

THAT KIND OF NONSENSE
By Patrick Tobin
Short Fiction
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There they were – the three signs.

Sign number one. I saw my primary care physician shopping at a local drugstore. I was about to say hello to him when I noticed he was buying wine in a box –white Zin. What suddenly bothered me wasn't the white Zin in a box, so much as finding my doctor in one of those depressing drugstores that seem to sell everything: generic headphones, breakfast cereal, lawn fertilizer. The lighting in these drugstores is always harsh, like a prison visiting area, and then you get to the aisle with the Seasonal items, and you start looking at the cheap disposable barbecues, and then before you know it you're having an existential crisis in which the underlying futility of Labor Day becomes the underlying futility of Life.

Sign number two. The other night I was having trouble sleeping so I started watching an old movie of the week with Shelly Hack. I'm not sure what the plot was. I think she was a mid-level diplomat trying to outwit a French assassin, played by one of those good-looking Brits who never quite achieve name recognition. I watched about five minutes and then I fell back to sleep. Two days later I was in Sears buying underwear and I walked by the section where they sell all those cheap Korean televisions and VCRs. Get this: all of the televisions were playing the movie

of the week with Shelly Hack. What was even weirder was that it was the same exact scene that I'd seen two nights before. Shelly was crying her eyes out, telling Cloris Leachman that she was *this* close to losing it. *This* close.

Sign number three. My father – the motherfucker I haven't talked to in over twenty years – left a message on my answering machine. He asked me to call him and left an 800 number. I have to admit, that was a nice touch – at least I won't have to pay for the call.

I found out I was HIV positive in 1991, when I was twenty-five years old. My doctors told me I probably had less than a year to live, so I sold off my life insurance policy to a group of investors in South Dakota. They gave me forty cents on the dollar, the best offer on the table. A really nice guy named Tom Shanley from Morgan Brothers Investments had me sign a lot of documents that needed to be notarized. Eventually I got a big fat check, quit my job, and said goodbye to my friends. Everything was in order – all I had to do was die.

The irony is that the \$250,000 in life insurance was a complete fluke. When I started my job after college I accidentally checked the additional life insurance box. When I later calculated that I was going to have to pay approximately twenty-three cents per pay period, I went to HR and said I'd changed my mind. The woman looked at me as if I'd been sent from Hell and told me she couldn't do anything about it. Once I'd signed and submitted the forms “there was *nothing* anyone could do until the *next* open enrollment period, which wasn't for another *eight* months.”

I went to Paris, where my somber mood appealed to a group of radical dramatists. They decided I should die onstage and rented out a theater in the 14th Arrondissement, where I lived and, for fifteen francs, the public could await my demise. I didn't die but the show, a Lacanian farce of sorts, eventually did.

Then I went to London, where a woman named Rhonda told me I could die in her flat and she would take care of me. Eventually Rhonda got pissed because I remained unapologetically healthy, although she claimed her anger was because I “was always on the fucking phone”, so

she kicked me out.

I decided to go to Madrid. I tried to meet Pedro Almodovar, but the closest I got was getting drunk with a guy named Mario, who sometimes works for the caterer who does most of Pedro's movies.

Every once in a while Tom Shanley would call to see how I was doing. I would tell him I wasn't feeling very well, a true statement because I was mostly hung over. One time he said I was the healthiest guy with 78 T-cells he'd ever seen. He sounded suspicious when he asked me if I was taking any experimental drugs, and I said no, that I wasn't even taking Vitamin C. Tom said he liked me, but Morgan Brothers was very concerned about its investment. I told Tom I honestly felt the end was near. He said anything I could do to speed up the process would be greatly appreciated.

I went back to Paris and tried opium, but it just wasn't me. I tried to climb Everest – the idea of freezing to death on the roof of the world was immensely appealing – but I was distracted by all the fantastic souvenirs in the foothills and subsequently was separated from the expedition. I went to Pamplona, but there weren't any charging bulls in the streets, just a bunch of peasants who tried to sell me international phone cards.

I ended up in Sao Paolo, where I was buying a round of drinks for a group of sailors when the bartender took my American Express card and cut it up into tiny pieces. Quite frankly it came as a relief, because I knew this kind of death couldn't be lived for very long.

