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LOOSE BUT LUCID: A DREAMER IN PARADISE

By Bucky McMahon

IT'S NIGHT. Tallahassee. I'm walking uphill toward the English Department building on the campus of Florida State University. Ahead, beyond a parking lot where a few cars gleam out of the shadows, and across a street lined with tall oaks, rises the multi-story red-brick building, where I'm due, where I'm late. Like a ghost I've returned to haunt the joint, attracted by the minor trauma of grad school and teaching freshman comp. Oh, it's the old academic anxiety dream shaping up, all right. And what I expect will be what I get: labyrinthine halls, missing gradebooks, rioting students.

I'm not particularly anxious, though—which is strange—just a travelin' along the top of a brick wall, which is getting narrower as it rises higher. Maybe I should've gotten down earlier, as I should've done many things earlier. If I'm not careful I'll fall.

No sooner feared than found—whoops, look out!—I'm going down. Grab something? There's a tree. A branch? Got it. It's just a twig, though, a green stem. It couldn't possibly hold my weight, except that I'm suddenly weightless. Why? Because in this particular nothing, it seems, there is nothing that is not-I. Fall where? Fall how? Impossible, for the moment. I hover on the border of two worlds, trembling perpendicular in an electric breeze of wonder like an explorer's flag. From that other hemisphere of sham, with its impossible reading assignments and phantom classes that never conclude, nothing protrudes but the twig with its spray of leaves which I still clutch against a slight but increasing suction.

And now I remember. I fucking remember!

It is not night. It can't be Tallahassee. What I remember is that the one who floats, suspended in an aspic of pure mentation, is Dream Me, a functional model, if you like, a mock-up of the self, while the so-called Real Me lies mostly paralyzed, major motor neurons blocked, on his back in a

single bed on the Big Island of Hawaii, some 3,000 miles from Tallahassee and a decade removed from my last school bell.

I'm in two places at once. And I think I like it.

To be aware that I'm dreaming while I'm dreaming—to impose some control, and invest some wisdom in the third of my life I spend asleep, compulsively rehashing the past and rehearsing the future—that's the gist of lucid dreaming. And lucid dreaming is what I'm here in Hawaii to learn, along with a dozen or so other oneironauts, aged 86 to 16, from Sweden, Germany, Canada, and the U.S. We're all participants in *Dreaming and Awakening*, a seminar taught by Stanford sleep scientist and lucid dreaming expert Stephen LaBerge. Why, in our insomniac age, tinker with the balm of oblivion? In *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming*, our text for the seminar, LaBerge has laid out a laundry list of enticing reasons—flight, dream sex, hassle-free travel, free psychotherapy, nightmare reduction, witting access to the unconscious, and glorious adventures in transcendence, to name just a few.

And you think I'm going back to that other school?

Not if I can steer this dirigible self, this feather-light homunculus I've become, elsewhere, towards other, better adventures.

While accounts of lucid dreaming date back at least as far as Aristotle, and LaBerge's book wasn't the first tome on the subject—predecessors include 19th century French Orientalist the Marquis Hervey de St. Deny's dream journals, and Mary Arnold-Forster's *A Study of Dreams* in the 1930s—LaBerge, a Stanford Ph.D. in psychophysiology, is the guy who first did the science. In his landmark experiments at Stanford's sleep lab in the late 70s, LaBerge was able to prove that lucid dreams did in fact occur during unambiguous sleep. Based on earlier studies showing that some of the eye movements of REM sleep corresponded to the reported direction of the dreamer's gaze, LaBerge asked lucid dreamers to make voluntary eye movements when they realized they were dreaming. These eye signals appeared on the polygraph records during REM, proving that the lab dreamers had indeed been lucid during uninterrupted REM sleep.

In subsequent experiments—and thousands of lucid dreams—LaBerge compared perceived dream time with actual clock time (a very close match); found that dream movements result in corresponding patterns of

muscle twitching; and that dreamed sex results in physiological responses very similar to those that accompany actual sexual activity. No wonder we frequently mistake dreams for reality, LaBerge argued: To the brain's perceptual systems, dreaming of doing something and actually doing it are closely equivalent. Along the way LaBerge also took on the bugbear of anxiety dreams—Can't find your keys? Won't make that meeting? Hello! There are no keys. There is no meeting. You're dreaming! Go do something fun or useful—reducing his frequency of dream unpleasantness from 60 percent (about average, according to dream content studies) to 1 percent. In peak lucid dream experiences, LaBerge accepted his Shadow (in Jungian terms), a seven foot barbarian who held him in a death grip, then transformed into a rainbow and disappeared into his heart; he met God, or a version thereof, in deep outer space, singing joyous hosannas; and reconciled with death.

