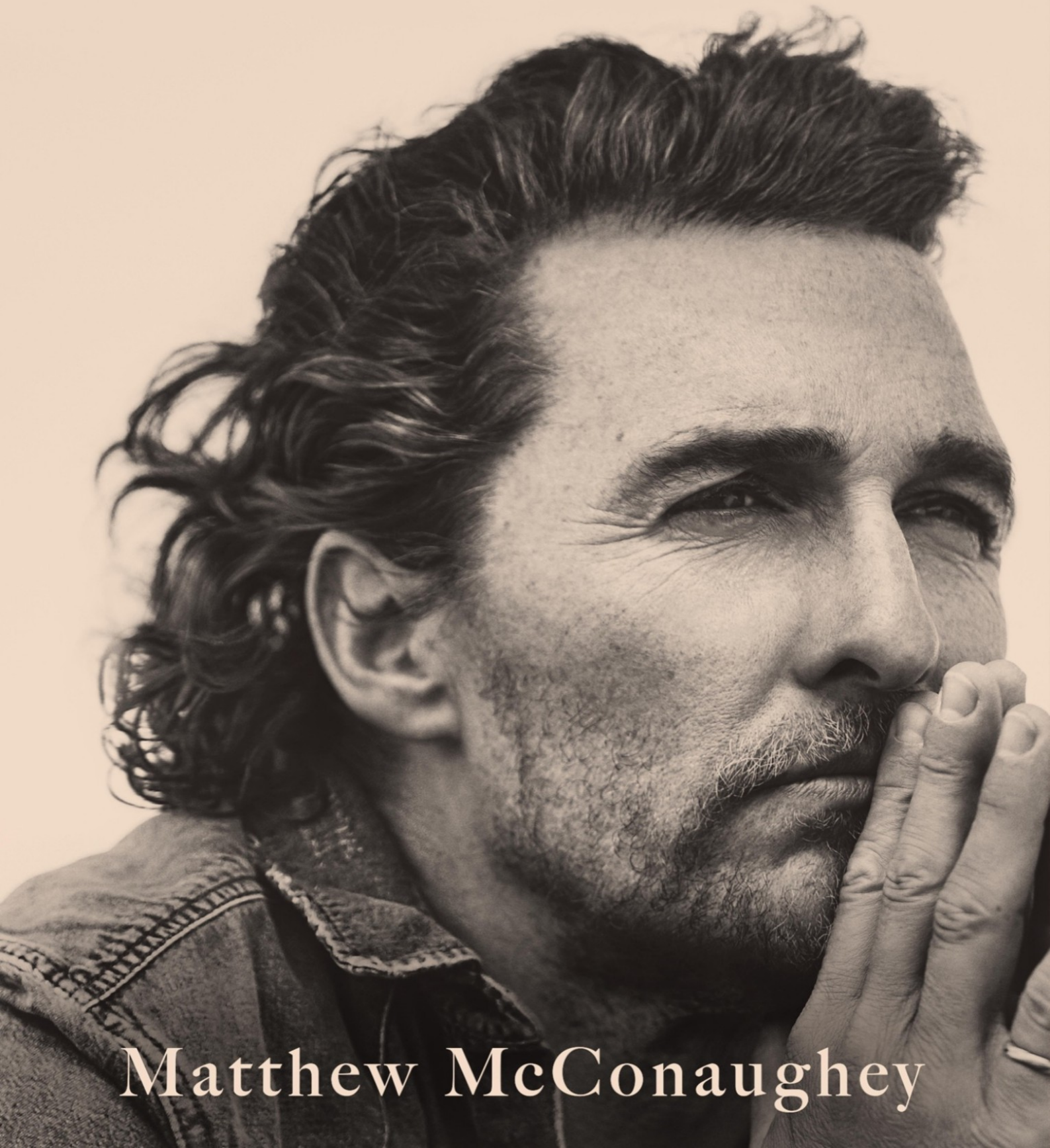


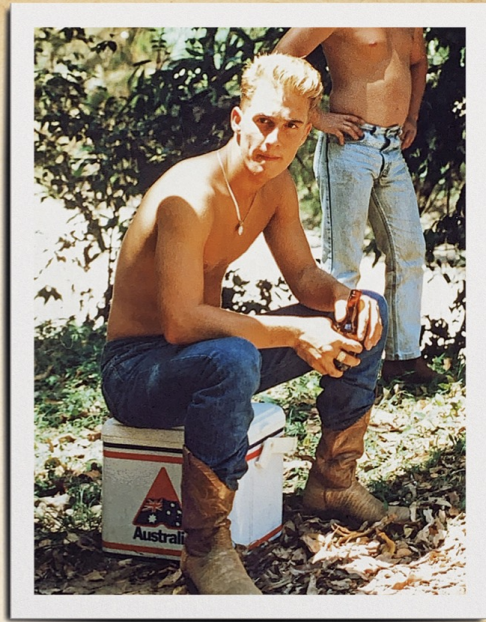
GREENLIGHTS



Matthew McConaughey

A healthy soul enjoys
time with itself.

As my sweat ruins the pages
where I spill my heart
Is it telling me I shouldn't write?
This won't last forever
Sometimes I wish it could.
This is where I'm learning
to express myself



How to be a Hedonist and ~~still~~ still follow the rules.

By the way, I am still very young.
I can't let that stop me from striving though.



The time where time stops - the way of the west
and east - the art of the science the blue of
the green the man of the sun as above is below



-the jungle demands respect.

WHAT DO I BELIEVE?

*I believe we should spend more time working on a formula to save the world rather than in a classroom solving a math problem. I believe there should be classes that educate us on different ways of saving our ass. Greenpeace, Human Rights, Anti-Nuclear etc. *I still believe in love and a righteous way.

*The world is like some big neighborhood; the backyards are just bigger. We're all neighbors.

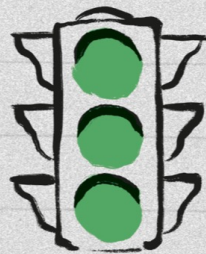


la vida



no complex

underdog = hunger



greenlights

Matthew
McConaughey



CROWN
NEW YORK

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1-22-89

I'VE FOUND MYSELF

- the most difficult word in the universe?
- WHOWHATWHEREWHENHOW?? - and that's the book.
- WHY? - is even bigger

I think I'll write a book. —————
A ^{word} ~~book~~ about my life.
I wonder who would give a damn
About the pleasures and the strife?

I think I'll write a book.
to help the generations with the truth about the past?
Who's to say one would agree?
Shit! I'm tired. Hope that these thoughts last...

I shall think I'll write a book.

- mood for the sayings
- favorite one
- physiological
- let 1. fit 5c - no - then are towards
- write a book.

March 11 -