Tom Shanley took the news that I was coming home with relative good humor. He'd appreciated my postcard from Caracas, and even more, that I'd remembered that his oldest daughter Becky had just been confirmed in the Lutheran church.

He said, "You're a nice guy, but we really need you dead."

And I said, "Well, that's kind of problem isn't it?"

And he said "Not really."

And I said, "What does that mean?"

And he said, "I think you know what I mean."

And I said, "I'll just change my name and go somewhere where you can't find me."

And he said, "You really think that'll stop me from finding you?"

And I said, "No. But it might buy me some time."

And he said, "Well, I hope so. Cause like I said, you're a nice guy and all."

And I said, "How will I know if you're getting close to finding me?"

And he said, "Let me put it this way. When you spot your primary care physician in a lousy drugstore, and then you see a movie of the week with Shelly Hack twice in less than two days, and then you hear from your father, you'll know that everything is about to fall apart."

And I said, "Thanks, Tom."

And he said, "No problem, kid."

The good thing about buying rounds of drinks is that I had a lot of friends around the world – I knew at least one them would know exactly what I needed to do to change my identity.

Don't ask me why but I moved to Portland, and since I was broke I had to get a job. I decided to be as inconspicuous as possible, so I registered with the Right Away Employment Agency. They call themselves the Right Away Employment Agency because all the employees are supposed to answer their bosses "Right away!" when asked to do something.

Right away I told the woman interviewing me that there was no fucking way I was going to answer "Right away!" I told her I might consider saying "sure" or "okay", but only if my boss wasn't an asshole. The woman doing the interview coughed and said she was sure none of the bosses who used Right Away were "quote unquote assholes" and I said she was living in a "quote unquote tragic world of fantasy." Then she noticed my typing test score – 140 wpm. She asked me if I knew Lotus and I said yes, and then she smiled and said she had the perfect assignment for me.

The perfect assignment turned out to be with a marketing firm working as an assistant to one of the VPs. It doesn't matter the name of the firm – all the marketing firms in Portland are interchangeable because they're all whorish handmaidens to Nike. It's the defining problem

of every American city with just under a million inhabitants. One ultra-huge international corporation moves into town and then every business becomes, in some way, dependent. People in Portland make crude jokes about the mating habits of Appalachians and I say substitute “whorish handmaidens to Nike” for “Appalachians” and it seems to add up to the same thing.

The VP I was to work for was a woman named Brianne Volger, about my age with a Harvard MBA under her belt. The HR woman at the marketing firm was savvy enough to inform me that Brianne had gone through fourteen assistants in less than two years. I asked the HR woman how much life insurance I could get through the firm and she told me the maximum was a million dollars. I asked her if an employee had to do a medical exam for the policy, and she said no, that you just had to pay an extra ten dollars every pay period. Then she laughed nervously and asked if I was worried that Brianne was going to kill me.

I said no, that I could take care of myself.

I had about fifteen minutes before I had to start working, so I found the smoking area. I don't smoke, but I believe you can get a quick read on any corporate situation if you hang out in the smoking area. During the next thirteen and a half minutes I found out that Brianne was bulimic, that she was having an on-again, off-again affair with a married guy who worked for a rival company, that everyone in the marketing firm had some kind of grudge against her, and that all the executives were looking for a way to get rid of her, although for now she was the company's top performer.

I settled into my new desk and booted up my computer. I looked into Brianne's office and she was already on the phone, yelling and occasionally pounding her desk. She was attractive enough, although her outfit was of that Harvard MBA circa 1993 style: the backlash against solid blue suits with dowdy white blouses. Brianne looked a little like a porn producer's image of a female corporate warrior, which I suppose would have been hot, if I weren't gay.

She motioned for me to come into her office. I got up and waited in the doorway for her to get off the phone. Instead, she threw some handwritten notes at me and mimed typing them up. I walked into her office and shut the door behind me, then I hung up her phone. I told her if

she ever threw anything at me again, said objects would find themselves lodged up her ass. She stood up and told me to get the fuck out of her office. I sat down in the chair across from her and started to tell her every detail I'd learned from the smokers. Eventually she sat down and stared at me in silence.

I said, "Am I wrong?"

And she said, "No."

And I said, "Do you still want me to leave?"

And she said, "No."