And it shows, indeed it shows. LaBerge seemed extraordinarily collected and contented and still as excited about the potentials of lucid dreaming as when he was a kid having serial lucid dreams about being an undersea pirate. As he paced and expostulated on the subjective nature of all consciousness, he wowed us with audio-visual demonstrations from his academic psychologist's bag of tricks. We listened to a specially-prepared tape and attempted to write down exactly what we heard. Within minutes, we were all experiencing auditory hallucinations. Next, we watched a video close-up of a man repeating "Da-Da! Da-Da! Da-Da!"—at least that's what we all heard—until we closed our eyes, and the words miraculously changed to "Ba-Ba! Ba-Ba! Ba-Ba!" As LaBerge explained, this particular miracle was due to our unconscious lip-reading of misleading cues. What we heard was our brain's best interpretation of the available sensory input. As LaBerge showed us with this and a variety of similar demonstrations, perception could reasonably be thought of as a sort of dream that normally corresponded to reality—thanks to sensory information, or the reverse, in the case of sensory *misinformation*.

Repeatedly astonishing us, the Dadaistic Dream Doc cut an impish trickster figure in Hawaiian shirt and shorts, with his shock of gray hair, hypnotic blue eyes, and burgeoning Buddha belly, owing to a lactose-extreme diet. Possessed of a sly wit (when I asked at meal-time why so much milk, he answered simply, "Mu!" a famous Zen koan to the importunate monk; or was that "Moo?"), he's given to referring to the human race as

“beach monkeys.” Thanks to his solid grounding in evolutionary psychology, he never let us wander too far into the mists of New Ageism. When someone asked, for instance, “Can characters in your lucid dream also become lucid?”, LaBerge attentively nodded along and then, rephrasing the question, gently steered the questioner back towards planet earth, like a Mr. Rogers for psychonauts. Though his own scientific understanding of the brain and the dream was always “a little more complicated” than the summaries we finally settled for, in the end he made lucid dreaming sound both obvious and easy. Possible, certainly. The reason there are thousands of lucid dreamers instead of millions, he said, was that it does take some time and effort. But ten years from now, he predicted, everyone’s going to be saying they knew about it all along.

Dream sex, dream flight, creative control—we novices wanted some of that. But I remember that either nobody was talking or we weren’t getting any. Not much. Not yet. The key for us—as Stephen LaBerge discovered as a young Ph.D. candidate at Stanford’s sleep lab, under the gun and needing to lucid dream on demand in the lab—would be memory. Simple, mysterious memory—the brain’s ability to remember to remember to do something. And memory training, along with the science of sleep and consciousness, has been the main thrust of the seminar. We’ve made lists of personal dream signs—bits of recurrent bizarreness—to try to remember to recognize and thus use to become lucid. I once owned a horse, for example, that shows up pretty regularly in dreams, still angling for the crippling kick; I’ve been on the lookout for that brute. And all week we’ve been playing a memory game in which every time someone in the group hands you something you must wink or tap your brow—I remember!—or else get a flower sticker on your name tag. We’ve made countless “state checks” during the day, asking ourselves, “Am I dreaming?” trying really to examine the nature of waking awareness, making little hops to see if gravity is operational, so that the question has become habitual, and the likelihood that we will ask “Am I dreaming?” while dreaming goes way up.

In short, we’ve cultivated at our leisure an obsession. And I remember it was starting to work.

The previous night—the eighth night of the seminar—I had an epic, stupid, non-lucid dream set in a Central American banana republic, featuring drug

dealing, gun-running, kung-fu fighting thugs, flying cars towed by helicopters, yachts the size of the Queen Mary, LaBerge himself and his sweet assistant Keelin, and finally, three comely brides of Dracula, who, as we tumbled into bed in a seedy hotel, and I extracted my right hand from the jaws of a savage dark midget, suddenly became quite palpably real, even as their illusory nature became clear. There was a subtle shift in distance, and a sharp uprise in Is-ness, like a sharp whack from an invisible interior Zen Master: was blind but now could see, or, rather, think.

