dick Overbeck and Sinatra -- well, maybe Sinatra won't be there after all. I got a couple of good ideas.

One thing is, I've been a little troubled for the last few weeks about the whole thing that's happening to Bobby. Why should Sinatra go through this whole bait-and-switch thing with the Krasna scripts and let Bobby dangle in the wind? The answer, I realized, is that they have to do it to attract certain players to the project. It's not just Bobby on the line, it's Jerry Wald and some investors. Sinatra plus MM is the bait, and they'll wind up with MM anyway. So the reason the whole affair has this cloak-and-dagger aspect is this need to attract more important people than Bobby, while Bobby's interest simply helps maintain the illusion.

The other idea is not to have Sinatra come in to the scene. I can humanize Overbeck by having him identify with Bobby and say "we're both plotzers" or whatever the Yiddish word should be (is there a web site for Yiddish?). Besides, I have the feeling Sinatra wouldn't deliver bad news himself; he'd leave it to a minion. (But is Overbeck a minion? Maybe this should have been Hank Sanicola all the time.)

19 Aug 99

Going slowly. 560 words yesterday, 270 the day before. I'm writing in the afternoon (at work) instead of the morning because I spend the morning on my job search.

Later: 1000 words today -- most of the big scene between Bobby and Dick Overbeck. Thought it went well. Not quite finished.

23 Aug 99

I finished that chapter, finally, on Friday the 20th at the end of the day, with the scene between Bobby and the FBI in his dressing room, where he betrays Timson in an attempt to undermine his chances at a role in *Make Nice*. The chapter took four weeks to write, on and off, and is 9000 words long! I suppose I should be glad that I'm keeping to my goal of about 10,000 words a month, but jeez, a 9000-word chapter!

Now I have two more chapters to go before the end of the "first part" -- although at this rate the "first part" is already going to be book-length. I don't know what the total count is now, though it would be easy to check on the computer.

Of the two chapters, 10 and 11, which remain in Part I, 11 is partially outlined, but 10 is entirely blank. All I know is that I want to spend a lot of time with Gene building up the the dramatic tension on his plot line. Aside from what I've written in this notes file in the last few weeks, I don't have much of an idea of what happens. But it'll come. I feel this book is somehow charmed, that it'll get finished without any huge problems. Of course, I'm still in the relatively early stages.

It's funny how huge Part I has turned out to be, in terms of how it seems to me now compared with the simple notion of an "early climax" that I had way back before I had written a word. Part I now looms as large as a mountain. It doesn't matter that the next two mountains are even larger; I can hardly even see them from here.

The biggest problem is going to be dealing with the middle of the book, for which I have exactly two ideas: the Democratic Convention for the Rat Pack, and a summer in Las Vegas for Gene. Aside from that, who knows.

As far as ch. 10 is concerned, I just noticed that on 2 Jun 99 I "brainstormed" this for chapter 7:

Mar 12 -- Late Saturday afternoon March 12 after Dolores gets off work?	There also has to be at least one scene between Gene and Dolores -- perhaps something that gives him the idea that she'll sleep with him the <i>next</i> time he comes up - this is part of the rising action in the section for him	(but of course she never will sleep with him)	She comes back to Gene's room pretending she forgot something. He puts on a play for her appealing to her sympathetic nature. She acts all sympathetic and comforts him. He thinks it will lead to their sleeping together.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I never used that bit in the last column, instead writing a more realistic and somewhat inconclusive scene that was groundwork for a further exploration of the relationship. But now I can put that in chapter 10.

I had a thought a few days ago about the almost-climactic moment in ch. 11 -- the place where Bobby has to tell Gene to shut up and go out to the car. Gene has twice now (in ch. 1 and ch. 8) saved the day by piping up when people least expect it. So he pushes his luck in ch. 11 (BTW, Sinatra is present each time) and goes too far. It makes Sinatra get mad and Bobby has to tell him to shut up and get out.

Because there are still a couple of scenes after that, this has to happen in like the second scene of ch. 11.

(Typically, I'm getting ahead of myself and figuring out a later chapter to keep from working on the chapter I should be working on. But doing so helps down the road. A lot of what I've written so far has been worked out in advance over months. A lot of the rest, of course, comes out of the blue, like the whole Dolores character, the scene between Bobby and Sammy in ch. 8, the scene in Philly's office at the beginning of ch. 9. This mixture of planning and spontaneity has served me well so far. The farther in I get, though, the more carefully I'll have to control the spontaneity. Nobody needs new major characters in the last third.)

26 Aug 99

Planning for ch. 10. First I wrote in the outline "breakup scene between Gene and Dana." Then I changed it to "make-up scene" because I wanted there to be tension in ch. 11 when Gene sleep with the showgirl. Then I looked back at what I wrote in notes earlier this month and realized the his relationship with Dana is not the source of the tension anyway -- it's his hopes for his relationship with Dolores. So I changed it back to "breakup." First they're gonna make up, then they're gonna break up, who wrote the Book of Love?!

I also wrote this:

Sat 12 Mar	Dolores and Gene on Saturday	She barges in his room as usual but is surprised to see him not there. She begins cleaning and then he barges in on her, scaring her.
	Dolores and Gene later	She comes back to Gene's room pretending she forgot something. He puts on a play for her appealing to her sympathetic nature. She acts all sympathetic and comforts him. He thinks it will lead to their sleeping together.

Then I realized there's no reason to show all this. I can open with them having lunch, and cover all the above in a paragraph or so.

I thought perhaps on the last trip -- i.e. the one covered in ch. 11, not ch. 10 which is what I'm planning now - - Gene could splurge a little and get a room at the Holiday Inn or something instead of the crappy little motel where Dolores works. The reason is not just to splurge but to have a pool to take Dolores swimming in.

Would the Holiday Inn allow a Chicano girl to swim in the pool? Good question. Maybe I can make something of that.

In any case, having a room at an acceptable motel makes it more likely that the show girl would fuck him in his room, setting up a conflict with Dolores. Not that they would actually run into each other, but maybe after the swim Dolores goes back to his room to change and finds something she left behind.

I don't know why I keep saying "show girl." It's a call girl.

Later -- I reworked the outline of the last two chapters of part I (again) and came up with about 10 different scenes (again!). Seems like no matter how much I write I come up with 10 scenes to go! (Compare the entry for 24 May 99.)

27 Aug 99

Arrghh, I just can't get started on chapter 10. I think I know where I want to start, then I just sit there. Meanwhile I just wrote Anna Hiller a bunch of stuff on how to get started on a novel.

30 Aug 99

I got to work on chapter 10 soon after arriving at the phone company this morning. Finally got off the dime by starting with Gene walking around Las Vegas thinking about the state of his relationship with Dana, although I tried to keep from using the word "relationship" because I don't think people used the word in 1960 like that. It would have sounded incredibly stuffy. I don't think people really started using it to describe their ... well, there really isn't any synonym except "marriage" or "engagement" which is why we started using the word in the early 70s, I guess.

I tried to score a few comic points but I think it'll be punched up later. Meanwhile I'm all set to launch into the scene with Dolores which is 10b.

My time at the phone company may be coming to a close after all. I am interviewing on Wednesday at a company called Commerce One. It's in Walnut Creek, which is a little closer than Pleasanton. So these long days of doing absolutely nothing but working on this book (or avoiding working on it) may be growing short. In fact, the people at the phone company still haven't given me a formal contract extension yet or even reacted to my proposal.

So I may be heading into another period where I don't have much time or energy to work on this -- unless I surprise myself again and make myself do work in an environment I'm not used to working in, such as the BART train out to Walnut Creek.

31 Aug 99

900 words yesterday, and today I sat right down and continued into 10b -- another 1050 words.

19 Oct 99

This is the first day since 31 August that I've opened my files for this book. During that time I got the job at the company in Walnut Creek, and I've been there since 8 September. So needless to say, my production during September was zero, and my production so far in October is zero. I didn't finish the first part before quitting the phone company job, and I don't even know where I am in the book. But a look at the outline will fix that.

I have been thinking about the book, and I also saw a four-episode cable TV Rat Pack documentary. Most of the information, if not the images, I'd already been exposed to. But there was one piece of info that was very valuable. Joey Bishop ascended to the Rat Pack when he filled in for an absent speaker at a celebrity roast of Sinatra sometime in 1959. They had met before -- he had actually opened for Sinatra in Vegas before -- but Sinatra had not really been aware of Bishop until the roast. There, by virtue of his low seniority, Bishop was the last speaker in a long line of roasters before Sinatra got up to make his reply. And apparently he got up and made much of his low seniority and the fact he had spent the whole banquet behind a potted palm at the last seat on the dias, etc. As a result of this *tour de force*, Sinatra tapped him for membership in his circle.

That would be a good thing to try to research. Fortunately the L.A. Times is on microfilm at the SF Public Library, not that I know when I'll have time to research it. I guess I just have to pile up a lot of research questions.

Hooray, I wrote 187 words on the train on the way home! -- the end of 10b. Maybe this will work after all.

22 Oct 99

318 words on Wednesday, the beginning of 10c -- though I'm not sure I'll keep it. But like most intuitive starts on this book, I probably will.

8 Jan 01

Hello there. It's more than a year since I worked on this book. Now I'm between jobs again, so I turned back to it -- and wrote 500 words, finishing up 10c.

I've got three weeks before the end of the month. Can I finish Part I finally?

9 Jan 01

Today my task is to finish chapter 10 with the breakup scene between Gene and Dana.

Gene has started reading "The Dharma Bums," and is more into the beatniks than ever, although all the crypto-Buddhist stuff blows his mind. I think I'll have him use some crypto-Buddhist bullshit in his argument with Dana, although not only will he get nowhere with it, she will get even angrier.

I'm feeling the need for more 1960 culture. Maybe I'll go to the library today and read more 1959 and 1960 magazines.

I was reading through chapters 8-10 yesterday, and I realized: this writing isn't that good! I'll really have to rewrite the whole book when I'm done. Well, writers have done that. Katia rewrote her book four times, and is starting yet another draft -- at least of a part of it.

She inspires me. That's one reason I'm getting back to this book.

Gene and Dana breakup scene, brainstorming.

public or private place? Perhaps Gene decides to force matters and gets Dana up in his room. Or perhaps *she* decides to force matters and goes home with him, but they have an argument before anything can happen. Sounds unlikely that she'd go to his shitty room, really.

Is there any other private place? Despite Bobby's invitation, I don't think it's too likely that they'd go to his house for a swim again. Or have an argument there.

Therefore it has to happen on a regular date. Say at a movie theater. That's very likely since we know they go to movies together.

Is there anything else they generally do besides go to movies? It's not likely he'll get her to another poetry reading! It's still too early in the year to go to the beach, and they can't go during the week anyway because she's at work.

10 Jan 01

Idea for 10d: Gene and Dana are on their way to a movie but never get there. Their argument happens during their trip on the bus, they are late for the movie, they can't get coffee, everything goes wrong. The argument flows across the city like a gun battle during a chase scene, only at slow motion, and the action of their breakup is contained not so much in what they say or their differing positions but in the fact they can't communicate, can't get to where they're going, can't do anything right. They're finished.

Can I have something in that scene that's a parallel to what happened to Bobby -- some parallel of his betrayal of Timson?

And by the way, it occurs to me that I need to load the betrayal more. Right now, the reader would probably see it as, why not, he's in Bobby's way, only an extremely moral person would hesitate, and Bobby just seems like a nice guy, not so much like an extremely moral person. So we have to put something in between ch. 6 and 9 that relates why Bobby actually cares about him.

Also I have to put in something that shows that Dana and Gene actually do make out once in a while, as I say at the beginning of ch. 10, so that that graf doesn't come as a surprise.

13 Jan 01

I worked the last two days trying to finish ch. 10 with the breakup scene between Gene and Dana. I got a lot done, but in order to really finish it, I feel like I have to know what movie they go to see and where the movie theater is. Otherwise it's just too difficult to envision.

In any case, I'm going to put that aside, until I get a chance to go to the library and dig up the LA Times for that date, 16 March 1960. I'm going to turn my attention to chapter 11, the last chapter in part 1. My plan is to

spend my time between now and the end of the month, when supposedly I'll have another job, finishing this part. Then I'll have something to show for my "furlough."

A lot happens in this chapter. Right now the outline looks like this:

18 Mar	Ch. 11a	Last trip to LV on Friday, 18 March. Gene gets a room at the Riviera instead of the crappy motel	Gene	See Bobby from Gene's POV as he goes to the scene with Sinatra. -- Bobby tense. May refer back to the discussion about reds with Sammy.
	Ch. 11b	Conversation with Philly, who is in town. Bobby finds out that "Make Nice for Daddy" won't even be made. Instead they'll make "Let's Make Love" with Marilyn and Timson.	Bobby	"Sure, there's a great part for you -- only Tony Randall's getting it."
19 Mar	Ch. 11c	Sinatra-Bobby conversation, plays up Bobby's low status. "You blew your chance a long time ago." Bobby does betray Gene somehow -- perhaps to look good for Sinatra -- "Get out of here."	Gene	Sinatra is drunk? Why not..
19 Mar	Ch. 11d	To make it up with Gene, Bobby gets him laid by a call girl.	3d person	
19-20 Mar	Ch. 11e	Bobby on stage, Sat. 19 March		Any chance of Gene witnessing this? Perhaps Bobby got him seats and he watches the show with the prostitute?
	Ch. 11f	Dolores comes over for the swimming date -- discovers some sign of the call girl		
20 Mar	Ch. 11g	Both Bobby and Gene extremely dejected, they drive back to L.A.		Return from LV -- end of LV trips

That's a lot of action to happen in one chapter, and I'm afraid that loading it up like that beforehand will just make me split it up into two chapters and *still* not have part 1 finished in two weeks. But if I use discipline, I should be able to succeed.

For one thing, 11a and 11b, as above, can merge into one sustained scene. In fact, if I tell it all in first person from Bobby's p.o.v., I can merge 11a through 11d into a single long sequence without a space break. Then 11e through 11g can be another long sequence without much of a break.

Let's say each of those two long sequences are between 4000 and 7000 words. That's a long-ass chapter. But in any case, if I have 21 days to work between now and Feb. 2, that's an average of 1000-1500 a day, which I can do easily once I get going. The important thing is to work every single day.

So my first challenge should be to get things going for the first sequence. It's Saturday afternoon while I'm writing this, a splendid Saturday in which I've already taken a long walk. I also made online reservations to go down to the L.A. area for some research on Feb. 2 -- got really cheap plane fare and hotel.

By the way, I was doing a little search and noticed that Frankie Vaughn, the doppelgänger of my "Donny Timson" character, died in 1999. This from the *New York Times*, 29 Sep 1999:

Frankie Vaughn, 71, Singer From Britain

Frankie Vaughan, a crooner who appealed to audiences in the United States as well as in his native England, died on Sept. 17. He was 71.

He had undergone surgery for a heart problem this year.

The singer, who had hits with "The Green Door" and "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine," also acted in movies. He appeared in "Let's Make Love" in 1960, performing a musical number with Marilyn Monroe.

Mr. Vaughan was born Frank Abelson in Liverpool, England, on Feb. 3, 1928. He turned to show business after studying at Leeds College of Art. He auditioned as a singer, landed a week's work at a music hall, and then started his career on the British variety circuit. His signature tune, "Give Me the Moonlight," led to his nickname among fans, "Mr. Moonlight."

He went on to star at the major British theaters, where he became a familiar figure in his customary top hat and tails. He also had hit cabaret shows in Las Vegas, Nev., and at New York's Copacabana. He continued to perform on the theatrical circuit in later years, appeared frequently on television specials and starred in a 1985 London production of the musical "42d Street."

Mr. Vaughan was made an Officer in the Order of British Empire in 1965 and a Commander of the same order in 1997.

He is survived by his wife, Stella, a daughter and two sons.

I was thinking about just changing the name of my character to the name of this guy -- they're pretty similar. But the whole subplot with the red scare and Albert Maltz is pretty realistic, and I don't want to mess that up by claiming that Frankie Vaughn was ever under suspicion of being a communist.

The only interesting thing is that his original last name was Abelson. A Jew! Perhaps Bobby can make something of that.

I'm sitting here trying to think how to start the chapter. Do I want them in the car on the way to Vegas, so I can have some space for Bobby's internal monologue before things start happening? Or do I want to start with them checking into the Riviera? (Gene is checking in too.)

I think I want to start with a conversation between them in the car. So that Gene can tell Bobby's that he and Dana have broken up. This gives Bobby the opportunity to suggest some "companionship" for Gene; if Dana was still going with him, he wouldn't. But seeing as how he feels partly responsible for their breakup, he wants to make it up to Gene.

But according to my outline, he does it in order to make up his "betrayal" of Gene in front of Sinatra. I think I better stick to that. But I'll have them talk about the breakup in the car so that Bobby will have that knowledge.

Okay, I finally got off the dime. Didn't really start writing until after 3:00 and worked for a couple of hours, but I got 11a done, at 1370 words.

20 Jan 2001

I worked intermittently this week, not getting as far as I could have. I did 11a one day, did 11b on two different days after that. Finally I did 11c on Thursday evening.

The whole time I was working toward the place in 11c where this bit of dialogue -- which I originally wrote in this notes file in the very early days of thinking about this book -- was supposed to appear:

Scene: Frank Sinatra tells Bobby, "This isn't your big chance! You're 40 years old! Your big chance was probably when you were 25, and you blew it, I don't know what it was but you must

have blown it, because here you are at 40 still playing the Lounge at the Sands and still getting shit parts like this one. No, a big chance would be if I pick this kid here" and he turns to Gene "and put *him* in the movie. That'd be his big chance. Your big chance happened so long ago that you'd need a history book to see it."

Gene: "Will you really put me in the movie?"

Sinatra: "No, kid, that was just an example. Who are you anyway?"

"I'm Mr. Blaine's driver."

"His driver! Get outta here!"

Dean Martin, laughing: "Looks like you just blew your big chance, kid."

(entry of 15 Nov 97)

However, once I was on final approach to that bit, the scene didn't have the same emotional mood that I expected. Instead of an angry argument, it is all said in jest – of course, in a passive-aggressive way in the context of a larger subtextual discussion about the movie that didn't get made and the pathetic state of Bobby's career. And at the end of the conversation, sort of to make Bobby feel better, Frank says to Dean, "Hey, let's join Bobby on stage for the second show tonight." Which of course simply draws more attention to the fact that Bobby can't make it on his own.

I was a little unsure of what to make of all this, but I'm going to try to go forward assuming it's a good idea. I like Frank acting like a loose cannon and messing up everybody's plans, including mine.

24 Jan 01

There have been many times when I've written in these notes, as a preparation for working on the next scene or chapter, "Today I'll write such-and-such with such-and-such approach" and then proceed to do something completely different. 20 Jan was such a day. Having said I was going to try to go ahead and write the scene with the change I made to the outline in the previous session, I quickly changed the scene back to the way I'd planned it by making the confrontation between Frank and Bobby less convivial and having Frank stay angry at the end. Then I wrote the remainder of the scene that way. It's so much easier. Otherwise I would really have had difficulty doing any of the scenes in the rest of the chapter the way I'd imagined. I did, however, take the false start and save it in the "cut things" file.

Then I was distracted all weekend by other projects. I started a new boy-boy story for the new Cleis book (still haven't decided on a title; they wanted "Incest," I decided on "Rut," but they didn't like that).

Today I'll get back to chapter 11. Who knows, with a lot of energy maybe I can get a lot done.

25 Jan 01

I wrote a short scene I hadn't planned on, in which Bobby kicks the FBI agents out of his dressing room. It seemed like the right thing to do at the time.

So adding that to the outline of the chapter, chapter 11 now looks like this:

18 Mar	Ch. 11a	Last trip to LV on Friday, 18 March. Gene gets a room at the Riviera instead of the crappy motel	Bobby	Bobby tense. May refer back to the discussion about reds with Sammy. Gene tells Bobby about breakup with Dana.
	Ch. 11b	Conversation with Philly, who is in town. Bobby finds out that "Make Nice for Daddy" won't even be made. Instead they'll make "Let's Make Love" with Marilyn and Timson.	Bobby	"Sure, there's a great part for you -- only Donhy Timson's getting it."

18 Mar	Ch. 11c	Sinatra-Bobby conversation, plays up Bobby's low status. "You blew your chance a long time ago." Bobby does betray Gene somehow -- perhaps to look good for Sinatra -- "Get out of here."	Bobby	Sinatra is drunk? Why not.
18 Mar	Ch. 11d	Bobby kicks the FBI agents out of dressing room		
19 Mar	Ch. 11e	To make it up with Gene, Bobby gets him laid by a call girl.	Bobby	
19-20 Mar	Ch. 11f	Bobby on stage, Sat. 19 March	Gene	Any chance of Gene witnessing this? Perhaps Bobby got him seats and he watches the show with the prostitute?
	Ch. 11g	Dolores comes over for the swimming date -- discovers some sign of the call girl	Gene	
20 Mar	Ch. 11h	Both Bobby and Gene extremely dejected, they drive back to L.A.	Gene	Return from LV -- end of LV trips

I'm no longer too sure about f and h anymore. I put in f because I thought it would balance the end of the section. But I don't think I need to do that at this point. We'll see. And I have no idea what h will consist of – I just want to show them coming back from Vegas in defeat.

Although – I just had a thought – perhaps I should show Bobby coming back alone. The question is, what effect does 11g have on everything? I think I just planned 11e-g to set up a big conflict between Gene and Dolores.. But if I really want Gene to spend the summer in Las Vegas, then why have a conflict at all? Why not just have her come over for the swimming date and have Gene decide to spend the summer in Vegas? After all, he's already pissed at Bobby – there's no big reason for him to come back.

Well, of course, he has to get his stuff. But just the same, I think I should have him cement his relationship with Dolores on Saturday, 19 March.

So I'll eliminate 11e and f, go right to the swimming date and whatever follows, then to the return to L.A.

29 Jan 01

On 25 Jan, working in the Muddy Waters café while the rain poured down, I got to the end of chapter 11. The chapter ended up looking like this:

18 Mar	Ch. 11a	Last trip to LV on Friday, 18 March. Gene gets a room at the Riviera instead of the crappy motel		Bobby tense. May refer back to the discussion about reds with Sammy. Gene tells Bobby about breakup with Dana.
	Ch. 11b	Conversation with Philly, who is in town. Bobby finds out that "Make Nice for Daddy" won't even be made. Instead they'll make "Let's Make Love" with Marilyn and Timson.		"Sure, there's a great part for you -- only Donny Timson's getting it."

	Ch. 11c	Sinatra-Bobby conversation, plays up Bobby's low status. "You blew your chance a long time ago." Bobby does betray Gene somehow -- perhaps to look good for Sinatra -- "Get out of here."	Bobby	Sinatra is drunk? Why not.
	Ch. 11d	Bobby kicks the FBI guys out of his dressing room		
18 Mar	Ch. 11e	Gene after "banishment" plays slot machines		
19 Mar	Ch. 11f	Dolores comes over for the swimming date	Gene	
20 Mar	Ch. 11g	Bobby and Gene on the drive back to L.A.		End of LV trips. Gene tells Bobby he's going to summer in Vegas.

I eliminated the bit about Bobby getting Gene a hooker to make up for his treatment in 11c, I invented an aftermath (11e) for Gene, and I made 11f into an incident in which the Riviera kicks Gene and Dolores out of the pool because she's not white. This fits nicely into one of the subplots in the book, that of racism, which we see in the chapter where Bobby and Sammy talk next to the pool at the Sands, and will see later on the night of the opening of the Democratic Convention.

11g seemed a little slim, and I want to go back today and polish the last part of the chapter a little. I need to get this out of the way. Mentally, I'm already in Part 2.

On Saturday the 27th I sat down for several hours and went through the first nine chapters, cleaning up a couple details and making notes on what blanks to fill in.

I've been telling friends that I'm just about done with Part 1 and they are all properly excited. As am I.

31 Jan 01

I handed copies of Part 1 to Cris, Sara and Katia, mailed a copy to Christine, and set one aside for the Cleis babes.

Now it's time to start thinking about Part 2.

Here are the situations at the end of Part 1:

Bobby hasn't gotten a part in any upcoming movie. He does have gigs in Reno and Vegas in May. No doubt there will be more throughout the summer, here and there.

Gene has broken up with Dana and something has happened to get his romance with Dolores really started. He has told Bobby he's going to move to Las Vegas for the summer.

I need to decide what happened between Gene and Dolores after they were kicked out of the swimming pool. I think what happened is that they had a nice time doing something after all, and something happened between them that brought the romance out into the open. They did not fuck of course, but they do kiss. In any case, I need to account for the 32 hours or so between them leaving the pool and Gene meeting Bobby at the Riv. All I've really established is that he didn't spend Saturday night at the Riv; no doubt he went back to the Cactus – NOT with Dolores.

In a way I wish I had gone ahead with Bobby getting a hooker for him, just because that would have been fun to write, and I also want the poor guy to get laid sooner or later. But we'll see what happens later.

Anyway, in Part 2, I've already thought about the following things happening:

Gene spends the rest of the spring and the summer in Las Vegas; through Bobby's help he gets a job at one of the hotels, let's say a job better than parking cars. He gets a little dumpy apartment to stay in – not much better than his room in Hollywood and certainly less smelly. And hot in the summer, of course.

The real action that takes place during this period is that he grows up some more, takes on some real responsibility. Perhaps he finds himself in a situation vis-à-vis Dolores and her family like my situation vis-à-vis Cris – he finds himself helping to support them in some way. He has this uncertain situation which eventually, through some event I don't know yet, becomes less uncertain – basically he becomes her novía. But he has some conflict around this too. I want to explore race, so the obvious thing to do is explore race in a subtle way – the fact that she's Mexican makes him a little leery. Also he still has his lying thing going. These and other threads lead up to a conflict.

As for Bobby, he has no movie, and he drifts away, to some degree, from the Rat Pack. (There is no account, that I've found, of him taking part in the whole Democratic Convention scene.) He is not invited to be part of the public face of the Hollywood-Washington cluster fuck, but somehow he is in a position to observe it. We get to explore racial themes here too, of course. Perhaps Bobby also has some conflicts around race, or simply about whether or not to take a stand around the issue. What stand, what situation, I don't know, but it would have to have something to do with the setting, i.e. the Demo convention.

I have to wind up Part 2 leading into Part 3, which is the final Bobby-Gene road trip: they are going to pick up Marilyn Monroe in Henderson, where they're shooting *The Misfits*, and take her to the Cal-Neva in Lake Tahoe. That means Part 2 has to wind up with Bobby being asked to do this errand by Sinatra. This means that Sinatra has to re-establish contact with Bobby toward the end of Part 2.

Perhaps what takes place is that Bobby somehow resolves the "conflict" by taking some kind of stand, which Sinatra notices, and comes and thanks Bobby, and asks him to do one more favor.

9 Sep 2001

Funny, I started my laptop on the plane on Friday just so I could write down an idea I'd had for "Make Nice." Then I forgot to put it down. I remembered it today. I'm at the Phoenix airport UAL member club. They have cubes here you can actually sit and work! Also yogurt. And the check-in people put me on an earlier flight without a change fee. This rocks.

Anyway, the idea for "Make Nice." It's like the first solid idea I've had for Part 2 since I suspended working on the book during the winter so I could write porn for Cleis. I knew I wanted -- Jesus, what's his name? -- Gene to spend the summer in Las Vegas. I had a vague idea of him getting a job parking cars at the casino. It would make sense since it's what he has experience in. But something was keeping me from being very enthusiastic about that. On Friday, I got a much better idea. Let's say he does go out there with the idea of parking cars -- an idea as vague as mine. But what he actually does is get a job working at the same dumpy motel as Dolores works at -- the one run by the Swede who shot a protective look at him and Dolores. He gets a job as the night man or something like that -- in any case, a job in the office. Because of lucky timing. Perhaps he makes positive changes at the place, who knows. It's not really about the motel business (although there's not much I know about mom n' pop motels in 1960 and I certainly could use some education about it) but I could have a little bit there.

This has several advantages that are immediately obvious. It gives him a place to stay, it brings him into constant contact with Dolores, and it provides an opportunity to show a part of Las Vegas that is a different world than the Strip.

I found out a couple of weeks ago that someone I know at church, Mari Irvin, actually lived in Las Vegas in 1960. The guy who gave us a ride back from the airport also did. And he offered to have me talk to someone else he knows whom he said could really be helpful. I have to follow up on that now that work on the TB additions is done.

1 Jan 02 -- Sonoma County, Calif.

I'm at the Doubletree hotel in a place called Rohnert Park, which is between Petaluma and Santa Rosa. I wanted to go to Bishop's Ranch for the week, but they are closed around New Year's. In fact, it would have been very convenient, not to mention cheaper, because on Friday the 4th, I really am going to Bishop's Ranch for a congregational retreat. (Actually it will probably be about a dozen people from the congregation. It's really hard for them to get people for these things. People don't want to spend a whole weekend out of town doing one thing, no matter how much time and money and devotion they lavish on that church.) But Bishop's Ranch is not open until the 3rd.

I arranged late check-out at the hotel, so actually I'll be able to spend all day of the 4th writing at the hotel and still only be charged for three nights: I was very impressed that they will allow me to check out at 6:00 p.m. Also, the hotel is excellent, a veritable resort in fact. The only thing wrong was that they had "energy saving fluorescent" lightbulbs in the lamps, and these cast a ghastly, bluish, dim light. I marched right out, drove across the freeway, and bought some ordinary hundred-watt lightbulbs at a WalMart. Much better!

So, I'm here, all caught up on my journal, it's just 5:00, and I have 72 hours in which to work on my novel. I'm going to keep all notes in this journal file, and when they pertain to the novel, I'll copy them over to the "Notes" file that belongs to the novel, the file where I keep all brainstorming exercises, outlines, and notes on my progress. The Notes file is, itself, a journal of the creation of the novel, from the day I first got the idea through whatever point I am. I have a similar file for *How I Adore You*, though not as substantial, of course.

11:30 p.m. -- I spent the evening trying to take a nap and failing, then reading Part 1 -- not the entire thing, but the last two thirds of it. Sara had counselled me that after I read what I had, some ideas would start falling into place. And Cris and I talked about it a little bit when we were eating dinner; she had some good ideas for set pieces, like having Sinatra and some mobsters having dinner with Rose Kennedy.

So after reading it again for the first time in several months, I'm cheered by the shape it's in, cognizant of the fact that it's going to take some sharpening, but generally pleased by what I have so far. Now for Part 2.

Back in 1999 when I was working steadily on Part 1, I wrote:

One major fact which I've missed til now, though, and which will actually help me with the ending, is the fact that the Democratic convention occurred in Los Angeles in July 1960, and Marilyn and JFK did a lot of fucking there, and then she went off to shoot "The Misfits." And the Rat Pack was all over the place, they even sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" to open the convention. I ought to be able to make a lot of hay there, although I may have to alter the time line a little. I'm still planning on the central event of the final act being that Bobby and Gene pick up Marilyn from the set of "The Misfits" and take her by car back to L.A. -- some ostensible mission of mercy which Sinatra has sent Bobby on. Invaluable to this whole section is the account in "Peter Lawford: the Man Who Kept the Secrets" by James Spada:

In July, (JFK) came into the Democratic National Convention with victories in all seven of the primaries he had entered, and he was just sixty-one votes short of the nomination. Serendipitously, the convention was held in the Los Angeles Sports Arena, putting Kennedy's show business supporters smack in the middle of the action. The night before the convention's July 11 opening, the Democratic Party staged a hundred-dollar-a-plate fund-raiser at the Beverly Hilton Hotel attended by twenty-eight hundred people. The Rat Pack and other of Hollywood's biggest names were present -- Judy Garland, Angie Dickinson, Milton Berle, Joe E. Lewis, George Jessel, Mort Sahl, Janet Leigh, and Tony Curtis among them.

Judy Garland sat at the head table next to the candidate; Frank Sinatra sat a few chairs down with some of the other presidential hopefuls -- Senators Lyndon Johnson of Texas and Stuart Symington of Missouri, and the potential draftee Adlai Stevenson.

The next day, Frank, Sammy, Dean, Peter, Janet Leigh, and Tony Curtis led the hundred thousand people jammed into the Sports Arena in a rousing rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" to open the convention. A few bars into the song, members of the Alabama delegation, seated close to the stage, began to heckle Sammy Davis with vicious racial epithets. His face burning with hurt and anger, Davis forced back tears. Sinatra tried to buck him up, whispering, "Those dirty sons of bitches. Don't let them get to you, Charlie!" Davis finished the song, but he didn't take his seat with the others once the convention was gavelled to order.

Alabama was one of the uncommitted delegations that Jack needed to guarantee a first-ballot victory. It was left to Peter to swallow his anger two days later and try to charm a group of men he considered bigots.... Throughout the week, Sinatra and the Rat Pack roamed the convention floor, ignoring barriers and restrictions, and cajoled recalcitrant delegates to join the Kennedy cause. Conscious of the cameras, Sinatra painted his bald pate black so it wouldn't be obvious under the TV lights.

After the first convention session, Jack Kennedy retired to his suite at the Beverly Hilton Hotel and spent some time with Judy Campbell. (Jackie had stayed home because she was six months pregnant and had a history of problem pregnancies.) Apparently Jack had never compared notes with Sinatra about Judy, because he tried, as Sinatra had, to talk her into a three-way -- "with a secretarial type in her late twenties," as Campbell recalled it. "I know you," Jack told her. "I know you'd like it." Just as she had with Sinatra, Judy refused.

For the rest of the convention, Jack Kennedy's sexual amusement was provided by Marilyn Monroe, who was preparing to begin work in Reno on "The Misfits," written by her husband, the playwright Arthur Miller.... The marriage had been in trouble for several years, and Marilyn was just emerging from an affair with the French singer and actor Yves Montand, the costar of her most recent film, "Let's Make Love."

... Now, with her marriage on the rocks, Marilyn was in Los Angeles without Miller, and Kennedy's large contingent of Hollywood supporters made her far less conspicuous in Kennedy's company than she might have been. The second night of the convention, Marilyn dined with Jack, Peter (Lawford) and Kennedy aide Kenneth O'Donnell at Puccini [restaurant co-owned by Sinatra].

Before dinner, Marilyn and Jack had apparently been intimate, because Marilyn giggled to Peter that Jack's performance earlier had been "very democratic" and "very penetrating." ...

As JFK was nominated:

The hall erupted once again, this time in acclamation for the nominee of the Democratic Party. Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack celebrated wildly, patted each other on the back, glad-handed strangers. "We're on our way to the White House, buddy boy," Sinatra yelled to Peter....

What's interesting in all that is the lack of mention of Joey Bishop, but the book is about Lawford, and the author clearly doesn't think much of Bishop. And in fact, it's better. I can put Bobby anywhere I want him in all those events. The scene between Davis and the Alabama delegation is unbelievable! You can't make up something like that.

But I'm getting way ahead of myself. I'm still in the middle of ch. 6 and I won't write about those events for weeks, if not months.

That reminds me of a lot of the stuff I want to put into Part 2. And I'm not worried at all about the way all the Rat Pack stuff will develop. I have Bobby's voice down pat, and I can rely on the historical record in part. It writes itself. It's Gene's part that's the hard part. Somehow I have to have him interact with Dolores and the whole issue of racism on the one hand and put him through a growing-up experience on the other hand.

Actually, I know from experience that if I just stick with the characters and have faith in them, continually sparking them off each other, they tell their own story, and all I have to do is listen. I've been able to do that to get through tough jobs like "How I Adore You" (the story) and "Quizzle" and "Incest" and "Ordinary Story," all of which bogged down in the middle while they were being written. What I need to do this week, in the three days I

have to work, is simply to create enough of a foundation for Gene and Dolores' story that I can easily pick it up and put it down as I continue working on the book this year. And hopefully finishing it this year, working on it twice a week, say.

One of the things I was reminding myself of, as I read Part 1, is Gene's whole interest in the Kerouac vision of Buddhism and Kerouac's own endemic "sadness," which he keeps mentioning over and over, especially in "On the Road." I think it's his version of the universal suffering which is at the heart of the Buddhist perspective on the world. Instead of saying everyone is suffering, he says everything is sad. And all the loneliness in his books is another way of stating it. The narrator's anguish at the misunderstandings between himself and Terry that almost prevent them from surrendering to each other -- that's the best example I can think of. (Of course it's all in "Desolation Angels" too, but I don't think I can cite that in 1960. "The Dharma Bums," yes.) I want to have Gene start to see things the same way, start to see the sadness and suffering in the world, through eyes that are new, courtesy of Dolores and her poor background. And at the Cactus Motel, where he gets a job, he encounters the hookers and gamblers and down-and-outers whose lives really are full of suffering. The poor in spirit. Even the Swede who owns the motel has TB, was sent to the desert for his lungs, but is not too good. So everything is in contrast to (and lies beneath) the glamorous world of Las Vegas that Bobby et al. supposedly represent (although we have already seen plenty of evidence that life for Bobby is also a struggle).

I don't know how I'll go back and forth between the two realities. It's important to note that Gene and Bobby are not together at all for most of Part 2; Gene is entirely in Las Vegas and Bobby is mostly in L.A., though he does have occasional gigs in Vegas (and other spots -- it's not too early to tip the reader to the Cal-Neva) and might talk to Gene at some point. If I do have them meet in Part 2, it shouldn't just be a passing meeting to get them together, it should be *necessary*, it should further both Bobby's and Gene's arcs in Part 2.

So I am thinking that most of what I should do here is write Gene's stuff. Get him established in Vegas, introduce some of Dolores' family or something. Get him the job at the Cactus and give him something to work for. Keep him on his spiritual quest, which he develops both by reading what he can and by experiencing some of the sadness around him; have him develop compassion. (Perhaps in later years he will turn into a real pace activist, and this is his training ground. Maybe that's too much. But those guys had to have some grounding.) Don't worry about the Democratic Convention stuff, that will be easy to outline.

I still really need to talk to that guy who is a friend of Mari Irvin's and was working in LV in 1960 to get the lowdown. But I'll have to start writing without having done so. (Something I should have done this fall. Christ, when did I meet him -- this summer sometime.)

So, it's late... Tomorrow I'll really start. Tonight all I'll do is make a new file for the beginning of Part 2 -- sort of putting the sheet of paper in the typewriter and typing "Chapter 12" on it.

2 Jan 02

Getting a start at 8:30 a.m. after a night of fairly fitful sleep... I did get some solid sleep from 5:00 to 8:00. The first night in a hotel is always tough, but I wasn't anxious about sleeping because I have no schedule at all. Just write. The only event of the day is when I have to be out of here when they clean the room, which they said would be around 1:00 or 2:00.

I got up, rinsed my face, and tried to meditate a little. Now I've ordered some breakfast, and I'll get to work meanwhile.

Let's make the first outline of Part 2.

Basically I have two parallel streams, Gene's and Bobby's.

Gene	Bobby
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<p>Gets a job briefly parking cars at a casino, then gets a job at the Cactus Motel</p> <p>Gets to know Dolores and her family and acquaintances</p> <p>Witnesses and starts to comprehend the challenges and depredations of living life in the working class</p> <p>Has to overcome some conflict that has sprung up... Something having to do with class and privilege and racism... But not something too didactic.</p> <p>And through this, becomes a man.</p>	<p>The whole idea here is to show that Bobby's career is becalmed and that he owes whatever success he has to Frank. Even the occasional gig subbing on the Tonight Show seems in jeopardy, dunno how.</p> <p>Meanwhile he witnesses the preparations by Frank et al. for the Democratic Convention in L.A. in July.</p> <p>Then we have the events of the convention itself, already partially outlined in the section above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JFK comes to Sinatra's house - A private dinner - The fundraiser on the night before the opening of the convention - 'Star Spangled Banner' at the opening of the convention - Lawford and Bobby among the Alabama delegation - The liaisons between JFK and Campbell, then Monroe, followed by the dinner in which Monroe pronounces JFK's performance as 'penetrating' - The votes culminating in JFK's nomination
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The whole second half -- it's probably more than half -- of the Bobby stream in Part 2 is already laid out -- writes itself. Getting it all going will be just a bit tougher, but not a problem.

The real challenge is obviously Gene. I do have an idea of the actions that need to take place at the beginning, though, and that's all I really need. Once I get going, things will develop... I'll just have to be patient and let things come, while thinking hard as I develop the section and steering everything for the biggest bang.

So let's work entirely on Gene while I'm here.

How to have the part open?

He's decided at the end of ch. 11 that he wants to move to LV to be near Dolores. I can skip all the transitional stuff as he actually moves up to LV, though I'll want to know what happens during that time as backstory.

Let's say he plans to get a job parking cars at one of the casinos. He even has Bobby put in a word for him at the Riviera, why not. Piece of cake. Then he considers a place to stay, and asks the Cactus Motel owner -- we'll need a name for him, he's a Swede... -- if he can pay a weekly or monthly rate. And while he's asking, the guy is hacking away, he's coughing, and let's see, he's on the fucking roof -- he's trying to fix the roof while Gene is talking up to him trying to negotiate a monthly rate, which no one has ever done before. And Gene finally comes up to the roof, takes the hammer and nails away from the guy while he goes down to rest, and finishes the job. Thus he becomes the motel's handyman. This allows me to show him acting compassionately for the first time.

That's good. But the problem is that it doesn't allow much movement for his character. He's already compassionate at the beginning of the section, so where's the movement?

