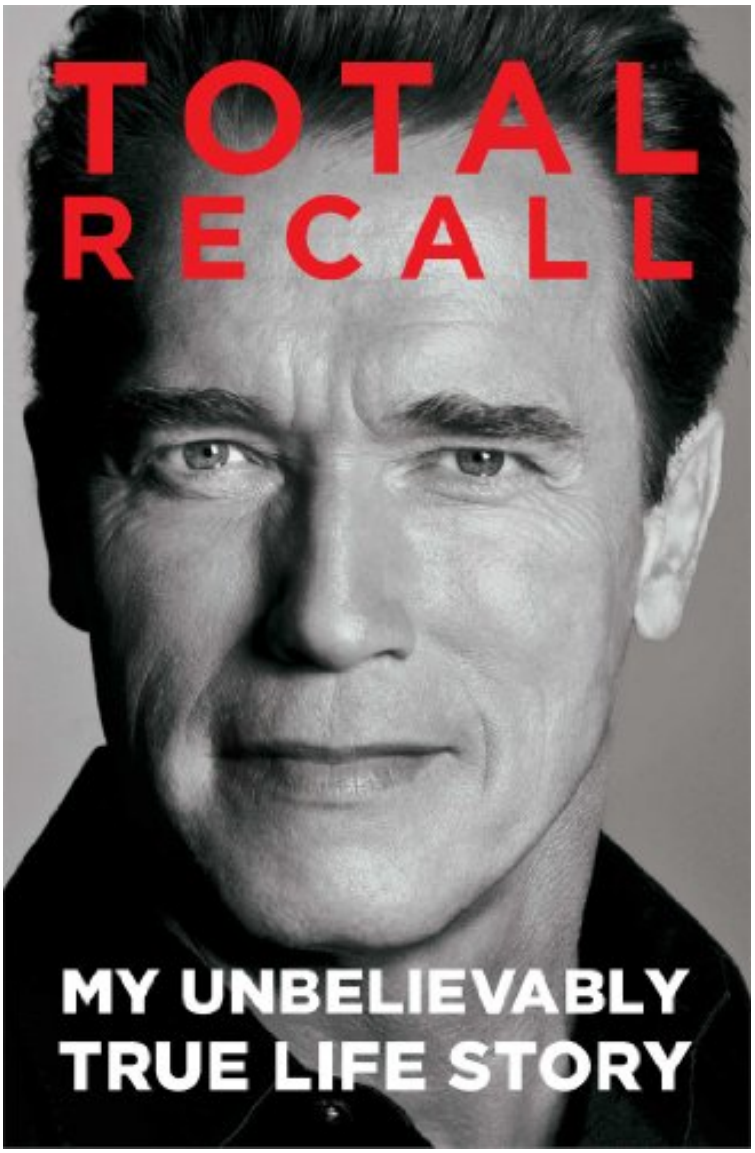
Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story (English Edition)



Par Arnold Schwarzenegger
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[Mobile ebook] Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story (English Edition)

Par Arnold Schwarzenegger : Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story (English Edition):

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurTHE GREATEST IMMIGRANT SUCCESS STORY OF OUR TIME His story is unique, and uniquely entertaining, and he tells it brilliantly in these pages.He was born in a year of famine, in a small Austrian town, the son of an austere police chief. He dreamed of moving to America to become a bodybuilding champion and a movie star.By the age of twenty-one, he was living in Los Angeles and had been crowned Mr. Universe.Within five years, he had learned English and become the greatest bodybuilder in the world.Within ten years, he had earned his college degree and was a millionaire from his business

enterprises in real estate, landscaping, and bodybuilding. He was also the winner of a Golden Globe Award for his debut as a dramatic actor in Stay Hungry.Within twenty years, he was the worlds biggest movie star, the husband of Maria Shriver, and an emerging Republican leader who was part of the Kennedy family.Thirty-six years after coming to America, the man once known by fellow bodybuilders as the Austrian Oak was elected governor of California, the seventh largest economy in the world. He led the state through a budget crisis, natural disasters, and political turmoil, working across party lines for a better environment, election reforms, and bipartisan solutions. With Maria Shriver, he raised four fantastic children. In the wake of a scandal he brought upon himself, he tried to keep his family together.Until now, he has never told the full story of his life, in his own voice.Here is Arnold, with total recall.ExtraitCHAPTER 1 Out of Austria I WAS BORN INTO a year of famine. It was 1947, and Austria was occupied by the Allied armies that had defeated Hitlers Third Reich. In May, two months before I was born, there were hunger riots in Vienna, and in Styria, the southeastern province where we lived, the food shortages were just as bad. Years later, if my mother wanted to remind me about how much she and my father sacrificed to bring me up, shed tell me how shed foraged across the countryside, making her way from farm to farm to collect a little butter, some sugar, some grain. Shed be away three days sometimes. Hamstern, they called it, like a hamster gathering nuts; scrounging for food was so common. Thal was the name of our very typical farm village. A few hundred families made up the entire population, their houses and farms clustered in hamlets connected by footpaths and lanes. The unpaved main road ran for a couple of kilometers up and down low alpine hills covered with fields and pine forests. We saw very little of the British forces who were in chargejust an occasional truck with soldiers rolling through. But to the east, Russians occupied the area, and we were very conscious of them. The Cold War had begun, and we all lived in fear that the Russian tanks would roll in, and wed be swallowed up into the Soviet empire. The priests in church would scare the congregation with horror stories of Russians shooting babies in the arms of their mothers. Our house was on the top of a hill along the road, and as I was growing up, it was unusual to see more than one or two cars come through a day. A ruined castle dating back to feudal times was right across from us, one hundred yards from our door. On the next rise were the mayors office; the Catholic church where my mother made us all go to Sunday Mass; the local Gasthaus, or inn, which was the social heart of the village; and the primary school attended by me and my brother, Meinhard, who was a year older than me. My earliest memories are of my mother washing clothes and my father shoveling coal. I was no more than three years old, but the image of my father is especially sharp in my mind. He was a big, athletic guy, and he did a lot of things himself. Every autumn wed get our winter supply of coal, a truckload dumped in front of our house, and on this occasion he was letting Meinhard and me help him carry it into the cellar. We were always so proud to be his assistants. My father and mom both originally came from working-class families farther northfactory laborers, mostly, in the steel industry. During the chaos