

# THE POOREST RICH KIDS IN THE WORLD

Why did the heirs to one of the largest fortunes in America grow up horribly neglected and abused? *By* SABRINA RUBIN ERDELY

== PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIELLE LEVITT ==

Walker Patterson  
Inman III and  
Georgia Inman  
at home in Utah  
in April

**T**

HE BLACK CHEVY TAHOE PICKED UP speed as it careened down the curving Wyoming mountain road, the two frightened children inside clutching their seats, certain that they wouldn't make it alive to the school bus at the bottom of the hill. It was only 7:30 in the morning, but their stepmother at the wheel already had liquor on her breath. The kids had seen her this way before; two years earlier they'd been in the car when she was pulled over for a DUI. This morning, she seemed even more wasted.

"Slow down! Please! Please!" 12-year-old Georgia begged from the passenger seat. In the back, her twin brother, Patterson, sat frozen in horror.

"Shut the fuck up!" their stepmother, Daralee Inman, snarled. Her right hand shot out to smack Georgia's face, while her left clutched a glass filled with Trix cereal, leaving no hands on the steering wheel. Pine trees whizzed by to their right, a cliff to their left. "Did I ever get you into a motherfucking wreck?" Daralee demanded, as faster and faster they descended the steep road that served as the family's half-mile-long driveway. "Did I ever get you into a motherfucking wreck?"

The kids reached for their seat belts, too late, as the Tahoe hit a bump, tipped toward the cliff - "God take my soul! Forgive me all my sins!" Georgia cried out - and then veered left and slammed into a tree. The exploding air bags felt like a punch, the windshield like cement. The twins struggled free of the car. Dazed, they began limping back up the mountainside, their stepmother staggering close behind.

As they crested the hill, their house finally came into view: a 10,000-square-foot log-and-stone cabin of preposterous proportions, filled with expensive antiques,

Contributing editor SABRINA RUBIN ERDELY wrote "The Rape of Petty Officer Blumer" in *RS* 1176.

valuable artwork and, stashed behind the steel door of a walk-in vault, sacks of silver and gold, jewelry, and bars of silver and gold, jewelry, and millions of dollars' worth of collectible firearms. This wasn't some no-name clan of backwoods hillbillies, Georgia and Patterson Inman were among the wealthiest kids in America: When they turn 21, the family claims, the twins will inherit a trust fund worth \$1 billion. They and their father were the last living heirs to the vast Industrial Age fortune of the Duke family, tobacco tycoons who once controlled the American cigarette market, established Duke University and, through the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, continue to give away hundreds of millions of dollars.

The twins' father, Walker Inman, 57, lumbered from the mansion, his tattooed sleeves visible under a black T-shirt, drinking his morning rum, bellowing, "What the fuck did you do to my children?" Morbidly obese after a lifetime of debauch-

## The Inman twins spent their childhood inhaling freebase fumes and deadbolted in their room.

ery and heroin addiction, he looked past his keening kids to glare at his fifth wife. "Honey," Walker rumbled, "we're going for a ride." He grabbed Daralee, hopped into his red Dodge truck and took off in a spray of gravel toward the wreckage down the mountain - then promptly lost control of the vehicle, which rolled onto the driver's side and skidded to a stop.

Inside the house, the twins called 911. The dispatcher at the police station couldn't make out *what* the hysterical children were saying, but local troopers knew exactly where they were needed, and quickly left for the remote Inman property, which Walker had dubbed "Outlaw Acres." Later on, in the presence of the Inmans' high-priced attorney, an officer would confront Daralee with the fact that she'd been driving with a blood-alcohol content of .05 - violating her probation - with her step-kids in the car, and Walker would admit he'd been drinking and driving too. And

yet no charges would be levied that November 2009 morning; the Lincoln County Sheriff's department would simply close the case. As ambulances and police cars came screaming up the hill, past the demolition derby of wrecked cars to where Georgia and Patterson sobbed in the grand arched entryway to their palace, it was just another day at the Inmans', home to the poorest rich kids in the world.

**R**AISED BY TWO DRUG addicts with virtually unlimited wealth, Georgia and Patterson survived a gilded childhood that was also a horror story of Dickensian neglect and abuse. They were globe-trotting trust-fund babies who snorkeled in Fiji, owned a pet lion cub and considered it normal to bring loose diamonds to elementary school for show and tell. And yet they also spent their childhoods inhaling freebase fumes, locked in cellars and deadbolted into their bedrooms at night in the secluded Wyoming mountains and on their ancestral South Carolina plantation. While their father spent millions on drug binges and extravagances, the children lived like terrified prisoners, kept at bay by a revolving door of some four dozen nannies and caregivers, underfed, undereducated, scarcely noticed except as objects of wrath.

"We were so fearful. I would hide in cupboards smaller than that," says Georgia in her Southern-tinged lilt, pointing to a two-foot-tall cabinet in the kitchen of their spacious Park City, Utah, home where the twins, now 15, are reassembling their lives and residing with their mother, a woman who has seen her own share of trouble and who has only recently become a presence in her children's lives. Patterson anxiously paces across the house's open floor plan with its panoramic view of snow-capped mountains while he and his sister take turns narrating their harrowing history. Unfailingly polite, earnest and occasionally skittish, the twins radiate a sheltered naïveté that can make them seem far younger, or like visitors from another culture. For instance, Georgia confesses she's never heard of the children's party game musical chairs.

"What is it?" she asks, her eyes wide and curious. "No, really, tell me!"

Such frank sweetness, delivered in their mushy drawl, tends to take the edge off some of the harsh and surprising things they will say in the coming days, as when Georgia wistfully recalls her toddler years: "I remember walking to my dad's room and holding a gun to his head. I don't know what stopped me," she says before bursting into giggles. "I'm sorry, that's terrible, I laugh when I'm nervous or upset."

"Pretty crazy," agrees Patterson with a duck of his head.

## THE HEIRESS

- (1) Walker's aunt Doris Duke, "the richest little girl in the world," in 1947.
- (2) A 1933 newspaper clipping heralding a portion of Duke's \$100 million inheritance.
- (3) Duke, later in life; her father told her on his deathbed to "trust no one."



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: AP IMAGES; NO CREDIT; RON GALELLA/WIREIMAGE

Having spent their formative years in a struggle for survival, the kids now find themselves trapped in yet another fight: A court battle under way with JP Morgan, the bank that manages the Duke trust, has found its way into the tabloids, as well as a parallel legal battle over their assets, which they claim are being raided by hangers-on. All told, millions of dollars are at stake. But that squabbling is part and parcel of Georgia and Patterson's miserable inheritance, as is their epic tale of pain, isolation and woe. "People can look at this as a blessing all day long, but it's *blood* money," Georgia says of their fortune and pedigree. Her green eyes - flashing now with anger - and slim, flared nose resemble those of her great-aunt Doris. "I never asked to be born into any of this," she adds. "Sometimes I wish I was never born."