He's compassionate when it's a white guy. Perhaps I can contrast this with his behavior early on for nonwhite people. Hmm, I dunno.

Keep it the way it is. It always comes out a little different when I write it, anyway.

So getting a job at the motel allows him to be around Dolores more. He invites her to a movie, and we see a contrast between the way she treats him with the way Dana treated him. Dolores is both more quick tempered and less of a bitch. Perhaps Gene learns to fight back eventually.

Ha, all this stuff I haven't learned to do. I have a temptation to make the relationship between Gene and Dolores an idealized version of the relationship between me and Cris.

Eventually he's going to meet her family. But perhaps before he does, he has to become a desk clerk. She doesn't want to tell them she's dating the handyman, but the assistant manager. So he has to achieve that. Then when he does meet her family, we have all sorts of unexpected things. It's going to be difficult, because I can't have it be a sentimental portrayal of the hardworking family and I don't want it to be like Tobacco Road either. (Has anybody ever actually read the book that gave that phrase to our idiom??) The way to do it is through farce. Have a cat disaster and other small disasters happening throughout the visit, so that Gene just sort of passes through this whirlwind which is nothing like he expected. Make the whole scene breathless, rollicking, a tour de force.

Okay, but I need to make the events of Gene's stream more interesting and unusual than just a steady development of his relationship with Dolores. What else is going on?

He's also continuing to develop his whole interest in Buddhism and beatniks. Naturally, in Las Vegas there are exactly zero Buddhists except for some Chinese who don't speak English at all, and exactly zero beatniks except for some fake ones at a Las Vegas joint that advertises itself as such. I may be able to make some hay with Gene visiting both places.

Dolores doesn't object at all to Gene's pursuit of all this; she doesn't mock it or regard it as threatening, the way Dana did. But she also doesn't take it seriously as long as it is simply a fad that Gene wants to follow. Dolores accepts only actions as valid. Perhaps she has come to be suspicious of words and only cares about actions. Hmm, that's interesting.

I wonder if I need additional secondary characters in this section. Would it be helpful to have Gene start nosing around the university looking for "intellectuals?" (Were there any intellectuals at UNLV in 1960? Are there now?) Perhaps, after spending a certain amount of fruitless searching after beatniks and Buddhism in the town, he goes over to the university and discovers some clues... Let's see, what might realistically have existed at UNLV in 1960? I can research this, but I can also make some guesses in the meantime. There's probably a folk song club, with earnest boys and girls playing guitars, and the folk song club eventually becomes an outpost of sympathy for civil rights, because so many of the folk songs are about the poor and are used in protests and etc. etc. -- the natural thing that happened. And there might be a club that is sort of self-consciously pro-Beatnik. They want, as much as Gene, to be cool and to be beatniks, but are just as clueless about it as he is. There's some comedy to be mined there, in the attempts of Nevadan youth of 1960 to be beatniks -- these kids who are children of ranchers or miners or casino workers or government contractors (Atomic Test Site) or, yes, schoolteachers and grocers and everything else... Somebody has to own that bookstore downtown... Anyway, a bunch of ordinary middle-class people without a single genuine cultured background among them, trying to make something out of nothing. There's comedy and pathos there. But Gene can't even be part of *that* because he's not a college student. Perhaps this provides an additional, and natural, direction for his character, that he decides he wants to go to college. (He had lied, of course, about having gone to Harvard; all he's done is go to a junior college for a year. There's some backstory there that I have to create, too.)

I'm going to take just a little break and go out to get some change for the maid. There was a downpour that seems to have let up, so it's my chance to go to the corner store I noticed before.

Okay, a list of the things I've thought of for Gene so far. Then I'll actually try to make a start.

Start right off with scene between him and the motel owner

A first scene between him and Dolores, her reaction to his proximity

His thoughts and desires -- Kerouac, beatniks, Buddhism (the fractured version portrayed in Kerouac)

Trying actually to approach some of these -- perhaps a scene with Chinese Buddhists and with the fake beatniks -- repulses him and throws him back on himself

Additional scenes showing growth of relationship between him and Dolores

At the library? What does he do there? Write? Look for beatniks?

Dolores' reaction to Gene's quest. And here perhaps she tells him a story that clues him and the reader into what she values, i.e. actions, not words

Gene meets Dolores' family -- I think by this time we need a real complication, not just all this exposition

Gene visits the university -- perhaps this is a turning point -- maybe we need a secondary character here, perhaps competition for Dolores!? Okay, that's a complication, not a major turning point.

Okay... that's really plenty to get started. Things will develop and a more formal outline will come as we go along.

Oh, just a note about Bobby's stream during Part 2. The whole of Part 1 was devoted to his trying, and failing, to get a part in "Make Nice," which is not even being made, while "Let's Make Love" is being made. I should say something about "Let's Make Love" the first time I mention Bobby, along with the facts of who's in it and who's not (namely Frank Sinatra).

12:45 p.m. -- I wrote the first two scenes in the first chapter of Part 2, ch. 12, totaling 1260 words. I've gotten Gene his job at the motel and, most importantly, finally, after so many months, kicked off Part 2. Thank goodness. These writing retreats really work.

After that I rested a little, stared out the patio door -- I'm in a corner of the inner courtyard of the hotel, and just outside my balcony (which is itself a perk, as I can see that not all the rooms have balconies) are three young redwoods, planted here in the corner by the ownership when the hotel was opened, perhaps twenty years ago; they're fifty feet tall now, growing straight in this shadowed corner -- and ate a little of the excellent chocolate I bought with Cris on New Year's Eve, and shit twice, and walked the corridors a little. I wanted to see if the housekeeper was anywhere close to cleaning my room, but I don't think she is. My plan is to remain here until she starts, and then go out with my laptop to keep working, then come back to take a shower and keep working some more, and then to eat something around 4:00 or 5:00 (instead of eating at 9:00 like I did last night).

I wish I could remember my dream from last night, it was something really odd -- a fractured bit of my reality, having either to do with Cris or Susie or this hotel or something, produced by the constant waking and tossing and turning. The bed is a great big king sized bed that really sags in the middle, but if I stay near the edge it's practically firm. I doubt turning the mattress -- as I did in a hotel someplace last year, can't remember quite where -- would help in this case. And I don't know if I can manage to turn a king sized mattress by myself anyway.

Okay, back to work. Gene needs to go to the library to get some books on how to be a handyman, he needs to have a conversation with Dolores, and perhaps he needs to tell Bobby that he won't be trying to get a job at the Riviera after all. Or... maybe he does. Maybe he needs the extra dough, maybe he can get a gig there just one night a week, like a really busy night like Friday night. Is that a good idea? Would it expose him to some things I want to keep presenting in Part 2, or have we had enough of the Strip? If I were him, I'd want the extra money, he's not getting much at the motel at all... a dollar an hour, which I think is pretty reasonable for that time and place -- maybe even too much. Something else I'll have to research.

3:45 p.m. -- I wrote another 800 words, the first scene between Gene and Dolores, then tacking onto it the scene where he goes and gets a job parking cars at the Riviera on weekend nights thanks to Bobby's word. Ya know, if I don't need it, I'll just take it out, easy. Total word count for the chapter is now 2100. Meanwhile I've written over 6000 words in this journal file since starting yesterday. That's all right. This file enables the real book.

Commenting on the dollar-an-hour issue -- when Dolores found out, she said, "I only get seventy-five cents an hour, and no room." This introduces early on the class and racial inequities.

Then I took a break for lunch and to drive around a little. The rain stopped around 1:00 and the countryside around -- a flat valley of pastures turning into housing developments -- was soaked. There were a lot of flooded

pastures, and some flooded roads, one which I didn't dare traverse in my little sports car. One of the reasons I drove around was to charge up my cell phone! I forgot the desk charger but I have one in the car.

Now I'm back in the room with another full stomach, one that will, I hope, last me until I go to bed. Six hours more in which to work -- I don't know why I can't finish a chapter today and write another one tomorrow.

7:00 p.m. -- Just couldn't get started again; took a shower, still no dice; finally took a 90-minute nap, got up at 5:45, and plunged in almost without thinking. Did 1430 words in 75 minutes, a good bit where I talked about Gene's aspirations to the Kerouackian life and spirit, his failure to understand the "sadness" of things, and moved on to his first encounter with Unit 12. He doesn't get much done, but sizes up the job.

It could be the end of the chapter, I'm not sure. Total now 3400 words -- a bit on the short side, but acceptable. Of course it doesn't matter how long each chapter is. Now that I think of it, I guess I should just continue the same chapter, depicting the next day and the work as it goes along. I can start chapter 13 with the Chinese Buddhists. That ought to be a kick.

8:50 p.m. -- I drank a glass of wine in the lobby while reading my Suzuki biography, walked to the corner store again, checked my email. Now I'm going to watch "The West Wing," breaking my vow not to turn on the TV, and then I promise to get back and write the next scene between Gene and Dolores before I hit the sack. I don't know how sleepy I'm going to be, after that nap.

9:40 p.m. -- No "West Wing," on account of no NBC programming. The NBC affiliate in the area changed from channel 4 to a San Jose station, channel 11, but the Rohnert Part cable system doesn't get channel 11. So no NBC at all.

I went back to work on my book, wrote 700 more words, continuing the chapter. Now it's up to 4300 and I think it really is done. 4300-plus words is a good day's work by any stretch of the imagination. I think I'll knock off.

Question is, what next. Say I am done with this chapter -- do I write a Bobby chapter? Hard to say. I know I made the decision this morning that I would just work on Gene while I was here, but I think I've done all the Gene stuff I can do today, and maybe I need to switch the focus for tomorrow.

3 Jan 02

Woke up late after another somewhat fitful night. My hands are falling asleep when I sleep, and I feel the tingling when I wake up. Sign of circulatory problem? Clogged arteries? My double chin seems more prominent these days...

I showered and went downstairs for breakfast, and now it's just after 10:00. So I'm getting a later start than yesterday, but yesterday I was starting from flat zero, and today I already have a whole chapter built. (I think it will need to be fleshed out in places.)

So, I think it's right to turn to Bobby today, despite what I wrote about concentrating entirely on Gene while I was here at the hotel. (Will be here through tomorrow.) I'll let Gene and his situation percolate a little. What I've done, in chapter 12, is give Gene this whole handyman's job that seems much more substantial than I first envisioned. He has this whole ruined motel room to refurbish. I'm starting to think of it as the first of several tasks (or labors, as in "the labors of Hercules") that will shape him into a man. He will receive more and more difficult challenges. This first one is just a physical challenge, but future ones will be moral. By the end of Part 2, he should be substantially different than he was in Part 1, where all he had to be was this picaresque character driving back and forth.

To turn to Bobby... I have a number of things I have to do before the events of the convention actually get underway.

Summarize the state of his career, contrast it with Sinatra. Frank is taking time off to work on JFK's campaign, but he can afford it. Bobby is merely becalmed.

Bobby has the gigs in May: at the Riviera, and in Reno. I will also give him a gig at the Cal-Neva so as to introduce that as a location.

At some point, he has to run into Frank or Peter, who will share with him the lowdown on the preparations for the convention. This is the expository scene that prepares for all the convention events.

But my problem is that I don't have a unifying task or action that Bobby is performing during this time. In Part 1, I could show him shooting scenes for *Ocean's Eleven* and rushing around trying to drum up a part in *Make Nice*. Now he has neither of those tasks to do. What does he have to do? Brainstorm:

- Get a part in another movie.
- Get a part in a TV show.
- Go to his agent and discuss either one, plus other things he can do. I like this, we can explore the true awful state of things, with absurd offerings like telethon appearances.
- Hmm, there's the whole fraudulent story about the Gay Talese interview for *Esquire*. What if there were to be some follow-up for that? But it would have to end badly... Another disappointment.
- The other thing to follow up on is the making of the actual movie *Let's Make Love*. Bobby has nothing to do with it, but what if he got on the set somehow? What if Sinatra asked him to keep tabs on Marilyn for him? That would prepare for the big errand in Part 3 -- but I don't want to really have Marilyn come on stage, as it were, *until* Part 3, when her entrance should have the same impact as the landing of the mothership in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. (A side note: Who can believe it was only 15 years in American culture from *Let's Make Love* to *Close Encounters*? Okay, 17 years, but still, there was quite a shift. In fact, there were two shifts: In between, we had *Easy Rider* and *Five Easy Pieces* and *Taxi Driver*. But I digress.) The point of getting Bobby involved somehow, on the periphery it would have to be, in *Let's Make Love*, would help connect a lot of dots.
 - It would help keep the reader from being left hanging, partially because most readers, I think, have never seen or heard of *Let's Make Love* -- I certainly hadn't when I started all this.
 - It would allow Bobby to stay in the position of being on the outside looking in, which is where I like him.
 - It would start the buildup to the appearance of Marilyn, an arc which is extremely important in making sure Part 3 feels right.

The only thing I don't know is exactly what this action is. In today's era, Bobby would be deputized by a TV show like "Entertainment Tonight" to play journalist and go on the set and do a puff piece about the making of *Let's Make Love*. In 1960, let's suppose *Look* magazine fulfilled this role. Why not? Norman Mailer et al. were always being assigned to write about popular events. Of course, Mailer was a novelist and thus a journalist (they were the same thing in those days, ha ha) but maybe it's not such a stretch from there to ... Well, maybe it is.

Let's see. In my research, I uncovered instances where articles would appear under a star's byline -- something like *The Real Frank Sinatra*, By Joey Bishop. (Unfortunately for me, there was no such particular article.) Or maybe *Why I Work So Hard For My Kids*, By Jerry Lewis. Of course these would be ghost-written and everyone understood that, but why not have *Look* commission Bobby to go on the set of *LML* and write about *The Movie Goddess And The Playwright*? Because that was one of the main angles in 1960, everyone was atwitter about the contrast in image between Monroe and Miller. Of course Marilyn was already getting boffed by her *LML* co-star Yves Montand and everybody knew it, but Miller was the philosophical type. Maybe that's my angle, that Bobby accepts this insulting assignment -- it's galling, of course, because *LML* represents a lost opportunity for him

-- and finds out that there are even more humiliating things, such as having your movie-star wife not be able to keep her hands off her co-stars.

I feel I need another task for Bobby to be doing during this time. The *Look* assignment can't be the whole thing. He could sub for the Tonight Show host, of course... Who I think, at this point, was Steve Allen. Jack Paar was gone and Johnny Carson didn't start until a few years later. Easy to research on the web, of course. Fine, we'll just have Bobby do that. He can do it from the Hollywood studio. (Why would Steve Allen need a sub anyway? Paar was temperamental, but Steve Allen is the opposite. Hmm, dunno... I could look into more of what Steve Allen was doing those days. Actually it would be good for me to research just who were the guests on the Tonight Show in a certain week... and I haven't really filled in my timeline yet. I have April and July as the boundaries of Part 2...

And of course, the other thing that I need to do, sometime during the convention scenes, is establish that LML has wrapped and that Marilyn and Miller are about to go out to Nevada to start working on *The Misfits*. That'll be easy to slip into conversations here and there.

Okay, I'm going to go on line and find out about Tonight Show hosts in 1960. Then I'm going to get started. It's 11:25 a.m.

Oops, I was completely wrong. Steve Allen was the first host, he was replaced by Paar in the late 50s, and Paar was replaced by Carson in 1962. No matter. Okay, I'm going to get started on ch. 13. Scene opens in Philly's office.

Started ch. 13. Research note: can I have Judy Garland headlining at the Cal-Neva? Would she have done something like that? Research who was playing at Cal-Neva and what sort of person would have opened for her.

1:55 p.m. Finished with the scene between Bobby and Philly -- not his Philly's office, but on the phone with Bobby by the pool. 2100 words it was. Can I have a phone dialogue scene that goes 2100 words? Is that too long? Someone will tell me if it is. Anyway, I think it's fun. I managed to introduce the journalist thing on the set of *Let's Make Love*. I think the whole idea is plausible. Why wouldn't somebody like Bobby Blaine do that, at that point in his career?

I need a final paragraph for the scene, and then I need to figure out what happens next in the chapter. Do I make the visit to the set part of the chapter? I think so, because if I don't, it's going to seem like way too much buildup for a scene that isn't all that important. Do I have something else first? Yes -- have Bobby meet with Tragge, the secondary character who's going to be his ghost writer for the gig. (Does Tragge go to the set? Probably.)

8:45 p.m. -- I wrote a scene between Tragge and Bobby, decided I would have Peter Lawford appear at the end of it and transition into a scene between Bobby and Peter, so I did a bit of rewriting. Now I've got them in a car together ready for Peter to give some exposition on the upcoming convention.

I don't know how good the scene with Tragge is. It felt rather easy to write it and what I wrote feels rather functional; probably it will have to be heavily redone. I say that because I'm suspicious of stuff that comes out a little too easily. Still, I like a lot of their give and take. I gave Tragge all these drunken mannerisms he didn't have when he first appeared in ch. 6, and I'll have to iron out the difference. I think I gave him all the mannerisms because I just saw him as a drunken hack suddenly, and in ch. 6 he wasn't. Either I'll have to iron out the discrepancy or else face the fact that I've simply created a different character. In any case it'll be easy to change the name if I have to. The chapter is now up to 3740 words. It's mostly dialogue, whereas the stuff about Gene had a lot less dialogue and more internal monologue and descriptions and action. Here it's all just sitting around talking. Perhaps that will be what makes the Gene part easier to write this time: he has more to *do*.

I would like to finish ch. 13 tonight, to sort of keep my streak going and because I know it isn't done and because it'll be much easier to face the last, shorter, day if I have something new to start off with. I do hope they leave me alone until 6:00 p.m., as agreed.

9:05 p.m. -- avoiding work by websurfing.

9:35 p.m. -- finally tore myself away from websurfing -- over absolutely nothing.

9:40 p.m. -- lying on floor trying to think of things for Peter Lawford to talk about. I want to show some things about his character that I haven't had a chance to yet. So far we've only seen him in action with Dana and Gene; now I want to show the smug prettyboy actor who doesn't realize he's quite middle-aged and that his career is actually going badly.

10:25 p.m. -- I wrote another 800 words, the conversation between Peter and Bobby. Don't know if it's any good or not.

The chapter is now a little more than 4500 words -- another good day's work. But I don't think I should end the chapter there. I should next have the interview scene on the set of LML. No need to hold that off to a different chapter. I'll work on it tomorrow. It must have lots of farce.

4 Jan 02

It's 10:00 a.m., and I've already written 500 words this morning. I realized last night that the whole scene with Peter Lawford is flat and that it has to be heavily redone. But before that I went through the scene between Bobby and Philly and made it much funnier, playing up the whole aspect that Bobby is getting really crappy, humiliating jobs. As I originally wrote it, it didn't sound like he was doing so bad; now the point is really clear that he has to settle for less. For example, instead of his own comedy record, he gets to *introduce* records by the rest of the Rat Pack.

Now I have to figure out what to do with the Lawford scene. Maybe I should just cut it. I can always have it until later. There are a few funny lines in it, but it really doesn't go anywhere.

I'm thinking that instead of cutting it, I should figure out how to make it work. Because I do need a scene early in Part 2 that introduces the convention.

Actually, to back up a bit -- the scene between Bobby and Tragge is flat, too. It doesn't introduce any new information or move the plot forward. Right now all it does is introduce this character Tragge.

Maybe if I rework that, I'll be able to approach the next section (Peter) again.

I did a little reworking, cut out the marine-themed bar that was so stereotyped I saw it in a movie made in 1955 (*Shack Out on 101*, with Lee Marvin). I also cut out the little bit about the barbecue in Oklahoma -- I can reuse it later. The chapter is now 4700 words long.

I'm avoiding like crazy the writing of the scene on the set of LML. In fact, I'm thinking of just bagging it for the day and going to movies until this evening. I'm a little tired. But I thought I would get done at least 10,000 words, and I'm only up to 9000. Does it matter?

12:30 p.m. -- I combed through and smoothed out the chapter once again, sharpening the dialogue. The chapter is 4832 words now. I think it ends fine. I can start ch. 14 with Bobby on the set of LML.

I'm getting a little restless in this hotel room. I never really got my meditation thing going. The pure experience I had last winter at Bishop's Ranch, where there was no TV, no internet, and no newspaper, I

meditated most days, and all I had for distraction were a few books, cannot be replicated here. Well, it can, of course, but I'm not strong enough to do it when the distractions are available.

I think what I'm going to do is pack up here and go to the movies this afternoon -- one exit down the freeway there's a multiplex where I can see the new *Ocean's 11* as a reward to myself.

Before I go, I want to construct the beginnings of the outline for Part 2, now that I have something to build on.

early April	ch. 12a	Gene meets Gustafson, finishes roofing for him.	Gene	
	ch. 12b	Gene gets job as handyman, then also gets job parking cars at the Riv	Gene	
	ch. 12c	Gene meets Dolores again, starts cleaning job	Gene	
	ch. 12d	Gene gets back to cleaning no. 12, talks more with Gustafson	Gene	Repairing the floor is "the right thing to do." Gustafson doesn't care.
mid-April	ch. 13a	Bobby on the phone with Philly talking about prospective work	Bobby	Several humiliations
a few days later	ch. 13b	Bobby meets Tragge at the Villa Capri	Bobby	More humiliations -- Tragge is intent on making sure Bobby knows he knows Bobby is no big deal
	ch. 13c	Bobby talks with Peter about events coming up related to JFK's campaign and the convention	Bobby	Bobby isn't being asked to participate, but we don't know why
the next Monday	ch. 14a	Bobby and Tragge on the set of LML	Bobby	
	ch. 14b		Gene	

Oh, I had a thought this morning in the shower: The reason Bobby is not being invited to help with the convention events is that the FBI refuses to give him security clearance on account of him not being "cooperative" enough -- the FBI agents screwing him because he threw them out of his dressing room in ch. 11. That makes complete sense, and helps to maintain ties between the sections by showing consequences of decisions.

I think I can make the LML scene nice and long. The question is, how does the chapter develop after that? I don't want to alternate chapters between Bobby and Gene, I have to mix the chapters up from now on. So I'll want to go to Gene. What's he doing?

11:00 p.m. -- Bishop's Ranch

I checked out of the hotel about 1:30 and did a couple of odd errands -- bought some clothes in Petaluma, then came back to Rohnert Park and got the car's oil changed. Then I went to see the recent *Ocean's 11*. Before watching it, I killed 45 minutes at the multiplex by watching the first part of an all-too-typical star-studded sex thriller called *Vanilla Sky* -- so painful. After that, *Ocean's 11* looked like *Grand Illusion*. For all its "Mission Impossible"-like stunts, I actually liked it.

Then I drove over to Bishop's Ranch, which is about 20 miles away. This afternoon, the congregational retreat started. I was right, there'll be a dozen people and not all are even here yet. It's cool and damp but clear, so far. Nice and quiet. There's a quiet here that goes beyond the quiet of the empty hotel, a deep-rooted purposeful quiet. No wonder I can get so much done here.

I don't plan on getting much done on my book, though, if anything. This time will be for my spirit.

5 Jan 02

Mid-afternoon break of the congregational retreat. Pouring rain since sometime last night, so we're all pretty much holed up inside the building -- bedrooms and common space -- which has been allotted to us for our weekend.

Time for me to think about plans for getting work done on my novel in the coming months, now that I have finally gotten off the dime. I took a look in my notes at just how long it's taken me to do this book so far. I found:

- Gathering ideas and research -- Nov 1996 to Jun 98
- Chapters 1-4 -- Jun to Aug 98 (Sybase sabbatical)
- Chapters 5 through part of ch. 10 -- Apr 99 to Aug 99 (temp job at Pac Bell Directory)
- Chapters 10 and 11 -- Jan 01 (laid off from Commerce One)
- Chapters 12 and 13 -- three days in Jan 02 (New Years holidays from work)

So in elapsed time, it's taken me three and a half years to write all that; in work time, it's taken me ten months. And I'm still only somewhere around 45-50 percent finished with the first draft.

It's strange that I can write two chapters in two or three days, as I just did, and take five months to write five and a half chapters, as I did in mid-99. The fact is that when I was doing that work in mid-1999, I was feeling pretty proud of the pace I was keeping, and some of those chapters are twice as long as the ones I wrote this week. In those five months I wrote something like 22,000 words -- two-fifths of a 50,000 word novel.

Well, since I'm measuring myself by word count, let's settle it once and for all... By actual count, I've written 82,500 words as of today. No wonder it's taken me so long -- the book is already as long as an ordinary novel. I'll certainly be able to say I've written a whole novel after this.

Whenever that is. Like I say, I'm only half through, if that.

I want to say something about my mood on Friday, the third day I had to write at the hotel. I did not feel like going on to write new stuff. I didn't feel confident about what I had done in ch. 13 the day before, and I felt I had to go through ch. 13 and improve it. I was also tired, and I was sort of afraid that if I wrote the scene on the set of LML right away, it would come out even weaker (though weak in the same way) than ch. 13. It would have been like trying to use the same tea bag for the third cup of tea. So I felt it was better to go through and have a better ch. 13 as the foundation of what came after.

I can go on and do a little outlining now, I think. That'll make it easier to start off with the LML scene.

the next Monday	ch. 14a	Bobby and Tragge on the set of LML	Bobby	The article will not come out for several months
that week	ch. 14b	Gene and Dolores	Gene	No idea what the purpose of this is
that Friday	ch. 14c	Gene knocks off work, takes a walk, comes back to watch TV and sees Bobby host "Tonight Show" on, yes, Good Friday	Gene	
Sunday	ch. 14d	Gene and Dolores go to church together?	Gene	
that day	ch. 14e	Bobby spending day alone at home	Bobby	too pathetic?
May 6? -- several days later	ch. 15a	Bobby at the Riviera -- comedy monologue	Bobby	Monologue is perhaps joking on how unsuccessful he is. ??

May 7	ch. 15b	Bobby comes to see Gene at the Cactus? Gene is almost finished refurbishing number 12? Perhaps on the spur of the moment, Bobby invites Gene and Dolores to come see his show at the Riv. She does not answer, but Gene actually refuses the invite on account of her getting kicked out of the pool before. Bobby: I'm sure it was a mistake. Gene: It was no mistake.	Bobby	Purpose is to contrast Gene's progress with Bobby's Demonstrates Gene's independence.
Thurs, May 8	ch. 15c	Sinatra and Lawford come to see Bobby on stage at the Riv?	Bobby	

17 Jan 02

Haven't worked on this in two and a half weeks, but I've thought about it a little.

What I was thinking was, chapter 12 isn't substantial enough. I've got Gene getting and starting a job at the motel. That's it -- 4500 words to do that. There's nothing going on beyond the surface of the events. I was thinking that the whole first chapter of the second half should have the impact of a good short story. So I'll have to go back and add a lot to the chapter give it a turning point and a real narrative ending ... put in some thematic stuff and some good language.

Sample sentence from chapter 12:

When Gene decided, after the weekly trips driving Bobby between L.A. and Las Vegas were over, to move to Las Vegas, Bobby had offered to say a word to the management of the Riviera if Gene was interested in working there.

Man.

Okay, I was writing quickly. I was trying to get a lot of work in. That's okay. It's going to be a messy, not to say shitty, first draft.

Perhaps I should just press on, not worry about it... Well, no. I don't have to worry about the language. But I want to do the short story bit on that chapter. It's got to have some weight. I can't just leave him sitting on the sidewalk with the toilet.

What's he dealing with? Physical work, which he's not used to -- but the reader can't tell that, the reader thinks he's pretty competent. I have to show him as clumsy, lazy, reluctant to get his hands dirty. I have to show him as more intimidated by the Swede. The arc of the story should be:

1. He gets the job, but more subservient and dog-like. More of a dip.
2. He immediately starts fucking up, and the Swede starts screaming at him (but doesn't have enough breath to actually do it for long)
3. He gets the job at the Riv, and it's like a refuge, even though he is treated like shit, because at least he doesn't have to get his hands dirty.
4. He gets to the floor part, and we can have that scene, but Gene isn't so assertive, he's still willing to knuckle under and be way too polite
5. He gets to the toilet and it's horrible, stuff sprays in his face, and he flees and literally has to hurl himself back into the room... He fights... In the middle of this, the Swede comes in and starts yelling, and Gene finds himself yelling back.

6. In a turning-point scene, Gene goes to the office in a grouchy mood. The two men circle warily, and resolve their dispute when Gene starts **telling** the guy just what he's going to do. Then he goes back and does it -- don't blow this off -- he has to go **through**. This is like the sex part of it that you can't shy away from, only it's not about sex, it's about plumbing. I don't mean it has to be erotic plumbing, but it has to have the same role in the story that a climactic sex scene does.
7. Then we can have the little peaceful scene on the sidewalk with Dolores.

That's so much better. But it's still not enough, I'll have to play it up bigger. Basically I need to put aside the whole issue of physical squeamishness in this chapter -- and foreshadow it earlier, in part 1, in places -- and for a reason. I need him to not be physically squeamish later in the part for a reason -- because he has to be willing to get his hands dirty later. And the willingness to get his hands dirty has to be a **metaphor** for something else -- for his willingness to confront the dirty side of life. Which we're going to see in spades in this part. He's going to be confronted with real suffering in this part, and he's going to have to not turn and run. First he's going to be confronted with someone else's suffering, and then he's going to have to suffer himself.

Geez. That's getting kind of heavy for what is really a light-hearted book so far. But I can't be serious for long, I'll fun it up. It's all farce. Can farce be about real struggle and suffering? I don't know.

I inserted the above in the main outline in place of what I had for ch. 12. I feel much better now.

19 Jan 02

Here's April-May 1960:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Part 1 ended on March 20. Let's say Part 2 starts with Gene coming up and getting the job at the Cactus Motel on April 11. Therefore the dates in April for the new arrangement of scenes in ch. 12 -- which I still have to rewrite -- are:

Mon Apr 11	ch. 12a	Gene gets the job at the motel, but more subservient and dog-like. More of a dip.
That week	ch. 12b	He immediately starts fucking up, and the Swede starts screaming at him (but doesn't have enough breath to actually do it for long)
Fri-Sat Apr 15-16	ch. 12c	He gets the job at the Riv, and it's like a refuge, even though he is treated like shit, because at least he doesn't have to get his hands dirty.
Tue Apr 19	ch. 12d	He gets to the floor part, and we can have that scene, but Gene isn't so assertive, he's still willing to knuckle under and be way too polite

Thur Apr 21	ch. 12e	He gets to the toilet and it's horrible, stuff sprays in his face, and he flees and literally has to hurl himself back into the room... He fights... In the middle of this, the Swede comes in and starts yelling, and Gene finds himself yelling back.
	ch. 12f	In a turning-point scene, Gene goes to the office in a grouchy mood. The two men circle warily, and resolve their dispute when Gene starts telling the guy just what he's going to do. Then he goes back and does it

After setting that out, I proceeded to map out the rest of the dates all the way into chapter 15. Of course, Most of ch. 14, where Bobby and Trage go to the set of LML, is an unknown. Something could happen there that throws the plan off after that.

What I need to do is get to work on rewriting chapter 12 so I'm happy with it. I don't want to have the rewriting hanging over my head while I go on, and I don't want anyone to read it the way it is -- it's just too insubstantial. God knows how I can go on and on like that for 4500 words and have it be so insubstantial.

Once I'm done with that, I can leave ch. 13 the way it is, and just get started on ch. 14.

Saturday, 26 Jan 02

Finally I'm in the office before noon, ready to actually write. The idea is to reproduce the working conditions I had in Japan twelve or thirteen years ago, when I was able to crank out 20 or 25 pages every Saturday. Of course, one of the reasons I was able to produce so much is that had no idea where it was all going, and as soon as I had to start really tying things up, I couldn't. I emerged from my Japanese sojourn with more than 900 pages of typescript that went practically nowhere.

But it was productive, in a sense. "You're really into quantity, aren't you?" Susie asked the other night, when I asked her how long the piece she's working on is. It's one way to measure whether or not you're doing anything, though I measure now in words, not pages. "Make Nice" is now more than 80,000 words long, including what I've done this month, which I'm partially already rewriting. That's 80,000 words that did not exist before, characters that did not exist before. It's something. Of course, it's really nothing until it gets between two covers and into a store -- I really do have that attachment to traditional marks of ... I was going to say "success," but merely being published is not success. It's just a certain level of attainment; just progress. So 80,000 words is progress, and being finished is progress, and being published is progress. Winning the National Book Award is success. I don't think this book is going to win the National Book Award, but getting a novel published for the first time is real progress.

Or would be real progress. I'd better keep that conditional.

Today I'll work some more on the rewrite of chapter 12, the first chapter of part 2. Until I put more punch into it, I won't be able to go on. The stuff about Gene is really important; if it comes off as insubstantial, the whole book will be morally wounded.

I wrote some more stuff, enhancing chapter 12. It's now better and longer, about 5800 words which is about a thousand more than the original. And it still doesn't feel done, but it's better. I'm worried that the arc I had planned for the chapter is now not possible. But it might be fine as it is.

Thursday, Jan. 30

All week long I've had my personal laptop -- on which I do my writing -- sitting on the desk next to my work laptop. I wanted to give myself a chance to turn to my writing when a slow period happened. Mostly it hasn't

happened, or I fill the time with web surfing. But today I have no meetings at all scheduled, and I thought I might turn to it. Also, I'm attending a sesshin on Saturday instead of spending the day writing. That may seem counterproductive as far as my novel is concerned, but I have a plan. I'm hoping that I will start doing zazen on a regular basis and that it will have a beneficial effect on my writing. I have no idea whether that even makes sense, but it's based on a theory. My theory is that I have a problem being honest with myself, personally and in my writing, and that meditation will force me to be more honest. Or perhaps I should say, permit me to be more honest, or give me the tools to be more honest -- whatever.

In any case, I have no idea whether I will be able to physically do the sesshin. But I'm going to throw myself into it and try. I guess the worst thing that could happen is that I will injure myself. I'll try not to let that happen.

So since I'm going to be meditating all day Saturday instead of writing, I thought I might at least take a look at these notes.

My outline says this:

Mon Apr 11	ch. 12a	Gene gets the job at the motel, but more subservient and dog-like. More of a dip.	
That week	ch. 12b	He immediately starts fucking up, and the Swede starts screaming at him (but doesn't have enough breath to actually do it for long)	
Fri-Sat Apr 15-16	ch. 12c	He starts the job at the Riv, and it's like a refuge, even though he is treated like shit, because at least he doesn't have to get his hands dirty.	
Thur Apr 21	ch. 12d1	He gets to the toilet and it's horrible, stuff sprays in his face, and he flees and literally has to hurl himself back into the room... He fights... In the middle of this, the Swede comes in and starts yelling, and Gene finds himself yelling back.	
	ch. 12d2	In a turning-point scene, Gene goes to the office in a grouchy mood. The two men circle warily, and resolve their dispute when Gene starts telling the guy just what he's going to do. Then he goes back and does it	-- don't blow this off -- he has to go through . This is like the sex part of it that you can't shy away from, only it's not about sex, it's about plumbing. I don't mean it has to be erotic plumbing, but it has to have the same role in the story that a climactic sex scene does.
Fri Apr 22	ch. 12d3	Success with the toilet -- get it from the Cut Things file.	

... but after working with ch. 12, what I've got is everything kind of compressed at the end. And the damn chapter is 5800 words long. I think that's long enough. I'll leave it as it is. It's still not a stand-alone story, but I need to move on. Never mind the marketing requirements.

So it's really like this:

Mon Apr 11	ch. 12a	Gene gets the job at the motel, but more subservient and dog-like. More of a dip.	Gene
That week	ch. 12b	He immediately starts fucking up, and the Swede starts screaming at him (but doesn't have enough breath to actually do it for long) Fixes window, then tackles toilet. Finally fixes toilet.	Gene
Fri-Sat Apr 15-16	ch. 12c	He starts the job at the Riv, and it's like a refuge, even though he is treated like shit, because at least he doesn't have to get his hands dirty.	Gene

9 Feb 02

I've been sitting here in the office all day since 11:00 a.m. getting very little done. I reorganized chapters 12 and 13 -- for the last time, I hope -- so that they now look like this:

Mon Apr 4	ch. 12a	Gene gets the job at the motel, but more subservient and dog-like. More of a dip.	Gene
Mon Apr 4	ch. 12b	Bobby on the phone with Philly talking about prospective work	Bobby
Apr 4-6	ch. 12c	Gene immediately starts fucking up, and the Swede starts screaming at him (but doesn't have enough breath to actually do it for long)	Gene
Thu Apr 7	ch. 13a	Bobby meets Tragge at the Villa Capri	Bobby
	ch. 13b	Bobby talks with Peter about events coming up related to JFK's campaign and the convention	Bobby
Fri-Sat Apr 8-9	ch. 13c	Fixes window, then tackles toilet. Finally fixes toilet. He starts the job at the Riv, and it's like a refuge, even though he is treated like shit, because at least he doesn't have to get his hands dirty. Internal monologue comparing current life to Kerouac's books, measuring his Beat quotient.	Gene

That leaves me ready to start chapter 14. And I did, with a few words, but have no enthusiasm at all for it. Wasted a lot of time, as usual, getting involved with looking at stuff on the web. That's the trouble with the office here. I start by looking something up, a detail I need to know, and then next thing I know I'm surfing reviews of the "Basic Instinct" DVD. (Turns out to have a 25 minute "making of" documentary included in it -- apparently the only way to see this documentary is to buy the DVD, since it's not sold separately.)

So bogged down I finally realized I needed to retreat to these notes if I wanted to have any prayer of getting anything done today.

Chapter 14 starts with the visit by Bobby and the journalist Tragge to the set of "Let's Make Love." (God, I wasted another 10 minutes just then. I can hardly concentrate.)

Q. What is the point of this scene?

A. One of the main goals is to show another in the series of humiliations visited upon Bobby.

Q. What's the point of that?

A. I need to drag him down so he stops thinking he's going to be a big star. I have to humble him so he's ready at the end of the book to take the job as a talk show host. After all, he doesn't have to host a game show.

Q. What else do you want to do with this scene?

A. I want to do another in the series of showing how a bunch of big Hollywood types behave. In this scene we've got George Cukor, Yves Montand, and Arthur Miller.

Q. What's so great about showing those three?

A. Cukor is a closeted homosexual; Montand is a continental ladies' man; Miller is a forceful intellectual. Each meets his match in Monroe.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Cukor is used to dealing with temperamental actresses; he's already been through Judy Garland, and in his opinion Marilyn Monroe has one-tenth the talent, and he's in no mood to put up with her bullshit; and yet, he has no choice. Montand is shtupping Monroe in his bungalow, but she's too high-maintenance for him; he's already reaching the point of disenchantment, and feels slightly at sea, a new sensation for him; he feels a little insecure in the American milieu. (Perhaps I can have a crew member as a foil for him.) Finally, Miller -- Monroe's husband -- sees himself as the One Good Man she's ever had or is ever going to have, and yet he knows he can't keep hold of her; he knows she's fucking Montand but he doesn't know what to do about it. In a way, Miller and Montand are complimentary of each other: each feels insecure in areas the other is strong in.

Q. Oh blah blah blah.

A. Well, yeah, it's a lot of emotional content, but I'm not going to have to do exposition about it; I can just depict, under the surface, what's going on between them.

Q. Sounds like one of those early De Lillo books, like Ratner's Star.

A. Um, yeah, maybe, I dunno.

Q. So anyway...

A. So anyway, I guess all I have to do is show Bobby going from one to the other. On the surface he's treated decently, but as he goes along he suffers more and more.

Q. What else do you want to show?

A. I want to show how famous people manage to puff themselves up to a journalist while simultaneously proclaiming themselves superior.

Q. That's a tautology.

A. Grammatically I guess so. I guess my assumption is that anyone who is trying to inflate their self-image cannot claim to be superior to anyone while simultaneously making sure others know it. Because to puff yourself up and make others feel inferior is actually a **bad** thing to do.

Q. Oh what does it matter.

A. All right then.

Q. What's stopping you from getting started on this anyway?

A. Nothin'.

... he said, 90 minutes later. Yes, I've wasted 90 minutes writing these notes. Maybe not entirely wasted -- I know more about what I want to do in the section, how to arrange it. Oh, by the way:

Q. Will Marilyn appear?

A. Not in this chapter. I'm saving her for part 3. It makes perfect sense she never appears; she's being a total flake on the set of this movie anyway.

Q. Why else is this a good thing?

A. It makes Bobby's job harder and makes it hard for his "article" to be successful.

I changed the dates, by the way. Since I wanted to have Bobby do the Tonight Show on Good Friday (leading to a really funny line in his conversation on the phone with Philly -- "So you're sending a Jew out there on Good Friday? What do you think, maybe I should wear sidecurls and a shawl? Or should I just wear a yellow star?... I'll go out there with a hammer and nails and say, 'We got him once, but he rose from the dead, the scamp! This time I'll get him for sure!'"), I had to figure out when Easter actually was in 1960, and adjust the dates accordingly. No big deal at this point, and it helps, I think, to have the LML filming start early. I'm already cheating by having LML film in April and May, as opposed to when it really was filmed, in January through

March. The only problem is that this shift in reality gives me a lot of time to go through before the Democratic Convention really starts in July. But I'll deal with that when I come to it.

All right, it's now 4:10. I have managed to waste practically the entire day -- I wrote 50 words and a bunch of notes. Heck. I'll try more tomorrow. I'm going home.

