

The Manual of Evasion

by Rudy Rucker

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Three excerpts from Edgar Pera's movie *Manual of Evasion LX94* online:

"Can the Future Affect the Present?" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad3xhghuHOA>

"Terrence McKenna's Timewaves" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLbS-kQhd9o>

"Rudy Rucker and Shaman McKenna" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfesNDn56Do>

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January 7, 1994. En route to Portugal.

No clear idea what day of the week it is, I'm still in the holiday "broken clock all gone" mode of vacation. Times like this is when it really pays off to be an academic. I don't have to go back to work for almost three more weeks.

I'm on my way to Portugal, to be filmed by some guy who got a grant from the city of Lisbon to make a movie about Lisbon. Edgar Pera. The negotiations were all with his producer, Catarina Santos. Edgar's read some of my books in Portuguese and decided to have me be in his movie, also the SF-and-conspiracy writer Robert Anton Wilson and

the psychedelic prophet Terence McKenna. Edgar must be quite a character, judging from his taste in literature, but you never know with Europeans. Catarina wrote me to ask me my sizes for costumes. The movie may be fictional rather than the expected documentary, I don't know. She called again just before I left, and I asked her what the costumes were, and she didn't want to tell me. "It's better if it's a surprise." So the theory I've been promulgating to my friends and family is that I'm going to Portugal to be filmed dressed as a giant chicken scratching at the ground with my feet.

My dog Arf has been scratching the ground like crazy recently, I think it releases musk from glands by his dewlaps. I've been studying him in preparation for my role. If Edgar asks me to improvise, that's what I can do. The first thing I'll say will be, "Do you have a chicken costume I can wear?" My face showing inside the huge, open beak. Foghorn Leghorn. A wobbling featherduster wired to my padded fanny. Or, worse, the handle stuck up my naked butt. But, hey, don't laugh, they're paying me all expenses plus a nice fee.

January 8, 1994. Airport hassles.

It's 29 hours later and I'm still in an airport. Newark was iced in, and my flight from Dulles was cancelled. I spent the night in the Dulles Hyatt in D.C., and I went back to Dulles pretty early in the morning today. Now I'm at JFK in New York.

I had interesting dreams last night, I was in this half-awake kind of state worrying about when to get up, and started dreaming quite lucidly, knowing I was dreaming, and the dream room endless variations on the hotel room. And sometimes something would come and grab me or attack me, and I realized this time that those things are also me, they are projected by me, everything in the dream is a projection of me, so I'd like *grab* the imp on my shoulder and squeeze and merge with him, and have a whirlpool kind of feeling. Very unusual. The fact that I watched *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* on TV in bed just before sleep helped the dreams too no doubt.

Here in N.Y., the tree branches are all covered with thick coats of ice. There's been an ice storm, which is why it took me 24 hours longer to get here. I have a boarding pass for TAP (Air Portugal); here's hoping it takes off in an hour like it's supposed to. Bad sign: it's doesn't have a gate listed yet, and all the other planes do. My suitcase got away from me at Dulles yesterday, too, so I've been wearing these clothes for two days now, and slept in the shirt as well. Supposedly it will catch up with me or I with it in Lisbon. If I ever get there.

Okay, we are on the plane now. I have a window seat and the plane is completely full. This is going to be rough. Nobody on the plane seems to speak English at all. The loudspeaker is playing the Lettermen singing Christmas carols. A big fat stoic lady next to me in all black and with big purse and coat and shopping bags that she doesn't want to put in the overhead. Her face is covered with warts, warts on warts like a fractal. Her arm is sticking way into my space. It's a good thing they're paying me to do this.

January 9, 1994. Lisbon, Terence McKenna.

As it turned out, the plane sat on the ground for 2 ½ hours before taking off. While we were sitting there, Robert Anton Wilson got put on the plane, his connection had been late. I said hi to him; he looked pretty stressed, his face taut, red and masklike. Later he told me that he's 62 and has high blood pressure. He also has post-polio syndrome, which makes him walk unsteadily.

