

Fooled By Randomness

Epilogue

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SOLON TOLD YOU SO

Beware the London Traffic Jams

A couple of years after we left him looking at John smoking a cigarette with a modicum of schadenfreude, Nero's skepticism ended up paying off. Simultaneously as he beat the 28% odds, up to the point of complete cure, he made a series of exhilarating personal and professional victories. Not only did he end up sampling the next level of wealth but he got the riches right when other Wall Street hotshots got poor, which could have allowed him to buy the goods they owned at very large discounts, if he wanted to. But he acquired very little, and certainly none of the goods Wall Streeters usually buy. But Nero did engage in occasional excess.

Friday afternoon traffic in London can be dreadful. Nero started spending more time there. He developed an obsession with traffic jams. One day he spent five hours moving west from his office in the city of London toward a cottage in the Cotswolds, where he stayed most weekends. The frustration prompted Nero to get a helicopter-flying license, through a crash course in Cambridgeshire. He realized that the train was probably an easier solution to get out of town for the weekend, but he felt the urge for a pet extravagance. The other result of his frustration was his no less dangerous commuting on a bicycle between his flat in Kensington and his office in the city.

Nero's excessive probability-consciousness in his profession somehow did not register fully into his treatment of physical risk. For Nero's helicopter crashed as he was landing it near Battersea Park on a windy day. He was alone in it. In the end the black swan got its man.