THIS IS NOT A TRADITIONAL memoir. Yes, I tell stories from the past, but I have no interest in nostalgia, sentimentality, or the retirement most memoirs require. This is not an advice book, either. Although I like preachers, I'm not here to preach and tell you what to do.

This is an approach book. I am here to share stories, insights, and philosophies that can be objectively understood, and if you choose, subjectively adopted, by either changing your reality, or changing how you see it.

This is a playbook, based on adventures in my life. Adventures that have been significant, enlightening, and funny, sometimes because they were meant to be but mostly because they didn't try to be. I'm an optimist by nature, and humor has been one of my great teachers. It has helped me deal with pain, loss, and lack of trust. I'm not perfect; no, I step in shit all the time and recognize it when I do. I've just learned how to scrape it off my boots and carry on.

We all step in shit from time to time. We hit roadblocks, we fuck up, we get fucked, we get sick, we don't get what we want, we cross thousands of "could have done better"s and "wish that wouldn't have happened"s in life. Stepping in shit is inevitable, so let's either see it as good luck, or figure out how to do it less often.

T. Life

I'VE BEEN IN THIS LIFE for fifty years, trying to work out its riddle for forty-two, and keeping diaries of clues to that riddle for the last thirty-five. Notes about successes and failures, joys and sorrows, things that made me marvel, and things that made me laugh out loud. Thirty-five years of realizing, remembering, recognizing, gathering, and jotting down what has moved me or turned me on along the way. How to be fair. How to have less stress. How to have fun. How to hurt people less. How to get hurt less. How to be a good man. How to get what I want. How to have meaning in life. How to be more me.