And I said, "Okay. But here's the deal if I work for you. First, stop with the barfing shit. It's going to kill you. Second, we're going to go for a walk every day after work, for thirty minutes. A leisurely walk, none of this power walking crap. And during our walks you're going to have to say at least one positive thing about someone other than yourself. Third, enough with the married guy. It's a futile situation that only deadens you to the possibility of real love."

And she said, "Is that all?"

And I said, "I bet you see a therapist, don't you?"

And she said, "Yes."

And I said, "Well, you're going to quit that asshole and I'm going to find you someone who won't put up with your bullshit."

And she said, "Okay."

And I said, "Any questions?"

And she said, "Who are you?"

And I said, "Julio Alvarez."

And she said, "You don't look Hispanic."

And I said, "I'm not. By the way, if anyone comes around asking about me, tell them you've known me since we were kids."

And she said, "I can do that."

And I said, "Great. I'll take the job."

I don't think I'm bragging when I say that I was the best thing that ever happened to Brianne. I found her a new therapist named Mike Underhall, a Vietnam vet and former Navy Seal. Brianne stopped throwing up after meals, but she worried that she was putting on weight so we started walking twice a day. She dumped the married guy, who subsequently got all weird and stalkerish. I solved the problem by calling in a favor from a guy who used to work for the Mossad. My friend didn't kill the married guy, just firmly reminded him about the importance of boundaries and good manners in this age of chaos.

I stopped hanging out with the smokers and moved on to the Early Lunchers. ELs are those harried, middle-aged assistants who gulp down lunch between 11:30 and 11:45 so they can be back at their phones while their bosses are out. They convene in the kitchen like a flock of nervous parakeets and microwave their Lean Cuisines and bitch about their daughters-in-law. You don't get immediately useful information from ELs, but the long-term payoff is extraordinary. Over time you offer to cover an EL's desk so she can get her hair colored, or you bring in an extra sticky bun. Before you know it you find out who's falsifying expense reports. Before you know it you find out who's sleeping with a client. Before you know it, you find out who's trying to move in on your boss's accounts.

I told Brianne the information I provided her wasn't to be used maliciously, that it was only to be used to save her ass and, by default, mine. I would do almost anything to keep my job at the marketing firm, because I knew that my job was my future. I had great health benefits. I had a million dollar life insurance policy. And I had five Optional Personal Use Days, in addition to ten Vacation Days, five Sick Days, and all federally recognized holidays except Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Important piece of information:

My father is a con man who's been in and out of jail as long as I can remember. My mother divorced him when I was twelve – when faced with child support, he claimed we weren't

really his children and disappeared. No one cared that much, except my oldest brother Kevin. Kev became a professional victim and eventually orchestrated a healing ceremony where all of us adult kids could resolve our father abandoning us. We were given small rocks and told to pound a clay jar to bits. I'm still not sure what the rocks or the clay jar represented, or why Kev was dressed in traditional Blackfoot garb.

Everyone was in tears and hugging, except me. Kev accused me of being emotionally stunted, and I thought fine, I don't really care. Except he added a look of pity that triggered such violent feelings within me that the only option was to punch him in the face.

My family never talked to me after that.

But back to my present situation.

I dialed my father's 800 number and got a recorded message. I was caught off guard because it was my father's voice, but he was speaking Japanese. I speak fluent Japanese because I took seven semesters of it in college, a misguided period in my life when I thought being an East Asian Studies major would make me an interesting person. My father's Japanese was pretty bad, as he told the caller "to leave an audible record after the unfortunate noise that will disturb your thoughts at the opposite of the beginning of this audible record." I thought about telling my father to go fuck himself in Japanese, but I'd forgotten that particular colloquialism, so instead I started to tell him what a rotten bastard he was in English.

Suddenly, he picked up the phone.

My father acted like we'd talked just the other day. He told me I hadn't done a very good job going underground and explained my mistakes in impressive detail. I told him I'd remember the information for next time, and he got kind of quiet and said he feared there wouldn't be a next time. My father knew all about Morgan Brothers and Tom Shanley. His voice became increasingly sad and I almost believed he cared about my circumstances, until he berated me for settling for forty cents on the dollar.

My father said, "Even though you're an idiot, I've got a proposition for you."

And I said, "I'm not interested."

And he said, "Do you still prefer dick?"

And I said, "If you're asking, in your crude way, if I'm still gay the answer's yes."

