

True Short Stories Of India

(And The Search For The Purpose Of Life)

By PF Sloan

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)



At Raji's, Los Angeles, California, USA (1987)

Contents

Story 1	The Buddha in the Cave
Story 2	The Underground
Story 3	Taxi to Infinity
Story 4	In a Bombay Alley
Story 5	The Man from Honeywell Arrives
Story 6	Secret Messages
Story 7	The Bank Caper
Story 8	Caveman
Story 9	Give Me A Brake
Story 10	Doesn't Compute
Story 11	Without A Leg To Stand On
Story 12	An Interview
Story 13	Earth Day

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 1:

The Buddha In The Cave

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I first met him on a dusty side street in a small South Indian town in 1989. His name I can't recall, though we spent almost 10 days talking and walking together. Names just seemed unimportant to me at the time. So, for the purpose of this story, which I swear is true, or at best, true as he related these events and facts to me, I will call him Vince.

Vince was from Australia. Five feet 10 inches tall, with the build of a Roman legionnaire. His eyes were steely blue, his hair sandy blonde, and he bore a resemblance not only facially to Richard Burton, the English actor and infamous husband of Elizabeth Taylor, but in his rapier tongue and wit. Which he used with a rapid fire delivery that struck its target mercilessly. He was called to this little village-town, as I was, by a Great Spiritual Teacher, who is known to be God Realized. Vince had been there at His Ashram for six months, I was only there for a few weeks before we met, or rather 'put together'.

Vince was an actor. He had been on the stage in numerous plays, and films, and knew the inward game of self-discipline. As we were walking along an oxcart path, in the backroads from the main drag of the town, we found a cool spot out of the 110 degree heat, near a small mud lake by some tall grass. We sat on the side of the mudbanks and began a conversation. I asked him what his life was like in Australia and if he knew what life was about in reality. He sat looking at the sky for a while and then related this story to me of his search in China for the purpose of life.

Vince felt that at 38, if the curtain of life were to fall down at this point, it wouldn't really matter to him. Life was a cosmic comedy, random events with little or no meaning and with no purpose. I agreed intellectually, with this theory. In his searching and inquiries into the meanings of life, he could sum it up in a word, meaningless. He was bored with the play, and the games, and all that the world held. Coming to Puttaparthi, he said, was the only salve on his wounded soul, but he felt that it couldn't last.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

We sat and talked by the side of this small mud lake about a mile or so from the one-street main drag that was Puttaparthie. In Telegu, the predominant language in the state of Andrah Pradesh, the name means ant hill. But, a hundred or so years ago it was called by another name. Due to a long-lasting dust storm and drought condition, the town and its water began to dry up and huge ant mounds formed, hence its name means the town of Ant Hills. A Great Holy Teacher was born in this little village, and was drawing millions of people to Him. Our lives were dried up, like those ant hills, and so here we were.

I won't indulge in my own story because I feel it is away from the point. I will say that everyone's story in the search for the purpose of life is intriguing, mine as well. But, while Vince's story is fresh in my memory, and it is filled with thrilling divine interventions, I want only to relate his story, and I have not imposed my thoughts or feelings to the best of my ability on the story as it was related to me. Perhaps, in the tradition of Somerset Maugham's "The Razors Edge", if you like.

Being a successful actor in Sydney meant stage work and film work, beautiful women, parties on his yacht and enough money to satisfy his every luxurious desire. As I mentioned before, Vince was more than a just a student of the game. Years of practice in acting which he took as serious fun gave him an inner instinct into other people's attitudes, postures, actions, and desires. He related to me in a master—student relationship style, condescending but mesmerizing to me. He was a formidable thinker and talker. He told me the women were always predictable. The game was off. Like a king lion. The hunt had lost its thrill. His ability to see thru it all was beginning to bore him to death and he was drinking alcohol more and more every night. He said it occurred to him to take a trip to China and seek spiritual enlightenment if there was such a thing. He put it off for months and months as just an amusement or escape for his mind, but it gradually increased in urgency. One day he told his friends he had purchased an airline ticket and took off for China. Just like that!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

A few oxen came closer to get a better look at us. Their gentle eyes and tails swishing. You don't realize how large they are till you see them roaming free. Every now and then a breeze. Like a huge weight being lifted off your lungs. He told me he walked whenever he could across China. Backpacking, for a year or so. Meeting all kinds of new characters. But, they too, began to become boring. He slept in the open whenever he could just for the sheer exhilaration of it. The cool night air, and the plenarious stars. Small rooms for rent were plentiful in every town and village but being a westerner always aroused his sense of paranoia. His timepiece alone would bring any robber a years worth of groceries, a bike, or his own piece of land. Never staying too long in one place, he visited monasteries, and temples. Talked with priests and peasants alike, all to no avail in breaking thru the mental eggshell that had become his reality.

It was, during what would be his last week in China, he told me, that something extraordinary occurred. Exhausted, and nearly out of money, in a small room on the border of Tibet, he contemplated suicide, and cried for nearly three days, until he heard a knock at his door. A small peasant man dressed in black, said, " You come with me". Vince said that at any other time in his life he would have thought, "Who do you think you're kidding? You want me to come with you so you can take my rings and watch and camera and have a nice life, huh, buddy? Leave me dead and buried in some nice out of the way place, right mate?" I might need to explain here that many times people had asked Vince to come with them to see miracles or something they thought he was looking for. Time and time again he would go only to see a show or charade put on for him for money's sake. He was used to and bored with the ruse. "Who are you?", he asked. "What do you want, and who told I was here?" The Chinese man replied, " I have come to give you what you have been searching after!"

The man dressed in black asked him if he had the courage to enter a cave at the top of a mountain where it was said the Spirit of the Buddha resided. And if he had, enlightenment was granted to such a person.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Vince thought it was because of pride and the idea of going home with nothing to show for it save empty souvenirs that he agreed to follow the man the next evening. But on further thought, he said it was due to this fiery quest that had brought him there in the first place. Or resignation over the boredom of his life and perhaps an acceptance of an anonymous and meaningless death in China.

The man came for him just before sunset the next evening. Vince didn't tell me anything about how he was feeling during the day. The reader can imagine how they might feel, by coming into contact with the possibility of certain death, or the last hope of attaining something meaningful from life. They walked thru the dusty dirt streets out into the farm areas and then further still till there were was only a large expanse of hills and mountains.

As they began to climb, Vince told me that he was suddenly sure that this was a ruse. With every step he climbed he saw the ending of his life draw nearer. The man would only have to push him a little, and he would fall. The body would be looted of its rings and watch and who would ever find out? But, Vince said that strangely he didn't care anymore. His intellect had let him down too many times, and he was gravely disappointed in himself. As they climbed higher still, a new feeling began to take hold of him. He didn't want to die, not yet. Not without knowing, truly knowing, what life was about! When they reached the entrance of a cave, the man took out a candle from his coat and lit it. This is where he killed the tourists! Robbed them, and threw them into a cave where they would never be found, Vince thought. "Go inside", the man said to him.