I never wrote things down to remember; I always wrote things down so I could forget. The idea of revisiting my life and musings was a daunting one; I wasn't sure if I'd enjoy the company. Recently, I worked up the courage to sit down with those diaries and have a look at the thirty-five years of writing about who I've been over the last fifty. And you know what? I enjoyed myself more than I thought I would. I laughed, I cried, I realized I had remembered more than I expected, and forgot less.

What did I find? I found stories I witnessed and experienced, lessons I learned and forgot, poems, prayers, prescriptions, answers to questions I had, reminders of questions I still have, affirmations for certain doubts, beliefs about what matters, theories on relativity, and a whole bunch of bumperstickers.* I found consistent ways that I approached life that gave me more satisfaction, at the time, and still.

I found a reliable theme.

So, I packed up those journals and took a one-way ticket to solitary confinement in the desert, where I began writing what you hold now: an album, a record, a story of my life so far.

Things I witnessed, dreamed, chased, gave and received.

Truth bombs that interrupted my space and time in ways I could not ignore.

Contracts I have made with myself, many of which I live up to, most of which I still pursue.

These are my sights and seens, felts and figured outs, cools and shamefuls.

Graces, truths, and beauties of brutality.

Initiations, invitations, calibrations, and graduations.

Getting away withs, getting caughts, and getting wets trying to dance between the raindrops.

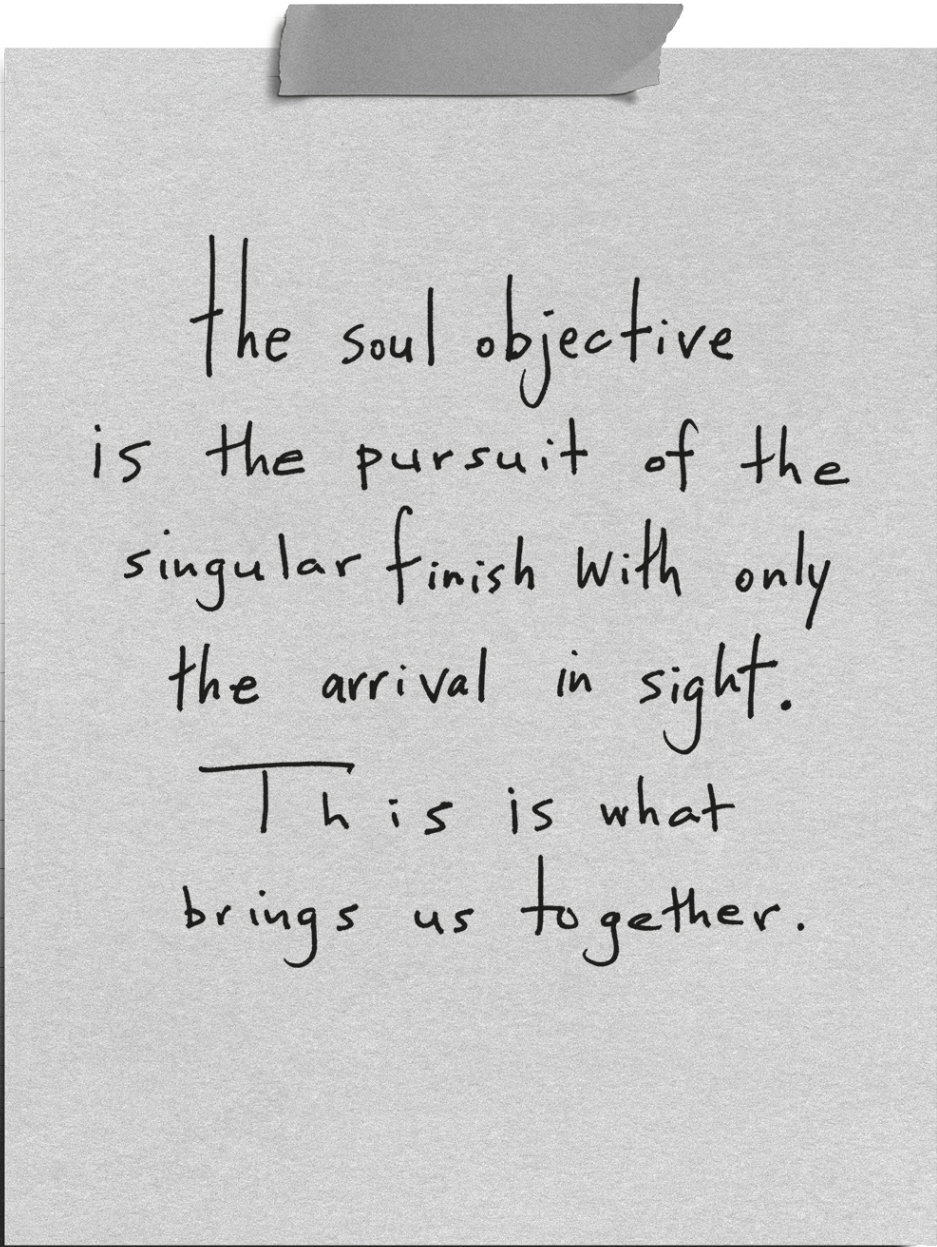
Rites of passage.