**F**OR THE TWINS' FATHER, Walker Patterson Inman Jr., few things in life were as much fun as blowing things up. He never missed an opportunity to squeeze a trigger or light a fuse, cackling away under the brim of his cowboy hat while engaging in the cleansing act of destruction.

Each July Fourth he'd put on an elaborate fireworks show at Outlaw Acres, staring at the exploding sky while spectators ran from the falling embers. Though he fancied himself a great outdoorsman, Walker's favored way of communing with nature was chucking dynamite into a body of water, a pursuit he called "DuPont fishing." And when Walker decided to plant some pecan trees, he eschewed a backhoe and instead blasted holes on his land, pushing down the plunger with a maniacal grin like Wile E. Coyote. More than mere amusement, Walker's destructive urges doubled as therapy, as when his first wife left him, in the early Seventies, Walker strode into the empty horse-racing arena he had built in South Carolina - and shot the place to bits with a machine gun.

He'd been full of dangerous mischief since he was a child. As a 13-year-old orphan in 1965 taken in by his aunt Doris Duke, Walker - then called "Skipper" - had romped around her lavish 14,000-square-foot Hawaiian estate without regard for property or propriety, shooting her Christmas ornaments with a dart gun, setting fire to crates of expensive teak and exploding a bomb in her pool. He was hideously spoiled, and stinking rich from three trust

funds: one from his father, Walker Inman Sr., heir to an Atlanta cotton fortune and stepson to American Tobacco Company founder "Buck" Duke; one from his mother, Georgia Fagan; the third from his grandmother, Buck's widow Nanaline Duke, who left the bulk of her \$45 million estate to her little grandson. Altogether, on Walker's 21st birthday he would inherit a reported \$65 million (\$500 million in today's dollars), a fortune so vast that *Time* predicted the boy would rank as "one of the wealthiest men of the late 20th century."

And yet while Walker abounded in riches, he had no stability. His alcoholic father had died when Walker was two; his mother, who swiftly remarried and gave birth to his half sister, Susan, died when Walker was six. Awaiting heart surgery shortly before her death, Walker's mother had written her attorney with her wish that her boy live a secure life with her sister Caroline, imploring, "I have it in my will, but I just want to be sure. In his short life, he's already had too many emotional upheavals." Instead, Walker was shifted from household to household until he wound up with his father's half sister Doris Duke.

Doris knew nothing about raising children, nor much cared. The witheringly wry, worldly heiress was among the most celebrated women of her day, a six-foot glamour queen hounded by paparazzi, who brushed elbows with every mid-century icon from Jackie Kennedy to Elvis Presley, pronouncing Greta Garbo "boring" and, after dating Errol Flynn, theorizing that bisexual men made the best lovers: "I should know," she declared. "I've done exhausting research on the subject." As a child - and sole inheritor of her father Buck's \$100 million fortune - she'd become famous as "the richest little girl in the world." She'd been raised by nannies in a chilly, silent Fifth Avenue mansion, with her parents taking little part in her upbringing; family lore holds that her father, on his deathbed in 1925, told 12-year-old Doris, "Trust no one." Now saddled with her pesky nephew Walker, watching him toss ketchup-covered tampons into her pool, Doris Duke regarded him with pity. He was desperate for love and attention, much like herself as a child. But Doris had her own fabulous life to live, and so she shipped Walker off to boarding school. "We were all too self-centered to be bothered with a problem child," she would later tell her cousin Angier St. George Biddle "Pony" Duke.

With no need to work, no guidance and no self-motivation, Walker set himself adrift, fighting back his melancholy with

world travel and fast times. By the end of the Seventies he had become a dedicated gadabout, and at parties he unspooled wild stories of his adventures, claiming he studied meditation in India with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi alongside George Harrison; getting tattooed in the Galapagos by female artists who worked naked, in pairs; meeting royalty in his wanderings through "Arabia"; learning gourmet cooking in Thailand, where he also developed an abiding love of heroin. Although some of his stories were surely embellished – as when he talked about partying with the Rolling Stones and Jimmy Buffett – and the drunker he got, the likelier he was to reach into a hidden holster and fire off a shot, Walker always had a rapt audience. He was the richest guy in the room.

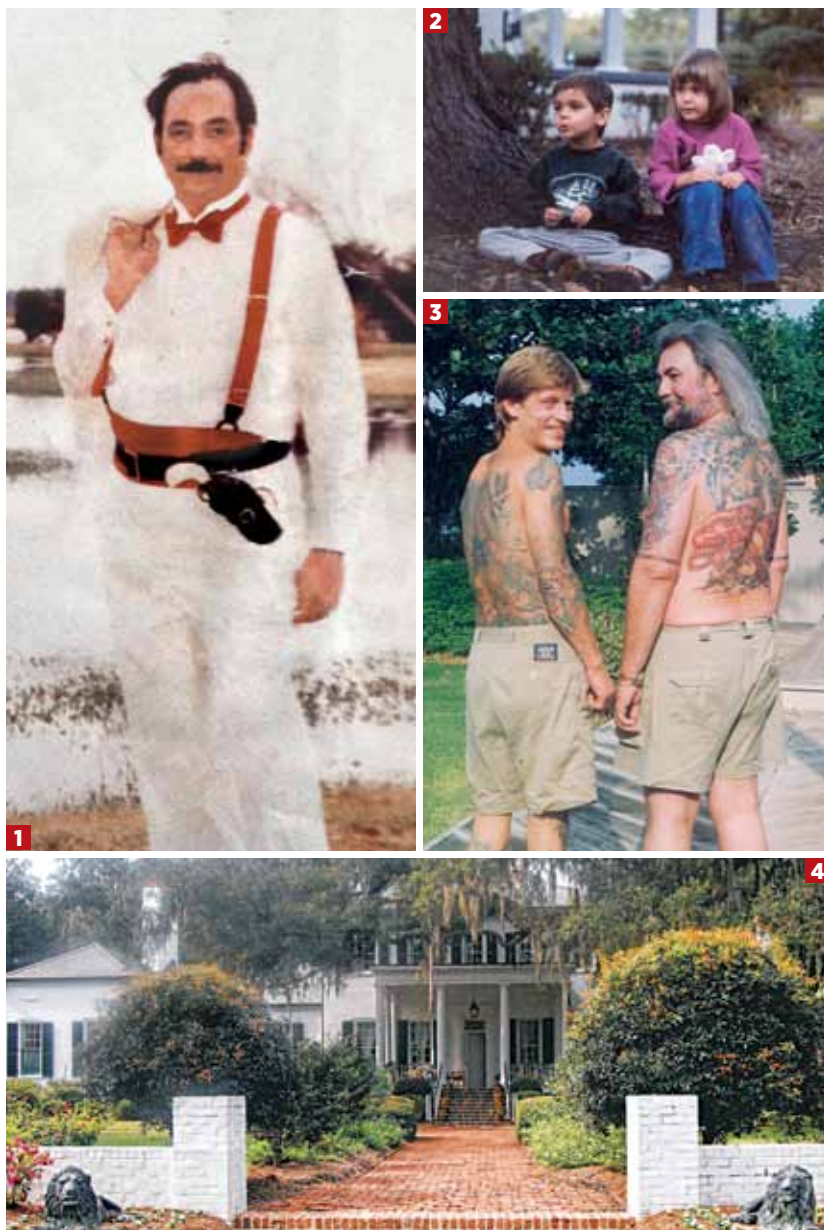
Walker's quest for love proved more elusive than his quest for attention. In 1983, when he met Daisha Aunday, a high-strung raven-haired aspiring model living in Hawaii, he'd already burned through two marriages. He soon proposed, and they set off on his 80-foot yacht, *Devine Decadence*, for what Walker declared would be a 10-year sail around the world. It started out promisingly, the two of them bronzing on the deck, Walker expertly cooking their meals in the galley with a giant spliff hanging from his lips. They sailed through the Caribbean, docking stateside every so often to stay with Aunt Doris Duke in one of her various homes.