And he said, "Well, that complicates things, but I don't think it's a deal breaker."

And I said, "We don't have a deal."

And he said, "Listen, I need you to come up here. I've got a Japanese prospect, and she's coming in two days."

And I said, "Why do you need me?"

And he said, "I've tried teaching myself Japanese, but it's not the easiest language to learn."

And I said, "I'm not getting involved."

And he said, "If you were here you could translate for me and, you know, *massage* the situation. You were always the best looking of the kids."

And I said, "Massage it how? By fucking this chick?"

And he said, "Now who's being crude?"

And I said, "Didn't I just tell you I was gay?"

And he said, "You don't have to do anything except be nice to her and translate. You know how the Japanese are about fags. If she thinks you're a fag everything will fall apart."

And I said, "I'm hanging up now."

And he said, "If this deal happens, your little problem with Morgan Brothers will be solved."

And I said: nothing.

And he said, "I promise you."

And I said: nothing.

And he said, "You know the irony? I always figured Kev was gonna turn out to be the queer in the family."

I went into Brienne's office the next day and shut the door behind me. I told her I needed her to do me a huge favor, and she said she would do absolutely anything for me. I asked her to come with me to my father's and pretend to be my girlfriend. She was quiet for a minute and then said she wasn't sure she could, that the company had a big project coming up with Nike.

I told her Nike could go fuck itself.

My father filled me in on the scheme. Kimiko Hirai, the youngest daughter of a Japanese industrialist, had been going to cooking schools all over the world trying to learn how to make the perfect demiglace. Now she was trying to find a more expanded purpose for her life and my father gave her a phony business plan to start up a chain of progressive day care centers in Japan. When I told him that neither of us knew anything about day care centers he said that wasn't a problem, that all we had to do was quote from a couple of fake Stanford studies. He reminded me that we weren't actually going to develop day care centers, that we were only going to take this woman's money.

I asked how much Kimiko's dad was worth, as if that information would somehow assuage my guilt. My father said the elder Hirai had cash and assets worth about \$350 million.

I didn't tell him I was bringing Brienne, but I figured he'd know anyway.

Brienne showed up at the airport wearing a ridiculous retro outfit. One of Brienne's biggest flaws is her persistent belief that she's Eva Marie Saint. Sure, she's blonde and good-looking, but she's not EMS, and *definitely* not EMS in "North By Northwest." I watched her walk through the airport, wearing her cat-eye sunglasses and tailored steel-blue suit, with her pale pink makeup bag, and I laughed at her.

Later she flipped through her "Vanity Fair" with wounded focus, until I finally told her to knock it off, that I wasn't going to apologize for being honest with her. She told me that just once in her life she'd love if I wasn't so brutally honest with her. I told her friends don't let friends continue delusional fantasies. She asked me if there wasn't one thing in her outfit that worked. I

told her the pale pink makeup bag was kind of cute, in a No Doubt circa 1999 kind of way.

As a conciliatory gesture, I bought her a Chinese chicken salad in the airport cafeteria. I explained the whole situation with my father. She said that under no circumstance should we go, that he was only going to ruin my life. I told her my life was already ruined, and then I revealed the whole situation with Morgan Brothers, and Tom Shanley, and my year and half abroad wantonly burning through \$100,000.

A woman announced over the PA system that our flight was starting to board. Brianne reapplied her lipstick and said we should go to our gate. I watched her walk in front of me, when I was suddenly overcome with gratitude. Unfortunately I blurted out that maybe I'd been wrong about the outfit. She looked at me with a very angry expression and said if I ever started lying to her she would cut off my dick. I promised I would never lie to her again and took back my comment about her outfit.

My father picked us up, and of course he didn't act surprised that Brianne was with me. While Brianne was in the restroom he asked me if "the broad in the tragic outfit" knew about the scam. I said yes, that she was here to complete the illusion that I was straight and that she would expect some kind of cut.

By the time he paid for parking, he'd already negotiated her down to \$2,500.

My father's always had a thing for blondes, so he was a shameless flirt with Brianne. Just as we reached the house he was telling her she was "a dead ringer for that broad in 'North By Northwest'."

My father got out of the car to open the gate and I whispered to Brianne that she should be a little more careful.

She said, "I'm a big girl, I can take care of myself."

And I said, "What's the deal with settling for \$2,500? I could have gotten you ten times that."