When we got to Lisbon, it turned out that *both* our suitcases were lost. It took a long time to give info to the baggage people, and when we finally got out of the airport there was *surprise* nobody there to meet us. So there I was, 36 hours after starting out from D.C. (where I'd made a stopover to visit my ailing Pop), with my suitcase gone, no clue what to do, and old Bob Wilson on my hands — he prefers "Bob" to "Robert." He was starting to really lose it, obsessively complaining about everything, like that he wouldn't have his medicine, and me falling unwillingly into the role of chirpy cheerer-

upper that I'd just finished doing with Pop on the way out here. Wilson looks a bit like Pop, actually: he has white hair and beard. I told Wilson, "Don't be so surprised they didn't manage to meet us. I mean these are people who invited Rucker, Wilson and McKenna to be in their movie. These people have got to be nuts! These people are fucked up! It's like . . . how long would you wait for Queen Mu to meet you at an airport?" We had a voice and fax phone numbers for Catarina Santos, but she wasn't answering her phone, nor did she have a message machine.

So Bob Wilson and I asked the tourism counter to recommend a hotel, and we got a cab to their recommended Hotel Nacional, a depressingly anonymous place in the business district, new, soulless, with a lobby of stone polished to a fierce tombstone glare; it didn't seem as if anyone else at all was staying there. Wilson and I lay down for naps in our separate rooms. My heart was doing funny things lying there, palpitations you might call it, my poor overstressed heart fluttering at my chest. I got up in the early afternoon, and Wilson was still asleep. Fine.

The sidewalks of Lisbon are mosaics made of miniature cobblestones, extremely slippery in the winter rain, mostly white, but with black swirly symmetric Belusov-Zhabotinsky patterns every so often. In the less traveled areas, grass grows verdant in the multiple mosaic cracks.

I found a small funicular railway and rode it up to the Barrio Alto, a neighborhood of old houses with laundry hanging out. The walls were crumbly stucco washed over with colors. It must be glorious on a sunny day. And there are tiles everywhere. The Moorish influence. I missed having Audrey here to show it to. I saw a little park with a nice-smelling cedar that had been trained to grow out over a circular overhead trellis — some beams up in the air making a hundred-foot-diameter disk with the branches of the cedar sprawling atop them. Old men underneath playing cards at little tables. Very quaint. I could see out over the city from one spot in the Barrio Alto — these view spots are called *miradouros* — I could see Teja River (called the *Tagus* in English, no doubt a British

idea like using *Leghorn* for the city *Livorno* in Italy or, for that matter, *Lisbon* instead of *Lisboa*,) and I could see the big landmark: the Castelo de São Jorge (the tilde over the letter *a* in *São* means to pronounce it like *Saoung*, cognate to Saint).

As it was Sunday, most things were closed, but I did stop in at one hole-in-the-wall cafe for a 150\$00 escudo glass of beer. (The Portuguese use the \$ sign for a decimal point.) The exchange rate is about 160 escudos to a dollar, so that means the beer was about ninety cents. Not that it was a big one by any means, it was a strange crippled-looking little glass. This humble cafe is beautifully appointed — tiled walls and a real wrought-iron lamp high on the wall, it's the kind of place that would be full of yuppies in Germany or the U.S., but here it's full of Mediterranean men, short guys with lined faces and thin lips, guys whom in California you'd be more likely to see in the parking lot of 7-11 than in a cafe. Portugal is *their* country!

I also stopped in at a cafe next to a movie theater and had a *Pizza a Atum*. *Tuna* in English is *Atun* in Spanish, and *Atum* in Portuguese. Because the cafe was next to a movie theater on a Sunday, it held two darling little groups of mother and children. How I love seeing women with their children, it is so wonderful to see the happy cute big-cheeked ice-cream-eating kids, and the loving tender mothers, the mothers albeit a bit frayed and distraught due the pressures of raising said kids — as were Audrey and I during those three-kid-travelling-circus years of yore, raising Sorrel, Tom and Ida. The Holy Family, the divine and darling herd.