at the end of World War II, theyd met in the city of Mrzzuschlag, where my mother, Aurelia Jadrny, was a clerk in a food-distribution center at city hall. She was in her early twenties, and a war widowher husband had gotten killed just eight months after their wedding. Working at her desk one morning, she noticed my father passing on the streetan older guy, in his late thirties, but tall and good looking and wearing the uniform of the gendarmerie, the rural police. She was crazy about men in uniforms, so every day after that she watched for him. She figured out when his shift was so she would be sure to be at her desk. Theyd talk through the open window, and shed give him some food from whatever they had on hand. His name was Gustav Schwarzenegger. They got married late in 1945. He was thirty-eight, and she was twenty-three. My father was assigned to Thal and put in charge of a four-man post responsible for the village and nearby countryside. The salary was barely enough to live on, but with the job came a place to live: the old foresters lodge, or Forsthaus. The forest ranger, or Forstmeister, lived on the ground floor, and the Inspektor and his family occupied the top. My boyhood home was a very simple stone and brick building, well proportioned, with thick walls and little windows to keep out the alpine winters. We had two bedrooms, each with a coal oven for heat, and a kitchen, where we ate, did our homework, washed ourselves, and played games. The heat in that room was supplied by my mothers stove. There was no plumbing, no shower, and no flushing toilet, just a kind of chamber pot. The nearest well was almost a quarter mile away, and even when it was raining hard or snowing, one of us had to go. So we used as little water as we could. Wed heat it and fill the washbasin and give ourselves sponge or cloth bathsmy mother would wash herself first with the clean water; next, my father would wash himself; and then Meinhard and I would have our turn. It didnt matter if we had slightly darker water as long as we could avoid a trip to the well. We had wood furniture, very basic, and a few

electric lamps. My father liked pictures and antiques, but when we were growing up, these were luxuries he couldnt afford. Music and cats brought liveliness to our house. My mother played the zither and sang us songs and lullabies, but it was my father who was the real musician. He could play all the wind and reed instruments: trumpets, flgelhorns, saxophones, clarinets. He also wrote music and was the conductor of the regions gendarmerie bandif a police officer died anywhere in the state, the band would play at the funeral. Often on Sundays in summer, wed go to concerts in the park, where he would conduct and sometimes play. Most of our relatives on his side were musical, but that talent never made it to Meinhard or me. Im not sure why we had cats instead of dogsmaybe because my mother loved them and they cost nothing because they caught their own food. But we always had lots of cats, running in and out, curling up here and there, bringing down half-dead mice from the attic to show off what great hunters they were. Everyone had his or her own cat to curl up with in bed at nightthat was our tradition. At one point, we had seven cats. We loved the cats, but never too much, because there was no such thing as going to the vet. If one of the cats started falling over from being too sick or too old, wed wait to hear the shot from the backyardthe sound of my fathers pistol. My mother, Meinhard, and I would then go out and make a grave with a little cross on top. My mother had a black cat named Mooki that she constantly claimed was unique, although none of us could see why. One day when I was about ten, I was arguing with my mother about not wanting to do my homework. Mooki was nearby, curled up on the couch, as usual. I must have said something really uppity because my mother moved to smack me across the face. I saw it coming and tried to fend her off, but instead I hit her with the back of my arm. In a second, Mooki was off the couchshe leaped up between us and started clawing at my face. I pulled her off me and yelled, Ow! What is this!? Mom and I looked at each other and burst out laughing, even though I had blood running down my cheek. Finally, she had proof that Mooki was special. After the turmoil of the war, my parents big desire was for us to be stable and safe. My mother was a big, square-built woman, solid and resourceful, and she was also a traditional hausfrau who kept the house immaculately