Now there was a knower who knew, as well as a doer who did, and what I intended to do and savor with the tang of full awareness was quite pithily summed up by a leering blonde as she crawled toward me across the mattress. “You’d do us all, wouldn’t you?” she said. And all bets being off, all things being equal, and nothing being real, I suppose indeed I would. But just as I gained control I began to lose reception, and the blonde to fade like the Cheshire Cat. LaBerge had instructed us how to prolong the dream state by spinning ourselves—our dream bodies—to re-activate the visuo-motor neurons, or by rubbing the dream hands to re-focus sensation. But pinned under a sensual pileup, before I could free my arms I was back in my cot in Hawaii. Damn!

But really I wasn’t in it for the sex. Rather it was that extraordinary moment, which I’d savored in its evanescence maybe a half dozen times in my life, when you pull back the curtain on Oz, and see the magician laboring at the switches and levers, and the set pieces come crashing down, revealing... Well, that’s what I wanted to know, what I wanted to see for myself, for starters.

I remember how, following that partial success, I’d been high all day, and gone to bed that night after the evening workshop session—which concluded with everybody kicked back on futons watching “Groundhog Day”—full of anticipation and optimism, only to plunge into yet another non-lucid, anxiety-driven dream. When my eyes popped open and I glanced over at the travel clock on the night stand, it was 5:00 a.m. Perfect. Right on the nose. A little miracle of intentionality. I was participating, you see, in a little side-experiment for LaBerge’s Lucidity Institute, the protocol of which included a half hour’s sleep-interruption to clear my head and re-set my intention, my goal to remember to become aware that I’m dreaming the next time I’m dreaming.

And I remember, all right, how, stealthily, so as not to disturb my snoozing roommate, I gathered up notebook, pen, the clock, and a baggie marked “52-B” containing a whale-sized green capsule. I slipped out of the dark bedroom and tiptoed to the screened common room. In the quiet of the kitchen I got a tumbler of water from the faucet and knocked back the 52-B. I was hoping that the previous night’s dose—“52-A”—had been the placebo, and that this would be the real thing, an herbal acetylcholine booster. According to the activation-synthesis theory proposed by Harvard sleep experts Robert McCarley and J. Allan Hobson, the aminergic neuromodulators—dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine—run the show during waking consciousness. Their exhaustion is what we feel as sleepiness, sleep their downtime. While the amines rest and replenish, the cholinergic neuromodulator acetylcholine takes over, using different neural pathways to run a very different show, one with striking physiological similarities to LSD trips.

Will the 52-B make the difference? If, indeed, last night’s pill was the placebo, my moment of lucidity showed I didn’t really need it. Certainly Stephen LaBerge’s experience and that of thousands of other lucid dreamers has shown as much. Still, as an impatient beginner, I wasn’t averse to a chemical assist, so I’d volunteered for the experiment, as most of my fellow Dream Campers had, “in the interest of science”. LaBerge’s theory was that, since lucid dreams occur most frequently during brain-states of high activation, the acetylcholine booster, taken at an opportune time, would produce a super dream, a big REM episode rife with lucid possibilities. The sleep-interruption was LaBerge’s theory, too. Since it’s well-established that the longest and strongest REM periods come at the end of the sleep cycle, in the early morning hours, you could enhance your chances of lucidity by getting out of bed, obsessing a little more on your goal, and then hopping back in the sack clearly focused for the exciting conclusion of the Circadian cycle. I expected my next dream to be a whopper.

Meanwhile, I set up my clock on the counter and began to scribble in my dream journal. For the past two months, following instructions in LaBerge’s book, I’d been recording dreams, sharpening my dream recall, giving them clever mnemonic titles while lying in bed. The one that woke me up at five I called “Tsunami: That Dumb Big Wave Dream Again.” As a surfer who’s spent some time in Hawaii and other dangerous places, I’ve seen big waves

coming at me, and dreamed of preposterously bigger. By now giant surf should be an obvious dream-sign to recognize and use to become lucid. Instead I just scrambled madly to get out of the way and ended up, sans transition, in the penthouse restaurant of a high-rise hotel in the middle of the Pacific. As the first wave smashed into the building, and crockery crashed, women screamed and the lights went out, I just held on like everybody else, hoping the quaking tower wouldn't fall. That, too, is typical of the acetylcholine-dominated brain-state of dreams, according to Hobson, hyperemotionality coupled with hyporationality: scared and stupid. LaBerge, in contrast, believes the non-lucid dreamer isn't so much irrational as helpless to argue, from a perceptual perspective unconstrained by sensory input, with the highly imaginative products of our dreaming brains. With constant change the norm in dreams, we experience change blindness, our gullibility explicable not by a cholinergic-induced lack of insight but by a lack of contrasting evidence. Indeed, whatever evidence we seek that the dream is real is swiftly produced by expectation and motivation. Big waves? Well, it is Hawaii. Look out!