When I got back to the Hotel Nacional it was nearly evening. The good news when I got back was that Catarina Santos was on the phone just then looking for me. I'd sent her a fax when I got up from my nap. Catarina had been assigned to meet us at the Lisbon airport, which has an exit and a traffic that looked (to me anyway) comparable in size and complexity to the airport of, say, Lynchburg, Virginia. It's pretty hard to miss someone at that exit, but Catarina had missed us, and had even given a frantic "Your father is missing!" call to son Tom, back in Los Perros, at 2 AM California time, which

made me want to kill her.

Waiting for Catarina to come to the hotel, Wilson and I had a few drinks, then slept a couple more hours, and then she showed up looking much cuter than expected at about quarter of ten. And trailed by none other than Terence McKenna.

Catarina is *une jolie laide* (a beautiful ugly), a woman with such lively complicated features that you love to watch her. She has a large, highly animated lips which are often drawn twitchingly up to her nose for this or that badger/gopher face of mockery or emphasis. She has a cracking, charming voice because she smokes cigarettes all the time, like all of the people here. When she met us, she was dressed all in black with a miniskirt and a black leather coat. Terence was glued to her like a limpet, apparently they were having an affair. I didn't envy him, as she's a sulker and a manipulator. But she was always fun to watch; her face was like a circus.

It turned out that Terence had gotten to Lisbon three days earlier than Wilson and me, and was angling to stay three days longer. He's divorced, unemployed, and was eager to stretch out the gig.

Terence is a person who grows on you. He's a tall skinny guy, about six feet and 160 pounds, with kind of gold-pro prospector face, meaning a chin up near his nose as if he didn't have teeth, and loads of whiskers in no particular pattern covering most of his phiz. His eyes are large, thoughtful and brown. His forehead is low; I'd say the guy's whole face is about half the height of a standard horse-faced soap-actor's visage. He has a head like a cheerfully scrunched fist. He looks a little like what you get when you put two dots of ink for eyes on your index finger's bottom knuckle and bounce the knuckle up and down over your thumb with a handkerchief wrapped around your hand to make a kind of puppet. (Sorry, Terence, I'm exaggerating!)

So Bob Wilson and I went out for dinner with Terence and Catarina and Edgar Pera, the director of the movie, which is called *The Manual of Evasion: LX94*. LX stands for Lisbon, or an alternate Lisbon, and the production is funded by the city of Lisbon in

honor of a year-long festival of the arts called Lisbon '94. We went to a place near the water, near the Rio Teja, at ten o'clock at night, a typical or even early time for dinner in Lisboa, quite a shock for someone with my supper-at-six upbringing. I had some beautiful olives and salt cod *seviche* as appetizer, then grilled cod, cod cooked in milk, and cod with beans and shrimps.

Edgar is a handsome man with short dark hair, a Mediterranean/Moorish face with full features and a lovely round chin with dark stubble. He often shrugs and makes self-deprecating gestures, like, "Who cares!" or "Don't ask me!" or "For God's sake relax!", blowing out air and shaking his head.

The best part of the day was that we took our backpacks (no luggage yet, guys!) out of the cold, shiny Hotel Nacional after dinner and brought them to the four star York House¹. This is where our employers, the Companhia de Filmes Principe Real had meant to put us up all along. And it is a terrific four star hotel, all in wood and tile and ceramic. Edgar said that during World War Two, the York House was a meeting-place and hang-out for spies. According to Wilson, who refers to the movie CASABLANCA, Lisbon was a big hangout for spies in WWII.

I should mention that on the way to dinner, and on the way back to the hotel, we got high in the car smoking hash. (Not mine! I don't remember whose!) Walking up the three gardened flights from the street to the York House, the spy house, high on hash in Lisbon, well it felt pretty cool.