clean. Shed roll up the rugs and get down on her hands and knees with a brush and soap and scrub the planking, and then dry it off with rags. She was fanatical about keeping our clothes neatly hung and our sheets and towels precisely folded, with razor-sharp corners at the edge. Out back, she planted beets and potatoes and berries to keep us fed, and in fall she would put up preserves and sauerkraut in thick glass jars for the winter. Always when my father came home from the police station at twelve thirty, mom would be ready with lunch, and again with supper when he came home precisely at six oclock. The finances were her job too. Having been a clerk, she was very organized and was good at writing and math. Each month when my father brought home his pay, shed leave him five hundred schillings for pocket money and take the rest for running the house. She handled all the familys correspondence and paid the monthly bills. Once a year, always in December, she took us shopping for clothes. Wed ride a bus to the Kastner hler department store just over the next ridge, in Graz. The old building had only two or three floors, but in our minds it was as big as the Mall of America. It had escalators and a metal and glass elevator, so we could see everything as we rode up and down. Mom would buy just the absolute necessities for us, shirts and underwear and socks and so forth, and these would be delivered to our house the next day in neat brown paper bundles. Installment plans were new then, and she really liked being able to pay off a fraction of the bill each month until it was all paid. Liberating people like my mom to shop was a good way to stimulate the economy. She took charge of medical problems too, even though my father was the one trained to deal with emergencies. My brother and I had every possible childhood illness, from mumps to scarlet fever to measles, so she got lots of practice. Nothing stopped her: one winter night when we were toddlers, Meinhard had pneumonia, and there was no doctor or ambulance to be had. Leaving me home with my dad, my mother bundled Meinhard on her back and hiked more than two miles in the snow to the hospital in Graz. My father was a lot more complicated. He could be generous and affectionate, especially with her. They loved each other intensely. You could see it in the way she brought him coffee and in the way he was always finding small gifts for her, and hugging her and patting her on the behind. They shared their affection with us: we always got to cuddle up with them in bed, especially if we were scared by thunder and lightning. But about once a week, usually on Friday night, my father would come home drunk. Hed been out until two or three or four in the morning, drinking at his usual table at the Gasthaus with the locals, often including the priest, the school principal, and the mayor. Wed wake up to hear him banging around in a rage and yelling at my mom. The anger never lasted, and the next day hed be sweet and nice and take us to lunch or give us gifts to make up. If we misbehaved, however, he would smack us or use his belt on us. To us, all this seemed totally normal: everybodys dad used physical punishment and came home drunk. One father who lived near us pulled his

sons ears and chased him with a thin, flexible stick that hed soaked in water to make it hurt more. The drinking seemed like just a part of the camaraderie, which was usually much more benign. Sometimes the wives and families would be invited to join their husbands at the Gasthaus. We kids always felt honored to sit with the adults and then be treated to dessert. Or wed be allowed into the next room and drink a little Coca-Cola and play board games and look at magazines or the TV. Wed be sitting there at midnight thinking, Wow, this is terrific! It took me years to understand that behind the Gemtlichkeit there was bitterness and fear. We were growing up among men who felt like a bunch of losers. Their generation had started World War II and lost. During the war, my father had left the gendarmerie to become a policeman in the German army. Hed served in Belgium and France, and in North Africa, where he caught malaria. In 1942 he barely escaped being captured at Leningrad, the bloodiest battle of the war. The building he was in was blown up by the Russians. He was trapped under rubble for three days. His back was broken, and he had shrapnel in both legs. It took months in a Polish hospital before he recovered enough to come home to Austria and rejoin the civilian police. And who knows how