**Full Retail**

*Fine Timepieces, Pieces of Time, The Full Retail, 5 Exits, Razny/Trump reflections*

**Had to leave Rolex to flounder at Graff to fully implode at Razny’s to set up my year of transformation**

[**Dated entries**](#dates)

[**Patek Phillippe**](file:///C:\Users\aaron\Creating\Writing\Pieces\Full_Retail\Patek%20Philippe%20Notes.docx)

[**Security Guard’s novel**](file:///C:\Users\aaron\Creating\Writing\Pieces\Full_Retail\Enter_the_Retail.docx)

**Characters**

**Establishments (5 exits)**

* [**Burberry**](#burberry)
* [**Omega**](#omega)
* [**TWCMA Rolex Boutique**](#tourneau)
* [**Graff**](#graff)
* [**Razny’s**](#razny)

**Symbols:**

* [**Timepieces**](#timepieces)
* [**ROLEX**](#rolex)
* **Diamonds**
* **U-Haul**
* **The Ides**
* **The Gyre?**
* **The Ides and 8 / Blue Moon**
* **Achillies Heel**
* **Running as freedom as unselfconscious self-expression**
* [**Swiss Made**](#swissmade)

**Themes:**

* [**Time (selling time, capitalism, wage slavery, means of production)**](#time)
* [**Money**](#money)
* **[Materialism](#materialism)**
* [**Selling (so important to Capitalism, markets)**](#selling)
* [**Process**](#process)
* **Value**
* **Life ordering goals**
* **Health**
* **Balance**
* **Dedication**
* [**Coworkers**](#coworkers)
* **Team player vs. Sled team member (suck it up vs. eat bitterness)**
* [**Love**](#love)
* [**Compartmentalizing / Boredom**](#boredom)
* [**Conspicuous Consumption**](#conspicuous)
* [**Violence**](#violence)
* [**Customers**](#customers)
* **Profiling (racial, class, sales potential vs/ time wasters)**

***Intention / conflict***

* collect thoughts about retail management, sales, and operations
* collect anecdotes from my retail experience for both future job interviews as well as for other writing pieces on the watches and work and America and Chicago
* process 2nd career
* Learn selling process, maintain selling process without letting it consume your life.
* Get back control of creative process
* Transition to full adulthood and parental responsibility
* Figure out what other career paths could I possibly transition to at this point in my life that were both realistic financially and relationally – did not want to go into a bunch of debt in pursuit of a career that I was not necessarily going to deliver the elusive work life balance that we desired. So I started to explore coding. I started with Ruby and ordered a $30 book and invested in a $9.99 MOOC and began working through both of them over the next two years as I transitioned jobs and we welcomed our second child into the world. I am not going to same that the next two years saw a ton of focused study but I certainly not had a dynamic openness to programming and was trying to work it into my mornings and commute and just trying to start working into that head space. Once I was laid off because of COVID and the civic unrest I was off to the races to try and cram just as much syntax and knowledge as possible. I attacked it like a literacy problem and one of my first strategems was an Excel file that was basically just my dictionary where I would record definitions and notes on general and specific web development and programming jargon. Expanding my known unknowns , expanding awareness, getting a sense of which direction to head, figuring out what are the beginning, intermediate and advanced technologies. What order should you learn them in. What kind of feedback loop of learning and applying what you learn? How much reflecting on the actual learning process should you be doing or is this just recursive obsessing at this point…
* I have attempted to shelter and shield my family from the fallout of my unfulfilling career and unfulfilled vocation.

Form:

* Song
* Wanted Ad:
  + Opportunistic. A poet. A parasite. A liar. A sociopathic cheat. An artist of the possible. A Confidant. A Priest. Eat bitterness, be a team player.
  + When you actually go through the motions and say that this is a cry for help she still doesn’t seem to understand or care that this is a cry for help and that it is kind of a big deal that you haven’t been able to eat lunch too days in a row and this whole situation is stressing you out ad making you drink more, making your drinking a little more athletic, a little sneakier and systematic, structured, efficient, on brand. Boots, hair, beer, running, sunglasses, contacts, 6:33, 6:33, This is my father. I can’t not write about it. The times are fine. They are not incredible. But I think the context is important. And the context seems weirder to me now than then even.

**Themes:**

**TIME:**

Time has always been a commodity.

Screwing people over because you know you can. Offering the service. It is what it is. We offer a premium services at a premium price. We offer a luxury service at a luxury price. We offer luxury at the exclusive price of luxury. Others cannot afford it-- that is why it is good. It is a positional good.

***Money:***

* Giving change on a hundred dollar bill at Ruby Tuesdays. After learning their enormous menu and taking written tests on it where you had to regurgitate all of the ingredients back on the paper before they’d let you start waiting tables. Busy night. Man pays with a hundered dollar bill. Hands full, put check tray down. Count change out on to check tray. Only realize at the end of the shift that I had counted the change down on top of the $100 bill and handed it back to the customer. Ended up working a double shift that day and walking with just a couple of dollars.
* Money counting disaster with Charles. Chinese gentlemen paying for the black dial Aqua terra GMT with all cash. Pulled from pockets of his traveling vest and his wallet and from his pants pockets, cash just pouring out of everywhere, collecting little, by little on the table. Trying to slow it down and bring order and then Charles jumps in and speeds it up. And then is satisfied and whisks the money away to cash register and pops it in without another recount. We ended up being a grand short.
* Refunding the elderly Filipino women 2,000 dollars to their credit card on accident for a repair, because we are chatting and there are very sweet and frail and have thin hair, lively eyes.
* Too much money is a problem
* Not enough money is a problem
* Social issues, connecting with people, becoming disconnected to people. Alienating other people from you in the way that you spend you money. Alienating other people from you by the way that you cannot spend or will not spend your money.

**Materialism**

Bruce Chatwin was an art appraiser turned travel writer. Known for his manic restlessness.

Quoted as saying in the best collectors the objects congregate around the bed and the bed is very narrow-- *the true collection houses a corps of inanimate lovers*.

Do the objects love us back? Do they reflect our glory or goodness or success?

Buben and Zorweg case to house watches vs. Gareth’s Russian Pawn shop.

A-- dominating, calculating,

Vs

B-- shambolic, bumbling, better at make believe, managing video game soccer team in his garden apartment checking out girls on FansOnly and chatting via dating apps.

Human connection. Connoisseurship. Knowledge. Taste. Class.

The quote from Joseph Campbell related to how far one can get on a meditation on a luxury watch depends upon the talent of the individual.

***Process***

* *My process does not penalize spontaneity and free association; in fact it rewards and amplifies it; makes sense of it; abstractions arise out of order not chaos*
* **It’s the iterations that are ultimately important. And your ability to recognize and grab hold of inefficiencies, Liabilities, weakness, disease, seepage, repetition**

***Selling***

* Discrete accumulation
  + Everything is 1%
  + Greet, engage, identify, close/capture, follow up
* Baseball
  + Technique tweaking
  + Statistically a lot of “failure”
  + Iterative approach
  + Micro goals to focus and motivate
  + Innovate around inefficiencies.
* Balancing new opportunities with accumulating leads.
* Convincing, defending, educating, expressing in an attractive, engaging, goal harmonizing way. I want to find our shared goals and make an effort to harmonize them. I am looking for that vein and trying to pry it open. I am a jet tanker trying to connect and refuel an F-16.
* So let’s talk about how this is going to go…you’ll us me, they’ll use me, and in the end if it all goes well, I’ll get a little bonus.
* The varnish of your authenticity stinking in my nostrils.
* Show gold
* Have fun, party
  + Frank never had that easy way that his homosexual colleagues seemd to have with clients that gay savoy faire that with a few enthusiastic questions and pronouncements and a compliment or two and a call for Arthur to bring some champagne flutes and you had yourself a party, a watch sold and quite likely a quality returning client to bring into the familiar fold of our expanding business. What a craven fucking job. How do you take care of your client’s needs and be super responsive without being a craven lap dog? You respect the process and make the job about the process—about the client and your job as a sales associate is to figure out how to get free to anticipate all of the client’s needs before they even have them. It because easy to be thoughtful because you have thought through all of these little issues and are prepared to offer immediate solutions or suggestions.
* Client focused / client celebrating
* Guide / educate
* Focused goal—everything runs through target
* Consistently ask for the sale / establish time line and follow up
* SWIS- Sell what’s in stock
* Energy exchange
  + Mirroring
  + People will often not return your energy and enthusiasm and that can be draining. People will also take up a lot of your time and drain your energy and suck your opportunities away from you.
* Process
* Numbers game
* Build repeat clients, build business
* Stop selling—you don’t need to proselytize anymore, induce conversion, recruit someone to one’s party, cause, institution, Amway me into your intellectual sphere.

What I always appreciated about sales was that the hours you actually got shit done—closed sales, ran credit cards, received wire transfers, you hourly compensation rate shot way up. Your reward was right there! DING!

Work

Interview Questions for Razny

* Hours- how do they work?
* Overtime- how does that work?
* Scheduling- how does that work?
* Vacation how does that work?/Sick days: me and family
* Healthcare- how does that work?
* 401K/IRA?/Bonuses/Profit sharing?
* Commuter Benefits?
* Patek Training?/Rolex Training
* Services- Locally vs. New York vs Switzerland?

Matt

* Compare experience at Omega to experience at Razny.
* How does it work working with management?

Comparison:

* New vs. uncertain
* Family vs. corporate
* Longevity, contribution

**二十五每个小时等于五万两千**

**二十七每个小时等于五万六千**

**二十九每个小时等于六万**

***劳力士：三万三千***

***格拉夫：六万六千***

***拉兹尼：***

**Conspicuous Consumption**

Fetishize—mythologize, signify, reflect

* Powers, access, cool, confidence, experience, refinement, degree, perspective, appreciation, conisourship, hope, accuracy, precision, memory preservation—anniversary, graduation, wedding, birthday, retirement, funeral/inheritance

**Customers**

* Short white shirts guy on the fashion walk with his dinged up Cartier things- sunglass, love bracelet… walking in with his blue steel moves. Chilling at the counter looking through the magazines. Someone says he drives a bus for his day job, don’t know how they knew that. This guy is strange. Never really talks. Just doesn’t respond or will sort of mumble in reply.
* Elderly Philippian women (reverse $2,000 credit card)
* Chinese man with cash stuffed all over his vest.
* Hispanic con cartel with woman with flouncy dress, pushing me around.
* Drunk woman playing Bond with all the Graff jewels
* Mr. Grey Visiting to talk jewels and bring her diamonds to be assessed.
* The tight white shorts guy with the designer sunglasses and love bracelet
* Ryan and Jackie
* Iron Dragon and the leather Jacket
* Armful of sweaters
* Snatch belt from behind my back.
* “Accidently” wristing one of the presentation watches and leaving his on the pad.
* Puerto Rican ex-coworker, just back from working like crazy trying to clean up his brother’s place. Drinking Heineikein like Gatorade. Had a sun. His son has health problems. His wife is overweight. His daughter is overweight. His hair is receding. His peak style period has passed. His watch expertise is aging on him seedier and seedier. Gareth too in his Garden apartment surrounded by hundreds of vintage Soviet era watches and empty LaCroix cans drained and then packed back into their cardboard 12 packs, just in case he runs into someone on their way to Michigan.

**Coworkers**

The luxury and loveliness of listening to other people’s problems, but ultimately not being responsible for solving their problems in any sort of existential way.

The crush of trying to work from home and having your family, who you care about, whose problems do affect you in an existential way, surrounding you, treading on your work space, not allowing you to fully transition and transform to work space Dad-- custom focused, laser drilling down and efficieines, organization, killing paper, following up on leads, maintaining the work space, preparing for meetings, reports, product knowledge. Next reach out strategies.

Oh, good to see you, Mr. John. Deferrential. Agreeable.

Fabulous, loud, flirty, complimentary, horsefaced and racist, married to a conservative suburban mob son with artistic aspirations. His first wife was too hippie dippie-- she’s in Wisconsin with their daughter and their cats living the vegan lifestyle and running a failing yoga and wellness clinic. The daughter is neurotic about all food now and takes the joy out of Fabulous lady sharing the city with the proto-neurotic hippie child. Who then gets the lead in Annie and odes a great job. She does something else and has to be fire and it sort of weird’s Christie out. Could I be Christie? Judegemental, insecure, Angry, ambitious. Frustrated as fuck that my life has come to this.

And the manager is mad because it’s Christmas Eve and the client’s want bubbly to celebrate their $10,000 purchase and she just wants to leave and take the sad bus back home to her empty apartment to watch *Love after Lock up* and get stoned and wine happy while cuddling with herr agro shelter dog.

Close up the shop, head back home.

Make wishes on the street lights

Down the avenue.

Frost on windows. Silver tinsel. Colored lights to settle the day down, or wake it up.

**Gareth-**

[**Gareth’s letter**](file:///C:\Users\aaron\Creating\Writing\Pieces\Full_Retail\Gareths_Letter.docx)

Grateful, but doesn’t know hot to show gratitude, to really get be back.

Your little buddy.

Abused by women. Not sticking up for himself. Getting hung up on really dumb useless shit.

Hanging out with the security guards. He has nothing better to do than hang out with those losers? Doesn’t he have anything else going on? Plays video games. Video chats with family back in England.

Came over and married a women he met on line through their mutual interest in photography. She had modeling ambitions. He liked to take photographs and sold jewelry and Tag Heuer Timepieces on high street at Beaverbridges. Had a romantic notion of life. How much life can you take? How much life can you take in? Do you really just have to show up. Here is a guy that has moved across the Atlantic to get married. And then went to Taiwan to get married and the both marriages had all sort of red flags all over the place. This question of how much pain can you take? This question of how much discomfort can you take in a bad cultural fit. All of the million little signals that are sent like feathers, but drop like lead, messages and behaviors unharmonized, unaligned. Desiring a life. Desiring a rhythm. Attempting to define that life through the courtship. How do you plan? How do you execture? How do you recover? How do you maintain yourselves? Are these mutually harmonious rituals. Can they be harmonized. Can the two of you articulate you needs? Can the two of you articulate your desires? How is your arguing? What patterns in you argument seem healthy to you? What patterns in your arguments seems unhealthy to you?

Gas mask photo with Chicago in the background. Name the buildings in the image.

Describe photo- color, resolution, stature of model, sense, communication of the body. Semiotics of the form, of the body.

Russian watches, modifying them, making a book, listening to weird Russian techno music, trashy, hip, wild, rhythmic, natural, offbeat, seeing humor in normal things. Photographers eye.

Vivian Mauer and her photography and her “eye” and her loneliness? And her lack of recognition. What is the point personally of art if the recognition is not there in your life? But there is still value there. The unbroken chain of sentiment that this life is worth capturing, worth paying attention to all of the time, not just in the big glitzy spotlight moments, because, well that is obvious, it takes zero effort, in fact it is a looking that is more akin to watching. What will be shown to me. And you are kept at a distance from the process and from the product. All features desired to be enhanced have been enhanced, the lights have been affixed just so, the makeup accentuating the pop of the facial features, the costumes are bold and intricately sequenced. The legs are long and limber and well-rehearsed, undulating in waves of acrobatic

**Charles**

Tanned. Long face. Handsome. Fit. Works out. Gets up early. Married to a slightly older, more successful partner who died unexpectedly when they moved to Las Vegas.

**Computers**

* Like a Robotic genie it would do what you commanded , precisely, ceaselessly.

03/11/2021

Where to begin? Death? Cold Sweats? Oral thrush? Sensitive liagemnt and muscle supported key joints flexing in unnatural and inadvisable directions, rib inflammation pressuring one’s sternum from within, harmless inflammation pressuring ones’ sternum, mimicking a heart attack, furtive heat blower sorties to cold back porch to get high, surreptitious edibles at dry family reunions, visits from the laughing Buddha, screaming at your white nationalist mother “It’s your tone!!!”. Am I making a mistake? AM I making a mistake? Tell me I am making a mistake. Tell me I am making a mistake. They, always, they, she talks of they, they built windmills that failed in the ice storm, they want bars open until 4:30 a.m. They legalized marijuana. They abort babies. They don’t want prayer in schools. They want to brainwash our children with sex education and available condoms.

They don’t understand how hard I have worked. They don’t respect my 6 children and 19 grandchildren. Am I angry—absolutely—but am I also full of love—you know I am. Fate is cruel, but god is love.

Do I have alcohol, caffience and THC coursing through my veins? No. And yet up I go dancing like a madman all around my kitchen—am I skanking? Is this aerobics? Bend knees, touch floor, jump, reach for the sky! Is this a mid-life crisis?

All night dreams. Elaborate jame packed tabagon runs through sloped forests, improbable slashing and weaving courses ending in unflinching crashes, bodies scattered everywhere—snapped necks, broken spines, arms, teeth spraying into the air life bursts of fresh powder. All observed with detachment—ravens nervously pecking a carcass of a mountain goat as an eagle looks on. Shifting its weight from talon-claw to talon-claw all in high-definition.

Then some suburban jewelry store. Spend the whole shit trying to get dressed. Buttoning, coifing, as I drop diamonds and emerald line bracelets over a tipsy twenty-somethings wrist. Mardi Gras is in town and its festive and I am out on the street corner, patiently explaining the concept of a security compromise to the redheaded youths whole hale me uncomprehendingly festive.

That bitch, that bitch, echo on the call recording. She falling into Chinglish fluently, me stumbling around technical shit I’d have a hard time speaking convincingly about in English. And but yet still, $8,000,000 in merchandise sold over the following 7 years.