And she said, "Money isn't everything."

And I said, “You are so full of shit! Let me tell you something, sister. This guy is completely amoral. He is using us, okay? He’s going to *lie* to us and *use* us.

And she said, “Maybe I’m in the mood to be lied to and used.”

And I said, “Shit.”

My father got back in the car and asked if we’d just had our first lovers’ spat.

The lakefront house belonged to a divorcee named Margaret. Margaret was in Mexico for the summer and my father was “housesitting.” The only thing my father had to say about Margaret was that women who’ve been divorced more than once have a profound lack of self-confidence – that any flirtation produces results wildly disproportionate to the effort. Brianne acted like the Dalai Lama had just spoken. I felt myself getting nauseous so I went for a swim.

I thought about Kev while I was walking to the pool and wondered if he ever thought about me. I didn’t notice the woman sitting near the deep end, so I was startled when she said hello in Japanese. I figured she had to be Kimiko, so I answered her in ultra-formal Japanese – the kind of Japanese used to appease shoguns. She told me to lay off the gilded language. I started to nod and bow, then I laughed. She smiled at my foolishness.

Kimiko was much more beautiful and sophisticated than I’d imagined. Somehow I’d gotten an image in my head of a shy virgin who wept with hormonal hysteria every time Leonardo Di Caprio died in “Titanic.” This was not the reality sitting in front of me. Kimiko was tall and lithe and oozed sangfroid. She had on a very expensive black bikini. She wore the same cat-eye sunglasses as Brianne, but on Kimiko the sunglasses made her look like an Asian Audrey Hepburn.

She offered me a French cigarette, which I accepted. I took her lighter and held it for her, while she steadied my hand with hers. It was the most erotically charged physical contact I’ve ever experienced in my life. I wanted to swoon. She asked me if I wouldn’t mind putting suntan lotion on her back and before I could respond she had her top off. I put some lotion on her unbelievably smooth, unbelievably soft back and started massaging it into her skin. Kimiko

moaned and whispered something that I couldn't understand.

I said in Japanese, "What did you say?"

And she said in Japanese, "I said you're not bad for a foreigner."

And I said in Japanese, "So that's your thing, huh?"

And she said in Japanese, "Yes, you filthy foreign dog."

And I said in Japanese, "Rumor has it you've tried to learn the perfect demiglace. With no success, I might add."

And she said in Japanese, "Yes. It's been my driving passion these past three years. It's one of my bitterest disappointments."

And I said in Japanese, "Maybe this dog can teach you a new trick."

We ran up to the kitchen and startled my father and Brianne, who were dancing to some crazy banda song. They were drunk. It turned out my father had no idea Kimiko was there – apparently she'd let herself in to the mansion. The situation would have become more awkward if I hadn't announced that Kimiko and I were going to make demiglace. Kimiko took a moment to size up Brianne, then announced she was going to change out of her size zero bikini. She left the three of us alone, reeling for very different reasons.

Brianne said, "That's it. I'm leaving."

And my father said, "No, wait. If you leave now you'll ruin everything."

And I said, "No one's going anywhere until I make this fucking demiglace."

And she said, "Don't you need veal bones for that?"

And I said, "Beef bones are an adequate substitute."

And he said, "How the fuck did she get in the house, that's what I'd like to know."

And she said, "Maybe the gardener let her in."

And he said, "What gardener?"

And she said, "The gardener who's out back fertilizing the roses."

And he said, "What exactly were you two doing down by the pool?"

And I said, “I was massaging the situation. What the fuck were you two doing?”

And they said: nothing.

And I said: nothing.

I don't think I'm bragging when I say that the sauce turned out perfectly. My father and Brianne grew bored with the whole process – by the time I was deglazing the pan they'd disappeared into the master bedroom. Kimiko stood by my side writing in a voluminous notebook. At one point she tried to help by chopping some onions, but I made her stop. I told her she was bruising the vegetables, that it was all about delicacy and discretion. Kimiko acted like the Dalai Lama had spoken.

She said in Japanese, “I will invest as much money as you tell me, filthy foreign dog.”

And I said Japanese, “You're not going to invest anything, Kimiko.”

And she said in Japanese, “Why?”

And I said in Japanese, “Because my father's a con man. There aren't going to be any daycare centers.”