24 Feb 02 -- San Diego

In a hotel at the edge of downtown San Diego. Today marks my one-year anniversary in the company. A year ago I was in a hotel in Dallas for the same purpose.

From a note I made last month about ch. 12:

Basically I need to put aside the whole issue of physical squeamishness in this chapter -- and foreshadow it earlier, in part 1, in places -- and for a reason. I need him to not be physically squeamish later in the part for a reason -- because he has to be willing to get his hands dirty later. And the willingness to get his hands dirty has to be a **metaphor** for something else -- for his willingness to confront the dirty side of life. Which we're going to see in spades in this part. He's going to be confronted with real suffering in this part, and he's going to have to not turn and run. First he's going to be confronted with someone else's suffering, and then he's going to have to suffer himself.

That's not in the chapter yet. Not enough. I need to go back and include it.

Later. I'm not going to rewrite that chapter yet again. I'll just put a note in the Main Outline (which has been redone a couple of times since I wrote that).

I wrote on Jan. 30 that I have trouble being honest with myself. I meant a few different things by that. One, I have a hard time seeing myself with some objectivity. Two, I often try to convince myself that I feel something other -- something more acceptable -- than I really feel. Three, I sometimes very consciously shy away from looking at things that upset me.

The third part of this basic dishonesty is related to the emotional squeamishness I recognized a year or two ago -- the reluctance to confront passionate emotions, whether in my own life, in my relationships, or even in some movie or TV show I'm watching. It's very hard for me to watch someone in emotional pain, whether it's my lover or some character in a film. Last night I went to see "What Time Is It There?" a heavily depressing Taiwanese movie about two youths, a young man who stays in Taipei, a young woman who goes to Paris evidently for no reason. Both of them, as well as the young man's mother, are deeply depressed and we see them all suffering greatly. It was very uncomfortable to watch, but the film was of fairly high quality, so I stuck it out. I had a similar experience watching the film "Lantana" in New York eight days before. The latter is a completely different film -- an Australian psychological mystery -- but the characters also suffer deeply.

This is all to say that one of the reasons I hope meditating will improve my writing is that I think that in order to meditate successfully you have to be really honest with yourself. You sit there and your feelings arise and you have to sit with them. You can't turn away or eat something or turn on the TV or read email. You have to let them arise and then you have to accept them. The way things are now, I'm afraid my fear of emotionality will prevent me from writing truly human characters. But if I am able to deal with my own emotions, I may be able to create characters who are less blank than the ones I commonly create.

I recognize the possibility that my current sensitivity may actually be a good thing. I might have actually simply been callous before, and I'm now becoming more sensitive and compassionate. In any case, I know I'm going to have to pass through this period where strong emotions upset me, and that I mustn't turn away or try to escape from them.

10:00 pm -- after taking a nap, a shower, writing a little, going back to the convention, returning my unnecessary rental car, and finally returning to the room to write, I have made a fully decent start on ch. 14, finally. It stands at 1600 words. I'll try to finish the whole on-the-set-of-LML scene while I'm in this hotel room, at least.

Wednesday, 27 Feb -- San Diego airport

I went back to the hotel yesterday after my stint on the convention floor, and loafed, getting no work done. The only good thing was that Katia called and we talked for a while. She's gotten work, the first work in about a year. It's keeping her from writing, but she's had plenty of time to do that. She says she's working on a story that might turn into a new novel, having finally put down any further work to "Crashing America," the novel she's trying to find an agent for. That effort is not going as well as it seemed to at first. No one, having actually read the book, wants to take it. But there are still some agents who have not weighed in.

We talked about techniques for getting started writing. I confessed it sometimes takes me several hours, if I haven't been working for days or weeks, to get going. She asked if I'd tried "Hemingway's trick" of stopping your work just before you have to, so that when you sit down next you know absolutely what you are going to begin with -- the paragraphs you refrained from completing the session before.

Last night I went to the Big Party of the convention. All these industry conventions have a big rollicking party on the last night. They have to have a band, some extravagant entertainment in addition to the band, and an open bar. This particular party featured a really, really bad corporate cover band that proceeded to slaughter, in a really wasteful and disrespectful way, the catalogue of frat-party dance hits from the 60s to the 90s. There was something bizarre about them, and after a while I figured out what it was: they were switching off performers. All the performers were youngsters dressed in shiny black outfits. And during each song, some of them always danced on a platform behind the band, just sort of being go-go dancers. I noticed that the go-go dancers kept changing, and it was then I realized that performers kept switching from being go-go dancers to singing at microphones at the front of the stage. Some of them even ventured down to the concrete floor (the whole venue had a concrete floor) to try to get some dancing going by the crowd of convention attendees, 99 percent of whom showed no interest in dancing.

The rest of the space -- a huge cavern beneath a tented ceiling -- was filled with many buffets of indifferent, various kinds of food, several open bars, a bank of computers at which a couple dozen complete losers were parked, a bunch of arcade games, and several pool and foosball tables. The whole thing was lit with the kinds of red, green and blue spotlights that have become *de rigueur* at big, catered corporate parties. Over in the corner there were several huge blocks of ice, one of which had been sculpted into an unrecognizable shape, all of which were slowly melting, having served no purpose.

I floated around the edges of this space, ate a little, observed the workings of the musical performers, looked at the vacant stares of my fellow convention attendees, and watched the catering workers. They kept carrying out trays full of martini glasses that were full of colorful, unconsumed cocktails.

When I got back from the Big Party -- I didn't bother to find out its official name or theme, though I'm sure it must have had one -- I watched television for a while and then, with no preparation, added 300 words to what I'd done Sunday on chapter 14. And this morning, having ordered a room service breakfast and with all morning before I had to check out, I wrote another 800 words or so. So that's about 2300 words for the weekend -- not too bad. I managed to write the beginning of the chapter, the scene between Cukor and Bobby, and then to transition Bobby and the journalist Trage into the interview with Yves Montand. This will be nothing but comedy, but I want it to end badly, with some humiliation of Bobby. That shouldn't be too hard -- perhaps I can have Montand reveal that the whole time he's mistaken Bobby for Trage's assistant or some other lower form of life rather than a fellow "celebrity" which is the whole angle on the article, at least as far as *Look* is concerned.

10 March 2002 -- Dallas

I was reading these notes from the beginning, and noticed that I had the idea of the showgirl character really early.

He lies about his girlfriend and how much they fuck, when in reality she is a virgin, in fact Gene has little idea of female geography either. This is corrected when Bobby arranges for Gene to sleep with a showgirl. The showgirl teaches Gene what's what.

Well, I planned all along in Part 1 to put that in, but in the end, as the climax -- such as it is -- of the part developed, she never ended up in there after all. Instead I got into this scene where Gene wanders around Vegas -- weak. I think I should put it back in.

Or, I had the idea: make her the source of conflict in the second part. This whole budding romance between Gene and Dolores needs some complications.

Or both. I could put her back in at the end of part 1: Bobby sends her up to make it up to Gene that he got kicked out of the Copa Room. "She teaches him what's what." The next day, as arranged, Dolores shows up to go swimming. Gene is full of ambivalence -- joy, guilt, conflict. After they get kicked out of the pool, he takes her up to his room. It has been made up, so no danger of Dolores finding a blonde hair or anything. Then what happens? Dunno. The problem is, any big events here would change the future that I'm now working on. Then I would have to write chapter 12 AGAIN.

Anyway, this has nothing to do with what I'm supposed to be working on today -- continuation of the scene in ch. 14, Bobby visits the set of Let's Make Love.

From above:

I managed to write the beginning of the chapter, the scene between Cukor and Bobby, and then to transition Bobby and the journalist Trage into the interview with Yves Montand. This will be nothing but comedy, but I want it to end badly, with some humiliation of Bobby. That shouldn't be too hard -- perhaps I can have Montand reveal that the whole time he's mistaken Bobby for Trage's assistant or some other lower form of life rather than a fellow "celebrity" which is the whole angle on the article, at least as far as Look is concerned.

I envision Montand trying to explain to Bobby what comedy really is. Montand is of the impression that such a spiel is just the sort of thing journalists like -- he's trying to be a good trouper. But he wouldn't do it if he realized Bobby was a fellow artist, which he doesn't. Thus Bobby suffers another humiliation.

7:30 pm -- I wrote 1425 words, almost finishing the scene with Montand. A good bit. This thing's going damn slow though. Oh how I wish I had a few months of solid work. I'd do a chapter a month, just like I did in the summer of 99, and finish by the end of the year.

23 March 2002

I did some work on this last weekend. I just never made notes about it. I wrote the transition from the Montand scene to the Miller scene, and the first part of the latter -- 1338 words.

Having a single calendar wasn't enough for me this spring. In order to schedule weekend events such as travel, sesshins, baseball games to which I had tickets, and still make time to write, I had to make a special schedule. Presently it looks like this:

dates	happening	write?
Mar 15-17		Y
Mar 22-24		Y
Mar 29-31	Easter	Y
Apr 5- 7	Giants game	N
Apr 12-14		Y

Apr 19-21		Y
Apr 26-28	java class	N
May 3- 5	JUST WRITE!	Y
May 11-12	java class	N
May 17-19	Vegas/desert	N
May 24-26	Fri: Berk Rep	Y
May 31-Jun 2	New York	N
Jun 7- 9		Y
Jun 14-16		Y
Jun 21-23	Portland	N
Jun 28-30	Pride wkend	Y

This enables me to see whether, over time, I am giving myself much of a chance to write anything. I figure three Saturdays out of four is pretty good. I have other goals -- such as piling up frequent flier miles. So I seize at any chance to travel. Next month I'm getting a twofer -- I'm going to Las Vegas for work in midweek and then staying for Cris. At least I hope it works out that way.

Then Cris saw in the paper, the other day, a review of a revival of "Oklahoma!" in New York. She said she wanted to go -- she loves the songs from that show and regularly sings them, especially "I'm Just a Girl Who Cain't Say No" and "Everything's Up To Date in Kansas City." So I got us tix to New York. I need 130,000 Hilton points for four free nights in the Waldorf Astoria so I transfer them (at 1 for 2) from my United Airlines account. I said I wanted to pile up FF miles -- but that's not precisely true. I'd rather pay for plane tickets and use the miles at the Hilton. What I want to pile up is actual flight miles -- which count toward a certain special status with the airline. For the last two years I was a "Premier Executive," which means that all things being equal, I get better seats. Now, thanks to the fact that I didn't fly enough last year, I am only a lowly Premier. (In fact, I went to Europe twice last year. But one of those was free, I can't remember how -- so I got no credit for having done it.)

Anyway.... Fuck... I've been sitting here mostly websurfing for an hour and a half now. Time to get to work. God, I suck.

I wrote 800 words, finishing the chapter finally. At least I hope it's finished -- I'm tired of it. I'll read it tomorrow and see how it looks. And I'm going home. It's nearly 9:00 pm.

24 Mar 2002

Back the next day -- yee ha. Have only wasted 1.7 hours before actually doing something. And in fact I rewrote a few words in chapter 12 already, and I added the six thousand-plus words of chapter 14 to the total word count: now over 90,000 words. Which means nothing, other than I will have a lot of editing to do.

Actually, that gives me a bit of pause. Most of the book is dialogue, and it's hard to cut dialogue without messing with the rhythm of what's there. This makes me think whole scenes will have to be cut or rewritten.

It might not be as bad as it seems. There's a lot of wandering and throat-clearing in those 14 chapters.

6:15 pm -- I've been spending all afternoon, aside from a walk I took and a lot of unnecessary web surfing, playing with the outline of the next chapters as a way to avoid working on what I know is going to be the opening bit of chapter 15. I have a few set pieces and a number of things I want to happen in part 2 -- deepen the relationship between Gene and Dolores in unexpected ways, thus exposing him to opportunities for growth through developing compassion; humiliate Bobby a lot, and have him witness the convention more or less behind the scenes;

31 Mar 02

I wrote 450 words as the beginning of chapter 15. Nothing much -- just tying up chapter 14 and leaving Bobby heading into a bar. I'll have to look at that again later. Why do I have him heading into a bar? He's just spent the morning with a lush, Tragge, and turned away in horror from another lush, Timson. So why does he head immediately into a bar?

Fuck, I'm going back to change that right now.

There, done. So it took me almost three months since Jan. 4 -- when I could have started off the scene on the set of LML -- to the end of March to actually finish the scene. That includes a lot of rewriting of chapters 12 and 13, though. In any case, I'm now a good three chapters into part 2. Which is good. The only problem is that I still have a kind of cloudy idea of what needs to happen in this part. It's kind of like where I was when I was writing the third and fourth chapter of part 1, and Bobby and Gene were creeping across the desert on their way to Las Vegas. Creatively, I was stuck. But I wrote my way out of it, and I'll write my way out of this, too. It'll just take a while.

I do have some outline of the next couple of chapters. But there are some blank spots -- notably the very next section I have to write, 15b:

Mon Apr. 11	ch. 14	Bobby and Tragge on the set of LML	Bobby	
Same day - Mon Apr 14	ch. 15a	Bobby finishes LML gig and then drives to Santa Monica	Bobby	Follow-up and analysis of the scene on the LML set Note: Bobby must fly to NY to do "Tonight Show"
that week	ch. 15b	?	Gene	
Fri Apr 15	ch. 15c	Gene knocks off work, takes a walk Comes back to watch TV and sees Bobby host "Tonight Show" on, yes, Good Friday	Gene	Catchup -- he's finished The Dharma Bums and is even more interested in Buddhism
Several days later	ch. 15d	Gene and Dolores together -- perhaps to a movie	Gene	we see a contrast between the way she treats him with the way Dana treated him. Dolores is both more quick tempered and less of a bitch. Perhaps Gene learns to fight back eventually.
Saturday, Apr 23 or 30		Gene goes to the university library. Look for beatniks? Look for info on Buddhism? Meets another girl, competition for Dolores?	Gene	Complication.
Mon May 2	Ch. 17a	Bobby spending the day driving from Reno to Vegas	Bobby	after playing the first weekend gig in Reno May 6-8. Driving, he misses Gene.
Wed May 4	Ch. 17b	Bobby comes to see Gene at the Cactus? Gene is almost finished refurbishing number 12? Perhaps on the spur of the moment, Bobby invites Gene and Dolores to come see his show at the Riv. She does not answer, but Gene actually refuses the invite on account of her getting kicked out of the pool before. Bobby: I'm sure it was a mistake. Gene: It was no mistake.	Gene	Purpose is to contrast Gene's progress with Bobby's Demonstrates Gene's independence.
	Ch. 17c	some transition	Bobby	
Thu May 5	Ch. 17d	Bobby is surprised when Frank and Sammy join him on stage Afterward, Bobby and Sinatra talk and Frank promises to come on the stage again soon with him	Bobby	This leads to another Vegas gig for Bobby as well as more TV work

		Gene goes to some Buddhist temple, expecting beatniks, but it turns out to be Chinese, completely inaccessible, and he goes home discouraged	Gene	
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See, it's very sketchy. The only thing I really have to hang on to is the sequence highlighted in yellow.

What do I have to develop?

- Gene's relationship with Dolores. Have to show them becoming closer, but less in a traditional romantic sense and more in a he-inherits-her-family sense
- Gene continues to pursue Buddhism and beatniks, or what he knows of them

But for Bobby, I really have little to develop. In fact, he's mainly an observer during part 2, the way I have things arranged now. I need some place for him to go.

7 Apr 02

I just took a long-ass five-hour-plus drive all the way to Morgan Hill, over Mt. Hamilton, out to I-5 on this amazing ranch road, and back to the city via Pleasanton and the Bay Bridge. Got to the office "to write" at 7:20 pm! But I'm ready. The idea was to clear my mind, and I do feel like I can put in a solid two hours. Which could be better than sitting here all day, I dunno. In any case, I'm going to plunge right in to Gene's scenes in chapter 15.

I was reading a piece in the NYT in which they cited some British novelist who is a bus conductor or gas inspector or somesuch thing; he writes his novels during his lunch hour. "I like to just get on with them," he said. Inspiring words.

I'm going to have Gene working, then knocking off and taking a walk, doing some thinking where we see he still wants to be a Buddhist beatnik, and catching Bobby on the Tonight Show on, yes, Good Friday. Then I'll have a conversation between him and Dolores and get a chance to show their relationship deepening, and to contrast it with his relationship with Dana I'll have them go to a movie.

Oh, I know what I wanted to say. I realized that one of the character developments that happens to Bobby is that he drinks less. He has a realization that he's tired of hanging around lushes (Tragge, Timson et al) and just does it less. Perhaps becomes a bit ascetic...

13 Apr 02

I wrote a couple hundred words during the weekday workday this week, while Jenny stayed at home pouting over the breakup of an affair. Now it's Saturday and I'm back in the office to write for a few hours before going to the Castro to see "Chelsea Girls."

I'm at this point in the outline where I'm further developing the relationship between Gene and Dolores:

Same day - Mon Apr 14	ch. 15a	Bobby finishes LML gig and then drives to Santa Monica	Follow-up and analysis of the scene on the LML set Note: Bobby must fly to NY to do "Tonight Show"
Fri Apr 15	ch. 15b	Gene at work Goes to work at the Riv and sees Bobby host "Tonight Show" on, yes, Good Friday	Catchup -- he's finished The Dharma Bums and is even more interested in Buddhism

Several days later	ch. 15c	Gene and Dolores together -- perhaps to a movie	we see a contrast between the way she treats him with the way Dana treated him. Dolores is both more quick tempered and less of a bitch. Perhaps Gene learns to fight back eventually.
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I've written the first two sections but haven't put in other stuff about Buddhism and beatniks. Maybe I don't quite need to, since I already talked about it at the end of ch. 13, and I have it slated for ch. 17. But maybe also my reluctance to fit it in at this point, or to talk about it directly right now, means the idea is flawed.

At the end of ch. 13, I have five or six paragraphs of narration that position Gene at the threshold of the Kerouackian world. He's wondering how to enter, and also how one picks up the mixture of knowledge and skills Kerouac's narrators display in "On the Road" and "The Dharma Bums." What's this esoteric eastern religion, with its multisyllabic deities, and how does one learn the fundamentals of hobo existence? And why aren't the two realms mutually exclusive? So I thought that Gene's next steps would involve trying to learn something about both, which seem to have something to do with becoming a beatnik. **But he's actually learning more about growing up and becoming an adult in his job at the motel, where he has to work with his hands, deal with an unpleasant boss, and live with the fruits of his labors. And he's going to be challenged in his relationship with Dolores, who is a realist and a member of the working class, not an overgrown teenager like Dana. Dolores is no rebel, but she comes from a family with a strong matriarchal spirit and she's been taught not to be overly-impressed with men. So she's going to be a challenge for Gene, as well.**

Idea: In the scene(s) between Gene and Dolores in ch. 15, I can explore the class issue more through Dolores. Right now, Gene is still slumming; he may work as a handyman or parking cars, but he isn't really of the working class. He's a small town kid who may as well be in college, and he hasn't really been forced to make a real choice yet. In ch. 16, I'm going to have him make a choice for the first time, and so in ch. 15 I think I need to prepare for that, foreshadow it somehow.

May 6, 2002

I'm still working on ch. 15. In fact, I hardly worked at all on my novel for the last three weeks. Last weekend I was in the computer class with Cris. It seems I did work on it on the 20th sometime. But anyway, I'm still in ch. 15. I just managed to finally have something happen that is going to develop the relationship between Gene and Gustafson -- Gustafson accidentally drops his cigarette in the wastecan and blames Gene for the fire. But I haven't written the whole scene yet.

Eventually -- and I don't know why I don't do it now, in 15c -- Gustafson keels over. Gene pulls a Mr. Ripley and keeps the motel open while the old fart is in the hospital. He takes the opportunity to clean out the old man's apartment and repaint it, simply because it smells so bad, so when the old guy comes home from the hospital three weeks later, the place is all cleaned up. In the meantime Gene has been running the place, appointing himself the manager. *Alles in ordnung.*

What does it prove? That Gene is not just a handyman. And perhaps he and Dolores believe it for a while. But when the old man comes back, he knocks Gene right back down to handyman and, in fact, gives him hell for repainting his apartment instead of the rest of the joint like he's supposed to.

May 8, 2002

After working on the outline in the hotel room in Burlington, I looked at chapter 15 again and, with a few words, drew it to a close. At 3800 words, it brings the total to 94,500, which is of no importance at all.

The outline itself is more impressive, and fearful. While Gene's storyline is being fairly well developed in Part 2 -- though I don't really know where it's leading -- Bobby's is not. After the set piece at the shooting of LML, he's sort of going through his paces. I don't really have much for him to do until the Demo convention. The

problem with that is that that event takes place in July and I'm only up to about the third week in April. While Gene's story keeps developing in May and beyond, I just don't have much yet for Bobby to do until the convention. And in fact, I don't have much for him to do during the convention either, except witness events. All that, I'm going to have to figure out. I find the discrepancy between the relatively rich Gene storyline and the sparse Bobby storyline a little worrying.

One thing I did think of while I was working on the outline the other day is a chapter 16 where Bobby -- still in New York after doing the Tonight Show on Good Friday -- goes to old haunts and encounters people. That's **all** I have. So before I write it, I'm going to have to do some thinking about it. Maybe that can occupy my mind until I get a chance to work on the book again on, what is it, Saturday May 18. (Some progress. That's why I feel sometimes I'll never finish. And yet, if I continue at a rate of 1.2 chapters a month, surely I should finish the draft by the end of the year, right? Or at least in a spurt around the holidays.)

18 May, 2002 -- Waltham, Mass.

Chapter 15 is insubstantial and I'll have to rewrite most of it. But it's enough to go on.

Now I'm in a hotel in suburban Massachusetts on the second of three business trips, visiting BEA's office in nearby Burlington. (Waltham, Burlington, it doesn't make any difference -- the point is that there are all these high tech companies along a highway called Route 128, which gives its name to the area, a sort of Silicon Valley of the east. The entire landscape is rolling hills and bluffs covered with thick woods, romantic "ponds" (including Walden), "salt box" houses, and shopping centers.)

After a couple of days of getting up around 5:00 to meditate -- I'll do so even earlier tomorrow -- I slept in this morning until 8:30. Then I went out to get a haircut and have breakfast, and came back to the hotel about 10:30. Then I got on the internet and did some research, not very successfully. I wanted to find the name of that famous Jewish deli in New York where the comedians gather. And I didn't, really. I found a famous Jewish deli called Katz's on the lower east side, but somehow I don't think that's it -- it's too far away from midtown where all the television studios (and, I suppose, radio studios) were. So I was unsuccessful. And to top it off, when I got up to go to the bathroom, I had a phone cord hooked around my foot, and I pulled the whole cord and the cover right out of the wall. Now it's noon, and that was my morning.

My plan is to write, today and tomorrow, a whole draft of chapter 16 -- Bobby in New York. I got the idea this morning or last night that Bobby goes, of course, to the famous Jewish comedians' deli. The only trouble is that I know really nothing about it -- just that it's a famous deli, with booths, and lots of pictures of show business people on the wall, and that Jewish comedians and performers would hang out there, especially retired ones. This is typical of how this book is going -- I'll get an idea, and before I have a chance to research it, it's time to write it. I feel like I have to write it in order to keep the momentum of the book going. The book is not fully outlined enough yet so that I can write it out of order -- I don't think this particular book will ever get to that point.

I'll just write through it and do my best. The more I write, the more research I have to do. My fear is that the research will cause me to completely rewrite what I've done. But I'd rather have a complete first draft with my work cut out for me than have my book languish because I haven't gotten the research done. Another example of this is that I recently found a book, "The Holy Barbarians," about the beat scene in Los Angeles in the mid-to-late 1950s -- a wonderful resource. Of course, I wrote the part of the book that deals with that, wrote it a long time ago. But now I'm reading this book, and later I'll go back and rewrite that bit. Actually that bit is minor, compared to the hole I'm digging myself with my almost completely ignorant depiction of 1960 Las Vegas.

So let's do the old Q and A to brainstorm about this chapter.

Q. What do you know about the chapter so far?

A. That it's a series of scenes all involving Bobby; it's set in New York over a period of time not to exceed the weekend of Friday, April 15 through Sunday April 17, 1960; and that the reason Bobby is in New York is that he has done the Tonight Show on Friday night, i.e. Good Friday, to his secret embarrassment.

Q. What ideas do you have for the chapter?

A. First, that Bobby takes the opportunity of being in New York to look up some old haunts.

Q. What old haunts?

A. As a Jewish comedian in his 40s in 1960, he's undoubtedly done plenty of radio and TV work in New York, not to mention live work in nightclubs from the Catskills and Atlantic City to Miami.

Q. What do you know about that?

A. Just what I've seen in movies.

Q. And what is that?

A. Well, the straw I'm grasping at is the scene from some movie -- was it "The Front"? -- in which the characters gather at a delicatessen frequented by Jewish writers, comedians, actors and so forth. The name of this place I don't know, but it is apparently a famous real place and the name should be easy enough to find out. This can serve as the setting for one scene. I think the place still exists, in fact, which should make it possible for me to check it out later this month.

Q. What other ideas do you have for the chapter?

A. By "visits old haunts" I mean he visits, both on purpose and accidentally, places that evoke memories of those days, before he went out to Hollywood.

Q. "Accidentally"?

A. Yeah, here's an idea -- He intentionally visits some places and people. But he also finds that memories flood back to him at unexpected moments, in unexpected places. Such as a certain street corner.

Q. Are all these memories pleasant?

A. No, and thus it's a sort of bittersweet trip.

Q. What is the purpose of telling about these memories?

A. To reveal more about his character and background.

Q. What is one thread?

A. Romance. We can see pleasant and unpleasant memories of the romance which, since Bobby is a bachelor, end with him losing the girl.

Q. What is another thread?

A. Career. Ditto about the good and bad memories. Mostly good in this case.

Q. What is another thread?

A. I was thinking religion, but that would really get out of my depth. From what I know, it would turn into Krusty the Klown's bar mitzvah.

Q. Okay, let's not go there. What alternatives are there?

A. Do we need anything else? It's only, say, a 48-hour period at the most.

Q. Try for one more theme.

A. Hmm. Well, the book is mainly about the collision between show business, the Mafia, and politics. I could have him recall an incident of performing for mobsters, or politicians, or both.

Q. Gud, gud, as Sara would say. Can you say more?

A. Let's say a big political fundraising dinner.

Q. Well, that's a little too much like all the convention scenes later in Part 2. Tone it down. Have it foreshadow those scenes.

- A. How about... let's set it at a nightclub. It's not a big official event. Bobby is simply on the bill at the nightclub -- or not on the bill, he's more the MC, but he does some jokes. And the occasion is -- I'm thinking it's sort of *near* some political event, say a few nights after an election. Or perhaps a party of influential people, including the guest of honor, has simply come there after a big fundraiser. Perhaps Bobby is aware of the presence of both politicians and mobsters, and of a common public knowledge that they are in cahoots, and he finesses the subject in his routine.
- Q. That's not bad. Are you going to flash back to the whole scene?
- A. No, just have Bobby recall bits of it as he passes by the place, or has lunch there, or something. And we can also show it faded somewhat, indicating the passage of time... That sort of thing.
- Q. That's good.
- A. And to boot, we can have his girl be present, too, and have that part of the whole scene.
- Q. Now you really do seem to be talking about a flashback.
- A. Yeah... Let's not get too involved. This is just supposed to be a 4000-word chapter.
- Q. Right. Now, at what moment are you going to start the whole thing? Friday night or Saturday morning?
- A. I like the idea of the whole thing building to a nighttime scene, so Saturday morning in that case. But I also like the idea of picking up on Bobby right after the Tonight Show ends, so Friday night in that case. I like that latter because the fact that he's coming right from the stage, or set, lends energy to the opening of the chapter. We can have that scene and then cut to the next day pretty easily.
- Q. Okay, do that. Isn't it time to get started? It's almost 2:00 pm.
- A. Time for lunch, maybe. And then a nap.
- Q. Oh, come on.

Thursday, 23 May, 2002 -- flight from Chicago to San Francisco

On the way home from the second of three trips to Burlington, Mass.

After I wrote the above, I got off to a good start, writing a 1400-word scene 16a where Bobby comes off the set from doing the Tonight Show and has a little chat with one of the show's guests, Phyllis Diller. I did a quick -- well, not so quick, it took me more than half an hour -- search to make sure what I suspected, which is that Diller was a Jewish comic too. Then I introduced a New York Times journalist, quickly contrasted him with Tragege, because I'm bringing him back at the end.

The next day, Sunday, I went out at 4:30 to Belmont to meditate with Eishin Ikeda -- I wrote a diary entry about it already. I came back, ate a lot of sugar for breakfast, went out on a three mile walk in which I twisted my ankle, drove back to the hotel and iced it down, took a three-hour nap -- and finally, at four or five o'clock, got up and started right in writing. And I wrote the scene on Saturday morning where Bobby is walking around town and has a nostalgic memory of his old flame. Then I found myself going right into a flashback. I had sort of planned **not** to do a flashback, but that's where the story led, so okay. The chapter now is about 2700 words so far. It's going to be a long one at this rate. I didn't even mean to have a long bit about the romance until later in the chapter. But it works in 16b. Then in 16d I can go back and talk about how they broke up.

We just passed Mono Lake and Yosemite Valley, so we're not that far out of SF. I just heard the engines cut back -- we're still very much over the foothills of the Sierra. That's how high up you fly.

We passed over some terrific country, I'm guessing it was in South Dakota. A range of green hills surrounded by sandy dunes. I'd like to go back there and find it.

Sunday, 9 Jun, 2002

How time does fly. I have been "trying to get work on this done every weekend," but the "last modified" field in the list of files doesn't lie -- the last time I did so much as spell-check the chapter was May 23. Here it is more than two weeks later. What happened during those two weekends? Well, last weekend we went to New York -- I had no expectations of working then. But the weekend before, on the 25th -- I really have no idea. I think I just hung out at home doing domestic stuff that needed to get done after my last long absence.

Another trip to Burlington starts tomorrow. Meanwhile, I came into the office on Sunday to work. By way of work avoidance, I went through all the email I hadn't yet read from my vacation, and I made a change to the schedule on the team's home page. And now at 3:30 I'm finally getting down to work.

I'm going to re-read ch. 16 and see where I left off...

Four hours later -- I wrote another 900 words or so, continuing and extending the whole flashback stuff and getting Bobby out of Bloomingdale's and down toward the Oyster Bar for his lunch meeting. It's all right but it will need so much rewriting. Basically all I'm doing is writing plot and dialogue, and almost no setting and atmosphere.

Now off to Massachusetts again, hopefully for some more work.

Saturday, 14 Jun, 2002 -- Waltham, Mass.

To start off my day's work, I re-read the entries since early March. I put in bold type two sections, which I reproduce here:

I was reading these notes from the beginning, and noticed that I had the idea of the showgirl character really early.

He lies about his girlfriend and how much they fuck, when in reality she is a virgin, in fact Gene has little idea of female geography either. This is corrected when Bobby arranges for Gene to sleep with a showgirl. The showgirl teaches Gene what's what.

Well, I planned all along in Part 1 to put that in, but in the end, as the climax -- such as it is -- of the part developed, she never ended up in there after all. Instead I got into this scene where Gene wanders around Vegas -- weak. I think I should put it back in.

Or, I had the idea: make her the source of conflict in the second part. This whole budding romance between Gene and Dolores needs some complications.

And:

But he's actually learning more about growing up and becoming an adult in his job at the motel, where he has to work with his hands, deal with an unpleasant boss, and live with the fruits of his labors. And he's going to be challenged in his relationship with Dolores, who is a realist and a member of the working class, not an overgrown teenager like Dana. Dolores is no rebel, but she comes from a family with a strong matriarchal spirit and she's been taught not to be overly-impressed with men. So she's going to be a challenge for Gene, as well.

Idea: In the scene(s) between Gene and Dolores in ch. 15, I can explore the class issue more though Dolores. Right now, Gene is still slumming; he may work as a handyman or parking cars, but he isn't really of the working class. He's a small town kid who may as well be in college, and he hasn't really been forced to make a real choice yet. In ch. 16, I'm going to have him make a choice for the first time, and so in ch. 15 I think I need to prepare for that, foreshadow it somehow.

Just to remember I have to go back and do those.

But more importantly, I have the last Q and A I did, in which I talk about what I need to put into ch. 16, Bobby's visit to New York. I'm still in the middle of writing that section, so it's a good time to be reminded of these things:

- In addition to flashbacks about Bobby's romance, which I have started to cover pretty well, make sure you're covering moments in his past career too. I have a radio bit in there but I need more career bits.
- Also don't forget to put in more about politics, about him performing at a political benefit that also has some mob ties.
- I can cover at least one of these in his conversation with _____ at lunch. They can reminisce.

The only trouble with this is that I don't know who's he's having lunch with.

Q. Okay, who's he having lunch with?

A. Someone interesting.

Q. Whom did you have in mind?

A. Someone in show business -- a theatrical producer who is interested in having Bobby be in a show.

Q. What idea does that give you?

A. It could somewhat echo the setting of "Let's Make Love," i.e. an off-Broadway show.

Q. Why is that interesting.

A. It would be ironic for Bobby to not get a role in "Let's Make Love" but to get a role in an actual off-Broadway show.

Q. That's not bad. But before we go with that, are there alternatives to the theatrical producer?

A. Yes, but I still have the whole day to write about, and I also want to have him visit the famous deli. He can meet other comics and reminisce more with them later.

I love this Q and A technique! I had no idea about the ironic comparison between LML and the show the producer wants Bobby to be a part of until I started asking myself about it.

I still need a name for him. David... Schein. Can I do that? I'll do it until I can research more, and then I'll substitute the name of a real person. Hmm, I've got my Milton Berle bio right here... Monte Posner is the only relevant name. After the mid-fifties, Berle seriously elides his career, even though he continued to be pretty big until at least 1964 or 65. There's almost nothing after 1961, but unfortunately (not for him, of course), he did almost all TV and movies during the fifties, so there is little possibility he'd mention the name of a theatrical producer. I'll have to find a name someplace else, someone who was actively producing shows -- the kind which might feature or star a young up-and-coming comic -- in the late 40s and still at it in 1960. Shouldn't be too hard with a little research. I'll call him David Schein for now.

16 Jun 02

Okay, it's David *Schlain*.

Yesterday I wrote about 1200 words, finishing a draft of the scene with the producer Schlain. I was fairly OK with it, but today when I got down to work -- after hours and hours of avoiding it -- I added a lot to the scene and made it much, much better. The first way I wrote it, it was just funny and silly. Now it's a farce that turns into a pointed argument. More conflict (there was none before), sharper, and it plays much more on the themes of the book.

I finished that scene, had Bobby walk out onto 42nd St., and realized I had to end the chapter there. So chapter 16 is done, at 6300 words. (Puts the book over 100,000.) And then I forced myself to write the next scene, the first scene in ch. 17, a good thousand words that sets up the next scene with Bobby. Now for 17b I can write the scene in the hospital, where Gene goes after Gustafson has his heart attack.

I had written in a note in the outline for 17b:

God, I just can't get this idea out of my mind. Perhaps this is the place where Gene meets another girl -- perhaps a young nurse at the hospital. She's touched by his concern for his "grandfather."

This reference to Gustafson being his grandfather is my idea for how he justifies taking over the hotel to everybody. He's already told the delivery truck driver that G. is his grandfather, for no other reason than his typical lying behavior. Now there's an actual reason for it.

Then I had a little brainstorm:

This whole repetition of "my grandfather" can only indicate that Gene is looking for a father this whole time.

There we go, a psychological theme. I can make something of that. His relationship with Bobby already has the flavor of that a little bit.

So, about 3600 words for the weekend. Not enough. I had two full days with absolutely no commitments; I wasted too much time watching baseball on TV, driving around, going to eat. This morning I went to church and was back in the room at 11:15. Great -- but I couldn't get anything done, was really restless, went out to eat, and didn't get back into the room until 3:30. And then I went to sleep for 75 minutes. Finally I got some work done after the nap. Actually I always get work done after a nap.

4 Jul 02

Another few weeks passed. It's frustrating. But this is a four-day weekend, and although I'm going to attend the all-day sesshin on Saturday the 6th, I'll still have a chance to get work done on two days.

Today I'll write the whole scene with Gene in the hospital in ch. 17, and I would like to write at least one more scene. Then I can finish the chapter later this weekend.

Q. What scene are you writing today?

A. Scene 17b. The setting is the hospital in Las Vegas where the ambulance has brought Gustafson. It's later in the same day as the end of ch. 15.

Q. Describe the setting.

A. The hospital is an old 30s hospital, but there is construction of a new hospital going on outside. As a 30s hospital, it has narrow tiled corridors of plastered walls painted institutional green. There are hanging globe lighting fixtures and intercom speakers hanging in the corners. The chairs are straight-backed institutional wooden chairs, and if you turn them over they say MFGD IN NEVADA DEPT OF CORRECTIONS on the bottom. There is a nurse named Spiegel and another named Sears.

It is about two in the afternoon.

Q. Describe Gene's state of mind.

A. He is in a sort of state of suspension -- let me explain. At times of change or decision, when something he says or does might affect the course of future events, he completely relaxes and acts intuitively. Like Ripley, he chooses his self-interest every time, and does what needs to be done. Usually this involves lying. Of course he lies all the time about himself and his circumstances -- the whole thing about his grandfather was an offhand comment to the truck driver in ch. 15 -- but in a moment of crisis like this, his mind really starts whirring and he says just the right things to manipulate the situation. The only time this did not help him was back at the end of part 1 where he was over his head in the group with Sinatra et al.

He hasn't had lunch, he may be a little light-headed.

Q. What needs to happen?

A. Simply that Gene gets a piece of paper from the hospital showing him to be Gustafson's grandson. This piece of paper is noticed later and becomes significant, a little piece of evidence that convinces someone else that he really is the grandson. More importantly, the whole thing solidifies in his mind.

We open with him waiting in the corridor. Then Gustafson is wheeled past him, and Gene has a scene where he calls the old guy Grandad (Gustafson can't respond -- we'll have a comic moment where he's conscious but has an oxygen mask on, so when Gene calls him Grandad, Gustafson is trying to say Fuck You but no one understands him. Then he goes to the nurse's station. He plants in everyone's mind the notion that Gustafson is senile and might not recognize him, and he gets a piece of paper that shows his relation to the old guy.

Q. What about this whole note that he meets a girl?

A. I think that just complicates things too much. I don't need another character and another whole plot thread. **Besides, if I go back and rewrite the last chapter of part 1 to have Gene actually sleep with the call girl, I can have the other girl in his mind the whole time without actually having her be an active character in part 2. Maybe I can bring her in toward the end and pop his bubble. Hmm, not a bad idea.**

Q. What else do you need to show?

A. Nothing!

Three hours later -- that scene is done. 1140 words, it didn't even take two hours. Part of that time I did a meditative walk around the church -- which is where I'm working today. Today being July 4, the whole place is closed; and yet I'm going to open it for meditation as usual at 5:00. As an added attraction, I can't connect to the internet, at least from the "lounge," which used to be the old office. So it works out great. If only I had the whole place to myself any time I wanted it!

Now it's on to scene 17c. The rest of the chapter is harder. Even though I know where Bobby is, I don't have all that much for him to do. He's already kept his appointment for the day, and all he has to do is wander around for the next eight hours until he meets up later with Feldman at the burlesque joint. Of course, I can and will send him on another nostalgia trip, but that's getting harder too. Now that I have Bobby and Lucy together, I have to break them up, all in flashback.

Avoiding more work, however, I have napped, failed to get on the internet, and gone across the street for a coffee. Now I have only an hour and 40 minutes left. I'll write through the next scene, knowing I'll probably pitch much of it.

I wrote another 1100 words, doing a not-too-bad scene between Bobby and Lucy, showing what happened when he proposed to her. It starts them off on the downhill slide.

So that's 2300 words today. Very good. Another 3000 words this weekend and I'll be happy.

6 July 02

I went today to the all-day sit at Hartford Street Zen Center, and in the last two forty-minute sitting periods of the day, I had a real breakthrough on this book.

Up to now I've never quite known how Part 2 will develop. I've introduced a bunch of stuff and had the Democratic convention to shoot for, but I've never had a good idea of what happens to either Bobby or Gene. Now I do.

Working backward: the whole book climaxes in Part 3, when Bobby and Gene drive Marilyn Monroe from Henderson to Tahoe. I've always wanted to have her somehow involved in some kind of climax or revelation, but I never had any idea what. Here's the first idea I had today: MM is high on various kinds of pills; that's why they have to "rescue" her from the Misfits set and take her to the casino in Tahoe that Sinatra is co-owner of (I forget the name for the moment -- oh yeah, the Cal-Neva. So in her confused state, she rambles about the universe and

everything, and she comes out with this zinger at the climax: "Everything just *is*." While this sounds like gibberish to Bobby, Gene nearly runs off the road, because he's been trying to get into Zen like the Dharma Bums, and this adage hits home for him. It leads to some sort of big life-turn for him.

Second idea: Bobby picks him up for this trip at the Cactus Motel -- it's the only place he knows to look for him, and sure enough, he's there. BUT he's in the middle of some sort of crisis with Dolores, and in the middle of this argument, Bobby shows up and Gene just goes with him. This is the end of the whole story with Dolores, and obviously I'll have to lead up to it. But very dramatic. Now I know how that ends.