Either way, from an evolutionary perspective it makes good sense. I ought to beware the sea, but much more so our beach monkey ancestors needed to keep on their no-longer-prehensile toes, their newly acquired big brains cycling in and out of highly activated states, accompanied by enforced paralysis through the hours of darkness, while the big cats prowled, as LaBerge lectured. And since REM is usually accompanied by erections in males and vaginal arousal in females, they'd wake up from their tiger dreams in the primal huddle anxious and horny. Better make more monkeys!

Thus musing on *la plus ca change*, I gathered my effects and tip-toed back to my room, where I checked the clock—5:36—and fumbled in the nightstand drawer for a couple of silicon earplugs to drown out my roommate's snores. Then, lying on my back, relaxing in the balmy Hawaiian night, I began a counting meditation: *One, I'm dreaming; Two, I'm dreaming....*

With careful attention it feels as if you can sense the chemical changing of the guard in the brain that signals sleep onset. The amines, having toiled all day in concert with the senses to construct a three-dimensional, purposive world out of whatever the fuck is really out there—and in here—begin to subside. To fizz. To sputter. You may feel an electrical tingling, little bolts of

lightning from the command centers in the brain stem as the neural pathways switch. Highend frontal-cortex-dominated thinking disappears—Ah!—often pleasantly, even as random hypnagogic images and voices begin to percolate up from the pre-conscious in a sort of mental jazz improvisation. The Beatles got the hypnagogic mood just right with snatches of *King Lear* and that ominous “Number nine! Number nine!”

Even then, in the borderland between wake and sleep, it was still me, one of me, barely but recognizably, still in Hawaii, and still counting: *Fourteen, I’m dreaming...* Oops! Only supposed to go to nine and start over... *One, I’m dreaming, Two...*

It’s night. It’s Tallahassee. Then it isn’t. It’s nowhere I’ve ever been before. And now I remember. I fucking remember!

The relief alone is terrific, followed by a wave of triumph. I’ve broken into the funhouse, and this time at the beginning of REM! Wonders await the psychonaut. Forward ho is in all directions at once. All I have to do is let go. And remember.

And so having vowed to explore my darkest consciousness, if darkness was what I found, I release the leafy stem and fly, feet first, backwards into blackness. Great hope, a little terror—is this the nightmare? No? Good—an excited tattoo of racing heartbeats, a disembodied oceanic expansion, a contraction to pure feeling...and I land back on earth, about a block further south, headed for the Williams Building on the campus of Florida State University. I’m like the goddamn Terminator.

It’s night again. Tallahassee, again. Still, I’m elated that I’ve done it—had a lucid dream, and apparently woke up at night in Tallahassee. I can’t wait to tell Stephen LaBerge. I can see him clearly, somehow, in his Hawaiian shirt, drinking from a gallon of milk, presiding over a dormitory of sleeping dreamers on the fourth floor of the English Department building. I see an old friend, Geren Goldstein, seated on a bench reading. “Man, I’ve just had the coolest experience,” I tell him. “I’m salivating with curiosity,” he says, not sarcastically, and puts out his tongue to illustrate. It’s purple, as if he’s been eating a popsicle. Soon as I get back, I say. I’ve got to hurry, meet Stephen LaBerge.

LaBerge emphasizes the role of schemata in the brain’s modeling of dream locales. Earth, night, a college campus—round up the usual suspects: the ground, sky, a horizon for perspective, functional structures of some

formal dignity. Activate a few memory neurons and it's a snap. Inside these buildings I can expect, and so will find, school things: offices, classrooms, blackboards, chalk... Yet while the anxiety dream's physical schema is intact, the anxiety itself has been transformed. I'm only anxious to show off, to present myself in triumph, if I can find my way through the labyrinthine halls.