Vince slowly and hesitatingly thought about his options. He was still fighting the numbness within himself which wanted to die, and the new feelings that said "Not without knowing!" He entered the cave. The man said, "The cave is long and dark and narrows at the end. At the end is a little opening where the Buddha resides. You will enter it like a foetus and curl your body up so as to fit in it." They walked in together by candlelight. The ceiling became lower and lower, and Vince said he was looking for the bones of others with every step he took. "Go in there if you want to know", the man said, pointing to a small opening. When he turned back around to look at the man, he was gone. The candle on the ground.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Vince said he was extremely relieved to still be alive but couldn't shake the feeling that death was awaiting him. He crawled inside the dark opening feet first, taking the candle in his hand. Stale air greeted his lungs! No room to maneuver his body once he was inside. Now he thought he got it! The robber would bury him alive! He would die of suffocation in here. Flat on his back he stared up at the wall! He saw in the dim candle light a likeness of the Buddha's form carved into the cave wall. A jolting beam of high energy light came hurling out of this carving and hit him between the eyes! He fell unconscious!

He said he didn't know how long he remained in that state. Upon awakening he heard an inner voice, loudly and clearly talking to him. He had been given the gift of awakening, it said! And this was merely the first step into enlightenment. He would be given instruction, this calm and soothing voice said, as to how to proceed with his life. Vince said he felt as if something had been rearranged in his brain circuitry! He was filled with a calmness and peace no drug or sex or success had ever given him! Another inner message he told me that he heard was "Your fate awaits you in India"!

This is the story as Vince related it to me to the best of my recollection. While we walked back to the village ashram Vince would suddenly say "Uh-oh, beggars at 9:00. And beggars coming in at 2:00!" Fighter pilot lingo. That isn't to say that Vince wasn't a charitable person. I saw him give his time and energy, lunch and dinner many times, to stray animals and tourists like myself! It's just that being an actor he saw thru many of their games. For example he'd say, "You know that beggar lives in Benares? He has a small palace and closets filled with beggar clothes. He comes here for the summer pickings, makes a fortune, you know", and laughed. Vince related another story to me while he was there.

Story 2:

The Underground

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Vince told me he returned to Sydney and began changing his lifestyle, somewhat. The parties were far and few in-between. He began a relationship with one woman for six months, but it seemed shallow and empty after his experiences in China. Not finding himself able to relate his new spiritual need to his girlfriend, it withered on the vine, and Vince took to drinking again alone. Working less and less and growing disheveled in appearance and not caring. He said he was waiting. That beautiful voice said he would be given instructions, and so he languished as if on holiday from life in paradise!

One evening an Indian woman introduced herself to him at a party. She mentioned that she had just returned from seeing a Holy Man in India by name Sai Baba. She showed him his picture and Vince just nodded his head. It wasn't till a few days later that he heard that Golden Voice again. He told me that the Voice told him that Sai Baba was the one who would take him on the next step of his journey.

Packing his bags he flew to South India for the first time, to a small dusty little town called Puttaparthi, where Sai Baba had a small ashram. During darshan one afternoon (darshan is what Abraham Lincoln called breathing the air of a Divine being), Baba asked Vince to give him his passport. Vince said he didn't really want to do that, but he did. On another afternoon Baba asked Vince to give him all his "chits". (Chits are what the Aussies call subway tokens.) Vince, said he understood the lingo but had no tokens on him to give, so he just shook his head in disbelief. Every day for a week Baba would come up to me, Vince said, and ask me for all my chits. I would say "I don't have any chits, Baba! If I did, I'd give them to you." "I thought the man was batty", he said to me. "Asking for my chits!"

Six months later, Vince had little money left and is walking around the streets like a madman crying, "Please give me my passport back so I can go home, Baba!" But Baba wouldn't, Vince said. The new tourists would point to him on the street in fear and disgust and say, "Who is that man? Why is he ranting and raving?" Another six months passed when one afternoon Baba presented Vince with his passport and said, "Go home with My blessings! Vince said it was the happiest day of his life. He left the very next morning by bus to Bangalore, and caught the next flight home to Sydney.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

It was about six months after I had returned from India that I found myself using the Underground one evening.

A beggar approached me and asked me for my chits! Vince said to economize he bought a month's supply of chits for the underground on sale, and for me to give them to this beggar would've left me without any for a month, you see? So, I told him to buzz off!

"I hadn't been working all that much lately", Vince told me. "Lost my interest almost completely in the craft, you know. So no money was coming in."

Watching me bottom line, he mimicked his own accent.

"Anyways, this beggar wouldn't take no for an answer. He'd ask, I'd refuse. He'd ask again and I'd refuse again and on and on, right? Then to my surprise one by one by one, the light bulbs in the ceiling above my head would pop as I walked ahead of the beggar. Each bulb would explode with a bang! This went on for a while and finally out of fear I surrendered all my tokens to the beggar. "Alright", I said, "if you want it so bleeding badly take em all!"

I sat down on a bench and suddenly remembered how Sai Baba had asked me repeatedly for my chits! I began to cry at the absurdity of it and at my own selfishness! It was then that I noticed that I was in the wrong station. I frantically looked in my pockets for a chit that I might not have given away. I realized that I needed the southbound express and I was on the north side! I began to laugh and cry at the same time", Vince said. "Finally, I just laid down on the bench and fell asleep. When I awoke, the southbound train pulled into the station in front of me! I was astonished!"

"How do you think that happened?" I asked?

"I don't know", he said. "I think the entire station was turned around! I know that's impossible, he said, but how else can I account for it?"

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

When, he took me on a tour of the village shops, it was a lesson worth the learning. "How much for this bracelet?" he'd say. The vendor said, "20 rupees". He'd laugh and say, "Oh, you're planning on going to Hawaii, huh? I'll be back tomorrow." Tomorrow, the vendor would say "10 rupees", and the next day "5". That's when he'd buy it! It took me a while to get the hang of it. Letting what I wanted go for another day. The urgency usually dictated its own terms, you know. Sometimes I would be able to contain myself; other times not. We went on other walks together but he just remained quiet! No more shouting and ranting and raving, no more acid wit. I didn't know what I felt for him. Was I envious of an inner peace which he displayed with power and discernment. I had been in awe of his charm and his ability to cause events, now he seemed on top of every situation. That's the story as Vince related it to me.

Story 3:

Taxi To Infinity

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I'd been at the mercy of the summer heat and the mosquitoes for six weeks now. And though I felt my spirit had become charged with energy my body felt on the edge of collapse! I had all but run out of money for my 3rd trip over to India to see Sai Baba, and I wanted to go home to L.A. It's not that living at the ashram was expensive; it was practically free. A room cost pennies a day as well as the fresh cooked vegetables and rice. But getting up every morning at 3:00 a.m. for prayers, and waiting for hours in line in the hot sun to get into the Darshan grounds to see Baba had worn me down. I needed a hot bath and maybe a cold beer. I decided to leave the next morning.

