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Hellraisers

The Life and Inebriated Times of Burton, Harris, O'Toole & Reed

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Extract

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Introduction

They are the four most extraordinary and controversial film stars Britain ever produced, men who at their peak had the whole world at their feet and lived through some of the wildest exploits Hollywood has ever seen. But all that fame had a price. Richard Burton's liver was shot by the time he reached 50; just one more drink would've killed him. Insurance companies wouldn't touch Richard Harris with a barge poll and his film career stalled for over a decade. Peter O'Toole's drinking almost put him in the grave before his 43rd birthday and his generally eccentric behaviour led to public humiliation and one of the biggest disasters the London stage has ever known. Oliver Reed ended up dying prematurely after an arm wrestling contest with a bunch of 18-year-old sailors on the eve of scoring his biggest ever movie triumph with *Gladiator*.

What follows is the story of four of the greatest boozers that ever walked – or staggered – into a pub. It's a story of drunken binges of near biblical proportions, parties and orgies, broken marriages, drugs, riots and wanton sexual conquests. Indeed if you or I had perpetrated some of the most outrageous acts it would've resulted in a jail sentence; yet these piss artists were seemingly immune from the law. They got away with the kind of behaviour that today's sterile bunch of film stars can scarcely dream of, because of who they were and because the public loved them. They were truly the last of a dying breed, the last of the movie hellraisers.

This book traces the intertwining lives and careers of Richard Burton, Richard Harris, Peter O'Toole and Oliver Reed, plus an assortment of other movie boozers who crawled across their path, people like Lee Marvin, Trevor Howard and Robert Mitchum. It's a celebratory catalogue of their

miscreant deeds, a greatest hits package, as it were, of their most breath-takingly outrageous behaviour, told with humour, affection, lashings of political incorrectness and not an ounce of moralising. Enjoy it; they bloody well did.

An Aperitif

Throughout the history of movies there have always been hellraisers; actors and booze go together like Rogers and Hammerstein or eggs and bacon. Film producer Euan Lloyd, who worked over the years with Frank Sinatra, Robert Mitchum and Dean Martin, says that drinking simply went with the job. 'Whether it was lack of confidence or just habit, it was hard to tell, but a destroyer could comfortably swim in the ocean of liquid consumed by actors.'

Lloyd's association with Burton and Harris was the boy's own adventure, perhaps the archetypal hellraiser movie, *The Wild Geese*, which also starred veteran boozer Stewart Granger and Roger Moore, himself not averse to a bit of elbow-bending, but able to hold it more than most. By 1978, after decades on the piss, Burton and Harris were mere shadows of their former selves. One day during a break in filming they sat together under the African sun reminiscing and trying to make sense of their lives. 'We were like two old men,' Harris said. 'Once the greatest hellraisers in the world, we were now too tired to stand up and pee. After two hours of philosophical discussion, we came to the conclusion that the tragedy of our lives was the amount of it we don't remember, because we were too drunk to remember.'

So why did they do it, Burton, Harris, O'Toole and Reed, why did they drink themselves to death, or – in the case of O'Toole – come within a hairsbreadth of it? Burton said it was 'to burn up the flatness, the stale, empty, dull deadness that one feels when one goes offstage.' More likely it was to get over the realization that he was appearing in a piece of shit. Nor was he averse to getting pissed on the job. Maybe it went hand in hand with his reputation as a legendary womanizer: not long after starting his infamous affair with Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Cleopatra*, Richard

Burton answered the phone at her home. It was Taylor's husband, Eddie Fisher, demanding to know what he was doing there. 'What do you think I'm doing?' Burton replied. 'I'm fucking your wife.' Probably emptying his drinks cabinet, as well.

Burton's intake was prodigious. At the height of his boozing in the mid-70s he was knocking back three to four bottles of hard liquor a day. On *The Klansman* he was drunk for the entire production. 'I barely recall making that film,' he confessed. Burton loved the sheer sociability of booze, drinking in pubs, talking with mates and sharing stories; he was a man who enjoyed life better with a glass in his hand. After sex it was the thing he loved most in life. Coupled with his nicotine addiction – it's rumoured he smoked 50 a day – Burton embraced that seemingly inbred Celtic desire to walk dangerously close to the precipice perhaps more than anyone.

