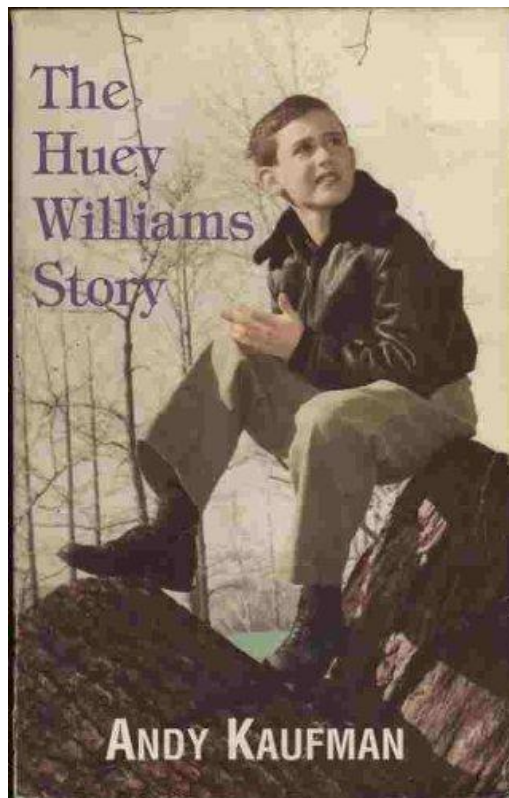


The Huey Williams Story

Andy Kaufman



1999

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The Huey Williams Story, the fictional biography of "the world's greatest entertainer."

Generally, the overall quality of the writing is quite remarkable. Andy Kaufman is a good storyteller, and portions of "The Huey Williams Story" are very entertaining. The work suffers a bit from lack of proofreading and editing, but still provides some interesting insight into Andy nonetheless.

This book is an epic novel and fills four volumes of three-ring loose leaf binders. The information below comprises our review of "Parts One and Two."

PART I

Generally, the overall quality of the writing is quite remarkable. Andy Kaufman is a good storyteller, and portions of "The Huey Williams Story" are very entertaining. The work suffers a bit from lack of proofreading and editing, but still provides interesting insight into Andy nonetheless.

The excerpts reviewed were composed between September 3, 1979 through November 29, 1980. The time period prior to (and during) the dates noted above comprised a busy and dynamic time in Kaufman's career. A year earlier (September 20, 1978) marked the debut of "Taxi" on ABC. Throughout 1979, Andy appeared in "Cher and Other Fantasies" (NBC); performed in a charity benefit for the NYPD, "VIP Night on Broadway" (Andy sang "Tomorrow" from the musical "Annie" with a very young Sarah Jessica Parker); four days later he starred in perhaps his crowning accomplishment, "Andy Kaufman Plays Carnegie Hall"; his ABC comedy special (originally taped in 1977) was finally broadcast; he made a guest appearance on, "A Johnny Cash Christmas (CBS); performed on "HBO's 2nd Annual Young Comedian's Show"; and was nominated for a Golden Globe award as Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy of Musical Series for his work as "Latka" on Taxi. In addition to the big events listed above, Andy continued an ambitious schedule of nightclub shows and college concerts all across the nation. He began his national Intergender wrestling career during this time period, even conducting one of his matches on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" (February 24, 1979). Considering Andy's tireless schedule, writing "Huey" in his spare time (most often during late night hours) seems simply amazing.

The story of Huey Williams is really the story of Andrew Geoffrey Kaufman, and this part of the Huey Williams saga clearly captures snippets of what life, and the world, look like through the eyes of a youngster/teenager. Andy was 30- years-old when he wrote this, and it's obvious that his childhood memories and impressions were still fresh in his mind. However, despite the innocence, many of the passages are tempered with the realities of life that Andy came to understand during his adult years. For example (on page 12), while explaining the character of John Smith an old black man known as the town drunk, Andy writes, "The boys secretly want to be like him when they grow up. What a life that would be just being drunk all the time... They see it as some sort of fantasy like a movie. They don't realize the reality of it. They don't perceive the pain. To them, he is a man who decided that this is what he wanted to be in his life and so he is that. There is no reason to them; no woman who has broken his heart, no financial situation..., no failure..., or whatever the reason might be. To them, all adults are part of a distant, unreal world in which problems don't really exist like they do so badly in the teenage years."

