

TIM LEHNERT

Moblinsky at the Wheel

A

S HE EXITED the highway, Moblinksy reached for a CD, *where the hell is it*; he poked under the passenger seat and along its side; *there*, he could feel the ridges of the case but couldn't work it free, *Jesus, pain in the ass thing* and leaning over and looking down as he tried to grasp it

¡BANG!

Moblinsky slammed forward and backward and forward. *Christ*. A grey minivan spun in front of him and hit the guardrail, *shit*. He wanted to keep going, *up along the boards*, but it lay on its side blocking his way and a car was coming up behind him, its headlights making him squint. Moblinksy hit the gas, *forward, cut to the inside*, but the Range Rover shuddered and he pulled over, killed it, and smelled a dusty chemical smell. He'd had some beers.

Moblinsky turned off the radio. *Rap shit; he wouldn't have been looking for the CD if that crap hadn't been playing*. Goddamn rap. How many beers, how many beers, how many? *None, a few, only a couple; a couple is best*.

Moblinsky sat motionless, the windshield was a TV. His hands shook, his ears rang, his head hurt.

A man with a beard approached, stared at him, and waved. Moblinksy made a fist and the man left. *Fuck, he'd been at the Kitten Room, nothing wrong with that, no matter what Lisa says, and there were beers and shots and an idiot who said he'd watched him play in Junior kept putting drinks on the bar. Afterwards he stopped with the Finns. Why not, no game next day. The Finns. Shitty rap music.*

Moblinsky folded the spent air bag over the steering wheel and called Bobby. *Voice mail. Shit*. He hung up. *Only a couple of beers. Only a couple*. He tried again, pressing the button with his pinky for luck, and Bobby was there. *Take it easy. Don't argue. You're shaken up, don't talk too much. Tell them you want to go to the hospital. See if they want some sticks or tickets, but only casually, offhand. I'd meet you but I'm out of town.*

Moblinsky closed the phone. He tried to remember how many sticks he had in back. The beard man was in the road opening the door of the sideways van, trying to pull someone out. Would he want a stick? Moblinksy could hear sirens now. He wished he could sit this one out.