I checked into a moderate price hotel and I ordered from room service a hot meal with a cold beer. After staying in the hot shower for twenty minutes my body began to respond to my commands again. I had just enough money for this night and for the taxi fare to the airport and I sat on the balcony terrace looking up at the stars and feeling great. When suddenly I was hit with a sadness! It hit me like a shockwave!

I felt I needed to see Sai Baba at the ashram one more time before leaving. My body quivered at the thought of going back to the Ashram, and my mind rebelled! But I couldn't fight the feeling.

Thinking maybe I had hidden some rupees in my valise when I wasn't aware of what I was doing, I frantically tore thru my bag looking for something that wasn't there. I mean I must have looked thru it a dozen times. Each time I looked I swear I believed I'd find some. I lay down on the bed exhausted, unable to grasp the feeling that had come over me! I turned off my mind and the lights and fell asleep.

When I awoke in the morning, I decided "Hey, let's look thru the luggage again!" I laughed at myself in disbelief as I watched myself searching thru the same clothes, corners and crevices of the suitcase. Then, "Oh", I said. I found a bundle of 20 rupee notes!!! There were a lot of them! I was too excited to count. I looked at the time and found that I could get to Darshan with time to spare as I ran out the door of my room, flew down the cold marble steps to the lobby and jumped into the first cab, saying take me to Brindivan.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

(Brindivan is the name of Baba's Ashram in Whitefield, about 15 minutes away by taxi cab.) The cab driver said "Yes, okay", and he took off down the noisy streets, making lefts and rights and lefts and then we were on this long straight road I hadn't ever seen before. There were fields of tall golden stalks on the left and right. I scrunched my lips and thought, I really never noticed this stuff before. "Brindavan", I said, "We're going to Brindavan, right?" "Yes, okay", he said.

Further along the road the fields of golden stalks were getting thicker and thicker. I thought, you know, this guy doesn't speak English!

"The sun is lemon jello", I said, "right?"

He says, "Yes, okay!"

"Your mother wears army boots, right?"

"Yes, okay."

Now, after a good 40 minutes on the road the driver suddenly veers off to the shoulder and falls asleep at the wheel!.... You know, what are you going to do? This guy doesn't speak English. And what am I going to say to him if I wake him up?

I sat in the back seat looking out the window at a clear blue sky surrounded by golden stalks on the ground, and thought "God, is this was where I was supposed to be?!"

Twenty minutes must've gone by, I don't know. I had shut my eyes and was napping, when I saw someone approaching the cab from the fields. I rolled down the window and a man in his early thirties dressed in white shirt and pants asks me, "Are you going to Brindavan by any chance? I said, "Yes, I had hoped to". At this moment the taxi driver woke up and yawning, looks at the man getting into his cab and gets angry. The man entering the cab talks to him in a rapid-fire tongue and the driver turns the motor on and pulls away like a cowboy in a gallop. Now it's 60 minutes past the time of Darshan and I figure well, we missed it. The man in the front seat begins to tell me his story.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

He tells me last night his wife took ill. Very ill! He did everything he could for her to make her comfortable and she was at last able to get some sleep. Sai Baba came to him that evening in a dream and said "I know your wife is ill, and you can't afford a doctor. I will send a car for you and you come to see me at the Ashram. I will give you some holy ash that will heal her!"

As our cab arrived at the Ashram gates we were told that Baba had delayed Darshan that morning, and lo, look he was just coming out now.

The man takes off toward Baba, and mind you there are around 2,000 people sitting there in front of him waiting.

Baba walks directly to the man and puts a packet in his hand and says something to him. Pats him on the back. He gets back into the cab, as I pay the taxi driver off. They take off like an eagle!

Baba walked back into the Darshan area but since it was so crowded, I couldn't really get in. But as he had walked towards the man, I had mentally said to him, "Thank you for the wonderful time I had by Your Grace, and with your permission I wish to return home".

Baba didn't acknowledge my mental words to Him as He sometimes will. But I knew He had felt my love and I had felt His one more time. I caught a cab back to the hotel and flew back to California.

Story 4:

In A Bombay Alley

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

**You're swingin' on the Riviera one day
Then bleedin' in a Bombay alley next day
© MCA Music Secret Agent Man By: (PF Sloan – S. Barri)**

Before Vince left India, he stopped in Bombay. One of the world's oldest and busiest ports, now a thriving movie and music town. They call it Bollywood. He said he was going to see a psychic there, The Reader Of Brigue. He was told that the reader had personal problems, mostly chasing after Western women, and his accuracy of reading the future was limited, but he had promised a friend that if he could, he would see him. He called the number up on the card he had been given and made an appointment to see him the following day. Checking into a small hotel called the International Grand, it had as much room as a beehive cell, he said. But it was cheap and clean.

After washing up in the room, he decided naturally to have a look around the city. Stepping outside into the street, he took a deep breath, and could smell the burning leaves mixed with cow dung that intoxicated the senses.

A rich, deep and memory–lingering smell.

After an hour's walk, seeing mostly apartment buildings and small shanty–style dwellings, he found his way back to the hotel and had dinner. Then went upstairs to sleep and await the next day.

In the morning he caught a cab to the Reader's residence. A large condo–like apartment building. He knocked at the door and a tall, blonde, American Goddess opened the door and ran out into the hallway screaming, until she disappeared from view. "It looked like a Marx Brothers' movie", he told me, and smiled. He lit a cigarette, and looked introspectively for a time. I hesitated to interrupt his reverie, when he began to continue talking. Well, he took me downstairs into a parking lot and measured my shadow with a ruler, right? Then back upstairs behind his desk, he pulled out a number of plastic sheaths and he begins to tell me about my business, and love life. Pretty accurate he was, down to the color of ex–girlfriends hair and eyes. He asked if I was more interested in my past or future, and I said "Whatever!"

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

At the end of the reading I gave him 400rs and walked out into the street. I had lunch somewhere, and I began to walk back to the hotel. My reservations on the airline were not for another two days, and I wondered what I was going to do with the time, when a taxi cab pulled up and the driver said, "You must come with me sir". Vince said he had seen too many movies to go for that line! He said he had the strangest feeling though, that he knew the cabdriver somehow, and instinctually trusted him. The cabbie said again, "Please come with me, sir. Trust me, no harm will come to you". I said, "Alright, I'm coming", and I got into the back seat.

We must have driven for two hours, the city streets faded from sight and the scenery was becoming backroads. He kept driving, thru the dusty backroads, until he stopped in front of a small building in the proverbial middle of nowhere, or as the yogi would say now here! He got out of the cab and opened my door like I was getting out of a limo in Hollywood! "This is my cousin's hotel, I will get you a good rate, don't worry!" I was still under the spell of déjà vu, I guess, because my mind was trying to get my attention, badly!

It wanted to say to me, "You idiot! You fool! This guy picked you out as a sucker and you bought it! Now look what trusting your instincts has done! How many times do I have to tell you....." Something like that. I felt the vague waves of its embarrassment, but I decided not to listen. Not now, not yet.