Harris too loved the communal nature of boozing. He loved nothing better than going into a pub on his own and by the end of the evening being surrounded by a new gang of boisterous pals. 'Men, not women,' he'd state. 'Boozing is a man's world.' For years Harris habitually drank two bottles of vodka a day. 'That would take me up to seven in the evening, then I'd break open a bottle of brandy and a bottle of port and mix the two.' Asked by a reporter once to describe how much booze he'd consumed over his lifetime Harris was only exaggerating mildly when he replied. 'I could sail the QE2 to the Falklands on all the liquor I drank.'

There was also an element of being the naughty schoolboy about Harris's drinking, of showing off. 'I adored getting drunk and I adored reading in the papers what I had done the night before.' He knew full well what he was doing by getting pissed all the time and ending up in police cells or brawling in public, but didn't think it that awful. Neither did he hate himself for it in the morning or feel guilty. No, Harris just believed that the world and too many people in it were boring old farts and his mission was to live life to the fullest and spread a little joy around. 'So I did, and damn the consequences.'

O'Toole was another who loved the social life of a drinker, propping up bars in Dublin or London, nattering with saloon-bar poets and philosophers,

putting the world to rights. 'But I don't really know what I get out of it,' he once said. 'What does anyone get out of being drunk? It's an anaesthetic. It diminishes the pain.' O'Toole would drink to excess for no good reason, as he became intoxicated quite quickly due to the delicate state of his insides; he suffered from ill health most of his life, particularly from intestinal pain.

Naturally eccentric, the drink merely compounded the affliction, and fame when it came threw a spotlight on it so all the world could gawp and gasp at his escapades. This was a man who travelled the world yet never wore a watch or carried a wallet. Nor upon leaving home did he ever take his keys with him. 'I just hope some bastard's in.' More than once, on the occasions when someone was not, O'Toole had to explain to the police why he should be breaking into his own property.

There was an undercurrent of violence to his drinking, too. At his hell-raising peak the gossip columns were filled with accounts of booze-fuelled antics: a brawl with paparazzi on the Via Veneto in Rome, a fistfight with a French count in a restaurant, his fleeing Italy on the eve of being arrested, even the beating up of a policeman. O'Toole's social life often was in danger of eclipsing his talent. 'I was silly and young and drunken and making a complete clown of myself. But I did quite enjoy the days when one went for a beer at one's local in Paris and woke up in Corsica.'

For Reed, like Burton and Harris, it wasn't so much drinking he loved but the fact that it took place in pubs. He loved the companionship, the camaraderie with other men, the chance to challenge people to drink contests or bouts of arm wrestling. All his life he preferred the friendships he made in pubs to those on a film set. 'You meet a better class of person in pubs.'

He also loved the loss of inhibitions in a person when they drank and so found great sport in getting anyone in his vicinity totally smashed. 'People make so much more sense when they're drunk and you can get along famously with people you couldn't bear at other times.' Journalists who visited him were invariably plied with unhealthy amounts of drink and staggered home after the encounter with the battle scars of a war correspondent.

Reed was proud of the fact that he could drink any man under the table. His favourite tipple was 'gunk', his own invention, an ice bucket with every drink in the bar poured into it. The *Daily Mirror* reported a doctor's findings

that the safe limit for any man's consumption of alcohol was four pints a day, and then printed a story that Reed had managed to knock back 126 pints of beer in 24 hours and photographed him performing a victory horizontal hand-stand across the bar.

Reed's antics were perhaps unmatched by any other hellraiser – and they are legion. He once arrived at Galway airport lying drunk on a baggage conveyor. On an international flight he incurred the wrath of the pilot by dropping his trousers and asking the air hostesses to judge a prettiest boy contest. All this led one journalist to say that calling Oliver Reed unpredictable was like calling Ivan the Terrible 'colourful'.