"I was in a whirlwind," recalls Daisha fondly. "I was young, and this guy was wonderful." But the happy couple's lifestyle soon spiraled out of control as Walker graduated from pot and pills to morphine – Daisha says she found him passed out in a bathtub with a needle in his arm – and from snorting cocaine to freebasing. The idyll came to an end in Panama, after two years together, when Daisha declined an orgy, but Walker participated; in the ensuing spat, Walker simply boarded the yacht and sailed off, leaving Daisha behind. Months later, he called her to announce his wedding to another woman.

Ten years passed before Walker contacted Daisha again, contrite. They rendezvoused in 1995 in New Orleans, where 43-year-old Walker, single again, looked worn but still dashing in the candlelight of a French Quarter restaurant. He told Daisha he'd made the mistake of his life leaving her and wanted to try again. They also spoke of how his Aunt Doris had died two years earlier, a loss that pained him in more ways than he could say. Doris' life of glamour had been deeply lonely, with few lasting friendships, two failed marriages and no children – her only baby, born premature, had died less than 24 hours after birth – and in her old age she'd turned eccentric, briefly adopting a 35-year-old Hare Krishna devotee before closing down her social circle altogether. Surprising ev-

## FORTUNATE SON

(1) Walker Patterson Inman Jr. on his wedding day to the twins' mother. (2) He desperately wanted the children – if he died heirless, his fortune would pass to Duke University. (3) Walker's back (right) was covered with a tattoo of an octopus in sexual congress with a woman. (4) The South Carolina plantation where the twins suffered abuse and neglect.



eryone, Doris had replaced Walker as an executor of her will and instead named her butler as sole executor of her \$1.2 billion estate, nearly all of which she left to charity. Although Doris had provided a \$7 million trust for Walker, he felt sorely betrayed by his beloved aunt. Walker said nothing to Daisha of his heartache, but assured her that he remained well provided for; court records would later reveal that his grandmother Nanaline Duke's trust alone paid

him as much as \$90,000 each month. As for the hard drugs, Walker claimed to be clean, though he warned with a grin that he'd always be a "chipper" – a dabbler.

At 35, Daisha was at the end of her own string of failed relationships, and had long since given up on her modeling dreams; Walker told friends she was "practically homeless" and working as a topless dancer (which Daisha denies). She could hardly believe she was getting a second chance

at comfort, happiness, maybe even love. At their wedding four months later at Greenfield Plantation, Walker's inherited 300-acre property in Georgetown, South Carolina, Daisha wore the bridal gown she'd been saving for a decade, and Walker wore a white tux with a red bow tie and a holstered ivory-handled pistol. After the exchange of vows, boxes of white doves were opened, but nothing emerged. As Walker kissed the bride, a caretaker scooped out a handful of dead and dying birds and tossed them skyward, where they fell in a pile on the grass.

Walker wanted children right away, and hustled Daisha into in-vitro fertilization. Daisha found his readiness for fatherhood a touching sign that he was ready to assume the responsibilities of being an adult. Still, Walker confided an additional motive to a friend. His grandmother's will had stipulated that if Walker left no heirs, upon his death his trust would be funneled into the Duke Endowment, a \$2.8 billion foundation established by Buck Duke that nourishes, among other institutions, Duke University. The idea repulsed Walker: The very name that had given him such unearned bounty also stood for everything he felt he'd been deprived. "He despised Duke!" says longtime friend Mike Todd. "Duke University, Duke Foundation – everything Duke, he hated."

**T**HE TWINS WERE BORN two months early, a boy and a girl, purple and shriveled at three and a half pounds each. "I can't believe I created something so beautiful," Walker marveled when he and Daisha brought the babies home to Greenfield Plantation after more than two months in the NICU. He'd never thought himself capable of doing much in life, other than being a professional hedonist, but if he accomplished nothing else at least he'd done this – miraculously created these two exquisite beings. He named the children Georgia and Walker Patterson Inman III, after his absent parents. He vowed to become the father he himself never had.

A year and a half later, Walker and Daisha's marriage was broken beyond repair. Daisha says he turned to drugs and beat her, and Walker told friends that her parenting was interfering with her parenting (which she denies). Either way, Daisha had taken the kids to her parents in Oregon, an arrangement intolerable to Walker. He concocted what seemed to him a reasonable solution. Walker called Daisha asking to reconcile, inviting her to join him in the Cayman Islands. Once there, according to Daisha, Walker offered her a night off by taking the 17-month-old twins and their nanny out to dinner – then hustled them all aboard a waiting private plane and took off for the States, leaving Daisha behind.

In the wake of what she refers to as "the kidnapping," Daisha says she called the FBI in the hopes of being reunited with her children, but no charges were filed. Even after that outrageous escapade, when the divorce finally came through in 2000, the children's court-appointed legal representative judged Walker the more stable parent, despite "his multiple marriages; his drug, alcohol and cigarette use; limited parenting experience; and his unusual, perhaps dysfunctional, upbringing." The judge expressed concern over Daisha, whom a psychologist had assessed as suffering from paranoid symptoms, anxiety, PTSD and "borderline intelligence." It had also been determined that Daisha was incapable of handling her own case. The court assigned her a Guardian ad Litem to aid her legal decision-making, a move normally reserved for minors and disabled adults (years later, Daisha's lawyer would

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discredit the psych report in court). Walker was granted primary custody of the twins. He moved the family to Wyoming, where taxes were low and the wide-open spaces appealed to him – he'd always considered himself a cowboy at heart.