Portage decade. A decade of portage. We can pretend we are all right. But magical thinking only goes so far. What happens when you reach the end of the line? What happens when you fail to convince yourself that you are winning, when you’re clearly not.

Searching for something to hang my hat upon.

Something to make my own.

Release from stress and tension.

No more moss growing over my stones.

Grinning, shaking, shaking, grinning.

Billionaires. Wisemen wise in ways we don’t rightly understand. This one distributes beef. This one’s the cilantro king of the Midwest. This one does bananas, that guy sold his company to Microsoft for like a billion dollars. This guy tracks liscense plates for the FBI and local law inforcement, and assorted domestic and foreign entities. Information is the new age commodity. Harvest how your data, sell it by the spoil.

This guy is old as shit and doesn’t move enough to keep his self-winding watch wound, but he would like a $20K one. She likes to try on watches and pose in the mirror. She is uncomfortably thin. Has a place in the mountains near Salt Lake. Can we ship there. He is pleasant enough, but seems kind of rough, like he lives in a motel, drinks cheap whisky with John Fahey on the weekends. His girl is a lawyer—very polite. Thai? Vietnamese perhaps? Between the two of them we try 4 to 5 different credit and debit cards before we can get the $10,000 payment for the watch to go through. Aspirational. A woman and her son, tipsy as shit, he then goes full drunkm zippy down with his glass outstretched for a refill. We get him into a $6K piece and a $40K piece for his mom. I make sure the watches are sized and the NO RETURNS paperwork is all signed within clear view of the cameras. My ass feels very tired when they gingerly, then aggressively broach the topic of return the next day when they get word that thei local dealer with give them a big fat discount. Fuck them. The sale stands and my numbers get a big burly boost. Padding liberally an already solid start to the quarter. I am selling what we have. Steel and gold. Preowned. Whatever. A repeat client, he’s a football player, calls me up to inquire about a couple of pieces. I steel him towards what we have. Provide him with the total including taxes. He’s going to bring me a cashiers check. We’ll get the watches sized up right away. I get an extra spiff for the Cashiers checks.

The money rolls in and though the money isn’t funny its beginning to accrue, we have been able to save these last few years. When you are selling ROLEX you start saving money. A whole bunch of people can feed around that crown.

We have been getting by on a single income. I feel good that my wife does not have to work. That she can be a fulltime mom. Keep our home—and she does, she is much handier than me—she builds things. She has a building mentality. Shew fixes thing. Fixes rooms right up. Freshens them. She’s a wonderful cook. This is a good life. The watches feed the flow. Keep the going sustainable. For how long though? This 10 years of portage is dragging on.

***LOVE***

Big boss man moved slowly like a Bond villain.

Emily the parts manager. Kind and sane and apologetic and caught between you and the customers and the brand. Delivering messages of crazy delivery timelines to repair these precious things. She’s friendly and funny and has a nice voice and seems like a reliable and predicable and consistently reachable alley. It’s a good working relationship. An oasis of non-passive aggression and buried grievances. Gabrielle wears many hats though is ultimately hand in glove with the big boss man. She also seems to think that we can read her mind. It feels like a lot of things get said in these manager’s meetings, but only a fraction of the information is then communicated on to us. The boss’s grievances shine through reflected or refracted in odd comments. Suddenly sharp comments alluding to neglect or company polices that are not company policies. What is the expectation of what we should be doing on social media for the company. How much of our time on the floor should he spent on social media. How much time of our commutes and how time are you expecting us to commit to the social media marketing of your business. Shane Decker seemed to be promoting this culture of ABC. Always be selling. Always have your cards. Always be on. You are the product. You are the lifestyle. You coo and ooo and aw at the product. You fetishize the size of diamonds and their quality. You constantly compare and collect and upgrade and consume and boast and broadly smile your ironic, knowing smile, you know the good life. You have money and all of these things are for you. You love alcohol and it makes you feel energetic and spirited. Spirits. Whine. Not much of a beer guy. Not a pot guy. Coke. Sure. Coke seeks material. Weed seeks spiritual. Spiritual doesn’t seek material. Must seek material in America. No safety net. Or maybe there is. Suddenly safetly net. A year of safety net. Still getting help. Finding way back up. Collapsing middle class. Falling apart. Falling into addiction and writing. Addication to writing. Added by smoking weed. Added by coffee. Coming in and out. Out and in. Broken on the wheel of time. Too self-conscious to continue. Feeling sad that I can’t make good use of my time. Coming back around to the meta writing this is proof my my insanity. This is proof that I am not in control of my mind this is proof that I am blocked and cut off from calmly eisting. Have this sliver in my head. Hve this sliver in my head. And I try to approach it and pull it out. Try to remove the sliver from my head. The subtle sliver. The sliver that is keeping me fro the flow of my mind and the control of my mind the knowing of my mind the acceptance of my mind the strength of my mind and rhythm of my mind athe understanding of my mind the getting ahead of my mind the boxing matach of my mind the calling out oto the saints of fmy mind that western heading medicine garden farmer machine strength in the numbers

The big boss man knows that it is all bullshit, its all a fuckign show. But you can’t get mad at it. You get mad at the scenery designer in a play. in a movie. Are they maliciously trying to trick you, pull one over on you, no-- they are trying to entertain you and engaeyou and make you ooh and ahh, they are trying to wow you,

Repair

* Buying the guys watch. Offering him $15,000 (the watch retailed for $30,000). Then when he thinks about it and gets back to us we offer him $13,000. And then we promptly flip it for $20,000. Sitting with those Korean guys. Taking about watches. Something egos. Being agreeable. Getting coffees. Showing something special. Oohing and awing tat the different timepieces. Exploring the language of design. Bruce Chatwin in Patagonia. Language. Loving language and collecting it. Finding the wherewithal to retu9rn to it soberly with gusto and clarity and wherewithal.

***[BOREDOM / COMPARTMENTALIZING](#boredom)***

My eyes glued to the clock. My god I hate this job Pretty good at compartmentalizing. Pretty good at driving through the strain. But now liberated, literally leaving pounds of weight, pounds of pressure behind me, I have a new lilt to my step and my pen thanks to my engagement with coding and my conviction that this is a path to long term vocational resolving trajectory for me.

Burrowed into this process—obscured from much of the outside world, but also deeply connected to it—full of longing and shattered wherewithal for it. desiring its goodness and vitality and affection and kindness and strength—shedding youthful scales of fear of awkwardness and unknowing and apprehension towards the world seen through a glass darkly. All the opportunity cost that bleed the wealth from our youthful heart—starving for apparent direction, in a lang suffiet with promise—oh, lonesome flaneur, oh, aware of status and confident of guo—yes, a Yes-man for 3-5 percentage points of the deal, skimming butler fat from off the crown of others achievements. Hustling to do so squased between a bottleneck product flow an anxious clientel and an over-stretched and mean-spirited first family.

A demanding clientele purchasing with trust in an act of celebration or love or remorse or commemoration and now once again I have the freedom to write.

I think I lost this freedom because I go a bit wise—I realized I absoklutely couldn’t put all of my eggs in the writing basket. I had to learn to support myself with something other than writing or I would ruin myself tyring to write myself into a commercially successful writing career. Which is only important to me in as much as it could help me crack the economic code of living and working and that ever longed for work-life balance ever dangled out just ahead, or around a bend. I didn’t trust my writing to stand up to both being my life ordering practice and my economic engine. And I think I have taken years to reconcile this fact—that I can authentically be a writer—possess that writerly instinct, desire, need, but not do it professionally. I thnk this approach is very good. I learn the discipline and the skills of writing and I make a life out of writing—employ it as a life organizing and cultivating practice and if there indeed are opportunities at some point to engage in this practice commercially, well we’ll just have to see, but the living is first… the exploration is first, the inquiry is first, the warbling is first… all those secondary considerations seem to work themselves out once you get the ball rolling. I suppose writing is just how I roll my ball, or at least how I would like to.

Identifying so strongly with writing sets up a poison pill dichotomy of having your writing dictate your sense of accomplishment and worth and talent. If the writing is going well and you are producing a lot and there seems to be some sort of flow then you are a good and talented person, but if it is not going well and there is a great empty chamber drone in response to your slapped out efforts then you feel isolated and incomplete and ineffectual.

My instinct right in this exact moment is to really try to turn the corner on my writing. Push through more of the *Yellow River* and push a few pieces of correspondence to completion.

The heist-- something that in boredom he hatches as a way to write blog posts. Something to do with the Second Brain here. He is trying to keep track of his clients, but he is also keeping track of his reading. But he is also smoking way too much weed and drinking too much-- starts to lose time, gaps in his diary. His second brain is taking over and making decisions for him.

He is alienated from his family. From his coworkers. He begins to plan a heist in the jewelry store he works in and he is actively trying to become a double agent. Work for the enemy. Find little ways to foment distrust and controversy. Handing out tracks. Spreading rumors. Trying to recruit bad actors. Dave’s brother an undercover narcotics cop for decades dealing with the Chinese mafia-- drugs, human trafficking. Befriending criminals. Helping them move, going to their kids birthdays, throwing their kids birthday parties.

**Swiss Made**

Definitive olde world background—craftsmanship, double plus good. Top of Class. Transparent. Neutral. All our bridges rigged with bombs.

**VIOLENCE**

**Omega hit, Tourbillon hit, gun shot near Hermes, suddenness of Barney’s disappearance, armed guards, Razny Hinsdale hit, snatch and grab, smash and grab, slight of hand, misdirection,**

**11/02/2021**

In the 1500 block of West Garfield Boulevard in Back of the Yards, a 51-year-old woman suffered a graze wound to her leg while waiting at a bus stop at 3:45 p.m. Sunday. She noticed the wound later and refused medical attention.

—A man, 29, was found between two vehicles with gunshot wounds to his face and body in the 1000 block of West 14th Street in Little Italy about 11:45 p.m. Sunday. He was taken to Stroger Hospital in critical condition.

**Symbols:**

**Timepieces**:

* Hair-spring: regular beats—expanding and contracting; breathing
* How do you know when a watch is calibrated correctly
* How is a second created?
* What does low amplitude on a watch mean?

Talisman: good energy… associations are energy.

Being right handed and wearing a watch when I wear one on my left wrist, sometimes when I am writing, I bend my left elbow and cup my left hand around the back of my necd, this brings the watch very close to my left ear and the ticking of the mechanism beats reassuringly, secret, alive. The escapement is the releaser, it holds back the potential energy.

The delight of a wind up toy, An animatron monkey crashing symbols and madly peddling around the room with the wild hither-thither energy possessed by mice and children. And this, the same dame thing, only more refined, more button up, not whizzing around the room like a lunatic, but panther prowling in possession of a certain depth of potential energy and resources that should not be taken lightly.

Metaphor of potential energy… could this be a place to bring in Physics as metaphor?

Let out potential energy. Accrue discrete ability. Improve over time. Improve your situation over time.

We walked through the streets.

Wearing our wealth on our sleeves.

You wouldn’t believe the reaction

we received. I showed up. I worked.

I made a few sales. Keep going.

The other side is just ahead.

Clients, products, environment

3/24/2021

Watches as symbols—all the ROLEX and Hans Wilsdorf stuff, *Lake Success*, Joseph Campbell quote about rhapsodizing on about a mechanical watch. Digital watch bit in *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galazy*

2/24/2021

Lost away in mazes of rubies and diamonds and folding over gears hand-polished with obsessive duty in calming fan-patterns known as *Cotes de Geneve* and directives and sales books and aging sales gurus with cowboy hats and bolos and who talk straight and seem to lose themselves in what they are saying sometimes, sometimes even stopping, pausing to jot down some notes on something they had just said or something that they had just thought. What for? For their next blog? Newsletter? Book? Talk? Is he writing his next talk while he is giving this one? That’s pretty fucking efficient.

You want to become a good business salesman like me? Well you can. You just have to start aggressively plugging everyone you come in contact with. Make your sales success the absaolute center and focus of your life and your identity. Numbers are important. Some people are obsessed with their IQ or their test scores or whatever, but right now, right here, in this life that you have chose, totruly have this job live up to its full potential and for you to live up to your full potential in your job the only number that means anything to you is our sales number. Are you driving business. Are you growing the business. Are you capturing information. Capturing attention. Engaging. Are you committed to becoming a 24/7 selling machine? Can you handle all of the success that is going to come your way. I bet you can’t actually. I bet a lof of people that read this blog might even take a few of these steps and start to tast some of the success that I am talking about and you know what they are going to do? They are going to quit! They are going to get scared. They are going to start getting busy. People are going to start coming in and asking for them. They are going to get pulled away from their lunch. They are going to get calls and emails at home of lead sna d customers seeking them out. They are going to either be VICTIMS of their own SUCCESS or they are going to become VICTORS of their success!

Are you away of the watch and jewelry needs over everyone in your life. Of everyone you meet. Until you have some kind of understanding of how you can help people, what you can offer them, how can you even share your life with them? How is that even being honest if you are not fully committed to helping everybody in your life with the goods and services that you offer. And if the goods and services that you offer are not worth taking up all of your time and your inspiration and your value system then maybe this is the wrong industry for you. Maybe you need to find some other industry where they want fakers and half-assed losers, instead of confident, hungry, 110% seeks and finders and closers and carers and helpers.

You know what is everywhere. Leads. At the gas station, at the super market, at church. That’s the key. And that’s the secret and that is how I sold over 400 one carat diamond engagement rings in a single year. And you can too.

Now the young people today—they want to be connected with. They want you to be right there with them. On Instagram and facebook. I mean it’s a bare minimum that you are active on the Brandeis social media page. To engage your on-line customer, you as a sales associate have to be engaged on-line.

You have to be fast— always, always, always give two cards. Send a card picture via text and thank them for their visit. Follow up with a hand written note card. Make note of all important holidays, birthdays, etc. Are they religious? What industry do they work in. What are the typical bonus schedules for that industry? Do you have their address? Have you checked out their house? What kind of car do they drive? This could be interesting—do they work on their car? Do they drive a vintage one? Something new and expensive? Get the whole picture? Are they merely aspiration, set-up and well off, honest to god wealthy, or like uber-fucking- good-night-nurse level resourced? How can you set yourself up to be able to meet their needs as seamlessly as possible.

And they really WOW them! You always have to be wowing people. Make them your FOREVER CLIENT. Think of it people, if you make just one FOREVER CLIENT a day. Within just a few short months between these FOREVER CLIENTS and all the references that they will bring you, you have to think that you are going to have an abundant business. You have to have this ABUNDANT mindset!!

You will be successful. You will have the car and the watch and the suits. You can take the vacations. Get the house. Get the girl or guy or whatever. But you know what is going to be more valuable than any of that? More valuable that your which will support you and your family and Mr. Brandeis and the Brandeis family and this community? The celebrations! The lives and deaths and graduations and weddings of the community. Your community, the lasting gift of all of this is confidence. Your confidence—that feeling that is built by investing in something bigger than yourself, something that you can be proud of and contribute to and reap the rewards of, we have a lot of work ahead of us, but you know what, we are not scared, we are not intimidated, because we know our jobs well and we are getting to know them better and better every day. We’ve seen the worst of it and in those challenges we have built up a tremendous reserve of strength and an impressive collection of tools and systems to handle whatever comes crashing down on us. This confidence is going to be our ballast and our support. It is going to prop us up and push us through, not through some empty rhetorical flourish, but from that mass of authentic ability building and solidifying and sharpening experiences all of us have been through. I am so proud of this team. And I know you will all continue to make me proud. Of that I have not a doubt in my mind.

We dedicated ourselves to the challenge and to our clients and to each other and we have moved mountains, we all got down behind it and put our shoulder into it and dug our feet in and gritted our teeth and your know what—it moved. We pushed it and it moved. We that together … as a family.

And that my friends is confidence. That my friends is pride. Plant the seeds— 1%. 1%. 1%-- plant them 1% at a time and then when the time comes be prepared to reap the benefits. Be prepared for abundance—materially, psychologically, emotionally. Feel your spirit lift each time you head into work because you know you are going good work for you, for your family, your Brandeis family, our community, our country, this planet.

I love the work you guys do! I am proud of the work you guys do. Mr Brandeis is proud of the work you guys do. Let’s keep doing it.. and keep doing it better, deeper, truer. More honest and loving. Let’s keep moving mountains and those FOREVER clients will just keep lowing right through the doors and into your ever enriching existence.

Plant the seeds. Harvest the fruit!

So I take that back, this is not all about a single number. That single number is an abstraction of something. It is a symptom of something, it is a simple dashboard indicator if your system is killing it or needs to be killed. It is an abstraction of your passion, your commitment, your worth, your love, your desire, your potential, your American Dream.

Look around you—see these people around you—your co-workers, your friends, your buddies, see the managers and the Raznys, they are all here for you. They want that Dashboard light to glow, to blind, to be a shining light. They want to see that glow in you, they want to see that potential unfold from you as you step into your beautiful shining self-actualized self.

They want your light to shine!!

**Diamonds**

Mike Todd, *Around the World in 80 Days,* A cursed diamond, and the criminals that tried to exhume his body to get the diamond.

**ROLEX**

* Wilsdorf & Davis
* Hans Wilsdorf (1881)
  + German orphan visionary: wristwatch will replace pocket watch.
  + 1926- new oyster case; Mercedes Gleitze swam English Channel with oyster watch
  + Genie whispered in his ear: “ROLEX” to give him the inspiration for the Brand name as he was riding the bus around London(?)

**Management**

Seeking strategy that amplifies all strengths.

Leadership that amplifies all strength. Science, faith, industry, arts, seeking out creativity in every corner of this existence.

Agree on the values, put them up front. Let’s be clear about what the reward is. Let’s agree upon it. Put what matters most to the employees up front and they will put the values of the company up front.