All these men played up to their boozy, brawling, madcap image; some resented the press label of hellraiser, others wallowed in it, turning it almost into a badge of honour and a second career. 'What that group of actors had was a fine madness, a lyrical madness,' said Harris. 'We lived our life with that madness and it was transmitted into our work. We had smiles on our faces and a sense that the world was mad. We weren't afraid to be different. So we were always dangerous. Dangerous to meet in the street, in a restaurant, and dangerous to see on stage or in a film.'

Director Peter Medak recognizes that this element of danger was a significant part of the hellraiser's make-up. 'It was the same with Burton and O'Toole, and Harris and Reed, there was this terrible sense of danger around them, you didn't know if they were going to kiss you, hug you or punch you right in the face. They were just wonderful.'

Legends are Born

Like father, like son. Richard Walter Jenkins, the father of Richard Burton, was a fearsome boozer, a 12 pints a day man, incapable of passing a pub without stepping inside for a quick one. 'My father considered that anyone who went to chapel and didn't drink alcohol was not to be tolerated,' said his son. A coal miner and inveterate gambler, Jenkins thought nothing of buggering off for days on end, his family unsure if he was alive or dead; once, for three whole weeks only to turn up as if nothing had happened. Yet his charm beguiled all those who met him. Burton claimed his father looked very much like him, 'That is, he was pockmarked, devious and smiled when he was in trouble.' Others thought the future film star got his handsome looks from his mother, a real Welsh matriarch who was responsible for keeping the household going, with scant help from her husband who was often penniless a few hours after getting his wage packet.

Stories are many about Burton's father. How he never arrived at a rugby match because the route to the stadium was cruelly lined with pubs. How he was burnt in a pit explosion and covered in bandages, looking like Boris Karloff as the mummy, but still insisted on going out boozing where his mates charitably poured beer down his throat. At closing time he stumbled home but bumped into a work colleague who had a score to settle. Trussed up as he was Jenkins stood no chance and had his teeth knocked out and was bundled over a wall. The family didn't find him until the morning.

Burton's grandfather, Tom, was just as much of a character. He too had been crippled in the mines, and celebrating a big win on a horse called Black Sambo one night got dreadfully pissed. In his wheelchair he raced downhill all the way home yelling, 'Come on Black Sambo,' but lost control and crashed into a wall. The old fool was killed instantly.

Richard Jenkins (later Burton) was probably spoon-fed such tales about his bonkers relatives from the day he was born on November 10th 1925. His chances of escaping them, however, or the environment in which God had chosen to dump him, the bleak coal-mining village of Pontrhydyfen, South Wales, were thin at best. To have achieved the fame and fortune that he did was nothing short of a miracle, especially coming from a household of 13 siblings. Having escaped his Welsh heritage Burton's patriotism for his country never dimmed, although its glow was barely visible from the tax haven of Geneva.

With a father who was absent most of the time, or wandered through life in a beer-induced haze, Burton was made to feel even more isolated when his mother died not long after his second birthday. For the rest of his life he'd regret not having even one recollection of her. Burton went to live in Port Talbot with his elder sister Cecilia. With household finances there on an altogether better keel, life suddenly became easier, although the threat of poverty was never far away.

In reaction perhaps to the crummy hand fate had dealt him Burton, from an early age, got into trouble, dirtying or tearing his best clothes, kicking the soles off his school shoes and worse, starting a smoking habit aged just eight. He'd scrape the money together to buy a packet of five Woodbines and illicitly smoke them while watching his favourite Western serial at the local cinema, popularly known as the 'shithouse'. Fighting was another occupation and Burton punched his way to the top of several local gangs. His dad declared proudly, 'You've got a face like a boot. Everybody wants to put his foot in it.'

But Burton's real passion was sport, principally rugby. 'I would rather have played for Wales at Cardiff Arms Park than Hamlet at the Old Vic,' he once said, meaning every word. Wherever he was in the world or whatever he was doing Burton always managed to get hold of important rugby results. During one matinee stage performance he installed a portable radio in the wings and kept straying across to it all afternoon to keep tabs on a crucial Welsh international, whether stage directions merited it or not. Often he'd travel to Cardiff from London to attend the big matches. After one such outing he and his brother Ifor were involved in a brutal and bruising encounter with English supporters. Burton would later trace the beginning of his lifelong painful and ultimately crushing spinal problems to the beating he received that day.