**I**N THE SPRING OF 2002, word got out in the remote Afton, Wyoming, area that the new family in town was hiring a nanny for their four-year-old twins. Ninety minutes from the Grand Tetons, nestled between two mountain ranges and with a population of just 1,900 souls, Afton was a hub of the Star Valley, though its modest downtown, notable for its archway made of elk antlers, boasted little more than a post office, a bar and a car dealership. The Inmans had moved to nearby Grover, an enclave of 147 people, and the baby-sitting job they offered was a bonanza, with a salary of \$30,000 – a third more than the per capita income – plus health insurance, free lodging and international travel. Over the next few years, the Inmans would come to employ dozens of caregivers, some of

whom would last just a few days. One after another, they would arrive at the massive property, marveling at the sheer size of the house framed out on the hilltop, as big as a ski lodge, ringed by smaller cottages. There was a tractor-trailer on the property, and according to former employee Teddy Thomas' affidavit, it was filled with explosives, artillery and "enough ammunition to start a small war."

The tableau would become only more alarming as a barefoot Walker Inman stomped into view, his gray hair sticking out in all directions, his shirtless back covered in an enormous tattoo of a nude woman in sexual congress with an octopus – an image inspired by Walker's admiration of "tentacle erotica." If his tattoo caused others discomfort, Walker showed no sign of caring, and that lack of courtesy – indeed, that aggressiveness – set the tone of the volatile household. "There was a lot of anger & threatening going on," wrote former nanny Lizzie Hull in a blind letter later on, at Daisha's request. "It was chilling. I felt I was watching a gangster movie." Among Hull's first tasks was to help Walker hang a machine gun on a wall of the cottage where the family was staying, where guns, knives and swords lay everywhere. Every ashtray in the house overflowed, every surface was mottled with cigarette burns, and the air hung with smoke. Out of the haze scuttled Walker's new wife, Daralee Inman, nee Steinhansen, whom he'd said he'd picked up hitchhiking: a tall, rough-mannered farm girl with straw-blond hair from Wheatland, Wyoming, who scratched and picked at her skin, and who was rarely seen by any employee until well into the afternoon. Many days, Daralee would hide out in the couple's bedroom, a room the staff dreaded having to clean for its acrid smell and the objects they'd find: white substances, needles and a blackened, bent-back spoon. "When they came out there would be a strange smell," wrote Thomas, adding that he saw drug paraphernalia in the house "too many times to be specific about dates." Once, former nanny Rebecca Hatton walked in and discovered the couple huddled on the bed, holding a flame underneath a broken light bulb.

But the new nannies' most shocking encounter was meeting the twins, as when Hull was ushered to the children's door and the caretaker slid back the deadbolt; staring silently out of that squalid prison cell stood the two toddlers. "They were very skinny and had dark circles under their eyes," noted Hull. Several witnesses attest that the kids were locked in their room each night, and, according to Hatton, there was food strewn across the floor and a foul smell from where the kids had been relieving themselves in a corner.

The children were accustomed to this sort of living – it was all they knew. They'd

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF DAISHA INMAN; COURTESY OF MIKE TODD; 2. GLENN SMITH/POST AND COURIER

spent the past three years in Jackson Hole, playground to the rich, living in a \$6,000-a-month rental home that resembled a glorified drug den. A later lawsuit described \$30,000 in damages including walls pocked with holes; leather furniture, artwork and carpeting destroyed; and even after two defoggings, a smoke odor so sickening that all mattresses needed replacing. Here, during the kids' tenderest years, terrible things had taken place. Walker had recently been overheard in the Afton pharmacy explaining why he needed new nannies: He'd fired the old ones after discovering them hurting the twins. "[He] also stated he had surveillance video of the abuse," one witness wrote in an affidavit. But the twins' maltreatment had also apparently come at the hands of their father. When plantation caretaker Vick "Butch" Deer flew in from South Carolina, he'd been stunned at where he found the preschoolers. "Walker made them stay down in the basement all the time," wrote Deer in an affidavit. "The basement was covered in feces and it was smeared all over and it smelled terrible. It was so bad that I wouldn't leave a dog in that condition."

The new Afton nannies were advised that their little charges were strange due to past abuses – that previous nannies had taped their mouths shut, among other evils – and possibly mentally retarded. Instead, the women were surprised to find the kids bright and friendly. Hull remembers them clambering into her lap for a story, and, brimming with mischief, constantly sprinting off into trouble, which she recognized as a ploy for attention. But there *was* something off about the children. They didn't know how to hold a pencil or draw with a crayon and were afflicted with serious speech delays. The few toys on the property were locked away.

All the while, the children had limited exposure to their mother, because Walker was engaged in a bitter fight to keep Daisha away from the kids – a fight that only escalated after Daisha made the unfortunate decision in 2003 to briefly marry a convicted sex offender, Randy Williams. Despite his own flaws as a parent, Walker became obsessed with protecting his children from Daisha and her new husband.

As the custody battle wore on, Daisha was often forced to represent herself for lack of funds, while Walker made use of his fortune to hire as much legal firepower as he needed. Thanks to his efforts, Daisha's role in her kids' lives would continue to shrink until she would virtually disappear; between 2003 and 2008, Georgia and Patterson would hardly see their mother at all. During those years, Walker would convince the twins that their mother was the enemy. He concocted stories that she was a hopeless addict who'd given them fetal alcohol syndrome, which explained why they were "retarded." "They kept telling us

that she didn't want to see us," says Georgia. "That she was a drugged-out mess and drunk, that she fed us alcohol, put it in our sippy cups." The twins learned to fear and resent Daisha. One court-ordered therapist who tried to intervene reported that Walker threatened to sue him.

Not that the kids seemed especially attached to their father and stepmother, either, and vice versa. Days into her employment, Hatton was asked to take the twins home with her for a week or more, and not only did the children go uncomplainingly, but neither parent ever called to check on them. In 2002, when nanny Phyllis Jasperson brought the kids to one of their infrequent visitations with Daisha, Jasperson observed the kids' excitement and unusual candor as they played with the cats and the Easy-Bake Oven. "They ran from one thing to another like kids do on Christmas," Jasperson later wrote in a letter at Daisha's request. "All the time telling their mother how daddy and the nannies hit them and

**One night Walker said, "I'm going for Thai food," then called days later – from Thailand.**

made them bleed, they begged their mother not to let the mean people hurt them any more."