I looked around the landscape and it was deserted as far as I could see. Huge dirt roads, a bridge that seemed to lead to nowhere, and this little white stucco hotel. I walked in. The manager or owner, I don't know, welcomed me like I was the King Of Morocco! He showed me to a room and said "Don't worry, I'll give you a good rate!" I stepped inside a small 12-by-15 room with a bed, and a black and white TV that didn't work. He doesn't know his brother-in-law is coming here next week with good news for him." I felt under my feet the insects who lived there and knew them as well as I knew myself and loved them as much. I knew their desires and feelings.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

It was 1:00 p.m.

I sat on the bed and watched the cab drive off, lit a cigarette and continued to stare out the window at dust. I must've fallen asleep for an hour or more, when bells outside in the street awoke me. It looked like a carnival. Hindu priests were stepping off a large truck ringing bells and waving incense sticks. A lot of people with animals were suddenly crowding into this tiny street. I watched awestruck at this change and the colors of the ceremony! Just as suddenly as it began, it ended, and the truck with the priests left canvass empty again.

"I had hoped to give up the nicotine habit while I was in India", Vince told me.

I had promised myself not to buy a pack while I was there. But to my chagrin, I found they sold individual cigarettes, and I wanted one now! I fought the feeling for ten or fifteen minutes but it wouldn't go away! I walked out the door of my room, to the manager's desk and asked where I could buy a cigarette. He smiled, and just pointed. I watched where he was pointing to and followed into the street where the Priests had done the animal blessings. There was nothing there!

I walked around to where the bridge was and crossed it. It was a mile long or so, and there were a few shops, but no smoke shops. I purchased a small silver ring of an Indian Saint named Shirdi Sai Baba for a few rupees, had a small bite to eat at a little stand, and walked back to the hotel.

It was around 5:00 p.m.

The sun was beginning to set and I was still on the search for a smoke shop when I found this alley of streets to the west of the small hotel. I entered it and found a smoke shop! What was interesting to me was how the alleyway seemed to go on and on into an ever-widening and curling street. I started walking deeper into what seemed like a labyrinth. The sun was still going down slowly, when I became aware of my fear again. It wanted to advise me that people can disappear in alleys!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I heard a voice exclaim, "He's here! Baba is here!" Vince took a drag from his cigarette and looked me dead in the eyes. "You won't believe what happened next", he said. He told me he felt a great sense of exhilaration and began looking himself for Sai Baba.

As I walked further into the alley people were sitting on the roadway, and I seemed to feel as if they were my dear relatives! I heard myself say to myself

"Oh, there's Narayana and his two children. She just got over a severe cold, and he's been grateful that she's better."

I saw an old man, and I heard myself say, "Just 120 hairs left on his head and missing one tooth in his back pocket comb!" Windows flew open and people cried "Baba, baba!" I felt myself gliding above the street, blessing each and every one from a heart filled with a Universe of abundant love!

Then I heard this Voice saying to me, "Oh look, that man's lungs are black with smoke! Baba will fix. Watch, watch!"

The image of Sai Baba was now inside my mind. As he took this deep breath in and exhaled a ton of black smoke. "Look now, black lung is gone... clean!" He laughed and laughed and laughed. "Look what Baba did", I heard Him say as he laughed.

"Is it you, Baba?", I said. "Yes", he laughed. "Just watch and listen!"

At that moment I heard millions of voices in my head, I knew the sound of each and every one of them. I knew their names and the names of their families and fathers and great-grandfathers back to the beginning when there was no one but God and into the future I saw their children and children's children into infinity. They were praying to God! Baba said to me, "See that man upstairs by the window, he doesn't like me. He's been asking me for a job for a long time.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

We came across a very small Muslim temple and the priest came out and bowed to Baba!

He asked Him in to bless the temple and at that moment I was left alone in my personal consciousness. I felt a cold fear tickle my mind like needles. I cried inside, "Baba, where are you?" And He replied, "Don't worry, I'll be right back."

I did what I thought to be my best imitation of Baba, using my hands in the way He might, and told the priest to wait. He didn't seem to notice anything wrong, I mean that it was me, Vince, there and not Sai Baba, so I stood fast and waited for Baba to return.

He did, I heard him tell the priest, "I bless! I bless! I bless!" and we moved on.

The sun had just gone down, and lights came on in the alleyway like a small Las Vegas! Music began playing and noise everywhere.... Baba seemed to be leaving the alley and people were waving goodbye! It was now dark outside as I reached the entrance where I had first entered into the alley.

I didn't know what had just happened! My mind was trying to tell me that I just went over the edge and should seek medical help! I walked into the hotel and the owner said to me, "Did you see Him?" "See who?", I said. "Sai Baba, Sai Baba was here! What a pity that you missed Him!", he said. Every 5 years the people in the alley save up enough money to celebrate a holiday. They wrote to Sai Baba asking Him if He would come, and He sent a letter saying "Yes, He would!"

"So", Vince said, "What I experienced was real. I tasted our Real Self that contains omnipresence and omnipotence and omniscience! Peace beyond imagination and Love beyond anything we as humans call love." "What did you do next?", I asked. Vince said he stayed the night. The cab driver came the next morning and took him back into Bombay where he stayed for another day, until he caught the plane back home.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

This is the story that Vince told me one afternoon, as we sat having Chai (Indian Sweet Tea) at a little restaurant on the streets of Puttaparthi. Ever since then my faith in God has deepened and I have a sense that I am not as alone as I think I once was. God is listening and watching, and waiting for me to make the right choices. Like the Indian man who was upset at God for not giving him a job when he asked for it, he chose to be upset and unhappy. Work was coming.... it wasn't on his timeframe though. So, he chose unfaith and unhappiness. Time wasted.

From this story Baba sounds as if He is always in Joy and enjoying everything and everyone. He sees them, as Vince said, as his dearest relatives and as His own Self! And that Self is in everyone and everything and constantly filled with giving and Loving and laughing!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 5:

The Man From Honeywell

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I was sharing a room with two Australians. They had their mattresses and nets comfortably arranged when I moved in. I felt like a squatter. I set up my business on the concrete floor in a corner of the room that would have been comfortable for one person. But the Ashram was filling up with people from all over the world. Rooms in the ashram were very inexpensive and were at a premium, hence the doubling and tripling up. There was a small Western-style bathroom, (the Indian-style bathroom had what looked like a bed pan cemented to the floor) and a sink with running water. Home sweet home! I had told a few friends that I had hoped to lose some weight on my trip to India, little did I know that Sai Baba must have heard me, and had me pay a price for that desire!

Everyone was abuzz about the new super specialty hospital that had been built in one year. "An impossible feat", said the President of India, when he had visited the marshland where the hospital was to be built. "There's no way to bring heavy machinery onto that land", they had said. And the plans that Baba drew up himself for the architecture would take at least 3 years. The next morning after Baba's announcement that the hospital would be completed the next year on his birthday, and this before the first brick was laid!