All between or on the other sides of persistence and letting go, on the way to the science of satisfaction in this great experiment called life.

Hopefully, it's medicine that tastes good, a couple of aspirin instead of the infirmary, a spaceship to Mars without needing your pilot's license, going to church without having to be born again, and laughing through the tears.

It's a love letter.

To life.



The soul objective
is the pursuit of the
singular finish with only
the arrival in sight.

This is what
brings us together.

* I've always loved bumper stickers, so much so that I've stuck *bumper* to *sticker* and made them one word, *bumpersticker*. They're lyrics, one-liners, quick hitters, unobtrusive personal preferences that people publicly express. They're cheap and they're fun. They don't have to be politically correct because, well, they're just bumperstickers. From the font they're in, to the color scheme, to the word or words they say, a bumpersticker tells you a lot about the person behind the wheel in front of you. Their political views, if they've got a family or not, if they're free spirits or conformists, funny or serious, what kind of pets they have, what kind of music they like, even what their religious beliefs might be. Over the last fifty years I've been collecting my bumperstickers. Some I've seen, some I've heard, some I stole, some I dreamed, some I said. Some are funny, some are serious, but they all stuck with me...

because that's what bumperstickers do. I've included some of my favorites in this book.

Sometimes you gotta go back
to go forward. And i don't
mean goin back to reminisce
or chase ghosts. I mean go
back to see where you came
from, where you been, how you
got HERE.

- mdu

Lincoln Ad, 2014

How did i get here?

I'VE EARNED A FEW SCARS getting through this rodeo of humanity. I've been good at it, I've been not so good at it, and ultimately, I've found some pleasure in all of it, either way. Here are some facts about me to help set the table.

I am the youngest brother of three and the son of parents who were twice divorced and thrice married, to each other.

We grew up saying "I love you" to each other. We meant it.

I got whipped until my butt bled for putting on a Cracker Jack tattoo when I was ten.

When I first threatened to run away from home, my parents packed my bags for me.

My dad wasn't there the day I was born. He called my mom and said, "Only thing I have to say is if it's a boy, don't name him 'Kelly.'"

The only thing I ever knew I wanted to be was a father.

I learned to swim when my mom threw me in the Llano River and I was either going to float off the rocky waterfall thirty yards downstream or make it to the bank. I made it to the bank.

I was always the first one to wear out the knees in my Toughskin jeans.

For two years I led the Under-12 soccer league in red cards, as a goalie.

When I kept whining about my lone pair of tennis shoes being old and out of fashion, my mom told me, "Keep griping and I'll take you to meet the boy with no feet!!"

I was blackmailed into having sex for the first time when I was fifteen. I was certain I was going to hell for the premarital sex. Today, I am merely certain that I *hope* that's not the case.

I was molested by a man when I was eighteen while knocked unconscious in the back of a van.

I've done peyote in Real de Catorce, Mexico, in a cage with a mountain lion.

I've had seventy-eight stitches sewn into my forehead, by a veterinarian.

I've had four concussions from falling out of four trees, three of them on a full moon.

I've bongoed naked until the cops arrested me.

I resisted arrest.