On the field the young Burton was a fearless player, never pulling out of heavy tackles, despite the opponents sometimes being miners and therefore big bastards. He was also loyal. When a teammate was picked on by an opponent Burton laid the bully out cold when the ref wasn't looking.

By 15 Burton was an independent, tough and troublesome man-boy who'd already developed a taste for beer, and who brazenly answered back to his teachers when he thought he was in the right. He bragged too of having girlfriends from the age of 12. One early date didn't go exactly to plan. From adolescence Burton suffered terribly from boils on his neck and face. He even had nicknames for them. One Olympic contender was smack bang on his arse and when this poor girl inadvertently grabbed hold of it Burton let out such a scream that she ran off terrified.

Being academically gifted Burton was saved from a life of drudgery down the mines but when his family hit a rocky financial patch he was forced to quit school and take a job as a shop assistant, his way out of the valleys through education seemingly strangled at birth. It was then that acting presented itself as a new means of escape when Burton joined a local club and began performing in shows, so impressing the youth leader who managed to persuade the council to readmit the boy to school after almost two years' absence. It was an unprecedented move.

On his first day back Burton lobbed his gym shoe across the classroom smashing a window. The tearaway hadn't gone away. He got into numerous fights, would return to school reeking of beer after lunch and at half time in rugby matches gathered the team around while he coolly smoked a fag. There's a story of him pissing out of a carriage window as the train roared by a station platform filled with people, and also of belting a teacher who had hit a friend for something he hadn't done. So his fearlessness was still there, too.

This was wartime and Port Talbot with its large steelworks was a target for the German Luftwaffe. But the air raids didn't trouble Burton who'd stay in bed while the rest of the family rushed to nearby shelters. On the evening of his first trip to London there was a heavy bombing raid. While other hotel guests scattered for safety underground Burton casually walked up onto the roof to watch the whole glorious spectacle. As during the rest of his life, he was unafraid of the obvious dangers around him.

* * *

Unlike Burton, Richard Harris was born into relative luxury, on October 1st 1930. His father, Ivan, was the owner of a local mill and bakery and his house in Limerick, Southern Ireland, was a large affair with maids and gardeners and big cars in the drive. Then suddenly, almost overnight, it was all gone when the bakery closed down. 'One day was luxury, the next morning my mother was on her knees scrubbing floors,' Harris recalled. 'I was too young to understand anything, but I knew we'd lost a lot.' In order to survive Ireland's worsening economic situation the family moved into more modest accommodation.

The Harris brood was a large one, as families were back then, and Harris all but got lost amidst the scrum of seven brothers and sisters. 'What's his name again?' his father frequently asked over the top of his newspaper. 'Dick,' said mother. 'Oh yeah, Dick, I remember.' Harris learned early on to be a rabble-rouser, an attention seeker, it was all he could do to make his presence felt in the household, but he was usually ignored until such boisterousness inevitably led to friction. Sometimes he'd flee home, sleeping rough outdoors. No one ever came looking for him, knowing full well that he'd eventually return meekly to his bed. But all this fostered in him a feeling of neglect and isolation. 'I never got to know my parents and they never got to know me.'

Instead Harris channelled his pent-up energy into sports, becoming a natural athlete, and also into a good deal of larking about. He was banned from virtually all his local cinemas for causing a nuisance. As keen film fans but always short of money, his mates would pool their resources to buy a single ticket and then Harris would go in and as the lights dimmed let his friends in through the fire exit or a window in the toilets.

School and Harris didn't mix either and he was often expelled, once for setting fire to the toilets, another time for attacking a nun. She took exception to Harris's boisterousness and thwacked him with a ruler, as nuns in Irish schools tended to do. Harris wrestled the ruler back from her and hit out violently. In his own words Harris was 'wild and uncontrollable'.