Jasperson and Daisha called 911. When the next day Jasperson arrived at Walker's home for work she found the door locked; her employment was abruptly over after two weeks. None of the nannies were allowed to say goodbye to the children upon their sudden firings. Not Lizzie Hull, who burst into overwhelmed tears on her third day, and arrived the following morning to find she'd already been replaced. Not Rebecca Hatton, who after expressing concern about Walker's smoking around the children, returned to the estate from baby-sitting the twins for two weeks and found Walker firing guns, and drunkenly shouting, "Get your ass off my property and mind your fucking business if you know what's good for you!" Though the women were concerned about the kids, they were relieved at their dismissals. "Those people scare me," wrote Hull of her three whole days with the Inmans. "I never want to see any of them again."

**W**HEN PATTERSON was 10, his dad got him his first tear-gas grenade. He already had access to his father's arsenal of guns, of course, and made use of Dad's choicest toys, roaming their property with an antique Gatling, shoulder-mounted rocket launchers, even an AR-12 with "Dragon's Breath" incendiary rounds that ignited anything in their path, with which Patterson accidentally started a forest fire. But a couple of days after acquiring the grenade, Patterson and Georgia got to bickering. "I'm gonna throw this into your room!" Patterson threatened his sister. Much to the kids' surprise, Walker roused himself to intervene, snatching the grenade from Patterson – and then pulled the pin. The plan was to teach the boy a lesson. But when Walker tried sliding the pin back into place, his glee turned to panic. The pin wouldn't go back in.

"Aaagghh!" Walker hollered, tossing the grenade deeper into the house as tear gas sprayed out. Georgia had already fled; father and son screamed all the way to the front door, Patterson hurdling the stairs and Walker hobbling as fast as he could on account of his bad leg, where he'd once accidentally shot himself. When the house was finally aired out enough that they could re-enter, the children's pet goldfish were belly-up in their bowl.

"Ha-ha-ha! My dad was pretty crazy," recalls Patterson, wiping his eyes from laughter. It's one of Patterson's happiest childhood memories. When he'd overhear his father guffawing while retelling the tear-gas story to friends, he'd thrill to hear his own name in the co-starring role. The best way to capture Walker's attention was to partake in his enthusiasms – in Patterson's case, the joy of blowing things to kingdom come. Georgia found a different angle: She joined Walker in his epic bad-mouthing of their mother, Daisha, whom Walker called "Douchebag"; Walker never tired of hearing Georgia parroting him. But their efforts were of little use: Dad was absorbed in his own world. Sometimes it was a far-off place in his mind, but other times he'd disappear, either into his stinking bedroom; to auctions to bid on collectible guns and other trinkets; and to farther locales, as when one night he announced, "I'm going for Thai food," then called days later – from Thailand.

With their stepmother, the kids tried to be as invisible as possible. She'd been accumulating quite a rap sheet: Adding to her prior record of felony drug possession in Colorado, she was arrested in Utah for possessing meth and heroin, pleaded guilty to felony drug possession, and was sentenced to house arrest. Then, in Wyoming in 2007, police spotted her swerving into oncoming traffic, and pulled her over

to find she had heroin, crystal meth, meth pipes – and both children in the car. The kids had been overjoyed at the prospect that she'd go to prison, but upon her guilty plea Daralee received only probation. (Daralee declined to comment for this article.) "If I wanted kids I would have had my own!" Daralee would shout. She made

## INMAN VS. INMAN

(1) Daisha, the mother of Walker's children, waged a vicious custody battle with her ex-husband. In the Eighties (2), Daisha was an aspiring model. (3) Walker's fifth wife, Daralee, an abusive addict, told Walker, "If I wanted kids I would have had my own!"



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DANIELLE LEVITT; COURTESY OF MIKE TODD; IRON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

no effort to hide her loathing of the children. Teddy Thomas wrote in an affidavit that Daralee yelled at Walker, "I don't want anything to do with the kids, and that was our deal when we got married!" The twins never understood why Walker and Daralee got married at all. They never saw them kiss, but often heard their rowdy

no effort to hide her loathing of the children. Teddy Thomas wrote in an affidavit that Daralee yelled at Walker, "I don't want anything to do with the kids, and that was our deal when we got married!" The twins never understood why Walker and Daralee got married at all. They never saw them kiss, but often heard their rowdy

fight and vows to divorce. And the children claim they were frequent recipients of their stepmother's fury: that she smacked them around, once clubbing Georgia in the stomach with a baseball bat, and pushing Patterson down a flight of stairs. The worst part, they say, was when Daralee skulked around in the night. "Everything happened in the dark," says Georgia. It felt as though they hadn't had a good night's sleep in years.

At school the twins had trouble connecting with classmates, few of whom were allowed over to the Inmans' mansion a second time after gaping at the guns, the explicit art and sometimes an eyeful of Walker, who preferred to be nude. Other kids went to summer camp, but the Inmans went to Abu Dhabi to bid millions at auctions; to Japan, where their father introduced them to friends who were supposedly *yakuza*; to Fiji, where Dad praised them as they dined on poisonous puffer fish. There were getaways aboard the *Devine Decadence*, which was docked in New Zealand. One day toward the end of second grade, when their father had yanked them out of school without warning, they told themselves it was for the best.

"Home schooling," however, turned out to be little more than a revolving cast of tutors with no teaching experience. Instead of book learning, Georgia and Patterson honed their survival skills. They learned how to hide when Daralee called their names, not to complain when their bellies grumbled and never to cry: "Buck up and be a man," Walker would chide Patterson. They learned not to snitch to anyone who came around asking about their family life, especially cops. They learned, from their dad's warning, that if they ever heard a shot from the basement gun vault, not to come in; they knew he was talking about suicide, or "kissing the Luger," as he'd call it with a raise of his eyebrows.

Among the kids' first memories, as toddlers, are of being trapped in cribs turned upside down and the terror of being locked in the basement. Recalling those abuses, Georgia lapses into a halting monotone. "They. Stuck my brother and I. In hot boiling water in our bath," she says, forcing out the words. "It felt like our skin was melting away." Her eyes zone out and her entire body convulses in a shudder, which happens occasionally when she discusses her childhood past. "I get a lot of flashbacks," she says faintly.

Meanwhile, the simple pleasures of childhood missed them entirely. They don't recall ever having been tucked into bed. Birthdays went by forgotten by their parents, and one Christmas, Santa filled their stockings with coal. The kids were on high alert for all manner of surprises, as when one time, a skunk wandered into their lavish Great Room – filled with family heirlooms, including a portrait of Doris Duke –

and Walker pulled out a machine gun and mowed the animal down. And at least four times, Walker overdosed, sometimes while the kids were home. "The ambulance flew up the hill, the kids were hysterical," tutor Susan Todd wrote in a letter. "Walker was out cold on the floor covered in vomit and no one could wake him." Georgia began using her dad's computer to learn CPR online. "You're gonna die," she warned him.