I applied to Duke, UT Austin, Southern Methodist, and Grambling for my college education. I got accepted to three out of the four.

I've never felt like a victim.

I have a lot of proof that the world is conspiring to make me happy.

I've always gotten away with more in life than in my dreams.

I've had many people give me poems that I did not know I wrote.

I've been naïve, evil, and a cynic. But I am most fearless in my belief of my and mankind's benevolence and the common denominator of values among us.

I believe the truth is only offensive when we're lying.

I was raised on existential outlaw logic, a carnation of malaprops, full of fictitious physics, because if it wasn't true, it ought to be.



There was nothing fictitious about the love, though. The love was real. Bloody sometimes, but never in question.

I learned early on how to get **relative**: how to deal.

I learned resilience, consequences, responsibility, and how to work hard. I learned how to love, laugh, forgive, forget, play, and pray. I learned how to hustle, sell, charm, turn a tide, make a downfall my upfall, and spin a yarn. I learned how to navigate highs and lows, hugs and blows, assets and deficits, love songs and epithets. Especially when faced with the **inevitable**.

This is a story about getting relative with the inevitable.

This is a story about **greenlights**.

The arrival is inevitable: **Death**.

A unanimous end, a unified destination.

A noun without regard. Our eulogy. Written.
Lived.

The approach is relative: **Life**.

A singular procession, our personal
journey.

A verb with regard. Our résumé. Write it.

Live it.

This is the first fifty years of my life, of my résumé so far on the way
to my eulogy.

What's a greenlight?

GREENLIGHTS MEAN GO—ADVANCE, CARRY ON, continue. On the road, they are set up to give the flow of traffic the right of way, and when scheduled properly, more vehicles catch more **greenlights** in succession. **They say proceed.**

In our lives, they are an affirmation of *our* way. They're approvals, support, praise, gifts, gas on our fire, attaboys, and appetites. They're cash money, birth, springtime, health, success, joy, sustainability, innocence, and fresh starts. We love **greenlights**. They don't interfere with our direction. They're easy. They're a shoeless summer. They say **yes** and give us what we **want**.

Greenlights can also be disguised as yellow and red lights. A caution, a detour, a thoughtful pause, an interruption, a disagreement, indigestion, sickness, and pain. A full stop, a jackknife, an intervention, failure, suffering, a slap in the face, death. We don't like yellow and red lights. They slow us down or stop our flow. They're hard. They're a shoeless winter. They say **no**, but sometimes give us what we **need**.

Catching **greenlights** is about **skill**: intent, context, consideration, endurance, anticipation, resilience, speed, and discipline. We can catch more **greenlights** by simply identifying where the red lights are in our life, and then change course to hit fewer of them. We can also earn **greenlights**, engineer and design for them. We can create more and schedule them in our future—a path of least resistance—through force of will, hard work, and the choices we make. We can be **responsible** for **greenlights**.

Catching **greenlights** is also about **timing**. The world's timing, and ours. When we are in the zone, on the frequency, and with the flow. We can catch **greenlights** by sheer luck, because we are in the right place at the right time. Catching more of them in our future can be about

intuition, karma, and fortune. Sometimes catching **greenlights** is about **fate**.

Navigating the autobahn of life in the best way possible is about getting **relative** with the **inevitable** at the right time. The inevitability of a situation is not relative; *when* we accept the outcome *of* a given situation as inevitable, then *how* we choose to deal with it *is* relative. We either **persist** and continue in our present pursuit of a desired result, **pivot** and take a new tack to get it, or **concede** altogether and tally one up for fate. We push on, call an audible, or wave the white flag and live to fight another day.

The secret to our satisfaction lies in *which* one of these we choose to do *when*.

This is the art of livin.

I believe everything we do in life is part of a plan. Sometimes the plan goes as intended, and sometimes it doesn't. *That's* part of the plan. Realizing *this* is a **greenlight** in itself.

The problems we face today eventually turn into blessings in the rearview mirror of life. In time, yesterday's red light leads us to a **greenlight**. All destruction eventually leads to construction, all death eventually leads to birth, all pain eventually leads to pleasure. In this life or the next, what goes down will come up.