PART II

The excerpts reviewed from "Part II" were composed between Christmas Day, 1980, through March 11, 1982. During this time period Andy was busy with his Intergender wrestling career, this includes his famous match with the now missing Playboy Playmate Susan (Miss September) Smith (October 11, 1981). He also appears on "The Midnight Special" and opens for Rodney Dangerfield at the Fairfield Theatre, San Francisco, California (January 29-31, 1981). Or should we say, Tony Clifton performed in

the last two referenced performances? Andy's controversial "Fridays" shows also aired during this time period (February 20, 1981 and September 18, 1981).

His critically panned and box office disaster, "Heartbeeps" premiered on December 18, 1981. (A recent celebrity profile in "Parade" magazine featured Bernadette Peters. Her list of film credits curiously omitted her co-starring role in "Heartbeeps.") When not shooting "Taxi," Andy worked evenings as a busboy at "Jerry's Famous Deli."

Again, Andy's commitment to his writing is phenomenal.

The majority of Part II was penned at homes on Greenvalley Road and Grassfield Road. Andy apparently carried this notebook/journal with him at all times. Passages were written in Chicago (Rick & Carol's), New York City, Carson City (whorehouse?), Boston, and London. The final pages (371-373) are written in New York City while Andy stayed at the New York Hilton preparing for his first appearance on David Letterman's new show, "Late Night with David Letterman." This appearance (February 17, 1982) marks the first of many visits Andy makes to the show. As you know, the following day (February 18, 1982) close friend Bob Zmuda appeared on "Late Night" as Tony Clifton. Most of the Late Night crew were unaware that he wasn't Andy Kaufman. During the early days of Late Night, Andy was Dave's favorite guest. "In those early days," said Letterman, "there was no better guest than Andy Kaufman. You never knew what to expect from Andy, but it was always exciting and unpredictable."

In Part I, Andy lays the foundation of the Huey Williams Story. Huey's childhood days, from his first day of kindergarten to the weeks after his high school graduation are revealed. We learn of Huey's deepest fears and wildest dreams, and begin to know his family and friends in some detail.

Part II (all 373 pages) explodes into multiple layers, multiple characters, and multiple storylines. And much like Part I, the stories revolve around tales of courage, inner-strength, happiness, silliness and joy. Huey (and friends) strive for acceptance and understanding in a world where they are viewed by many as misfits. Part II features Cowboys, Indians, Country & Western singers, bullies, occasional violence, common folk, medically trained postal workers, foreigners, strange beautiful women, and assorted outcasts. As Martin Buber once said, "All actual life is encounter," and Andy fills Part II with an assortment of colorful encounters in the magical life of Huey Williams.

In Part I, Andy built the history of "The Mountain," and reference to The Mountain continues in Part II. In Andy/Huey's world The Mountain appears to represent life's possibilities and everyone's hopes and dreams for the future. Everybody secretly wants to climb The Mountain but few dare. The journey up The Mountain was lifelong and treacherous and those who did, did so at great risk. If they successfully reached the top they gained great personal and material riches, and a better understanding of themselves(?) The Mountain is the focal point for the town, a place where a family can gather at its foot to have a picnic and admire its beauty.

In the beginning of The Huey Williams Story, The Mountain stands alone - untouched and adored. This changes when The Mountain is purchased by "a rich man or conglomerate." The Mountain is soon surrounded by a fence, installed by the rich owner. They also install a Tram which provides quick and easy access to The Mountain, but the owners of The Mountain control who has access.