Third idea: Lucy turns up at the Demo Convention. Yes, she got married to the orthodontist, but that was because she was socially climbing, and she dumped the doc a long time ago. She has been involved, in succession, with several men, including a gay Broadway composer, and now is a sometime girlfriend of some senator -- but get this, *JFK has his eye on her and Bobby finds himself bearding her during a convention-time fundraiser. And Bobby's humiliation is complete when he actually has to deliver her, the love of his life, to JFK.*

So during the ride from Vegas to Tahoe, Bobby is disconsolate -- he's in a state as well as MM, and so a lot of what she says is kicked off by his tragic emotional state.

Fourth idea. I don't know about this one, but by now I was flying. In an epilogue to the book, we see Gene in San Francisco eight years later -- it's 1968, and he is now 28 and on acid and he sees an old rerun of Oceans 11 on television and tries to convince his hippie buddies that he was there, well practically, and he knew Bobby Blaine - - what ever happened to him -- well he had that talk show, and then that sitcom, but yeah, nothing for the last four years or so, what the hell ever did happen to him.

I think that's all the ideas I had. All -- ha! That was unbelievable. An epilogue! Somewhere around the 200,000th word, I suppose.

It happened during the last two meditation periods. I hadn't even been thinking about the book during the day. Most of what I'd been thinking about was sex. But I had been settling, settling, getting quieter and quieter, and finally the sex part of my brain boiled away and I was thinking about the dharma talk given that morning by Jim Biggs. He mentioned someone he knew who had had "spontaneous enlightenment," which he described evocatively as seeing the world and its people with all the conflicts having evaporated. And I thought to myself the phrase "Everything just is" as a way of partially describing that, and then I thought that would be something funny to have somebody say to Gene, and suddenly I heard Marilyn Monroe saying it.

Oh, one more idea. I didn't get this while meditating but while basking in the glory of all the other ideas. I'm going to feed MM a bunch of Stephanie's lines -- particularly that b.s. about being "an old soul."

13 Jul 02

I did not do any more work that weekend. The only problem with the one-day sesshin is that it leaves only Sunday remaining on the weekend, and since I'd been out of the house all day Thursday (writing) and Saturday (meditating) I had a lot to do around the house. Also Cris and I had a fight right after I got home from church, effectively negating any of the creative energy I might have that day. And the fight was totally my fault, too.

So now it's a week later, it's Saturday, and I got off by myself again to write. 1:05 pm. I have all day with nothing in the evening scheduled, so if I want to take until 7:00, I can.

I'll re-read what I did last time and the notes above to see where I'm at. I'm pretty sure I can finish chapter 17 today. I wouldn't be surprised if there are 4000 words to go before the end of the chapter, during which (I think) I need to show Bobby at the strip club and to talk about the end of his affair with Lucy. I'm not sure if I need anything else in there -- perhaps showing him on Sunday morning in New York or flying back to California.

I have to be careful because the machine I'm working on now -- my laptop from BEA with a new hard disk installed and a new OS, Windows 2000 Professional, keeps crashing for no reason I can see. I'll have to save after like every sentence.

Some notes:

Above I wrote:

- In addition to flashbacks about Bobby’s romance, which I have started to cover pretty well, make sure you’re covering moments in his past career too. I have a radio bit in there but I need more career bits.
- Also don’t forget to put in more about politics, about him performing at a political benefit that also has some mob ties.
- I can cover at least one of these in his conversation with _____ at lunch. They can reminisce.

But I didn’t really do that. All I wrote about in his career was “The Liberators.” I still need to cover those first two bullets.

27 Jul 02

Yesterday I looked at the outline a little, now that I’m finished with chapter 17. Didn’t add much, but rearranged a lot. Here’s what I have scoped out, initially, for the next chapter:

Sat May 7	Ch. 18a	A few weeks later. The man who delivers furniture comes back. Gene explains to him that he’s now the manager, etc.	Gene	Gene has also repainted Gustafson’s room and this is why the furniture man is there, to replace the mattress.
that night	Ch. 18b	Gene runs the place at night	Gene	He encounters the motel’s night customers -- the hookers and their customers, the poor, beaten salesmen who need a room, etc.
Mon May 9	Ch. 18c	Bobby spending the day driving from Reno to Vegas	Bobby	After playing the first weekend gig in Reno May 6-8. Driving, he misses Gene. Should close the loop on “Fish and Fry.”
Wed May 11	Ch. 18d	Bobby comes to see Gene at the Cactus?	Bobby	Perhaps on the spur of the moment, Bobby invites Gene and Dolores to come see his show at the Riv. She stiffens, and Gene, noticing this, actually refuses the invite on account of her getting kicked out of the pool before. Bobby: I’m sure it was a mistake. Gene: It was no mistake. Purpose is to contrast Gene’s progress with Bobby’s; Demonstrates Gene’s independence. She softens up to him and invites him to her (family’s) home.
Wed May 11	Ch. 18f	Bobby is surprised when Frank and Sammy join him on stage Afterward, Bobby and Sinatra talk and Frank promises to come on the stage again soon with him	Bobby	This leads to another Vegas gig for Bobby as well as more TV work

I like the way this chapter is laid out, because it really moves several things forward -- Gene’s relationship with Dolores, his career at the motel, his spiritual journey, and Bobby’s career as well as his relationship with Gene. It keeps Bobby and Gene connected, and harks back to Part 1 in several ways.

Q. What do you have to work on today?

A. The beginning, at least, of chapter 18.

Q. When does this chapter take place?

A. About three weeks after Gustafson’s heart attack.

Q. Isn’t that an awfully long time for a heart attack victim to be in the hospital?

A. Not in 1960.

Q. What is the key thing in the first scene?

- A. The main thing is to show Gene in charge of the motel in Gustafson's absence. He shows this by accepting a furniture delivery and telling the truck driver (carrying on the charade) that he is keeping the motel going until "Grandad" is out of the hospital.
- Q. What other things do you want to show?
- A. We'll check in with Gene's relationship with Dolores. She still won't go out with him, and is actually pretty ambivalent about Gene's whole I'm-the-grandson routine. She goes along with it for the time being.
- Q. Anything else?
- A. Not really. This first bit can be pretty short.
- Q. What's the next thing that happens?
- A. In 18b -- there doesn't have to be much of a break before it -- we'll see Gene running the motel on Saturday night. He has to deal with the motel's regular patrons; this is the first time we see them in the book.
- Q. What is the purpose of that scene?
- A. It's part of Gene's growing up. He has taken on more of the responsibilities of running the place; now he has to deal with the unpleasant realities of what adult life is really like. Also "the poor, beaten salesmen who need a room." This is all the stuff that's hidden from adolescents -- drunkenness, whoring, drugs, sex, petty crime, violence -- and it's the true beat life that Kerouac writes about a little, but really only hints at, in "On the Road." Gene has to deal with it very directly, because he stands as one of the few people on that strip -- there are several such motels -- who is not a prostitute, a pimp, a drug dealer, or some kind of hood. But he doesn't have the luxury of standing apart from all these; he stands in the middle of it, up to his knees in it. The question is whether he's going to actually become a part of it somehow.
- Q. What does it mean "become a part of it"? What does that matter?
- A. Whether he contributes to the world's misery or contributes to the opposite by having compassion and giving comfort.
- Q. That's a little heavy.
- A. It's a heavy section. But it will also have elements of humor and farce.
- Q. It sounds long.
- A. Yes, I think it will be sort of long. Long enough to show him encountering that moral struggle, dealing with it, and making a decision about it.
- Q. But jeez, that's only one part of one chapter.
- A. Hey, it's a novel. It's supposed to be dense.

6 Aug 02

- Q. What's on for today?
- A. Continuing chapter 18.
- Q. Where are you?
- A. Just started 18b before I knocked off last weekend. I really ought to finish 18b today at least. That should be a good 2000 words, maybe more. Since there won't be that much dialogue, it might not be too much.

- Q. Remember, it's important to be concise.
- A. Right.
- Q. What are the most important things to show?
- A. First, the milieu, and second, Gene's choice.
- Q. What's the choice?
- A. I said above that he stands in the middle of all the crap. He has two decisions to make. First, whether to become part of the crap or to hold himself above it; second, whether to contribute to suffering by making it worse, or to help alleviate suffering through compassion.
- Q. What did you just realize?
- A. The two choices are the same choice. By deciding to be compassionate, he is not holding himself above the crap, but he is not making it worse, either.
- Q. So what does that tell you?
- A. His evolution during the scene should go from trying to hold himself above it to a crucial choice where he decides to act compassionately. By doing so, he gives up the idea that he is above it all, but he retains his humanity.
- Q. What else did you just realize?
- A. Dolores witnesses none of this. She works during the mornings and is not present during the hours of heaviest business.
- Q. Doesn't she come back and clean it all up, though?
- A. Yes, but she doesn't deal with the fucked-up people, only the aftermath of their presence. Maybe we see something of that later. But the focus is on Gene's interactions with the people of the night.
- Q. What did you just realize about the place of this chapter in the book?
- A. This chapter contains the turning points for both Gene and Bobby.

10 Aug 02

- Q. Today?
- A. Continuing chapter 18. I write a fine farcical-weird scene which showed the misery of the patrons and the way he deals with them, but I need to do more.
- Q. What more?
- A. Specifically: "The question is whether he's going to actually become a part of it somehow -- whether he contributes to the world's misery or contributes to the opposite by having compassion and giving comfort.... He has two decisions to make. First, whether to become part of the crap or to hold himself above it; second, whether to contribute to suffering by making it worse, or to help alleviate suffering through compassion." That was lacking from the scene I wrote earlier this week.
- Q. Are you going to put it into that scene or write a new scene?
- A. It will be a new scene. The last bit I wrote took place on Friday May 6. This bit can take place on Saturday.
- Q. Is there anything that needs to happen before you depict the events of that scene?

- A. I'm thinking he needs to hear some dharma. I'm been wondering where to put that, and I think it has to be before he is called to make this choice. Otherwise there's no preparation for his choice. He doesn't have the tools and the reader is not (subtly) clued in.

4:30 p.m. -- I wrote 1000 words, inserting the Gene-visits-the-Buddhists scene so it takes place in the middle of chapter 18, after the riotous events of the previous night (Friday) to prepare him for what takes place on Saturday.

I don't know what takes place on Saturday, though.

The chapter is already up to 5500 words, and I'm going to have to have a chapter break after the Saturday night events. I was planning on having Bobby's visit happen in the latter part of the chapter, but I'll have to have that in the next chapter.

Where I break chapters makes little difference. It's just a way of organizing all the writing.

The events described in chapter 18 happen all out of order. First we have early Saturday afternoon. Then we flash back to the previous three weeks, and then to Friday night. Then we bring it up to Saturday morning, and then -- finally in the "present" -- Gene goes to visit the Buddhist temple. The chapter will continue from then on chronologically.

I went in and played with the outline to bring the outline of ch. 18 up to where the actual chapter is, and to separate the Bobby-centric events I had planned into ch. 19. Then I mopped up a little bit after that. I am even closer to understanding how all the events of part 2 come together, and for the first time, I think I have a realistic list of all the chapters in part 2. According to the way the outline is now, after the current chapter I'm working on, there will be 5 more chapters in part 2. At my current rate of working, I should definitely be able to finish those by the end of the year. Whether I can also finish part 3, the end of the book, is another question. But I should have lots of time over the Xmas break to work. The company is forcing us to take two weeks off again.

It's almost 5:00. I should probably pack it in, go home and try to cool the house off -- it's the second day of a heat wave. Cris is off in Alameda all day visiting Francisca.

Friday, August 16, 2002 -- Los Angeles

In the Airport Hilton for a couple of days of work on my novel. I described the totalitarian room and the unbearably desolate view from the window in my personal journal.

What's on for today? I'll try to finish chapter 18. I need to write the crucial "act of compassion" scene, 18e.

Reflecting on 18d, which I wrote in the last session -- For months I planning to write a scene in which Gene visits some Buddhists. In fact, I first mentioned it in January when I was starting to write Part 2. (I've written about 40,000 words in part 2, by the way -- quite a lot for less than 9 months of work at this pace. That's encouraging.) But I never knew at all what it would consist of until I actually needed it from a narrative perspective. Then, as soon as I knew why I needed the scene and what its narrative purpose was, I wrote it very quickly.

5:00 pm. I didn't really get down to work until after 2:00, after a sort of nap. I wasn't quite sleepy enough to take a nap really, but I did my best, and then I got up and wrote one paragraph. It was a hard paragraph but it provided some transition into what I really had to write, and then I took a short walk and ate a bacon-chicken sandwich at a Carl's Jr. that featured about a dozen very well-behaved Marines, most of them in uniform. I sat there waiting for my sandwich covertly watching them.

When I got back I got down to work, wrote a few hundred words, laid down again, and then at 4:00 I did a good hour of work and finished the chapter. At least I guess it's finished... it's a little weird and quiet, and maybe I'll have to go back and pump it up. I thought it was going to be farcical but I guess I already used up all the farce I could fit into that chapter in 18c.

So now it's 5:20, I really should keep going.

I'm already tired of watching airplanes out the fucking window.

17 Aug 2002 -- Still at L.A. Airport Hilton

I noticed something I wrote in recent entries in this notes file that typifies the way I work on this book. On July 27 I wrote about working on (what was then scheduled to be) scene 18b -- "we'll see Gene running the motel on Saturday night. He has to deal with the motel's regular patrons; this is the first time we see them in the book." I actually did write about that in 18b, but it also extended into 18c and then I finished what I had intended for the scene in 18e. So one scene became three, which is why this morning I have to start a new chapter, ch. 19, and work on scenes I had originally scheduled for the last part of ch. 18.

I don't have a hard and fast rule about how long chapters have to be. And as I said before, the division of chapters that I'm making now is inconsequential for the eventual finished book, because to get it finished I'll have to cut a lot. So the stuff I'm about to write at the beginning of what is now ch. 19 may well end up back in the same chapter with the things I've just written.

I have about three hours to work this morning and I want to make the most of them. So let's see, I have to start with Bobby, having done a weekend in Reno and having a midweek gig to do in Vegas -- it's the promised gig back at the Riviera, part of the spoils of his association with Sinatra -- driving from Reno to Vegas. His interior monologue gives the reader a chance to catch up with what he's doing. It's two days after the events of ch. 18.

In the second scene in the chapter -- all the driving having reminded him of his trips back and forth to Vegas with Gene -- he visits Gene at the Cactus. There we have the interesting scene where he offers free tickets to his show to Gene and Dolores, but they refuse, remembering the incident where they got thrown out of the Riviera pool at the end of part 1. This further develops both Gene's character and his relationship with Bobby, and provides another in the series of humiliations for Bobby. Furthermore it allows Gene to impress Dolores and thereby finally earn a date with her. The date will take place in ch. 21.

Finally, there is a third scene in the chapter where we show Bobby on stage at the Riv a night or two later. The place is only two-thirds full and he knows he will never get another gig there again when, like magic, Sinatra and Davis show up and the place starts jumpin'. Bingo, the next night the place is packed. So this is a short respite for Bobby from his humiliations.

But back to the beginning of the chapter.

Q. What is the summary of 19a?

A. Bobby drives from Reno, having performed there over the weekend, to Las Vegas to do a midweek gig at the Riviera.

Q. What are some things you know?

A. Bobby is driving alone; it's daytime; he drives down through Nevada on U.S. 95. He has several hours in which to think.

Q. What does he think about?

A. As usual, the gig he's just done, the state of his career, new material, etc. He might also mention the upcoming convention, just to keep it in our minds, and Lucy, ditto.

Q. Has anything happened to make him think of Lucy?

A. Not since his trip to New York in ch. 16 and 17, which take place the second week of April. It's now almost a month later -- Monday, May 9, to be exact.

Q. Anything else?

A. Can't think of anything.

Q. Then why don't you get started?

A. Lazy.

Q. Maybe this needs more work before you start.

A. No, I want to write at least 19a this morning, I really do.

Q. It doesn't have to be long.

A. No, that's right. Okay.

10:52 a.m. -- okay, a thousand words took care of 19a and a transition to 19b. Very neat. I made a nice joke about all the pent-up piss from the soldiers in a military convoy causing a flash flood. And I introduced the subject of race relations which is one of the themes of the chapter.

Now I'm off to Kinko's and to the reading at a bookstore in West Hollywood, or Westwood, which I'm not sure is the same thing.

Sunday, 25 Aug. 2002

Back in San Francisco, to write in the office on Sunday afternoon. A limited amount of time to work for I have a date with Dina tonight.

On the way from the car to the office -- my office downtown at BEA -- I stop at the Briazz franchise on Kearny St. to get a sandwich. I realize they have tables there and I wind up spending 45 minutes there writing -- I just start right in and finish scene 19b, in which Bobby visits Gene at the motel. It came out differently than I imagined it, and more complex. Instead of having them simply turn down his invitation to the Riv as a matter of principle, thereby humiliating him more, Dolores tells Bobby that instead of simply inviting them to the Riv to make up for the swimming pool incident, what they really need to do is change the policy about the swimming pool.

This is not completely out of left field for her, because she's shown some spunk before, but I probably need to go back and lay the groundwork for this speech a little more. But I can worry about that later.

So instead of a simple humiliation, we have Bobby promising to actually do something about the policy. Of course he won't be able to, and we'll see some of the subtle ways businesses keep from doing the right thing while saying they of course support doing the right thing.

So I did 550 words just sitting in the restaurant. Now to do 19c with Sinatra et al. I even started it off already sitting there. Now I'm in the office finally.

I did 2000 words of 19c. Sort of "finished" it, but in a way that can be almost completely rewritten. It's just a comedy scene on stage, and the only thing it contributes is a little commentary to the whole theme of race and politics. There will have to be another scene, 19d, in which Bobby tries to influence the swimming pool policy of the Riviera. I want to have Sinatra involved in that, because otherwise it's not even credible.

Or maybe not. Maybe I just have Bobby try to do it on his own. I dunno -- in any case, next time. I'm about out of time today.

Saturday, 31 Aug 02

Muddy Waters Café on Church Street. Here I spent several weeks in the winter of 2001, finishing work on the second edition of *Too Beautiful* (the book) and met with Jeanne C. during a heavy downpour to discuss writing for SF Gate. I have a choice now of working at the church office, my office, a library someplace, or a café.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Muddy Waters	Easily available latte, background music, many distractions	Must keep buying coffee
Church office	Couch to nap on, complete privacy	Feeling of isolation
My office	Privacy, can sleep on floor, nearby restaurants	Proximity of porn district, internet connection
A library	None, comparatively	Uncomfortable chairs, other patrons who are actually more annoying than the ones in the café

Today I'll write 19d and finish chapter 19. I feel so confident!

I finished 19d and then went for a bit of a walk. Stopped by the church to drop off my computer, went into the office, and found it stripped, the table, chair and couch gone. So much for that as a work spot -- though I guess I could work in the new office on weekends and holidays.

Took a walk anyway, ate a couple of cheap tacos, ran into Dina and Tina, picked up the laptop, came back to the café. Anna was still here and introduced me to this guy -- not a grad student but a sometimes boyfriend. I reread all of ch. 19 and changed a few words. It'll need to be pumped up in spots, but it's basically okay.

Now I really need to pause and do a reassessment. I'm basically finished with many of the plot threads in the first half of Part 2, and I need to transition into the second half of the part, the whole thing around the Demo convention. That'll take some thinking and planning. Maybe I'll try to get that done on Monday, a holiday.

2 Sep 02

Monday, a holiday. Almost 5:00 pm -- wasted day which I will try to salvage a little by doing some thinking about what comes next.

I'm at the end of ch. 19 and I have blown through a lot of the plot issues that I initiated at the beginning of part 2 and before:

Bobby's career is still scraping along almost entirely on Nevada gigs; he has no movie prospects. The only thing he has going that has nothing to do with Sinatra is his Tonight Show gigs. He has a hope that the gig opening for Judy Garland will lead to getting on her train rather than Sinatra's, but there's nothing to suggest that this is a real possibility.

Gene has ensconced himself in Las Vegas at the Cactus Motel. While Gustafson lingers in the hospital, Gene's doing everything. This is supposed to raise him in Dolores' eyes, but it hasn't yet. That's one open issue. I have managed to get him established, though, not only as a handyman and motel night man but as a person who is competent to do more than just drive and park cars.

Gene has investigated further the Buddhist thing, and I don't think there's much there for him to do in Las Vegas. The only thing he can do is leave there and go on the road, or start reading, and he's unlikely to read much while he's in Las Vegas. However, I want to make the whole thing about Buddhist compassion a big thing for his character, and he hasn't gotten there yet. So that's another thing he has to do.

Gene has not yet ♦ looked for beatniks in Las Vegas, but I don't know how far I want to go with that. Originally I was going to have him go to the university and drift into the library. There he was either or both going to:

Meet a girl

Find a crucial book

I'm not going to do the first one. Instead, as (perceived) competition for Dolores, I'm going to write the call girl back into the beginning of Part 1 ♦ and then bring her back ♦ at the very end of Part 2 somehow. **IDEA:** Have her come to the motel as a hooker, of course! And it's right at the moment when, or right before, Bobby comes to pick him up for the trip with M.M.

As far as finding a crucial book is concerned, I think I could ✓ still do that, but I'm concerned that it's a little late in the section to be having him drift over to the library. Maybe I could have him do it after he visits the Buddhist guy. Or, **IDEA:** why not have the priest give him a book to read? ✓

What book, though? A Buddhist book, obviously.

I spent an enormous amount of time in flashbacks depicting Bobby's old flame, Lucy, and I'm going to bring her back in one of the Demo Convention chapters. I don't regard this as an open issue because I basically know what I'm going to do: Have Bobby be assigned to escort her to a banquet, for the purpose of bearding her for JFK.

Most of these ideas are for Gene, and that's fine. I have plenty of Bobby stuff to do during the next few chapters. Basically it's mostly not **about** him so much as using him as a witness, though the reappearance of Lucy will really help. But I still have a lot of development of Gene to do. I have to get him to the point where he not only has explored all the possibilities of being with Dolores, but realizes he's at the end of it.

7 Sep 02 -- Newark Airport Hilton

Open issues from the last entry:

1. While Gustafson lingers in the hospital, Gene's doing everything at the motel. This is supposed to raise him in Dolores' eyes, but it hasn't yet. I need to put in a transitional scene before the one where he actually goes to her home and we have the "cat disaster." ✓
2. I want to make the whole thing about Buddhist compassion a big thing for his character, and he hasn't gotten there yet. ... Gene is given a "crucial book" by the Buddhist priest (go back and put this in the end of scene 18d), and reads it, the latter of which can be related second-hand after the fact -- and this should lead to him building more compassion. This is essential to prepare for the later scene in which he expresses his compassion. ✓
3. Gene looks for beatniks? That's a real question mark; I'm not sure how this would fit.

One of the problems I have is that I meant to write a "crucial act-of-compassion scene" as scene 18e, but it didn't turn out to be crucial enough, and I have to build on it. I wonder if this is a fundamental problem in my book, that I fail to commit to the true purpose of some scenes and have to add another scene later to cover what I should have put in the first one.

I wasted *lots* of time today and it's already 2:25 and I'm just getting down to work.

4:15 pm -- After an attempt at a nap, I went back and fixed chapter 18 to take care of no. 2 above. I reread most of ch.18 -- not bad. It wasn't an easy chapter to write; in a way I'm surprised it's done.

Cris calls. I hear about the possums, about a phone call that woke her up and made her grouchy, about her relationship with her friends. I ask her to mail me a file and I have to talk her through it. All that takes half an hour.

I add 400 words to chapter 19 to wrap up the bit about "Fish and Fry," depicting a moment of hilarity in Bobby's dressing room as he broaches the idea to Sammy and the others.

Now it's 5:40. I take a leak.

I got the file from Cris -- my outline. I had an older version of it. I'll take a look at it -- the main idea is to figure out where to put the scenes that explicate no. 1 above.

6:07 pm -- Okay, as I have it mapped out now, the next two chapters look like this:

Ch. 20a	Gene and Dolores talk, she invites him home	Gene	
Ch. 20b	Bobby opens, at the Cal-Neva, for Judy Garland	Bobby	We hear that Sinatra's visit in 18f has led to more Foreshadow something here -- Judy is like Marily
Ch. 20c	Lawford conversation	Bobby	Bobby and Peter Lawford talk more about the up - this is 6 weeks after their previous conversation months before the convention. Bobby finds out that he will not be invited to have convention. The reason for this is evidently his "n the FBI.
Ch. 20d	So later we do have the scene where she takes him to meet her family. Have a cat disaster and other small disasters happening throughout the visit, so that Gene just sort of passes through this whirlwind which is nothing like he expected.	Gene	Make the whole scene breathless, rollicking, a ton be mirrored by the JFK-Sinatra dinner scene sho
Ch. 21a	??		Completion of gene's turn to compassion?
Ch. 21b	Gustafson returns to the motel Dolores: "What's the matter with you? Why don't you quit?" Why, indeed.	Gene	But when the old man comes back, he knocks Ge to handyman and, in fact, gives him hell for repair instead of the rest of the joint like he's supposed He doesn't quit because I need him to be there to suffering -- he has to be brought down so his red MM makes sense.
	(JFK comes to visit Sinatra's house in Palm Springs)		Not an actual scene in the book -- merely mention
Ch. 21c	Farce: JFK's family has dinner with Sinatra's family, including Sinatra's goons.	Bobby	In July, (JFK) came into the Democratic National victories in all seven of the primaries he had ente sixty-one votes short of the nomination. Serendipitously, the convention was held in the L Arena, putting Kennedy's show business support middle of the action.

It doesn't really thrill me.

I think there's something I haven't really thought out about this chapter 20. Scenes 20b and 20c, as outlined above, are no problem. The problem is the Gene scenes.

I've had this whole "cat disaster" business on my mind for months, since I dreamed it up in January:

So getting a job at the motel allows him to be around Dolores more. He invites her to a movie, and we see a contrast between the way she treats him with the way Dana treated him. Dolores is both more quick tempered and less of a bitch. Perhaps Gene learns to fight back eventually.

Ha, all this stuff I haven't learned to do. I have a temptation to make the relationship between Gene and Dolores an idealized version of the relationship between me and Cris.

Eventually he's going to meet her family. But perhaps before he does, he has to become a desk clerk. She doesn't want to tell them she's dating the handyman, but the assistant manager. So he has to achieve that. Then when he does meet her family, we have all sorts of unexpected things. It's going to be difficult,

because I can't have it be a sentimental portrayal of the hardworking family and I don't want it to be like Tobacco Road either. (Has anybody ever actually read the book that gave that phrase to our idiom??) The way to do it is through farce. Have a cat disaster and other small disasters happening throughout the visit, so that Gene just sort of passes through this whirlwind which is nothing like he expected. Make the whole scene breathless, rollicking, a tour de force.

Looking back at that note, I see that, first, I haven't done the scene where they go to a movie. I had started that, actually, in chapter 15, and then I cut it -- I decided I didn't want them getting so friendly so fast. So the way it stands in ch. 15 now, she refuses to go out with him:

"If you let me take you to a movie, maybe I wouldn't have to bother you like this."

"Why don't you go paint something?" she yells back.

"Why don't you want to go to a movie with me?"

She appears in the bathroom doorway, pulling on rubber gloves. "Listen, Gene, you're nice. It's nothing personal. But my mama didn't raise me to go out with no handyman, I'm sorry. Or a parking lot attendant. Or a beatnik, for that matter. And don't you go thinking I'm just some motel maid. I'm going to be an accountant. This is just something I'm doing to make money."

"Well, this isn't exactly going to be my career, either."

"All right, good for you. Why don't you go out and get a real job. You work at that big casino, you got that show business buddy -- *you say*. Why don't you get him to tell them to hire you as something else? Why don't you be a desk clerk at the hotel or something? That don't take a college degree. Now, for the last time, go away, before I throw something."

Well now it's five chapters (and a fictional chronological month) later. Maybe it's time for them to go out to a movie. *Then* she can invite him home.

Sat May 14	Ch. 20a	Gene and Dolores talk, she agrees to go to a movie	Gene	
	Ch. 20b	They go to a movie	Gene	
Fri May 20	Ch. 20c	Bobby opens, at the Cal-Neva, for Judy Garland	Bobby	We hear that Sinatra's visit in 18f has led to more work for Bobby Foreshadow something here -- Judy is like Marilyn
Fri May 20	Ch. 20d	Lawford conversation	Bobby	Bobby and Peter Lawford talk more about the upcoming convention. Bobby finds out that he will not be invited to have a public role at the convention.
Sun May 22	Ch. 20e	Dolores takes Gene to meet her family. Have a cat disaster ...	Gene	This will be mirrored by the JFK-Sinatra dinner scene shortly afterward.

As for 20d, I'm going to have to go back to ch. 14 or something and find out what they've talked about already, to avoid repetition.

Nah, there's nothing.

9:04 pm -- I ordered room service and I'm watching a David Mamet movie on TV. David Mamet loves this actress named Rebecca Pidgeon -- she plays the femme fatale in at least two of his movies. She's great and I don't know why she's never in anything else. *[A note later: it turns out she is his wife.]*

Am I ever going to get anything done on this fucking chapter? I've wasted a whole day here. I've written 400 words on a chapter I'd already regarded as finished.

Q. What is your fucking problem?

A. Uh, I wrote all the other stuff too fast? I outpaced myself?

Q. Yeah, sure. What ever happened to GET ON WITH IT?

- A. I did, I did.
- Q. So let's do it now.
- A. I'm tired of listening to this motherfucking hard drive going around and around.
- Q. No. You have three hours left. It's 9:47. You can write the first two scenes at least.
- A. All right.
- Q. Promise?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay, what is the first scene?
- A. Gene and Dolores are talking, and he invites her to a movie and this time she says yes. That's it, the whole thing. It should be like 300 words.
- Q. Yeah, and that's why you said you would do *two* scenes, you cheapskate.
- A. The second scene is where they actually go to the movie.
- Q. What is the purpose of the second scene?
- A. First, to show her finally loosening up a little with regard to him, and second, to contrast the way they are with the way Gene was with Dana.
- Q. What does that contrast amount to?
- A. Well, because she's smarter and more ambitious than Dana, and more independent when it comes to her idea of herself as an adult, she doesn't take any guff from him.
- Q. We have already seen that, in spades. What else?
- A. Also, she doesn't assume they're going to be together. She's testing him. She's always testing him, or comparing him to her idea of what she wants, or what she expects a man to be. And he realizes it. That's what's really driving his growth -- not reading Jack Kerouac books, but trying to become the person she deserves.
- Q. Why does he respond so strongly to her?
- A. I think it's just animal attraction mainly. I mean look, the kid is 20. He doesn't need much of an excuse to grow up.
- Q. Okay, so how do we see this in the scene where they go to a movie?
- A. Let's first say what it's *not*. It's not a scene like where somebody treats her disrespectfully and he slaps them around verbally or literally. It's also not a scene where he saves her life or any of that shit. Because that pseudo-macho shit doesn't matter.
- Q. What does matter?
- A. What matters is the things that *really* show maturity: courage, not macho bluster, but the courage to tell the truth ...
- Q. What was that?
- A. The truth -- hey, there's an idea. He's always lying. Let's say he comes to a moment of truth with her. Literally.
- Q. But it's not like she has a false idea of him now.
- A. Yes, but he has b.s.'d her about some things, and he probably thinks she bought some of it. So in a rush he tells her the truth about everything.
- Q. What brings that on?
- A. Hmm, well, how about this. He kisses her for the first time. And he just opens up completely.

- Q. Just from kissing her?
- A. Let's say something else happens right before that -- a sort of a shock.
- Q. Mm-hmm?
- A. Uh... I dunno.
- Q. Okay, let's back up a little. The purpose of the scene is to show them getting closer, and to provide justification for her inviting him home. You think she's going to invite him home because he "opened up to her"? What's the real reason she invites him over? Maybe the whole problem is this notion that he has to go over to her house. What's the point, aside from an occasion for farce?
- A. There has to be another reason? Besides, it parallels a scene with Sinatra in the next chapter.
- Q. That's another problem. Why should Bobby be at that dinner with Sinatra and JFK? No, never mind. Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Let's get back to this chapter. Let's back up some more, in fact. What is the whole arc we're in?
- A. The arc of his relationship with Dolores. He meets her in, like, chapter 5. He moves to Las Vegas because of her. He keeps the motel open because of her. Basically she just knocks him out and he is instinctively doing anything he can to stick around her. (This includes both ordinary things like inviting her out to movies and unique things like her being the only person he tells the truth to.) But then something happens where he has to leave.
- Q. What's that?
- A. Well, that's what I don't know. But anyway, here's the arc -- they get closer, and then he leaves all of a sudden. Why, I don't know.
- Q. Well, let's think about it. Maybe you need to know it in order to move forward. In fact, isn't that the missing piece of the whole puzzle -- the fact that you don't know how their story is going to end? You know about Bobby and Lucy, you know about the talk show that Bobby will eventually get at the end of the book, but...
- A. But in order to give some weight to the ending for Gene, and indeed to give his whole character weight, I need to set up a big-ass internal conflict *and* a conflict with Dolores that he resolves by leaving.
- Q. All right -- how do you do that? Why does his leaving resolve the conflict?
- A. Well, let's see. If he stays he betrays himself. That's obvious.
- Q. If he stays he betrays himself *how*?
- A. It's all about truth and lying, isn't it? So, if he stays, he is lying. He can't continue to lie, so he can't stay.
- Q. How could staying be continuing to lie? Doesn't Dolores want what's best for him?
- A. Above all, she wants what's best for himself. And -- oh fuck it, do I have to explain it? It's basically a version of the relationship between me and Cris. He wants to leave, she has decided she wants him, and he has decided he wants to go.
- Q. So why is this an internal conflict for him?
- A. First, because he has invested so much time into seducing her. Second, because he instinctively wants to please her.
- Q. When does he start thinking he doesn't want to be with her?
- A. When he goes to her house.
- Q. Why? Because it's so chaotic? How could that possibly show him as strong? Explain this.
- A. Okay, he goes to her house. It's chaotic and it scares him. He starts to back away emotionally.
- Q. Can't she tell that, as time goes on in the next chapters?

- A. Yes, of course.
- Q. But how could leaving possibly resolve this, from a character perspective? I mean, you're supposed to be showing him as maturing. Isn't he running away from a mature commitment here?
- A. Maybe his real commitment is to get on the road. Maybe that's what he's running from during the whole book. He keeps getting these jobs, instead of getting on the road.
- Q. That's kind of upside down, isn't it? Not in a good way.
- A. Well, shit!
- Q. The problem is that you have all these things you wanted to happen, and you can't figure out a way to justify them.
- A. Well, he does have to leave her at the end of part 2. I mean, that feels right. He goes back on the road, at least symbolically, by joining up again with Bobby for one last trip, and from there he's going to go on the road for real. I'll have to figure out how, but I'll work that into the last pages. In any case, I have here point B, which is where I am now, and point F, which is where I need to be, i.e. he leaves her. What points C, D and E are, I don't know. (I'm just making up the fact even that there are three points. I don't know how many there are. I hope they are few, though.)

Gee, I've written 2100 words today... OF NOTES!

9 Oct 02 -- San Francisco

Today should be the beginning of a new phase of working on this book. I've been laid off from my day job again, and it doesn't look likely I'll get another one soon. So I should have a lot of time to work on this. The last period of layoff -- two months in winter 2000 -- I got only one and a half chapters done. But they were big chapters, the last two chapters of part 1, and finishing part 1 was my goal then.

And until now, my goal this year has been to finish the first draft. But with at least three months of free time ahead of me, I should be able not only to finish the first draft, but get a lot of rewriting done, as well as start looking for an agent.

That's if I can away from the house. I actually got laid off five days ago, but Cris has kept me close by, working on house projects. The only extended period of time I got away was when I went to the all-day sesshin at HSZC. Then I had no new breakthrough, as I did on July 6 -- just a couple of vague ideas. No, I have the feeling there will be no more magic moments in the writing of this book. Just some hard work.

So let's see, what **was** I thinking the other day? My main problem remains Gene's character development, and rather than having a roadmap, I believe now I'm just going to have to write through it. (At least I now have the time to do that.) I just have to keep from getting bogged down. The specter of my unfinished novel "Us and Them" looms over me -- the way I was unable to really wrap things up.

I'll just do a bit of brainstorming. Maybe it'll go better than the last session (Sep. 7).

Things I gleaned from rereading notes:

I wrote in ch. 18 the bit about the Buddhist priest giving him the book. Now work the book in.

I still need to give Dolores a reason, or motivation, for starting to think of Gene more as boyfriend material. **Perhaps I can do this by combining it with the scene showing him acting more compassionately. She witnesses it and it impresses her.**

I can still have him look for beatniks. In fact, this is the one thing I had a bit of an idea about during the last sit on Saturday. He meets the *one* beatnik in Las Vegas, and that one guy is on his way out of town. He bestows on Gene, as a parting gift, the title of the Only Beatnik in Las Vegas.

From my notes on Sep. 6: "She's testing him. She's always testing him, or comparing him to her idea of what she wants, or what she expects a man to be. And he realizes it. That's what's really driving his growth -- not reading Jack Kerouac books, but trying to become the person she deserves." *That's what's driving his growth -- trying to become the person she deserves.* Whether or not he realizes that's what he's doing. "He doesn't need much of an excuse to grow up" because "he's 20."

He has a moment of truth. Not in 20b, though, but in the acting-compassionately scene. It's not just the action; he has a realization. Then "In a rush he tells her the truth about everything." Never mind the part about kissing.

"Something happens where he has to leave." It's not just the visit by the hooker to the motel. It has to be like what happened between me and some girls, including Dina: attraction and willingness fades. And because he is now habitually facing the truth about all this, he has to leave. The hooker is just the catalyst.

And a new idea:

Maybe Gustafson returns to the motel in ch. 21. But then something else happens -- a real relative shows up. Actually this relative has been seen at the hospital briefly. And this relative cruelly consigns Gustafson to a nursing home and appoints Gene the official manager -- but only as a caretaker until he can sell the place. This, if nothing else, raises him in Dolores's eyes. But maybe also Gene unsuccessfully defends the old man -- this also impresses her.

There, I got more ideas just now than I did all day Saturday during the one-day sit. Now I'll work them into the outline.

Here's the result:

Fri May 20	Ch. 20c	Bobby opens, at the Cal-Neva, for Judy Garland	Bobby	Foreshadow something here -- Judy is like Marilyn
Fri May 20	Ch. 20d	Lawford conversation	Bobby	Bobby and Peter Lawford talk more about the upcoming convention -- this is 6 weeks after their previous conversation and nearly two months before the convention. We hear that Sinatra's visit in 18f has led to more work for Bobby Bobby finds out that he will not be invited to have a public role at the convention. The reason for this is evidently his "non-cooperation" with the FBI.
	Ch. 21a	Gene working at the motel. We see him thinking about the people there, being confronted with choices about them, and at least realizing he can choose to act differently than he has.	Gene	Work in the Buddhist book -- Gene's reading it and not really understanding it, but pondering it just the same.
	ch. 21b	Gene visits the hospital -- Runs into Gustafson's son Albert	Gene	Albert's a pill
	ch. 21c	Albert drops Gene off at motel. Gene talks with Dolores -- mentions Albert. She asks him to dinner.	Gene	
	ch. 21d	That night -- Gene making a compassionate choice	Gene	That's what's driving his growth -- trying to become the person she deserves. But his choices should also have consequences in which he suffers. Just making the choices should make him suffer.
	ch. 21e	Next morning -- another compassionate action. This time Dolores witnesses it, and is impressed.	Gene	
	ch. 22a	Bobby on stage -- comedy monologue	Bobby	He talks about issues of race and poverty, truth and lying.
	ch. 22b.1	Gustafson comes home from the hospital, more or less an invalid. He starts giving Gene shit. Albert is there and briefly watches his father's performance. He decides Gustafson can't run the place by himself and decides to plunk Gustafson in a nursing home.	Gene	

	ch. 22a.2	Gene defends Gustafson. Albert appoints Gene the official manager -- but only as a caretaker until he can sell the place.	Gene	This is Gene's moment of truth, his moment of satori. The real turning point for his character.
	ch. 22a.3	Dolores has witnessed all this. Then "In a rush he tells her the truth about everything."	Gene	
Sun <hr/> (afternoon)	Ch. 23a	Transitional scene (JFK comes to visit Sinatra's house in Palm Springs)	Bobby	
	Ch. 23b	Dolores takes Gene to meet her family. Have a cat disaster and other small disasters happening throughout the visit, so that Gene just sort of passes through this whirlwind which is nothing like he expected. Make the whole scene breathless, rollicking, a tour de force.		This will be mirrored by the JFK-Sinatra dinner scene in the next chapter.
approx. Fri Jul 8	Ch. 24a	Farce: JFK's family has dinner with Sinatra's family, including Sinatra's goons.	Bobby	In July, (JFK) came into the Democratic National Convention with victories in all seven of the primaries he had entered, and he was just sixty-one votes short of the nomination. Serendipitously, the convention was held in the Los Angeles Sports Arena, putting Kennedy's show business supporters smack in the middle of the action.

The "cat disaster" chapter has now gone from being in ch. 20 to ch. 23. If it slips any further it'll be out altogether. Perhaps there's something in me that doesn't want to write it. But if I make it a bigger deal than it needs to be, I'll never do it.