As we checked in, Wilson started a big fight because the clerk wanted to keep his passport overnight; I evaded, and went on to my bed.

¹ York House Residencia, Rua Das Janelas Verdes 32-1, 1200 Lisboa, Phone 396 24 35, Fax 397

January 10, 1994. Filming on the river.

I was awakened by a liveried man knocking on my door to bring a tray of breakfast at 7:30 AM. Rolls, butter, apricot jelly, and a pot of coffee and a pot of hot milk. It was delicious; the butter was like a different substance from the butter I get in the U.S. — it was so fragrant and healthy-tasting. Outside it was raining.

I phoned TAP (Bob Wilson's interpretation of the Air Portugal acronym was now "Take Another Plane"), and there was no news about my suitcase. It seemed that TAP's origination airport for the NYC/Lisbon flight alternates between JFK and Newark. So my bag was 48 hours out of phase. I put on the same clothes for the fourth (!!!!) day in a row.

A woman showed up at the hotel to put make-up on me and Bob and Terence. Catarina and some film-crew people were there with a bunch of clothes, but they figured my overcoat and beret looked fine. They were fresh out of giant chicken suits, even though I did repeatedly ask for one. Bob was wearing up in a white T-shirt and a camel's hair coat, and they made him put on something black, which pissed him off.

There was a yacht waiting for us by a monument to the Great Navigators (a big theme in Lisbon!). It belonged to the production company, or to one of the company's contacts. The rain cleared up and the sun came out. Seeing Edgar and all his lively hip crew, I began to realize just how serious a gig this was. I mean, these guys had big heavy-duty 35 mm cameras, not to mention any number of Hi-8 video cams.

We got on the boat and motored around the wide Rio Teja for awhile, being filmed answering questions about time. The questions were posed by Carlos, a TV reporter who was playing a reporter. Bob, Terence, and I were cast as the Shaman, the Neuro-Magician, and the Master of Chaos. (They use X for CH in Portugal, so actually, we were the Xaman, the Neuro-Magician, and the Master of Xaos.) I was kind of stiff and like jockeying for position, worried the others would talk more than me, but eventually I got a good rap or two on film, talking about my idea that we are like eyes

which God grows to look at himself with — God being thus like a giant snail or mollusk that extrudes eyestalks.

Later I actually got to see this shot onscreen in the rushes. The camera angle was low so that my head was like sticking up from behind the dome of the boat's binnacle (compass enclosure), and I was raising up my arms to simulate eyestalks, the arms at different heights and my hands cupped as if holding eye-spheres. Right above and behind me was the great suspension bridge over the Rio Teja. This bridge looks just like the Golden Gate bridge, and was built by the long-term dictator Salazar, but is called the April 25 bridge in honor of the date of the 1974 revolution. In the shot, my hands stuck up above the lines of the bridge. Much as I liked this shot, it didn't make it into the finished film.

The technology of the filming, which I didn't understand at first, was that the video cameras would be on most or all of the time, but the heavy-duty 35 mm cameras would only be on for occasional bursts of three minutes. A three-minute role of 35 mm film costs \$300, and another \$200 for processing. Given Edgar's finite budget for the film, he is sparing with the 35 mm, preferring to wait and wait around until finally there is a feeling that all is ripe and the key scene can be shot — almost always in one take with no repeat. The final film may include some footage from the videos to pad out or vary upon the 35 mm. For editing, everything is transferred first to video tape and then to a digital format called AVI. The edit is done by using the AVI files on a computer, much as if one were word-processing a bunch of documents. Once you have all the snips and splices figured out digitally, you print out a spec sheet, and the lab does the snipping and splicing for you.

Eventually the boat docked on the other side of the Rio Teja. They filmed us arriving — the idea of the movie is that there are Saboteurs who are changing the speed of time in various parts of Lisbon, and that they are being helped by the Xaman, the Neuro-Magician, and the Master of Xaos.