long it took his psychic wounds to heal, given all that he had witnessed? I heard them talk about it when they were drunk, and can imagine how painful it was for them. They were all beaten and also frightened that any day the Russians might come and take them away to rebuild Moscow or Stalingrad. They were angry. They tried to suppress the rage and humiliation, but disappointment was deep in their bones. Think about it: you are promised you will be a citizen of a great new empire. Every family will have the latest conveniences. Instead, you come home to a land in ruins, theres very little money, food is scarce, everything needs to be rebuilt. The occupying forces are there, so youre not even in charge of your country anymore. Worst of all, you have no way to process what youve experienced. How could you cope with that unbelievable trauma when no one was supposed to talk about it? Instead, the Third Reich was being officially erased. All public servantslocal officials, schoolteachers, policehad to go through what the Americans called denazification. You were questioned, and your record was examined to determine if you had been really hard-core or in a position to commit war crimes. Everything having to do with the Nazi era was confiscated: books, films, posterseven your personal journals and photographs. You had to give over everything: the war was supposed to be erased from your mind. Meinhard and I were only faintly aware of it. In our house was a beautiful picture book that we would borrow to play priest and pretend it was the Bible because it was much larger than our actual family Bible. One of us would stand and hold it open while the other would say Mass. The book was actually a do-it-yourself album for promoting the mighty accomplishments of the Third Reich. There were sections for different categories, such as public works, tunnels and dams under construction, Hitlers rallies and speeches, great new ships, new monuments, great battles being fought in Poland. Each category had blank pages that were numbered, and whenever you went to the store and bought something or invested in a war bond, you would get a photo to match up with a number and paste into your book. When the collection was complete, youd win a prize. I loved the pages that showed magnificent train stations and powerful locomotives spouting steam, and I was mesmerized by the picture of two men riding a little open flat handcar on the track, pumping the lever up and down to move themselves alongthat seemed like adventure and freedom to me. Meinhard and I had no idea what we were looking at, but one day when we went to play priest, the album was gone. We searched everywhere. Finally, I asked my mother where the beautiful book had disappeared: after all, that was our Bible! All she would say was, We had to give it up. Later I would say to my father, Tell me about the war, or ask him questions about what he did or went through. His reply was always, Theres nothing to talk about. His answer to life was discipline. We had a strict routine that nothing could change: wed get up at six, and it would be my job or Meinhards to get milk from the farm next door. When we were a little older and starting to play sports, exercises were added to the chores, and we had to earn our breakfast by doing sit-ups. In the afternoon, wed finish our homework and chores, and my father would make us practice soccer no matter how bad the weather was. If we messed up on a play, we knew wed get yelled at. My father believed just as strongly in training our brains. After Mass on Sunday, hed take us on a family outing: visiting another village, maybe, or seeing a play, or watching him perform with the police band. Then in the evening we had to write a report on our activities, ten pages at least. Hed hand back our papers with red ink scribbled all over them, and if we had spelled a word wrong, we had to copy it fifty times over. I loved my father and really wanted to be like him. I remember once when I was little, putting on his uniform and standing on a chair in front of the mirror. The jacket came down like a robe almost to my feet, and the hat was falling down on my nose. But he had no patience with our problems. If we wanted a bicycle, hed tell us to earn the money for it ourselves. I never felt that I was good enough, strong enough,