Well, the land somehow became solid and only hand workers were allowed to work on it. No machinery! It was built in grand Indian design and larger than a number of city blocks. Everything was supposed to be free. And doctors from all the world came to donate their time. The first surgery was a heart surgery and it was done on Baba's birthday. I went to take a look at it and indeed it was grand, but that's not what this story is about really.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I lay on my mattress on the floor listening to the Aussies swap beer stories and how the women and fishing are so good, and what in the world are they doing here anyway. They didn't seem to get who this 'Sai Barbra' was, as they called him. A week came and went and then one of the Aussies got dysentery. It was a bad case and he was constantly in pain. It was difficult to get any sleep, and then I caught it. With one bathroom to share it was comical to see. However the comedy had just begun. I began losing strength and couldn't go out to buy water or food. The Aussie who was well seemed to forget I was there while his hands were full nursing his friend. I seemed to lose track of time after a while, and I felt "This is not the way I wanted to lose weight!"

I slept and didn't eat and didn't drink any water for I don't know how long. I felt as if I could leave my body at any time. I didn't feel panic, or scared.

It seemed natural, but the thought or idea of it seemed wrong. I lived in a dream state and no longer lived in the world, when the door of the room opened up and a man from Minnesota asked where he could put his bed down.

The Aussie who was well was out of the room. The other Aussie was recovering, but he wasn't aware that I was even there! The man from Minnesota yelled out, "This man is dying! What's the matter with you people? He needs electrolytes and water right away." I was given huge amounts of the stuff and in a week or so I had recovered enough for him and I to engage in a conversation.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

This is what he told me:

He said his name was Frank, but I'm not really sure that's what it was. He had been to see Sai Baba once for a few days, seven or eight years ago. He worked as a specialist for the Honeywell Corp. His specialty was air conditioners.

Now it seems he had a dream where Sai Baba asked him for his help and would he come over to India? Frank told his wife about the dream and she said no, he couldn't go. They couldn't afford it and a hundred other reasons. The bottom line was, she placed a heavy pressure on him. "If you go, don't expect me to be here when you get back", she told Frank. Frank apparently hadn't buckled under the pressure because here he was. A knock on the door! "The head of the Specialty Hospital has a car waiting for you, if you could join us as soon as possible" an Indian in a Nehru-style jacket said! I said to Frank, "That's pretty good attention, man." He said, "Yeah, but I hadn't told anybody I was here and I don't know anyone at the hospital"! Frank wasn't easily ruffled at these seemingly impossible miracles. He was a yogi. Even-minded, you know, at anything that entered his world.

The problem was the doctors were performing surgeries with broken air conditioners. It was intolerably hot! The air conditioners were from the Honeywell Corp in Minnesota and Frank got on the phone with his supervisor there and told them they needed about a hundred s235890 model coils right away and could they send them over to India. ASAP! Frank's supervisor said, "So you're in India, huh? That's great, we thought you took off with a woman from St. Louis!" They both had a good laugh.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I'd watch Frank get up early every morning and do Yoga exercises. I was in awe at his mechanics, and perseverance. He'd go to Darshan every day and get last row in a crowd of 5-6,000 people, while I'd get first row and hand a letter to Baba that I'd written for him, or sometime he'd ask me how I was doing!

Frank stayed 5 more days and never once complained about his seating situation in the darshan grounds. He said, I'm where I am supposed to be. When I asked him, "What will you do if your wife isn't there?", he said calmly, "She'll either be there when I get back or not." I thanked him for saving my life, and he said "God's grace." We shook hands and he told me he was a big Barry Manilow fan and if I ever performed out his way, he hoped he'd like my music as much as his.

So, a guy flies in from Minnesota after having a dream, saves my life, fixes the air conditioning at the hospital, and flies home just like that! Barry Manilow I just want you to know I love you!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 6:

The Secret Message

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I was driving home alone after having had lunch with a friend in Venice, Ca.

While waiting in the left lane to make a turn, I saw a large expensive box in the middle of the intersection. It looked like a hat box to me. I made my turn, opened my door, and swooped it in like a hawk its prey.

I pulled over to the curb, shut the motor off, to have us a peek inside. The people in a restaurant, across the street with large glass windows, were watching my every move. So, this film was being shot and the audience was watching and what was this character going to do? What was in the box?

I lifted the top of the box and found inside a spongy and realistic form of a female breast. Being artistic by nature, it hadn't occurred to me this was a prosthesis, but rather a symbol of some kind.

Since breaking apart from my girlfriend, my first reaction was that this was a joke to remind me of how much I missed her physically. But looking at the audience across the street, I realized quickly that wasn't it.

Then I thought, did there have to be a message? Couldn't this just be some random event? Yes, I thought, exactly! This thought sobered me for the moment, and I realized someone must want this back!

I looked on the box for an address or telephone number but found none. I thought of taking it home with me and placing it on my pillow, but no, that wasn't the right thing to do.

I placed the box in front of the restaurant, in case whoever lost it decided to backtrack. I placed the mystery in front of the audience. And that was it, I thought, or rather would like to think.

As I was driving, I thought, what kind of person loses a breast like that? Oh, Betty, do you remember what I did with that breast I bought the other day? I found it comical, I didn't see the pain or the obvious.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

It wasn't more than a couple of months later I found myself back in India with Sai Baba. The ashram rooms were completely filled up and that meant having to take a small hotel room in the town. Rooms there at the time were expensive and not as clean. Not to mention the endless noise of the traffic and cars that honked their horns in Indian tradition day and night!

I hesitated in making any decision and sat and waited for something to propel me into action. It came in the form of a woman. My on-again, off-again female love was at the ashram and says, "I have to talk to you". I told her of my situation, being without a room, that is, and she said to me, "There is one room here that is locked up tight, but I have a friend who has the key. It seems the woman whose room it is went back to the States to have a cancerous breast removed!"

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 7:

The Bank Caper

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Jerry Brown was running for President again.

I was helping out in his campaign office by singing songs to the volunteers on their breaktime, and opening for him before he gave his fiery speeches on the road and on college campuses.

One of his favorite songs besides one that I had written, "Eve Of Destruction", was "Bad Moon Rising" by John Fogerty & Creedence Clearwater Revival.

It was the day of the night of the election. I had put together a band to play for the party at the campaign Headquarters. Jerry asked me to sing "Bad Moon Rising" as many times as possible during the evening. I said, "Fine". The only problem was I didn't know the lyric, and didn't have a copy of the song as far as I could remember. I could have gone to one of the mega-record stores, but it didn't occur to me then!

I had a few errands to run before the party and one of them was going to the bank. I had been a customer there for a few years and never had a problem with any of the tellers, okay? This day was different!

I stepped up to the window and the teller, an attractive lady, said to me, "Go over to the coffee bar and sit down!" I said, "I'm sorry, why should I do that?"

She just repeated what she had said a moment before, extremely curt and cold, I thought. I shook my head, rolled my eyes and walked over to the coffee bar that was a couple of couches, a table and an instant coffee maker. Okay. I poured myself a cup of coffee, sat down on the couch, and kept looking at the teller. The bank was unusually empty, but everyone seemed very busy. She didn't accept my questioning glances.