Now, so that I can claim I have actually got some writing done, I'm going to try to finish ch. 20 once and for all.

Wednesday, Oct. 16

Still haven't heard anything about getting that other job in the company; tomorrow is my last day on payroll and Mary H. herself said it would be "much harder" to transfer me after that date. I haven't heard squat from her, and that's fine with me. I don't *want* the job now. Perhaps I'll feel differently in a few months, but for now all I want to do is finish this book.

I've been working on chapter 21 this week. Today I moved the scene where the beaten-up hooker returns to the motel from 18e, which is where I composed it, to 21c. The whole action of Gene's character needs for that scene to happen in ch. 21 instead of in ch. 18, where it was too soon. Also ch. 18 was way too long as it was. The chapters are getting shorter and that's fine, but ch. 18 was way too long at 7200 words. Now it's still about 5000 words and ch. 21 is now 4900 words; I need to add one scene to it.

So all I really wrote today were the first three paragraphs of scene 21c, about 300 words. Then I cut and pasted. Voilá, the chapter is almost finished. In fact, I can write the last scene today, all I have to do is go home and do so.

I think the next chapter, where Gustafson's son brings the old man back to the motel and Gene confronts him, will be pretty easy to write. In a sense. In another sense, it will be hard for me to put in all the stuff I usually give short shrift to -- descriptions of physical things and so forth. I'm bad at the telling detail, which is one of the real strengths of fiction. I'm good at dialogue, which is the part about the chapter that will be easy to write.

Saturday, 19 Oct 02

I decided chapter 21 was fine pretty much the way it was. I went over the scene I moved to smooth out the incongruent details, and that was it. Now I'm into ch. 22, and I've written 600 words of a comedy monologue by Bobby. It's not that funny and it's not that pertinent, but it will serve as a placeholder until the time comes for rewrite.

I've been talking to Katia and Christine as if it's a sure thing that I will finish my first draft by the end of the year and do a rewrite in the next month or two. But how long it really takes me depends on a lot of things -- whether or not I have to get a day job in the meantime is only one of them. Cris is being very supportive. She is taking it for granted that there are no jobs out there and that it would be more trouble than it's worth to search, and she's giving me a free ticket at least until January to write my book. What a luxury! All I have to do to keep up my part of the bargain is limit my spending and keep the house reasonably neat.

Today I have about three hours left -- I already finished 22a, the monologue, today -- to get a start on 22b. It's slated to be a long scene where Karl brings his father home from the hospital; G. senior starts raising hell, Karl decides the old man is in no shape to live by himself and announces he's going to move G. to a nursing home. Gene finds himself defending Gustafson Sr., and though he fails to convince Karl, this marks the real turning point for his character: he's able to be compassionate toward his enemies.

I'm sort of sitting here at Muddy Waters, delaying getting into it. This is when, if I happened to be sitting in a place with internet access, I would do work avoidance by surfing the internet. If I really needed to, I could pay for access at a terminal they have in this café. But I don't really need to. And like I say, I'm on a budget now.

23 Oct 02

I worked on the book today, Wednesday, for the first time this week. 973 words -- well into the key scene in ch. 22 between all the primary characters in the Gene thread. I feel it's going well.

I worked at home, for about three hours. I was going to go out, but Cris wanted me to stay close, so I worked in the kitchen. Because she was out gardening, the cats hung out with her and didn't bother me all day. Then about 2:30 she came in and had lunch and we got to talking, but I was still able to make a little progress. Now I'm getting a little tired, and in an hour it'll be time to go off to St. Francis, so I'll knock off.

28 Oct 02

I worked for a few hours this morning down near Pac Bell Park, in two different coffee shops, and finished ch. 22 (3500 words, nice and succinct -- it's good the chapters are getting shorter as the book gets later) with the confrontation between Karl, Gene and Gustafson. It'll need some redoing but it's fine for now. The only thing that concerns me is that after this, the visit to Dolores's family might seem like the wrong tone. But I'll deal with that when I get to it.

I'm going to have to do some thinking again now about the outline and what I have left to do before I get into the convention. Very little, I think.

I had two ideas over the weekend:

1. It's not Peter who is sent to woo the Alabama delegation, it's Bobby. That's the big favor he does for Sinatra, not so much the trip with Marilyn.
2. When Bobby gets the talk show at the end, he already knows it's going to fail, because he's going to go up against the Tonight Show. But he appreciates the gesture and he's going to give it his best shot. That's how the book ends.

30 Oct 02

I keep refinishing ch. 22, adding on a little bit more. I've "finished" it about three times. Now I think it's finally done -- 4178 words. That's about 10,000 words for October, which is my usual output when I don't have a job. It should have been higher, but it was also two-plus chapters. And I still have most of today and tomorrow morning to get some more done, if I can start ch. 23. I'm going to take a break now and maybe go out to the ocean and clear my mind.

Q. What events are left to describe?

A. The dinner at Dolores' house, the dinner at Sinatra's, several scenes around the Dem. convention, a scene between Gene and "the only beatnik in Las Vegas," a scene where Bobby arrives at the motel and Gene decides to go with him to pick up MM, the scenes around MM including the final scene after dropping her at the Cal-Neva. There, that makes it sound manageable.

Q. The scene at Dolores' house is next?

A. Well, that's the next major scene. I'm not sure if I don't need a Bobby scene in there first, for balance.

Q. Never mind balance. You can handle that in rewrite. You should just be hitting the high points now.

A. Yeah.

Q. What occurred to you last night while dipping into "Moving On"?

A. That there is a strong voice and point of view in McMurtry's novel and little in mine.

Q. What conclusion did you draw?

A. That what I have here is a first draft. Which is not surprising. I wonder how much McMurtry rewrote, and how long it all took him.

Q. Never mind, just finish the first draft.

A. Yeah.

Q. Are you stuck?

A. Yeah, I'm quitting for the day.

5 Nov 02

Finally getting the chance to work again ... I sat down in the church lounge (formerly the old office) and did 1050 words for the first scene of ch. 23. Then I wrote the first paragraph of the next scene.

Then I started thinking about the end of the part and how to get Gene and Dolores through all this stuff that has to happen before the last scene of Part 2, the scene where Gene leaves Dolores and goes off with Bobby. I sat down with a piece of paper and a pen and wrote down two columns:

Bobby	Gene
Fundraising dinner; Lucy incident	
	Motel bought
	Meets "the last beatnik"
First night of convention -- Star-spangled banner incident	
Bobby has to talk to the Alabama delegation	
Dinner with MM	

MM to Misfits set	Gene asked to stay on
JFK wins nomination	ambivalence
Sinatra-Bobby meeting -- one more favor asked	
	Hooker he knows (from ch. 11) shows up
	Confrontation with Dolores
Shows up at motel, invites Gene	Leaves to go with Bobby

I swiftly transferred all that into my outline, changed a few things and... *I have a completed outline for the first time:*

Fri Jun 3	Ch. 23a	Bobby finds out he's not going to become the regular opening act for Judy Garland.	Bobby	
Sun Jun 5	Ch. 23b	Dolores takes Gene to meet her family. Have a cat disaster and other small disasters happening throughout the visit, so that Gene just sort of passes through this whirlwind which is nothing like he expected. Make the whole scene breathless, rollicking, a tour de force.		This will be mirrored by the JFK-Sinatra dinner scene.
approx. Fri Jul 8	Ch. 23c	Farce: In Palm Springs, JFK's family has dinner with Sinatra's family, including Sinatra's goons. Cris's idea: have Rose Kennedy appalled and disgusted at Sinatra and the manners of his goons.	Bobby	
Sun Jul 10	Ch. 24a	Big fundraising dinner. Bobby has to beard Lucy for JFK.		<p><i>In July, (JFK) came into the Democratic National Convention with victories in all seven of the primaries he had entered, and he was just sixty-one votes short of the nomination.</i></p> <p><i>Serendipitously, the convention was held in the Los Angeles Sports Arena, putting Kennedy's show business supporters smack in the middle of the action.</i></p> <p><i>The night before the convention's July 11 opening, the Democratic Party staged a hundred-dollar-a-plate fund-raiser at the Beverly Hilton Hotel attended by twenty-eight hundred people. The Rat Pack and other of Hollywood's biggest names were present -- July Garland, Angie Dickinson, Milton Berle, Joe E. Lewis, George Jessel, Mort Sahl, Janet Leigh, and Tony Curtis among them. Judy Garland sat at the head table next to the candidate; Frank Sinatra sat a few chairs down with some of the other presidential hopefuls -- Senators Lyndon Johnson of Texas and Stuart Symington of Missouri, and the potential draftee Adlai Stevenson.</i></p> <p><i>After the first convention session, Jack Kennedy retired to his suite at the Beverly Hilton Hotel and spent some time with Judy Campbell. (Jackie had stayed home because she was six months pregnant and had a history of problem pregnancies.) Apparently Jack had never compared notes with Sinatra about Judy, because he tried, as Sinatra had, to talk her into a three-way -- "with a secretarial type in her late twenties," as Campbell recalled it. "I know you," Jack told her. "I know you'd like it." Just as she had with Sinatra, Judy refused.</i></p> <p>Third idea: Lucy turns up at the Demo Convention. Yes, she got married to the orthodontist, but that was because she was socially climbing, and she dumped the doc a long time ago. She has been involved, in succession, with several men, including a gay Broadway composer, and now is a sometime girlfriend of some senator -- but get this, JFK has his eye on her and Bobby finds himself bearding her during a convention-time fundraiser. And Bobby's humiliation is complete when he actually has to deliver her, the love of his life, to JFK.</p>
	ch. 24b	The motel is bought.	Gene	
	ch. 24c		Gene	He meets the one beatnik in Las Vegas, and that one guy is on his way out of town. He bestows on Gene, as a parting gift, the title of the Only Beatnik in Las Vegas.

Mon Jul 11	ch. 25a	<i>The next day, Frank, Sammy, Dean, Peter, Janet Leigh, and Tony Curtis led the hundred thousand people jammed into the Sports Arena in a rousing rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" to open the convention. A few bars into the song, members of the Alabama delegation, seated close to the stage, began to heckle Sammy Davis with vicious racial epithets. His face burning with hurt and anger, Davis forced back tears. Sinatra tried to buck him up, whispering, "Those dirty sons of bitches. Don't let them get to you, Charlie!" Davis finished the song, but he didn't take his seat with the others once the convention was gavelled to order.</i>	Bobby	Bobby is on stage for this -- invited up at the last minute
Mon Jul 11	ch. 25b	Gene is asked to stay on by the motel's new owners.	Gene	Ambivalent feelings
Tue Jul 12	ch. 25c	Gene conversation with Dolores -- argument?	Gene	
Tue July 12	ch. 25d	Bobby is summoned to Puccini, doesn't know why, is introduced to MM, hears her "very penetrating" comment	Bobby	<i>For the rest of the convention, Jack Kennedy's sexual amusement was provided by Marilyn Monroe ... Now, with her marriage on the rocks, Marilyn was in Los Angeles without Miller, and Kennedy's large contingent of Hollywood supporters made her far less conspicuous in Kennedy's company than she might have been.</i> <i>The second night of the convention, Marilyn dined with Jack, Peter (Lawford) and Kennedy aide Kenneth O'Donnell at Puccini [restaurant co-owned by Sinatra].</i> <i>Before dinner, Marilyn and Jack had apparently been intimate, because Marilyn giggled to Peter that Jack's performance earlier had been "very democratic" and "very penetrating." ...</i>
Tue Jul 12 Wed Jul 13	ch. 25e	Bobby and Peter go to get the Alabama delegation on board. Peter has to do a blackface routine, and Bobby has to tell nigger jokes.	Bobby	<i>Alabama was one of the uncommitted delegations that Jack needed to guarantee a first-ballot victory. It was left to Peter to swallow his anger two days later and try to charm a group of men he considered bigots.... It's not Peter who is sent to woo the Alabama delegation, it's Bobby. That's the big favor he does for Sinatra, not so much the trip with Marilyn.</i> <i>Throughout the week, Sinatra and the Rat Pack roamed the convention floor, ignoring barriers and restrictions, and cajoled recalcitrant delegates to join the Kennedy cause. Conscious of the cameras, Sinatra painted his bald pate black so it wouldn't be obvious under the TV lights.</i>
Tue Jul 12	ch. 26a	Hooker shows up at the motel (in the evening of course)	Gene	The call girl that Bobby got for Gene at the end of part 1 reappears briefly. Gene has been thinking about her for half the book and hoping to get back with her somehow. She reappears and pops his bubble, and this helps precipitate the emotional crisis which leads to him leaving Dolores and going with Bobby.
Wed Jul 13	ch. 26b	JFK is nominated; Sinatra celebrates	Bobby	
	ch. 27a	Sinatra-Bobby meeting -- Sinatra asks him to do one more favor, to pick up MM at Misfits set and deliver her to Tahoe	Bobby	Sinatra wants to get in good with JFK, figures a good way would be to deliver MM to him. Bobby is still looking for ways to patch things up with Sinatra, so he's doing him this favor. The fact that Sinatra treated him like shit throughout Part I is ignored as long as Frank's in a mood to be nice. Sinatra might even refer to the earlier "favor" saying "Don't worry, I haven't forgotten what you did for me" but of course would never actually admit he was wrong in any way.
	ch. 27b	Gene-Dolores argument	Gene	
	ch. 27c	Bobby shows up asking Gene to go with him, and he goes	Gene	"Something happens where he has to leave." It's not just the visit by the hooker to the motel. It has to be like what happened between me and some girls, including Dina: attraction and willingness fades. And because he is now habitually facing the truth about all this, he has to leave. The hooker is just the catalyst.
III.	ch. 28a	Bobby and Gene on the road to Misfits set	Bobby	
	ch. 28b	Misfits set -- pick up MM		

	ch. 28c	On the road to Tahoe		So during the ride from Vegas to Tahoe, Bobby is disconsolate -- he's in a state as well as MM, and so a lot of what she says is kicked off by his tragic emotional state. MM is high on various kinds of pills; that's why they have to "rescue" her from the Misfits set and take her to the casino in Tahoe that Sinatra is co-owner of (I forget the name for the moment -- oh yeah, the Cal-Neva. So in her confused state, she rambles about the universe and everything, and she comes out with this zinger at the climax: "Everything just <i>is</i> ." While this sounds like gibberish to Bobby, Gene nearly runs off the road, because he's been trying to get into Zen like the Dharma Bums, and this adage hits home for him. It leads to some sort of big life-turn for him.
	ch. 28d	Arrival at Cal-Neva		
	ch. 28e	Bobby is offered talk show in reward for work at the convention and for bringing MM		When Bobby gets the talk show at the end, he already knows it's going to fail, because he's going to go up against the Tonight Show. But he appreciates the gesture and he's going to give it his best shot. That's how the part ends.

(The italicized sections are quotations from the Peter Lawford biography from which I originally got the ideas about the Demo Convention scenes. My intention is to write about the incidents that author describes, changing them in some ways, mostly to insert Bobby.)

I feel so pleased with myself that I have a completed outline. According to this, there are only six chapters to go, with a total of 20 scenes. That's maybe twenty-five or thirty writing sessions. If I keep working every other day, I *will* finish the first draft by the end of the year.

Ha -- that's when I *don't* have a job. I don't know what I was thinking, before I was laid off, that I would be able to finish the first draft by the end of the year even *if* I had a job.

7 Nov 02

Today I *will* begin, at least, the scene at Dolores's family's house.

Q. What are the salient points to get across in the scene?

A. We learn about Dolores' family and their values. This is important later, because it is these values that Gene is going to react against. The values are thrift, conservatism, entrepreneurship.

Q. What do these have to do with Gene?

A. He doesn't realize it, but the main reason he's been invited over is not for inspection merely as Dolores' date or even her future husband, but as someone who can act as the front for the family buying the motel and thus taking a step up in the American dream.

Q. How's that work? What's he got to do with it?

A. They want his experience with the motel, they want his relationship with Dolores to bind him to the family and the whole scheme, and they want a white guy to be the front.

Q. Why and when does he rebel against this?

A. He doesn't find out about it until after this dinner scene. When he realizes what's going on, he feels trapped and wants to get away. Seen from the point of view of a putative beatnik, getting tied down to a family business is the worst thing that can happen.

Q. What do we learn about Dolores in the scene? How much does she have to do with the scheme?

A. She genuinely likes Gene, but she's not crazy about him. However, she's a pragmatist, and supports the scheme. If she gets a husband out of it, so much the better.

Q. What does this all remind you of, a little bit?

A. The Togawas' scheme for the English school with me and Cris as heads.

4:00 p.m. -- I FINALLY wrote the "cat disaster" scene, plus a short transition scene before it. So I added a scene to the outline to raise the count of scenes, and added 1503 words to the manuscript.

I finished with the disastrous part, but I'm not sure I'm done with the scene. They haven't even eaten dinner yet. I think they need to drop more hints about buying the motel, although I have already put some hints in; and they have to grill Gene more.

The question is, when they ask him about his background and his family and so forth, is he going to lie or not? ♦ I haven't really shown his character changing on that score. I'll have to do more thinking about that.

Still, a decent day. I'll be especially happy if I get a chance to work again tomorrow.

8 Nov 02

Not a very productive day. I wrote 460 words to finish, in a sort of tentative way, 23c, and I made a couple of notes about 23d, the parallel farce scene at Sinatra's. This is Cris's idea, to show JFK's mother shocked at the uncouth behavior of Sinatra's buddies.

11 Nov 02

Looking at the outline, I noticed that I had copied down a note that Jackie never attended the Democratic Convention because of a risky pregnancy. So I put a few lines of dialogue into the scene in ch. 20 between Peter and Bobby to mention that. It certainly explains why JFK was so free to fuck around with Judy Campbell and Marilyn Monroe that week.

Working at Muddy Waters, I'll try writing 23d today, the scene at Sinatra's house in Palm Springs.

12 Nov 02

Working at the café on 17th and Dolores. I wrote part of 23d yesterday but didn't get too far into it. Sitting here trying to think of exactly what to put in, I was trying to come up with a guest list for Frank's private dinner for JFK. And I thought, well why not have Sam Giancana there? And his date for the dinner would be Judy Campbell. But that wouldn't work because it would put the three of them -- Giancana, Campbell, and JFK -- in too close a proximity. If Campbell was too obviously Giancana's date, it would be too much in JFK's face, and they were already fucking by this time.

Then I thought of bringing in Lucy. Bobby's old girlfriend whom we spent parts of two chapters on several chapters ago. I had the idea a while back to actually bring her forth during the convention sequence in order to further humiliate Bobby. It will turn out that one of the things Bobby has to do for Frank (and thus for JFK) is to beard Lucy for JFK. In other words, Bobby has to accompany her to an event as her date but the real purpose is to provide a way for her to get past all the reporters and into a private clinch with JFK. (I haven't answered the question of how Frank notices her or procures her for this purpose, but I'm not too worried about handling that.) Now I'm thinking it might work to bring her in now. Is it too early, or will it be effective to introduce her now and give Bobby a chance to react to the whole situation?

However, she couldn't come as Giancana's date, for the same reasons as Campbell couldn't. Therefore if she's going to be in 23d she has to come *with* Bobby, so he beards her on *this* occasion.

Q. What are the advantages of that?

- A. It creates more tension in the scene, where now there is none; all I have now is to make it a farce. Also there's no real reason for Bobby to even be present at the dinner, unless he serves some purpose for Frank and/or JFK. Thirdly, it creates tension for the reader to *anticipate* the convention.
- Q. What are the disadvantages?
- A. Can't think of any substantial disadvantages.

I guess I should do it, then. I'll have to rewrite just about all of 23d I've done so far, but that's not such a big deal.

5:00 pm -- I didn't do that after all. I did rewrite the first part of 23d, but instead of having Bobby pick up Lucy, I had him pick up just an ordinary political groupie. This introduces the whole idea of bearding someone, so I can just have the Lucy thing happen in the next chapter (or wherever it comes) without any explanation. Also I put a few words into ch. 20 to prepare for it. Then I wrote 970 words for the first part of 23d, and had Sammy drop the bomb that Frank won't let him get married to May Britt until after the election. This speaks volumes about the social politics of the time (and is also what actually happened). This lends the requisite tension to the scene and saves the Lucy bombshell for closer to the climax. So I feel satisfied with my two day's work even though I haven't made much progress. Tomorrow, back to it.

13 Nov 02

I worked for a while at Maxfield's -- the café on 17th and Dolores that has the free internet access -- but left when, to my amazed disgust, some other woman with a laptop started watching a movie on it -- without headphones. She was sitting right behind me, and even with earplugs I could hear it. I can work with the usual distractions of a café, but not with that. I retreated to the church.

Things went slow all day. I ground out the rest of the scene, though (23d), for a total of about 2200 words yesterday and today. That feels good.

Now I'm at the church and I'll just set up the meditation and go right into it, since it's the second Wednesday.

14 Nov 02

3:30 pm -- I took all day to get down to work, partly because I finished ch. 23 yesterday, in a manner of speaking, so I felt I could relax for a few minutes. I skipped zazen this morning, went to Sara's church to go to morning prayer, came home and ran on the treadmill, took my time having lunch, and paid some bills.

Came in to Muddy Waters and reread a few notes, but found myself really rebelling against the idea of working on the book at all. Perhaps I really do need a rest. In any case all I intended to do today was go over the outline and make some notes for the next chapter. But I wonder if I can even think about it at all. Why not just get into the truck instead (I have the truck today) and just drive around and relax?

Man, I don't even want to be here. Okay, I'll bail.

19 Nov 02

On Sunday the 17th, I sort of fooled myself into writing 800 words. I had no intention of writing anything; I was sick with a cold. Cris left the house in late afternoon and I turned on the computer and looked at the outline

and realized that I really did need to add a short bit to ch. 23 to fill in a time/character gap; otherwise the break between the events of that chapter and those of ch. 24, which takes place weeks later, would seem too big. So I did that, and then really made progress by starting off ch. 24 with 400 words. I also rearranged the outline a little to be clear on the events of ch. 24 through 26.

I didn't try to work the next day, which was yesterday. I knew the next thing I would write would be the sudden reunion of Bobby and Lucy.

This morning I slept in -- I skipped zazen both yesterday and today -- then went to an appointment with an insurance salesman, and then went over to the church. I sat down and immediately started writing on the big reunion scene. I stopped 3250 words later, having finished two whole scenes of chapter 24. What a good day!

Then I went home and exercised and had only an Odwalla for dinner, and I feel just unbelievably virtuous. Now I'll finish cleaning up the kitchen and try to get to bed early.

About what I wrote: Writing the emotion-charged scene between Lucy and Bobby was exciting and fulfilling and made me wonder, why doesn't every session of writing make me feel that way? Is it because most of what I write is dull and has the emotion wrung out of it? Or am I making a problem where there isn't any -- maybe it's like worrying that every single time you have sex it isn't super, and thinking it can be super every single time. Writing is like sex, in this way.

21 Nov 02

After skipping a day following my big day the 19th -- actually Wednesday the 20th was spent hanging out with Cris including spreading her mother's ashes on Mount Tam -- I left the house today ready to work. But on the way to a café, I got the idea to take a nice long drive preparatory to sitting down to work. Then I got a call from Katia. She was feeling blue and wanted someone to be with her. I told her I was getting ready to take a drive and why didn't she join me. So she did -- we ate lunch in Half Moon Bay, and then the drive on Hwy 1 was so nice -- it hasn't rained in three weeks now -- we went all the way to Santa Cruz, took a walk on the pier, and drove back via Skyline. Didn't get back to the city until almost 5:00.

But I still wanted to work, and I went to the café and sat down and wrote the next entire scene. I would say I finished a chapter, but beforehand I decided I would end ch. 24 with the scene at the dinner attended by JFK and Lucy, and start ch. 25 with the national anthem scene. Oh how long I've waited to write these scenes! And the national anthem scene came right out, like shampoo from a bottle -- 1500 words, voila.

Now I'm going to have to look back a little and see if I still don't need more fill-in of the Gene-Dolores relationship between the family dinner and the time of the convention, which happens to be when things are coming to a head with Gene and Dolores.

Perhaps I can have the Sanchez family buy the hotel in late June, and Gene gives it a try, he doesn't bolt right away. That's more believable than Bobby showing up to take him away right as the relationship with Dolores comes to a head.

Sun., 24 Nov 02

I spent a lot of time in the middle of the afternoon working on the outline, figuring out a place to put the additional material I mentioned at the end of the last entry -- the Sanchez family buying the motel. I decided to take the Sinatra-Palm Springs scene I had as the end of ch. 23 and move it to the beginning of ch. 24, and put all the additional Gene material at the end of ch. 23. Needless to say, this entails a lot of changes to the outline that I said was "completed for the first time" on Nov. 5, but I knew that would happen.

The outline of the last half of part 2 has become very lumpy -- a lot of Gene stuff that covers late May and June, then a lot of Bobby stuff in the convention week. I don't feel like I can interrupt the convention stuff just to show what Gene's doing, so the novel goes back and forth less. But maybe that's a good thing.

5:40 pm -- I did two short scenes, 23e (700 words) and 24b (530 words). In 23e, I have Dolores and Gene going to a movie, and Dolores spilling the beans about her family buying the motel ("maybe") and asking Gene if he wants to stay. She also heavily hints that he should ask her to marry him but he doesn't get it; this may be clear to the reader, but I'm not sure.

In the scene in ch. 25, I finished up the first night of the convention. Since I moved so much back into ch. 23, ch. 25 is now only 2100 words long, but I have one more scene to add to it, a Gene scene set on the same night. But before I write it, I have to write 23f, because that will be the last Gene scene before we have a two-week break until 25c, and I have to write them in time order to know what happens.

26 Nov 02

I have 23f and 25c to work on today. I have a full day to work, the last I'll have until Friday the 29th because of Thanksgiving this week.

Skipped zazen again this morning; slept instead. Works for me.

3 Dec 02

I finished chapter 25, for the most part, on the 30th, doing about 2000 words all told. Then yesterday I spent the day at the library, reading the L.A. Times for the period leading up to and including the Democratic Convention in 1960. There were a number of details I needed. It was tedious, and I felt at the end of the day that I hadn't found out that much.

But writing today on 26a and 26b, I put in little bits I'd found out, so it was valuable to do. I hadn't done much research on the convention and here I was writing about it for the last week.

Today I'm writing another one of my long-awaited scenes, the one where Bobby and Peter go to the Mississippi delegation to try to talk them into supporting Kennedy, even though they were the ones booing Sammy on the first night of the convention. (It used to be Alabama, but I found that more sources said it was the Mississippi delegation. The L.A. Times didn't mention the incident at all, that I could see. But I'm going with Mississippi.) I did more than 1400 words today, not only in ch. 26 but by putting in words here and there in the previous two chapters as well.

The writing is coming pretty easily. There's little to worry about in terms of plot points in these chapters. The next ones will be tougher.

And I'm also conscious of the need to go back and rewrite like the whole of Part 2 -- smoothing it out and making it seem less aimless, while at the same time putting in more details of setting and characterization. I almost don't want to show it to Sara in its present state even when I finish the first draft, because I'm am so conscious of what needs to be done next. But I'll print it out and give it to her anyway. Her and Katia and Christine and Cris, my readers.

7 Dec 02

Saturday of a long week of little progress on my book. The work on the kitchen -- which was supposed to be finished by Friday but which, of course, continues -- and especially the effects of the work, namely the dust and disruption and its affect on me, Cris, and the cats -- occupied much of my time and attention. Actually I spent much of each day I wasn't able to work sitting at the dining room table listlessly surfing the web, or watching television. The reason I hung around was to babysit our handyman -- to call him a contractor would be an insult to contractors -- and the cats, which were contaminated with dust and soot along with most of the rest of the house. One of the cats got so sick that Friday was taken up largely with two trips to the vet out on Taraval St.

So today, Saturday, loomed as the first day I could possibly get any work done, and even then, I didn't get a chance to leave the house until after 2:00 pm. When I finally got away, I went straight to a movie in order to wash my mind of all the house-related thoughts and feelings. I saw "War Photographer," a documentary about an American war photojournalist who is apparently well known for his fearless descents into hellish, dangerous conditions. The film shows plenty of these, as well as a few tributes from colleagues. Seeing the film certainly served the purpose of getting my mind off my own insignificant problems.

Then I had dinner, and now to work: it's 5:52 pm. Usually I'm wrapping up at this hour.

Today I need to write more on chapter 26, ideally finishing it. Then we have the last two, difficult chapters: chapter 27, which depicts the end of the relationship between Gene and Dolores and Gene's sojourn at the Cactus Motel, and chapter 28, the book's last chapter (!), which depicts Gene and Bobby's final journey, to pick up Marilyn Monroe from the set of "The Misfits" and ferry her to the Cal-Neva for a "rest."

Fueled by sushi and a small-size sake for dinner, and a large chocolate bar for dessert, I write more than 1500 words, finishing chapter 26. I decide to polish off 26c, the Kennedy victory, in just two paragraphs. Nothing more needed.

As for 26b, the scene in which Bobby and Peter woo the Mississippi delegation, I turned it into a big farce, with Peter singing "Mammy" in blackface only with words that subtly mock the bigotry of the rednecks, who are cheering so much they can't even really hear it. Bobby's own monologue isn't as strong; I'll try revisiting it later and make it more pointed. I did manage to score a point or two at the end of the scene where he sits down briefly with the Mississippians.

And with the 4800 words in chapter 26, I go over 150,000.

8 Dec 02

Notes from reading "My Way" by Kitty Kelly:

Puccini was co-owned by Frank, Peter, Hank Sanicola and Mickey Rudin, the latter being one of Frank's lawyers.

In 1954 when Peter married Pat Shriver, "Pat bought Louis B. Mayer's house in Santa Monica" which was used by Jack as a "base of operations in southern California. He used it frequently and began to socialize with the Rat Pack at Puccini."

Peter: "I was Frank's pimp and Frank was Jack's. It sounds terrible now, but then it was really a lot of fun."

Frank introduced Judy Campbell to JFK on 8 Feb 60, presumably at the Sands. Frank subsequently introduced her to Sam Giancana and they became involved for years.

"Not everyone in the Kennedy camp was pleased with Frank's involvement. 'We wouldn't let him campaign openly in the primaries,' said Paul Corbin, a Kennedy aide. 'We couldn't even let Peter Lawford in because of the Rat Pack image. Frank make his contribution to the Wisconsin and West Virginia primaries over the jukeboxes -- that's it.'" (I'm bending time here, showing Frank promising to record a Kennedy song in July.)

The real Maltz timeline:

21 Mar 60 -- a NYT Times story breaks saying Frank had hired Maltz to do "Private Slovik"

Hearst papers and John Wayne pressure Frank to drop Maltz

Frank takes out full-page ads in Hollywood trade papers defending his right to employ Maltz

TV sponsors join pressure

Ambassador Kennedy calls Cardinal Spellman and Cardinal Cushing (Boston) to try to rein in priests who attacked Sinatra from pulpits, but was "told that Sinatra's associating with Communists could damage his son's campaign among Roman Catholics."

Joe Sr. calls Frank and forces him to make choice

Sinatra issues public statement ousting Maltz

In early 1960, Frank, Dean and Hank become titular owners of the Cal-Neva. Actually Giancana owned the largest stake but was legally not allowed to.

Notes from "The Last Days of Marilyn Monroe" by Donald H. Wolfe:

"Officially a resident at the Biltmore" which was the Kennedy headquarters for the convention, "Jack Kennedy stayed at an apartment belonging to Jack Haley on Rossmore Blvd., near the Wilshire Country Club. This hideaway was discovered by a (reporter), and Kennedy was observed by an apartment resident climbing down the fire escape to avoid being caught in a compromising situation. The press caught up with him as he was spotted climbing over a fence and getting into a car. He shouted to the perplexed reporters, 'I'm going to meet my father!'" as he hurriedly drove off. The compromising situation may have been with Marilyn Monroe, who was visiting Kennedy on her way to the Reno location of 'The Misfits,' which was to begin filming on July 21."

The dinner at Puccini on July 12, the second night of the convention, with JFK, Sinatra, Lawford and MM, was attended by "Kennedy's campaign manager, Peter Summers," not O'Donnell.

At Pucini (sic), "there was a private room **upstairs** for VIPs." (I have it as a "back room.")

"Peter Summers recalled seeing Kennedy and Marilyn together the next morning emerging from a shower at the Lawford beach house."

"After the (July 14 acceptance) victory speech at the Coliseum, Peter Lawford threw a party for Jack Kennedy at the beach house, and borrowed the head bartender from Romanoff's, Ross Acuna. Acuna recalled seeing Sammy Davis arrive with Marilyn Monroe" (bearding her) ... "Peter Summers confirmed that Marilyn and Jack Kennedy were together that evening at the Lawfords'."

"On 20 July 60 MM arrived in Reno on a United DC-7 from Los Angeles" to begin working on "The Misfits."

"The three most important men in her life had deceived her. Montand had made la grande sortie, JFK had charmingly taken advantage of her naiveté, and Miller, she felt, had used her."

"Shortly after the conclusion of the convention, Sinatra opened at the Cal-Neva... and invited MM and the other 'Misfits' stars to see his show on Saturday, August 13. The entire cast, production staff and crew were transported there.... Among the guests that weekend were Joe and Jack Kennedy, Sam Giancana, and Johnny Rosselli."

"For many years, the Cal-Neva had been one of the favorite haunts of Joe Kennedy, who had often vacationed there with (his lover) Janet Des Rosier. Following JFK's nomination, Joe Sr. went to Cal-Neva for a two week working holiday while laying plans for the campaign with Sinatra and Giancana."

"According to Sen. George Smathers, things weren't going well between MM and JFK. Now that JFK had won the nomination, Marilyn's silence about her relationship with the presidential candidate became vital. Smathers said an effort was made to 'talk to MM about putting a bridle on herself and on her mouth and not talking too much, because it was getting to be a story around the country.'"

Whatever occurred at the Cal-Neva (that weekend) had a devastating effect on MM in the following days on location in Reno. Cameraman Russell Metty told (director John) Huston that they couldn't shoot close-ups of MM's eyes because they had a 'strange look.' She began slurring dialogue and missing cues. On Friday, Aug. 26, Paula Strasberg discovered MM unconscious in her room at the Mapes Hotel in Reno. She had overdosed. Scooping out the dissolving capsules still in her mouth, Strasberg called for an ambulance. M was rushed to the hospital, where her stomach was pumped. On Saturday she was taken to the Westside Hospital in LA." ...

J. Edgar Hoover was reappointed by JFK as FBI director. This surprised many, but Hoover had "an expanding file of JFK's indiscretions." Thus Bobby Kennedy was appointed attorney general, the only one who could keep Hoover under control. This enraged Hoover, who referred to RFK as "that skinny squealing little liberal shit."

I spent a lot of time today playing around with the outline. The next thing to do, of course, is work on the difficult ch. 27 in which I have to quickly build to the Dolores-Gene confrontation which is resolved by Bobby showing up. But I kept having this feeling that I hadn't paced it right. Their relationship just wasn't intense enough for a big confrontation.

So I took some of the stuff I had written in ch. 23e and inserted it in ch. 24b. And instead of having the Sanchez family buy the motel at the end of ch. 23 I'm going to have that happen at the end of that 24b.

Then the stuff I've written between Gene and Jaime in 25b will make more sense, though I'll have to expand it somewhat, because now instead of that being Jaime's tenth night at the motel, it's going to be his first, and he's going to see and be outraged at everything for the first time.

Before I did all this, I saved a version of what I had done, in case this gets all mucked up and I have to throw it out and go back to where I stopped yesterday.

So now I have two or three scenes to redo from chapters that had been finished. But I want to smooth it all out before I get into ch. 27 because I have to understand the emotional reality.

10 Dec 02 -- Bishop's Ranch, Healdsburg, Calif.

Two years ago I came here for ten days to attend the "Silent days in Advent" and the Benedictine retreat, and to finish my book "How I Adore You." It was an extraordinarily productive time during which I solved problems that had been bugging me in several stories. The success of that time not only enabled me to finish my book but gave me the confidence to keep working on my novel. Now the novel's almost finished -- the first draft, that is -- and I'm back up here for the same events at the same time of year.

First of all, the most recent thing I did, on Sunday, was fuck around with the outline and move a little material among chapters 23-26, so that I could better support the big events in the Gene-Dolores relationship that are going to take up much of ch. 27, the next chapter I have to write and the penultimate chapter of the book. By "better support" I am referring to a feeling I've had for a while that there's too much Bobby and Rat Pack stuff all through ch. 24-26 and that all the Gene-Dolores stuff in ch. 27 will feel like it's coming out of the blue. So what I feel I have to do, in chapters 23 *through* 27, is make sure the curve of their relationship is done well, that the reader doesn't feel like they drop out too much during the whole convention sequence that takes up most of ch. 24-26, and that the events of ch. 27 -- which provide part of the major climax of the whole book, at least as far as Gene's character is concerned -- are properly prepared for. So this week I need not only to write ch 27 but to rewrite sections of the preceding chapters in order for all that to be done well.

The fact that I'm not merely forging ahead but doing some significant rewriting for the first time is partly for all the good reasons I just cited but also, I think, out of a little bit of fear of this momentous chapter. On the phone I described it to Katia in terms of being a skier poised at the top of the last run, and pausing at the top to play out the run ahead of time a little bit, partly out of being conscientious but also partly out of fear. But I know I'm not so much afraid that I'll get locked up. What I'm nervous about is the possibility that I will get into a rat's nest, the

way I did in my "Polar Bear" story, the rough edges of which I never quite succeeded in smoothing out. In a way that's similar to that, I'm a little afraid I'll get mired in the uncertainties of ch. 27 and the scenes that lead up to it in the preceding chapters.

But the only way to get around that is to think through the whole relationship of Gene and Dolores, as well as Gene's internal struggles, until I have a consistent picture of where they're both coming from and what they both want. Then I'll be able to depict Gene's internal conflict and the conflict between those two characters in such a way that the reader will feel is realistic and insightful.

The other big challenge I have to face, in terms of the outline and the workings of the plot, is exactly how the events of ch. 28 come to pass -- the final road trip that involves picking up MM and taking her from the *Misfits* set to the Cal-Neva. I found out, by reading "The Last Days of Marilyn Monroe," that MM actually did leave the set of *The Misfits* to have a liaison with JFK at the Cal-Neva, but the book says that the entire cast and crew went up there for the weekend. Then later she leaves the set again, having had a breakdown. What I want to do is combine the two, taking liberties with history. This will be a bit tricky but not too much. The main problem is that if I still have *The Misfits* begin filming when it actually did -- following the convention -- then ch. 28 would have to take place weeks afterward, and I feel that would mess up the continuity of the book. I think the solution is to have the filming already going on when the convention takes place. Then the convention substitutes, in a way, for the first break in filming that really took place when the whole cast and crew went to the Cal-Neva, and the scene in my book where they take her to the Cal-Neva substitutes for the second break in filming that really took place when she had her breakdown.

This also will require a bit of rewriting, but only of lines here and there in which I make reference to the fact that filming hasn't started yet. I hope readers will forgive the departures from history, but I'll write it so that it will work. In fact the only people who would possibly object would be MM buffs and sticklers.

But I won't have to worry about that at all until I'm done with ch. 27.

Here's what I have:

Tue Jul 12	ch. 27a	Gene meets the one beatnik in Las Vegas, and that one guy is on his way out of town. He bestows on Gene, as a parting gift, the title of the Only Beatnik in Las Vegas.	Gene	Why not have the Last Beatnik stay at the motel? He's on his way out of town. Maybe the guy is not the last beatnik in any real sense but he claims that title sardonically.
Tue Jul 12	ch. 27b	Hooker shows up at the motel (in the evening of course)	Gene	The call girl Patsy that Bobby got for Gene at the end of part 1 reappears briefly. Gene has been thinking about her for half the book and hoping to get back with her somehow. She reappears and pops his bubble, and this helps precipitate the emotional crisis which leads to him leaving Dolores and going with Bobby.
Fri Jul 22	ch. 27c	Sinatra-Bobby meeting -- Sinatra asks him to do one more favor, to pick up MM at Misfits set and deliver her to Tahoe	Bobby	Sinatra wants to get in good with JFK, figures a good way would be to deliver MM to him. Sinatra might even refer to the earlier "favor" saying "Don't worry, I haven't forgotten what you did for me" but of course would never actually admit he was wrong in any way.
Sat Jul 23	ch. 27d	Gene-Dolores argument?	Gene	
Sat Jul 23	ch. 27e	Bobby shows up asking Gene to go with him, and he goes	Gene	"Something happens where he has to leave." It's not just the visit by the hooker to the motel. It has to be like what happened between me and some girls, including Dina: attraction and willingness fades. And because he is now habitually facing the truth about all this, he has to leave. The hooker is just the catalyst.

I think I need to rethink the outline of the whole chapter. The incidents named in this outline are in there, but they've always been just placeholders. I have to rethink the whole thing.

11 Dec 02

9:00 a.m. All right. On the topic of the relationship between Gene and Dolores.

It begins early in the book, in ch. 5. I didn't plan for her character, nor even for a romantic interest for Gene; she just appeared, bursting through the door of his motel room. And I got to know her in the same prickly way that Gene has -- as someone who's intelligent, assertive, and hard-working, and who hides a genuine decency and sweetness beneath a certain amount of bitchiness. In fact, it's not bitchiness but assertiveness and a willingness to speak her mind (cf. Dana). She's often dismissive of Gene when she sees him threatening to divert her from her goal of getting ahead.