We went up the hill to have lunch in a small town with a name something like Alameda. I waited with Carlos in a square, and noticed a woman filling up big plastic pitchers at a fountain. "I can't believe that woman has to haul water to her house," I said. Carlos answered, "You have to understand that Portugal is the end of Europe and the beginning of the third world."

We went into an unprepossessing place for lunch, and sat at a long table. I sat next to Michael, a guy who seemed like a Frenchman with good English, but who turned out to be a longtime expatriate New Yorker who's acquired a French accent. He lives in Paris in an apartment above, of all places, the Procope, the brasserie where dear Audrey and I had dinner on our 25th anniversary in Paris in 1992! *Voltaire* used to hang there. Michael is a very talkative, dynamic guy, typically wearing a jump-suit with a zillion zippers. He has a shock of black hair and a long nose. Michael is the cameraman for *The Manual of Evasion*. For lunch I was served a Portuguese mixed meat plate with part of a pig's leg, some blood sausage, some lard sausage, some beans, pot-roast, potatoes, cabbage and, lo and behold, a pig's ear. We had red, white, and "green" wine, this being a tart slightly effervescent white wine.

After lunch we went to shoot film in a winery. The idea was that this is where the Xaman, the Neuro-Magician, and the Master of Xaos were meeting the Saboteurs. I got in a couple of good raps about transrealism and the Central Teachings of Mysticism. For a long time we sat at a huge picnic table covered with wine-bottles, some open, sitting there, and pretending to be getting drunk. It was up to us how much we actually drank, and when they needed to reshoot a scene, they'd empty out our glasses into a pitcher so that the actresses could refill them. It was weird to have an infinite amount of wine in front of me — a moment I'll remember during thirsty times. I kind of held back on the drinking lest I do something stupid. The actresses were a fat lively blonde woman named Suzy, and a cute actress called Ana, who was also acting in a Pirandello play.

Terence was quite funny, saying things like, "Gentlemen, the question on the

floor is *What is Reality?*," and then going into all sorts of raps about time-machines. He has this idea that logically we can't see a time-machine before one is invented (because as soon as we see a time-machine, then we can copy it and invent one). So as soon as the first time-machine *is* invented (which will happen, according to Terence, in 2012), then time-machines from all down the future will show up, and the arrival of all this novelty at once will cause some kind of information explosion. It's fun to hear him talk about time-machines with that same wild, unschooled excitement that I had about them as a teenager.

The river had gotten rough, so we drove back to the hotel instead of taking the boat. When we got back, my suitcase was finally there! I took a shower and changed my shirt three times in a row. My four-day underwear could have been cut into squares and sold to dysmenorrheic women needing hormone therapy. I had dinner alone in the hotel dining-room, sitting at a table near the kitchen. I had a great fish soup, and feeling casual in the European ambience just said, "Can I have another?" and they brought me another, and then a shrimp and endive salad, and then a nutcake of ground hazel-nuts. A perfect meal.

In bed I turned on the TV, and saw a Portuguese news-story about how six people on a yacht had drowned in the Rio Teje today!

January 11, 1994. The observatory. "Time flies."

The next morning Catarina drove Bob, Terence, and me to an astronomical observatory for the day's shooting. Bob was in a foul, sulky mood.

The observatory was a lovely pastel yellow classic mansion sitting in a small botanical garden in the misty rain. The Portuguese used to have lots of colonies: Goa in India, Angola and Mozambique in Africa, Brazil in south America, the Cape Verde islands in the Pacific, and the island of Timor near Indonesia. They have the same latitude as San Francisco, so exotic plants from the former colonies can flourish in their botanical gardens. Terence is something of a botanist due to his researches into

psychedelic plants, and he told me that one of the big trees was a dragon's-blood tree from the mid-East. Its red sap is used for incense.

Walking out alone into the rainy garden later in the day, I thought of the phrase from Sartre's *La Nausée* which I quote in my *The Secret of Life*: "I went into the garden and the garden smiled at me."