With time on my hands I started looking thru the stacks of magazines on the coffee table. They were old copies of the usual, Time, Newsweek, People and a copy of Song Lyric magazine, circa 1978. On the cover it said: lyrics to this song and that song and "Bad Moon Rising"! You know you can feel the adrenaline flow when something hits you over the head!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I hurriedly copied the lyric down, though at first I thought I would just try and memorize it. I have to tell you that any moment I thought the magazine would vanish in my hands. After successfully writing it down I re-approached the teller and she told me the computers had failed, and now they were up again.

I had this feeling that the faster I write the better it will be for all.

Well, the party went off as scheduled. We sang "Bad Moon Rising" for Jerry a number of times during the night. His bid for the presidency was not successful, but I think Jerry knew it, and his asking me to sing "Bad Moon Rising" may have been his way to let the volunteers know. I don't know for sure.

But I believe we need more men of integrity like Jerry Brown in politics if the younger generations are going to become interested at all in ending the corruption and greed that has afflicted our system for too long.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 8:

Caveman

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

In Northern Oregon, near Grant's Pass, on a large plot of land called Enchanted Acres lives a Doctor Wilma Bronkey and her husband. Dr. Bronkey worked with handicapped children for 30 years and developed a system as to how to get thru to them with the love they need for healing.

Every July 4th, for the past ten years, they invited people to come bring tents and sleep out on the land and watch enchanted things happen. They invited a few speakers every year and I received a letter asking if I would be one of them.

I was feeling like a curmudgeon, low on money and energy when I got her request. I simply wrote it off in my mind, and planned to sit down and write her a "regrettably not" letter.

You know when you're supposed to be somewhere, you're going to be there whether you know it or not. I didn't know it.

The first chain of events started with my receiving a CD of songs from The Flintstones TV show. I had been in a surf band in my early youth. A song I had written was recorded by James Darren and used for the TV shows. It was on this CD. Included was a small check from the record company. On the cover of the CD were Fred and Wilma, Barney and Pebbles. Cavemen and women. Okay. I thought that was a fun surprise, but I had no way of knowing how it was attached to Wilma's July 4th shindig. Though, Wilma should have been my first clue.

Without warning, an ex-girlfriend and I got together and decided to fly to San Francisco for the weekend. She wanted to show me where she used to live etc. etc.

We walked along the Castro district and found an old record shop. We walked in and I immediately went to work combing thru the stacks of old LPs looking for a rare Gene Vincent or Beatles release from Germany or England, when she came across an LP that had one of my recordings on it. It was called "Golden Nuggets Vol. 5" and contained my song and vocal of The Grass Roots' hit, 'Where Were You When I Needed You'. I bought it and took it home, and one evening I began to read the liner notes. They said every song on this LP was a national hit but one, and for some reason everyone who was involved in the project felt it should be included on the LP. It was a local hit in Boston by a group called Edison Lighthouse, I believe. It was a song about July 4th and the girl he loved was named Wilma and what a good time they used to have! Clues 2 and 3.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

C'mon, is it just me, or does it seem incredible to you? Or are you a callused spiritual seeker yourself and all these phenomenon seem to you like ho-hum!

Okay, sometimes a building has to fall on me to get it. Is that the message, you get?

I drive up to Oregon, Grant's Pass, and just a few blocks from Wilma's place is this huge statue of a Caveman!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 9:

Give Me A Brake

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I caught up with Vince accidentally at a small juice stand in Puttaparthi. He told me this story; he swears is true.

"I had bought myself a small economical Hyundai to get around in, you know. The car worked well, the only problem was that it was constantly being burglarized for its radio, he told me. It was costing me \$80 a pop to replace it, and it was getting to be too much. When it happened again, I cried out to Sai Baba, "What am I doing wrong?" That evening, I went out to my favorite little restaurant in Sydney. There was an old beggar sitting in the shadows wearing an orange shirt and torn pants. I walked out of his way to avoid any contact with the beggar, when he spoke to me. "Do you have a quarter, son", he asked? Vince decided to ignore him completely and continued walking. The beggar man asked again, "Have you a quarter?" Vince said for some reason he felt obliged to answer, and he replied, "Why, yes I have." Expecting the beggar to ask for it, he walked on. The beggar replied, " Well, then don't let me hear you complain anymore!" "I was too much in shock and couldn't believe what I had heard him respond", he told me. When I did recover a second or two later, I turned around to face the man, but he was nowhere to be seen.

"A few weeks later, I saw a picture of Shirdi Sai Baba, affectionately called the old man, and he appeared to be the man I saw that night", he said. "The old man returned in a dream I had, a while later", Vince said, drinking his mango lassi, smoking an Indian cigarette. He related to me what Sai Baba had told him. Baba said, "All children are mine! The thieves pray to me for help to get something to feed their family and what am I to do? I must answer their prayer even though they must pay for the consequences of their bad actions. I tell you this, unless one gives to charity with a full and open heart, all your money will go to either thieves, doctors, lawyers or to taxes! So, do what you will, you have been told".

Vince decide that day to start giving a little to every request for charity that he got, and though it seemed like there are so many, he lovingly gave what he could. Coincidentally, the thieves stopped breaking into his car after that and he enjoyed relative safety.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

On another evening, he was visited again in a dream by Shirdi Sai Baba. Baba said in the dream, "I am protecting you and not to worry, I will let you know when there is any danger with the car." "I had been worried about the brakes", Vince told me. "I know I needed new ones but I just couldn't afford them, you know? I was saving up as best I could, and hoping they'd hold up. One day they started squeaking so badly I had to bring the car into a mechanic. Let me tell you", Vince smiled, "the mechanic came into the waiting room where I was sitting and looked ghastly. His face was pale and he was truly troubled! "Look here, mate, what kind of joke are you trying to pull then"? I hadn't a clue as to what he was upset about and tried to tell him so. When he calmed down some and realized this wasn't a gag, he took me into the garage and under my car and showed me my brakes, or rather lack of them. He stood there astonished and said, "Look, your car hasn't any brakes at all, I mean none! He said "How did you get here", thinking if it wasn't a joke, it came by tow truck, but I tried to tell him I honestly didn't know anything about it. I said I'd been driving around for six months or so, even though I knew I needed a brake job! The mechanic seemed to start believing my story", Vince said. "When I told him I couldn't afford a complete brake job, he took up a collection and said, "You're not leaving here without new brakes", he said, "It's on the house, son"!"

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 10:

Doesn't Compute

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Four state-of-the-art laptop computers were delivered to my front door apartment in Venice, one afternoon in 1995. There were two odd things about this occurrence. One was I didn't order any computers and the other was I didn't order any computers! My name was on the invoice and so was the service number, so I gave the company a call!