**5 Exits**

***Burberry***

For a time I taught at Kaplan in the morning and then would hustle over to Burberry for the evening shift. Sometimes I would have a morning student as well. It was a relief when I was finally able to transition “full-time” to Burberry.

Smoking cigarettes in the alley with the Serbian shipping and receiving guy who had a cool mustache and who I randomly ran into at that BBQ music joint the Honky Tonk down in Pilsen. And all my writing ever will really be is just a list of real and imagined physical or emotional topographical locations.

Small room with the two managers as they try to convince me that I should stay and sell for them an offer that they had been pushing for months but had somehow gotten held up. I had put my time in. I was done folding jeans and arranging shirts and showing $200 belts to gang bangers, dressed up in my single suit that I shrunk from dry cleaning too much and finally ripped the ass right out off, thankfully to the day that my new pants arrived.

At any rate it was nice to be on my way.

The path of strength broke me— actual sores appeaing on my body, my chest tightening my body clenching, injuring itself, negative vibes radiating through my body— much like when I joined Burberry I was determined to make it work through my drive and energy— I gave myself a hernia. I completely destroyed my one work suit, ripping the pants out through the ass.

The real progress really only began when I turned to the weakness and accepted it as a guide. – Rumi

First full-blown medical emergency level injury and I didn’t have insurance and I had to seek out medical aid avenues and off and on I walked funny and felt very stiff and was worried about exercising. It was a selfless fucking act to try and break into this industry. We both liked the sound of the montey. It would answer all of our pr3oblems. It would cover both our meager wages plus and we’d have health insurance and she wouldn’t have to work and could just focus on the babies when we had them.

***Omega***

Staff dinner with Dario at Quartino’s

Drinking beer on a bench nea the fountain in front of the Newberry Library before hand. Getting quite drunk at dinner and having zingers for everyone. Then quitting the next day.

Waked every day to the Hancock. Thought it was interesting and kind of errie that I was working directly across the street for the Church where I would come downtown and smoke my pipe in college. Making the 45 minute journey just to get my feet wet in the city. Get the feel of it. During my time doing private English and Mandarin tutoring I traversed all over the shop. Lot’s of cycling. And then began cycling to work using the Divvy Bike. Something I kept as on option for all of my downtown jobs. When I finally settled in and got my first Chinese sale, I hustled up to the cash resgister to ring it through and the song *Chinatown* by Destroyer came piping in. Seriously, where were we now and where were we heading?

***Gareth***

* Photography: the gas mask shoot
* The San Antonio crew—Timepiece summer camp; summer camp with steak and booze and James Bond.
* Meets girl on-line. A model interested in photography. He moves to the US and they get married and settle in Chicago and then completely fall apart. He loses his mind, takes LSD and is accosting some guy about getting his life back together. He is slapping the guy in the face saying, come on, man, get it together!!
* Meets Anne (Annie) at a Trivia night. He sends a drink to her table. She accepts and they are together constantly over the next two years. They marry. They divorce. He moves from her airy condo with roof top deck to his garden apartment that is very cold in the winter. He meets girls that are fact and gross and have bad hygiene and want to fuck him because they have never fucked a British guy. They are fucking an accent. One girl gives him a script. She makes suggestions of the kinds of things that he can text her based on Britishy lines that she has heard and collected over the years.
* Gareth talking to a client of the phone confirming that we have a certain piece. Going on lunch, the client comes in. We don’t have the piece that Gareth told him we have. I figure it out. Calm the client down. We order the piece. All is well. I suggest to Gareth that we split the sale and he accuses me of being opportunistic. There are a lot of sour grapes. I am working on the principle that I not only saved the sale, but I acted in the role of a manager and was out of the UP pool denying myself the ability to start a new relationship, to deal with Gareth’s mucked up one.
* Telling the same coffee story over and over again—proof that our relationship kind of hit a high point on that trip and has been sagging lower ever since. We did have a nice week and I remember on the way home drinking overpriced beer in this San Antonio airport café and feeling very good and relaxed and light in my head to be getting on a plane and chatting mindlessly with Gareth and flying back to Chicago, probably napping off my beer bliss along the way, will need to get some water in me. More drinking buddies to get me on my way. There is nothing wrong with drinking buddies. The only reason you are worried about only having drinking buddies is because your world has systematically shrunk during these last 7 years of fatherhood. The fact that a lot of your close friends who have kids do note have kids around your kid’s age, or the one’s who do not live in the area. I have a huge bottleneck of socialization building as I try to firmly wrap my head around this year and my life and existence. I have somehow managed to tie together all of my burning, but often super abstract and inchoate uncertainties into an artistic quest of self-exploration and development. I am doomed to fail, but that does not mean that I should not try. And the try again. Fail again. Fail again better.
* Heart felt letter .something’s missing… subtle becomes psycho, driving it out .. coffee story setting up eye twitch admission.
* Americans working hard, not being able to do it without coffee.
* Valerie—quirky, sweet, they had fun together—she wasn’t “good enough for him”, “something was missing”

***Saul***

* Growth
* “Hey, Boo-boo, don’t forget about my picnic basket.”
* “Don’t Taylor Swift me.”
* “TD Bank- (tittie bank)
* Encyclpedic knowledge of watch brands and models
* Speaks passionately, though thought process is sometimes difficult to follow.

***Fanglu***

* *Chocolate Chrishon*
* *Tittie Bank*
* *“Don’t Taylor Swift me.”*
* Quiet, obfuscation…
* The cruelty of directness and honesty. How do you tell someone that you feel like you have grown past them? How do you grow past someone but continue to honor the relationship?

***Mackenzie***

* Very serious about her job. Good at it dedicated. Fierce.
* Blond extensions shedding around the apartment
* She loses her job over pushing to run the card twice so that we wouldn’t have to do the code ten. I was very green at this time and was completely deferring to Mackenzie. In retrospect this was such a bullshit move and struck me as completely fucking bizarre. Was she working with these people? They were rushing us. We were trying to slow it down. She was not allowing up to slow it down.

***Charles***

* *Come to Jesus moment*
* *Let my people go*
* *Charles and John and their place in Mexico.*
* *Charles not recounting the money when he tossed it into the cash register.*
* *Wine bodegas on the company dime. So pig full and priggishly acting in and out of line line. Sensing all had been shitty from the git. Uncharacteristically one-sided, slyly dividing the conquered from the to be quested.*

***Tourneau***

She let loose a monsoon of bad juju.

Where is that writing I did about the Cathy Lee inspired story/side plot. Connecting it to the jewelry who wants to shut her up about his illegal trans shipping practices and more specifically to shut her up about what she knows about his deep mob instincts.

Maybe she staged the robbery? Could those two ideas cross pollinate?

Playing Legend of Zelda voiced by my cousin in the back of the Tourneau store below the Women’s Athletic Club, between the Cartier Boutique and that new Starbucks- you know the one, it’s the biggest one in the world. On the northwest corner of the block is the Conrad Highrise hotel. On the south side of the block, the Ontario side is the *Lowry’s* Steakhouse where we all dinned so many years ago. Further on on Ontario, Uno’s, Trader Joe’s, and on down towards Portillo’s and the big McDonald’s and such.

***Graff***

I was brought on and given a book of leads that were mostly a decade old. Spent the year off and on cold calling these customers from years ago. More often than not I would end up getting their insurance appraisals updated for them or answering some repair or cleaning question. More than once the reaction was very cold. Bad timing! Hang up. Oh, I don’t buy jewelry anymore…

Being walked out by Bobby. Getting my two weeks of paid vacation. A gift.

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Elizabeth Taylor, her Jewish husband and the grave robbers in the Chicago suburbs. And that crazy woman who was well known on the north shore and Jenn feeling like she is losing her mind and becoming like that woman and might one day come to work under similar duress. Goes home on weekends to be with her mother. Dinners with her brother who dates and goes to concerts. They get tickets together. Her dad, older, quiet, retiring, his daughter’s grief heavy on his heart, but he is deep into autumn and without the wherewithal to administer to her needs. He will be leaving soon, or course he will. Will leave them in comfort and security. A good main and able earner. Distant. Driven. They had live in Europe it had been a good life. It was a shame about he fiancé. It not for him getting sick they might have all been happier. Might have bought the cabin on the lake and gone there and stayed connected all meeting up there when they could, it all could have been very different if he had not gotten sick and died. It was obvious. Unclear. But still obvious.

Roethke, *Words of the Wind*, the flying fabric stitched on bones.

Is the illusion of vividness still vividness.

Came to Roethe through

* Some kind of A Roethke poem here. Or Roethe key imagery to summarize the experience of being trapped in that Jewelry vault for a year.
* Notes about the Graff London Robbery. His second family in Switzerland. His South Afrian Vineyard thin white and red wines.
* His penchant for self-promotion.
* Connection to the mob? Could make something up?
* Something about the nappy British Jeweler traveling to South East Asia with a briefcase full of jewels and a twinkling eye and silver tongue to help people see the stones as he did. These cultures. These values makers. A specific vision for value, of what is possible, and having the language, both written and visual, the complete intertextual sophistication to communicate the vision—a life of beauty and leisure: yachts, vineyards, art, exquisite taste, health, vitality, automobiles, sexuality, travel, fragrance, all of the sense feasting all of the time. The very best of everything. You only seek the best in this mortal existence and you not only have the means to embark on this holy aesthetic quest, but you also, life Mr. Graff himself, have a vision and the taste and insider knowledge and the correct sense of history. You, know, what will have lasting value.

Really well preserved nice sneakers…

Graff and dining with the Ladies in the Glow of the 109 ct. diamond

And her Great Great Grandfather Harvey and the Harvey girls and the pancakes apple pie and WHAT ERA architecture poppoing up along the Santa Fe line. And the Christmas Classics and the Dickensian outfits and the ebullient dwarf with jingle bells and my squirming child and Her dead husband writing about death and distance and he was dead and he was a poet and his father had made toys and her great grand father has served good coffee and hospitality and Judy Garland had portrayed a Harvey girl, and we say a BLANK on the wall of the ART club and what about the Art Club. What do you remember. And betsy had had a miscarriage a month earlier and I had almost been fired for inviting rival sales associatesa dn I had spend the whole enter doging dirty looks and shcasing Eve’s drunk entitle playing eneigbor as she pretended to be a wine drunk bond girl and I find myself overstating my Chinese translation activity. The ability is there. Would be there. Could be there if it was not high season and I wasn’t having a busy time working, working Sundays feeling depressed and down because of the miscarriage and the reality that I had probably made a mistake with switching jobs and not having any idea of how to get back to good, but trying to take what comes— The Harvey Girls, The Danish Fleet of Shipping vessels that landed me my best sale ever, Mrs. Harvey’s son’s writing. He is wealthy and trying to find a career. A talent. A focus. Something that will sustain him and allow him to engage with life and be interested and be interesting and find value and meaning in work. He writes—what, what, that would be an exercise, writing a story or a piece in the voice of a character. This si actually what *A Failed Attempt* is I believe. Attempting to consolidate material from my glum, down in the mouth failed and failing self-defeating obsessive, trying to find a way into this character. Into the being. Flush it out. Find the empathy and understanding. Appreciate the abundance of insight and marvel at the ultimate dearth of complete self-awareness or understanding. We make an art of learning just enough.

Officer Todd- handsome, tall, solidly build, football player, wrestler, handsome, police officer, plays on the Chicago Police officer football team, laid back, seemingly at ease with his uber maleness, exaggerated maleness due to the largeness of his form and his handsomeness. He is the law. Law of the state. Law of man. Might makes right, might makes right.

Having spent 8 years in a tomb I understood what the stakes were and though they were not mortal exactly, they certainly were significant, steep, eWw ven existential. What kind of life did we want to live? How were we going to go about living it?

Expensive earrings. Danish-Mexican couple. Live in Mexico. The address on the Map program is a wooden shack. My blood runs cold. We pan the camera around 180 degrees and there is a substantial fence that looks very nice with a long paved drive sweeping away behind it. And yet we are shipping the earrings to New Jersey for tax reasons. Skipping out on $8,500 in taxes. How much tax have a I helped people evade. A great deal. It was part of the gig. A deal closer… sometimes. An angle. Something the customer would come to, or you would lead the customer into. Let me work for you. I will arrange everything. All you have to do is fill out this card. Give me your wrist measurement and I will painlessly run your credit card and by Tuesday you will have the dopest timepiece in all of Prairie Rapids. You don’t know what people want. You don’t know what people will think is cool. Looks good. Etc. Its all about perception and personal style and self-expression. Fostering the moment. Not interrupting the purchaser from the dream. Staying in the brand, on brand, in the dream.

The couple had been fighting. They came in, breezy. He stayed with them, chatted. Got them sitting down. When the pair she tried was not satisfactory, they were too bulkly he knew just the pair to suggest. He knew that they were in the vault and on “hold” but there by eve, the director herself, but there was no money down on them. They could be remade if we really ended up needing two pairs. He assumed it wouldn’t be an issue. He makes his suggestion, the earrings are brought. They are bought. It all feels quite unreal as he runs their credit card for $85,000. My commission was going to be the full 5% because I did not discount at all. Just paid for Christmas and then some, This was why I was hear. Putting myself in the path of bigger wallets, more massive bank accounts. Staying active, applying my system, deeply learning the product and how to communicate the product and the brand to a wide array of people.

Trying out your stuff. But you have a lot of stuff. But now with the jewelry it feels like most of your stuff does not work, or that you are expending so much effort trying to speak fluently and engagingly about the product that it is difficult to bring the other stuff along. You thoroughly do not connect with the material, the product and this will ultimately doom your forward motion in this industry.

Finding a way to sell something with passion that you have zero interest in. Timepieces were a revelation to me. Meeting people where they were was a revelation to me. Taking care of people was a revelation to me.

Polish. Professional. Bi-lingual. Computer savvy. Punctual. Consistent. Healthy. Hardworking. Focused.

And then going to pick the earrings up from the young man at the hotel with his young wife upstairs in the room and we talk in the lobby and he gingerly broaches the possibility of returning the earrings or exchanging them. Jesus fucking christ. They want to exchange them. I sense his hesitation and his level of will here. We definitely talked about it being a final sale. We have signatures. I keep it light and friendly and emphasize how we want to have customers for life and we want people to be happy and we would be very happy to work with them on some sort of exchange, but all sales are final. My pulse does not race at this flexpoint. I feel easy and breezy and in control. He could certainly did his heels in and give me the earrings back and say, you know what, we don’t want them. Her take them. Figure out how we can get our money back. You have our card information on file right. Okay, yeah, that should be enough. Figure it out.

But he wasn’t. He was very rich and his family had a fleet of shipping vessels and he lived with his wife in Mexico and she seemed rather rich and the money did not mean the same thing to him as it did to me, but the $4,500 meant a great deal to me and the $85,000 full retail sale likely bought me a little more time. And with all of the shit of this month, this week, this crazy week of Rick Bayless and the Mexican Aztecan feast and the Jewelry show, and the lady’s luncheon meeting the Havey’s heir and getting the Roethke recommendation and ordering her late husband’s book of poetry on line and finding her son’s website, he was a fiction writer and had a website linking together his various on line and in print publishing efforts. His wife was a graphic designer and worked from home and seemed very depressed. I enthusiastically ask her if it is kind of great to work from home, she seems like a creative, I would love more than anything else to work at home and have my space and my time to work and create. She says she finds it very lonely. And I think, my god, you don’t have any young kids, you seem to have a ton of money and yet you are super lonely. Is loneliness inevitable for some people? What is the right amount of loneliness or alone time?

The man famous for having a very expensive divorce, the surgeon’s wife dining out on her Italian villa and olive orchard, the friend of the host, our boss. Was that it? Afterwards we discuss what we should sell the famous divorcee for his new wife who is much younger and who has recently given birth to their first child together.

Marty’s best client’s are lesbians who made a bunch of money developing a low-calorie snacking line.   
  
Beef distribution, haircare products, technological surveillance, finance, marketing, business, entertainment, athletics, medicine, dentistry, law, construction, real estate, insurance, re-insurance, food distribution, pharmaceuticals, nail salons, Chinese students (Midwestern Universities), engineers, entrepreneurs (fasteners, manufacturing, auto dealers), manufacturing: commercial and residential ovens,

You once expressed a sort of admiration for Emily’s knowledge of what its like to have lost a parent. You creepily sang to Tom Waits, indirectly in a department store, near a sweater display. I remember calling you from a department store as I quaffed champagne and wandered around the accessories floor in Barney’s that was such an institution until it was not and disappeared over night and the whole five story superstore of fashion and good taste was just an empty sell. All of the clothes had been sold on consignment so they went back to the manufactures or where ever no need for a big blowout sail at all. Later that evening I dropped by a Ralph Lauren event in the Mansion like Ralph Lauren flagship on Michigan avenue where I was given a key to a glass case that contained a handbag in it. Whoever had the magic key would get the hand bag. I had wanted to at least give mine a try, but a very eager woman who seemed like she had something to do with the charity wing of the purchasing even was increasingly aggressively trying keys from a pile of identical small brass keys, making an increasingly large pile of tried keys to here right as they proved themselves to be the wrong keys. And I waited in line, patiently at first, feeling kind of amused at this woman’s antics, they feeling increasingly annoyed that she was oblivious that other people might want to have a turn. She had all the keys and none of the social awareness of share them or give anyone else a crack at the lock. I slipped my key on to my keychain with my house keys and my library pass and left the event and went home kind of hoping that my key was the right key and that by leaving I had ensured that no one would go home with the handbag. My sour grapes were pointless, but I did like my key and I felt like its symbolic value was definitely enhanced by the ambiguity of its abilities. Was it a lock breaker? Maybe? Possibly? I guess we’ll never know though.