The Williams Building can be a confusing edifice, especially if you enter through the basement aquatic center where women in bathing caps are performing a Busby Berkeley style water ballet and waiters in tuxedos carry trays from an elaborate buffet. Now wait a minute. Come on. There's never been a basement aquatic center in the Williams Building. The force of compulsive automaticity—the feeling of no choice, no respite—abruptly halts. The acetylcholine-fueled, limbic-urged blinders of belief are off again—while the scene still whirls around me. Now—wonder of wonders—I'm conscious of being in a dream again, of being in an illusory body surrounded by other bodies which are also illusory, though they seem real enough, as do I. The rising steam from the pool, the sound of splashing, the pungency of chlorine, that banquet table laden with turkeys and sliced hams and little pastries—so richly detailed, so gratuitous. I step in front of a waiter. His eyes bug slightly as he tries to go around. "Pardon me," he says.

I pat his back as he goes by. Pardon me! Believe me, friend, all are pardoned here. I appreciate the work you're doing for me. A woman in a black one-piece is headed for the pool. I embrace her, kiss her neck, her cheek, her lips. She is neither surprised nor resistant. I pull the straps of her suit down over her shoulders. Her breasts are beautiful, and Christ!—I'm about to come just holding her. And while I can't exactly see how this furthers the study of consciousness, the work is irresistibly attractive. I'm a kissing bandit, a bee with a brain and a hard-on zooming from flower to flower, and yet there's a nagging notion that to climax would launch me out of the dream world. And besides, I'm due upstairs in the English Department Office.

Transition? None. New schema: the office—walls and smaller spaces, file cabinets, desks with tchotchkes and family pics and two middle-aged women in conservative pantsuits giving me a deer-in-headlights look. They are, apparently, the administrators of my academic anxiety dream. Were I a lucid dreamer of some sophistication I might ask what exactly I have to sign to get out of this institution permanently. But no, sadly no, I only want to have sex with them also, and while they are understanding—they can see

my problem—and cooperative, as I sweep the little snow globes and the daily Far Side calendar off one of the desks, in preparation for crashing down onto it with the nearest of the two. But under her pastel blouse I encounter only a sort of burlap material. The other lady stands nearby, wavering like a column of flame, cycling rapidly through a variety of matronly identities, each more elderly than the last. Better get out of here!

In one of the loopier “Dreaming and Awakening” discussions, we hashed over the pros and cons of passing through dream walls. It is said to be impossible. It is said to be a cinch. LaBerge once had a claustrophobic client who repeatedly dreamed of walls closing in on him. LaBerge counseled that, with a degree of lucidity, the dreamer could remember to imagine a door, or fly up through the top. “But since I never heard back from him,” LaBerge said, “I can only assume he was cured. Or crushed.”

Remembering this I decide to give it a try in the English Office. The wall is an oddly mottled collard-colored green and sickly organic in appearance. My arm, as I extend it toward the wall, doesn’t look so good either—all chitinous and glimmering, reddened and singed. Numerous grub-like fingers sprout from my fist, more the longer and more closely I look. Habituation, LaBerge cautioned. Neurons don’t like the same old same old; all things must be aflowing in the dream world. And so it’s a normal enough looking hand I put forth—action restoring the model—to insert into the movie-monster flesh of the wall. My arm slides in to the shoulder—very Cronenberg-esque—and I follow with eyes closed...

...and find myself struggling on my back under the blue plastic bottom of an above ground pool. It becomes a thin latex membrane, which I’m at last able to burst through, though I have blue plastic goop all over my hands. Fortunately, here’s an outdoor spigot under which to rinse. All that has taken place so far has been in a sort of buzzing nocturne of unnatural light. At last I’m outdoors in daylight and feeling calmer. Excited, astonished, but acclimating to the rhythm of lucid dreaming, the start and stop of belief and disbelief which provides the traction for events to unfold.

LaBerge explains: “Especially at the onset of lucid dreams there is the danger that too much thinking about what’s going on will withdraw attention from the dream and cause a premature awakening. On the other hand, too little reflection, and you lose lucidity. The key is a balance between participation and detachment.”

Just so with this tree in the sunlit garden. Clearly it is little more than a hedge, and spiny, not good for climbing. Never mind. A little ways up, the branches are stouter, well-spaced, so easy to climb in fact that I'm at the top. Now it's The Tree—the great forked apotheosis of all things upthrusting, a towering hardwood a thousand feet high. So high indeed that I'm hanging on in the crook amidst a thunderstorm, inside swirling gray clouds that flicker volcanically as sheets of hot rain pour down. When the storm subsides, I can see a patchwork tropical landscape far below, and how the rain-slick trunk bulges out about twenty-feet below, offering a natural launching pad should I care to bump and jump.