It's a matter of how we see the challenge in front of us and how we engage with it. **Persist, pivot, or concede. It's up to us, our choice every time.**

This is a book about how to catch more yeses in a world of nos and how to recognize *when* a no might actually be a yes. This is a book about catching **greenlights** and realizing that the yellows and reds eventually turn **green**.

GREENLIGHTS.

By design and on purpose...Good luck.

If all that I would want to do,
would be to sit and talk to you...
would you listen?

—Matthew McConaughey, age twelve

part one



OUTLAW LOGIC

A WEDNESDAY NIGHT, 1974

DAD HAD JUST GOTTEN HOME from work. Greasy blue button-down with “Jim” on the left chest patch already thrown in the washer, he sat at the head of the table in his sleeveless undershirt. He was hungry. My brothers and I had eaten already and Mom pulled his reheated plate from the oven and shoved it in front of him.

“More potatoes, honey,” he said as he dug in.

My dad was a big man. Six foot four, 265 pounds, his “fightin weight,” he’d say, “Any lighter I catch a cold.” At forty-four years old, those 265 pounds were hanging in places that, at this Wednesday evening dinner, my mom didn’t fancy.

“Sure you want more potatoes, FAT MAN?” she barked.

I was crouching behind the couch in the living room, starting to get nervous.

But Dad, head down, quietly continued to eat.

“Look at ya, that fat belly of yours. Sure, eat up, FAT MAN,” she yapped as she scraped overwhelming amounts of mashed potatoes onto his plate.

That was it. BOOM! Dad flipped the dining table into the ceiling, got up, and began to stalk Mom. “Goddamn it, Katy, I work my ass off all day, I come home, I just want to eat a hot meal in peace.”

It was on. My brothers knew the deal, I knew the deal. Mom knew the deal as she ran to the wall-mounted telephone on the other side of the kitchen to call 911.

“You can’t leave well enough alone, can ya, Katy?” my dad grumbled through gritted teeth, his forefinger raised at her as he closed in across the kitchen floor.

As he closed in, Mom grabbed the handheld end of the phone off the wall mount and raked it across his brow.

Dad’s nose was broken, blood was everywhere.

Mom ran to a cabinet and pulled out a twelve-inch chef’s knife, then squared off at him. “C’mon, FAT MAN! I’ll cut you from your nuts to

your gulliver!”

They circled each other in the middle of the kitchen, Mom waving the twelve-inch blade, Dad with his bloody broken nose and snarling incisors. He grabbed a half-full fourteen-ounce bottle of Heinz ketchup off the counter, unscrewed the cap, and brandished it like her blade.

“C’mon, FAT MAN!” Mom dared him again. “I’ll cut you WIIIIIDE open!”

Assuming the stance of a mocking matador, Dad began to fling ketchup from the open bottle across Mom’s face and body. “Touché,” he said, as he pranced right to left.

The more he flipped ketchup on her and dodged her slashing chef’s knife, the more frustrated Mom got.

“Touché again!” Dad teased as he splattered a new red stripe across her while eluding another attack.

Around and around they went, until finally, Mom’s frustration turned to fatigue. Now covered in ketchup, she dropped the knife on the floor, stood straight, and began to wipe her tears and catch her breath.

Dad dropped the bottle of Heinz, relaxed out of his matador pose, and wiped the blood dripping from his nose with his forearm.

Still facing off, weapons down, they stared at each other for a moment, Mom thumbing the ketchup from her wet eyes, Dad just standing there letting the blood drip from his nose down his chest. Seconds later, they moved toward each other and met in an animal embrace. They dropped to their knees, then to the bloody, ketchup-covered linoleum kitchen floor...and made love. A red light turned green.

This is how my parents communicated.

This is why Mom handed Dad an invite to their own wedding and said, “You got twenty-four hours to decide, lemme know.”

This is why my mom and dad were married three times and divorced twice—to each other.

This is why my dad broke Mom’s middle finger to get it out of his face four separate times.

This is *how* my mom and dad loved each other.



the golden rule and everything in moderation

Two adages, often solicited as general rules for life.

There's a loophole in each.

Sometimes people don't want to do what you want to do.

And one man's appetite is another's indigestion.



The McConaughy clan migrated from Ireland to Liverpool, England, to Little Rock, West Virginia, and New Orleans. There is no royalty in our past. There is, however, a lot of cattle thieving, riverboat gambling, and an Al Capone bodyguard.