***Razny’s***

[***Bruce and Cathy (Water’s Edge)***](#bruce_cathy)

*Contextualize – entertain – showmanship -- extroversion*

The Old Razny Loyalty Pledge. James Comey and Donald Trump having dinner.

How the hell did I get here? How the hell am I commuting to the suburbs to learn the jewelry trade. The absurd novelty of my life has forgiven many of the inconveniences of my pecuniary limitations and social uncouplings.

Went back to watches to consolidate and free up mental space to focus on computing. Plan worked well. Sold well. Built up reserve to pursue coding and then Covid hit and Oak Street where I worked took a beating in the civil unrest, including my store which had a U-haul truck driven through its front door, smashing in the façade.

Razny culture was all about fear— you’re going to get in trouble. Somebody is going to be pissed if they find out. Don’t let Stan know! A good Catholic fear bringer. Brought a fucking assault rifle to the boutique and paraded it around, talked about going to the shooting range with the security guards, of course he wasn’t going to go, big BSer, has a boat with a Trump flag, obsessed with money, visibility, hospitality that bring him close to people with money, chasing a sort of purchased purchase on classiness and status. We are the watches. We are the diamonds. You’re purchasing the Razny name, you’re buying your way into this way of life— cars, meals, jewelry, parties, travel, luxury, achievement, specialness.

I didn’t buy any of it even though it was my job to sell it, but because I was white and tall and had a square jaw and decent English and Mandarin I got the job and executed it quite handily.

Representing something you so tenuously support and believe in isn’t good for you over the long term though. It is empty. It is hollow. It does not feel like you are building anything of interest or worth or even very much compounding value. Each day is sand and you pass it through the glass until the next day when you turn the glass over and pass the sand back through once more. It sets up this split in your personality that ends up being exhausting to maintain. You are a poor cultural fit. The culture begins to strip the enthusiasm from your soul.

Culture can be so invigorating, but also so entrapping, circumscribing, autocratic, inhospitable, a culture of conformity.

Within the context of each sale I could enter the illusion by being groomed, attentive, clear, knowledgeable, anticipatory, curious, kind, driving the conversation and the sale along with questions, my context clear I am freed up to by some version in myself that is not moored to myself, whose interests and passions are secondary and rather irrelevant to the particulars of the current proceedings. I know why I am here. I know what my intention is. I have the training and the knowledge base to provide the service and experience that will please this particular customer and keep me in a virtuous cycle of pleasing customer and building a growing business of repeat clients and referrals in addition to ever swelling activity and potential of my CRM system.

My sense of alienation, working this grain grinding job, was heighted by the struggle of my writing impulse to gain any traction beyond scattered frustrated ramblings due to lack of time and energy. During this period I would still write, but not from a place of abundance or practice or stride, not from fitness or frothy inspiration, but rather a place of venting and meanness and sorry and radiating discomfort and dissatisfaction with my current vocational conundrum. I could vent, but I couldn’t quite open a vein, I couldn’t quite tap into my full truth which in retrospect was probably a good thing as I was mid-chapter in my becoming and things were too dire to admit at times when the way out, not to mention just the way ahead, the next step seemed completely bewildering, boxed in, hopeless. It sucked to find myself in a position to not be able to do the one thing that I desired to do more than anything else— write.

Systems would form, but they were rickety and contingent and poorly maintained. Miscommunication was reif, thus a lot of last minute changes, miss connections, unfulfilled tasks, shifting guidelines and procedures, unincentivized initiatives, unitegrated initiatives, loose security situation, people with initiative did well, no one had cracked the code and lasted very long at Oak, this was likely by design to keep any one non-Razny employee from running the show down there. Particularly challenging working environment. Three floors, short staffed, no support staff (unlike at the other single story stores), no lunch coverage, inadequate security and cleaning services.

Holding out just a little bit about coming back to work, and well within my rights given the extremely poor communication and of a plan or expectations. I frankly I was unwilling to be on call for Mr. Razny and his jewel empire during a time of pandemic and civil unrest. Please fire me so I can leave this shitty job and collect unemployment while I make move to hustle into the tech industry.

Razny’s was a bad place. We were tryin g to save money and exit out of there ASAP

My general strategy was to simultaneously trying to sell as much as I possibly could while also subtly, subtly, position myself to be fired. I had to be valuable though kind of annoying. Which was easy to do, all I had to do was work in the way that I worked while also not integrating into the “Razny” culture that emphasized not questioning anything, constructive criticism, mindless enthusiasm for whatever the boss happened to be whimsically enthusiastic about.

Leaving the retail world I kind of feel like in some ways I am emerging from 7 years or deep cover.

Challenges:

* Rules abruptly shifting, shifting seas of restrictions
* Initiatives announced, but then often never supported or followed up on
* Inundated with initiatives and MOST IMPORTANT things
  + The 5 absolutes
  + The Team Selling Model
  + The hypothetical management tool that management would float out and never deliver (i.e. bathroom cleaning chart)
* People shopping between the different stores and being told different things; can’t feel confident about little things, have to PUSH for everything. (that first Submariner Sale)
* Constantly pulled between the back of the house duties and customer facing main responsibilities.
* Leaky, incomplete systems

I worked with Aaron.

I think I would know.

Really? Cause I don’t know you and I’m pretty sure I’d know you if you had worked with Aaron. I’m Michael Razny. At any rate. What do you neeed. How can I help you. By this time I realize who is on the phone. I saw the caller idea and I am trying to waze at him to clue him in that I know who he is talking to andwaht it is all about. gBut he persists, essentially sstaling the client from under me? Being helpful>? Just being clueless. Given that this kid doesn’t know what the Twin Cities are I am going with clueless. Though this dynamic was often reflected on with the Razny’s Cluelessness or Cruelty. I suppose cluelessness is a sort of cruelty. Just like carelessness. Our intenionts are oten ireelevant to the results of our actions.

I was not cut out for a leadership position because it was obvious to everyone that I really didn’t give a shit about kissing the Razny’s asses. I was polite, but I did not go out of my way to get close to them.

Forgive the Razny’s reflect on your experiences and how you could have improved your time there. Reflect on how you can use your time there in your future job search. Leave the heaviness and embarresassment and the shamed bhind. Frgive the Razny’s. Forgive yourself.

Cubic Zirconia set engagements sets shown to eager young couples ready to learn, confronting the limits of their budgets and so forth and middle-aged women somehow looking to solidify their aging status with an expensive upgrade to their one upon a distant time forever ring. I am in a much different place than I was 7 months ago. Halleluhiah

The Razny Buck: Christmas bonus from the company store.

*Truck system, The:* The paying of employess otherwise than in current coin or m aing it a condition that they shall buy food or other articles from some particular shop. In Britain this was made illegal by Acts in 1831, 1887, and 1896.

The lose of gentility.

Money, power, loyalty

Winning and losing

On board or Off the team

Team player or piece of shit

Owners are like politicians who elected their own constituency. They stick around at the Big Boss man’s profit and pleasure. Big Boss man. Hey Boss. You bet Stan. Yes, Stan. He’s going to say yes or he is going to say no.

Big Boss Man:

* Well tailored clothes, expensive shoes he purchased in Europe, very expensive watch.
* Wines, liquors, cigars, guns, cars, a boat, fetishizes all of the stuff.
* “I’m trying to work hard here. I’m trying to sell for you and take care of my family and I really don’t need this passive aggressive bullshit.
* “I had to think a minute. Was this a punishment or a reward. Again. Nothing was said.”
* “Well I think it’s pretty obvious to me that it’s not a reward, first Saturday of the holiday season.”
* “I think we probably see a lot of thinks differently, Stan.
* Wasn’t fit to manage, so he managed in fits.
* Ambiguity and loose, shifting, unaccountable back of the house procedures, without clear point person at either end of the logistic chain. Numerous poorly documented owner exception inventory issues.

He wanted team players for his dogsled squad—fast legs, strong backs, can take a good whipping or two. Runs for the money and to please the musher who gives extra nuzzles to the TOP PERFORMERS. Maybe a little mean deep down or can be if need be. Press every advantage. Structure laws to control employees freeing self and loyalists to operate outside of protocols. Protocol is about control and incentivizing. It was not always clear on what they were incentivizing. Contradictions in responsibilities: working the door vs. cleaning the bathroom. When shit hits the fan, well be ready to manage in fits and with fits. What do you expect from a bunch of ill-managed misfits.

Stan is buying us lunch this Saturday, because for a good number of people this weekend’s pop up Leap year Sale means working extra and working harder and with any luck, being super duper busy on Saturday making taking any kind of lunch un tenable anyway, so you might as well has some lukewarm carby something or another lurking upstairs in the staff room for you when you stumble up there late in the day like a late round prize fighter and talked out and whipped around from hustling gup and down stairs and all day dealing with watches and jewelry. Loose stones and finish pieces. Most of which you have never seen in your life and that just showed up in the store a couple of days ago. So on top our all of our other stuff, we are supposed to through our full enthusiasm behind selling this random jewelry that we know nothing about.

But if you do get a second ot get up there, either in the overtaxed elevator or up the wide fire stairs through the back entrance off the alley, or up the customer stairs with the great class front façade windows letting the natural light bath down. Golden beams dropped from the sky down on Oak Street just where it runs into Michigan Avenue. Near the Oak Street Beach and the lake immediately there and the paved bike path running north and south along the lake front fwher I have commuted and run and sawm and walked and tried to figure out home to claim this terra firma as my home sweet home.

But if you do get up there, there will be some food on the table in aluminum catering trays—meatballs in sauce and salad and pasta and some sort of baked chicken. And this is where my flexitarrean ways go out the window and I fill my face with meat even though I know its going to make me gassy as all hell, but its all right because the guards are gassy as hell and so we always have a candle burning at the front of the story. I have been way less gassy since I haven’t been eating meat this year haven’t I?

But those folding chairs around the table in the staff room and the staff table being a folding table. And the chairs very stained and really gross looking. And yet feeling kind of put off when the Razny’s all crowed in and dined around the table when we were all downstairs running around taking care of the store. The division between lifers, management, family, whatever and people that weren’t established yet, made sense for the business perhaps. That relational aspect. Those who could accept the RAZNY way and the big boss man’s hand’s on management style, a style that he seemed to have a diminishing wherewithal for with his attentions spread between four locations now and an ever expanding portfolio of real estate and development deals. He was trying to fly the plane and run traffic from below. This obviously lead to a lot of confusion and a goodly amount of scenarios where you either needed to get the hell out of the way or pick up the pieces and figure out the details of some deal the boss had set into motion. It was very distracting, onerous, and flow killing. With limited supply of pieces it also sset up a dynamic of competing with ownership, management, and family members for access to product. This made the selling process extra excruciating. Constanting putting the sales associate in an impossible position between the client and management. Within this landmine strewn selling environment, I prided myself on figuring out what was possible, what was efficient. I focused on core competencies and skill sharing, training. I focused on the job and kept my relationships with my co-workers productivity focused— I have my agenda and working ways, but could also be flexible and was often willing to “lose the battle” to win-win the relationship.

We are all so thankful for this lunch and so just like everytime where the lunch announcement is sent out, or the monthly birthdays are announced, this email chain explodes and takes over our inboxes like some sort of manic Russian hack:

“Thanks, Boss!”

“Dan, you are the best!”

“This family is fantastic!”

“We’re so lucky you guys!!”

“I love this!”

“I’m so there!”

“Totally worth the 9 days in a row that I am having to work right now!!”

“Fuel up and Knock ‘em, dead, guys!!”

“Can’t wait to Leap Ahead on Saturday!”  
 “This is the best team ever!!”

“Sweet!”

“Happy days are here again!”

“Fuck yes!”

“This is such a great company.”

“Thanks for really caring about us, Dan!”

“Hello, meatballs! Wouldn’t miss it for the world!”

“See you guys with my selling socks on and my tummy full of delicious!”

“This is so cool, we love you, Dan!”

“Let’s do this!”

You build up the byzantine codification of exceptions and precedents and good faith declarations of who knew what when? And what is fair? And what is convenient? And how do you react when you have differences in opinion.

And Rebecca sells that annoying chatty woman that horrendous weak coffee, nicotine stained diamond. She is good. She knows her stuff. You has the recquisite knowledge and panache to sell trinkety jewelry. It is a speed that goes against everything that I have really done up until this point. But here we are…

So we really want to get the word out, because we are not going to do a blowout clearance sale. like this for some time. Maybe ever.

So, yes, see, hopefully, all of you have thoroughly booked your schedules with appointments. Just bursting forth, appointment overlapping appointment. If they have to wait, let them wait. The longer they stay in the store the more mokney they spend. This is a fact. Something Shane Decker just harps on and harps on. Keep them there. Make them at home.

Matt would just filibuster the shit out of these people. If you can get people relaxed and chilling out and just having a coffee or whisky then you have made a connection. You have had a moment. You have relaxed and taken a load off. You have greeted and connected. They are now better equipped to tell their story. You need to find their story and become a part of it. Try and find a way that yu can add value to the big day—you can add value just by remembering it. By writing it down. Getting into their narrative. Reaching into their reality and trying to understand what goods or services that I have that might be of interest to the client.

I had a lot of success with pre-owned watches because of the market, but also because I knew a lot about them and could really contextualize their value within the context of the watch buying market and the watch buying experience. I would run these messages, these scripts for the clients and see how they responded. Based on their response I could customize my following script. Honing in on the Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Of the situation. The more information I had about the situation, the clearer picture of the appropriate timeline and tools I would like to take.

I could be the watch mascot and cheerleader.

I couldn’t get myself comfortable doing the same thing with jewelry.

I was much more attracted to all of the things that you would do in this watch—which was everything… as opposed to what you would do in this jewelry and what the jewelry would represent which was a more delicate, quieter, more emotive conversation to have that felt less natural to me. It likely doesn’t help that from a very young age I had unconsciously be inoculated to a sort of dismissive, if not judgmental attitude towards jewelry. My father NEVER bought my mother jewelry. My parents wedding bands were simple white gold bands and there was no engagement ring to speak of. As far as I know my mother has never owned a diamond. The idea of the family Jewels was extremely foreign to me. Our valuables were our home, our vehicles, and a healthy retirement.

My father’s idea of an ideal Sunday would be some Church, a long ass run and a light beer in the evening while making dinner for his 6 children and his wife.

**Organization (or lack there of)**

Management runs big “campaigns” or pushes “capricious numbers”. There goals are pie in the sky and designed just to put as much pressure on Sales forces as possible. Once you have done a juob for a while and you have seen the growth that is possible through hard work and you have had some sense of the market, you know these numbers are a tool and they are not really a tool that are supporting the reality of your business. Management didn’t give us the tools to pursue all of these leads because we were so strung out with back of the house responsibilities, keeping the door covered with a skeleton staff (including an inadequate security staff) and then constant new initiatives that cluttered up our work flow and then would never before followed up on or fully integrated (some CRM initiaties-- special apps)

Lack of set stable KPIs.. whatever the focus of the moment becomes the touted KPI-- number of reviews-- get them any way you can.

Quarrelling managers-- stuck between Mom and Dad

Manager bootleneck-- too many managers, assistant checks out and General Manager puts up with it because its more tenable than the power struggle.

Strong manager-- focused on her selling, big clients, unrealistic about what I would need to be successful, maybe delusional. The whole model was delusion. More straight up steady eyed CON than sweaty hustle. And she lording over all it. The head honcho because she has the biggest book. The most exclusive clients. She is the most expert, most knowledgeable, a study in grace and ease-- tension simmering below that calculated half-smile, judgemental, classist, sizing one up, smiling, gemmy without irony, assess jewelry, Charlatan, confidence game, cause we say so, that’s the market, this ??? what?? a convenience few, a positional good, diamonds, luster, exquisite, Elizabeth Taylor. Around the world in 80 days. Cantinflas. OPnion. Thought. Expression. Poems. Bodily expressions, pulse, heartbeat, the sound of blood blowing through our blood pipes, life iself, surrender, becoming, settling for our alms, humbly, becoming one with the planets, one with the stars.

Manage the managers. Manger off seling not attending to managerial duties. No one is managing the manager. A new managerial bottleneck, not enough managers. NO access to decision makers when we need it, making transactions and trouble-shootable issues becoming crisis-- we keep losing sales because our UNION pay system is not accepting certain series of Chinese credit cards. This is an issue over a long period of time and it takes me jumping about three levels to get the main IT manager on the phone and get his commitment that he is going to resolve it. Why was I calling though? Why was I watching the front door and the back door and keeping track of merchandise and juggling my clientelling and also doing back office corporate tasks like follow up with our credit card payment service provider.

This situation made getting final approval on anything a stressful, time crunched, nervy, ambiguous process-- unnecessarily-- an approval code a price accommodation, a schedule request approval(cause the schedule was supposed to be out yesterday and you still don’t know if you are approved to take your vacation next week-- which you are now taking regardless of what that goddamn schedule has printed on it, but still possessing the personal wherewithal to stop and reflect on whay you are habingt to expend this much per-emptive rage on a request you made 3 months ago? Oh, yyeah, because there is no sorr of system for vacation requests and approvals, just like all of the “systems” in this bunglingly run family chain of 4 independent, but “totally integrated” watch and jewelry stores.

Family business-- families ask you to do more for less, you are helping the family, you know. You have zero equity, but you are helping us build ours. Come on, do it for the family. Citizens and non-citizens. Does this line of influence get abused-- yes. Are liberties taken. Yes. Did out of 50+ employees have an organized HR department to ensure that we were truly a professional organization and not just the watch and jewlry version of a mob outfit. No. No we did not.