And she said in Japanese: nothing.

And I said in Japanese, “By the way, how did you get in the house?”

And she said in Japanese, “The gardener let me in.”

And I said in English, “The gardener. Of course.”

Tom Shanley was waiting for me by the pool. He'd changed out of his gardening clothes and was wearing a very nice, albeit conservative suit. I wondered how I'd missed noticing him before, with his salt and pepper hair and deep blue eyes and broad shoulders. I told him it wasn't quite the time of year to be fertilizing roses and he smiled. I asked him how his family was doing, and he said that he and his wife had gotten divorced. I was genuinely sorry and Tom seemed to appreciate that.

I asked him if he wouldn't mind waiting to kill me because I had something I wanted to

run by him. He said that would be fine. I told him about the million dollar life insurance policy and that Brianne was the beneficiary. I wondered if there wasn't some way we could fake my death, because I was sure I could convince Brianne to split the insurance money with Tom.

Both of us heard a noise. When we turned around to investigate, Kimiko was suddenly in front of us holding a gun.

I said in Japanese, "What gives?"

And she said in perfect English, "You can drop the Japanese, faggot."

And I said, "How did you know I was gay?"

And she said, "I've had hotter back rubs from my mom."

And I said, "Who are you?"

And she said, "Leslie Yamasaki. I'm an American operative for the yakuza."

And I said, "So the demiglace...?"

And she said, "A crock of shit."

And I said, "That hurts. Mainly because it was such a beautifully symbolic story, what with a gorgeous Asian Audrey Hepburn futilely chasing down perfection."

And she said, "I can tell you it won't hurt as much as this bullet will."

And Tom said, "I'm a little confused."

And she said, "His dad thought he was conning me, when in fact, I thought I was conning him. And that ain't gonna make my people happy."

And I said, "My father's an idiot."

And she said, "Pretty much."

And I said, "Listen, maybe there's a way to work this out."

And she said, "You got five minutes to convince me."

I just checked on my father and Brianne. It appears they're in a post-coital coma, sleeping off a lot of booze. Tom, Kimiko/Leslie, and I are about to sit down to dinner and I just wanted to make sure my father and Brianne knew they were included.

Margaret has an amazing collection of wine so I sent Tom down to the cellar to pick out a nice Burgundy. Kimiko/Leslie is picking out the music – wait, I think she just put on the Brandenburg Concertos. She may be nothing more than a mobster, but I still think she’s got class.

So.

Basically no one’s getting offed at this point. We’re going to enjoy a lovely meal together and wait for my father and Brianne to get their asses out of bed. I think the deal is this: Tom gets \$350,000, a hundred grand of which he’ll get to pocket because Morgan Brothers is only expecting two fifty. Kimiko/Leslie thinks her people will be satisfied with \$300,000. We all put our heads together and came up with a dentist in Vancouver who will create all the fake dental molds and charts that will eventually confirm I’ve died, but he won’t do it for less than \$150,000. Oh, and because I have to “die” in Canada, there are a few government officials who need to be paid off, totaling about \$50,000, depending on the exchange rate.

I’m sure I can convince my father to leave Brianne alone for \$50,000, especially if he doesn’t know about the million dollars and particularly if Kimiko/Leslie brandishes her gun. My only stipulation will be that he contacts Kev and participates in whatever family healing ritual Kev feels appropriate.

That leaves about \$100,000 for me and Brianne.

I know she’s going to squawk about leaving the marketing firm, but I’m sure I can convince her it’s for the best. I mean, after all, how many times can you pretend to work yourself up over the newest pair of basketball shoes? Both of us are getting a little old for that kind of nonsense. There’s a whole world out there, I’ll tell her, full of adventure and beauty and truth. As if that weren’t enough, I’ll tell her, there’s a group of randy sailors in Sao Paolo waiting for me to buy them a round of drinks.

And just as we’ve spent our last penny, wherever that may be, I’ll take her by her gloved hand – the hand that isn’t carrying that ridiculous pale pink makeup bag – and we’ll board that final plane to Pamplona with as much style and grace as we can muster. I’ll convince the flight

attendants to give us a complimentary half-bottle of champagne, because I'll tell them that we're celebrating a special occasion. We'll raise our glasses and toast one another and laugh, with a kind of proud courage.

Because this time I'll know precisely when the bulls are running.