During the "western town history" portion of Part II, Andy continues to build the history of The Mountain with rich descriptions of the town of Auburndale. Auburndale was, established at the edge of The Mountain and named after one of their more prominent citizens, "(T)he citizens of the community named their town, 'Auburndale,' after Jack Auburn of General Store fame." Andy's writings exhibit a flair for old west storytelling as such, ".an old friend of his, Dame Lady May, known as Mrs. Martha May Ray, of Scotsboro fame, built a hotel not too far from Jack Auburn's General Store, and the two became neighbors." The people of Auburndale view the changes to The Mountain, particularly the Tram, with suspicion and skepticism. The Tram leads to their economic downfall, not to mention some general bad behavior.

Huey's first night in Auburndale is quite eventful. After securing his belongings at a local shop, Huey explores the town and finds the Auburndale ail, home of Auburndale's one and only prisoner. The

prisoner committed the town's first and only crime, and as punishment is now on permanent display behind bars.

For dinner, Huey chooses Jake Ormsby's Restaurant. The rowdy brand of people in the saloon/restaurant make Huey uncomfortable. Despite the drinking, cursing and bawdy behavior, Huey stays and eats his entire meal. Huey even tolerates the rude treatment he receives at the hands of his waiter.

As Huey begins to eat his salad a floor show begins. A toothless old man with a guitar and a gravelly voice begins to sing boring songs. Andy describes thusly, "sputtering curses in between songs, and looking mean like he'd just come off a pirate ship and had cut the hearts out of many a man and raped many a woman." (Page 251)

In shades of Tony Clifton, the singer treats the audience terribly, "During his set of music, he kept reminding the customers in the place that he resented being there and didn't have to put up with any of them, 'So shut up when I'm on the stage! I could be home right now with my shoes off, relaxing with my woman.'" (Page 251)

Huey finally gets a room for the night at Lady May's Hotel, and while there meets Curly, a famous Country & Western singer. (Perhaps it wouldn't a great stretch to believe that the character of Curly was inspired by Andy's admiration for Slim Whitman.) At Curly's behest Huey puts on a private show for Curly and his friends. After Huey fancies them with songs, pantomimes, magic tricks and some home movies, (Does this sound an awful lot like Andy, or what?) Huey plays the instrument his late Grandpa taught him to play (in Part I), the exotic "Wamagadoon." Curly is blown away by this new and mysterious musical creation and greatly admires Huey's proficiency on this weird new instrument. The Wamagadoon is described as follows, "And Huey proceeded to play the instrument just the way he had for various children years ago. He started slowly, and then let the music build gradually, until the instrument was practically playing itself as Huey just plucked it at random and arched his body forward, letting it bounce up and down with the music, smiling and eventually saying such phrases as, 'We're playing the Wamagadoon! Hey, it's time to play the Wamagadoon!' And with every pluck of the fingers or hands on the surface or strings of the instrument, waves of bliss were felt throughout the room and even outside where the men were waiting for their leader but did not start without him because they were so entranced by the sound and vibrations." (Pages 270-271)

An Excerpt

February 2, 1982 11:35 PM, NYC Berkshire Hotel

...Approaching the dam from out of the sky and coming closer with a taunt that angered the waters was the giant funnel of an enormous tornado. Now this was not the sort which came and went in just a few short minutes like most tornadoes. No. This tornado had been around for quite a while and at this point in time lived with its wife and several children up beyond the clouds near the North Pole, coming down to the earth less and less as it grew older. It did not mean to do any harm either. Those days had passed. When it had been younger, of course it would swoop down on little helpless villagers and destroy them with its tail, getting malicious joy and thrills from the mischief. But as it grew and matured, the same pleasure was not being felt anymore and it felt painful to see such mindless destruction, so it only teased by lifting citizens of the whole villages up in its funnel and twirling them around a few times, then letting them go so that they would all land in different parts of the world. No one would ever get physically hurt because the tornado made sure to be gentle with them, but it was a great big inconvenience for them when each individual had to make a journey, alone, back to his or her village. Sometimes it would take years before whole villages were reunited, but they always did manage to get back together again.

