

JUSTIN BIEBER'S HAIR IN A BOX

Elizabeth Crane

Justin Bieber's hair is in a box on your dresser, a gift for your niece. Justin Bieber's hair, in a small clear box, is on your dresser, next to your necklaces and your spare change and your hairbrush. Justin Bieber's hair is glad to be here. Justin Bieber's hair wants you to open the box and let it out, wants to spend your spare change on gum and candy, wants to try on your necklaces and brush itself. Justin Bieber's hair can see what you see out your window, sees your vision of the world and likes it. Justin Bieber's hair sees you there and likes what it sees. Justin Bieber's hair has a great personality, you would know this if you let it out of the box. Justin Bieber's hair would do your dishes for you, wouldn't you like that? Justin Bieber's hair believes that age is just a number, just like you're always saying! Justin Bieber's hair has no stance on abortion. Justin Bieber's hair is so soft and smells so good, you should really let it out of the box. Justin Bieber's hair thinks you look so pretty today. Justin Bieber's hair knows what you want. Justin Bieber's hair wants to touch you. Justin Bieber's hair will hold you afterward. Justin Bieber's hair wants to have your babies. Justin Bieber's hair wants to be whatever you want him to be, if you'd just give him the chance. Justin Bieber's hair wants nothing more than to love you. ■

COLONEL SANDERS HAS A CHOICE (LIVES HIS BEST LIFE)

Elizabeth Crane

When he was five years old, Henry Goldfarb requested that his name be legally changed to Colonel Sanders and refused to answer to anything else. He wore a black ribbon tie to school every day, for which he was regularly kicked in the shins. Weirdly, this Colonel Sanders did not care for fried chicken, but he loved, loved, loved, the KFC biscuits. He ordered them by the bucket and ate them and ate them and built forts out of them. In seventh grade he dropped out of school, like the real Colonel Sanders, so his parents told him to get a job. He looked into work as a steamboat pilot, as he'd heard the original Harland Sanders had once done; it sounded romantic and exciting, but there was little work available in this field. The same thing happened when he looked into the insurance business, and being a railroad fireman. All this having failed, and now fourteen and an outcast for as long as he could remember, Colonel Sanders despaired and took to smoking crystal meth. Soon, having stolen all his mother's jewelry to pay for his developing meth habit, his parents kicked him out. During this time, under the influence, Colonel Sanders completely forgot his real name. Several years passed.

One day at the meth lab where he sometimes worked, Colonel Sanders met a girl who went by the name of Angie. Cool tie, she said. Not one person, in all his years, had ever said this to him. Angie also liked the meth, which cheered him. Colonel Sanders thought Angie was super cute, considering that she was missing several teeth and her skin was gray. She had long pink hair, and she wore a denim skirt and a Diet Dr. Pepper t-shirt. Cool shirt, Colonel Sanders said. Nobody ever wears a diet soda t-shirt, he added, clearly impressed.

I know, right? Colonel Sanders and Angie stayed with this moment for a while, nodding. They may have nodded for minutes. Time had a way of floating around when you were on meth. However much time passed, Colonel Sanders finally introduced himself

to Angie and asked her if she'd like to share a bucket of biscuits with him sometime.

No time like the present, she said.

I like the way you think, he said.

Within days, Colonel Sanders had moved into the trailer Angie shared with her step-cousin and her three babies.

Life with Angie in the trailer was good for a while, if by a while you mean three days. The first three days in the trailer were magical. They practically didn't even hear the babies' constant screaming. Angie had traded a ten-carat gold rope necklace she'd "found" for a week's worth of meth, and on their first day of living together, Angie and Colonel Sanders smoked themselves into a blissful stupor, gorging on biscuits and Sonic blasts. They stayed in bed all day, pulled up their fuzzy *Scarface* blanket around them and fiddled with the antenna on their TV so they could watch all new episodes of the last season of Oprah. Colonel Sanders and Angie both loved Oprah, found her totally inspirational. After they watched Oprah, they would always discuss the episode and ways they could live their best lives, which usually involved lifetime supplies of meth.

Anyway, unsurprisingly, Colonel Sanders and Angie's week-long stash of meth ran out at the end of the third day, and so they were forced out of their cozy retreat to scrounge up a new supply. Angie felt that Colonel Sanders, as the man, should be the breadwinner, but given his past experiences, he felt insecure about looking for work again. Plus he was only about seventeen, not much of a man at all. Plus, wherever he went, whether it was for factory work, or delivering newspapers, or even KFC, even in the rare instance that an interview went well, as soon he wrote Colonel Sanders on his application, he was never called back again. Angie was not pleased, and suggestions that she also look for work were not met well. You haven't tried hard enough, Angie told him and suggested that he either give himself a new name or plan on prostitution. She wasn't kidding.

Well that tore it. Colonel Sanders couldn't imagine having a different name. It was how he knew himself. It reminded him of when he was a boy and his imagination had been fired by an old man with a pointy beard in a white suit. But neither could he imagine selling

his body for sex. (Never mind that he had only ever been with Angie and was scrawny and unwell and still wore the ribbon tie, which no one had found sexy before Angie.) He didn't know how this woman he loved could ask him to do either of these things, it was like asking someone to choose between killing a puppy or a bunny. He took a long walk and thought about these choices, handing over a jar of pennies for a bucket of biscuits to eat while he thought it over, but in the end, he couldn't do either. But as the greasy biscuits coated his chin and shirt with crumbs, he began to form another idea. He would open a biscuit stand. He had no plan for how he'd do this, but he figured flour and water would be the extent of his startup costs, and that seemed doable. (He forgot about the butter, but since he had no money at the moment for any of it, that was really neither here nor there.)

When he returned home to tell Angie of his decision, he pleaded with her to think of what Oprah would say. Living your best life cannot mean prostituting yourself, he told her. Everyone loves biscuits.

No they don't, she said. I don't.

What? Three days ago ... Colonel Sanders had felt their love was practically founded on biscuits, but as he started to say so, he felt the futility of mentioning it. He wasn't sure if he could be with someone who didn't feel the way he did about biscuits, but nor was he sure if he was ready to leave her. When they met, his house was a table in an alley that hadn't been picked up yet.

Angie took a long pause. Well, I just don't see how we have a choice, she told him.

We always have a choice, Colonel Sanders said. We always have a choice, he said again, and again, and one more time again, hoping he might come to believe it. ■