She likes Gene, but not only for his personality but for who he is in contrast (not shown) with the other available choices. She sees the prospect of marrying a gringo superior to marrying another Latino, especially an illegal one. She finds him acceptable and likes the attractive, though unformed, parts of his personality: his amiability, his good nature. She recognizes that he works hard, but this isn't really impressive because she comes from the working class and her brothers are construction workers so this is simply normal; actually she secretly thinks he doesn't work as hard as her brothers do (and she's right). The only thing about him that she really admires is the way he's learned to be more compassionate for the poor patrons of the motel. This is something truly new to her. As a working class person, she tends to look down on the poor, and as a Latina she tends to look down on prostitutes. In fact, as the person who has to clean up after the prostitutes -- a job which, in her book, tends to make her even lower than them -- she has the least motivation to feel any compassion for them. So Gene's shown her a new attitude. She doesn't approve of treating prostitutes this way, and she'll never share Gene's attitude, but she recognizes the integrity of Gene's attitude and behavior.

As for getting married to Gene and moving into the motel, this would be a real step up because she would go from the housekeeper to *La Patrona*. She wouldn't have to be the housekeeper anymore; she would hire somebody to clean up the rooms. This is accepted in her family as a sort of given, assuming she and Gene get married.

But if they don't get married, then it's all up in the air. She alone would never be allowed to move into the owner's apartment; one of her brothers and his wife would probably do so. And she would likely remain the housekeeper. This would be bad on several counts, not the least of which is that she would essentially be under the thumb of her brother's wife. So she *really* doesn't want that to happen. It's that prospect, therefore, which is as much or more of a motivating factor for her getting married to Gene than simply liking him and wanting to be with him.

Good, that all fits together and makes sense. I hadn't worked all that out before. I'm happy to see it makes sense from all angles. Now all I have to do is subtly apply those character traits and motivations to her scenes in Part 2.

Speaking of Part 2 -- 49 weeks ago I was in a hotel not far from here, writing the first chapters of Part 2. I got about two chapters done. And since that time I've written another twelve chapters, more than one a month. Pretty good for somebody who held down a full time job most of that time. Of course, I've gotten a huge amount done in the last 10 weeks since I've been unemployed; my per-month average through September wasn't nearly as good as it is now. But it all just goes to show how productive I can be if given the chance.

4:00 pm -- I spent the morning and most of the afternoon doing the rewriting and smoothing out I describe above. Along the way I added about a thousand words to the ms., including a new scene after 25a. Now I'm back at the beginning of ch. 27, and I realize I've actually done a bit too much to press Gene's hand. The way I have it at this moment, it seems like a given that Gene isn't going to stay at the motel. I need to go back and undo part of that so that, by the time we get to ch. 27, the reader really doesn't know which way Gene is going and really thinks he could go either way.

It's that "Do you still want to be a beatnik?" scene that tipped the balance too far -- scene 24b. Clearly, that's the fulcrum of the whole Gene part of the book. I need to move the fulcrum to ch. 27 instead.

4:30 pm -- I went back and rewrote scenes in ch. 24 and 25 to make them more open-ended. The only trouble is that now these scenes are clearly set during the week of the convention, and I need now to lengthen out the time a little so it doesn't look like the end of ch. 27 -- where Bobby comes to pick up Gene for the Tahoe trip -- comes too soon after the end of the convention. The reason for this is that I have to give MM time to go back to the *Misfits* set and have a breakdown.

In any case, I'm now ready to work on ch. 27. I'll get on it tonight, I guess, after dinner.

7:25 pm -- Before Evening Prayer and dinner I went into ch. 26a and added a crucial conversation to the scene on the telephone between Bobby and Frank in which Frank asks him to come to Puccini later that day. I inserted some raucous talk by Frank in which he tells a bawdy story about Lucy, who was JFK's date the night before. This I adapted from the portion of the Lawford biography, the bit from that book where it says:

Apparently Jack had never compared notes with Sinatra about Judy, because he tried, as Sinatra had, to talk her into a three-way -- "with a secretarial type in her late twenties," as Campbell recalled it. "I know you," Jack told her. "I know you'd like it." Just as she had with Sinatra, Judy refused.

I simply mixed up Lucy and Judy Campbell and the "secretarial type," so that it's JFK asking Lucy to sleep with Judy (whose name everyone is familiar with). This revelation about the extent to which Lucy is degraded by these Don Juans leaves Bobby completely wrecked.

What I'm going to do is have him face up to Sinatra, at least a little, at the end of the book, and have Sinatra apologize, for what it's worth.

Okay, let's really knuckle down here on ch. 27.

Q. What are the important things to depict in this chapter?

A. Well, lots of very important things. The most important is the end of the relationship between Gene and Dolores . It ends when Gene decides once and for all to leave Dolores and go off with Bobby.

Q. Does he decide suddenly or what? How does he make the decision?

A. He decides in extremis when caught between Bobby and Dolores. They're right there figuratively on either side of him, and he chooses Bobby.

Q. Why?

A. Because he doesn't really want to get married to Dolores and stay there forever; because he wants a way to leave immediately; because he remembers the job with Bobby fondly and this is a chance to go back to it, if only for a day or two.

Q. Okay, so working backward here... Just what proposition has Bobby made?

A. He only asks Gene to come with him for a few days. Gene leaps at the chance to leave for good.

Q. What's going on when Bobby arrives to make this proposition?

A. Gene is talking with Dolores... maybe arguing. I've always thought arguing. She's giving Gene a lot of pressure and Bobby offers an escape.

Q. What's she giving him pressure about?

A. Well, here's the thing. It's a month after the convention, say -- enough time for MM to crack up. Since Gene has to still be at the motel, he actually has agreed to stay on and has dropped a lot of hints about marrying her -- just enough to keep the situation going. So she's pressuring him to decide to actually marry her.

Q. Why is she pressuring him?

A. Partly because her family is pressuring her. They can't stand for the situation to be ambivalent. She can stand it more, because she really doesn't want someone who doesn't want her, but she doesn't like his vacillation either.

Q. What about this whole notion of the call girl Patsy showing up?

A. This seems harder and harder to work in. For one thing, it's unrealistic because a call girl at the Sands does not fall so far as to go to the Cactus in, what, four or five months. For another thing, the whole notion of 1) her showing up; 2) Gene reacting to her presence; 3) Dolores detecting his reaction and finding out Gene slept with her -- is based on a stereotypical jealousy script that isn't interesting. For another thing, there's no *reason* Dolores would be around in the evening when the clientele shows up. And finally, putting it in means rewriting a lot of ch. 11, the last chapter of Part 1. I've been meaning to do that for a long time, and I don't feel like doing it now, and I'm afraid I'd have to before writing this Patsy Returns scene. So I don't think I'll do it.

Q. Okay, what does that leave us with?

A. 1) Some explanation to draw attention to the fact that a month goes by. 2) The "last beatnik" scene; this actually can happen during the "month." 3) Gene and Dolores work around to an argument. 4) Bobby shows up.

Q. That's not much more than you had before.

A. No.

12 Dec 02

9:00 a.m. -- I'm going to read my notes and then go for a walk before getting down to work.

I had a couple thoughts: First, Gene should tell Sanchez in what is now 25b that he *will* stay. Then they can still talk about marriage. So we can leave the marriage thing still up in the air during the next month. Second, uh, what was it... Oh, last night, I thought of having the conversation between Bobby and Frank in which Bobby tells Frank that Lucy was actually his old girlfriend either in the book's very last scene or in the scene in 27 where Frank asks Bobby to do one more favor.

Okay, now a walk while it's still foggy out.

10:30 a.m.

Back from the walk and a shower. I really don't know where to start so I think I'll just feel my way.

12:35 p.m.

I finally wrote the first part of ch. 27 -- an 850 word scene between Gene and Dolores, in the office, that shows the state of their relationship: he's still around, she's dropping plenty of hints, work on the motel proceeds apace.

Now I think I need to have him take one of his walks, do some thinking, then come back to the motel and have the Last Beatnik show up. I'll have to do it in such a way that it doesn't come out corny.

I skipped Eucharist for the second day in a row; it comes at a particularly inconvenient time, 11:30. I'll go to lunch now, a little late.

1:10 pm

I was going to go to town and do a load of laundry, but I realized I just don't have to, and this is really my last full day of work before the Benedictine retreat starts tomorrow. So I'm going to plunge back in and see what more I can do with the time. I still think I may be able to write the whole chapter today. It's just a matter of thinking clearly and keeping at it. If that's possible after lunch.

Q. Right, what's next?

A. Gene encounters the Last Beatnik.

Q. What are you trying to show with that scene?

A. There's the irony of "becoming" a beatnik when he's still never really figured out a way to be one.

Q. Isn't there something else?

A. Perhaps it actually will serve to clarify Gene's mind. He's a beatnik now. He's not going to settle down and get married.

Q. Ha. All right, where does it take place?

A. I was thinking at the motel. But that's no longer Gene's territory. I'll have Gene go on a walk and meet the guy at the bus station.

Q. What's Gene doing at the bus station?

A. Maybe he's checking out of town buses too.

4:00 p.m. -- I wrote 27b, the encounter between the Last Beatnik and Gene. It came out better than I could have imagined it, while not being perfect; I'm satisfied. Now I've written 2650 words so far today; I'm going to take a break. Maybe I'll drive into town and miss Evening Prayer. I'm the worst Advent retreatant -- I'm hardly doing their thing at all.

8:50 pm -- Back from Compline. I haven't made any progress since 4:00. But I do have two scenes, and I'm able to go on. I'm still picking my way with respect to the Gene-Dolores dynamic, though. I don't really know how many scenes I need, or what I need to include. At this point I think I have set up one more visit to her house for Sunday dinner. I'm not looking forward to writing that, but I'll give it a try -- tomorrow, probably. I'm tired now.

I should start tomorrow with some Q and A. And I really must work during the morning.

13 Dec 02, 2:00 pm

The silent Advent retreat is over, the Benedictine retreat is set to begin. It's been raining nearly nonstop since 9:00 a.m., and it also rained most of the night. I just got back from Healdsburg, where I went to buy an umbrella; the road's already almost flooded. Therefore I expect people are going to have a dickens of a time getting here in time for Vespers, much less dinner. They might not come at all; if I were coming from San Francisco on a rush-hour holiday weekend and the weather was like this, and I didn't have to come, I might not.

All that has contributed to me feeling very forgiving and copasetic about the weekend. I am the Choir Master, which means I'm supposed to know and sing all the antiphons, which are hard. But I consider that I've accomplished something merely by being here.

I also accomplished a lot this morning. Let me see... Two more scenes, 27c and 27d, and another 1200 words. My outline for this chapter has been very much changed from what I pasted above on the 10th. It's now this; as you see, I have actually made a new chapter break where there was none.

Fri Jul 29	ch. 27a	Gene and Dolores talk while reorganizing the office	Gene	
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Sat Jul 30	ch. 27b	At the bus station, Gene meets the one beatnik in Las Vegas, and that one guy is on his way out of town. He bestows on Gene, as a parting gift, the title of the Only Beatnik in Las Vegas.	Gene	
Sun Jul 31	ch. 27c	Gene has Sunday dinner again at casa Sanchez. More hints he should ask D. to marry him.	Gene	
Mon Aug 9	ch. 27d	The "Motel Dolores" sign is installed	Gene	
"	ch. 27e	Confrontation between Gene and Sanchez	Gene	
Fri Aug 13	ch. 28a	Sinatra-Bobby meeting -- Sinatra asks him to do one more favor, to pick up MM at Misfits set and deliver her to Tahoe	Bobby	Sinatra wants to get in good with JFK, figures a good way would be to deliver MM to him. Sinatra might even refer to the earlier "favor" saying "Don't worry, I haven't forgotten what you did for me" but of course would never actually admit he was wrong in any way.
Sat Aug 14	ch. 28b	Gene-Dolores argument?	Gene	
Sat Aug 14	ch. 28c	Bobby shows up asking Gene to go with him, and he goes	Gene	

This is what happens when I just write through a problem. I get through it, the work is good, I'm productive, but I end up with twice as many scenes as anticipated. Whether I have to cut a good deal of it remains to be seen.

The interesting thing about this process is that in the last week I've done a lot of going back and rewriting and changing little things, which is not the way I've generally been working on this book. I generally have just been forging ahead. But here at the end of the book, Things have to be very much in order, and I have to keep everything straight as I go, for fear that I'll consider the first draft finished and forget to change something crucial and end up with a plot problem that's very difficult to unravel.

So this afternoon I would love to get more writing done but I believe I should practice my antiphons.

4:10 p.m. -- I found myself drawn back to chapter 27, so I sat down and 27e, the chapter-ending scene between Gene and Sanchez -- a scene I hadn't even imagined until today -- just rolled out of me. The scene effectively resolves almost the entire Gene plot thread; all that's left to do is depict the farewell scene between him and Dolores. That'll be in chapter 28.

Still heavy rain.

14 Dec 02, morning

I might get a little chance to write this afternoon, but I'm going to have to remember leave early so as to get to San Francisco in time to go to Sara's party. And I have a little time now, but then I have to get ready to lead the "choir practice."

15 Dec 02

I drove yesterday afternoon back to San Francisco in some of the heaviest rain I've ever driven in. It was coming down so hard that people were pulling off the freeway, and those who continued slowed down to about 20 m.p.h. But I was comfortable in my truck, up above the spray, and with my new tires, and I just kept going at a stately pace. That downpour lasted only a few minutes but it was really something.

It kept raining the whole way back into the city, but either because the weather had scared people into staying home, or everyone was already at the mall, there was not much traffic. I actually made it from Bishop's Ranch 7 miles outside Healdsburg to the Golden Gate Bridge in 90 minutes, a feat in any weather.

Then I went to Sara's birthday party with Cris. And then drove back to Healdsburg. The rain had stopped by then and I got back in jig time as well. Then I got about 5 hours' sleep, and then led the morning prayer service. After breakfast, another choir practice, and then Eucharist. By the time we were done, and were eating lunch and could actually converse, I really had people fooled into thinking I was a real choir director. All these old ladies were asking me if I were one, and they all talked about how fun the singing was and even the choir practice. That was rather satisfying to me, actually.

Now it's nearly 2:00 pm, and I've finished packing. All I can do is head home, in yet another storm, though not as bad as yesterday's. This week I will try to get away again for a few days to finish my novel. The work on the kitchen at home continues and actually it's easier for everyone if I'm not home, so that encourages me to find a motel room and write.

To sum up, I feel very satisfied about what I've done this week. The word count isn't huge, but I'm satisfied with what I have been able to do, and I still feel I'll finish this by Christmas.

17 Dec 02

Now that I've polished off one of the two remaining big problems in the book -- the degradation of Gene and Dolores' relationship -- the remaining problem concerns the geographical and credibility problems around the book's climactic scene.

All along, up to now, the sequence of events has been like this:

1. Gene is arguing with Dolores, ready to depart
2. Bobby shows up -- after driving from L.A. -- and takes Gene away
3. They drive to the Misfits set near Vegas and pick up MM
4. They take her to the Cal-Neva on Lake Tahoe

The only problem with that is that the Misfits set was not near Vegas in reality; it was near Reno. The cast and crew stayed in Reno and drove out every day to the set, some 75 miles outside of town. So now if I have Bobby driving all the way from L.A. only to pick up Gene, and then drive with him all the way to the set outside Reno -- that is 15 hours of driving, for Bobby. Then it's three hours, at most, from the set to the Cal-Neva. So it doesn't really make that much sense for Bobby to pick Gene up to "help" drive MM from the set near Reno to the hotel on the other side of Reno.

However, it does make sense if:

- Bobby drives all the way from L.A.
- and is so tired that Gene has to drive the rest of the way to Reno where they pick up MM at the hotel in Reno -- she's not out at the set -- she's hiding in her hotel room
- they drive her up to the Cal-Neva.

All right, so it isn't really that much of a problem -- *if* Bobby is going to do all that driving. Why doesn't he just fly to Reno, rent a car, and use that?

Now let's look at reality. What actually happened, accg. to "The Last Days Of Marilyn Monroe," was:

"Shortly after the conclusion of the convention, Sinatra opened at the Cal-Neva... and invited MM and the other 'Misfits' stars to see his show on Saturday, August 13. The entire cast, production staff and

crew were transported there.... Among the guests that weekend were Joe and Jack Kennedy, Sam Giancana, and Johnny Rosselli.”

“For many years, the Cal-Neva had been one of the favorite haunts of Joe Kennedy, who had often vacationed there with (his lover) Janet Des Rosier. Following JFK’s nomination, Joe Sr. went to Cal-Neva for a two week working holiday while laying plans for the campaign with Sinatra and Giancana.”

“According to Sen. George Smathers, things weren’t going well between MM and JFK. Now that JFK had won the nomination, Marilyn’s silence about her relationship with the presidential candidate became vital. Smathers said an effort was made to ‘talk to MM about putting a bridle on herself and on her mouth and not talking too much, because it was getting to be a story around the country.’

“Whatever occurred at the Cal-Neva (that weekend) had a devastating effect on MM in the following days on location in Reno. Cameraman Russell Metty told (director John) Huston that they couldn’t shoot close-ups of MM’s eyes because they had a ‘strange look.’ She began slurring dialogue and missing cues. On Friday, Aug. 26, Paula Strasberg discovered MM unconscious in her room at the Mapes Hotel in Reno. She had overdosed. Scooping out the dissolving capsules still in her mouth, Strasberg called for an ambulance. M was rushed to the hospital, where her stomach was pumped. On Saturday she was taken [by plane] to the Westside Hospital in LA.” ...

So the way I should depict it is:

1. Frank tells Bobby that MM wants to take a break from filming
2. Bobby takes a plane to Reno, rents a car, and takes MM to the Cal-Neva

Unfortunately, this has no room in it for Gene. So I’m back to:

1. Frank tells Bobby that MM wants to take a break from filming
2. Bobby drives to Vegas, picks up Gene
3. They drive to Reno
4. They pick up MM from the Mapes Hotel
5. They drive to the Cal-Neva -- a drive of an hour and a half -- and drop her there

We’re still left to wonder why Bobby drives all the way to Reno instead of flying. Of course, if he does drive, then it would be logical enough to go via Vegas, and it would be logical to pick up Gene to help with the driving. But let’s see if I can think of a reason for him to drive at all.

Oh, I remember now. He’s afraid of flying. Hmm, that seems pretty dubious. After all he flew back and forth to New York thirteen chapters earlier.

Well, let’s look at it this way. We’ve established already the idea of him driving back and forth between the Cal-Neva and Vegas, even though it was perfectly possible to fly. I could just put in something about how he’s afraid to fly. I could even write a comic scene about that when he goes to New York.

I dunno. I think I’ll just write it the way I have above -- the 5 scenes -- and then if anyone squawks while reading the first draft I’ll have to deal with it in the rewrite.

19 Dec 02

I spent much of the week stressing over not being allowed to write, though Cris did leave the house on Tuesday the 19th and I wrote the beginning of ch. 28, about 500 words, even though I was in fact at home. Now two days later I wasted much of the day and finally am at the church a little before 4 pm to see if I can make some more progress against my goal of finishing this in time for Xmas.

When I say finishing it in time for Xmas, I mean actually writing the whole of the first draft, but I do want to go back and clean a few things up before giving it to people.

So today I'll write the rest of 28a, the scene where Frank Sinatra asks Bobby to do one more favor and go pick up MM.

5:00 pm -- In an hour I did 1500 words to take care of 28a. In doing so I resolved -- I hope -- any questions the reader might have about why Bobby does all that driving when he could simply fly to Reno. Frank *asks* him to drive, *so that* he can pick up MM "on the way." It sounds completely natural in the scene -- or as natural as anything that Frank proposes. He even foreshadows the action by asking "what happened to that kid you hired to drive you?"

20 Dec 02

3:10 pm -- The next scene I have to write is something I only recently came up with. In my old plan, the tension between Gene and Dolores was going to mount until they had a fateful argument, and then Bobby shows up and Gene just goes off with him. But the way things are now, it's already settled that Gene will leave; this was decided by Dolores' father and decreed in ch. 27. So my new plan is for Gene and Dolores to have a farewell scene and for Sanchez to then take him to the bus station. Then Bobby shows up at the motel looking for him, and Dolores says he's gone to the bus station. Then Bobby picks him up before he can get on a bus to San Francisco. That's chapter 28.

So next I have to write the farewell scene, and I haven't had it in mind to do long enough that I really know what it's all about. So it's Q and A time again.

Q. What is the main action in ch. 28b?

A. Gene says goodbye to Dolores and leaves.

Q. Is this a surprise for her?

A. No, her father has already told her about it.

Q. Why don't we see that?

A. Because neither Bobby nor Gene is present, and showing a scene where neither is present would disrupt the book's unity.

Q. So how does Dolores feel about it?

A. She has really mixed feelings. She is disappointed that it didn't work out with Gene, but she already had an inkling that it wouldn't. She likes Gene but was not in love with him, and so her heart isn't broken, but she will miss him, and she is willing to admit as much. She feels very ambivalent about the heavily patriarchal role her father has taken in the whole thing.

Here's an idea: She shows up with her father who says, "OK, say goodbye and I'll take him to the bus station," and she makes her father leave, showing some anger. She wants this, at least, done her own way.

5:30 pm -- I did 28b, after a short nap. 1600 words -- it wasn't hard. It'll have to be sharpened up a little but I think I did well capturing Dolores' mixed feelings. Perhaps I should have done more with Gene's. But I think I can put them in now, at the beginning of 28c, the bus station scene.

27 Dec 02

My hope in the first part of December was that I would actually finish my first draft by Christmas. At the pace I was going, that hope was justified. But for the last two weeks I have had little chance to work.

So 27 December finds me still waiting to write the end of ch. 28 and all of ch. 29. To do this, I'll go out of town again, to Christine's this time, since we don't have enough money for me to stay in motels and the drive will do me good anyway. I'll leave tomorrow. Meanwhile Cris has unexpectedly left me alone today, and I may as well try to get something done.

I did finish ch. 28, in less than 500 words. There wasn't that much to say, after all.

29 Dec 02 -- Wonder Valley, Calif.

Arrived here, after more than 24 hours' travel including a night in Bakersfield, at about 3:30. Now I've taken a short nap and I can work a little.

Only one more chapter to go:

Fri Aug 19	ch. 29a	Bobby and Gene on the road to Reno	Bobby	Bobby has to explain what they're doing. They also catch up to each other. Allows them to reflect aloud on the state of things.
	ch. 29b	Arrive at Mapes Hotel, pick up MM		
	ch. 29c	They drive to the Cal-Neva		So during the ride from Vegas to Tahoe, Bobby is disconsolate -- he's in a state as well as MM, and so a lot of what she says is kicked off by his tragic emotional state. MM is high on various kinds of pills; that's why they have to "rescue" her from the Misfits set and take her to the Cal-Neva. So in her confused state, she rambles about the universe and everything, and she comes out with this zinger at the climax: "Everything just is." While this sounds like gibberish to Bobby, Gene nearly runs off the road, because he's been trying to get into zen like the Dharma Bums, and this adage hits home for him. It leads to some sort of big life-turn for him.
	ch. 29d	Arrival at Cal-Neva		Like 29b, this seems like it has to be fairly straightforward.
	ch. 29e	Final scene between Bobby and Sinatra. Bobby tells Frank that Lucy, whom Frank told a tale of in 26a, was coincidentally his former girlfriend. Frank finally realizes what Bobby has sacrificed, and tries to make it up to him. Bobby is offered talk show in reward for work at the convention and for bringing MM		When Bobby gets the talk show at the end, he already knows it's going to fail, because he's going to go up against the Tonight Show. But he appreciates the gesture and he's going to give it his best shot.
Sun Aug 21	ch. 29f	Bobby and Gene goodbye		

29c is really the climax of the book. It's the emotional peak. 29e, which provides a denouement for Bobby, is not set up to be that emotional. Here's a problem: Gene's satori comes as a direct result of the action of the chapter, and it's an emotional climax as well; but Bobby's denouement -- that he gets a talk show on TV -- comes only indirectly as a result of the action of the chapter, because it's Sinatra that's doing all the work off stage.

1. But isn't that exactly the place I want to be, in order to achieve what I originally imagined -- and by that I mean looking back at my notes from the very first, where I decided I wanted Bobby to finally get what he wants in the end as a sort of act of grace and not because he has directly earned it
2. The thing is that a lot of the important action that brings about Bobby's "victory" happens behind the scenes. Sinatra is making all these arrangements off stage while Bobby is doing all this driving. This seems like a problem, or at the very least, a counter-intuitive way to reach the end.

I should probably know how Sinatra actually pulls this off. OK, so let's say he needs at least a couple of full days to pull all the strings. That means their conversation in 28a should take place earlier in the week, which is not a problem. But I should also provide Sinatra with a greater motivation to reward Bobby, and that's why I have to go back to 28a and put into the conversation Bobby telling him who Lucy really was and what she meant to him.

Sinatra spends the few days making phone calls, cashing in a few chits, meeting a network president at Puccini and getting the guy laid.

Whoa, I just had an idea: Sinatra invites the network guy up to the Cal-Neva. There he wines and dines him. In fact, why shouldn't the guy already be going there. Like Frank says in 28a, people hear Sinatra is performing for ten days at the Cal-Neva and it's going to be like the Summit, people drop everything and head up there. And there the prexy sees Bobby perform. Although Sinatra has already primed the guy, the guy is able then to go to Bobby after the show and award him the talk show. This provides much more of a genuine climax to the whole Bobby story.

So now we have this:

Fri Aug 19	ch. 29a	Bobby and Gene on the road to Reno	Bobby	
	ch. 29b	Arrive at Mapes Hotel, pick up MM		
	ch. 29c	They drive to the Cal-Neva		All this is same as above
	ch. 29d	Arrival at Cal-Neva		
Fri Aug 19	ch. 29e	Bobby performing with all the others		JFK is in the audience, as is the network president
	ch. 29f	After the show, Bobby meets with Frank and the network guy and is awarded the talk show		Philly is also there, to provide some semblance of reality to this whole wish fulfillment scene.
Sat Aug 20	ch. 29g	Bobby and Gene goodbye		Gene takes off the next day

That's great. It's a lot more writing than I anticipated, but it makes a lot more sense.

I've been lying all along to Sara. I kept saying I had three more scenes to go. That's because I thought there were only three really substantial scenes in the 5 or 6 scenes I had mapped out for ch. 29. In any case now there are seven distinct scenes. Oh well, I've got a few days to work on them.

Now the only thing left to decide is just how Gene takes off in the last scene of the book.

8:50 pm -- I added 1000 words to 28a: in which Bobby breaks the news to Frank that Lucy, whom he bearded for JFK and whom Frank later referred to in the most bawdy terms, was actually his former fiancé. That laid the groundwork for ch. 29.

Sometimes I think that all this work I'm doing, in which I go back and put in material that will lay the groundwork for something, actually means I'm doing the lion's share of rewriting now. But I don't think it's all going to be that easy.

30 Dec 02

9:50 a.m. -- I don't really have a deadline of midnight on Dec 31, but it would be tidy if I could actually finish by then. It would make a nice story. But there's no need, especially since I will be here until at least Jan. 2.

Part of the whole holiday thing down here in the desert is that Philip Klasky, who bought Jerry's house where Christine used to live, has brought a lot of family members down here for a 50th birthday party for his cousin Rick. Rick is someone I have actually met and whose apartment in L.A. Cris and Christine and I stayed at at the end of 1988 just a few days after we'd come back from Japan. Christine and Philip and Rick have always formed some kind of troika. Anyway the reason I bring it up is, not only will there be a party tonight **and** tomorrow night

at Phil's, but his sister Eileen is also staying over at Christine's. They are about to go over to Phil's for a big breakfast, and I'm going to stay here alone and work. Or I'd never get anything done. But meanwhile they're chatting in the living room and I'm marking time until they leave.

Q. What does the first part of ch. 29 cover?

A. Gene and Bobby drive from Las Vegas to Reno.

Q. What day is it?

A. The afternoon and evening and night of Thursday, Aug. 18. They will arrive at Reno on the morning of the 19th (scene 29b) and take MM up to Tahoe that day (29c). That only takes a couple of hours at the most. Then that evening, Friday, Bobby will perform with the others (29e).

Q. What takes place between Bobby and Gene on that drive up to Reno?

A. First and most obviously, they tell each other what's happened since they last saw each other in May. The reader already knows this information, so there's no real need for me to spell it out. The only important element around that would be their reaction to what each other says.

Secondly, it's from Bobby's point of view, so we have Bobby's thoughts and feelings as well.

Thirdly, and most important, their statements and Bobby's thoughts lay the foundation for the novelistic action of the chapter.

Q. What is that action?

A. Bobby has been tormented throughout the book. In this chapter comes his deliverance through an act of grace. Gene has suffered and wandered in his own way, and achieves a moment of singular clarity. These two actions come from two different agents.

Q. Talk about the two agents.

A. Bobby's deliverance comes from Sinatra. In psychic-emotional terms, Sinatra is both a father figure and a king figure. He holds powers to deliver great rewards and great punishments. If we look at Bobby's story as a quest, then Sinatra is the king who delivers Bobby from suffering by bestowing great rewards.

Q. Well, is it an act of grace or not? Because grace is undeserved, but if it's a quest Bobby has completed, then it sounds more like the rewards are deserved.

A. It's more like grace. Bobby doesn't perform his "labors" in order to win a reward, really, but as an expression of his complex relationship with Sinatra.

Q. Now about Gene, and Marilyn Monroe as an agent of his deliverance.

A. Gene has been exposed to suffering and has learned some compassion; the compassion allows him to suffer *with* the guests of the motel and with Gustafson. But he hasn't made sense of it. The suffering bugs him (although I need to go back and put that in), but he is naturally more concerned at the moment with the failure of his relationship with Dolores.

Q. What are the key elements here?

A. In addition to the elements of suffering and compassion, there's the element of being decisive. He hasn't been decisive about his life or about Dolores, and the decision to leave has really been made *for* him by Sanchez. Perhaps one of the key things that happens to Gene in his moment of satori is that he makes a big decision.

Q. Yeah, what?

A. He goes back to Dolores.

Q. Are you sure?

A. No.

Q. Okay, talk about MM as the agent of deliverance.

A. Not to use too much of a cliché, she's a goddess figure -- especially to Gene. He ascribes godlike powers to her. So for her to bestow on him enlightenment, albeit unintentionally, is not too much of a stretch.

Q. So you're going to set all this up in 29a?

A. Yes, I'm going to use their conversation as a kind of summation of what they've been dealing with during the whole book.

5:00 pm -- I'm knocking off for the day, having written all of 29a and much of 29b, nearly 2700 words. I also cleaned up a few things in ch. 28 -- for example, a little online research showed that the Mapes Hotel was well known at the time, so Sinatra wouldn't have acted unfamiliar with the name (as I had originally depicted). The Mapes Hotel, by the way, was closed in 1982 and blown up in January 2000.

I also learned that Monroe and Miller stayed in room 614. The internet is an amazing thing.

31 Dec 02

10:45 a.m. -- A bit of a late start, but it's OK because I will be able to work late into the evening. We have a New Year's Eve party to go to at Perry's house but we won't leave until 11:00 or so. I'm going to try to work hard all day and get through 29c and 29d.

This is a big day. The scene with Marilyn Monroe has been in the outline, or existed as an idea, for the entire time I've worked on the book. It was the landmark I was going toward, all this time. To actually write it, as the pinnacle of the whole project, and within the deadline I'd set for myself of the end of the year, is immensely satisfying. Of course, the other day I decided that it actually wouldn't be the last big scene in the book, that I would expand my idea for the following scene into two scenes, and those would comprise the climax. So it's like climbing a mountain where you get to what you thought was the top, and see another, higher peak on the other side. But maybe I'll do that tomorrow, or even today.

My computer, which was noisily going plock, plock, plock much of yesterday, has not plocked once today. It seems the machine definitely prefers to sit in one place, even though it is a laptop. But I'm still getting the HD looked at if not replaced.

So let's so a little thinking about this Marilyn scene.

Bobby's mental and physical state: He's physically tired from the drive, though somewhat freshened by the chance to take a shower early that morning. But he's depressed by the series of events and non-events of the summer: the Lucy episode, the convention-related episodes, and the general state of his career. (I need to go back to 29a and make that clearer, I think, but I'm not going to do it now.) Also, Marilyn herself is a depressing sight. Finally, Bobby suspects that Frank isn't really bringing Marilyn up to Tahoe for her health, and this realization is also oppressive. The latter is confirmed when he sees JFK in passing later.

Gene's physical and mental state: Not as tired or depressed as Bobby, he has just driven all night from Vegas with only a few hours' sleep, and he's probably a little spacey. (They didn't say spacey in 1960; what did they say?) Let's say he wakes with some anxiety; maybe he even had a bad dream. And the specter of Marilyn more or less out of her mind is upsetting. (Bobby foreshadows this at the end of 29a when he indirectly compares MM to his motel guests, saying he'll have to use the same interpersonal skills with her as he did with them.) So during 29c (the drive up to Tahoe), Gene is confronted again with suffering. Not just hers but with the suffering of the world, of which hers reminds him. This prepares him for satori.

5:50 p.m. -- I finished 29c and 29d today, writing about 5000 words including the bit I added to 29b. A full day's work -- I think actually my biggest word count day ever, on this book. I wrote the entire final scene with Marilyn Monroe, the one I've been leading up to this whole book.

I think it's all right. It will definitely need some redoing. There's some sentiment and I certainly don't want it to have gotten out of hand. I'll look at it again in a day or two.

Tomorrow, I'll write the ending. Only a day late. But what a good beginning to the new year: to finish a book.

1 Jan 03

This morning, at 9:58 a.m., I wrote the last words of the book (of chapter 30, as it turned out. I decided to make 29e and 29f a separate chapter 30. As for 29g, I put the goodbye in 29d). I sat back, went outside, took a little walk in the driveway -- and quickly decided I was done. The ending is a little weak, but it's good enough for a first draft. I can pump it up a little when I get home in a couple of days, before printing out the ms.

Saving the final changes, I make a .zip archive and put the zip file on a diskette. Then putting this in my pocket, I went outdoors and walked over to what's left of the scrap metal pile. Christine had joked more than once in the last couple of days that, when I finally finished, we should ring a big bell. But there is no bell, so I found two pieces of metal that produced a clanging sound, and walked across a quarter mile of desert to Philip and Rick's house, where Christine and everyone else were eating waffles. They all praised me and then I ate waffles too.

So that's it!

I took a walk with Christine early in the afternoon, then went to town for a sandwich and a change of scenery before coming back around sunset (i.e. 5:00 pm). I spent an hour and a half spell-checking all the files and standardizing the format so they would print out right. While doing that I noticed all the place-holders I'd put in for street names and other proper names -- small bits that will have to be researched, they won't even keep me from distributing the first draft to friends.

I do feel good. Tired, though. I wrote 5000 words yesterday, and finished up with 2700 words this morning, for a three-day total of about 12,000 words. From now on, I won't be able to measure my progress in word count anymore!

5 Jan 03 -- San Francisco

Sunday afternoon. After coming back from the desert 48 hours ago, I didn't do anything on the book until today. I wanted to make sure the ending looked all right, so I went through chapters 29 and 30, doing a little rewriting. I was able to add a couple hundred words to ch. 29, making the delivery of MM much more sinister -- the reader can see what she's really been brought up there for. This is much better and less sentimental than what I had before.

But for the most part, what I had was fine.

I don't think I have time to print it out before going to Sara's, but I'll give it a shot.

12 Jan 03

I haven't done any work on my book for several days, as Cris got another knee surgery on Friday and I've spent much of my time staying close by. Since it was one of the relatively minor arthroscopic cartilage-clearing jobs (as opposed to the more major ligament replacement work she had done last winter), she is already up and

about, but there's no way she can drive herself anywhere for a couple of weeks. So there's no way I can really get away, even to the office at church for a stretch of several hours.

But I did have a good idea today, when I was listening to a radio interview with a writer. I realized I didn't do as much with the climactic Bobby-Marilyn chat in ch. 29 as I meant to. I did a good job with the sort of wiggled-out Marilyn chatter, but I never got to the point where she really provides him with a moment of grace (as she does, in advertently, with Gene). I'll have to go back and play that up more.

The way it is now, Bobby looks askance at her ramblings, and that's what's justified currently, since she doesn't really focus on him. But I want to go back and have her really turn her attention to him so that she offers him grace, and he has somewhat of a realization there too, in addition to Gene. This then forms the main spiritual resolution in the book for both main characters. The final chapter, in which Bobby gets some of what he's wanted all along, i.e. recognition from Frank and a touch of real success, also will have to be played up slightly. Right now, the way I have it is that Bobby does a little ruminating at the very end of the book, explaining to himself why Frank was so generous. It'll work better if I have Frank explain it himself. Then Sinatra also becomes an agent of redemption.

20 Jan 03

So far I have a few things I know I'm going to have to do:

- rewrite the first two chapters to shorten and sharpen them
- rewrite ch. 29 according to Sara's notes and also so that the focus is a little more on Bobby, as noted in my entry above
- rewrite a great deal of the whole Gene-Dolores arc in Part 2 to deepen Dolores' character and make the motivations of Gene and Dolores more active and more believable.
- Do research on all the things which are now placeholders, as well as things that turn out to be inaccurate or anachronistic, and correct all those references

I haven't gotten notes from anyone else yet, though Cris mentions some anachronism from time to time as she's making her way through the text. I got a note from Christine today to say she was nearing the end and had had a great time reading it, so that's good.

So I guess in order to continue working on the book in an organized manner, I can continue to use my outline. But I might need to create other tools to look at other issues, like the way Dolores and Gene's relationship develops. As for how to make her character more interesting -- Sara said she was too one-dimensional, nothing but "a good girl who talks back" on occasion to Gene -- I'm open to suggestions. Right now the adjectives that describe her are dedicated, focussed, ambitious, serious. She doesn't have any negative qualities in the least. The same is true, to a somewhat lesser extent, of Gene, though his negative qualities are slightly more apparent. According to Sara this is the book's major fault, and it's one that will need a lot of rewriting.

However, solving the problem will probably solve another problem, namely the excessive length. Sara surprised me when she said it was 20% too long. "Is that all?" I responded. "I figured at least 40%." In any case, I'm going to have to cut, and clearing up their relationship will make me remove all the lollygagging I did in the first several chapters of Part 2. Sara said there was too much handyman stuff; I thought there was too little because I had wanted to depict Gene's character growth through his struggle with the remodeling. So that's something else to smooth out.

3 Feb 03

.... Of course, I'm mainly doing all this work on mysteries as work avoidance, to keep from working on "Make Nice," which is what I'm really supposed to be working on. Here it is February and I've done very little work on a second draft, aside from a little cutting and reordering of the opening, and then dividing the 30 chapters of the first draft up into 60 chapters. I made a new chapter every time the voice changed, for the most part. (Ironically, "Blindsighted" also has 30 chapters. But it is also about 1/3 the length of my original thirty chapters, I'm estimating.)

I note that I have two different and somewhat conflicting notes I made this month in regard to the material in the "old" ch. 29:

- rewrite ch. 29 according to Sara's notes and also so that the focus is a little more on Bobby
- I did a good job with the sort of wiggled-out Marilyn chatter, but I never got to the point where she really provides Bobby with a moment of grace (as she does, in advertently, with Gene). I'll have to go back and play that up more.

However, that was before Katia gave me her comments. She only read the first ten chapters, so never got as far as ch. 29, but one of the things she urged me to do was determine the main themes of the book. She said that once I did this, rewriting would be easier because I would be rewriting according to these themes and eliminating whatever did not explore these themes. That sounds like good advice, but since starting to think about mysteries I've been thinking more in the mode of subplot, not theme. Of course they aren't mutually exclusive, in fact the book better have clear examples of both. The truth is that something makes me almost afraid to tackle this question of theme because I'm afraid it would lead to too much rewriting.

Cris, who's almost finished reading the first draft, says I should largely leave alone the Bobby scenes, especially those where he appears with Sinatra et al. That reinforces Sara's comments, to some degree, since Sara felt that the book's biggest weakness, once the opening got squared away, was the Gene-Dolores subplot.

So either I'm avoiding thinking about the Gene-Dolores subplot, or I'm avoiding thinking about theme, or both.

11 Feb 03

Took quite a while off from thinking about this, while entertaining ideas for other books, going to movies, and just generally avoiding it. I went so far as to get whole new ideas for other books, such as the "moviestars" concept. Finally, this morning in the shower, an idea came to me for how to approach working on the Gene-Dolores problem -- as I've come to think of it. By that I mean the set of problems that were created by me not being quite sure what their whole subplot was about -- problems such as the lack of clarity about the characters' goals, Dolores' own basic character, the excess length and wandering quality of Part 2, and so forth.

Today, Tuesday, Cris went to Dublin to go to work again. (I almost wrote "Emeryville.") And while I have to clean up the house and go shopping in preparation for tonight's church meeting here, and also go to Oakland for a 4:00 appointment, I still have a couple of hours in which I can concentrate on this book. The only thing that's likely to distract me is Nancy coming over to put all the Macintosh components back together, and she's not likely to do that until at least mid-afternoon.