"I promise you, I will live forever," Walker told her. "I am invincible."

On a series of supervised visits with their mother that year, 2008, it became clear the strain was taking its toll. As psychologists watched from behind a two-way mirror and a video camera filmed the proceedings, the children uttered non sequiturs that made plain their anguish, as when 10-year-old Georgia declared, "My dad never abused us! He would take us to the hospital every time! He's a good dad!" and, apropos of nothing, "Our house is so expensive. Mom [Daralee] kicks my butt, Dad never kicked my butt." Patterson, who spent the visits edging longingly toward his mother and accepting her hugs, looked directly into the camera, then turned away.

"I'm gonna be dead," he murmured. "The truth is eating me."

**O**NE OF THE MANY troubling aspects of Georgia and Patterson's story is how many people witnessed their torment, and yet no help

came. Certainly the kids were on the radar of Wyoming authorities for years. After nanny Phyllis Jaspersen called 911 in 2002, the Lincoln County Sheriff's deputies interviewed the kids at the station — "It appears to be a custody battle," one officer noted. "In my opinion the children appear to be in fine physical condition" — before forwarding the matter to Wyoming's Department of Family Services. According to Daisha's notes at the time, DFS took no action for lack of evidence. Still, there were plenty of other chances to step in, because through the years at least three other people claim they reported the Inmans to Wyoming's DFS and still no action was taken.

Investigating the family may have proved challenging. Georgia and Patterson say they did get occasional visits from DFS, which works in conjunction with local law enforcement, but that before the agent's arrival, their father would get a heads-up, hide his drugs and make the home presentable. (A DFS spokesman declined comment, citing privacy issues.)

When Walker's friend Mike Todd once broached the subject of sending Walker to rehab, Walker's lawyer shot down the idea, Todd says, arguing, "If you go to rehab, they will use this against you, and you will lose custody of the children." And yet during a 2007 custody hearing about wheth-

er Walker could relocate the family, his lawyer announced to the court, "There's never been any evidence of abuse and neglect.... In fact these are some of the most well-cared-for children there is." Eventually, the courts allowed the family to temporarily move across the country, to Greenfield Plantation.

Not long after their arrival in South Carolina in 2008, the state's Department of Social Services would field three separate calls about the Inmans. One was from Georgetown County police, who were summoned to a restaurant when Walker shouted at and hit Georgia so violently that two patrons said they feared for her safety. (Georgia told police she "deserved to be yelled at.") Another report came from a psychologist who evaluated the kids and was tipped off to the parents' drug history. And DSS was also notified by Todd, whom Walker had hired to do restoration work to the decrepit manor. Nothing seems to have resulted from any of the reports. The inac-

**"If a quarter of what the twins say is true, they are severely traumatized children," their therapist says.**

tion came as a shock to Todd, who could hardly believe the degree of madness playing out on Greenfield Plantation, a former rice farm where a pet camel named Sinbad roamed and where the family had once owned a lion cub until Walker fed it too many fast-food burgers and it died. "It was like living in an insane asylum," remembers Todd. "Like a nightmare you couldn't wake up from."

Though Daralee was enrolled in a Florida rehab — trying to catch a break on the sentencing from her latest drug bust — she and a band of friends visited Greenfield on weekends, leaving behind glass pipes and little brown packages, says Todd. The kids, then age 11, were left in the care of a pair of married nannies, whom Todd says were engrossed in their own doings, with the husband strolling the grounds swilling beer and shooting alligators, while the wife, stringy and unkempt and with one burst breast implant, would get so furious with the children that she once beat them with a steel ladle. The kids were locked in their rooms at night. By day, they wan-

dered the grounds unwatched, heedless of the snakes and alligators, and once had to be rescued from the fast-moving Black River, which they'd tried to sail in a homemade raft. Even Walker's longtime drug dealer Carl Richardson was shocked at the kids' danger, and by Walker's obliviousness. "Walker was usually so drugged up that he didn't care what the children were doing," he wrote in an affidavit.

Walker spent that summer nodding out all over the house, scarcely able to keep his head up. He'd become sick and monstrous-looking. Pallid but for his purple-veined nose, he tried to add color in his cheeks by scrubbing them with Borax powder. His top teeth had fallen out, and his dental implants wouldn't stay in, leaving him a mouthful of titanium pegs. Walker was beginning to shut out longtime friends, dismissing them as either money-grubbers or unwilling to "ride with the brand" — traitors, in cowboy lingo. His paranoia was so extreme that he lugged a huge case of guns wherever he traveled. He'd come to think himself so capable that when he accidentally cut his thumb to the bone, and the wound became infected, Walker performed surgery on it himself in a Las Vegas hotel room, using a scalpel from a 19th-century surgical kit he'd bought at auction. He had no fear of death, he'd told Todd, because years earlier, while in India, he had learned to stop and start his own heart. "The monks were amazed," Walker slurred.

And yet once in a great while, a shaft of self-awareness penetrated. In a mildewy closet in the plantation's main house one day, Walker came across a shoe box filled with his father's belongings. Walker sat cross-legged on the floor and took out the items one by one: his pilot's license; a newspaper notice of his 1954 death from "consumption" in this very house. There at the bottom of the box were a pair of oval lenses in gold wire frames: Walker Sr.'s spectacles. Walker lifted them out. His father had been a spoiled heir who'd loafed his life away, drinking himself into oblivion, becoming nothing more than a specter in the imagination of his love-starved son — a biography of failure that Walker had duplicated. Walker closed his hand around the spectacles, hung his head and wept.

**T**HERE WERE FLIRTATIONS with sobriety. As Walker attempted to ease off the hard stuff — soothing himself with swigs of pink syrupy methadone — he started cooking family meals again, always the first sign of his resurfacing. New plantation caretaker Ron Altman had initially been appalled at the way Walker brushed off Georgia's hugs and barely glanced at Patterson, but now saw a change. "He was not a warm parent, but

I watched this man and his family grow," says Altman. "I tell you what I think, those kids finally got to him."

Walker became playful, amusing the twins by singing loud choruses of "Witch Doctor." "When he was in his right frame of mind he was really funny," Georgia says. The children hung on their father's every word as he told them the adventure tale behind each of his tattoos; laughed about his childhood havoc at Aunt Doris'; and confided for the first time the miseries of boarding school, where Walker said he was bullied by the other boys, and had vented his fury by blowing up a latrine. As Georgia and Patterson drank in their father's attention, they felt as though he was revealing himself for the first time. And in those moments of vulnerability the twins recognized something crucial. "My dad was really sad," says Patterson. "My dad was really lonely. He didn't really have any friends."

