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JUNE 2023
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MY DAYS: VOLUME 1
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CRUELTY
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When you asked me if I'd like to run another office, I emphatically told you transferring me might kill me because of the extra stress it would place on my stroke-stressed heart.

You claimed you understood.

You transferred me anyway.

The additional stress began destroying my health.

You didn't care.

You told me you'd get me to help run the office, so you sent your childhood friend to me. You said everyone hated him and 'watch him like a hawk' because you thought he had substance abuse problems.

It was glaringly obvious what you were doing. You were setting me up to be replaced.

You replaced me.

You transferred someone despite the warning it would end his life and then had him train his replacement.

What's the word for that?

Cruel. It's cruel.

Thanks, Sparkly.

And the fucking legal system lets you get away with it.

What would you call people who terminated a person in their sixties after that person gave you almost a decade-and-a-half of their life?

Cruel. It's cruel.

Is there a word to describe a person who fakes being your friend but exploits your health by using your personal experiences to harm you financially and emotionally?

A person who pretended to be a friend who did not reach out to you after you had life-saving surgery?

A person who did not reach out to you when one of your best friends died.
But when you told that person you were scared for your future, used that against you?

Cruel. It's cruel.

What would you call people who fought you tooth and nail to destroy you and your family?

Cruel. It's cruel.

For what?

I will never know.

What would you call people who never looked you in the eye to say 'sorry' and 'thank you' after they hurt you dramatically just because they fucking could?

They are cruel and probably weak, pathetic, cowards.

Is this a true story?

No, it's a work of fiction because people who'd do the things mentioned couldn't possibly exist.

Do you think they'd care about what they've done to a good person?

No. They are monsters.

You sound confident in your assessment.

Wouldn't you be?

Yes.

I hit the Fitness Asylum again yesterday, with Depression walking lockstep with me, trying to knock me down. By the end of the day, I will have hit 35,000+ steps.

What the fuck am I going to do?

The well is running dry. My economic life has been obliterated.

I've sent out over 50 resumes. Zero responses. At almost 63 I've become dated, obsolete.

I knew this would be my reality. Nobody wants a man of my stature. Fuck you, former employer; my legal team was incompetent, and you screamed MITIGATE after going to great lengths to block every possible path forward.

Fuck you.

I'm going to die soon. I don't see a way out. Hope is fluttering away.

Do you care?

Of course, you don't.

Why did you pretend you were my friend? Why?

Fuck you.

You sound angry.

I'm scared, Sparkly. You know, I'm not an angry man. But I'm terrified...

I don't want to go. I worked for a company for a decade-and-a-half, and my golden watch will be my family becoming homeless. Not for lack of trying.

I'm terrified of the opinions of others.

Get a job.

As you read the next sentence imagine the flow of tears.

I'm turning 63 in one month.

I sit down at a restaurant for a soda. Some young people, children, walk in to apply for work—I don't look like them—I can't compete with them—I'm going to die homeless.

Think about that for a second, I gave a decade-and-a-half to a company, and I end up dying on the streets. With people I know calling homeless people a problem. I guess I'll die a problem.

How does that make you feel (former employer)?

I know you don't care. But you do know it's a reflection on you, not me.

I remember the person who pretended to be my friend trying to convince someone who was studying to be a doctor to quit his job and come and exploit suffering people instead. He did this while drunk out of his mind. He did this more than once.

This story isn't real. Nobody would have treated their most valuable employee, the person who saved your company, like you treated me?

Jacques sits down beside The Mayor and me. Jacques can't hide who he is – if you listen.

Most people don't.

I'm not sure what we are talking about. Still, somehow Jacques manages to slip in the name of a city in Florida, calling it a shithole and then comparing it with a town in California.

The racism is subtle.

I have a hunch about what he's doing. I Google the two cities' demographics, and guess what?

What?

Good guess. Most of the two cities' populations are black.

I hate when I'm the only one paying attention.

I go home to type. I turn on the news.

Story 1

It is about an adult screaming at a 9-year-old girl to get off the track (track meet) because she's really a boy, she's not, and shouldn't be competing with girls. This is a true story.

Think

What fucking world do we live in where a grown man believes children are having gender-reassignment surgery to gain a competitive advantage, is a thing?

Rhetorical.

Story 2

A grocery store is broken into, and the hungry thieves take about \$100 in food.

Rhetorical

Hey, that wasn't a question.

Story 3

The news granted 20 minutes to a man running around Alberta to draw attention to a fucking Maple Donut he wants on the menu permanently at Tim Hortons.

Terry Fox ran across Canada on one leg to raise money for research.

The man in Alberta, his son or daughter, like donuts, so he's spearheading the cause of permanence.

Twenty minutes of airtime.

I pitched a story multiple times about companies taking advantage of the pandemic to lay off older employees, leaving them devastated and at risk of homelessness.

But no, a man in Alberta is running to save the donuts.

Rhetorical.

I sit down for a pop.

It's Gary's birthday. He's turned 47. We are good friends; we ebb and flow as friendships go. I'm not sure where we are now. It's good to see him; he reminisces about how, 13 years ago, I helped him get in wicked shape.

Whom sits with me.

Whom has Parkinson's?

Whom is packing up his home of 16 years because his financial life is in turmoil?

Whom is now 68?

I listen.

Dean enters. He's upbeat. I remind you; Dean is dying.

I listen.

Colin and I speak about tennis; he calls me his tennis buddy.

Colin's friend overhears me saying something about exercise and forgetting to hydrate. He laughs and then gives a toast to hydration.

