

Psychedelic lights swirled, shooting streams of light from the glittering ball hanging above the dance floor. The music was fast, but my friends were dancing slowly. They were too loaded and too cool to keep up with the beat.

The red walls of Chuckkers were decorated with the twelve signs of the Zodiac, painted in glittering gold and black lacquer. Above each booth was one of the heavenly constellations. Each star's logo could be seen from anywhere within the after-hours club. As the pulsing lights reflected off the symbols, they acted as beacons, making it easy for people to find each other in the darkness. I saw Carmen sitting at our favorite booth at the back of the club.

I maneuvered through the crowded club toward the bar. As I slowly made my way, I felt Carmen's eyes on me. I knew she got an inward tickle from watching my grand entrance through the club. My girl admired my arrogant strut. She'd often say to me, "Your attitude matches your walk. I am proud of the fact that you won't take any shit from any bitch, including myself."

Money was king, but it was chump change as far as motivators were concerned. The greatest intoxicator—what made selling your body and the price of the streets worth it—was that feeling of being cool. I believed the emotional drug of feeling hip was by far the best, badass dope.