But then, after a few years of this, the tornado met its wife and settled down. At first it reduced these escapades almost to nothing, except when it got restless and needed to go out for a twirl just for exercise. However, every once in a while, when there was a marital spat, it would leave in a huff, blow

down upon a helpless village, and just for spite, lift all the people up and spin them around so that they all landed all over the globe, setting them back a number of years each time. It made sure to never hit the same village more than once, though, except for one time when it had hit a little town three times in a row. That was when there was a large fight with the wife and it was so mad that every time the poor residents of this little town finally all got back together again it would strike them again and spread them out for another few years. This depleted the morale of the villagers a great deal, but they persevered and each time ended up together again until the wife got wind of what was going on and told her husband that if it ever happened again she would leave him. Since then he caused no more trouble, especially being that his children were growing up and he felt a responsibility to his family. So from then on he mainly stayed home and relaxed, telling stories to his children and teaching them about the world they were becoming a part of.

Cast of Characters

Huey - Andy
Jack - Stanley
Waldo - Michael
Kate - Carol
Harry - Papu
Daisy - Grandma Pearl
Eddie Dunbar - ?
John Smith - Old Black Man, Town Drunk
Miss Ware - Huey's Kindergarten Teacher
Dabbsy - The "Kindly" Operator of the Ice Cream Concession
Tiny - "F-Troop"
Tommy - "F-Troop"
Danny - "F-Troop"
Scott - "F-Troop"
Jill - "F-Troop"
Marla - "F-Troop"
Ralph - The Retarded Boy at the Bowling Alley
William Dupree - ?
Carole - Curly Redheaded Girl with Large Breasts
Janet - The Blonde
Major Events/Persons in Storyline:
First Day of Kindergarten
Attendance in Kindergarten
John Brown
The Amusement Park
The Mountain
Imaginary Friends
King of the Hill
Doll on the Top Shelf
Dream Girl With the Diamond Birthmark
Grandpa the Trickster
The Evils of Cigarette Smoking
Grandpa's Death
How To Kiss a Girl
Graduation

Taxi Driver
Susan Brown the Homecoming Queen

Pictures

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June 10, 1971

THE HUEY WILLIAMS STORY

by Andy C. Hoffman

Introduction

All across the globe in every large city, in every small village and in numerous sparsely populated areas, there are families who have never heard of Huey Williams. His name rings out like a bell along with the fact, "enchanted children of God everywhere with his unique, simple sense of humor, it is no wonder that his magic name has become synonymous with comedy."

Huey J. Williams, just like most, had to start from the bottom & work his way up. Many times it looked like instant failure, would he never be deemed to tell old ladies ~~at~~ ^{at} cocktail parties, or making magic for little boys and girls on their birthdays? At times, it really looked as though this would be the case. But for ~~the~~ Mr. Williams, there was no stopping. Not until that final step: the big

body tingled with ecstasy. He watched until the bareback riders were done, then got up, determined to find the backstage entrance.

"I'm sorry. You can't go in."

"But I must! Please. It's very important!"

"Sorry. Only circus personnel."

January 10, 1982, 4:20 pm

Ormsby Home

Huey was determined. He went all over the tent, trying to find an opening or an alternate entrance to the backstage area. Finally he found a door and saw all the performers standing around inside. She had to be among them. It should be pretty easy to find her. Excitement spread through every portion of his limbs, shooting through every fiber of his body like an arrow. It was a private door. It seemed that probably no one knew about it except the circus personnel. No one was watching so he walked through as though he belonged there.

Immediately, someone shouted "Hey Rube!" and in an instant several dozen men were upon him, holding him down and pouncing upon him as though he were a common criminal who had just committed a serious injustice against one of their family. More and more kept coming in a seemingly endless array as the word "Rube!" spread among them. They held him down and asked "All right, Bub! What's the idea?"

Huey was going to tell them about the girl but noticed the first guard and figured that they wouldn't understand, so he tried to think fast. "I'm a fan. I wanted to meet the performers."

Some of the men didn't believe him. "A likely story!" they said.

Others did believe him and were flattered. They laughed and said, "You can't just come in here like that."

Then they all said "C'mon, buddy. Out you go!"

"But can't I just get one autograph?"

"Come on!" They were carrying him out.

"Just one?" he pleaded.

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