smart enough. He let me know that there was always room for improvement. A lot of sons would have been crippled by his demands, but instead the discipline rubbed off on me. I turned it into drive. Meinhard and I were very close. We shared a bedroom until I was eighteen and left to join the army, and I never would have had it any other way. To this day, Im more comfortable when theres someone to schmooze with until I fall asleep. We were also supercompetitive the way brothers often arealways trying to outdo each other and win the favor of our dad, who, of course, was a competitive athlete himself. Hed set up races for us and say, Now lets see whos really the best. We were bigger than most of the other boys, but since I was a year younger, Meinhard usually won these head-to-head competitions. I was always on the lookout for ways to gain the advantage. Meinhards weak spot was fear of the dark. When he was ten, he finished elementary school in our village and graduated to the Hauptschule, which was over the ridge in Graz. To get there involved taking public transportation, and the bus stop was about a twenty-minute walk from our house. The problem for Meinhard was that school activities usually ran until well after sunset on the short winter days, so he had to make his way home after dark. He was too scared to do this alone, so it became my job to go to the bus stop and pick him up. In fact I was scared too, going out in the dark alone at age nine. There were no streetlamps, and Thal was pitch black at night. The roads and paths were lined with pine forests like the ones in Grimms fairy tales, so dense it was dark even in daytime. Of course wed been raised on those horrible stories, which I would never read to my kids but which were part of the culture. There was always some witch or wolf or monster waiting to hurt the child. Having a policeman as a father also fed our fears. Sometimes hed take us on foot patrol, and hed announce he was looking for this or that criminal or killer. Wed come up to a hay barn standing by itself in a field, and hed make us stand and wait while he pulled out his gun and checked inside. Or word would get around that he and his men had caught some thief, and we would run down to the station to look at the guy sitting there, handcuffed to a chair. Reaching the bus stop was not a simple matter of following a road. The footpath wound past the castle ruins and downhill along the edge of the woods. One night I was walking on that path, keeping a close eye for threats in the trees, when suddenly, out of nowhere, a man was in front of me on the path. There was just enough moonlight to make out his shape and his two eyes shining. I screamed and stood frozenit turned out to be just one of the local farmworkers headed the other way, but if it had been a goblin, it would have gotten me for sure. I fought back my fear mainly because I had to prove that I was stronger. It was extremely important to show my parents I am brave, hes not, even though hes a year and fourteen days older than me. This determination paid off. For the trouble of picking up Meinhard, my father gave me five schillings a week. My mother took advantage of my fearlessness to send me to buy the vegetables each week at the farmers market, which involved trekking through a different dark forest. This chore earned five schillings as well, money I happily spent on ice cream or my stamp collection. The downside, however, was that my parents grew more protective of Meinhard and gave less attention to me. During the school holidays that summer of 1956, they sent me to work on my godmothers farm, but they kept my brother at home. I enjoyed the physical labor but felt left out when I got home and discovered theyd taken Meinhard on an excursion to Vienna without me. Gradually our paths diverged. While I would be reading the newspapers sports pages and memorizing athletes names, Meinhard developed a passion for reading Der Spiegel, the German equivalent of Time magazinein our family, that was a first. He made it his thing to learn the name and population of every world capital and the name and length of every significant river in the world. He memorized the periodic table and chemical formulas. He was a fanatic about facts and would challenge our father constantly to test what he knew. At the same time, Meinhard developed an aversion to physical work. He didnt like to get his hands dirty. He started wearing white shirts to school every day. My mother went along with it but complained to me, I thought I had my hands full washing your fathers white shirts. Now he starts with his white shirts. Before long, it became the family prediction that Meinhard would be a white-collar worker, possibly an engineer, while I would be blue-collar, since