On this day's shooting there were three actresses and two actors as well as Terence, Bob and me. The funniest actor was called Duarte Barrilaro Ruas; he looked like Bela Lugosi with slicked back hair, lab-coat, and a pasted-on goatee. He had a huge mouth, and liked to do crazy laughs.

For filming us they were making us go up on a creaking lacquered-wood ladder — like a library bookcase ladder — to get near the eyepiece of this huge telescope, a telescope with a big lens at one end and a little lens at the other end, the traditional idea of a telescope in other words, and not some newfangled thing with a mirror. The place was trippy and rundown but still actually functioning. The telescope was in a giant cylindrical room with the traditional penislike slit-silo-dome on top. A rotating slit. There was a balcony/catwalk all around the edge up high, with windows looking out on this part of Lisboa.

An actress called Margarida Marinho had lunch at a table with Edgar, Bob and me. She was such a funny actress; I'd been watching her pretending to be an astronomer adjusting a telescope during the morning's shooting. It really taught me something about acting to watch her seemingly endless free flow of improvisations of gesture; different ways of twiddling the dials, looking surprised, moving about, and so on. We were doing shots with us standing on a kind of ladder next to a huge brass telescope.

After lunch one of the guys ran up to me with this ice-cream-cone shaped cigarette and said, "Rudy, would you like some psychedelic? This is tobacco with hashish." And we all smoked some of that and the afternoon got funnier. Bob Wilson cheered up a bit, but then was cranky again, and when I said enthusiastically, "We're

going up on the wobbly observing ladder to be filmed again," he said, "I don't like to see sadism in a man," and I said, after a minute or two of it sinking in, "I didn't mean to sound sadistic, I was just trying be cheerful," and then Terence chimed in, "I hate to think of all the atrocities that have been committed under the name of trying to be cheerful." Well that moment was bum, but much else was wavy during this stony afternoon.

I noticed that rain leaked in through the windows on the high room circling balcony, and that there was crumbled off window-glazing on the sills, and there were lots of little flies there, breeding in the water or something, funny little baby Portuguese flies, and I got into this rap, rehearsing it to whoever would listen, that the insects were *timeflies*, which relates, you wave, to Zeno's Second Paradox of Motion: "Time flies like an arrow, but at each instant there is no time, so how does the arrow move?" And relates further to the classic automatic language translation program which translated "Time flies like an arrow," into Russian and back into English, yielding: "Insects which live on sundials enjoy eating arrows." And, most weightless fact of all, the arrow which the timeflies enjoy eating is *Zeno's* arrow!

In the milling around, I happened to walk up the stairs behind Durte and Juanne, a striking woman who turned out to be a professional model, aged 19. You could tell she was a model from the way she held herself, posing so perfectly. Before I'd grasped that she was a model, she'd just seemed kind of bland and skinny, but once I thought of her as a *model*, she seemed very attractive. She was wearing thick-soled sexy boots and tight leather pants, oh my. I filmed her a little with my own video camera. And then they filmed a big scene of me and Terence talking on the room-circling balcony, and Juanne was supposed to turn a big crank on the wall next to me as I talked, and I'd been flirting with her a little, and she said, "In the scene, I will bump you, yes?" And I said yes, so then she kept bumping me with her leather butt while I was talking — what thrills these sporadic contacts sent through me! I tried to *act* a little, and show reactions to the bumps. Finally in fact I pulled out my handkerchief and started polishing her bent leather butt —

much to the filmed outrage of Terence who was just then holding forth to me about liberating oneself by pursuing the erotic element of life, and, noticing my polishing of Juanne's butt, complained that I wasn't listening to him. Another of my favorite moments that didn't appear in the film — ah, the heartbreak of being an actor.

My clowning was greatly to the amusement of a hip young guy called Daryl Pappas, moved to Portugal from L. A., who was taking publicity still photos for the film. When we finished shooting, he was hitting on Juanne. "Are you a virgin?" Juanne: "I'm saving myself for God." Daryl: "Well, I'm him!" Juanne: "No, God has no head." Heavy. Juanne's way of showing heightened sexual interest was to chew her gum a bit faster.

