

# Soto's eddie in buried onions: running from himself

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Soto's Eddie in Buried Onions: Running from Himself When driving through Fresno, California it may seem like an ordinary, underclass city, but to Eddie Fresno is a prison he cannot escape. In Buried Onions Gary Soto describes the hardships and challenges of Eddie's life. Eddie had grown up in the city of Fresno, one not known for its friendly people and wealth. Eddie is desperate to escape Fresno and his whole past, that he does not even realize that it is a part of him. Eddie tries to run away from Fresno, the gangs, and just the general people. It takes extensive time, but Eddie finally learns to accept his past and lives in harmony with it. Fresno may not literally have a giant fence surrounding it, but to Eddie it might as well have for he cannot get away. The poverty of Fresno is in all places and even shown in the skeletal dogs. "Returning to my apartment, I stepped over winos, the homeless, and stray dogs with ladders of ribs poking through. Hunger, I saw, was crawling from one end of the street to the other" (100). The school, Holmes' playground, and his apartment all play an important role in Eddie's life. The school is where Eddie had grown up and where he used to join his old gang friends for naughty deeds. Holmes playground is the signature spot for the young gang members to hang out or for any kid who wants to goof off after school. Eddie's apartment is tiny and dirty but it had been fitting for Eddie. Fresno has been Eddie's personal hell and he did anything he could to escape. It is no secret that many children who live in Fresno will end up in a gang. Eddie is no exception; but he tries, at least, to lead a respectable life. The gangs form more than just friendship and never like to lose a member. Eddie might have left the gang but they never left him, always watching and trying to steer him back to their rebellious ways. The younger gangs are

made up of immature school children that irritate Eddie. He becomes more frustrated with them and their ill-behaved acts, perhaps because he knows what mistake they are making. The older gangs, however, are a threat not just an annoyance. " I glanced over my shoulder, slowing but not stopping, because if you stop and it was your enemy, your life could spill before you could touch your wound" (6). Angel especially keeps trying to intimidate Eddie and get Eddie to work with him again. The more Eddie fights Angel, the more Angel tries to pressure him. The gangs in Fresno create a frightening environment, unsafe for anyone and Eddie cannot wait to leave them behind. One of the most important influences on Eddie's life is his family and friends. Mr. Stiles taught Eddie significant lessons about trust and honesty. Even though Eddie had been honest about not stealing his car, Mr. Stiles did not believe him and in effect they both lost out of a great opportunity. Eddie's aunt might be family but she is not a very good influence. She loves Eddie, but she is willing to ask him to put himself in danger to avenge Jesus' death. Jose has been a good example of someone who left Fresno and got on a good path. Somehow Fresno still got to him as he returned. Coach Holmes is someone who could be a true role model for Eddie. " He was wiser than a priest and kinder than my art teacher. He was as clever as the cop who had started the gang program" (91). Coach had been there to listen to Eddie and offer him advice; Coach understands because he knows what Eddie had been going through. Coach had been helping Eddie to get out of Fresno by encouraging him to join the navy. Eddie might have cared about some of the people in Fresno, but not nearly enough to keep him there. Eddie is always trying to escape his past that he does not realize it is a part of him; it would

be like Eddie trying to out run his shadow. For Eddie Fresno has been a dreadful place to be with the excruciating heat and poverty it creates an awful living environment. The gangs in Fresno are not only bothersome but also dangerous and vicious. Eddie may have many connections in Fresno but he had been so anxious to leave he did not care who he left behind. Through Eddie, Gary Soto shows us that we have to learn to accept ourselves for who we are and embrace where we come from. Soto, Gary. Buried Onions.

Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1997.