Dad is from Patterson, Mississippi, but grew up and felt most at home in Morgan City, Louisiana.

Mom's from Altoona, Pennsylvania, but always said she was from Trenton, New Jersey, because "who'd wanna be from a place called Altoona?"

I have two brothers. The oldest, Michael, has been going by "Rooster" for forty years now because even if he goes to sleep at 4:00 A.M. he always wakes at sunrise. When he turned ten, he wanted a little brother for his birthday present, so Mom and Dad adopted my brother Pat from the Methodist home in Dallas, in 1963. Every year Mom and Dad offered to take Pat to meet his birth parents. He declined until he turned nineteen and took them up on their offer. Mom and Dad arranged the meeting and the three of them drove to the home of Pat's birth parents in Dallas. Parked curbside, Mom and Dad waited in the car while Pat rang the doorbell and went inside. Two minutes later Pat walked out of their house and jumped into the back seat.

"What happened?" they asked him.

"I just wanted to see if my dad was bald cus my hair's thinning."





First marriage
12.22.54

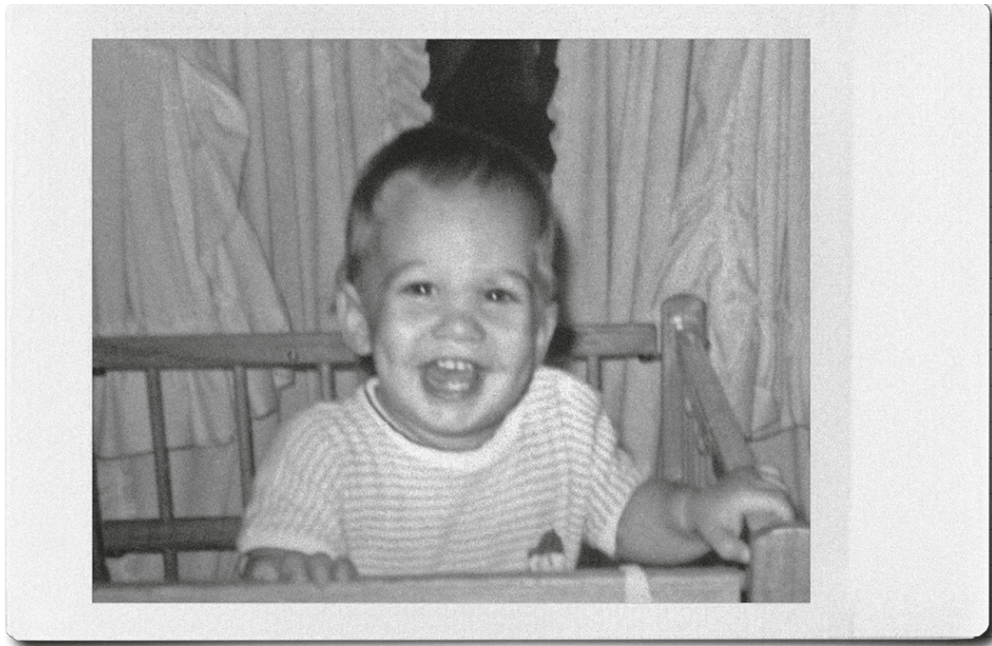


Second marriage
12.18.59

Me, I was an accident. Mom and Dad had been trying to make a baby for years to no avail, so Mom thought I was a tumor until the fifth month of pregnancy. Dad went to the bar instead of the hospital the day I was born, because he suspected I wasn't his anyway.

But I was.

I got my first ass whupping for answering to "Matt" on the kindergarten playground ("You weren't named after a doormat!" Mom screamed), my second for saying "I hate you" to my brother, my third for saying "I can't," and my fourth for telling a lie about a stolen pizza.