Terrible operations. Byzantine rules and leaky spreadsheets, lack of clear, steady, consistent point person.

Franks people were mobsters. Frank was a nerd who had married some crazy former Mormon chick from Indiana. Some famulously horsefaced womena with a ticking biological clock and a super Trumpian outlook on humanity. Bitching bout the foreigners not beging able to speak English and trying to use food stamps at Target and slowing the line down when she just wants to get the fuck home and have a quiet fucking evening.

Jimmy, he has slick hair and a week chin, reminded me of a darker Tintin, had a sort of jaunty look to him until you realized how twig thin his legs were. Something to do with his Diabets. Sunglass outside always. Country Club clean. Porsche outside picking up his blonde one. McMansion just after the wedding. Baby on the way within a year. Proud, Papa, proud Grandpa. Father got scope up in the Kraft hooker scandal down in Miami. Maybe had to do a Caribbean wedding for his new wife because of it. 6 boys? 8 Boys? Triplets in the mix. Christine and Jimmy on a Caribbean island and it is raining and then are getting drunk and watching the Discory channel and having sex? And swimming with the sea bigs and posting videos to their feeds. What is the hook here though? There has to be a hook? Maybe a montage. Maybe something for a characterization of Jimmy or Christine. This is how you study though. You recollect and you collect and then over time you are able to boil it down to something useful and complete.

I had been trying to get let go, but somehow still on decent terms for some time. That is a tough needle to thread. Keep performance up, not least because a good bit of my compensation was tied to my sales, but keep my loyalty to my clients, while keeping management at arms length. Management had so consistently proved to be unhelpful, unresponsive, uninterested, overwhelmed, we often felt pretty abandoned by management on the selling floor, or removed far enough from them that their assistance seemed more like an injection of extra inertia that a clarifying, quickening path to completing the sale. That said, as best I could I tired to have sales wrapped up, or at least contextualized within the parameters of reality before getting management involved. This often entailed reading management as it did reading the client. Which is fine. I accept that sales people will always be caught in this position between management and client, but I also have what I think should be a reasonable ideal—dealing with management should not be a bigger drain of emotional energy than dealing with the client.

Managers saying the say thing every time. The looping ritual. Can’t we just cut to the chase. Check the SKU. What can we do? Why do I have to sell you on this? The fact that I am calling you should mean something. The fact that I have to call you and that we don’t just have somebody in the building that can assess real time what will get this sale done on the best terms. These back room phone calls were excruciating sometimes, especially when the relevant manager was often just not available. This is often the dynamic—the theoretical back-up or efficiency neither provided back-up or efficiency because it was either inaccessible, impossibly inefficient, or simply not followed up on and properly supported.

When did we become disconnected from reality?

Yes, push for growth, achieve growth,

But also tighten up the ship, improve operations,

Improve flow, working environment and order

Reponsibilities:

* Sales
* After sales
* Custom creations
* Special orders
* Appointments
* Events
* Clientelling
* Greeting door
* Concierge
* Cleaning
* Organizing
* Operations
* Shipping / Receiving.
* Product knowledge
* Training / knowledge share

What’s the plan?

We’re not a big corporation…

Walked back out through the door, feeling pretty sure that they would lay me off… feeling more worried that they wouldn’t fire me than they would…

Dates:

09/14/2021

04/29/2021

Trumpian fascism uses race to drum up support

For its base fear politics

While accusing the opposition of fear mongering,

Relentlessly attacking the media for attacking them.

They want a fight, it’s the only way they can operate.

With them its either you’re loyal and subservient

or at just plain at odds.

The Patriarchy

Gandalf, Dumbledore, Obiwan Kenobi, Papa Smurf, Santa Claus

Could I super impose Donald Trump and Ivanka Trump over Stan and Christine Razny and then kind of build them up through allusion and reference and context. Mise-en-scene. Branding. Bringing a sort of George Saundersy playfulness and luminosity to it. Energetic. Action. Scene change. Sharp Characterizations built up over time. That is the thing. I don’t need it to come out all at once. We can build this up over time. Seeing which stories take root and grow. Which stories suggest sources that we feel inspired to pursue. Patience with the unraveling. Dedication to the unraveling. Dedication to the processing. Dedication to the process. Patience.

Vacuous script. Vacuous. Right. On her phone. Waiting to get her attention to ask her for something she’s going to have to call somebody about. The inertia of all of this. Why don’t we have a code in the boutique?

Willingness to split sales with colleagues if there was a legitimate claim to having advanced the sale. Lots of weird intertangled connections are forged and in a job where sales are both economic stability as well as personal pride and political and self-worth importance. Maybe this is kind of a shity job, but its not as shitty as some jobs and it pays pretty well and I am not bad at it and certainly better than all these other jackasses and I will go to the matt to keep things the way they are. Passive-aggressive gotcha games to keep the drums bumping that they are a victim of other people trying to steal their sales or seek an unfair advantage in the UP systems an intense and byzantine collection of rules and procedures to determine which sales associate has the right/responsivity/duty/opportunity to assist the next client.

Very willing to enlist an ally in supporting my clients. Sometimes it was disrespectful and the obfuscating or just “not mentioning”, “not communicating” anything about the sale was a layered matrix of intention and laziness and forgetfulness and disorganization. Incompetence or cruelty? Disloyalty or opportunism? Perhaps, ultimately diserving of part of the commission or some of it, drilling down on this idea of value and added value and work done and stepping on toes and hurt feelings and sour grapes and meaningful eyes annoyed, searching, accusing, the stakes measely but high enough and personal enough and precedent setting enough to get your ire up, forced to compete, forced to care, hand forced into the politics of the fish bowl when all you wanted to do was transcend it. Sitting the courtyard of the church across the street from the John Hancock building smoking my pipe and thinking fondly about become a writer and traveling to Europe and becoming an adult and gaining a perspective. I was in someways pre-cool and this point just as I am post-cool now. Out of it, out of the loop, out of touch, absolved from having to sync myself to the rhythm of the day, the politics of the moment, the unfolding collective canopy. Escaped. At large. Removed. Existing. Life. Liberty. Pursuing Happiness.

03/27/2021

Follow up. They forgot. Client wants to work with another sales associate. Starving us of the “A” product. Not even worth the man hours to pursue. Management is doing you a solid. Bestowing the opportunity on you to sell this object to your client. The challenge of running people through the vetting process without offending or alienating them. Anything is theoretically possible. Thus, each new situation becomes an exploration of what is possible. Inviting growth. Inviting fragmentation.

The forever client. The fly-by-night client.

The number of first generation immigrants being employed bby this company was definitely a sign, a symbol, an omen. They will put up with more of this shit won’t they. Employee people who need the job more than you need them. I did need the job. I needed it a great deal, especially at the beginning. Perhaps less and less as time went by. But regardless I kept my free mind thanks to a secret / not-so-secret willingness to walk away from it at any time.

02/06/2021

An enormous Athlete, could be based on that pitcher who came in… Lee Smith. And his wrists were so huge and we had to add all of those extra links into the bracelet.

I have found my internal tourbillon. Equilibrium in the midst of unhinged horizons, lies.

Beating true and smooth like a Breguet hairspring pulsing in the deep heart of the fine luxury watch, tinking away like a manic assembly line working, working fucking hard to meet his quota.

Reyes Brothers

Ken Griffin.

Pritzkers

Nancy Crown

Michael Polsky- he had one of the most expensive divorces in U.S. history. Close to 200 million. More than Michael Jordans.

02/02/2021

Under Trump the Chinese clientele continued to go down.

Gone were the days of “I’ll take the blue one.” Or the guy with the fishing vest and wads of cash zipped and velcroid up all over him. The duffle bag full of cash for the white gold dive watch with full diamond bezel, standing outsaid on Michigan Avenue smoking cigarettes with a client until his bank transfer comes through. Getting those three women from Shanghai happy and drunk on Champagne and into a $10,000 timepiece each. Having Saul want to fight me because I talked to one of the stragglers in the group of 8 Chinese tourist. I made a friendly comment about the man’s camera in Mandarin and we started chatting. They were obviously not really shopping to buy, but just curious about the shop. My Chinese quickly became the novelty and we had a nice little chat and then they were off. Saul, whose up it was livid. The regional manager Jen happened to be in the back office at this exact oment and got to list to us shouting at each other. I try not to raise my voice but I did a little bit that day, trying to keep it humorous, but not backing down, knowing that there was no way Saul was going to come out of this looking good or doing the right thing for the business. My 8 year luxury career was full of these little shifts and surprise tiffs. Avoiding this kind of bullshit became a big part of the job. Don’t step on toes. Don’t offend. Don’t threaten (you can be threatening just by doing your job and being competent and diligent at it… don’t it caught in the gossip pool- sales is the easiest low paying job you’ll ever have and the hardest high paying job…something like that.)

But yeah, the battle against corruption, the capital controls, the development of the domestic economy, the concentration of Chinese nationals on the US coasts, Donald Trump and the trade war and the ratcheting up tensions between the US and Chinese governements, coronavirus all conspired slowly, slowly suck the Mandarin component out of my job.

01/20/2021

I made it in this industry and I could have stayed in this industry. Received an invitation to apply at Harry Winston—the short term smart money was on doing this, but I did not consider it for a second. I should feel very proud of this—not what I means for me, but what it means for my family. Despite the desperation of the situation—the pandemic, the economy, the fraught political climate.

01/06/2021

Underneath the stars. Cold. Emergency exit out to the alley across from the backdoor of the Indian Buffet. Fucking cooks pissing on our back door. Other cooks from Doc D’s smoking weed to make manning the fryer station more manageable. 3 years on the alley on the otherside, inside where the rats aren’t allowed.

12/19/2020

I was objectively good at it now. I had played the game and learned what I needed to learn and get to know who I needed to know and had won? A friend was not the GM at Harry Winston and had just hired a former colleague. I had a pretty kushy jewelry job on offer. If this offer had come to me three months earlier I would had a lot of questions. I would have been very interested. I was perhaps in really good position to excel at this job after my Graff experience and training, my familiarity with Swatch Group and the benefits and my now extremely sufficient diamond knowledge. Harry Winston was a much better brand and was actively trying to be the branch between VCA and GRAFF whereas GRAFF was just GRAFF way off in the stratosphere, a business model on to its own, founded by a briefcase full of jewels and a cockshire little man in a finally tailored suit.

12/18/2020

Got into retail in this really low level porrly defined role and just through myself into it and very quickly I was the savvivest on merchanise for the whole floor, because I had organized it, and thus when the sales associates were all engaged and I had no one to pass a client off to, I just started ringing clients up on other sales associates numbers. This obviously engratiated me to my colleagues and I bacscailly did what ever I wanted to do running all over the store just knocking out whatever job or task seemed the most pressing, learning about all the nooks and crainies of the 4 story (including the labrythine basement backstock vault). Meanwhile, I was making 12 dollars an hour and in my zealous enthusiasm I had given myself a double sports hernia and I had zero health insurance.

Within three months I was selling Omega watches. Two years later Rolex. Then diamonds for a year. And then Rolex. The top was beginning to wabble, the trajectory was diminishing. The course had been run. My Mandarin itch had been scratched. It was now both a solid personal and professional skill, but not one that I felt compelled to push ahead as my lead asset as I had when I dove into luxury retail.

Mandarin would travel with me, but a new bug had bitten me. Just after our return from China and I ahd had confirmed that we would not be returning to China (knocking out a lot of different career paths), I felt convicted to tack back toward an industry that would offer a broad array of opportunities and a chance to build harder skills that would travel a lille better than my current set. It was at this time thatm, on the advice of two friends who are long time coders, that I began to study Rudy.

Puts “Hello World”

Really appreciated Boris. I really felt affirmed by this prerecorded teacher. He broke things down so well. He would walk you back, help you take that next leap. I really believe he was the key to mky sticking with it. The going was slow of course, for just as I was feeling my first spark of interest in coding, I was also making a transition back to watches after my year at Graff. Establishing myself at my new job took a lot out of me. The three story store, frequent 6 day weeks, holiday lockdowns, kinetic commute. We we’re doing it. We did it, but certainly not without a great expensive of energy (physical and emotional). This did not leave a ton of wherewithal for coding, but I persisted. Working with Boris in my headphones, or on my phone ass I commuted downtown, or half-asleep in a chair with the girls just down leafing through an increasingly marked-up, but increasingly textbook, which upon its arrival I had regarded with a good dose of both excitement and trepidation. Was this possible? I knew nothing. What was I doing? Was this even a responsible use of my extremely limited free time? My writing is suffering. I don’t have any time for Chine. If I am doing anything shouldn’t I be doing something for betsy and the girls, or my extended feamily, I really should be in closer contact with all of them, and my friends, oh, so many good people, phone call, texts, emails, What’sApp, Instagram, Facebook, etc… “Dad, dad, dad, da,d, look daad, look, Dad!! Watch. Dad! Look! Look at this weird apple. It looks like a face. Dad, Belle Belle has a marble in her mouth, she’s trying to eat it.!”

12/17/2020

The parallels between the Trumps and Raznys are

His son, more book smart than Dad, plays the piano, but still lacking some larger curiosity and openness to life. Insists that there were almost as many knife vicitms as fun victims. *I’m pretty sure*. Didn’t know what the “Twin Cities” were. When someone called the shop looking for me and saying that he had “worked with me” a phrase we used on the floor a million times a day, the Son says, um, well, I’m the owner’s son and I am pretty sure I would know you if you had worked with Aaron. From there the client, who was kind of a disloyal, opportunistic duche bag, friendly enough for a hello, you had friend’s like that in high school right? He was rich, super self-centered, came from some old South African diamond money. It was unclear how much money he actually had. He was only looking for the “hot” pieces. Some of which he had multiples. He was known at all the dealers in town. Was likeable. That sort of con-man that hangs around, gets close, you invite him along, oh, sure, I haven’t actually had dinner, thank you so much, a STEEL BLAH BLAH BLAH for me, oh my, why thank you, our 5 years of small talk has finally paid off.

Everybody should be super afraid of being fired. Everybody is expendable. Keep the Big Boss man happy. This kind of leadership can be kind of effective. If you have a strong economy and a ready supply of moldable workers, you are welcome to keep pushing, grinding people down until you find a couple neuritic diamonds in the rough that fit in your own mean neurotic Town & Country steeple chase.

To see a man like that in the White House was frankly frightening. A strong leader is not always a wise leader. A selfish leader who believes he can go it alone and break off into his own reality of things, bend the world to his own reality and subject other people to it. Yes, that is pretty powerful magic. That is savvy, bulldozing media and public sentiment manipulation. And the fact that he used rallies and tons of disinformation to rally up his base. That is fucking crazy!!

Why were the Razny’s pushing for those so hard? Where they making $10 profit on them? Sell a 4Ocean bracelet, pay for your lunch. Sell a window, a bracelet, *Sell Something*.

That book could have some good notes for *Full Retail*. Shane Decker would be another good source. Shane decker jotting down his pearls of wisdom as he thinks them. Measured tones. Son’s a minor league baseball player, he seems pretty pleased with that. An athlete if you know what I mean, ladies. Just like his ol’ Pops in his time. This ol’ ponytail didn’t grow itself.

Dotting the period with satisfaction and a chuckle to himself. His gaze returns to the retail workers in front of him. His eyes are blue and bright and he says “All right then, let’s talk clientelling, let’s talk reach out. Let’s talk attitude, let’s talk the 5 musts and the 8 absolutes and S.W.I.S. protocol and the Brandis way.

**Bruce and Cathy**

Gets pulled into the Brandis way and they are using the watches to launder money. This knowledge puts the business at risk—they send drifter Phil—he pretends to get hit by the car of Cathy Lee who is thinking about going to the cops. She is married to Bruce, a depressed writer, older than her, always felt like something would happen to him. Cathy had happened to him. But not much else. Couldn’t seem to be able to wrap up his novel. Maybe one more trip back to Korea. He had to know the place completely before he could write it. He had to have a sense of the things from the inside out. He likes Rodger’s Park because it reminds him of the Bob Newhart show and Bob Newhart was just about the funniest guy he’s ever heard. And a good guy. If they ever do get married he talks about taking her last name so he can be Bruce Lee. Does Cathy have a child with autism? Down-syndrome? She sends most of her money to the suburbs to her sister and her elderly mother. She makes her money on Michigan Avenue selling watches to the ultra-rich and accomplished and the aspirational and the inherited and the hardworking and the ill-considered. The first Rolex I sold was to a guy that was trying to replace a Rolex that he had lost the night before in circumstances that he did not want to revisit. He would buy his way out. He would simply replace the item and there would be no one the wiser.

“Okay, I’ll just grab your links and paperwork from the back and send you on your way here.”

He looks up. What? No, don’t send me anything. Nothing.

Oh, no, no, no

* Bob Newhart- 60s standup, sit-coms from the 70s. First Sitcom the Bob Newhart show used the *Cooper Black* Type Face (like Pet Sounds). [Jack Riley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Riley_(actor)) as Elliot F. Carlin reprises role on *St. Elsewhere*, *ALF*, *Newhart*. The exterior of the home apartment is the Thorndale Beach North Condominiums building (5901 N. Seridan)
* Bob Newhart’s comedy is dead pan. Plays one side of the conversation. This could be a bit. Have Bruce be a Newhart like character. The straight man to his wife’s exciteable wildness.