I introduce Whom to Colin.

A traveller sits next to Whom. She's carrying a book. I ask her what she's reading?

A conversation ensues about books. She laughs a lot. She's visiting from Halifax; her name is Maryanne. Somehow, we talk about cats.

Sandy is sitting on my left. He shares a picture of a book on his phone. He's a contributor in the book. I smile and share that with everyone within earshot. Sandy beams with pride.

David sits to Sandy's left, next to a woman named Lindsay. David says what he loves about me is that I effortlessly ensure everyone never feels alone; he says I bring people out of their shells.

I mostly listen.

I understand most people are lonely. At least a little. And if we show interest in one another, the world will become kinder.

Greg comes up to me and says, you bring people together. Much like our dear friend Scotty (who died in 2020), Greg ads.

I don't try.

I don't want to die on the streets.

I'm scared.

I did not deserve what the people who ran the company I worked for had willfully done to me and my family.

Tears leak from my eyes.

Every day, I hit the Fitness Asylum and move, move, move.

Every day, I write.

Every day, I try.

Every day, I make someone else feel less alone.

Every day, I make a stranger laugh.

Every day, I cry.

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Grammarly Readability Score = 83

Grammarly Readability Record = 99 (May 1, 2023)

L, can I say something?

Sure, Sparkly.

I find it unfathomable the monsters who you used to work for haven't reached out to you to see if you are okay.

OUTSIDE OUTSIDE

IF YOU TURN INSIDE — INSIDE OUT
YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF ON THE OUTSIDE
BUT IF YOU TURN OUTSIDE — INSIDE OUT
THERE IS NO GUARANTEE YOU WILL BE INDOORS
WHAT?
BOUNCE!

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My Days

MY DAYS

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CONTINUED

SIGNS
SIGN?

I keep strolling. I come across a sign →

**No Trespassing
In the Pool Area**

Okay, very specific, I thought.

And then I come across a restaurant under construction, gutted, with a sign →

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**Closed
We Are Renovating**

And then, another →

Watch For Moving Traffic

Who are these signs for?

DATING SITES DATING SITES

I think about dating sites. Mostly, these are hookup sites where the same 8 people keep hooking up with the same 8 much-more-very-so-hot-people a lot.

I dive deeper into my mind and think about penis pictures and the propensity of some people to share photos of their erect penis beside bottles and cans: beer cans, shampoo bottles, etc.

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I ponder: Who was the first horny guy to do this? Was he thinking, oh my, I'm horny, what I'm doing isn't working, I know, I'll take a shot of my dick next to a bottle of Head and Shoulders?

It must have worked because there are copycats out there.

IT TOOK ME AWHILE TO REALIZE I WAS BEING BULLIED
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OR
OK

THE TRAGICALLY HIP + ANNE MURRAY FEUD CONCLUSION?
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I t's the Gummy Friday before the Gummy Friday that I'm about to arrive at shortly. I'm sitting with The Postman, The Sayer, when Tennessee meanders into the bar. He's not a regular of Gummy Friday; he's taking the place of The Mayor this week.

The Postman starts the afternoon off by trying to get me riled up. It works, and He is contrarian to agitate me. I hate when he does this.

Walk away.

You're right, but I don't.

I tell him he is upsetting me.

He keeps going.

I tell him to stop.

He screams at me. I'm too sensitive, and he tells me to shut up.

I tell him I'm not the one talking.

He goes on.

I tell Tennessee why his comments about the Tragically Hip upset me. The Tragically Hip was an iconic Canadian band that didn't need the validation of America to be a massive success. I explained to Tennessee that Gord Downie (lead singer) exemplifies what it means to be Canadian, and he gave his life to the country by performing a farewell tour while he was dying from brain cancer. I explained to Tennessee it upset me 6 years ago when we were watching their last concert, and Tennessee said they should turn this crap off. And his commitment to a bad joke, upsets me still today.

Back to this day, and a few days prior, I was sent a book to review 'The 10 Days That Shaped Modern Canada.' One day listed in the book was The Hip's last concert. When Tennessee saw this, despite knowing it upset me 6 years ago, he said, why is that crap band in the book? They should have an artist like Anne Murray in it. This comment makes no sense. He's being a dick. Just because.

I might have called him an idiot. To which Tennessee aggressively challenged me, Name three Tragically Hip songs, he bellowed. This flustered me. I didn't understand his challenge.

Our conversation then deteriorated off-topic to who was a more incredible artist: Anne Murray or The Hip? I fell for Tennessee's attempt at deflection; for a while.

And then, I understood this conversation was not about the music, although there is no comparison. One artist wrote about Canadiana and was an advocate for Indigenous rights and the environment. The other sang cheesy love songs written by men who were in their 70s. Nothing against the artist.

When I said this to Tennessee, The Postman and the Sayer joined in attacking me, saying how much they loved Anne Murray. Love of Anne had nothing to do with the conversation, I kept trying to convey. And besides, they don't.

They were simply contrarian.

I challenged them.

They became much-more-very-so aggressive.

I asked them to stop.

They kept going.

And then, Tennessee had a meltdown and started screaming out his love for Anne Murray, and he could like whomever he wanted, which is correct.

I suggested he wasn't having the same conversation with me.

And then he fired a zinger; he said I take things too far. Directed his words at, me but to much-more-very-so to an audience who enjoys riling me up. This rendered me speechless. He was inviting others go gang up on me.

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Maybe he didn't understand what he had just done.