Had Harris been able to avoid school he would have, the underlying reason being his inability to read fluently. 'I just couldn't hack it.' It wasn't until he was well into his 30s that Harris learnt he was dyslexic. At secondary school he survived by focusing on rugby, and like Burton

became obsessed with the sport, dreaming of one day playing for his country. Aged 12 Harris was already a big bugger and a real bruiser on the pitch, able to dish out punishment as well as receive it. One such occasion was when he was a player for a local junior team and took on the legendary professional front row forward Ducky Hayes. 'If the stand was full of surgeons they couldn't have done anything for my nose I got such a wallop,' Harris ruefully stated afterwards. Carried off, his face smeared in blood, Harris was treated in the casualty department of the nearby hospital, and with his face heavily bandaged and only the slits of his eyes visible, sportingly returned to the field of play to be greeted with shouts of derision such as: ''Tis the return of the Phantom; no, 'tis the Mummy.'

Harris ended up breaking his nose a further eight times in subsequent collisions with various walls, doors and fists. The last time he broke it was when he plunged headfirst through the windscreen of a car. It was reconstructed using bone from his hip as there was no bone left in his nose. 'Each time a girl kisses my nose,' he joked, 'she doesn't know how close she is.'

Away from the sports field and in the classroom Harris tended to doze off or fart to get attention, the lesson going completely over his head. The teachers simply gave up on him. Even caning or the occasional whack didn't work. At one exam he made houses out of the test papers and when he'd exhausted that outlet simply put his head on the desk and fell asleep. This don't-give-a-fuck attitude was like a magnet for the other kids who gravitated towards him as their natural leader. It was a role Harris happily cultivated. Nor did he much mind his dunce status. One story had a student complaining that Harris was sound asleep during a lesson, to which the teacher replied, 'For God's sake don't wake him.'

Such attitude surely would've seen Harris booted out had it not been for the rugby coach who kept the lad on because he was the best second row forward amongst the pupils and the school prided itself on its junior rugby team. Harris's parents, both very much the outdoor type, forgave their son's academic lapses on account of his prowess on the rugby pitch. Just as well. Harris left academic life with nothing much to show for it. Even when his teacher secretly passed him the answers for the

intermediate exam, in a bid to help him on his way, Harris, with days to prepare, still flunked it.

To the north west of Limerick, in County Galway, is the picturesque Connemara, birthplace of another legend who could booze for Ireland. Peter O'Toole arrived just two years after Harris on August 2nd 1932 and like him, and akin to Burton's rabid Welsh patriotism, being Irish was the most important thing in his life. O'Toole said it accounted for his passion, his unruly behaviour, his disregard for authority, his natural capacity for acting, and of course his love of drinking. It was to an isolated cottage in Connemara that O'Toole would always retreat whenever illness or personal tragedy befell him. It was his sanctuary. 'I go to Ireland for a refit, just like a car.' He liked to brag to journalists the preposterous notion that he was descended from the ancient kings of Ireland. Throughout his life O'Toole would also never venture out of his front door without wearing something green, usually socks. It was his own private homage to the fact that in the late 19th century the British authorities made it a capital offence for any Irishman to wear his national colour.

Perhaps O'Toole's attachment to Ireland is so strong because he was forced to leave it at an early age. When his father, Patrick Joseph O'Toole, couldn't find suitable work any more he moved the whole family to England and a small terraced house with an outside loo in a working class area of Leeds. O'Toole was a year old. The area was well known for its large population of Irish expatriates. 'A Mick community,' O'Toole described it. His father never again set foot on Irish soil.

The Leeds neighbourhood where O'Toole grew up was rough. Three of his playmates went on to be hanged for murder: one strangled a girl in a lover's quarrel; one killed a man during a robbery; another cut up a warden in South Africa with a pair of shears. It was, he recalled, a heavy bunch.

Although it was his mother, Connie, who instilled into O'Toole a strong sense of literature, by reciting poems and stories to him, by far the biggest influence on his life was his father. Patrick was an off-course bookie, illegal before the war. He was feckless, a drunk and occasionally violent. 'I'm not from the working class,' O'Toole liked to say. 'I'm from the criminal class.' One day Patrick stood his son up on the mantelpiece and said,

'Jump, boy. I'll catch you. Trust me.' When O'Toole jumped his father withdrew his arms leaving his son splattered on the hard stone floor. The lesson, said his father, was 'never trust any bastard'. One Christmas Eve Patrick came home rather the worse for wear. The excited young O'Toole asked him if Father Christmas was coming. Patrick went outside, burst a paper bag, came back and told his son that Father Christmas had just shot himself.

