



Roger Salloch

Is a novelist, short story writer, photographer, screenwriter and critic.

He was born in New York and his work has appeared widely in publications such as The New York Times, Rolling Stone, The Paris Review, Ploughshares and The North Atlantic Review among others.

A novel, "**Along the Railroad Tracks**", was translated into Italian and published in 2016 ("Una Storia Tedesca", by Miraggi Edizioni).

The same novel was translated into French and published in Paris in 2017.

Miraggi has now also agreed to translate a new novel, "**Vanilla Ice Dream**", in 2019.

In November 2018, Salloch's long short story, "In Germany", received recognition by Glimmer Train Press as one of the best 25 stories they had received out of 1500 in their 2018 Fiction

Open. It will be published in 2019 by *The New England Review*.

Vanilla Ice Dream

140 pages

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MATERIAL: [full English](#)

Vanilla Ice Dream is about America in 2020. It is not dystopian. It is (increasingly) realistic.

The main character is Carter Hollmann. He is a travel writer who comes back to his own country to discover what the race riots signify. There have been many. He is directly concerned because his wife Meredith is black, they had a quarrel ten years ago, he slapped her, she had a restraining order put on him and they divorced. He may not be able to see their child, Chelsea, until she is eighteen, and by then he thinks he will probably be an old man.

Carter returns to a country transformed by the Trump experience. He teaches night school and meets Julio Orijniak. Julio is half Puerto Rican by birth. An aspiring actor, Julio earns his living working for a moving company. He helps black families relocate to safe « renaissance villages. »

The job is also part of a videogame project being developed by Mandy Lemmour, his employer, a wealthy old bedridden man. Photographers work with Julio. One of them is Meredith, Carter's former wife.

The videogame is called Three Strikes. It is based on what is called the Lake Michigan incident. According to the government, the Lake Michigan incident actually happened two years ago. Planning a revenge on Chicago's violent police force, (and on the state for cutting funds to Chicago's poorest schools,) three black- brotherhood teenagers were caught just before they dumped jerry cans full of poison into Lake Michigan. The worst was avoided, the federal government sent the accused to Guantanamo. But the die was cast.

Initially, Three Strikes is financed and promoted (it goes viral) by Lemmour. He is not a racist, he is a capitalist. Images of black communities burning are tinder for his enterprise, moving the poor to resettlement camps and then investing in rebuilding programs sponsored by banks. A new dimension is added when some government people get involved, use the game to begin a national register of black families,

Is it just a game? What is its real purpose? Does Meredith know? Such questions are essential to the narrative, and essential to American history. Who was behind MLK's photographer, Ernest Withers? The FBI. Might this be a replay of what was done to Japanese American citizens in WWII? And leprosy victims in Puerto Rico at the start of the 20th century? (Julio's family won the right to emigrate to the mainland because Julio's great grandmother collaborated with the authorities in 1898 and helped them locate hiding « lepers. ») Is this that kind of racism, or is it more insidious? Maybe blacks are being moved to renaissance villages because their properties would be valuable if they were free to be developed. But maybe even that is only part of the story. These are the questions Carter has to ask himself. The answers take him deep down into his own past, and that of the woman he loves.

At the end of the novel, a reconciliation takes place at a gallery opening for Meredith's photographs. Carter gets to hold his daughter in his arms again. But the Dream in the title takes place in a landscape that is Vanilla Ice. It will take more than feelings to keep the enemy at bay. It will take more than resistance. It will take a new awakening.

In his 1959 meditation, "The Discovery of What It Means to be an American," James Baldwin wrote as follows : "The time has come, God knows, for us to free ourselves of the myth of America and try to find out what is really happening here."

*VANILLA ICE DREAM IS AN ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT SOMETHING
ABOUT WHAT MIGHT ACTUALLY ALREADY BE HAPPENING*

"HERE."