'Hi' I said, "I just got 4 computers delivered to my door and.....". I was interrupted by the voice on the other end of the phone. " Yes, Mr. Sloan, and we're so sorry that it's taken so long. The two computers you ordered were stolen en route to your apartment, so we had to replace them with two others", he said. "Oh, that's alright", I said. "How much did they cost?" I asked. "Well" he said, "Along with the 5-year warranty, they're about \$2,400 a piece!" "Okay" I said. "And who placed the order for these, and how were they paid for?" I asked. He gave me the name of a person I had never heard of and said they were fully paid for. I felt it my duty to ask at least a dozen times if they had the right Mr. Sloan, and the right address. But each time I tried to tell them there was some mistake, the guy on the phone would say there had been no mistake; "We're just sorry your two computers took so long to arrive". I hung up the phone like a thief.

I kept them in their boxes for weeks, expecting the call from the company asking for them back, but when a month went by, I opened a box up and took a look at a neat 286 Windows running Windows 3.1 with a B & W screen and floppy drive! I hadn't had any computer experience before, but it seemed to come naturally. User-friendly, really!

Now this writer friend of mine, unbeknownst to me, had been writing stories and scripts for years on a really antique computer. It had crashed and burned long ago. The information locked frozen. There was only way to get the info out; he said he needed the same model computer as his, but a higher upgrade, which mine was! So voilà, he got the first computer as a gift!

Meanwhile in India, a woman friend of mine by the name of Diane was talking with Sai Baba. "When am I going to get a computer so I can do an overseas letter to people, Baba?" she asked. "Soon," Baba said. "One of those old Indian computers?" she asked". "Oh no" Baba said, "State-of-the-art American!"

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

It was time for me to go over to India again and spend time with my teacher and I took with me one of the computers to write down my experiences with.

Upon arriving at the Ashram in Brindavan, Baba was already giving Darshan. I stood outside the grounds and saw Him sitting in a chair on a stage. At that moment I heard this name pop into my mind in a huge echo. It said "Diane".

I thought, "Diane. Who's that? The name of a woman I'm going to meet, or what?"

After Darshan, the first person I run into is my friend Diane from Los Angeles.

She sees the computer I'm carrying and says, "Is that for me?" I stopped dead in my tracks, and thought inside my head, "Is this computer for Diane?" "Why yes" I said, "How did you know?" So there went the second computer.

If you're thinking this is too fantastic to believe, and it never happened, that I'm making this whole story up... just let me tell you now, it's true, okay! Get over it!

I didn't like computers really. I mean they were out in 1990, and even earlier, but I didn't feel attracted to them, actually I wanted nothing to do with them, don't ask me why. I don't know!

The third computer went to a storyteller in Los Angeles named Michael. He didn't know I had a computer, he just told me he needed one to keep track of all the stories he was collecting about Afro-American folk tales. He entertains children all over the world now with his stories and has been written up in many newspapers.

I kept the 4th for a while until it broke on me.

I'm writing this story on a 586 Pentium with Windows 98, awaiting the new Windows 2000, unless I get a Mac! God Bless!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 11:

Without A Leg To Stand On

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

A young Indian doctor interning in Africa returned home to his native land.

While on vacation he heard talk of a Divine Being giving Darshan. Being Hindu by birth but a scientist by nature, he skeptically went to visit this Holy Man. He was given extraordinary closeness, and the Holy Man's fame had not yet spread around the world, as it would in a few short years. This is the story as related to me by Dr. Gottia.

"I left India to return to my internship in an African hospital", he told this group of people who had come from all over Southern California to hear him talk.

"I had spent a week or so with a Holy Man in India, but was unimpressed with his small body and extra large crown of hair. When I left his small Ashram, I didn't give him another thought.

One morning, I received an emergency call for a doctor in a small village, many, many miles from the hospital. It was my turn to take the call, and I did.

While out on the road a great force, in the form of gusts of wind, rolled my vehicle over. The vehicle was turned upside down with my legs pinned inside and I was unable to move.

As the sun set, I prepared myself for a long night ahead, with the hope in the morning I would be missed and eventually rescued.

When I was a small boy of eight or so I used a broom as my crutch and I would pretend I had lost a leg and hobble on the broom. I never thought this was odd behavior, even after I had grown into adulthood. For this lingering fear of losing my leg was somehow inside me. The only reason I am mentioning this is because of the strange and wonderful intersection that occurred after meeting Dr. Gottia!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Morning came and went on the African plains. The afternoon I spent pinned upside down with all the feelings in my legs gone. As a doctor, I had the objective view that unless I was rescued soon, my legs would soon be useless. When two black bushmen approached the car, early that evening, I felt my ordeal was over, but I wouldn't know for sure if the blood stoppage in my legs would cause me to forever be without them. They pulled me out of the car, and in English told me not to worry, my legs would be alright. They put me on the side of the road and said an ambulance would be by and take me back to the hospital. Which happened in a short while. I was told I was lucky, that a few hours more and my legs would have had to have been amputated. So, when I had sufficiently recovered from my injuries, I took a leave, and flew back to be with my family in India.

My friend, Stephen, was in a terrible funk that afternoon. He had received some bad financial news and I felt it imperative to take him out to a great restaurant that would lift his spirits. But our way was blocked! Every street leading to the restaurant was unusually crowded. My patience was wearing thin on the congested Los Angeles streets. So I decided, instead of going north where the place was, I would do as the yogis do and go where the resistance is least.

Even if it's in the opposite direction! So that's what I did. Matter of fact, as I was on the freeway going west, the idea of going to that particular place had all but left my mind. But it hadn't. I veered off the freeway and headed back north again on city streets. Finally I pulled across the street from the restaurant!

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

The Doctor decided to pay one more visit to the Holy Man; being very grateful to God for his good luck, he thought this would be a good gesture.

"So you've come back, and no worse for wear?" said Sai Baba, without being told anything of his ordeal. "Lucky for you two black tribesman showed up, who just happened by that deserted road where your car had overturned! What do you make of that, doctor?," He said and smiled. "How do you think it's possible for me to have known this?" Baba said, describing the physical attributes of the Africans as well as their outer garments. "You think this puny little form of mine is all there is to ME," he chided him, showing that he knew his secret thoughts! "I'm not limited to this one body, I am all bodies, and in all things". "Can you scientifically comprehend that, doctor?" he said.

"It has now been 30 years, and I have been able to comprehend a very small piece of Sai Baba!" he said.

When the Doctor had finished telling this story, pictures were taken with each person, and I had one taken as well. A few days later I received my print and stuck it in the glove compartment of my car. Thinking it was out of the way, to avoid the clutter of photos that were scattered about in my drawers.

I sighed with relief at finding a meter on the street, and started to open my car door. I opened the door and began to swing my leg out when I stopped to look over at Stephen to see if he was okay. In a split second, a speeding truck came and took the door off. The force of the impact forced open the glove compartment, and a picture flew out onto my lap. In momentary shock, not knowing what had actually happened, I could only remember hearing a terribly loud noise! I noticed the door wasn't there and I could hear metal banging as it was being dragged away by the truck, before it came to a stop.