I didnt mind getting my hands dirty at all. Do you want to be a mechanic? my parents would say. How about a furniture maker? Or they thought I might become a cop like my dad. I had other ideas. Somehow the thought took shape in my mind that America was where I belonged. Nothing more concrete than that. Just . . . America. Im not sure what triggered this. Maybe it was to escape the struggle of Thal and my fathers iron rule, or maybe it was the excitement of going to Graz every day, where in autumn 1957, I followed Meinhard into the Hauptschule and started fifth grade. Compared to Thal, Graz was a giant metropolis, complete with cars and shops and sidewalks. There were no Americans there, but America was seeping into the culture. All the kids knew how to play cowboys and Indians. We saw pictures of American cities and suburbs and landmarks and highways in our textbooks and in grainy black-and-white

documentaries shown on the clackety movie projector in our class. More important, we knew that we needed America for safety. In Austria, the Cold War was immediate. Whenever there was a crisis, my father would have to pack his backpack and leave for the Hungarian border, fifty-five miles to the east, to help man the defenses. A year earlier in 1956, when the Soviets crushed the Hungarian revolution, he was in charge of taking care of the hundreds of people fleeing into our area. He set up the relocation camps and helped the refugees get where they wanted to go. Some wanted to go to Canada; some wanted to stay in Austria; and of course many wanted to go to America. He and his men worked with the families, and he had us kids come along and help feed them soup, which made a big impression on me. Our education about the world continued at the NonStop Kino, a newsreel theater near the central square in Graz. It ran an hourlong show over and over all day. First would be a newsreel with footage from all around the world and a voice-over in German, then Mickey Mouse or some other cartoon, and then commercials consisting of slides of various stores in Graz. Finally, music would play, and the whole thing would start again. The NonStop wasnt expensivejust a few schillingsand each newsreel seemed to bring new wonders: Elvis Presley singing Hound Dog. President Dwight Eisenhower making a speech. Clips of jet airliners and streamlined American cars and movie stars. Those are images I remember. There was also boring stuff, of course, and stuff that went right over my head, like the 1956 crisis over the Suez Canal. American movies made an even deeper impression. The first one that Meinhard and I ever saw was a Tarzan film starring Johnny Weissmuller. I thought he was going to swing right out of the screen at us. The idea that a human could swing from tree to tree and talk to lions and chimpanzees was fascinating, and so was Tarzans whole thing with Jane. I thought that was a good life. Meinhard and I went back to see it several times. Two movie theaters we always went to faced each other across Grazs most popular shopping street. Mostly they showed Westerns but also comedies and dramas. The only problem was the strictly enforced rating system. A policeman assigned to the theater would check the ages of ticket holders going in. An Elvis movie, the equivalent of a modern PG-13, was pretty easy to get into, but all the movies I wanted to seeWesterns, gladiator movies, and war movieswere more like todays R-rated films and therefore were much harder to get into. Sometimes a friendly cashier would let me wait until the movie started and then signal with his head toward the aisle where the policeman was standing. Sometimes Id wait by the side exit and walk into the auditorium backward. I paid for my amusements with money I earned from my first entrepreneurial venture, selling ice cream at the Thalersee in summer 1957. The Thalersee was a public park, a beautiful lake nestled in the hills on the eastern end of Thal, about a five-minute walk from our house. The lake was easy to reach from Graz, and in summer thousands of people would come for the day to relax, to swim and row, or to play sports. By afternoon theyd be thirsty and hot, and when I saw people lining up at the ice-cream stand on the terrace, I knew this was a business opportunity. The park was big enough that, depending where your blanket was, going to the patio could mean a ten-minute hike, and your ice cream would be half melted by the time you got back. I discovered I could buy dozens of ice-cream cones for a schilling apiece and then walk