I went to zazen this morning, getting up at 5:00. Then I forgot to go to morning prayer. Then I got really sleepy so I took a nap, and had a dream that there was a noontime meditation session at Walgreen's in the Castro, upstairs somewhere. When I got up from the nap, I had that loggy feeling, but I'm awful glad I took it. Because I won't have time to take a nap in mid-afternoon.

Oh, I never said what my idea was. Well, I've been thinking for the last ten days about what Katia said about how to construct the dialogue -- how a scene heavy with dialogue commonly has lines mixed into it that denote actions by the characters, even if they're inconsequential actions, that demonstrate what the characters are feeling.

And she also said that characters in novels don't have serial conversations, in which A says something and B responds directly to what was said, and A responds directly to what B said. She said characters talk past each other, each with their own agendas, often not especially listening to each other that hard. (Actually she said that's how people talk; but only Cris talks that way.) And looking yesterday at a story by Faulkner and another by Hemingway, I saw examples of what she meant.

So my idea is that, now that I've separated the 30 chapters of the book into 60 chapters, each of which has only one point of view, I can sit down and identify some elements about the characters that I never did while writing the first draft -- namely, I can determine what each character wants, how they feel going into the scene, and how they're going to react to what the other character's goal is. And I can write kernels of dialogue, putting down in one page what I have generally taken three or four pages to do. This will collapse the scenes greatly.

I'll apply this much more to the Gene-POV scenes than to the Bobby-POV scenes, which are invariably clearer.

What I'll do today is create a new outline of the 60 chapters, and go from there. I will undoubtedly be able to reduce the number from 60, but for now I'll think of the structure as having 60 chapters.

14 Feb 03

I didn't do shit after I wrote that last entry. I think I went to a movie, or maybe I just fucked around -- something I've been doing a lot of this week.

But today I finally sat down and made an outline of the 60 chapters.

It was really my first opportunity to see the structure of the whole book. I made some notes in the new outline, which I'm calling the second draft outline, about which scenes are unnecessary. But I still haven't done the real work of figuring out Dolores' character and sharpening the whole business with Gene in Part 2.

20 Feb 03

Almost another week has gone by, tra la.

Cris left for El Salvador yesterday, though, so now's the time for me to really get something done. I must say, however, I'm a bit discouraged by the fact that I haven't had any brainstorms about Dolores in the last several weeks. Perhaps that means that she actually is a fully-formed character in my mind, and I just have to tease out more details about her and develop her relationship with Gene more. Perhaps I don't have to change her character. I do like her the way she is.

I do have a tactical idea, at least. I will go through the new outline -- the "second draft" outline with its 60 chapters -- and identify all scenes with Gene and Dolores. Then I'll map out the arc of their relationship and see where the problems are.

Not that I really know what I'm doing. I'll look back on this someday and see how lazy and stupid I was, I guess.

Yesterday I pulled my copy of "Sexus" off the shelves. Bought in 1979 or 1980, the paperback was a little old and beaten-up then; after another 20 years, its pages are seriously yellowing, and each page has a ring of brown around the edges. Damn cheap acidic paper. Back then no one cared. It's in such bad shape I'll have to buy a new copy, but that will be fun.

Later -- Well, I didn't do much work today, but I did come up with my first decent idea.

Let's suppose we leave the Dolores character more or less the way she is -- rather than introducing any new character traits that go against what we already see, such as that she's a slut or something. Right now she is:

- ambitious
- hard-working
- honest
- outspoken
- doesn't take any guff from anybody
- pragmatic -- gets along with Gustafson to keep her job, but doesn't buy any of his bullshit
- says she wants to be an accountant
- initially says she's "not going to stay" at the motel, but when her family buys it, looks at it as a business opportunity

The thing is, we don't see enough of most of those qualities, and we especially don't see her *act* in ways that allow us to *see* these traits. Most of all, we don't see any internal conflicts.

What internal conflicts exist already, at least in a nascent way?

She has an internal conflict about her attraction to Gene. In her mind, he has advantages, but these are outweighed by his disadvantages. The fact that he is not interested in staying at the motel and/or marrying her makes her instantly reject the idea of being with him. She does it without a second thought.

I can play up this conflict by showing more of how she's attracted to him. I can also make her just a wee bit more aggressive in her pursuit of him. The way the relationship is portrayed now, they're both extremely passive. That's one reason it's so boring. Instead, *I have to show what she wants*. And what Gene wants.

Another internal conflict may have to do with her saying she wants to be an accountant. A fine ambition on the face of it, but she seems so unconflicted about it. She never even says *why* she wants to be an accountant. And she seems to feel fine about the whole motel idea... How does she *really* feel about it?

The other thing I did manage to do was fill in the bit in ch. 40 where Gene reads out of "The Dharma Bums" for the Buddhist priest.

22 Feb 03

Despite my refusal to even pretend to work, I did have an idea. I've been trying to figure out the Dolores character and her relationship with Gene. It occurred to me that the scene in (the old) ch. 11, where they try to go swimming at the Riviera and are prevented because of her race, is actually a key scene in their relationship, but it doesn't seem to have any affect on their relationship. By rights, she should trust him more and want to be with him more after he defends her like that -- but I haven't followed up the scene at all. So my idea is to move the scene to later in the book -- to a point where their relationship reaches a turning point. *Then* she invites him home, starts seeing him as boyfriend material, and so on.

Doing this will mean restructuring all those chapters in the second half of the book, but that's all right. It'll be easier if I have some kind of clue. This is the first decent clue I've had.

23 Feb 03

I really must delve more into the internal emotional conflicts of my characters. Bobby should clearly suffer more from his betrayal of Timson to the FBI; his relationship with Gene should suffer from the "Get out of here" scene, which needs to be played up more; Gene's ambivalence must be more clearly depicted as pain. That doesn't mean it can't be funny, but the pain and suffering needs to be clear.

Brainstorming about story:

Gene meets Dolores. He tries to flirt with her and she rejects him.

But sometime toward the end of the old Part 1, she lets him get close. The reason is that she is in some kind of emotional state, perhaps pissed off about something her father said, and she's rebelling by letting Gene kiss her.

With that much encouragement, he moves to LV and gets the job at the Cactus. Note the whole swimming pool scene hasn't happened yet. She goes back to keeping Gene at arms's length. Here's where we see more of her depth of character.

Bobby visits the Cactus (as in the new ch. 41a) and invites them to go swimming. They accept (why not?) and the swimming pool incident happens -- with Bobby there. I'm going to have to make reference to the historical event of that spring, namely the real threat of a march by the NAACP. But I can simply say that the "Moulin Rouge Agreement" has already been agreed to, and this incident simply happens while they're trying to figure out how to implement it.

So Gene defends her and she has a new respect for him. This is deepened in ch. 45a when Gene defends Gustafson.

But what are some of the deeper things about her character that I haven't revealed?

First of all, I need to develop a conflict between her and her father and brothers. She wants to escape from them and sees Gene and the motel as a way to at least live apart from them. (No that's bad, see below **) She needs to argue with them more. She wants Gene to defend her, but he is charmed by her father, whom he was prepared to dislike. But despite this conflict, she can't just leave; she has to go through the motions, because Gene doesn't offer much of an alternative.

Perhaps she really does want to go away with him. Perhaps once she realizes he has this whole wandering yen and intends to go to San Francisco, she wants him to marry her and take her away to San Francisco where they can start over. Gene thinks it's a good idea, but when it really comes time to do it, he can't bring himself to. Because he really wants to travel on his own.

No, that's weak. I can't have ambivalence be a major character trait. It's just too weak!

Perhaps he has a reason for not wanting to be tied down. It's one thing to want to get laid, but he doesn't want to be anchored to the motel, and he doesn't want to be anchored to a woman. He just wants to go on the road.

**So this whole plan for the Sanchez family to buy the motel is actually sort of threatening to Dolores. She doesn't want to get married and run the motel; it's too close to her family. She wants a way to leave town. She secretly pressures Gene to take her away.

When Bobby shows up, it's not at the bus station. It's at the motel, at the height of the conflict between Gene, Dolores and her father. And he goes away with Bobby. That's close to my original idea.

At the end, I don't think it would make sense to go back to her. Well, maybe he'll try anyway. We'll leave what happens up to the imagination of the reader.

25 Feb 03

I did some good work on the outline this morning, making note of the scenes that will have to change, given my notes of the last few days. I put in notes like this (right-most column):

Fri-Sat Apr 8-9	31	Gene struggles with maintenance works at Riv for first time parking cars. On Sunday, walks and thinks about the idea of getting settled versus the "on the Road" idea of transience.	Gene	Almost nothing happens here, except we find out about the job at the Riv, and we hear again about the Kerouac stuff -- and not for the last time.
Sun Apr 10				

Mon Apr 11	32	Bobby and Tragge on the set of <i>Let's Make Love</i> .	Bobby	Add consequences of betrayal. What if Bobby's betrayal had led to the firing of "Timson" and the hiring of Frankie Vaughan, the actual actor?
Fri Apr 15	33a	Gene almost finished with #12. Foreshadowing of Gus' "inspection" in 33b. Then goes to work at the Riv and sees Bobby on the <i>Tonight Show</i> .	Gene	Atmosphere should be continuation of 30, 31 -- atmosphere of battle.
Sat Apr 16		Next morning, discusses seeing Bobby on the <i>Tonight Show</i> with Dolores. "Why don't you let me work?" "I like talking to you."		
Sat Apr 16	33b	Gene finishes #12. A lot of back-and-forth with Gustafson and Dolores. She briefly watches while he scrubs his hands. He feels her eyes on him and looks up quizzically, and she turns away. But he caught her thoughtful expression. To truck driver, Gene blurts out that he is Gus' grandson. Gustafson's collapse.	Gene	Actually there is no need to have 33b and 37 intertwined in the New York scenes.

I feel like I'm finally getting my head around the work that will have to be done. But aside from removing the swimming scene from Part 1 and moving it to later in the book -- so it will be the first turning point in Gene and Dolores' relationship -- there isn't much that will change about Part 1, which now covers the first 26 chapters (was 11 chapters). I continue to feel that most of my work will be in what was Part 2.

But I also divided what was Part 2 into four parts. So the high-level outline of the book now looks like this:

1. Bobby's struggle to get into "Make Nice"
- 2a. Gene goes to work at the Cactus
- 2b. Bobby in New York; flashbacks about Lucy
3. Gene's spiritual and emotional growth; complications begin with the Sanchez family
4. Democratic convention; Lucy redux
- 5a. Gene's relationships with Dolores and her father come to a head
- 5b. Picking up Marilyn, and Bobby's reward

27 Feb 03

I actually got something done today -- a week and a day after Cris left. I took out the references in ch. 22 and 26 to their swimming date, since I've decided to move it to later in the book. I wrote a new ending to ch. 26, which opens with Gene playing the slot machines and ends with the last scene in part 1, the departure on the fourth and final trip to Vegas.

The next thing I want to work on is to strengthen the negative consequences of Bobby's betrayal of Timson. The way it is in Part 1, there are no consequences. I have to make him ashamed and I also have to make it clear that Sinatra finds out and punishes him somehow.

For the rest of the morning, I want to work a little on Gene's character. I was talking on the phone to Cris in El Salvador the other night. She asked me if I'd done the classic writing exercise where I write a biography of Gene, and I said no. She said it's unclear to the reader just how much of what he says about his background is bullshit. This doesn't surprise me, since from the very beginning I was just feeling my way along with him.

So let's think about Gene for a few minutes.

Q. What are the facts about his upbringing and education?

A. He grew up in a small southern Illinois town. His family was middle class and his father owned a hardware store. His mother was a housewife. So the family had some money. But his father disappeared early somehow -- let's say he went off the road one night on the way home one night; he had been playing basketball in a church league and stopped off at a bar with a few of the other guys on the way home, and then went off the road and died in the accident. Gene was 7 when this happened.

An uncle took over the hardware store and made sure Gene and his mother had enough. Gene didn't hang around the hardware store as a kid, didn't particularly get along with his uncle. He associates hardware and handyman work with his disliked uncle.

Gene graduated from high school in the small town, went to junior college for a semester, dropped out, worked as a maintenance man at a local golf course for a year, then went out to L.A. when it got cold.

Q. Why did he come out to L.A.? What was he looking for?

A. He wanted to get away from the midwest and wanted to go somewhere warm, avoid winter. Believed that California was constantly warm and sunny, and that girls who spent lots of time on beach getting tan were possibly more liberal about sex than small town girls, who all knew him anyway.

Q. Why does he use lying as a tactic, either in a tense situation or simply to get what he wants?

A. When his father died, he viewed it as a betrayal and a desertion. In his anger and grief at the time, he told a trivial lie to excuse himself, and the adults fell for it. (A little like the kid in "The Four Hundred Blows" who blurts out that his mother has died, making all the adults around him suddenly solemn and solicitous.) Taking notice that most people either didn't care about the truth of what he really did, or were too busy to investigate whether what he said was true or not. After that he used lying as a sort of lubricant for life, sometimes in a tense situation, but never in a crucial one. Almost all his lying is boasting, inflating his accomplishments, his background -- that sort of thing.

Q. What is the deeper psychological underpinning?

A. A lot of it is anger, going back to the anger he felt when his father died. He also does it to break the tension of a situation (like the bit about Gay Talese waiting to talk to Bobby).

Q. So what you're angling for is that all the older male adult figures in Gene's life in the book -- Bobby, Gustafson, Sanchez -- are father replacements. If that's true, then Gene needs to be a little more angry at Bobby for the "banishment" in ch. 25.

A. Uh huh.

Q. Also, you'd think he would do more to impress Sanchez "the good dad."

A. Hmmm.

3 Mar 03

Thinking about the five-part high-level outline I wrote down the other day:

1. Bobby's struggle to get into "Make Nice"
- 2a. Gene goes to work at the Cactus
- 2b. Bobby in New York; flashbacks about Lucy
3. Gene's spiritual and emotional growth; complications begin with the Sanchez family
4. Democratic convention; Lucy redux
- 5a. Gene's relationships with Dolores and her father come to a head
- 5b. Picking up Marilyn, and Bobby's reward

I'm moved to write more about the Gene-Dolores-Sanchez plot thread. I realize now that plot thread has three main characters, not just two. Four if you count Gustafson.

Sleepiness immediately descends.

Later. Okay, let's put a few things in order.

ch. 26b -- on last trip to Vegas with Bobby, the day after getting thrown out of the nightclub by Sinatra et al., Gene goes back to the Cactus and "seeks out Dolores. She is upset because of an argument with her father. And

Gene is upset for the same reason, i.e. he was rejected by his substitute father Bobby! So they commiserate and Gene gets an emotional foothold for the first time. In her upsetness, Dolores says something about if she had a nice boyfriend like him, she wouldn't have to deal with her father anymore."

ch. 27 -- Gene gets a job at Cactus. Dolores not too impressed with seeing him. Starts dealing with maintenance.

ch. 29 -- More maintenance. More Dolores not being impressed. There's no differentiation between this chapter and 27 at all. Maybe this should be cut.

ch. 31 -- More maintenance. That's three chapters in a row. Here perhaps I need to insert a scene where Dolores is more sympathetic to him. Their relationship needs to build slowly, she can't just keep putting him off.

ch. 33 -- Ditto, make it four in a row.

Now up to here I have three and a half chapters -- 27 through 33a -- where I basically have Gene dealing with all the maintenance. It gets repetitive and more than one person complained. So I'll have to do a major reshaping of this part, and also work in Dolores a lot more than I have so far.

Then:

Goes to work at Riv for first time. Next morning, discusses with Dolores seeing Bobby on the Tonight Show. Her not impressed.

Then the incident with the fire and Gustafson.

ch. 37 -- Gene waits in hospital.

ch. 39 -- Gene runs motel. Flashback to the same day of ch. 37. Then incident in which hooker is beaten up, shady cops come.

I need to add to this a scene where he has another sympathetic moment with Dolores, to prepare for her agreeing to come with him to the Riv.

ch. 40 -- Gene visits the Buddhist temple.

ch. 41 -- Bobby drives down from Reno, visits Cactus. I need to have him invite Gene and Dolores to see his show and go swimming. This sets up the swimming incident.

ch. 42 -- This is now a "go to the movies" scene -- change it to the swimming pool incident.

Now after the swimming pool incident, I need to accelerate their relationship. It's this incident which leads her to take him really seriously, because he defended her. And I need to bring in the family after this. So this is really a turning-point incident.

4 Mar 03

Between going to meditation this morning, working on the church newsletter, and getting a nap in, I still found time to do a little work on my book. I'm doing things to the outline that look like this:

27	Gene gets a job at Cactus. Dolores not too impressed with seeing him. It should be like: "Here I am ready to be your boyfriend, like you said." And she's like: "Shut up, I never said anything like that, get your ugly butt out of here." Annoyed with herself for encouraging him, she didn't even remember the conversation in ch. 26 until he reminded her. He starts dealing with maintenance. No, let's delay that until ch. 29.
28	Bobby's phone conversation with Philly about upcoming gigs, including the interview gig.
29	Now: more maintenance and more Dolores jibes, like "Hey Smelly." Make it: the first chapter where there's maintenance. Keep the jibes from D. and the stuff with Gustafson.
30	Bobby at Villa Capri with Tragge. Then meets Lawford, discusses upcoming campaign. First mention of convention.

31	<p>Now: more maintenance. For rewrite: Instead of maintenance in this chapter, let's make it more about his relationship with Dolores.</p> <p>Keep the bit where he goes to the Riv for the first time to park cars.</p> <p>On Sunday, walks and thinks about the idea of getting settled versus the "on the Road" idea of transience.</p>
32	<p>Bobby and Tragge on the set of <i>Let's Make Love</i>.</p>
33a	<p>Gene almost finished with #12 -- <i>cut most of that</i>. Foreshadowing of Gus' "inspection" in 33b. Then goes to work at the Riv and sees Bobby on the <i>Tonight Show</i>. -- <i>keep that</i>.</p> <p>Next morning, discusses seeing Bobby on the <i>Tonight Show</i> with Dolores. "Why don't you let me work?" "I like talking to you." -- <i>Cut a lot of the back and forth with D except for the part about seeing Bobby on the Tonight Show the night before -- she doesn't care a bit.</i></p>

The orange stuff is all Bobby stuff, chapters I'm not going to do a lot to for the second draft. Everything else is Gene stuff, which I'm planning on largely rewriting.

I even did a bit of rewriting today, working on a couple of chapters from part 1. But I'm still shying away from the big job of rewriting all the Gene-Dolores-Sanchez stuff.

I still feel kind of sleepy, like I need another nap.

7 Mar 03

Yesterday I did a little desultory work on a few of the chapters having to do with Gene and Dana, and with the Gene-Dolores scenes from Part 1. I also worked on the scene where Bobby and Gene pick up the two suburban women in Victorville. Mainly I was trying to cut extraneous dialogue and keep scenes from being too dialogue-heavy. I'm trying to find a way to implement Katia's criticism that people don't have logical conversations and that scenes need descriptive details to enliven them. It's hard to do without completely rewriting the scene, but I haven't completely rewritten any scenes yet. Maybe today I'll try rewriting... what is it... 26b, the scene which up to now has been the swimming pool scene where Gene and Dolores get thrown out by the Riviera's staff and Gene defends her. Since I've decided to move that scene to later in the book, I need to write a new scene where:

Gene goes back to the Cactus and "seeks out Dolores. She is upset because of an argument with her father. And Gene is upset for the same reason, i.e. he was rejected by his substitute father Bobby! So they commiserate and Gene gets an emotional foothold for the first time. In her upsetness, Dolores says something about if she had a nice boyfriend like him, she wouldn't have to deal with her father anymore." This encouragement is enough for Gene to decide to move to Las Vegas. (from a current version of my outline)

Q. What is the main point of this scene?

A. First, to introduce the Sanchez family dynamic, and second, to lay the groundwork for Gene and Dolores' relationship, and third, to give Gene a reason to decide to move to Las Vegas now that he has broken up with Dana.

Q. What's Dolores upset about?

A. She's had an argument with her father the night before.

Q. Over what?

A. Directly it was about the decision to move Felice into a room by herself where she can take care of her (illegitimate) child when it is born; Dolores will have to leave that room and move in with the children. Indirectly, of course, it was merely one in a series on continuing arguments over when Dolores is going to get married and hopefully get out of the house, or (as she wants) stay unmarried while going to school.

9 Mar 03

All right, it's simple:

Gene meets Dolores. At first he just flirts with her and gets a mediocre response. Then on his last trip to Vegas, he finds her upset about her situation with her family -- a common situation, the result of being a nineteen-year-old still living at home. She makes a casual mention that encourages him to pursue her more actively, so he moves to Las Vegas. For a while, she varies between discouragement and toleration, but then she sees him in action a little more, and starts to take him seriously as a way out of her family situation. The family tolerates this because they'd like to see her married off. Gene's response is to play it both ways for a while, but then when the motel is sold and it seems like he's really going to have to follow through, he starts to pull back. This creates tension between him and Dolores, and when Bobby shows up, he takes off with Bobby.

Dolores's goals are clear: independence from her family. This can happen either through becoming an accountant (her original idea, which doesn't go away) or marrying Gene and running the motel.

Gene's goals are less clear, and that's a weakness. Now that I understand Dolores and their relationship better, I need to think more about him.

12 Mar 03

I was so dead yesterday. After getting up at 5:20 to go to zazen, I couldn't do a thing all day but websurf or watch TV. Cris was back -- I picked her up on the 10th from her three-week sojourn in El Salvador -- and feeling a little depressed, but I don't think that was the reason. I think it was the missing sleep. This morning I slept until almost 9:00 and I feel great. I'm going to have to rethink that whole zazen-in-the-morning thing.

Or maybe not. Maybe it's all right to sacrifice one day a week to it. It could be my sabbath.

Anyway. I have a good day to work today. I'm back at the church for the first time in three weeks. People are bustling away downstairs, as it's Wednesday and the Senior Center activities are going. The weather is gloomy and cold.

So -- Gene. Let's do some thinking about him. What did I write a few days ago?

He grew up in a small southern Illinois town. His family was middle class and his father owned a hardware store. His mother was a housewife. So the family had some money. But his father disappeared early somehow -- let's say he went off the road one night on the way home one night; he had been playing basketball in a church league and stopped off at a bar with a few of the other guys on the way home, and then went off the road and died in the accident. Gene was 7 when this happened.

An uncle took over the hardware store and made sure Gene and his mother had enough. Gene didn't hang around the hardware store as a kid, didn't particularly get along with his uncle. He associates hardware and handyman work with his disliked uncle.

Gene graduated from high school in the small town, went to junior college for a semester, dropped out, worked as a maintenance man at a local golf course for a year, then went out to L.A. when it got cold. He wanted to get away from the midwest and wanted to go somewhere warm, avoid winter. Believed that California was constantly warm and sunny, and that girls who spent lots of time on beach getting tan were possibly more liberal about sex than small town girls, who all knew him anyway.

When his father died, he viewed the death as a betrayal and a desertion. In his anger and grief at the time, he told a trivial lie to excuse himself, and the adults fell for it. (A little like the kid in "The Four Hundred Blows" who blurts out that his mother has died, making all the adults around him suddenly solemn and solicitous.) Taking notice that most people either didn't care about the truth of what he really did, or were too busy to investigate whether what he said was true or not. After that he used lying as a sort

of lubricant for life, sometimes in a tense situation, but never in a crucial one. Almost all his lying is boasting, inflating his accomplishments, his background -- that sort of thing.

What is the deeper psychological underpinning? A lot of it is anger, going back to the anger he felt when his father died. He also does it to break the tension of a situation (like the bit about Gay Talese waiting to talk to Bobby).

So all the older male adult figures in Gene's life in the book -- Bobby, Gustafson, Sanchez -- are father replacements. If that's true, then Gene needs to be a little more angry at Bobby for the "banishment" in ch. 25. But you'd think he would do more to impress Sanchez "the good dad."

A natural place to introduce the information about his hardware-store upbringing would be at the point where he starts doing the handyman work at the motel. But that's too far into the book; it would make the reader wonder why the author hasn't intimated anything about it up to that point. It would seem too convenient. The reader has to think to himself, when the handyman work comes up, that it is ironic -- in some of the same ways the work that Bobby has to do in Part 2 is ironic -- that he's living out his fears.

In (the former) ch. 12 where Gene tells Gustafson about his "plumbing" background -- the reader should realize that Gene is actively avoiding admitting his real background *which the reader should already know*.

So what I need to do is go back and put some references to this background in Part 1, so that by the time the handyman work actually starts, the reader is prepared for it.

Okay, so that's one thing I need to do. The other thing I need to tackle is, what are Gene's goals overall and especially in Part 2? I wrote this on Feb 13:

So my idea is that I can sit down and identify some elements about the characters that I never did while writing the first draft -- namely, I can determine what each character wants, how they feel going into the scene, and how they're going to react to what the other character's goal is. And I can write kernels of dialogue, putting down in one page what I have generally taken three or four pages to do. This will collapse the scenes greatly.

That's fine as far as it goes, but it still doesn't tell me what Gene *wants*.

I've been pretty silly. All along I've made Gene too much like me -- rather undirected, vague about what he wants and even vaguer about how to get there, taking things as they come. I have to face the fact that this is *fucking boring* in a novel, that I need characters who are more dynamic than I am in real life. It's *fiction*, for God's sake. I can *make things up*. Even things that are not that natural. For example, the whole affair between Bobby and Lucy. I constructed that out of half-remembered movie stills, and it came off all right. (It could be better.) I can construct some character for Gene.

The habitual liar part does come off. That's fine as far as it goes.

- Q. Thinking about the habitual liar part for a minute, how can you relate that to something like a character goal (and not just a trait)?
- A. Someone tells lies to hide something. A habitual liar tells lies constantly, constructing a fictional character that serves as a mask hiding his real character.
- Q. What is Gene's (not really conscious) goal? What is he trying to accomplish by doing this?
- A. He's trying to make people more impressed with him than he thinks they will be if they knew the truth about him. If they're more impressed, they'll grant him attention and access, which is what everyone wants in show business.
- Q. How's that? Does he want to go into show business? Is that why he came to L.A.?
- A. Not really, but by the time he's been there for a while, he's picked it up by osmosis. Everyone in L.A. is in show business whether they like it or not. Parking valets at Chasen's are definitely in show business. By being part of that milieu, he picks up the desire to impress, to put things over on people.
- Q. All right. But surely there has to be something else.

- A. Well, like any young man his age, he wants to get laid. He's a virgin and really, really wants to make his boasts a reality.

I went to lunch -- with Susie, the first time I've seen her in more than a year -- and came back and added a little to chapters 2, 5 and 6. In addition to putting in a little about Gene's background, I put back into ch. 2 some stuff I had cut about Gene bragging about sex with Dana. I think it's necessary for his character.

Back to thinking about his "goals."

- Q. What does a young man want, besides to get laid?

A. To find a teacher, and to find some truths he can believe in.

- Q. How is he pursuing this?

A. By reading Kerouac.

- Q. So what does that tell him?

A. That it's not a good idea to get tied down, that enlightenment is found in fleeting experiences, that perception and experience is more important than settling down or even romantic relationships, that romantic relationships can supply sensation and experience but are only a means, not an end. That male friendship has the potential to be more meaningful than a romantic relationship. That language is a wonderful thing, even language for its own sake.

- Q. Yeah... well? What's he doing about it?

A. Basically he's doing the opposite of all those things. He's settling down, developing a romantic relationship, not making any friends, and doing nothing about writing or language.

- Q. So even if he thinks he wants to aspire to those things, Kerouac is not giving him any help. Kerouac is not providing a way for him.

A. Well, he *wants* those things. Just doesn't know how to go about them.

- Q. But he's doing the *opposite* of those things. What's that say about what he "wants"?

A. Hmmmm, good point.

I think it's nap time.

14 Mar 03

I worked some more on chapters 16 and 22 -- the scenes where Gene meets Dolores on his second and third trips, respectively, to Las Vegas, and used the opportunity of Gene wandering around LV to put in some background about him -- the stuff I wrote about his bio, his childhood background etc. above. I ended up putting some dialogue back into those chapters, and added 400 words to ch. 22 about his inaptitude for hardware. That'll make his sojourn at the Cactus all the more ironic.

18 Mar 03

I'm managing to actually sit down and work on this book only every three to five days -- certainly not the pace I was keeping in November and December. Even though Cris is back from El Salvador -- actually she came back 8 days ago -- I'm still hanging around the house more than I used to. ...

Then the whole war with Iraq started coming to a head, to the point that on Sunday there was a meeting between Bush and his few allies -- the U.K., Spain and Portugal -- at which they decided to dump all diplomatic efforts. The next day, yesterday, Bush went on TV and delivered a 48-hour ultimatum to S. Hussein to go into exile. S.H. is refusing so that means the war will start tomorrow or the next day. All this time I have been spending way too much time watching television, listening to the radio, and surfing the internet, until by the end of the day yesterday I was sick to death of it and completely exhausted, in the same way I was exhausted after watching television all day long on 11 Sep 01.

Today, the interim day between the ultimatum and the expiration of same, I resolved not to make the same mistake. So I left the house a little after 10:00 and went downtown. I wanted to meditate in front of the Rothko at the SFMOMA again. But there was some kind of strange art-teaching class being held on the floor directly in front of the painting, and it was impossible even to directly face the painting, there were so many people there. So I bagged that idea and went downstairs to the café. By then it was nearly 11:30, so I had an early lunch and then walked around downtown a little. I took my watch to the jeweler and bought a rain jacket and a pair of cargo pants at the Gap. Now finally I'm at church to start writing.

Writing does seem like a nice productive thing to do in the face of the war, even if the book I'm working on is a relatively light comedy. And I really must knuckle down if I'm ever going to finish it and get on to the next project, ideas for which keep popping up in my head. Ideally, I will be able to send out the first raft of queries to agents before I leave for Holden on May 3. I don't absolutely have to have the second draft finished by then -- all I would be sending out, in fact, would be a sample chapter, along with the query letter and the other material.

Must think of myself more responsibly, as a novelist, rather than as someone who is just mucking along waiting for my unemployment to run out -- which is what I generally act like.

What should I do today? Tackle ch. 26, toward the end of Part 1:

On last trip to Vegas with Bobby, the day after getting thrown out of the nightclub by Sinatra et al., Gene goes back to the Cactus and "seeks out Dolores. She is upset because of an argument with her father. And Gene is upset for the same reason, i.e. he was rejected by his substitute father Bobby! So they commiserate and Gene gets an emotional foothold for the first time. In her upsetness, Dolores says something about if she had a nice boyfriend like him, she wouldn't have to deal with her father anymore." This encouragement is enough for Gene to decide to move to Las Vegas. This replaces the swimming scene.

When I was working on Mar. 7, I got up to the point where D. and Gene actually have to start talking about why she's upset, and I stopped dead in my tracks. I can see I'm going to have to write through the problem, which will result in a long scene I'll have to cut down later.

On a side note: I bought a magazine called "Novel Writing" -- one of those Writer's Digest publications. It said that a full-length novel is generally 80-100K words. My first draft was something like 175,000. It's nice to know I only have to cut it down to 100,000 words or so and not 80,000.

Well, I wrote a thousand words, building up that scene with Dolores and Gene, and then going on to write something else in which he walks around and sort of reacts. I wanted to get him to a place where he decides to move to Las Vegas, and I didn't get there. I'll have to go back and hit it again.

I'm a little worried that I'm just making things longer. But I'm trying to make the dialogue scenes especially economical, and provide more description and sense of place. In any case, it's better than doing nothing or just websurfing.

21 Mar 03

I had a notion in mind this morning to work on something -- something about combining two different scenes which weren't really necessary. But I can't remember exactly which two they were.

I think I'll look at the end of the chapter where Peter Lawford encounters Gene and Dana. That whole bit at the end where Bobby takes them home is way too long.

I spent a few hours working on a few of the chapters in Part 1. Realized that ch. 23 contains references to the swimming date, which in the original draft Gene had just invited Dolores to, in ch. 22, but now they're not doing it. So I'll have to change that whole conversation. But I don't have enough energy to do it right now.

I really should get some work on this done tomorrow or Sunday.

27 Mar 03

Katia and I talked a great deal about my book. I told her I was of a mind to sent out queries before I go off to Holden, but she said there was nothing to be lost by waiting a year, starting on another project, and then seeing after a year if I still regarded the second draft as done. She also asked some pointed questions about the book's themes that suggested I still had work to do to integrate these themes more. (Cf. my notes of 3 Feb 03). Then she got to talking about the query letter and about how one of the aspects of the letter was explaining to the putative agent why I had written the book and what about my own bio would provide interesting hooks he or she could use to sell the book. That flummoxed me; I said there wasn't anything about my bio that had anything to do with the book, save for my film criticism degree. She said, well, there has to be something I was passionate about that made me want to write the book. I said something about how as a child I had been mystified by what it meant to be an adult and that I had written the book partly to decipher what the signs and mores of adults in that era meant. She said, see, that's really interesting. I found the whole conversation a little discouraging, though. In fact it reminded me of what I mentioned yesterday, of my frustrating and frustrated habit of equivocating.

Like I say, now it's 3:30 and I suppose I should go on to make a few notes about the book, based on our conversation. Let's suppose that idea about "deciphering the behaviors of adults" has something going for it. In the book this is seen as Gene tries to figure out what it means to be an adult. But it's also seen in the backstage scenes with Sinatra et al., scenes that lift the veil on Hollywood and show what it's like in the inner sanctum.

So that means that important scenes are the ones where Gene is trying to figure out how to be a beatnik, or a handyman, or a motel clerk, and where Bobby is trying to figure out the combination of things that will keep him in Sinatra's inner circle. Except that Bobby is already mature enough to realize that he neither needs nor wants to be in Sinatra's inner circle, except to the degree it gets him jobs.

28 Mar 03

Maybe it was the talk with Katia yesterday, or maybe it was the fact that the war (which began 17 March) has slowed to a crawl so it no longer feels like you need to keep up with it all day and all evening long, or maybe it was the gorgeous warm spring breeze -- but I went to the church, got there before noon, and did some work in some of the Part 2 chapters for the first time. I worked on chapters 23, 27, 29 and 31 -- all Gene-and-Dolores chapters.

I did it without referring much to the notes above, so I need to go back and do that... to make sure I don't get off on the wrong foot again and not properly lay the groundwork for the Gene-Dolores relationship.

Their relationship will really take off with the swimming scene in ch. 42 (to which it has been moved).

7 Apr 03

Been working on this very little.

But today I added a bit onto ch. 26, a crucial little bit where Gene kisses Dolores on the 4th trip to Vegas, it replaces the swimming scene and gives him an excuse to move to Vegas. I also moved a following section in which he thinks about Kerouac a lot from ch. 26 to ch. 22, so that the events of the 4th weekend would move faster.

I really think I've done all I need to do, structurally, to Part 1, except to add some stuff to ch. 14. A little background for Gene. That chapter is fairly insubstantial but it does provide a relief from Bobby's POV in a long sequence about him trying to get a movie part. And it starts the downward slide for Gene and Dana's relationship.

8 Apr 03

I was wondering what to add to ch. 14. The answer is in my notes from a few weeks ago:

He wanted to get away from the midwest and wanted to go somewhere warm, avoid winter. Believed that California was constantly warm and sunny, and that girls who spent lots of time on beach getting tan were possibly more liberal about sex than small town girls, who all knew him anyway.

I'll do that now -- just add some exposition that mentions his ideas of California girls and the contrast of that to Dana.

Phases in Gene and Dolores's relationship:

1. Preliminary -- he flirts with her during his weekend visits to LV.
2. He kisses her on his 4th visit to LV, meanwhile having broken up with Dana. Based on this, he moves to LV.
3. Period between beginning work at the motel and Gustafson's collapse. D vacillates between friendliness and coolness.
4. Period between Gustafson's collapse and Karl's advent. During this time things at home are pressuring her more. She starts to see Gene as a possible route out.
5. Motel is put up for sale. D's family comes into sharper focus. He has Sunday dinner at their house, twice. D. is going out with him on dates, flirting with him, building up a little sexual pressure.
6. Issue of him possibly marrying Dolores comes out into the open. He is called upon to confirm his intentions.
7. Decides to leave, and does so.

Having mapped this out, and laid it against the outline of the second draft, it's clearer now what I need to do. I didn't get much writing done, but the outlining was helpful.

Looking at my notes from December when I was working on what was ch. 27 -- and is now ch. 54 -- I can see that I recognized this relationship arc issue then. And I did my best to make it make sense, but I failed, partly because I hadn't done enough thinking about it. Now that I have have, I can see I'll need to do a lot of rewriting, and probably rewrite ch. 54 entirely. I tried to squeeze too much into a single chapter. What is it -- 5000 words. And it needed to be, since it covered a huge amount of that relationship. By the time I get to this point in the book in the rewriting, I won't have to overload it like that. Or at least I can take it and make more sense out of it.

7 May 03 -- Holden Village

12:30 pm -- My first work period -- i.e. work on this book, not in the kitchen. Since I haven't worked at all for a month, I'll have to take a bit of time figuring out again where I am in this project. It's not wasted time, since this go-round I really am going to do the work. It's all the pressure-building in March that was more or less wasted, although I did do some good outlining and a little rewriting.

I think I'm going to start today with ch. 27 (new accounting), the first chapter in Part 2. Gene arrives in L.V. and gets the job at the Cactus; he shows up expecting Dolores to be happy he's there, and she's actually rather unhappily surprised. She doesn't even remember the content of the conversation they had in ch. 26, set a few weeks before, though she does remember kissing Gene. It's the kiss and what it implies -- whatever that is, it's not what she wants now to imply -- that she's embarrassed by.

7:45 pm -- This afternoon I did some good work smoothing out chapters 27, 29, 31 and 33 -- which account for part 2 in the five-part outline of:

1. Bobby's struggle to get into "Make Nice"
- 2a. Gene goes to work at the Cactus
- 2b. Bobby in New York; flashbacks about Lucy
3. Gene's spiritual and emotional growth; complications begin with the Sanchez family
4. Democratic convention; Lucy redux
- 5a. Gene's relationships with Dolores and her father come to a head
- 5b. Picking up Marilyn, and Bobby's reward

However there are also the seven phases of the Gene-Dolores relationship; those chapters account for phase three.

Putting these two schemes against each other -- something I've never explicitly done -- I have a schematic that looks like the following:

	Sections in the five-part outline		Phases in the Gene-Dolores relationship	chapters
1	Bobby's struggle to get into "Make Nice"	1	Preliminary -- he flirts with her during his weekend visits to LV.	9,11,16,22
		2	He kisses her on his 4th visit to LV, meanwhile having broken up with Dana...	26
2a	Gene goes to work at the Cactus	3	... Based on this, he moves to LV. Period between beginning work at the motel and Gustafson's collapse. D vacillates between friendliness and coolness.	27, 29, 31, 33
3	Gene's spiritual and emotional growth; complications begin with the Sanchez family	4	Period between Gustafson's collapse and Karl's advent. During this time things at home are pressuring her more. She starts to see Gene as a possible route out. Bobby visits them and detects their connection. They have the swimming date, which also draws them closer.	39-42, 44-45
		5	Motel is put up for sale. D's family comes into sharper focus. He has Sunday dinner at their house, twice. D. is going out with him on dates, flirting with him, building up a little sexual pressure.	47, 49 (may need more)
5a	Gene's relationships with Dolores and her father come to a head	6	Issue of him possibly marrying Dolores comes out into the open. He is called upon to confirm his intentions.	52,54
		7	Decides to leave, and does so.	56

So the chapters I worked on this afternoon correspond to 2a, which corresponds to phase 3.

Fine. Gustafson's collapse has now, however, become the turning point. "She starts to see Gene as a possible way out." To bring this to life, I need to invent new incidents of the "pressure" coming from Dolores' home, and show their relationship becoming more involved (if not closer) during this period. In other words, their relationship develops as an alternative, for her, to her relationship with her family.

Seems quite simple when put that way. But it sure took me a long time to figure it out.

So tomorrow I'll start working on that section: chapters 39-45.

I'm pretty pleased with what I did today. I had worked on those chapters before, but always in a somewhat desultory manner. Now I feel like I can really move past them.

8 May 03

2:30 pm -- I worked during the first part of the afternoon on chapters 39 and 40. Thirty-nine had very little that needed to be done in terms of the Gene-Dolores relationship, but I needed to add scenes to the beginning and end of 40 to depict progress in their relationship. After writing a couple hundred words, I realized I could take material from a different section that has to be replaced anyway. It was the scene where they go to a movie for the first time, and now was just the time for that to happen. So I just pasted it in there.

Chapter 41 is from Bobby's POV, but includes the scene where he visits them at the hotel and invites them to go swimming. It used to be a scene where he *found out* about the aborted swimming date and then invited them to make up for it, but now he is inviting them to go swimming for the first time.

(I just realized that Bobby invites Gene and Dana to go swimming at his house, as well. I should put in some little line in part 1 about how he has this notion that kids just love going swimming.)

I skipped ch. 41 for a little bit, and thought about the swimming scene; but now I realize I'm going to have to do ch. 41 anyway so I may as well do things in order.

I'll take a break and a little walk now, and then come back and maybe nap a bit before getting back down to work.

4:40 pm -- I re-did ch. 41, taking out 2000 words and writing a new end for the scene where Bobby invites them to see his show. The way it works out now, he invites them to see his show, and when that doesn't work, he invites them to go swimming.