An indescribable feeling and thought raced thru my body and mind. My leg should have been taken off! Stephen asked me if I was alright. I said I was! I looked down at this picture on my lap of me and Dr. Gottia!

Story 12:

An Interview

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

It was on my second visit to see Sai Baba that I was granted a private conversation with Him. These are called interviews. Almost everyday Baba would choose a group of people to talk to in a small room. Baba chose all kinds of people from all walks of life and all different countries. You couldn't make an appointment to speak with Him. Presidents and movie stars. He did the choosing! Everyone wanted this interview, but I was very frightened by the thought of it.

Baba usually asked people, "What do you want?" and I really didn't know. I knew I didn't want to be forced into a situation where I would talk like a parrot out of fear and say "I want Enlightenment! Enlightenment over good health or wealth." I didn't know what I wanted. That night he came to me in a dream and said "I know you're frightened, don't be. I will show you right now everything that will take place in the interview. And I won't ask you any questions!" He told me two people were flying in from Los Angeles, Dave and Barbra Lambert. After they had been there for a few days, he would ask our group in for a talk!

True to the dream – that's what took place. I held the door open to His little room and let everyone in the group go in first. It numbered around forty or so. I sat in the back of the small room, hiding myself. He sat on a chair and sang a song to us, 'Love is my Form, Truth is my name, Bliss is my food'. He called me to come sit in front of Him. Then He asked me if I would please massage His feet for Him. I began to gently massage His feet while He told stories and asked questions of certain people. I watched as He waved His hand and a gold pen appeared. He showed it to me and asked if I liked it. I said it looked like good workmanship. He agreed. He gave it to an Indian student that sat at His left, and smacked him on the face. He 'created' a packet of blue pills that he threw to one of the ladies in our group. He told me she didn't know it, but she was going to have terrible stomach pains later in the day, and we should give her these pills along with fresh mango. "After 3 days she will be alright", He told me. About ten minutes after the interview, Jenny collapsed.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

He invited a small group of 6 people, not including myself, to go into another adjoining room. While the larger group waited, Baba pulled open a curtain and we sat down in a smaller room. He sat on an old chair, and this was where He usually asked people what they wanted. The group, 3 women and 3 men, sat quietly. I suddenly remembered this part in my dream that I had had with Baba. He was staring at me like an impatient schoolteacher waiting for me to say something!

I asked Baba, "May I ask you a question?" He said, "Yes, what is it?" It looked like relief flashed across the expression on His face. Like he was saying to me, "It's about time, Phil!"

"What do You see when You see me?", I asked.

Baba looked at all the people sitting there in a state of semi-frozensness and said, "I see only Light and Love". His reply seemed to warm everyone up and I went into another state of mind, and didn't hear anything else till we rejoined the larger group.

Baba gave me 18 packets of Vibuthi, and everyone else received handfuls of it. Everyone walked out the door but me. I stood there alone with Baba. I was just looking into His eyes and He into mine. When suddenly he said, "Yes, what is it?"

I didn't want any material thing from Baba at that moment, I realized. I just wanted to know He was for real! "Yes," He said to me. I smiled and showed him this small silver ring of Shirdi Sai Baba that had recently broken. Not knowing how to ask him directly if He would fix it for me, I said instead, "Baba, look at this ring, what shall I do with it?" He looked at it and delivered a punch line I never expected. "If I were you I'd keep it", He said. I nearly exploded in laughter, but contained myself as He walked me out the door, and I felt the warm sunlight disappear into a greater sunlight within me.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

Story 13:

Earth Day

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I was told in a dream that Baba spoke and appeared in, that after I had gotten offstage, I would meet a long, silver-haired lady. Baba said I was to give her one packet of Vibuthi (ash that He produces by the wave of His hand). He was aware she had developed colon cancer and this 'medicine' would heal her of it.

I had been invited to perform on Earth Day in Santa Barbara, 1990. I turned it down at the time because I was going thru a bad break up in a romantic relationship. She was involved in this event. So much so, that she would be taking me to the event. I wanted to keep my distance. But I called her and accepted the date. I rehearsed my band for a week or so and we looked forward to playing.

The show went off without a hitch, and the band and I enjoyed ourselves, as well as the crowd of 2,000 people strewn across a large grassy lawn. I wanted to announce over the mike that if there was a lady who fit the description, would she meet me backstage? But I didn't. Instead, I seemed to have forgotten about it completely! I went out into the audience and spread a blanket and waited for the next performance, which was to be Jackson Browne.

On my little finger I wore a small silver ring with the image of Shirdi Sai Baba given to me by Vince. It was very small and His features hardly distinguishable! When this woman sitting behind me asked, "Is that a picture of Shirdi Sai Baba?" I turned around to see a woman with long, flowing, silver hair and the dream I had a few nights before poured back into my mind. "Yes", I said, "It is. How did you know?"

She told me that ten years ago she had gone to India to see Sai Baba. She had stayed a few weeks and found Him to be wonderful! But when she had related some miraculous stories that she had heard and experienced there, her friends let it be known that they felt she was anti-christian and mentally deranged. They told her Sai Baba is the antichrist! And after a number of years, she came to believe them! She didn't want to mention his name anymore, and she moved back to her own blanket.

TRUE STORIES OF INDIA (SEARCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF LIFE)

I could see she was very frightened. That even saying she knew Sai Baba was tantamount to devil worship in her mind. So I didn't know how to bring up the idea that Baba had told me she was diagnosed with cancer, and how to get her to take this packet of Vibuthi I had been given personally by Baba.

I asked her how her health was. She said "Fine." I said "Really?" She said "Yes."

So I just came out with it. I said, "Look, I don't know how to tell you this. So, I'm just going to have to tell you this." I told her the dream I had had with Baba.

She looked very pale suddenly! And she confessed to me in a whisper that the other day her doctor had told her the news of her cancer. Nobody else knew yet. I could see the wheels turning in her eyes. "What do you think I should do?" she asked me.

"Okay", I said, "Look, I don't know if this Vibuthi is going to work. I'm just the messenger today, okay? But if you take it like Baba has suggested....", but she refused to. Loggerheads.....

I turned back around to hear Jackson singing 'Doctor My Eyes have seen the years....'

I couldn't get her out of my mind, and by the end of Jackson's set, I felt suddenly very physically attracted to her. She, on the other hand, moved onto my blanket.

I promised to come see her the next week and spend the weekend, if she would take the Vibuthi from me, and put it into a glass of water, and drink it down. She said she would!

I called her the next week to find out how she was, and she told me the doctors had told her after another examination that they had made a mistake. She didn't have any cancer, and that they were very sorry for mis-diagnosis and the pain it might have caused. I said to her, "Do you believe that?" She said she didn't know what to believe! And did I think that the Vibuthi had worked and they couldn't or wouldn't accept that? I said, "Yes! I believe that, unfortunately."

We couldn't seem to work out a weekend when I would drive up and weeks turned into months and we lost contact with each other. But that's what happened at the Earth Day show, 1990!