Back at the hotel, I had a few drinks in the hotel bar with Bob. He cheers right up when he's having drinks or drugs. It would be fun to write an SF story together sometime, he's an incredible fount of knowledge with an idiosyncratic worldview. A little later, I had dinner at the hotel with Edgar, his wife Marguerite, Terence, Catarina, Bob, and Michael. I had dried fish appetizer (swordfish and lox), some duck breast in a delicious Madeira sauce, and a lot of drinks.

January 12, 1994. Around Lisbon, the Alfama.

I slept late, till 10:30, and woke feeling like shit. In the morning we went out to shoot on location in Lisbon. Terence was friendly and full of gossip about all the *Mondo 2000* people on the way over.

Our first shot was in a giant free-standing outdoor seven-story elevator that goes down a cliff into the shopping district, known as Beixa. I talked a lot to Carlos, he was explaining a headline I saw about a man named Xanana being arrested. What a cool first name. He's a Portuguese-speaking resident of East Timor who is leading a rebellion against the Indonesian government, who took Timor over about seventeen years ago. The Portuguese are on the side of the rebels, but according to Carlos the U.S. has been on the side of the Indonesian oppressors. Then we walked down the Beixa main street to the

dock where the ships used to arrive, the caravals. According to Terence, the king's men would be right there to take the valuables from the ships as they landed.

Speaking of first names that begin with an "X," Terence told a story about going into the Amazon and taking a weird drug with some short brown natives, and how after about an hour, he's looking at them, at their eyes that were "black and glittering like a cockroach's" (Terence's quote from William Burroughs), and starts wondering if his new friend Xlotl is going to kill him. Xanana and Xlotl. "How do you spell Xanana?" "Like banana with an x." Xanana and Xlotl are going into my new book *Freeware* for sure as surfer limpware moldies; flickercladding dudes infested by psychedelic camote fungus.

Then we drove to Edgar's studio and had lunch in a dive next to it. I had two whole grilled fish, quite good, though dangerously bony. If I'd eaten them as fast as I normally like to eat, I would have choked to death.

Inside Edgar's studio was the "Time Lab," an amazing set with lots of clocks going at all different speeds, and a smoke machine, and colored lights, and dials and meters and big weird gears to roll back and forth and make strange shadows. The set was in the shape of a cylinder, so that standing inside it, the cameraman could pan, and never pass a wall-corner, giving the effect of the lab's being huge, even though it was only about twenty or thirty feet across.

Edgar would frequently argue with Michael the cameraman about how to do a shot; Michael was quite knowledgeable about how to shoot a scene — it's like the cameraman gets the picture, and it's more the director's job to put the pieces of picture together. There was some conflict because, as Edgar later told me, he likes to not be like a dictator, he feels that if he lets situations evolve spontaneously, people do better work for him. And Michael, feeling the power-vacuum, kept trying to start bossing, but Edgar — when push came to shove — wouldn't let him. Michael felt that the movie was being shot too slowly, while Edgar felt that it was better to wait until everything was right before shooting a scene.

So we waited about four or five hours until everything was right, and then shot our last scene in the Time Lab. I cranked up my adrenaline by singing some songs for the actors — they videoed me doing my Dead Pigs version of "Duke of Earl." Bob had a tantrum just before this scene about his clothes — they made him take off his camel's hair coat and white T-shirt again, so as to match his other scenes — and he kind of did his best to spoil the scene by complaining about his clothes in the scene instead of talking about time; so this scene didn't make it into the movie either. And then Bob had a tantrum about getting our checks from Catarina. A difficult man, but a genius, able to quote page after page of Pound, Joyce, Shakespeare, the last words of Dutch Shultz, you name it. But egomaniacal much more than me. I had some fun in the scene anyway by waving around a giant wrench and starting a mad scientist laughing jag which Durte got into.