Then in the scene at the end of the chapter, I cut out all the dialogue where he protests the Riviera's swimming policy. I might move that to ch. 43 or some later spot.

9 May 03

2:00 pm -- I lost two hours this afternoon after lunch: As a kitchen worker, I had, along with several other new people, to take a food handler's test to qualify for a county food handler's card. It reminded me of the years in Austin when, for one job or another, I had to get a food handler's card; but in those days, the requirement was that you got a TB test. Today we watched a video and then took a multiple-choice test; no TB test was required.

Anyway, it's now 2:00 pm, but I've already managed to get a little work done today anyway. I did some editing of ch. 43, cutting about 500 words about Judy Garland. Sara had said it was too much Garland for no apparent reason. However, I just looked at my outline and I see that Bobby's comedy routine in ch. 43 must comment indirectly on the swimming scene in ch. 42. So I'll have to rewrite that.

I don't feel much like writing today, frankly. I feel like taking the afternoon off to read. But tomorrow I'll also have a short afternoon, since I'm scheduled to wash dishes at the end of my kitchen shift. I'm not sure how long that takes, but probably at least until 1:30.

The least I can do is make some notes about ch. 42. Then I'll take a little nap and see if I can make some progress on it.

Q. What is the main thing in chapter 42?

- A. The swimming pool scene with Gene and Dolores.
- Q. How is it different from the scene you wrote in the first draft?
- A. It happens later in the timeline, in phase 4 of their relationship instead of phase 2.
- Q. Anything else?
- A. Well, I'm playing with the idea that Bobby is present. But I don't see how that would help things. I think it would just confuse the issue.
- Q. Why?
- A. Because the main thing is for Gene to defend Dolores, thus giving her reason to take him more seriously. If Bobby is there, it would mess up that whole exchange.
- Q. What else is different from the first draft?
- A. Gene is not actually staying at the hotel this time and cannot claim to have a right to be in the pool either.
- Q. So how do they get in to the pool at all?
- A. Perhaps Bobby meets them and conducts them to the entrance of the pool area, but then leaves them on their own. Thus the scene could play out in a similar way as before, but without Gene being able to claim he's a guest and waving his room key around.
- Q. So you're got two little parts to the chapter so far.
- A. The two little parts are: Gene and Dolores arrive and are greeted by Bobby, who points them to the pool and disappears; they encounter trouble at the pool and have to retreat without swimming.
- Q. That's where the scene ended before. Do you want to continue on and show more this time about what happens after?
- A. Yes.
- Q. So what happens after?
- A. One idea I've had for a long time is that they go to a municipal swimming pool and talk and really spend a little time together. This shared experience leads to them bonding.
- Q. That's not a bad idea.
- A. Yes, and besides, I haven't had any others.

12 May 03

8:00 pm -- I opened this file and was really astonished I hadn't made any entries for the last two days. In fact I did a little work on ch. 42 on both the 10th and 11th. I wrote the beginning of the chapter on the 10th and then the next day I went back and realized I had written it all in past tense, so I changed it back to present tense, and wrote a little more, for a total of about 750 words. Then today I wrote another 1300, extending it into scene 42c. The first 1800 words are merely a rewrite of what I had done in ch. 11 of the first draft.

I really want to finish at least the first draft of the last scene tonight so I can say I finished the chapter. But I don't much feel like it. I'll try to relax a little and then tackle it.

9:50 pm -- Nothing works. I'll make a few notes and then hit the sack.

Q. What do you want to achieve in 42c?

- A. For Gene and Dolores to reach a new phase in their relationship; namely, that they come to the realization, in such a way that it's out in the open between them, that they are, or could have, a love affair.
- Q. How are they going to do that?
- A. By having a conversation about ... I'm not sure what -- but among other things, D's situation at home and her irritation with her family. Gene is understanding, expresses his attraction for her. She can't help liking hearing his words of admiration and attraction, and realizes finally that he's got a real thing for her.
- Q. How does she respond to that, and why?
- A. She responds by opening her heart to him a little bit. Enough to consider seriously dating him and further exploring the relationship (although such terms were not in use then, and people didn't think that way -- I'll have to make sure the language I use is appropriate).
- Q. How does their relationship change after that?
- A. They begin dating frequently, and develop an attachment to each other. While she maintains her sardonic arm's-length verbal behavior, her actions show she is opening up to him. By which I mean her spending time with him, making out with him, and having serious conversations in addition to the joking, sarcastic ones. She is sweeter to him.
- Q. What effect does this have?
- A. They are able to form a solid front against Karl when he comes on the scene. But her family takes notice, and then they have to deal with the family's reaction. Gene becomes a player in the game D is playing with her father and the rest of the family.
- Q. How does all this work with the motel-for-sale angle? How soon do you want to bring in the possibility of them getting married and taking over the motel?
- A. I don't know, but I'll have to handle it differently than I did before.

13 May 03

4:25 pm -- I finally finished ch. 42, after having (finally) an unbroken afternoon to work. I ended up patching some dialogue from ch. 40 -- where I had moved the scene where they go to a movie for the first time, and she asks him whether he's serious about her -- to ch. 42, where I wanted them to really talk about that. The conversation, coming now after the swimming scene, marks a turning point in their relationship.

I feel so much more satisfied with my work on the book than I have in several days -- during which I struggled with the chapter. I'm going to have to be a wee bit more protective of my time, I think. Having less than four hours in the afternoon doesn't work nearly so well.

Tomorrow I'll start in on ch. 43. It's not a Gene scene, it's a scene where Bobby does a comedy monologue. I want to rewrite the monologue so it comments on the discrimination issue.

14 May 03

I didn't get much done today. I decided *not* to rewrite ch. 43. After I cut out a lot of the extraneous Judy Garland stuff it works fine as it is. I'm not sure that I can't cut out even more Garland -- but we'll see what the final length is.

Cris found the idea of the FBI checking on Bobby on behalf of the Kennedy campaign rather strange. I'll have to run that by someone else.

I also did a bit of polishing of ch. 44, but aside from the last part where there's a phone conversation between Gene and Dolores -- after Karl brings his father back to the hotel and then takes him away again, this time for good -- which I want to replace with another scene showing them becoming closer -- there's not that much to do.

The main thing that happened today is that the Prodigal Kitchenites returned today and one of them moved in over my head and immediately turned a stereo up extremely loud. It was 1:10 pm. I immediately went up there and asked him to turn it down and told him I work in my room in the afternoons. But by 3:00 it was on loud again. And again after dinner, when it sounded like they were practically having a party up there. The only reason it's not on now, at 8:55, is that there's a real party going on in a different building that all the youngsters are at.

This is not good. My nice quiet retreat is completely wrecked if this goes on.

From a journal entry in Feb. 01:

Then I went over to Sara's and chatted with her about all this and about "Make Nice," the first part of which she read. She said the compulsive-liar side of Gene's character needs to be clearer, and his character needs to be conflicted a tad more. Also, she said the breakup with Dana happens a little too smoothly, that the reader has to regret it even more than Gene does.

I haven't done any of that.

15 May 03

No raucous music today, except for a little quiet music around 7:00 a.m. while he was dressing. In fact, I gained an hour when I was given the hour off between 9:00 and 10:00. Today's "hunger awareness lunch" did not require as many people in the kitchen, and since the Prodigals returned yesterday, there were seemingly twice as many.

I used the time to work on chapters 45 and 47, doing a little bit of rewriting and some moving around.

While I actually was at work in the kitchen -- or rather on the basement stairs, which I was sweeping for lack of anything better to do -- I got an idea. There's already a sentence that says something about how Gene discovers the motel actually does make a small profit as long as he doesn't do a lot of renovation. Since Dolores wants to be an accountant, why not have her discover this? She could be working together with Gene on the books and that could be her finding.

16 May 03

Instead of doing actual rewriting yesterday afternoon, I did a lot of work with the outline, continuing some thoughts I'd had from the morning, when I was making progress mostly by moving things around. I decided to create a new chapter 48 to cover some of the development in Gene and D's relationship once he had dinner at her house. My thinking is, once he meets her family and they start talking to him about the motel, I need to bring them to the fore more gradually, until the whole idea of them getting married and running the motel together comes out in the open. In the first draft, that whole sequence wasn't developed well at all; it all happened off stage.

So this afternoon I wrote the opening for a new chapter. Only about 700 words, not a huge amount, but it helps that whole development. I had Sanchez visit Gene and Dolores at the Cactus a week after Gene has Sunday dinner with them. I put in that D has been bringing his lunch and they've been eating lunch together at the kitchen table. Sanchez drops by on some pretext and has a little look around; he doesn't really do anything, but it brings him forward out of the background, so that his intense involvement later (and not so much later, either) is not such a surprise.

18 May 03

Yesterday I worked on ch. 48 steadily and by 4:30 had a draft of 48b completed. I went to bed feeling as if it probably didn't quite express what I wanted it to. But this morning I got up and read through it and it seems fine.

I mistrust my judgment, though. It was fairly difficult to write, even though it's a dialogue scene and only about 1800 words. When I write quickly and the words flow out, I know it's good. But it wasn't that easy and I didn't have the feeling at the end of my work period that I'd really gotten across what I needed to.

Of course, part of the problem is that I'm still flying blind a little. I'm trying to raise and smooth out, if you will, the curve of Gene and Dolores' relationship, trying to delineate the changes more clearly and make the whole relationship more intense. The way it happened in the first draft, everything happened either offstage or in a sort of unspoken way, and it was neither interesting enough nor clear enough what was happening. It reflected only ambivalence, not passion.

The problem is that ambivalence is one of the ruling emotions, if you can call it an emotion, of my personality. Hesitation, indecision, co-dependence and dithering are the main ways I get through life; I let things happen *to* me rather than make a clear decision to go after something. (Examples of the former: my career in the software industry, my living together with Cris, and all the times I've been laid off. Examples of the latter: deciding to move to California, to teach in Japan, to switch jobs from Sybase to Peoplesoft. Examples of things I wanted to happen and didn't pursue aggressively enough: career in radio; career as a writer; moving to New York. It's as if I am able to make a major change only about every five to eight years, and that exhausts me for a long time.) Unfortunately, having my characters do that is not very interesting. Reactions of my readers to the first draft were unanimous: they loved the Bobby parts and they found the Gene parts unclear. The main reason they liked the Bobby parts is because he seemed like a fully drawn character, and one reason he came across that way was that he was pursuing something passionately. Gene doesn't even pursue Dolores passionately.

That's the thing Kerouac has that he doesn't: passion. And that's why he isn't able to emulate Kerouac.

19 May 03

I worked on and off all afternoon -- despite two naps or attempts at naps -- and knocked off at 4:30. I finished all the work on chapters up through 50. That included creating a new chapter in which I re-inserted what used to be all the Bobby scenes from ch. 19 of the first draft: the scene where Gene tells him about the swimming pool incident (I kept out the part where Bobby talks to Dolores), Bobby's monologue about running as the first Jewish president which is interrupted by Dean and Sammy (I had put it into ch. 41 yesterday so I had to take it back out, but that wasn't too hard -- it worked better coming right after the conversation about the swimming pool incident), and the scene backstage where Bobby talks about it with Frank (I had to drag that back from ch. 41 as well).

I have no idea whether that is a readable paragraph but I'll just keep going.

Now ch 50 (it was ch. 48 a few days ago) ends with the motel being sold, and that's the end of part 3 of the book. I have only three more chapters from the first draft that contain material having to do with Dolores. If I didn't have to go downlake this week, I'd be finished with this pass by the end of the week; maybe I still will be. Then I'll fix up the first three or four chapters -- there's a little repair work left over from the reordering of material -- and then I'll make one big pass through the book, doing smoothing.

Then I don't know what I'll have to do. That last pass will tell me whether or not I'm anywhere near done, or if I need to take another crack at it. In any case I'm really glad I have four more weeks to go here, the dental expedition notwithstanding.

24 May 03 -- Chelan

I spent several hours going through the Dolores scenes today, cutting bits and in some cases whole scenes here and there. For example I ended up cutting the whole second Sunday dinner scene -- it was just a lot of banter. If it suggested a closeness forming between Gene and D's family, that's actually opposite to what's happening in the book at that point. I still have to deal with the crucial scenes in part 4 and do writing such that the Dolores scenes climax in what was my original idea: G and D's argument comes to a head *at* the motel just as Bobby arrives. I know I still haven't done enough to inflate the emotional atmosphere to make the reader care, or wonder, what Gene's going to decide. I'll have to hype things up somehow.

25 May 03 -- Holden Village

8:30 pm -- I'm having some real doubts about the work I've done lately. Although technically I have done a lot of rewriting and reorganizing, some cutting and some sharpening, I think the Dolores scenes still fail to make complete sense, and I also think Gene fails to into focus in general. His lack of focus, his lack of desire, are much of what causes my inability to make clear the current of his relationship with Dolores.

9:30 pm -- I did some work with the outline, erasing all the Bobby lines of the table so I could just see the Gene parts. After fooling around a little, I think I see the problem. Everything is pretty much okay until 47c and 48a -- respectively, the (now only) Sunday dinner scene and the following Saturday, when D's father visits the motel and looks around and Gene starts to realize he has in mind buying the place.

After that, there are several scenes that are seeming more and more random and meaningless. Yes, heartfelt dialogue is spoken during those scenes, supposedly in which people learn lessons from and about each other. But the scenes do not in the least illuminate Gene's interior struggle.

Q. Let's try to take his interior struggle step by step.

A. Okay.

Q. Let's start with the swimming scene and go from there. What has already been established up to that point?

A. Gene is attracted to Dolores, he likes a bunch of things about her, and they have done a little making out. In the swimming scene and subsequent dialogue -- *and I don't think there's enough in the public pool scene, though it goes on for pages, to indicate just what's happening to draw them closer, other than the exchange of information* -- they learn much more about each other. They become more real to each other and continue to find each other acceptable. *I think I need to pump up Gene's dialogue there. He needs to be sicker, more outraged, he needs have true compassion for her. This is the meaning of his learning compassion, not just his ability to shepherd motel guests.*

Q. All right, so describe how their relationship *should* be after the swimming pool scene.

A. Let's try: They work more closely together and talk about what changes should be made to the motel. *This is a preliminary living-out of the possible future in which they run the motel together. We should see them working together as if they are already married and in charge of the place.*

Q. What's Gene's reaction to this?

A. He's fine with it at first. This is his reaction in what is now 48a, when Sanchez visits -- though I might want to move that scene. *Sanchez finds Gene and Dolores working together, not eating together.*

Q. Does their relationship continue to grow?

A. Yes, up through the Sunday dinner scene. *The dinner scene should be moved to after Sanchez's visit, and should become a turning point in Gene and Do's relationship.*

Q. In what way?

A. Somebody mentions something about marriage at the dinner, and *it's there that Gene realizes* -- not in 48b the way I have it now -- how they see him. *In addition to marriage, they also make some kind of*

burro joke -- like if he thinks he's been working hard now, just wait until he "gets" the motel. The implication is that they'll make him work like a dog to "repay" this symbolic gift of the motel and their daughter.

Q. How does Gene react?

A. With some vertigo and panic. His Kerouac dreams come back to him.

Q. How will you enhance this?

A. In the scenes building up to the Sunday dinner, make the motel life with Dolores seem positively idyllic, so that he can really see this vision of a life there with her. It's a dream life only because it excludes her family from the vision, and in fact, *I need to make it clearer that they can't be together without her family's constant involvement. I should probably go back and foreshadow that by having her say something, early on, about how she feels that somehow she'll never be rid of her family.*

Q. So how do we see his panicked reaction?

A. In both solo scenes and scenes with Dolores. We see it by the way he behaves at the motel and how he thinks about it, and by how he acts with her. There should be a *marked distinction, a clear contrast* between these scenes and the idyllic scenes that came before the Sunday dinner.

Q. What happens next?

A. The Sanchez family buys the motel. This only raises his level of anxiety higher. Another change I need to make is that *instead of the joshing on the one hand and the respectful questioning on the other, the brutal assumption that G and Do are getting married is completely disrespectful. Instead of giving him so much time to "think about it," they just move forward and assume he's on board. They don't even think he needs to make a decision as much as assume he accepts the direction everything's moving.*

Q. What's the irony there?

A. In dialogue I'll have to cut or radically reshape, Dolores already puts her finger on his ambivalent character, preferring others to make choices for him. But when that's actually the case, as here, that's not the way he wants it to be at all. *He realizes he has to make his own choice, and that terrifies him.*

Q. How does it play out?

A. Perhaps he makes a decision in his own mind and plans to have a nice heart-to-heart talk with her, but instead a misunderstanding and an argument ensues. This is not the final argument scene, but the next-to-last one. Then finally we have that argument scene where Bobby interrupts them and Gene goes with him.

Well, I do like all that much, much better than what I have. I'll turn that into outline in the morning before my shift.

26 May 03

Morning -- I inserted the notes from yesterday into the "Gene only" version of the outline. Making those changes does not tear up the structure as much as I anticipated. There's a little reordering, and I'm going to have to throw out that whole new ch. 48-50 I wrote May 16-19. I'll have to write new scenes in 44 to show the "idyllic" vision of Gene and Dolores running the motel together, and I'll have to add new material on the Sunday dinner scene -- that'll be the most difficult job because it will be a new turning point.

Then I can move on to the scenes in (what is now numbered) ch. 54 and 56 which is where I've bogged down.

So basically I've lost about ten days, and the work done between the 16th and the 23rd. But I have to do that to move on at all, and I do still have a full three weeks here. 22 working days, according to my calendar.

27 May 03

Yesterday and today I did a good deal of reworking, once again, chapters 42-47 (excepting the chapters in Bobby's POV). Today I mostly worked on ch. 47d, the Sunday dinner scene. I've rewritten both scenes in which Sanchez appears up to now -- 47b and 47d -- so that he comes across as less calculating and more benevolent. I created a lot more pressure and tension in the dinner scene (actually a before-dinner scene) by having the Sanchez men grill Gene and having him gradually realize that a), they are interested in buying the place, and b), they have no intention of him just sitting around the motel, they're going to expect him to bust his ass, either there or in a real job. Nobody comes out and says it, but now it's in the subtext.

God, my first draft was so thin and watery compared to a complex scene like that. The action of the scene hasn't changed, even the dialogue itself hasn't changed much, only the meaning of the dialogue.

Affected parts now look like this. You can see some of the scenes I cut.

Thu 12 May	42a 42b 42c	Bobby meets Gene and Dolores and ushers them to the swimming pool SWIMMING SCENE They go to a municipal swimming pool instead and relax together. The whole thing becomes a bonding experience. DONE.	Gene	Pump up Gene's dialogue here, make him more outraged, show his compassion. DONE
Fri 20 May	43a	Bobby opens for Garland at Cal-Neva	Bobby	This needs to be a comic routine that indirectly comments on the swimming scene.
"	43b	Bobby conversation with Lawford about convention	Bobby	
Mon 16 May	44a	They have lunch for the first time together at the motel, and D examines the books briefly. Leads to Gene thinking about being there with her.	Gene	This is a preliminary living-out of the possible future in which they run the motel together. We should see them working together as if they are already married and in charge of the place.
Mon 30 May	44a 44b	Two weeks later. Gene continues to run the motel. Moira and her honey. Sheila the drunk hooker, "not drunk enough."	Gene	
	44c	Gene interior -- thinks maybe growing up means he should leave Kerouac behind. Positive feelings for Dolores.	Gene	Cut: Dolores and Gene in a friendly, teasing scene. <i>She invites him to her house for Sunday dinner.</i>
Tue 31 May	45a	Gene visits Gustafson in hospital, encounters Karl	Gene	
"	45b	Back at the motel, the beaten-up hooker returns and spends the night in Gus' chair	Gene	
Wed 1 Jun	45c	Next day. Karl returns with Gustafson. Karl decides to sell the motel. Gene defends Gustafson.	Gene	
sometime early June	46	Bobby and Philly at lunch.	Bobby	
Wed Jun 1	47a	Gene keeps place open. Short phone conversation with D, he invites her to dinner. She says pick her up at her house. A john comes in and jokes with Gene about it being a "no tell motel" and him a beatnik.	Gene	
Sat 4 Jun	47b	Gene and D working together. Sanchez visits briefly.		Moved from after the dinner to before the dinner, in order to prepare for turning point events at dinner.
Sun 5 Jun	47c	Gene and Dolores go to a movie. Mention of the "little house" milagro. She says they're teasing her at dinner for having a boyfriend.	Gene	Moved from <i>after</i> the first Sunday dinner scene (in this chapter).
Sun 12 Jun	47d	Gene has Sunday dinner at Sanchez house.	Gene	
Tue 28 Jun	48a	Bobby phones Gene, who tells him about swimming incident	Bobby Gene	Change to Gene's POV, put in
	48b	Scenes showing Gene's reaction -- fear and panic		

Tue 28 Jun	49a	Bobby's monologue: running for president Dean and Sammy visit Bobby on stage	Bobby	
	49b	Back in dressing room, Sinatra jokes with Bobby, Dean and Sammy about the swimming pool incident Dolores told him about in 41a and about <i>Fish and Fry</i>		
Fri 1 Jul	50a	Sanchez family inspects the motel.		
	50b	Gene reaction to inspection -- more panic		
Sat 2 Jul	50c	Evening. Gene gets call from realtor that motel has been sold.	Gene	The Sanchez family buys the motel. This only raises his level of anxiety higher.

28 May 03

I worked this afternoon on ch. 48, though I reversed the order of scenes shown in the above outline. I have Gene coming back to the motel after the Sunday dinner and getting completely paranoid over the possibility of being slave-driven by the Sanchez family and being stuck in the motel forever. Then I have Dolores coming to him a few days later and saying that they are indeed thinking of buying it, and shows him a plan to raise the rates on all the rooms after remodeling the whole place, and this really freaks him out.

I feel, in the last three or four days since coming back from Chelan, a complete change in my approach to these chapters. Perhaps through a mixture of the days away, the recovery from illness, the momentum of three weeks of work, and all the Updike, I now feel inspired. I know exactly what I want to do, and I go through chapter by chapter. Even where I have to completely reorganize material and do a lot of rewriting, as in ch. 47 and (today) 48, I know just what tone I want. It's a wonderfully empowered feeling.

29 May 03

Working at odd times today -- before breakfast, and after dinner -- I managed to put together a new version of ch. 50:

Fri 1 Jul	50a	Dolores becomes increasingly uneasy with Gene's behavior. They discuss openly the possibility of getting married. Gene shows great anxiety but tries to keep his options open.	Can re-use parts of the old scene 48b in the file MNcut48.doc
Fri 1 Jul	50b	Sanchez family arrives to inspect the motel, interrupting the argument.	
Tue 5 Jul	50c	Gene and Dolores go to a movie, and afterward, discuss more.	
Tue 5 Jul	50d	Evening. Gene gets call from realtor that motel has been sold.	The Sanchez family buys the motel. This only raises his level of anxiety higher.

That's the end of part 3. Part 4 has only one Dolores-Gene chapter in it right now; mostly it's Bobby stuff in the Democratic convention. Man, I'm glad I'm not worried about rewriting that part too!

I'm not sure where I'll go after this. I'll probably keep the one chapter in part 4, but what I'll do in part 5 is sort of up for grabs. I want to bring in Sanchez to pressure Gene. Maybe I'll have him try to charm him, but in a selfish way.

Anyway, I won't think about it now. I'm tired after hiking and everything else that happened today.

31 May 03

Finished a new draft of ch. 56. I kept scenes I didn't expect to. Chapter ends with Gene and Sanchez at dinner, as before, but Sanchez is now encouraging him to work harder for Dolores. This gives Gene more time.

I will now have ch. 58 to cover the period of Aug. 2-17. It should be a completely new chapter except for a paragraph or two, and should cover the rising action and climax of Gene's relationship with Dolores.

1 Jun 03

12:50 pm -- My day off, but I didn't deign to work in the morning. I wrote a letter after breakfast, then went to the Matins service, and after that I went to the Labyrinth, which took the rest of the morning. (And I only walked it one way. If I'd walked it both ways I'd still be out there.)

So I'll get to work now on ch. 58. Feels kind of like a big day -- because once I'm finished with this, I will have accomplished my basic goal, to rewrite all the Gene-Dolores sections. Of course, after today I still have 15 days to work. That will allow me to do plenty of smoothing.

But first things first. Let's think about what needs to go into this.

Q. What is the main action of the chapter?

A. The relationship between Gene and Dolores comes to a climax, and is resolved when Gene leaves with Bobby.

Q. How close are Gene and Dolores to this point when the chapter begins?

A. I think they could be fairly close. One big argument would do it. Of course I'm relying on coincidence -- Bobby drives up at the peak of the argument and wants Gene to go with him, and Gene takes the opportunity.

Q. We'll get to that later. Think about the beginning of the chapter. What emotional state is each character in?

A. Gene: Has already decided he wants to go. D. is not the primary reason; he just wants to move on. However, he has a motive for staying: he wants to prove himself, or rather impress, Dolores and her father, wants to demonstrate he is more mature and ready to settle down than he really is.

Dolores: Has gone through three or four weeks of Gene being hesitant and (from her perspective) wormy about his feelings, so she's getting pretty pissed off and impatient. On the surface she has maintained a pleasant professionalism, but her anger is rising to the surface, and will surface with not much excuse.

Father: Still thinks he can manipulate everyone into doing what he thinks is best for everyone.

Optimistically still considers Gene as potential son-in-law but is mostly selfishly motivated: wants to resolve problem of unmarried daughter at home and get free labor in the bargain.

Q. So the main thing in the chapter is this big argument between Gene and Dolores. Is her father present?

A. No, but I might bring him in before that a little -- maybe show him looking pained as Gene shows no progress.

Q. That's an idea, talk more about that.

A. At end of ch. 56, Sanchez urged Gene to try harder to win Dolores and gives him a few weeks to work on her. During the period covered by ch. 58, he watches to see if Gene makes any progress but doesn't really see any. At first he coaches Gene, then is put off by him. So that can be the opening action of the chapter: we see Gene being urged by Sanchez to try harder, Gene fails, Gene starts to resist pressure, Sanchez is put off.

Q. Then what happens between that and the argument?

- A. I think we see Gene thinking about his options, torn between what he wants (to leave) and what is expected of him (to stay). We see him taking steps closer to leaving for San Francisco.
- Q. Does he pack?
- A. Hmm, that seems awfully concrete. But it would be a bad idea to rely strictly on ambivalence as action. That's been a bad idea all along.
- Q. Correct. So what *actions* does Gene take?
- A. Well, let's see, what are the options? He could pack, he could buy a bus ticket, he could move from one room to another in the motel and use that as an excuse to pack, he could read books about SF (but what books?), he could buy a used car, he could write to somebody in San Francisco and ask for a job, he could ask Bobby or somebody else for a job or a contact in SF.
- Q. Of those which do you like?
- A. Move from one room to another and use that as an excuse to pack. Perhaps Sanchez or even Dolores asks him to do so. I also like him going down to the bus station again, not buying a ticket, then maybe walking by the Buddhist temple to no avail. The sense that there's nothing for him to do in Las Vegas anymore.
- Q. Anything else?
- A. Just that it's hot. Or does he go down to the Riviera and try to get his job back?
- Q. What would be the point of that?
- A. No point in that.

God, I just had a very "literary" idea. Gene goes to visit Gustafson one last time in the hospital. Gustafson has had a stroke and can't speak. Gene speaks to him, telling him what he really feels.

Man. I think I'll try it. It's a little bit "Five Easy Pieces" but...

3 Jun 03

Got a slow start this afternoon -- greeted a bus, goodbyed a bus, and finally came into my room. Looked at my journal, stopped myself doing so, laid down for a nap. David upstairs played his stereo very quietly for five minutes, then stopped, but it was long enough to get me out of bed. Finally I started working, and wrote scene 58c: Gene visits Gustafson in the nursing home. I did 1200 words of that, knocked off at 4:20, checked the post office: no mail for me. "It's a first," marveled the postal girl. "A second," I corrected her, but actually, the day on which I got no letters or cards, I got a package. So today I got nothing at all for the first time.

It occurred to me lately, and now even more strongly with the scenes in chapters 56 and 58 featuring Sanchez and Gustafson, that what Sara said was true: the book is full of father figures for Gene. Bobby, Gustafson and Sanchez -- even the Buddhist priest (a priest, thus "father") -- all alternative father figures. To top it all off, his own is dead. Whether I meant to or not, I have written a book about a kid with no father who encounters all sorts of father figures: an encouraging, permissive but somewhat absent one (Bobby); an evil, slavedriving but weak one (Gustafson); a wise, permissive but ultimately aloof one (Lee); a warm but conniving and ultimately manipulative one (Sanchez). Add to that the one figure he really intends to learn from, Kerouac. In the end, the best one takes him away, only to set him free.

I should keep this theme in mind when making my next pass through the book. In addition, the other themes: the mystery of being an adult; the embrace of both sadness and happiness; the search for success.

4 Jun 03

I finished the Gene-Dolores rewrites today, and eager to find out how much I'd managed to cut, I laboriously opened every chapter of the second draft and did a word count. To my disappointment, I've only managed to cut 11,000 words from the original 174,000. Oh, man.

Well, I did achieve my primary goal for this draft, which was to make the Dolores and Gene stuff more cogent. In doing so I know I added words in some cases. So maybe in the second draft I took out 15,000 and added three or four thousand.

Anyway, I can flag passages in the next pass for cutting while I smooth. I'll bet I can take off at least another 10,000 easily. But I'd really like to get it down to, say, 125,000. I think that would make it a little more saleable.

But maybe it's not a very important consideration. I dunno.

Also I still need to rewrite ch. 3 to put it all in a single POV. What's in there now is a kludge, a combination of material from Gene and Bobby chapters.

So the next goal, to be accomplished in the exactly 13 days I have left to work, is:

- smooth
- cut
- fix ch. 3

5 Jun 03

I started trying to fix ch. 3 and decided to resolve it by rearranging the chapter structure yet again. To make a long story short, I combined 5 chapters into the first chapter, and then went ahead and rearranged the whole book. So that now I have 24 chapters, most of them with several sections, some of the chapters are 11,000 or 12,000 words long. Imagine.

It's late, I'll look at it again tomorrow (12th day left to work) and see what I've got.

7 Jun 03

Exhausted by a morning of cleaning lettuce, and thinking it might be good to take a day off, I didn't work on the book at all yesterday. I took a few notes for my next book, is all, and read.

Now back to work. First thing I'm going to do is word counts of all the newly arranged chapters.

9:15 pm -- Dusk. I got some work done on my book today, doing a word count of all the chapters and then going through two of them and cutting. I managed to cut about 2100 words more. But I didn't get a terrific amount done; I was in a bad mood left over from my kitchen shift.

8 Jun 03

After my work yesterday and today, I have managed to reduce the word count to about 154,000 words. That's 20,000 less than the first draft, but I haven't even gone through most of the second draft chapters yet -- just the long ones. The most significant thing I cut was almost all the Phyllis Diller scene. I liked it, but it contributed almost nothing to the story. Just more celebrity fun.

Eight more days to work after today.

9 Jun 03

I worked on several more chapters today, and have gone through 13 of the 24 chapters trying to cut. I'm now just below 150,000 words. I've already attacked most of the longer chapters, and most of the ones in the first part of the book. I've been avoiding working on the chapters with heavy Gene-Dolores content because I worked on them so recently.

It's fun going over stuff I haven't read lately, like Gene's "job interview" at Bobby's house, where he's under the impression that he's auditioning for a gag writer's job. There's some funny stuff there. I do have to replace one of the jokes though. That thing about the drunk just doesn't work on paper.

Seven more days to work. Maybe I'll take another day off to read.

12 Jun 03

I finished going through the second draft chapters and cutting what I could. I didn't do much cutting yesterday or today. The final word count is approx. 148,000. That will give the editor something to cut.

I'll knock off for today -- it's mid-afternoon -- maybe work on the piece I wrote about the labyrinth. The newsletter lady actually asked me about it today, after I mentioned it to her a couple weeks ago.

14 Jun 03

This morning I did my little "almanac" announcement at 7:30 and again at 8:15. I had recruited yesterday a woman who knew how to play the little piano tune they use on "Writer's Almanac," and the tune plus my attempt at a Garrison Keillor impression went over big. More importantly, while sitting from 7:30 to 8:15 with the woman who played the piano -- whose name (I confirmed with the office) is Carolly ("Carol-lee") E--- -- I found out that not only was she a successful writer but that her agent is also Nick Tosches' agent. Tosches' *New York Times Magazine* article on Dean Martin, an excerpt from his Martin biography, is what got me writing "Make Nice" in the first place. So I was rather excited when she asked me about my book and said she wanted to read a chapter or two, because if the agent likes Nick Tosches, why shouldn't he like my novel about Dean Martin et al.? I related my idea to Carolly, who immediately said it sounded commercial, by which I assume she meant saleable and not too literary or obscure. Wouldn't it be funny if I actually get anywhere with this agent just because I happened to satirize the "Writer's Almanac" at a remote church camp?

After my kitchen shift, I printed off a couple of chapters and lolled around the village waiting for the woman to pass by. I was sure I'd find her at lunch but she didn't seem to come to lunch. Maybe she was lying down after getting up early to play piano for me.

I found Carolly on the porch of her lodge 20 minutes before supper, and gave her the first two chapters of "Make Nice." She thanked me and said something about how she could get started on it with the few minutes remaining til dinner. I went down to wait on the wooden deck outside the dining hall for the dinner bell to ring (there really is a dinner bell). Eight minutes later I saw Carolly wander down toward the dining hall. Either she got started and found no reason after the first couple of pages to go on, or something, but I didn't take it as a good sign. Actually what I most fear is that she will be a little patronizing and encouraging, when she's really disappointed and thinking that she overestimated me when I was explaining to her what the book was about. I'd rather have her say, "Look, this doesn't work, and I'll tell you why."

15 Jun 03

Carolly showed up at breakfast with the pages I'd given her. She said that what she read -- the first two chapters -- had some real strengths and showed real "commercial potential." She said there were some redundancies that can be cut but that the dialogue and the Bobby Blaine character was very strong. She asked me what the "arc of the story" was and I had a hard time explaining it to her in a few words -- which may be a problem, I'll have to work on that and get my explanations in better order. She actually said there should be *more* dialogue, that "commercial novels" have as much as 50% dialogue. (This is obviously not the standard that Katia was thinking of.) Generally, she seemed to think it will need more tightening. In the end she gave me the name and address of her agent -- Nick Tosches' agent! -- and said to send him 100-200 pages along with a "20-to-30-page story treatment" or outline (which sounds awfully long to me) and see what he thinks. Finally she said that she was on a few book club editorial boards and had to review about 50 books a year, so she reads a lot, and that she sometimes gets stuff she can't even make it through five pages, but if she were to get my book, based on what she read she would recommend it.

All very encouraging. Of course, it makes me think that I should go through another round of cutting and so forth before sending it off to this agent. Maybe I will work over the first hundred pages or so and get it in better shape. I've got all day today.

26 Sep 03 -- three months later

I'm kind of surprised I haven't updated this file since leaving Holden. I have worked on the book a little, performing some cleanup, and I did send the first few chapters to Carolly's agent. But he sent them back, saying he wasn't accepting any new fiction so hadn't even read them. I took this to be a transparent white lie -- what agent worth his salt could resist reading at least the first two pages of a book by an unknown author? -- intended to make me feel as if it didn't count as a rejection. So I began working on a list of names of other agents.

But then I stopped, because I started working at the end of July. I never did get any other queries sent out. And though I was taking the time to do another pass through the book, now thinking of an agent reading the chapters and trying to take out the slack, I stopped that too. And this is the first day in six weeks that I have even thought about doing anything. I haven't read one word or opened even this notes file since July 16.

Thus there's nothing in this file to tell me where to resume work. All I can do is rely on the revision dates of the files and start with the last one I worked on.

I did have one idea in the last six weeks. That is to take out all the car valet stuff from the first chapter. Get the whole book moving sooner. I'll think about it.

Later. I went through chapters 7-10, managing to cut a few thousand more words. Most significantly, I cut the whole scene where Bobby and Gene give a ride to Costa Mesa to the two middle-aged housewives. It was an interesting, atmospheric scene, but it didn't move the story forward. And I managed several hundred more here and there. I'm down to 141,300 now.

Going through chapters 9 and 10, though, I didn't find that much to cut, and it may be I can only do a few chapters a day. So I'll knock off and try it again tomorrow, maybe.

20 Feb 04 -- five months later. Bishop's Ranch.

That was a funny place to stop. I guess I had gotten into the rhythm of cutting and updating, and finally I just finished, sometime in October or November. I've certainly considered the book finished for several months.

In December I gave it to Sara to read a final time, and she said it was fine, except that the first chapter still needed sharpening.

I played with the first chapter a little, and then sent out a small raft of queries. I got nibbles from a couple of agents, who asked me to send the first three chapters. But they ultimately rejected me.

Earlier this month I went to an event called Speed Dating for Agents, where I managed to talk four agents into reading the first few chapters. That was last Sunday and I haven't even had a chance to sit down and get the query packages together yet.

Then today I realized I had nothing planned tonight or tomorrow morning, and I was starting to feel so squeezed at home with the cats and everything -- we made the third trip to the vet in a week -- that I made a sudden decision to go to Bishop's Ranch even if just for a night. I think that experience of driving to SF and back the same day back in December 2002 convinced me that it just wasn't that hard to get here. This afternoon I made it in less than two hours, and that was with a prolonged stop for gas.

So I won't have much time, really, to work. From now (3:50 p.m.) to dinner, then after dinner until I get tired. In the morning, I have to drive back to SF in time to get home and change clothes and go to Michael's symposium at St. Francis. If not for that, I could have stayed out here the whole weekend, or at least until breakfast Sunday. But I feel I really must go to it.

While I'm here, I'll try to redo the first chapter again. I've been resisting this, because I don't want the first chapter to reflect a huge amount of polishing while the rest of the book is less so -- I don't want it to give the feeling of having been over-polished. But I'm sure Sara is right if she says it needs at least some polishing, while at the agents' event on Sunday, most of the agents interested in fiction said they were looking for impressive writing. And right now, the first chapter is just not impressive enough.

9:35 p.m. -- I did work on chapter 1. I moved things around a little. Now the book begins with the football and the parking valets again. I removed the bit where Sinatra and Bobby have a play-fight on the set of the movie, and moved the conversation about Bobby getting a driver and about *Slovik* to the scene in the dressing room at the end of the day. I didn't succeed in cutting anything. I am at a loss as to what to take out, if that's what I have to do.

The other thing I did -- and this took most of the five hours I worked -- was change the whole book from 11-point single-spaced paragraphs with 6 pts of space after (just like in this file) to 12-point double-spaced ones. That took surprisingly long, partly because I sat down and read scenes. I caught a few typos and one inconsistency that had been introduced by past moving of scenes from one part of the book to another.

Now I'm about ready to quit, but I really should write my query letters. Oh hell, I'll do it tomorrow. There's no way I'll get the query packages in the mail tomorrow.

Once I get those query packages in the mail, I'll really have to get down to work on the layout job. I'm supposed to have a preliminary draft for Simone in a week, but I haven't had enough time at the Macintosh to work on it. Cris has had actual work all week long, and the Mac and her laptop use the same monitor.

Pretty nice up here at the ranch. I'm up in the motel-like "lodge" rather than in the cabins as usual, and it's a little noisier on account of the frogs that live by the stock pond about 100 yards away in a gully. But it's a lot warmer than the cabins. The cabins have heat but they're big noisy forced-air gas heaters, so noisy you can't run them at night, which means you get really cold. This place seems to have radiant heat; it's really effective.

Even though it's before 10:00 a.m., I feel like getting into bed. I've worked hard and driven two hours and I need the rest.

4 March 2005

In the year since I made an entry here, I have sent out several queries to agents about "Make Nice." Though some of them expressed initial interest, and a few of them read at least substantial portions of the manuscript, none decided to take me on as a client.

But I haven't gotten discouraged yet. This morning I sent out three new query letters. Up to now, I've always gotten a referral from one writer or another -- a friend, or friend of a friend, or someone I used to know. None of those referrals bore fruit, though it meant that the agent would at least agree to look at a few chapters. So now, for the first time, I'm sending out queries to agents with whom I have no contact whatsoever. I have nothing to lose.

Also in the last year, I've gone through my novel chapter by chapter with a writing group. It's a long book and we just finished going through it once; we'll go through it again, in larger chunks. It's helped me catch many small things I'd missed before, so it's been worth it. Still, if no one wants to publish this book, it doesn't really matter.

I think I'll post this "Notes" file on my website. Perhaps someone doing research on Sinatra et al. will run across it and read parts of it, or perhaps my friends will glance at it. It'll be a way of publishing the book in a sort of shadow way.

I really like the book I wrote. It was very fulfilling to work on such a long project and bring it to completion, and the writing itself was, for the most part, a lot of fun. Especially in 2002 when I was working really regularly, above all in the last three months of the year when it seemed like I was on the home stretch.

Now I'm working on another novel. It won't be as big a project, and I hope to finish it this year. Perhaps the publishing industry will be more interested in it.

As I bring this project to a close -- or, if I'm lucky and someone does want to publish the book, to a pause -- I'm grateful for the experience. It really was worthwhile. At least I can say, unlike so many others who have never tried, or who have tried and failed, I have written a novel.