When his occupation turned legal Patrick became a familiar face around the racecourses of Yorkshire. The young O'Toole idolized his father and never forgot the times when he was allowed to accompany him to the racetrack. Sometimes Patrick would miscalculate the odds, or would lose so heavily on one of his bets that he would not have enough cash to pay off his winning customers, so, immediately after the race was over, Patrick would grab little Peter's hand and say, 'C'mon, son, let's be off!' and the two of them would slip through the shrubbery and disappear quickly from the track, not to return for a few weeks.

To grow up with a father who lived so recklessly inevitably led to O'Toole approaching life in a similarly happy-go-lucky way. The whole family income rested on success or failure at the racetrack. 'When he'd come home after a good day, the whole room would light up. It was fairy-land. When he lost, it was black. In our house, it was either a wake or a wedding.'

Patrick also liked to drink and wasn't averse to picking a scrap with a policeman when drunk. Father and son often got plastered together, like the occasion in London when Patrick came down to celebrate the birth of a grandchild in 1959. The O'Tooles got customarily slaughtered and as everyone retired upstairs to bed Peter lay spread-eagled on the floor: 'Not asleep, but crucified.' Patrick tried lifting his flagging son to his feet, but to no avail. Instead he opened another bottle and joined him on the floor. That's where the pair were found the following afternoon.

O'Toole can thank his father not just for his love of booze, but for his sheer durability. 'He was physically quick – whatever else I got from the old sod I got that. A little while before he died he was hit by a car as he came out of the bookies and knocked into a saloon bar without being much damaged.' Alas, O'Toole also inherited a lifetime of ill health. As a child he suffered from TB, a stammer and poor eyesight that resulted in

several major operations. The constant illness played havoc with his education. Although he could read by the age of three, O'Toole did not attend school on a regular basis until he was 11 and then only stayed for two years. He disliked school intensely and was a rebellious and poor pupil. Being devout Roman Catholics the O'Tooles entrusted their son to the goodly care of nuns and Jesuit priests, but it was an experience that led O'Toole to later describe himself as 'a retired Christian'. In art one day he drew a vibrant picture of a horse. When asked by a nun whether there was something else that might be added to the picture, the young O'Toole agreed and drew a huge dangling dick with piss coming out of it. Wildly, and with both hands, the nun began to flail the boy. Other nuns rushed over to join in.

In a 60s interview with *Playboy* O'Toole heavily criticized his religious upbringing and the Catholic Church in general. For weeks after he got angry letters from priests and nuns. 'They were shocked. I wrote back saying I was shocked – what were they doing reading *Playboy*.'

Whereas O'Toole and Burton hailed from the working classes and knew poverty as children, Oliver Reed knew only privilege, with a nanny, a maid and a butler serving the household. Born on February 13th 1938 in Wimbledon, South London, Reed said his earliest memory was of seeing patterns sprawled across blue skies during dog fights in the Battle of Britain. Evacuated from London to the Berkshire countryside Reed happily played in fields, drank lemonade in the village pub and waved to pilots from the bottom of his garden as they taxied their planes along a nearby runway for take off. One day a blazing aircraft narrowly missed obliterating the house and ditched in the next field. Villagers ran to the crash site where children were already clambering over the smoking husk for souvenirs. Reed could see the pilot slumped over the controls of the downed Messerschmitt. It was the first time he'd seen a dead man and he began to cry.

Reed's introduction to the opposite sex was equally vivid and a result of that age-old game of doctors and nurses. Barely five Reed had just pulled the knickers down of an obligingly cooperative local lass when her mother walked into the room. That little girl grew up into the actress Samantha Eggar and fate made sure she and Ollie would make a movie

together, where they laughingly recalled the incident. 'I didn't attempt to consummate the memory,' said Reed.