By now it was eight, and Edgar had invited us to his house for supper at ten, so I killed an hour or so walking around the neighborhood of his studio. This was the Alfama neighborhood, the old Moorish part of town. It was one of the most amazing experiences. Built all of tiles and cobblestones and stucco on a steep hill, the district has alleys and staircases leading every which way. It reminded me of Escher's engravings of Maltese hill towns, or of his pictures of cities with ambiguous perspectives. To make it the more completely Escher-like, many of the buildings are entirely covered with tiles that are patterned in arabesques, or in *trompe l'oeil* designs. It was one of the most exciting strolls I've ever taken, and the more enjoyable after a day of being cooped up with all the film crew's (and especially Bob's) personalities.

When I got back from my marvelous walk, they were through shooting, and I rode over to Edgar's house with him. It was me, Edgar, Marguerite, Edgar's friend Pedro and his wife Lourdes, Durte, Carlos, then Catarina and her production higher-up Marie-Juana (loved the name!), also Terence and Bob. Dinner was served at — get this — 11:15 PM. And nobody thought this was particularly late! It's sure not Louisville, Kentucky.

Before dinner, Edgar said something to me in his sincere way that really made me happy. "Everybody loves you. All of us on the movie." That felt so good. He was very satisfied with my work for his film. I'd made a point of mentioning his plot line several times during the filming, which will be a help in trying to make the movie feel like a coherent whole.

Dinner was pot-roast with a nice pureed carrot sauce. During dessert, one of the guests passed around tobacco and hash jays. It was like the '70s again — nicely dressed lively young people having some civilized tokes together after a fancy dinner at home. I haven't seen anything like that in the U.S. for 20 years. Maybe I travel in the wrong circles — or is it that Americans really have gotten more puritanical? Or maybe it's that my friends and I are all middle-aged.

After dinner, we watched some rushes on Edgar's TV — mostly of Terence, as the rushes lag two days behind. There were some really funny scenes with Terence; he has a golden tongue. "You are such a great talker," I exclaimed to Terence, and he answered, "It's the only skill I have. If it weren't for that ability, I'd be sleeping under a bridge." Another time I heard him introduce himself to someone saying, "I'm a criminal and a bullshit artist." Not a pretentious guy. I hope some of my scenes come out well — the one with the eyestalks looked promising, and there ought to be more. And I hope there's some good ones of Bob, too. After watching all the rushes of Terence we were both wishing there was more of us.

Some of the movie is shot in speeded-up time, like there's a love scene in a factory. The love scene was a panic, it was like Chaplin in *Modern Times*.

With any luck, *The Manual of Evasion* might be a psychotronic classic of cinema. Or at least a highly respected work of surrealist film. It's supposed to be about 55 minutes long. Edgar's trick was to have some of the action take place in front of landmarks of Lisbon, so that the City of Lisbon will be satisfied that the movie is "about" the city — even though it is science fiction. Terence came up with a rant how all great

cities are transtemporal and transspatial, and that Lisbon has a bridge like San Francisco's. And in my one of my scenes, I made the point that if you go across the Golden Gate bridge and look at San Francisco, the ocean is on your right, but if you go across the April 25 bridge and look at Lisbon, the ocean is on your left, implying that Lisbon is a mirror-image of San Francisco . . .

I liked acting. It was a big adrenaline rush; you'd know when your scene was coming, and you'd get ready for it, trying to think of what you'd say and what mood you'd project, and then it comes, and it's over in a flash. Once the company applauded after I did a scene ranting about time, chaos and temperature (as per request), and it felt wonderful. You get this big ego boost right back; it's addictive, a true fix. After their scenes everyone is trembly and smoking cigarettes. Another great thing was to be working in a group instead of working all alone, as I do when I write.

This was really a terrific trip. I did something interesting and creative, managed to party without ending up feeling like I made a fool of myself, and forgot completely about my usual life. I can't believe I'm going to have to go back to work.