By the time the Inmans returned to their Wyoming home in 2009, Walker had slipped back into self-absorption and the kids were stuck with their stepmother, whom they say had become scarier than ever. Much later, in April 2011, a government authority would finally render a decision on Daralee when, according to a document from South Carolina's Department of Social Services, a two-month investigation determined that in retrospect, "minor children Patterson and Georgia Inman were physically abused by their step-mother Daralee Inman." DSS declined to comment beyond confirming the investigation's existence. But the twins claim that back in Wyoming, Daralee's abuse spun out of control.

"Daralee was mad and she fucking hit me with a kitchen knife," says Patterson. "Look, it's right here." He's standing shirtless in the finished basement of their home, taking a break from his Xbox to show me a thin four-inch white scar trailing from his right armpit down his side. "I'm not lying," he adds. Georgia had earlier recounted that after the stabbing, she had run to her brother's rescue by grabbing a first-aid kit, straddling Patterson to hold him still and, incredibly, sewing up the wound herself. When I ask Patterson about it, however, he reels backward at the suggestion.

"I don't know what the hell she's talking about. I'm not gonna let her stitch me! Are you crazy?" he hollers. Later Georgia insists she's telling the truth, explaining that her brother has repressed parts of their childhood. "He doesn't really remember," she says calmly. "He's real mad about it."

Though many of the painful details of their childhoods are backed up by sworn affidavits from family employees and other records, other stories the twins tell about their lives have a surreal, if not downright implausible, tinge. They talk of their stepmother encouraging them to read a satanic bible, holding Georgia down to inject her with drugs, and serving them meat crawl-

ing with maggots, which Patterson can't discuss without dry-heaving. They tell me that while visiting Japan, they witnessed a *yakuza* torture session; that in Wyoming, they once hid in the trees while drug dealers opened fire on their house; and that during a road trip through Nebraska, their father shot dead a posse of would-be carjackers, after which Walker slid back into the driver's seat, bloodied, lit a cigarette and muttered, "Don't talk."

As fantastical as they sound, these memories are as real to the twins as all the rest. It's as though the Inmans' trauma is so deep that ordinary tales don't describe the horror. Georgia nonchalantly speaks of seeing ghosts hanging by their necks from trees, and of a china doll she once owned turning its head to leer at her. That theatrical quality extends even to some of the twins' happy memories, as when they delightedly recount the time they and their father tranquilized a bobcat, stuffed it into a suitcase, left it by a South Carolina roadside, and watched from hiding as unlucky passers-by opened the case to discover the pissed-off contents — "It jumps out, blood everywhere, and you can hear them screaming," Patterson says while Georgia screeches with laughter — surely *that* couldn't be true, could it? Other stories are sweeter. When they tell me with pride about the time their father took them to an Eagles concert in Myrtle Beach, and they were brought onstage to sing "Hotel California," I don't have the heart to tell them that no such thing happened; I've already been told by Todd, who accompanied them to the show, that Walker had been so incapacitated that he'd lain semiconscious in the grass until they'd left early.

On the morning of February 25th, 2010, the clerk of a Lakewood, Colorado, Holiday Inn found Walker Patterson Inman Jr. dead on the floor of his hotel room. From the disarray it was evident how Walker had spent his final eight days on Earth: with a butane torch; a water pipe made from a soda bottle; a Ziploc baggie filled with heroin; and prescription meds including an opiate blocker, which, the coroner noted, heroin users often take in the mistaken belief that it counteracts overdoses. The official cause of death was a methadone overdose. His death certificate listed his occupation as "lifetime adventurer."

Without their father in the picture, the custody battle took a bitter new edge. Daralee demanded that the twins call her "Mom," and forbade them from attending Walker's burial in South Carolina, warning the kids that Daisha would be there to scoop them up. In August 2010, Daisha arrived at Outlaw Acres with a court order, a fleet of police cars and two ambulances to claim her children. Georgia threw rocks at her mother's windshield, screaming, "Fuck you, Daisha," while, Patterson says, Daralee instructed him to get his gun and

shoot Daisha. After an hourlong standoff, the kids grudgingly surrendered. Marching past Daisha in the driveway, Georgia kicked her mother hard in the shin, a gesture her father would have appreciated. Then the twins were loaded into an ambulance for the six-hour drive to a children's psychiatric facility, where they would be institutionalized for the next three months.

**M**Y BROTHER'S really mad now," observes Georgia, seated at the breakfast nook of the Inmans'

spacious rental home, morning sunshine pouring in the wraparound windows. It's a Friday before school, for which Georgia is overdressed in a brown Calvin Klein dress, her chin-length golden-brown hair still shower-damp. Behind her, Patterson is pacing with agitation, hands clenched at his sides as he listens to his sister recap their troubled upbringing. "My brother, he has serious issues," Georgia continues. "He can't even recall whether our father ever said he loved him. But yet he likes to say—"

"Wait, wait, wait—" Patterson, in jeans, a black T-shirt and a newsboy cap, interrupts to defend his father. "He's *not* a bad man," Patterson says of Walker. "He isn't!" Upset, he storms off across the room with Daisha in pursuit to try and comfort him. Daisha, a hyper, distractible woman whose green eyes blink from behind a duck blind of false lashes, has been grateful for her reunion with her kids but also overwhelmed by the parenting needs of two emotionally disturbed teenagers. She tries to keep them upbeat with cheery slogans posted throughout the house, like the note taped to a bathroom mirror that says "Anger is for losers and we are winners"; or the framed sign over the fireplace where Patterson and Daisha are now heatedly arguing, reading, *A MOTHER'S HEART IS A SPECIAL PLACE WHERE CHILDREN HAVE A HOME*. At the table, Georgia tries to keep her composure despite the rising voices in the background, then loses it.

"Rainbows and butterflies!" she yells viciously at her mother and brother, her own taunting affirmation.

The past three years have been a struggle for the twins as they've grappled with their past. Before they were able to live with Daisha, they were sent to the Wyoming Behavioral Institute. The twins were suicidal, uncooperative and dangerously underweight. Therapist Jennifer Greenup had never seen such extreme emotional deprivation before. "If even a quarter of what they said happened to them happened, they are severely traumatized children," says Greenup, adding, "Their symptoms are real. Whether it's paranoia, lack of trust or hostility." Eventually the kids were able to move in with [Cont. on 74]

## POOREST RICH KIDS

[Cont. from 63] Daisha and began bonding, a triumph unto itself. But although they've taken positive steps, Greenup says the scale of their trauma is so great that she can't gauge their progress: "I can't say they're progressing well, because there's nothing to compare it to," she admits.