I got my mouth washed out with soap for saying “shit,” “damn,” and “fuck,” but I only ever got in real trouble for the using or doing of the words that could harm me. **Words that hurt.** The words that helped engineer who I am because they were more than just words; they were expectations and consequences. They were **values.**

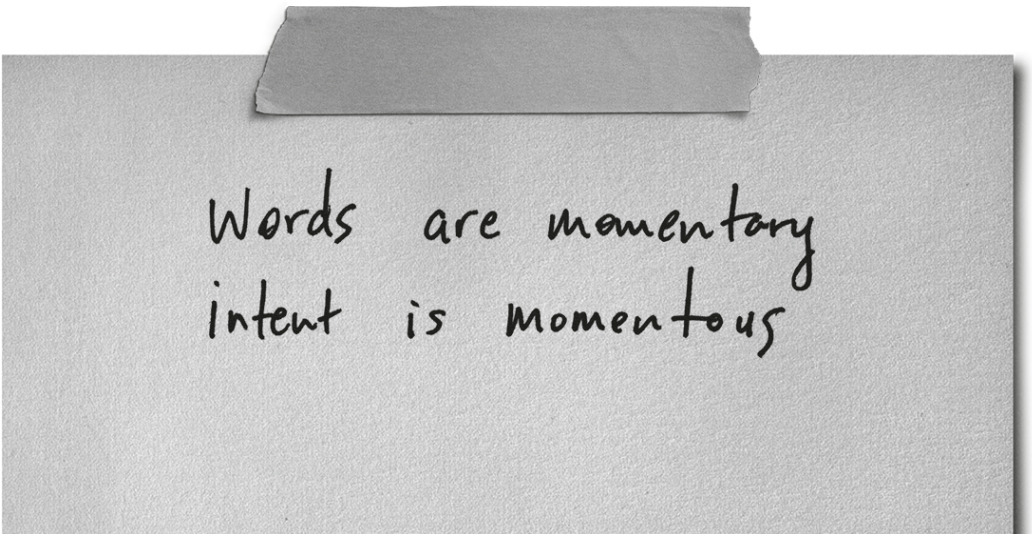
My parents taught me that I was named my name for a reason.

They taught me not to hate.

To never say I can't.

To never lie.

GREENLIGHT.



Words are momentary
intent is momentous



My parents didn't *hope* we would follow their rules, they *expected* us to. A denied expectation hurts more than a denied hope, while a fulfilled hope makes us happier than a fulfilled expectation. Hope's got a higher return on happiness and less debit on denial, it's just not as measurable. My parents measured.

And while I am not advocating for physical punishment as a consequence, I do know that there are a lot of things I didn't do as a kid that I shouldn't have done, because I didn't want to get my ass whupped. I also know that I *did* a lot of things as a kid that I *should* have done, because I wanted my parents' praise and adulation. Consequences, they work both ways.

I come from a loving family. We may not have always liked each other, but we always loved each other. We hug and kiss and wrestle and fight. We don't hold a grudge.

I come from a long line of rule breakers. Outlaw libertarians who vote red down the line because they believe *it'll keep fewer outlaws from trespassin on their territory*.

I come from a family of disciplinarians where you better follow the rules, until you're *man enough to break em*. Where you did what Mom and Dad said "because I said so," and if you didn't, you didn't get grounded, you got the belt or a backhand "because it gets your attention quicker and doesn't take away your most precious resource, time." I

come from a family who took you across town to your favorite cheeseburger-and-milkshake joint to celebrate your lesson learned immediately following your corporal correction. I come from a family that might penalize you for breaking the rules, but definitely punished you for getting caught. Slightly calloused on the surface, we know that what tickles us often bruises others—because we deal with or deny it, we’re the last to cry uncle to bad luck.

It’s a philosophy that has made me a hustler in both senses of the word. I work hard and I like to grift. It’s a philosophy that’s also led to some great stories.



Like a good southern boy should, I’ll start with my mom. She’s a true baller, living proof that the value of denial depends on one’s level of commitment to it. She’s beat two types of cancer on nothing more than aspirin and denial. She’s a woman that says “I’m gonna” before she can, “I would” before she could, and “I’ll be there” before she’s invited. Fiercely loyal to convenience and controversy, she’s always had an adversarial relationship with context and consideration, because they ask permission. She might not be the smartest person in the room but she ain’t crying.

She’s eighty-eight now, and seldom do I go to bed *after* her or wake up *before* her. Her curfew when she was growing up was when she danced holes big enough in the feet of her pantyhose that they came up around her ankles.