Cathy is very intuitive. She comes home sometimes and says “oh, man, I had to work late tonight talking to this couple about this pair of watches and they didn’t buy but I just know that they are going to buy, I just know sometimes you know, she’d say. *Sell Something*— this being the moment that ruined my sales career. This is an exaggeration but its definitely the trackable point that I fully fell out of the Razny’s good graces.

Bruce wears gloves and is germaphobic, something is off, was he involved in improv theater and uncomfortably personal stand up monologues

Cathy is materialistic, bright, cheery, but also sort of direct and caustic, a bit embittered when she begins drinking. Has a grown child somewhere? Possibly severely autistic, lives with her elderly mother somewhere in the suburbs?

Some en vogue charity like 4Ocean a for profit company that sells 29 cent plastic bracelets for $20.00 based on the big trust agreement that 4Ocean will give a least some percentage of the proceeds towards combating the ocean plastic pollution issue. How much of the insane profit margin goes to this end? What percentage? They don’t have to say. And they’re not saying.

10/31/2021

It is getting cold. Next week the time change. Five years now since the Cubs won the World Series and Trump was elected and I sold Rolex watches on Michigan Avenue across the street from the Burberry Flagship store where I began my retail career 9 years ago. It has been 7 years since Esme arrived. I was selling Omega watches at that time up the street in on the street level across from The Hancock building and that medieveal looking courtyard of the 1st Episcopal church where 24 years ago I would hang out by myself after having taken the brown and then the red line all the way down town from Albany Park, switching from the brown to the red at Belmont, behind the mammoth brick back of the Vic theater. I would sit in the courtyard and smoke my pipe. It was my freshman year of college and I had recently traded a fitted LSU hat a simple “Batchelor” branded smoking pipe. My grandfather had smoked a pipe and I had some inchoate longing to be among old European architecture. What is it about being in an acquisitional learning state that makes you want to burrow back deep intm the past.

And now instantly cold on the porch in North Center where we have now lived fro nearly 6 years at the intersection of Lincoln (Hwy?) and Irving Park (IL 19) and Damen, a residential north south street that is served by the good old #80?, the slowest, least hurried mode of public transportation one could ever experience. Damen is also awful in a cab or an uber.

12/15/2020

All right, now this is the most important thing…

How hard can he work his people. Which is not a bad idea for making money, but is it sustainable. Is the work meaningful? Is the good work being recognized? Is moral up? Is the system working smoothly, securely, or tightly, or is it loosely and leaky and fraught with anxiousness and poor communication? A million different processes and everyone is the most important and everyone is a little loose and incomplete and unsustainable. We can do anything. Quoting prices off this pricing booklet put together by some other organizations with hand written changes and inserted prices adjustments. A horribly set up system that only works because we don’t need it all the time.

* Merchandise not being unpacked
* Merchandise not being displayed.
* Displays not being displayed because the chain of communication is so gunked up as well as the accountability follow up.
* Management that necessarily works in fits and dressing downs and frustrated rants because the systems have never been set up and the management is upset that the workers, juggling their many responsibilities and making value calls everyday on the most important duty, often in a kind of harried triage scenario due to the volume of our business and the skeletal nature of our staff.

They wanted hustlers. They wanted all-iners. They wanted people that were too dumb to stick up for themselves. They loved immigrants. The sad little Razny world in the basement of the Addison location… was there another door out of there? What would a fire drill look like. In a basement suburban bunker monitoring four jewelry stores. Feeling frustrated by the chaos of policies and lake of clarity in divion of responsibilities. Setting up

12/14/2020

I did not like my job and it made me feel shitty about myself and made me cut myself off from many things that I loved and that had previously sustained me. Despite my unhappiness I propped myself up on genuine bounty of my lively family life—my growing girls, my loving wife. We were holding things together, together. My wife cooked wonderfully and we would eat well and festively. I would often have a beer or two in transit from downtown to shake the drain of the day off—the battle, the physical sprint of it, the manic tick of it.

I generally sell well. In the end moving about 3.2 million dollars in merchandise in a little under two years. I made this guy some money. Sure I stopped cutting my hair when nailing down a hair appointment ahead of time became impossible, because we were always in the dark about the upcoming schedule. One of the main issues that continually raised the question of “incompetency? Or cruelty?”

Zero consistency. Very wobblily systems of request and follow up and tracking. Wasted time on bug hunting when something would inevitably fall through the cracks. Inventroy nightmares—pieces willy nilly moving in and out of inventory. Bought back from customers and resold.

Having to show those preowned Nautilus again and again from the window. The slate blue dial. The flat profile. The cool confidence. The abstraction that could only be achieved over time. Endurance, tradition, legend, myth—I’ve only heard about these… I’ve never even hear about these…the sacredness of the rich, the sacredness of wealth. The deep gratitude one feels to God fro their wealth. For the gifts. All the good gifts.

People nominally in charge of things perpetually passing the buck. These people often being members of the family and thus difficult to hold accountable as they seemingly only reported directly to their father who was very much about having everybody else figure things out about a lot of key business flow issues, big boss man’s top down approach seemed to paralyze managers from implementing procedures. Our manager took her cue from the big boss man’s daughter who was nominally our GM, but who was often a no show or very late show, early leave for her shift, gutting out staffing levels even deeper, it was often like some sad back alley chess match just to keep a body on the floor and keep up with a workflow that would necessitate leaving the floor to go into the back office or having to go up to the second or even third floor. As we were dealing with high value merchandise this poor floor coverage was truly an annoyance and frankly a security risk.

Trying to take care of those guys that wanted to seel the Patek Philllipe to another guy in our boutique oer the phone and the Patek is all iced out and obviously something that was done on the secondary market.

Commitment => a new world unfolds when you commit.

12/06/2020

I have long decided that one of my cherished qualities of a good manager is one who does not allow his or her stress and anxiety about things that their workers can’t control seep down to the workers. If there is something that the workers can do something about, absolutely, let the stress in, let them know what is up, so we can all be worried about it and do something about it. Otherwise, let’s focus on what we can do to do this job better and reach our objective.

11/29/2020

Depressed and self-medicating and had been for a long time exactly because I had not been doing what I felt passionate about. I worked, but I did not feel passionate about my work. I felt passionate about providing for my family and to that end I did care about doing a mgood job and building my business and taking care of my clients, but over time my allegiance to my clients increased and my allegiance to management became stretched, abused, taken for granted, seemingly actively discouraged. My experiences in the luxury watch industry will be invaluable to me once I get some distance from it.

In January 2020 my sales were un significantly thanks to some repeat clients, savvy deployment of our inventory, especially preowned pieces— a comfortability and effectiveness cultivate over time by my product knowledge and improved ability to listen to client’s needs and my adaptability to extend the conversation over time. I was also doing a better job closing sales, finding urgency hooks, tapping into urgency signals. Making it a process. Getting people to take the time. Following up. Leveraging optimism as a force multiplier. Leveraging my extensive list of contacts to keep leads. The sum total of all of these interactions meant that unlike a year and a half ago, I had people walking through the door to see me and calling me on the phone and texting me. My business was growing. I had three engagement rings coming down the pipeline. I had an accruing number of “jewelry” buyers. I was getting my jewelry schtick down. My reviews were bringing in people and positive comments. I had VIPS to invite to events and offer HOT pieces to. I knew the rules. I had effective strategies for selling consistently and effectively within the Oak Street system.

Tried to do a dry January. Ended up with lots of cheat beers on my way home and sneaking out to the Longroom to drink beer and eat beef and try to figure out how to use my camera and not feel some dumb in the process. The bartender seemed annoyed that I was working on that at the bar. Implying that that seemed like something you could do at home with a couple of youtube videos Was he implying that I should just be at home drinking and watching Youtube. Okay, maybe I should be… and then the pandemic hit and that fucking showed that Asshole because I did stay home and that was one off the last times I visited a bar for the next couple of years.

11/24/2020

A manager should endeavor to act as a firewall for inactionable challenges or provide leadership, directive, parameters for overcoming them, not just heap ambient anxiety upon his or her underlings.

Remember that idea I had about the one man show for Ben about being a Rolex Salesman. Something that would show some of madness of the whole thing. Something snappy that would take the linguistic piss out of Rolex and Swiss watch making while at the same time doffing a cap to them and the extraordinary

Nail salon technichians often have way better credit than doctors who tend to be way too leveraged and carrying a lot of debt.

I should read something about being debt free and something about the danger of being debt free.

The Shark- he has swallowed all of the sales bullshit and heaps it back on them even as he completely falls apart.

Shane Decker- writing his thoughts down ass he gives his critiques, possibly free-styling his next blog as he holds these personal sessions. He is very cartoonish. Engaging sure, but kind of manically confident. His son is playing in the minor leagues. He has sold thousands of one carat plus diamond rings. He has found clients everywhere- at the supermarket, the filling station, church, sure even church. Theyre are a lot of marrying types at church. I volunteered as a treasurer for a year to get a deeper understanding of the local spending power. I came up a with a strategy, a great marketing campaign.

The Diamond Buyers Club- small town ladies start a diamond buying club that can consolidate the diamond buying process and personalize it. Your family jeweler- literally someone that is in your family. No longer stores, but all of the merchandise is on-line and you can reach out to your closest family contact about the purchase, they will be thrilled to walk you through the process. They can set up the conselltation in person or on-line via Zoom. A lot of our consultants and their clients become lifelong friends if they aren’t friends already!

Joseph Campbell Quote about a meditation on watches. It depends on the talent of the person. Meditation takes talent. Rhapsody takes talent. Effort. Resilience.

Gareth and the Moonwatch, training in, San Antonio, New York, San Francisco.

My own rhapsodizing about the moonwatch

“Did you sell any watches today?”

My two year old asks, but she asks and she’s adorable for it. And I didn’t and I laugh and I say not today and tickle her. And my soul leaps up and the whole shitty day has been worth it. And somehow this organic career has been perfect and has gotten me set up with life in the city. And we have settled here almost by way of filibuster, fucking toiling away on Michigan Avenue. But I have to say, I have felt pretty taken care of by the Unemployment insurance. How is Aflac doing? Are they blowing up? Or growing. I want to buy insurance now, I am sure a lot of other people dok do. Suddenly the sense of insurance looms large within the broader fiscal logic of our nuclear economy.

Why are the bathrooms so dirty? A case study from the floor.

11/20/2020

Back in January (1/31/2020) I had set a goal: 10,000 words a week and 25 miles. 10,000 and 25 seemed very reasonable to me. One long run a week would knock out a good chunk of the mileage and a string of solid, quite mornings would blow though my writing quota without too much strain. Plus, the discipline of it would give some ballast to my hyped up sales life. Sitting and thinking or maybe reading and sitting and writing in the morning before the second or third cup of coffee and the three flights down and two blocks to the train, two flights up, five stops to Belmont, fingers crossed that the transfer will be there to walk across the plateform to, then three stops to Clark, and three or four flights up from the underground and a three quarter’s mile hustle along Division or Elm to State and then Oak. And then my workaday sprint up and down the three stories of story front we occupied on the most exclusive shopping street in the city. I spent my day mostly standing or bounding up and down the stairs or striding the impossibly long distance to the back of the store, where my many responsibilities would draw me in an uncomfortable and imbalanced amount of time. More coffee throughout the day. Oh, someone brought donuts, how nice. And then off work and hustle home. Pound a tall boy and a bag of potato chips in the park outside the Newberry Library, like the chips and the beer on the train to Grand Rapids, wobbly on your feet bumming cigarettes in the Michigan summer night. And later trying to get cigarettes from that gas station that had just been rammed by a minivan. We went somewhere else and the clerk kind of put his arms up and shrugged at the mess all around him. We smoked cigarettes and talked about what, what… I have no idea what we talked about, but it was nice to hang out and drink beer and smoke cigarettes like a gang of beatniks after an earlier drunk on the train and taking pictures of the landscape and writing in my journal and journeying on and on without a destination.

11/19/2020

Shane decker with his bolo tie and his weak character actor chin and his cowboy hat and his boy playing in the minor leagues and his place in Colorado and his speaking engagements all around the country and his presentations and his package dealers and his success and his intensity and his focus and tenacity.

Could have fun making him some great convoluted speeches. Self-satisfied. Confident. Yucky but absolutist.

No matter how damn sweat you fucking fuselage is, you still have to hook that sucker to some sort of engine or you’re going to sick faster than you can say 1st class. Some engines are extremely powerful, but not very reliable, some are smooth and easy and relatively maintenance free and even some what effective, still others are dynamite and dependable, but demanding and involved to set up and maintain.

My eight year luxury career began at Burberry and ended at Razny Jewelers. At the end of the experience I was older and my life looked and felt older. I had a six year old now and a two year old. My drinking has gotten sneakier and sadder. My attention span has collapsed. Don’t read many books. Feeling buried in journals and notes, all began in burst of inspiration or effort, but then left and never returned to. No rhythm for returning. No rhythm for fostering forward momentum. Where is my metronome of stillness? Blocked by that fear grip. That time grip. The bedlam grip. The obsidian grip. Thrown off and despairing that I’ll ever find that right opportunity cost recipe to balance out all my diverse needs and interests— writing, Chinese, computers, family, fitness.

Dreaming of reading Wendell Berry and living in the city and working in web and app development. Continuing on with my Chinese study, but not with the sweaty unsettled feeling that my vocational best bet had run its course and was up for reassessment, it was time to cut our losses or collect our gains, or whatever necessary sequence of moves needed to be made to get clear, get free, get on and into the next thing, immediately.

11/14/2020

Greet within 5 seconds. Make a connection. Discover the client. Identify needs. Overcome objections. Explore add on purchases. Close and follow up. Greet withing 5 seconds. Make a connection. Discover…

The tea guy who was a guitarist from the Fugees.

Aaron Sorkin, Mark Wahlberg, Kahil Mack, Burger with his diamond encrusted burger ring, that tall guy with the dogs who was a lawyer of some kind, that other tall guy with the super bitchy wife. Battery changes, full-services, shattered crytals, magnetized movements, strange sound from the rotor, stiff winding, scratches, tuffs of human hair somehow wedged between the case and the case back.

I had probably made a mistake. I should have probably come up with a better plan. I was no longer a footloose and fancy free 20 something, nearly not a 30 something year old one either.

I was exposed. I was not that great of a salesman. I had really worked on and honed my watch schtick and it was second nature and I actually believed in the overall value of the brand. I had walked away from that to spend a year in a gothic crypt surrounded by strained manic-tinged vibe as I held up my best poker face and brought my best attitude to a situation that I was crashing and burning in. And ultimately I was happy I was crashing and burning there. The jewelry made no sense to me and clientele of uber rich and ambiguous intentioned singles or couples really made me miss the walk-of-all-life clients we see coming through the Brand’s shop.

And like I said, I had believed in the Brand. The Brand had never let me down. They understood the market and they kept us fed. We were very loyal to the Brand and now I was sorry that I was no longer representing them. Now I sold diamonds. Or at least I tried to sell them. It didn’t go well. It was a very long year. Midway through my wife had a miscarriage. We pushed through Christmas attending a Christmas Gala at a smantsy Arts club downtown with the heiress to the Fred Harvey fortune, willfully bringing our willful just 2 year old and chasing her around and around. Our hosts were so gracious. We were so stressed.

Her husband was a decent poet, her son was some sort of self-published author, delicate death closing in on us.

On the outside of this world of money where people persure their demons and their delights, where the financially necessities for maintaining niceties have been severed. I shae lie through my goddamned teeth to keep my pride here. An imagine future where I am a poet and a translater and I have the gumption to push through the block that has kept me beholden to this broken system of images and forms. And I humble before my parents and the lord. Or if I life my head up then shame. You are wrong mother, I reject your conclusions. You are a bore and a self-righteous one at that. You have a dense center of rightness that I have feared offending, but my offense now made, complete, sculpted, enshrined, strung out, grown from seed and splayed out upon a vine.

And then we traveled to China for the Chinese New Year. Again, what were we thinking. I think it was a timing thing, and beyond that, I guess, why not. Ultimately, travel is about the travel. And tough as it is sometimes inconvenient travel is sometimes the most memorable.

A month after our return I launched my exploration into computer programming. A month after that I quit my jewelry job and went back to the Brand. A new outlet had opened just a few stores down and they also sold another Really Great Brand. I figured- perfect, I will jump back into my watch groove, consolidate my business, get some growth through the CRM system I had built over the years through using OUTLOOK in a specific quasi-programmic way.

Then I proceeded to get my ass worked off over the next two years at work while also trying to push forward with computer programming while at the same time trying to maintain and expand my Mandarin Chinese in the midst of seeing our family grow by a second daughter. My progress in Ruby felt slow, but kinda no wonder.

And then Covid-19.

Running. Fast far. Knee hyperextension. Hip.

Lots of edibles and some inexcuseable day drinking.

Lots of writing. Tarot. Intuitive growth.

Letting the demons out. Hit upon some clarity

Intense stretching to bring back my balance.

Feel into a great rhythm of programming and then

Pushups and exercise as well. I think I did not do a

Good job staying loose during that month with all of

The uncertainty with Covid and the tension and violence in the city.

And the unrest with the people. And the uncertainty on my work situation and

Wanting to have the ability to just focus on coding full time, but not knowing how much longer that was going to be possible. And then getting the call from Stan and getting let go permanently. And the road clearing ahead. And then the pullback in July with visits up north where I drank too much beer and majorly damaged my achillies. Three months later it is finally healing.

Maybe sweet Achillies was just trying to heal me.