Perhaps in the hope of ending such liaisons, at age seven Reed was bundled off to boarding school by his divorced parents and left to feel even more abandoned and betrayed. Nor did he take much to education. Often his impatience resulted in a smack across the head from a ruler, or he'd be lifted from his desk by his ear and deposited in the corridor. His antics, Reed realized, drew the attention and enjoyment of his mates and he began wearing the persona of class clown with pride.

When his family could no longer afford the school fees Reed went to live in Tunbridge Wells to be looked after by a series of nannies and au pairs. One particularly nubile au pair, Swedish of course, called Ingmar, took Reed and his brother David into bed with her one evening telling them that if they all stripped off and squeezed together their joint temperature would shoot up from 98.4 to 160. Every few minutes Ingmar would diligently slide a thermometer under their little cocks and say, 'Not yet varm enough.' To get things really moving Ingmar helpfully guided Ollie's hand onto hers as she repeatedly slotted the thermometer in and out of her rapidly dampening vagina, while at the same time pressing his free hand onto her breast until his fingers felt the stiffening of her nipple. Every time she presented the thermometer to be read all the boys could say was, 'Wow!' and think what a great science experiment they were having. Today if Ingmar had been a man and Reed and his brother little girls it would quite rightly be a case of child molestation. 'Later in school,' said Reed, 'when boys would say that girls get excited and get babies if you push your donger into them, I mourned for Ingmar.'

A succession of schools were unlucky enough to have Reed fostered upon them and in every one he sank to the bottom of the class as he daydreamed his time away, the bane of many a teacher's life. He had particular trouble with reading and writing due to poor eyesight. Like O'Toole he underwent a series of operations but still the problem persisted. It wasn't until his late thirties, the same age as Harris, that Reed uncovered his dyslexia.

By the time Reed was 11 he was already built like the proverbial brick shit house, a fearsome image slightly offset by the fact he still wore short trousers, at his father's insistence. 'I looked like Charles Bronson dressed

up as a Boy Scout.' But no one dared tease him. It was Reed who did the bullying, able to pick on feeble youngsters at will. Hanging on the ropes in the gym one day Reed watched as one such weakling entered. 'Hello, Cammel,' Reed said. 'Oh, hello.' Reed was having none of that. 'When you speak to me, Cammel, you say sir.' 'Sorry, sir.' 'That's much better, Cammel.' Reed moved onto the wall bars. 'Do you know what tits are, Cammel?' 'Sort of birds, sir.' 'No they're not, Cammel. Tits are round and hang around ladies' chests.' Reed was swinging about like Tarzan as he elucidated on the subject. 'Tits don't fly, Cammel, tits wobble.' A matron entered, her face purple with rage. 'You filthy boy,' she hollered. 'Wash your mouth out with soap and water, you disgusting boy.'

In the headmaster's office Reed watched as he carefully selected a vicious looking cane and struck him hard on each hand. 'That didn't hurt,' announced Reed. Silence. 'Right lad, if that's the way you want it.' This time the headmaster raced up and delivered such stinging blows that Reed's fingers swelled up like sausages. 'That didn't hurt either,' said a defiant Reed. The headmaster yanked Reed over and walloped his backside. 'That hurt sir. That hurt like bloody hell.' 'Don't swear at me, boy.' Another wallop. 'Get out.' By this time the headmaster was physically shaking with temper, or 'probably excitement' Reed guessed. The incident made him a hero to the other boys but it resulted in his expulsion and yet another new school.

The last port of call in Reed's whirlwind tour of academic establishments was another boarding school. On his first night he was subjected to an initiation test. Stripped, blindfolded and with ointment rubbed on his cock for good measure Reed was made to crawl along the floor to kiss the Blarney Stone. 'Start kissing, Reed,' one of the elder boys announced. Reed imitated loud snogging noises until his head was thrust forward so his nose touched bare flesh followed by a jet blast of foul air into his mouth. The blindfold was removed and there was the Blarney Stone: 'It was the bare arse of the fattest boy in the school. He was amazing. He could fart at will.'

Finding time not just to bully the smaller boys, Reed also bullied the other bullies. Such behaviour was not by choice. He'd observed and learnt that, like life outside, it was survival of the fittest, the strongest succeeded while the weak got abused and ignored. As for sex, it was never mentioned.