Now, strangely, I'm reluctant to do so. I know I can't be hurt by the fall, but I'm less sure about that launch, the slight twist needed to avoid a pair of barky knobs. I could bust my butt! But summoning some real courage, hands at my sides, toes pointed, I leap, nail the launch perfectly (did you expect less?) and enter free-fall face-down, back-arched, like a practiced parachutist. The wind roars in my ears, rips at my clothes. Terminal velocity, it seems, is just what the unconscious ordered, for with the steadily rising ground as its canvas, it lets loose with a torrent of mesmerizing imagery: scenes of global devastation, followed by delicate, intricate line drawings which are at once cartoons of the world geo-political situation and comments on the aesthetic compensation of complexity, however disastrous. Someone's a genius in here, and it ain't the flying beach monkey who, before dream-smashing to the dream earth, intuitively levels off and begins to cruise—in face-prowed, wonder-powered flight—through a suburban neighborhood, still looking for trouble.

Other episodes ensue—a comically ineffectual encounter with a girls' softball team in the crowded dressing room of a discount sporting goods store, a thug who offers cocaine as a pretext for flicking my nose—and other anomalies, too, blips of bizarreness impossible to categorize, before I seem to surrender flight at sunset, splashing down in the shallow end of a rather swank hotel pool. Nice landing. And how can she resist her hero from the sky, the water nymph who awaits. She's found the coziest spot in a nook away from the resort's tiki-torch lights, where I come swanning up, naked as she is. "Who am I to you?" she says, holding me at arms' length, smiling playfully, thank God, though whether this is a rebuke for the anonymous monkey sex I have tried to indulge in, or the witty repartee of an amorous Anima, I can't summon the neurons to decide. She lets me in to her

embrace, and I gratefully subside there, cheek on breast at the warm waterline. I know I'm going, dematerializing. Whatever subtle Kegel exercise of the pre-frontal lobes has kept the illusion alive, I'm letting go.

And wake up. Check the clock: 6:39. Nearly an hour of lucid REM. I feel as giddy as Scrooge on Christmas morning. Wonderful dream! And though, in immediate retrospect, I seem to have fucked it up in the same ways I fuck up my waking life—except for The Tree; that was a hell of a jump—I can't wait to tell Stephen LaBerge and Keelin and the rest of the Dream Campers. My first full-blown lucid dream. I didn't really believe, and wouldn't still if I hadn't seen it with my own dream eyes, that such a surpassingly strange brain-state could be accessed and sustained.

There's one more day and night of Dream Camp. I cadge another acetylcholine booster from Stephen LaBerge—"The first one's free," he jokes (though he has acquired a use patent for the herbal aid)—and follow the sleep interruption protocol exactly as before, and dream, non-lucidly, that I'm traveling with my wife and our families to a tourist destination, a quaint little backwoods community founded by lucid dreamers, who are bearded farm-folk, sort of Amish. "Did you get the name of the town?" my wife asks. I have my notebook and pen handy, but no, I can't read the sign, the name of the town, which is written in shape-shifting hieroglyphics—the Dream Sign *par excellence*.

Now it's been several hectic months, but I still recall the elation that lasted days afterwards. As soon as I can clear my desk and take a day or two to revive the obsession, I'm going back in. ∞*

* Editor's Note: Is turnabout fair play? Bucky McMahon is *not* the author of the following...

MS BIO SKETCH FOUND IN A DREAM:

WHO IS CHUCK BONAMMY? A THUMBNAIL'S POV

Charming, Cultured, Witty, and Reflective come to mind. Name-tag reads: "Chucky Bammon" (Hired Pen, nom de same, "rhymes with Mammon"). But this is little more than a mask. Many fascinating Sub-personalities, including obscure émigré "Chuck Ban y Mom" subliminally hinting that sometimes a cigar is just a Cuban, a touching Inner Orphan (AKA "Chucky Banmom") occasionally allowed out to play. Numerous good-old-boy types (e.g., "Bo Chucknammy") as well as decisive and incisive can-do ilk (e.g., Chuck Nommaby and Chuck Manybom). Remarkable and unexpected set of darklight tattoos including an elaborate World Tree upon which hangs a Shaggy God, and thereon hangs a tail. Or is that tale? Closer inspection reveals minuscule WHO AM I? engraved on left thumbnail. Upon his right thumbnail, one can just make out scrimshaw depicting something very like a whale...