Teach me something about my drinking. I didn’t head to well, but healed slowly. Had a great month of coding in August and the kind of collapsed right at the beginning of September when betsy and the girls went to Ft. Wayne. I was really a piece of shit. I got very little done. Really didn’t even read much and just drank and smoked weed and lulled sleepily on the couch. It was kind of amazing on one level, for the peace aspect, but it was also pretty fucking self-indulgent and compulsive. I have now after 400 + pages scribbled on yellow legal pads diagnosed myself as having Borderline Personality Disorder. This order most clearly displays itself in my compulsive relationship to alcohol and marijuana. A situation which as of this Ides we be official. The 8 will be my test. The cresting action towards the Ides this month, which began with the visit of the Laughing Buddha, and reached an emotion crescendo with the raw dialogue with your Imam on Thursday the 8th maybe… I am breaking free and but yet still as I allow these emotions to bubble up, bubble up, bubble out I must recognize that they are blocking me from doing other things. This is not a problem if you create a right space to deposit these emotions and ideas. I like the idea of meditating on the abstract idea of something. Doing some sort of Stream of Consciousness

*PIECE of TIME*

Pock faced and handsome. Crows lines and a winning smile. We have cool cards. He was a caddy and all the rich guys he caddied for had golden wristwatches. Say it- Rolex. Say it again. Rolex. Somewhere right now in Vegas, pink neon light bathed abode. Water running in the bathroom, he’s brushing his teeth. Thinks he might get another piece in the morning. Show her he is sober enough to get it up now. Just needed a little sleep. Just need a little time to sleep it off. She’s already dressed, though she was still in bed feigning sleep when he stumbled out of bed and into the bathroom. She hears him in there being inelegant. And on the bedside table, his watch. Her Johns always put the watch there. The older ones do. The ones who have been married for 30 years and have all the little habits that go along with that. The long pauses. The repeated stories. The strained self-importance. And the Rolex on the night stand. The Rolex off the wrist just as they settle into bed drunk or sober, tired or keyed up. The decades long ritual of entering sleep.

The guy from Arkansas and the blacks in Mississippi, standing around a burning barrel on a hot Mississippi night stripping the copper out of stolen extension cords. And plumbers are the lowest forms of life. And we have cool cars. And I once gave a watch to a Mexican electrician to get his face rebuilt because some body had shot him through his face and fucked it all up and then Obamacare came along and his employer wouldn’t cover it. And then Obamacare covered it, but then there were complications with the metal mess in his reconstructed jaw and it had to be done all over again, but Obamacare wouldn’t do it again for him, because they had already payed for it once. And so he was saving up his money to get a new face. And so I went into my bedroom and I looked at that fucking rose gold piece of shit Rolex and what the fuck was I going to do with it. I couln’t wear that piece of shit. I couldn’t fucking wear it. I was embarrassed to. I had bought it for myself because I thought that is what you do when you get a little scratch. Just like those rich guys I caddied for. Where are they now, where the fuck are they now. They are dead- heart disease, cancer, a boating accident. Gordo had complications from diabetes.

Chicago, Chicago, always Chicago. You bought those Chicago books so that perhaps you could get through them and actually know a few facts to pop off to people. My Chicago history is hazy. Its about as accomplished as my Mexican geography. I suck. I am a shitty human being.

Let’s try to lay off on the self-hatred. You know, for the kids.

I don’t fucking know for the kids.

Did Donnie it for the kids? Did Donnie “Mr. Mother Fucking World” do it for the fucking kids? Fuck no he didn’t. He did it for his fucking self. His mother fucking self. And I don’t blame him. You thinks those kids give a fuck. They fucking don’t give a fuck about anything. You know what I fucking mean. This fucking guy over here. He don’t know what the fuck is going on. This is some new fucking derivative act. Some fucking off Broadway sideshow put together by a guy with an M fucking A. That’s right everyone. I have a BA and an MA. I am practically unemployable.

Job skills. I will show you some fucking jobs skills. Fuck jobs. Fuck ‘em.

So I see this guy the other day. And he’s like, hey Arnie. Which already my drawers are in a ruffle, cause what the fuck- my name is Ernie. Erine. It’s short for earnest. My lead fucking quality. And fucking the name of the great fucking writer of all time. I fucking love Earnst Hemingway. Have you read some of that guys writing. Its fucking brilliant. He was painting. He was fucking painting with words. Like some kind water color bullshit. He was that fucking artist hero that every undergrad imagined they could one day be. What exactly that artist hero looked like had evolved over time. I feel like now the artist hero could probably rap and dance really well. Have cool hair and clothes and a dope twitter handle *little side note as I break voice.*

Over the years I have had the pleasure of presenting ROLEX timepieces to clients for birthdays, graduations, weddings, anniversaries, job promotions, retirement gifts and on and on. I have noticed that clients often approach the purchase of a celebratory ROLEX with emotion as well as expectation. This is a big moment and the client wants to commemorate it right. What I so deeply appreciate about ROLEX timepieces is their remarkable substance; their unimpeachable quality, design, and engineering imbues them with both a literal and symbolic robustness. This substance ensures that what you deliver to a ROLEX client is a not only a superbly regulated, trend-proof timepiece of exceptional quality, but also a worthy symbol of their achievement. The cherished connection between this special moment and the timepiece and the wearer only increases over time. And that is powerful.

11/02/2020

Did Darren the Mobius-double security guard tell me that he was sexually assaulted by a priest?

Did he tell me that he was visited by a dragon? Did he tell me that he kicked like 5 guys asses like Bruce Lee? How many guns did he have in his SUV anyway?

We chat discretely— this is my filibuster— this is my commodity swap. I am a billionaire’s boyfriend, I am no a robocop.

Graff was not working out. Not going anywhere. So I came up with a plan— get back to a watch shop. Code and write and study Chinese as much as possible around the margins of selling and being a family man. These last 7 years have been a portage—

Management… why is it often so poor…

Seeking strategy that amplifies all strengths.

Leadership that amplifies all strength. Science, faith, industry, arts, seeking out creativity in every corner of this existence.

Agree on the values, put them up front. Let’s be clear about what the reward is. Let’s agree upon it. Put what matters most to the employees up front and they will put the values of the company up front.

Employers who do no want their employees to understand how much money they are making off of them.

11/10/2020

Team players are good, sacrifice is encouraged.

Communists are absolutely fucking evil.

11/01/2020

Adorn the middle managers in manly steel talismans and send them off to sea, to war, to deal, to explore, to wed for richer or poorer.

The symbol is the thing— the language of wealth.

You could stick around and sweep up the glass, or get down on your hands and knees and scrub up the blood. Or you could kick the dust from your heals, and walk through the door, the gyre still pulsating, a sub aural drone that buzzes in my heart, and exit this decade of dislocation. Step on through, enjoy the fall, let’s save the landing for the big surprise finish.

10/29/2020

I was able to work this job and excel at it, but only at the detriment of my physical and mental health.

10/21/2020

Raznys, listen up, unless you want to suggest some creative use of my formerly harbored angst towards you and about our unhealthy employer-employee relationship, you are more than free to fuck off.

Emotional distance makes me write so much better, I am still emotional, but I understand it is part of the gig so I can turn it on and turn it off, within the context of the process. The process gives me space to turn it on and turn it off. The process gives me space to work through the energy blocks, the thought blocks and loops. I can look upon the blocks and bruises squarely. They are me. I’m so much deeper than than the wound.

12 Year Cycle

What if I had told you in 2008 that you would live in Beijing for two years and then struggle to find an in for your Chinese and then fall into luxury retail and work that for almost 8 years during which time you will have two daughters, first an African American President will be elected for 8 years followed by a nativist Donald Trump, and then aided by a global pandemic and a generational legacy of racial violence freed up to focus on my dual vocation of writing and coding.

10/20/2020

Realized today tat I continue to think about the Razny’s ad harbor a lot of justified and unjustified anger against them. They unnecessarily made my life worse, harder, more unpleasant, less convenient, more stressful, less efficient, less predictable, less stable, less happy, less healthy, less joyfull, less creative, at a very delicate, family building moment. Instead of being supportive, they were combative and vindictive. This is the Trump way. The Trump way is the only way. The organizations way. You are in or you are out. You are with us or you are against us. You are strong or you are weak. You are honest or you are a liar. You are tremendous or you are a disgrace.

10/10/2020

I have worked under a mean boss, a narcissistic boss— a boss who cared very much for his profits and guns and boat and Florida home— but hade little regard for his employees.

He would talk about who he liked to run things lean— meaning that we were perpetually short-staffed and the while the sales team had the opportunity to personally sell more, it was done so at the cost of having to work at an unnecessarily frantic and anxious pace while dealing with slapdash and chaotic support structures. The bathrooms were inadequately cleaned and management refused to come up with a comprehensive strategy to remedy this. Instead looking to the already stretched thin sales and security staff to pick up the slack and keep the bathrooms clean. With no single person stepping up to lead this charge the bathrooms were consistently in subpar shape… I would like to say that I steeped up and took charge and ensured that our bathrooms were sparking clean, and while I did my part to do the occasion whip down I was not about to take the managerial role and lead the charge. I honestly did not have the wherewithal. Also, my suited coiffed sales persona did not jive well with trying to scrub a bathroom nice and clean. Doing a presentation on a $100K Patek Phillipe timepiece while smelling like Comet didn’t seem like a good idea to me. But we get kept an hour late with the implication being that the boss doesn’t care how it gets done, just that it gets done. But then the manager does not make any organizational moves, one of the mange trap setting communication stand-offs we’d find ourselves in. Damed in you did, damned if you didn’t. Ineffectual, political, uncertainty, end up expending a lot of energy mitigating the information gap between the client and management, without me being given full transparent access to product availability. Get the client to commit to the possibility of doing the transaction and doing it all in cash and not sending it out of state to avoid the sales tax. If they were up for all of those requirements then wonderful, perhaps we could help them with that at some point, though it would really help quite a bit if you established yourself as our client by using one of our other services or exploring some of our other brand offerings. We love taking carry of our established clients. And why wouldn’t we, they take care of us.

He created or at least tolerated a incomprehensible management structure which led our defacto “Regional Manger” to scold us for not doing a good enough job managing our managers. Who despite numerous requests to change the procedure was unable or unwilling to produce a working schedule for us in a timely manner, making planning both professional and personal activities an unnecessary contingency and source of stress and frankly resentment eroding my goodwill, trust and loyalty to the company. There was no clear procedure for requesting days off or receiving confirmation that your request was even received, much less approved, making it necessary to hound mangers (who would pass the buck) to the owner/president himself, which turned even vacation requests and approvals into this uneasy “favor” giving or withholding. Zero effort by management to make sure that employees had the time and wherewithal to take breaks or even have lunch. This lead me to skipping lunch many days. My favorite days were when one of the family members would show up in the early afternoon after the team had been running around all day and were looking forward to more floor coverage so we could start to take our lunches. And the manager/family member would come waltzing in with their just picked up lunch and would breeze through saying “hey, guys, how’s it going? I’m just going to head upstairs and eat my lunch that I just picked up.” It truly hurt that they were so oblivious to our needs? Did they even care? Was it incompetence or just cruelty?

Loyalty to the boss was more important than honesty or even legaity (shipping out of state, letting people wear pieces out the door. Lying about the availability of pieces. They are available, just not for you. A sales strategy of snobby coercion and racketering (earning illegal money), making it a spoken or unspoken rule that you can only gain access to certain pieces through relationships or spend or place of residence.

the action (generally illegal) of advertising goods which are an apparent bargain, with the intention of substituting inferior or more expensive goods.

In many ways the controls that management put on the HOT pieces were understandable. We did want to keep our pieces off the black market. Interestingly enough though, most of those controls were a result of mistakes (sometimes egregious on the part of the 1st family), and despite their mistakes, the tightening of the controls flowed a greater and greater percentage of the “HOT” watches to family members or preferred sales associates. Which was frustrating as our store was allocated specific pieces to maintain our customer base, but we would instantly have to transfer the HOT watches to the suburbs where the owner would self them to his top clients and use them as a reward to punishment scheme for controlling sales associates. Again, if you got an opportunity to sell one of these watches it was like mangagment was doing you a favor. Which they were not, given that the commission structure for these watches was quite low and typically with all of the hoops and procedures and delicate back and forth between the client, and management to make sure a sale was possible/approved often ended up being more trouble than it was worth. I read these realities and focused my sales strategy on moving the “B” and “C” team pieces and did my best not to be too concerned with my lack of consistent access to the “A” pieces. My resentment and frustration with this situation waxed and waned. It definitely made me a little defensive about my sales numbers which were great, especially considering my lack of access to the “easy sells”.

This is very interesting that I am writing about Razny’s now that I have gained some more emotional distance from my parents and my family’s political and religious belifes. Now perhaps I can return more fully focues to my vocational quest. Something has loosened up, opened up, released. Slowly, slowly my vocational path is emerging as one combing tech, writing and linguistics. Need to look into Ruby natural language processing.

15November2019

The Ides… do I quite my job today? Do I get fired? The smart money sticks it out through the Holiday month. It would be kinder to the staff and make more financial sense if I can stretch it out thorug the holidays.

I thought it would be easier by now, but somehow it is harder.

**Challenges in current job:**

* Fragmented staffing and management (day to day we do not know who will be showing up- one guard or two)
* Inadequate staffing
* Inadequate staffing exacerbated by family-employees not reliably reporting for full scheduled hours.
* Ill defined roles with regards to front of the house and back of the house responsibilities leading to floor coverage issues and unmaintained work spaces.
* Management focused on selling at the detriment of completing basic management fundamentals: (building and space management, lunch management (leading to many days where staff does not eat, nor take a break), timely schedule completion (nearly always posted the night before it goes into affect), lack of timely confirmation of requested days off/vacation)
* Poorly planned scheduled of “special events” adding to workload and hours, over-taxing an already over stretched staff.
* Optional meetings that pop up and then suddenly become mandatory when employee declines to rearrange schedule last minute to accommodate managements disorganization.
* Scheduling staff beyond 40 hours and 5 days a week without prior consultation.
* Pressured to sell lines that have not been introduced or adequately merchandised.
* Inconsistent access to product leading to favoritism, ambiguity, and unnecessary uncertainty when attempting to provide transparent, honest customer service.
* Management blundering merchandise from brand flagship stop to feed VIPs, friends and other stores.
* Consistent schedule (preferably with weekends and public holidays off).
* More generous time off

**Get back in control of your creative process.**

And let us not deny that the person who currently controls your creative process the most

is Mr. Stan Razny. And that just kind of pissed me off. He owns the majority of my working time and he profits the most from it. I am just another puppet on a string shoveling money up to him. Feeding his ego and the luxury spending. What the hell would happen if Stan died? What the hell would happen to the business. Would his kids take over? Would they have the managerial wherewithal to keep the thing afloat. I mean it must be a fairly lucrative business. Something that they could rent out as well. They are ambitious. The are fighting tooth and nail to make a difference. They are fighting tooth and nail to make up their image. Get thorught o the other side of the room. The real important. Creation that I am thinking about is the fact that I am now typing quickly but I am not making amny sense at all. Wouldn’t this be a good time to take five and do some guided breather. No?

**05/01/2016**

I don’t want to talk about myself. And yet I feel like that is all I can do. And then you have these chatty guys and gals and I think that they are fucking assholes and that somehow they are their only alternative which is not true at all. Communication takes many forms. I speak in short sentences. I speak in short bursts. Why not learn watches as well as you can? Why not learn watches as well as you can? I saw you in the street and you were calling out to me. I saw you in the street and you were calling out to me. And I want to be a hunter. And I want to be direct. And I want to call someone close. And make them feel like they are taken care of. Fuck the desperation. Because I am more than this goal. The goal tells me what I must do to make as much money as possible, but what about my larger goals- staying organized. Staying educated.

There are ways to do this and ways not to do this. Let’s do this.

I suppose this part of the problem. This fragmentation that has me feeling like I can’t complete a thought with you. Why do you say that. Make some effort to participate. Why are they almost good people? Why are they almost bad people? They seem like douche bags. Don’t be crass. I don’t like being crass. But I endup being crass to try to come across as some sort of hardass. But I am not a hardasss. I am just quiet. I can become a sort of hardass. I can become the sort of person that gets up early to do the things that I love. And when I do the things that I love I will break through this feeling of half selfness. This unrealized self. I am achieving my goals if not my dreams. I have a loving wife that I could do a better job supporting emotionally. I have a daughter that I could do a better job supporting emotionally and financially etc.

I have to look into life insurance. I have to look into investmenting. Stocks. Bonds etc. But remember son, money isn’t everything, but it is certainly something that I don’t want to have to worry about. I am going through this very concrete part of my life. Fuck the abstract myself seems to say. I need concreteness. I need money in my bank account. I need savings. I need the security of knowing that I can cover my expenses for several months without working.

And where does writing come into this. Writing comes into this because I still feel the need to express myself and be artistic. Though honetly I have never really completed a piece of art. Is art ever really finished?

I don’t have to be ashamed of my simple mind. I don’t have to be ashamed of that which is the purpose, the long and short of it, the end and all of it. Wealth distribution does strike me as awfully fucked up and we live in a time where that is worsening, why is that. I don’t mind people getting richer, but when wages stagnate and poverty is exacerbated and education levels don’t improve and we are becoming more divided than having a sense that our racist past is still holding sway, that is a dispiriting feeling and conclusion to come to. We all know which way we are heading? Though do we. Why the fuck would you say something like that.

I am writing and that is an end in itself.

And where does writing come into this. Writing comes into this because I still feel the need to express myself and be artistic. Though honetly I have never really completed a piece of art. Is art ever really finished?

