

## PIE IN THE SKY

Travis calmly surveyed the Northwest section of the Marketing Department. No sign of Tate.

"Son of a bitch..."

Incredibly, TortCorp's flagship client had not yet severed ties, but Travis knew it was an inevitability. The cockroaches within his heart hissed vilely as his head swam with thoughts of Tate. How he could be away from his desk mere minutes before their "Come to Jesus" meeting intended to reset their rocky engagement? The idiot! And where in the blazes was he anyway?

Walking with the longest and most rapid strides possible, Travis traversed the perfectly polished marble hallways leading to the kitchen. Travis muttered to himself, but hoped God was listening.

"If he's in there, I'm going to cut his throat. I don't care who sees. Hell, I don't even care if Big Jack himself is in there alongside every single goddamn member of the board."

There lay Tate. Ass in a chair. Arm on a table. Cheek on his arm. Curled up like a baby. Angelic, even. Almost as if by a miracle, Travis' blood pressure plummeted to a level only moderately above the so-called healthy range.

"The meeting's in two min-"

"Pi...zza"

The word came out more softly than the sound of a butterfly's wings flapping in the silent June dawn.

"What?"

"Eight pies...they were just left here...I..."

"Eight?! Heaven help us."

Everyone in the office knew of Tate's disease. If he saw food, he ate it. No exceptions. Goldfish syndrome, they liked to joke, not knowing the pop science informing their shared belief was just that. Although their common goal was to accumulate staggering wealth at the cost of the slow destruction of the world, they did have compassion for Tate, and as such they went to great lengths to diminish the potential impact of his tragic personal flaw; they loved the boy.

"I don't know who did it...Travis...I swear...I was just..."

"No! Tate!"

"The agenda...I only made four copies..."

"Tate, hang in there buddy! Tate!"

Travis ran his fingers through Tate's hair, which shone with the color and radiance of the sand on a flawless Caribbean beach - the sort of beach that everyone's wives would agonize over if heavily edited images of it were obnoxiously plastered onto a two-page ad for some worthless firm's consulting services, in a rag like Capital Returns Monthly. Travis really needed to cancel his subscription before another intradinner argument erupted.

"Tate, I'll find the bastard. Fuckin'...some fuckin' intern I bet! I told Patrick the Millenials were no-good. They're no good, they're no good, they're no good..."

Travis was too stunned by Tate's agony to realize his own cheeks were covered in tears. He cradled Tate's head in his arms and squeezed it tightly into his chest while what was evidently Tate's soul left his body. Travis stepped back and watched it unlock and then open the window. It entered the threshold where the glass had just been, paused, and then continued onward through the greasy, particulate-matter laden air around the nine-hundredth floor of their horrible office, until it was just barely visible, and then, ultimately, not. For the first time in his life, Travis took notice of how tiny and fragile Tate's body seemed inside his powerful, masculine three-piece suit. He removed his shoes, and approached the window.