Seeking security while they work on their issues, Georgia and Patterson have retreated into familiar isolation. They're enrolled in ninth grade at a special private school that provides one-on-one tutoring, which is getting them caught up to grade level, but have limited real-world contact with other kids. When not at school they're hiding here at the house, where Patterson plays *Grand Theft Auto* with an online crew called Reapers MC. Georgia, though the more outgoing of the pair, is even more cautious. "I don't think I'm ready for friendship yet," she says heavily; she feels ill-equipped for the vagaries of teenage drama when all she really wants is to extend for a little longer a childhood she never fully had. The twins still believe in Santa Claus. They wrote him letters last year; Patterson's poignant note, his scrawl as sloppy as a first-grader's, read, "Dear Santa I know I haven't been good But if you do come all I want is to say hi to you in person." The kids insist that not only did Saint Nick reward them with gifts – "I mean, explain to me how three huge bags get into a house basement!" argues Georgia – but that they actually saw him. Georgia has also glimpsed another unlikely person lately: her father, who has appeared to her since his death. In fact, she says in a hushed voice, "I think he's here." She indicates the empty chair beside her at the breakfast table.

**T**HE TWINS CLEARLY HAVE A LOT of healing to do. Though they're now in therapy, the banks that control their trust funds had at one time claimed that the children hadn't demonstrated the need for mental-health help. It's a bone of contention in one of the two financial struggles that currently dominate the kids' lives. Because they were minors when their father died, any disbursements from the trusts they inherited must be approved by the banks that oversee them. They need to provide receipts for every penny spent, and most requests for funds require prior bank authorization, a cumbersome process that leads to e-mails like this one from a JP Morgan vice president: "I received your email regarding Patterson's kickboxing, and will advise you on that request after we have had a chance to review with the Committee." Such bureaucracy resulted in the kids being temporarily suspended from school – which costs up to \$20,000 a month – for nonpayment.

"Those damn trustees!" fumes Daisha. "They had no oversight when Walker was

alive, and they funded two severe drug addicts and let them run amok," yet the banks subject her to what she sees as unreasonable scrutiny. For example, when she and the kids moved from a converted church in South Carolina to Park City without warning last fall, she was outraged that trustees insisted upon ousting the family from their \$120,000-a-month St. Regis Hotel suite. "We were forced into the only house available!" Daisha shrieks, referring to their current \$20,000-a-month spread. "Between ski season and Sundance, we were almost on the street!"

JP Morgan and Citibank declined to comment, but in documents filed in Manhattan Surrogate Court, JP Morgan has argued it needed to be vigilant in protecting the kids' money, because since Walker's death it has been bombarded with outrageous financial requests from Daralee, who asked for \$1.9 million; from Walker's attorney, who wanted "unlimited funding" in connection with his role as a trustee of Walker's estate; and from Daisha, who asked for a lump sum of more than \$430,500. She later asked for \$50,000 to buy the kids' Christmas gifts and a trip around the world. Unhappy wasting money on rental properties, Daisha also recently looked into buying a \$29 million ranch, which she claims could be had for a mere \$15 million: "What's that to the children, seven and a half million apiece, cut and dried?" she scoffs. But JP Morgan nixed the request as expensive enough to decimate the trust. Because for all the family gossip about Walker's riches, it appears there may be very little left of the family fortune: According to sources, the children stand to inherit not a billion-dollar trust, but a comparatively paltry \$60 million.

While the twins sort out their money with the banks, they're also waging battle in Wyoming, because they claim their father's estate is being raided. Walker left behind not much in the way of liquid assets but a lifetime's worth of possessions, which he willed to his children in trust. At the moment, however, the kids can't set foot on their properties in Wyoming or South Carolina, because Daralee has a legal right to reside in both houses; when they tried to visit their father's grave on Greenfield Plantation, police were summoned. And they've spotted some of their dad's precious collectibles being sold online. In 2011, a Maine auction house unloaded 25 of Walker's fine firearms, many engraved w.p.i., for \$300,000. "I don't let anybody take my dad's things. It's our family's history," says Patterson angrily. After a lifetime of powerlessness, being robbed of his father's mementos is one more degradation than he can stand. He and Georgia would like to exact revenge on everyone they consider responsible for their abuse. "I'm taking everybody's asses downtown," says Patterson. "Everybody

that fucked with my family, and fucked with me and my sis."

The kids need to figure out what comes next for them – how they can start creating a life for themselves, and connect with others. Daisha has devised what she thinks is a terrific idea for an appropriate new set of playmates: She's working on getting the twins together with Michael Jackson's kids, with whom she thinks they'd have tons in common. "Wouldn't that be historic? The Jacksons and the Dukes, two of the most famous names, together?" Daisha asks.

As for the kids' own plans, Patterson seems to hope for a quiet life. "I hope I don't have to live alone. But I actually don't mind. I'll just sit at Greenfield, fishing by my dad's little tomb, just talking about life," he says. "You can't trust anyone," he adds mournfully, repeating the words he learned from his father, which Walker learned from his aunt Doris, which she learned from her father, Buck Duke.

Georgia is more optimistic. Inspired by self-help books, she wonders if she might turn their experiences into something positive, perhaps by becoming a motivational speaker for abused kids. "There's gonna be some things that are harsh and you can't undo them," she says. "But the choices you make are what make you." The idea appeals to her: That you need not be shaped by your past, but rather that the path ahead can be forged solely by your own actions, starting now. It happens to be the same can-do mentality of Buck Duke's father, Washington Duke, whose sense of possibility more than a century ago transformed the Dukes from North Carolina dirt farmers into tycoons. But for Georgia and Patterson to truly turn their lives around, they'll ultimately need to step outside of the bubble that great wealth affords and learn some of the life skills that eluded so many in their lineage. If only there was someone to teach them.

"Hey, Georgia! Patterson! You ready for your Power Thought reading with me?" Daisha yells across the house, and the twins gather in her spacious bedroom. Daisha dashes around lighting incense and putting on a tootling New Age CD, explaining that they've been drawing healing strength from a melding of Christian forgiveness, crystals, Native American folklore, a *Spirituality for Dummies* book and a three-foot cherrywood Buddha statue she keeps in her walk-in closet. She picks up a small glossy-paged book of affirmations. "You want to pick the Power Thought, or should I?" Daisha asks brightly. Neither child answers, but slump back against her four-poster bed and stare with blank faces at the carpet, quietly waiting for it to be over. For a long moment there's no sound but soothing spa music while their mother thumbs through the book, searching for the mantra that will get the twins through another day. 