around the lake and sell them for 3 schillings. The ice-cream proprietor welcomed the extra business and even loaned me a trunk to keep the cones cold. Selling ice cream, I could earn 150 schillingsalmost $6in an afternoon and get a nice tan walking around in my shorts. Eventually my ice-cream earnings ran out, and being broke did not sit well with me. The solution I came up with that fall was panhandling. I would slip out of school and wander along Grazs main street, looking for a sympathetic face. It could be a middle-aged man or a student. Or maybe a farm lady who was in town for the day. Id come up and say to her, Excuse me, but I lost my money and my bus pass, and I need to go home. Sometimes she would chase me away, but most often she would say something like Du bist so dumm! or How stupid can you be to do that? Thats when I knew I had her, because then shed sigh and ask, So, how much is it? Five schillings. And shed say, Okay. Ja. Id always ask the lady to write down her address so I could repay her. Usually shed just tell me, No, no, you dont have to send it back. Just be more careful next time, although sometimes shed write it down. Of course, I had no intention of repaying. On my best days, I could beg 100 schillingsalmost $4. That was enough to go to the toy store and go to the movies and really live it up! The hole in my scheme was that a schoolkid alone on the street in the middle of a weekday was conspicuous. And a lot of people in Graz knew my father. Inevitably, somebody said to him, I saw your son on the street in town today, asking a woman for money. This led to a huge uproar at home, with tremendous physical punishment, and that put an end to my panhandling career. Those early excursions outside of Thal fired up my dreams. I became absolutely convinced that I was special and meant for bigger things. I knew I would be the best at somethingalthough I didnt know whatand that it would make me famous. America was the most powerful country, so I would go there. Its not unusual for

ten-year-old kids to have grand dreams. But the thought of going to America hit me like a revelation, and I really took it seriously. Id talk about it. Waiting at the bus stop, I told a girl who was a couple of years older, Im going to go to America, and she just looked at me and said, Yeah, sure, Arnold. The kids got used to hearing me talk about it and thought I was weird, but that didnt stop me from sharing my plans with everyone: my parents, my teachers, my neighbors. The Hauptschule, or general school, was not geared to turn out the next world leader. It was designed to prepare children for the world of work. Boys and girls were segregated in separate wings of the building. Students got a foundation in math, science, geography, history, religion, modern language, art, music, and more, but these were taught at a slower pace than in academic schools, which prepared kids to go on to a university or technological institute. Completing Hauptschule generally meant graduating to a vocational school or an apprenticeship in a trade, or going straight into the workforce. Still, the teachers were very dedicated to making us smart and enriching our lives in every way they could. They would show movies, bring in opera singers, expose us to literature and art, and so on. I was so curious about the world that school wasnt much of a problem. I learned the lessons, did the homework, and stayed right in the middle of the class. Reading and writing took discipline for methey were more of a chore than they seemed to be for some of my classmates. On the other hand, math came easily; I never forgot a number and could do calculations in my head. The discipline at school was no different from that at home. The teachers hit at least as hard as our parents. A kid was caught taking someones pen, and the school priest hit him so hard with the catechism book that his ears were ringing for hours. The math teacher hit my friend in the back of the head so hard that his face bounced on the desk, and he broke two front teeth. Parent-teacher conferences were the opposite of today, where schools and parents go out of their way not to embarrass the kid. All thirty of us were required to sit at our desks, and the teacher would say, Heres your homework. You work on it during the next couple of hours while your parents come through. One after the next, the parents would come in: the farm lady, the factory-worker dad. It was the same scene almost every time. Theyd greet the teacher with great respect and sit while he showed them stuff on his desk and quietly discussed their childs performance. Then youd hear the father say, But sometimes he causes trouble? And hed turn, glare at his son, and then come over and smack the kid, hard, and go back to the teachers desk. Wed all see it coming and be snickering like hell. Then Id hear my father coming up the stairs. I knew his footsteps, his police boots. Hed appear at the door in his uniform, and now the teacher would stand to show respect, because he was the inspector. Theyd sit and talk, and it would be my turn: Id see my father looking at me, and then hed come over, grab me by the hair with his left hand, and boom! with his right. Then he would walk out without comment. It was a tough time all around. Hardships were routine. Dentists did not use anesthesia, for instance. When you grow up in that kind of harsh environment, you never forget how to withstand physical punishment, even long after the hard times end. When Meinhard got to be about fourteen and something at home didnt suit him, he would run away. Hed tell me, I think Im leaving again. But dont say anything. Then he would pack some clothes in his schoolbag so that nobody would catch on, and disappear. My mother would go nuts. My father would have to phone all his buddies at the different gendarmerie stations in search of his son. It was an incredibly effective way to rebel if your father was the police chief. After a day or two, Meinhard would turn up, usually at some relatives house or maybe just hiding out at a friends place fifteen minutes away. I was always amazed that there were no consequences. Maybe my father was just trying to defuse the situation. Hed dealt with enough runaways in his police career to know that punishing Meinhard might compound the problem. But Ill bet it took every ounce of his self-control. My desire was to leave home in an organized way. Because I was still just a kid, I decided that the best course for independence was to mind my own business and make my own money. I would do any kind of work. I was not shy at all about picking up a shovel and digging. During school vacation one summer, a guy from our village got me a job at a glass factory in Graz where he worked. My task was to shovel a big mound of broken glass into a wheeled container, cart it across the plant, and pour it into a vat for melting back down. At the end of each day, they gave me cash. The following summer, I heard there might be work at a sawmill in Graz. I took my schoolbag and packed a little bread-and-butter snack to tide me over until I got home. Then I took the bus to the mill, got up my nerve, walked in, and asked for the owner. They brought me to the office along with my satchel, and there was the owner, sitting in his chair. What do you want? he asked. Im looking for a job. How old are you? Fourteen. And he said, What do you want to do? You havent learned anything yet! Still, he took me out into the yard and introduced me to some women and men at a machine for cutting scrap lumber into kindling. Youre going to work in this area here, he said. I started right then and there and worked at the yard the rest of the holiday. One of my duties was to

shovel great mountains of sawdust onto trucks that would take it away. I earned 1,400 schillings, or the equivalent of $55. That was a good amount in those days. What made me proudest was that even though I was a kid, they paid me a mans wage. I knew exactly what to do with the money. All my life, Id been wearing hand-me-downs from Meinhard; Id never had new clothes of my own. Id just started getting into sportsI was on the school soccer teamand as it happened, that year, the first tracksuits were coming into fashion: black long pants and black sweat jackets with zippers. I thought tracksuits looked wonderful, and Id even tried showing my parents pictures in magazines of athletes wearing them. But theyd said no, it was a waste. So a tracksuit was the first thing I bought. Then with the cash I had left, I bought myself a bicycle. I didnt have enough money for a new one, but there was a man in Thal who assembled bikes from used parts, and I could afford one from him. Nobody else in our house owned a bike; my father had bartered his for food after the war and never replaced it. Even though my bike wasnt perfect, having those wheels meant freedom.Revue de presse'As brick solid as its author' Independent on Sunday 'His accounts of the heady times of Terminator and Total Recall are indispensable for fans' Sunday Times'Fascinating behind-the-scenes trivia' Sunday Express