I don’t have to be ashamed of my simple mind. I don’t have to be ashamed of that which is the purpose, the long and short of it, the end and all of it. Wealth distribution does strike me as awfully fucked up and we live in a time where that is worsening, why is that. I don’t mind people getting richer, but when wages stagnate and poverty is exacerbated and education levels don’t improve and we are becoming more divided than having a sense that our racist past is still holding sway, that is a dispiriting feeling and conclusion to come to. We all know which way we are heading? Though do we. Why the fuck would you say something like that.

I am writing and that is an end in itself.

I am a sales associate at a luxury watch boutique. I stand to make around 70,000-80,000 dollars this year. About 10 to 20 thousand dollars more than I have made in years past. In theory, with similar expenses as the previous year, we should be able to build up our savings to a fairly comfortable level. What is a fairly comfortable level. $13,400 to meet the full family deductible for our family if god forbid we got into some major medical situation. Three months of living expenses banked away, if god forbid I lost my job and had to look for a new one. $12,000. $80,000 for a down payment on a house. $20,000 in a new car fund to have on hand if we need to replace our current vehicle. So I have the goal of saving up $125,400.

And that seems like something I could achieve in about 6 years total…so by like fall of 2021…. Which makes it basically a 5 year plan. And at that point. I will be set up pretty well financially, I will be ready to transition to a job where I will have weekends free allowing me to be more on the same schedule with my daughter(s) education…. I will speak read and write fluent Chinese and Spanish and I will begin learning French at that time. I will be 42 years old. I will have a completed draft of my Existential Zombie novel where I will explore history, theoretical physics, science fiction, fantasy, religion, economics, language, art, and sexuality…. Fun stuff. Between now and then I will write 1,000 letters. That is about 4 letters a week.

All totally obtainable goals. I think what I need right now is to be solidifying my watch knowledge, my sales knowledge, I need to be working hard to sell, and working hard to prepare myself to sell.

What do I feel good about?

I feel good about the money betsy and I have been able to bank away this year. I feel good about how that money in the bank mitigates stress from unexpected expenses.

I feel good about the fact that betsy is getting treatment for her back.

I feel good about my earning potential at the present compared with my earning potential a year ago.

I feel good about my relationship with the morning- getting up and getting into things that I want to improve at.

I feel good about my daughter- she is healthy, strong, smart and growing, challenging betsy and I and helping us grow.

I feel good about my wonderful wife. What a good mother she is. Her sense of moderation. Her compassion and concern. Her creativity and diligence.

I feel good about our living situation.

I feel good about the year’s events- Emily’s wedding, betsy’s big family reunion, betsy’s trip to Nashville, my trip to NYC.

I feel good about my chances of getting in better shape this summer than I was in last summer.

I feel good about facing down the struggles that I have in organization and consistency.

I feel good about my passion for learning.

I feel good about my passion for language.

I don’t feel good about my abdomen, feeling flabby and gassy.

I don’t feel good about my posture, feeling tired and hunched.

More core.

I don’t feel good about my inability to express myself to other people in an honest engaging way.

I don’t feel good about my on going frustration with my co-workers and customers. I need to fight cynicism. I need to rise above cynicism. I need to lead with love and optimism. I need to make it easy for people to make good decisions when in my presence. I need to express myself more. I need to let my personality come out, even if it is a seeking personality that seeks to open other people up. You have to work at it a little bit. But it is not a bad thing to work at.

I want to replace fear and anxiety and inaction, with fortitude and drive and intention.

Want to live full and well and good.

Should we do a watch Wednesday- where I can burn through the materials, review things and organize my watch knowing….

**11/01/2013**

New York, Beverly Hills, Dallas, Chicago, Bal Harbour, Greenwich...

Bal Harbour, Florida, is located on the northern tip of the barrier island commonly referred to as Miami Beach.

There are luxury shops on a barrier reef.

How do you feel when you wear fancy clothes? I say it is survival.  It is nothing but survival.  We are living and just trying to survive.  I get paid next Friday.  Before that, I have surgery next Wednesday.

It is the first of the month and I am back to zero.  My sales are back to zero.  My bank account is back to zero.  My goals for the month regarding writing are back to zero.  Last month I wrote 20,000 words.  That is the most I have written in a single month in years.  Wow.  That is something I should be extremely proud of.  I feel depressed and disappointed because I have never been able to push through to the other side with writing.  And by the other side I just mean that I have never been able to push through to being able to write and write consistently and write things that I could share with others- not aggressively, but when you connect with someone who appreciates writing being able to refer them to something that you wrote and have that something that you wrote reflect something of your intellectual and spiritual and aesthetic self.  If your goddamned wristwatch can say something about you- and it does, I really agree that it does, then goddamned personal writing should have a few things to say too.

He spoke of truth, but of a truth only seen at a side glance.  And I asked him for his proof and he gave me a side ways look.  He spoke of necessity. People living out lives of quiet desperation.  We have jobs and we have friends, but the fears and the uncertainties never leave us.  So he read management books and tried harder and harder to manage his team better and to be stronger.  At work one way, at home one way.  If the same, bad?

Aesthetics are important. For example, now, here, in my apartment (this place whose lease is running out, out of which we are being run out) where it is cool, but I am warmly dressed in wool and flannel.  Where I am sitting in a comfortable chair with a comfortable lap desk (which I have wanted for a very long time but still did not acquire until I found one in new condition at a yard sale on Erie for a dollar over the summer and I didn’t even have a dollar on me so I walked home up to Huron got a dollar and then walked back to purchase it, passing another yard sale along the way where a woman was selling new school supplies; it must have been August), and it is morning and I have the day off from work which feels special because it is a Friday, I work tomorrow and Sunday because I work in retail and those can be two of our busier days, though this weekend is promising to be rainy, warm but rainy, so I am not holding out too much hope that it will be an extremely comfortable day.

Why don’t I just warmly greet people and shake their hands and introduce myself to them.  It would be a good disciplinary practice and one that might reward me with making new friends, new clients.  If I am happy and excited and upbeat there are at least certain people that I will be able to bring along with me.

11/21/2020

I needed to do that work and I needed to get that perspective and decompress and realign. I got very low doing that work though. I had to push a lot of myself to the way back and just focus in and puss through. I drank coffee. I drank alcohol. I smoked weed. I ate sugar. I ate grease. I ate empty calories. I was sped up and trying to go faster to get ahead of this thing that was promising to completely overcome my overall wherewithal. Not giving a shit about my job and feeling bad about that. Not carrying if they fired me. Finding a certain strength in that. Having made up a resolve to push off in another direction. But not quite fully having an idea of what it would take financially or temporally, so kind of feeling like my best strategy was to keep plugging away and growing my savings.

Covid opened the door for me to pursue coding full time. Pursuing coding full time impressed it upon me how deeply I needed to keep deepening my sporadically engaged practice of writing. This lead to some tension between pushing ahead with coding and catching up on decades of writing and thoughts and relationship musings and story ideas and sketches and the inspiration for what has amounted to my most sophisticated and developed writing process, which over the course of the last 8 months has proved to be an incredible boon to both the quality and the quantity of my writing.

Freed me from the cold war gridlock I was stuck in with management because I “passively-aggressively” refused to be a Yes man Lap dog, it was a culture of manic enthusiasm for whatever the message the big boss was sending down. He was buying us lunching because some of us were working for the 6th or 7th day in a row— “oh my god, you are so generous! This is awesome! What a great boss! The boss that is pumping you full of cheap carbohydrates and sugar to keep you humping around the store making sales. What a fucking Mother Theresa. Am I arrogant? Perhaps. Do I also feel like I have enough self-respect to demand decent management— absolutely! This is our job for godsake! Where we end up spending the majority of our productive, creative, energetic, engaged hours. Just writing that and reflecting on all the time I spent behind a jewelry counter or in front of one really does kind of make my stomach churn. But I did it. It was more nuanced than just standing around and being dumb. You became a Chicagoan in those years. You were deeply connected with the workaday existence of it. You were hustling and scrapping and trying to advance in your career. Trying to get to a more comfortable play. A more prosperous, flourishing, grounded place where you could naturally be and grow and foster a wholesome environment for your wife and your children.

But at Razny’s it was a little bit too much to expect that the shift schedule be posted in a timely manner so as to allow us to organize our business, set our appointments, as well as our private lives. They emphasized the importance of having us set appointments ahead of time, but did an awful job getting our schedule posted ahead of time, adding another and unnecessarily contingent layer to the process. Setting up loyalty tests, or situations in which you would need to spit commission if you do not come in on your last minute appointment. An appointment you were not able to steer todays a convenient day because you didn’t know what your work schedule was ahead of time. This kind of collapsing of the future. Not really knowing what is on your personal horizon. Makes work the only sure thing ahead, the only sure thing behind.

Management refused to get their shit together. The other three stores had less urgency to get their schedules out ahead of time because their scheulde were vastly more consistent, we once again on Oak had management gaps all over the place.

At our store the manager had neither the wherewithal or the authority to manage. The owner’s daughter was the nominal manager but sporadically came in (making scheduling a challenge and often unnescesaryily short staffed. When a the GM completes the staffing of the store, but then doesn’t come in at all or only comes in for part of her shift and always arrives later than the rest of the time and often leaves earlier. It truly felt like phantom management. If we asked her for pretty much anything she would pass the buck to her Dad or Fabiola was her Dad’s number two and who wore pretty much ever management hat but Owner.

The stupid, avoidable schedule situation resulted in me growing my hair out because I had such a hard time pinning down a time ahead of time to get my haircut. It wasn’t a huge issue because it was Oak street representing European brands, but I could tell it bothered management, especially when I didn’t do an absolutely consistent job of keeping it super groomed and slick. There are always awkward phases as you grow and overgrow your hair out. I would love a montage of all my different hairdos or hair-states as I closed sales and walked people to the door and shook their hands and sent them off on their way. Finding the formality of it. The ritual. The repeatable, honable good aspects of the experience and then repeating them and honing them.

At the Christmas Party I made sure to drunkenly boast to the owner about my success with diamond sales. Hitting those points that he had told us that he wanted to here. My blurry eyes, my scraggly hair and big Tom Ford glasses. Just like Heath Ledger said one of the fat butted office girls. And she produced an image on her phone. It was a kind thing for her to say. He felt underdressed and whatever. The dining room was weirdly drafty and atmosphere less, like someone tried to spice up a nursing home community room by turning the lights of and smashing a bottle of whisky against the floor. I told that piece of shit all about all the diamonds that I was going to sell for him.

Seeking reinvention at every mention of your failed experiment.

I had called Ben to say hi. I was high but in a friendly chatty mood, trying to find new wasy to push through the COVID-19 isolation. Caught him at a crabby moment. He sounded like what the fuck are you calling me for. I had no one to echo my reatlity to me. I had no one to see me and understand where I was at. I had some work to do to transform myself. But I was up for it and feeling particularly unsentimental about holding on to the past at all. He was a frustrated or failed actor and dated short girls who felt comfortable sitting on bar stools. He was a real drunk wasn’t he. I had been right there for a while, but was now getting some separation from drinking and from the culture of having only drinking friends and acquantances. It would take some discipline, but I knew I had to confront alcohol. I had to confront money. I had to confront sugar and sports and films and weed and exercise and reading and writing and religion and politics and all of it. I felt better doing this on the outside of the ramshackle drinking allegiances I had glue-sticked together over the years.

The Omega Boutique had been smashed up. The Tourbillon too. And the front window of Chanel and Hermes and then Razny’s had gotten a U-Haul truck driven right through its front window and the Rolex boutique had had its windows smashed in. We had been shut down that one Black Sunday after the Laquan McDonald video had been posted.

Symptoms of something else. The thing is never just the thing. It can’t be, especially if does not have a good goddamn explanation. 16 bullets for a kid with a knife? 9 minutes for a neck in broad daylight, bullets from a gun as the state calls Taser, Taser, Taser.

And then after 7.5 years of my butler meets car salesman act has been put to rest.

We need to pick our line. We need to run along it.

11/22/2020

Purgatory of trying to sell luxury watches from a cellphone during the lockdown.

Deeper purgatory of trying to sell luxury watches from a cellphone during lockdown in the midst of significant social unrest.

U-Haul truth driven repeatedly through the glass façade. The Rolex, Patek Philippe, Buben & Zorweg, Razny, U-Haul.

Smash. The doorway was broken. I walked back though to hand off my company cellphone. The gyre has busted open for me.

Fever dream of Grand Theft Auto Chase. 1st impression of Chicago was from the Blue Brothers and the ridiculous car chase through the loop. The movie set dramatics of it all.

Then a woman dead at Ashland and Irving by Lakeview High School, The Popeyes, The Longroom.

The frustrated middle-aged salesman is a well-tred trope.

But when you are the frustrated middled-aged salesman the trope feels extremely tired, soul-sucking, unfun.

In my daughter’s preschool class they always talk about people’s buckets and how we have the opportunity to fill up people’s buckets or to empty them out. Retail keep poking holes in my bucket. My morale, enthusiasm, energy, effort, goodwill just kept lieeking out, spilling out, haemoraging out faster than I could refill it. Tried to support this embalanced situation with a pleathora of unhealthy and indulgent consumption habits. We get stressed and so we “treat” ourselves, we “spoil” ourselves.

The moment that sums up the whole experience for me was when the defacto regional product and sales manager over the 4 Chicagoland stores came in and scolded us as a group of under-support and demoralized sales associates that we needed to do a better job managing our managers. This is the moment that you realize that no one is coming to help. There is no one coming to help. If you take initiative you run the rist of stepping on toes, coming off as bossy, expending energy to try to get people on board an initiative that is not your responsibility, a push that engaging very pragtically is taking time and energy away from your actual responsibilities which are A) make sure everyone is greeted within 5 seconds of entering the stores and B) that you are ferverishing working any and all already established hot, warm, lukewarm and cold sales leads, while keeping the store merchandised and clean and orderly. This all is very doable, but when you roles are ill defined and there is an absolute lack of on-the-ground engaged, productive, organized, mission-harmonized management the whole flow of the business feels much more grinding than necessary. I began to get the sense that management liked to make it a bit of a grind. They liked to keep us short staffed, lean and mean and running. They wanted everyone to be manically active and tired and a little afraid and super grateful for the recognition and free lunches that The Family would shower on us. Our soul for Meatballs and a birthday shoutout.

12/04/2020

The heist: Oak alley, details, descriptions. All the things that were wrong with security. The keys, etc…

12/2/2020

Worked my way up, just by sticking around, one of my enduring frustrations is product availability. Limited supply, very high demand and high resale value, sometimes even higher than retail, especially if you have the piece shipped out of sate and you don’t declare your use tax on that. How many hundreds of thousands of dollars in Taxes did I help people avoid?

What message should my watch send says almost nothing to most people everywhere. I suppose this is the blunt utility of a yellow gold watch. Most fine timepieces mean very little to the uninitiated. You are hoping that only the right people recognize your expensive bauble. They will see it and recognize you as someone of taste and adventure and athleticism and science and forward thinking and tradition and value and quality. You are a quality person who has made quality investments with their time and have been rewarded by their great quality with more quality.

They have the mark. They have the sign. They understand its meaning. It represents the environmental variable time, but expresses it in the refined idiom of the wearers world. It is a symbol of the wearers world, reality, allowing you to see them as they see themselves. They like the weight of it, the tangibility, the solidness, they like the envy it evokes in people, they like the reminder of love that it represents, the association, I am the daughter of…, the brother of…, the son of… the spouse… really did not care about any of this shit, had a hard time at times pretending like I cared, leaving me to fall back on my instincts which were to just keep my head down, organize, and hustle.

Some people had to mature into gold…

Goals, parameters, structure, flow…

11/24/2020

You seem dangerously vacuous and not very kind. I am here with my baby. How do you do? Following the path along the lines I was pulled down. Shocked by my naïve assumption that consensus on the foolish and the wise would be a bit more telegraphed.

11/16/2020

He woke in the hotel room buried in a white comforter and pillows. The room was small and silent despite the enormous and raucous city just outside.

I broke Tyler’s I-pad! Did you hear that! I broke Tyler’s I-Pad!

Thirty-something duldrums, a man of a certain age, no longer young,

Not respectable enough to be old…

**07/04/2019**

From at dream: The house where betsy and I went with CB was incredible. A “cabin” by name only. Square footage to spare. Long low windows all out the back overlooking the property, all owned as far as the eye could see.

I remember that true cabin. And they made a cabin. Two friends building. Somehow never got involved. They made a nice little place. They made a nice little place. There was Dante and he was out at his place with his boys and his pretty and sad looking wife who kept a horse and reminded me of aunt Jane. And there huge wall of books and the clear eyes of Dante. And the cars that he worked on and the truck that he fixed up for his 8 year old sun. What of those boys now? Off to college, off to the cities. Into the wilderness. Do we go deeper, or do we come up for air.

I spoke to her on the telephone and her voice reached me through the void. Her voice reached to me and caress me through the void.

And yes, the dream did get weird, and every fucking thing is a transaction. He wanted sex. I was to be paid in privilege. I have all of this all ready I told him looking out at the incredible view with a poet’s arrogance, owning it in a way he never would.

This subversive ownership, this mercurial power. There is a reason poets die young or very old. There is a reason I will never have a single cent. A single lick of sense. I go brow beating myself back to my roots. I go shaking off the ill timed malaprop. I go joking with the kids who called me names in the street. Tattle-monger, Sharp-striker, Stale-manager, Striking-sharp tongue. Watson Cricket territory. Westinghouse elevator territory. I am so full of shit. Looking to make a buck off of the enemy. I don’t need you coming to me. I don’t need you coming to me. I am living in the middle of the sea. I am living in the middle of the sea. We enter through the side door. We enter through the sea. I am a roving sign. I am a roving spy. I don’t disagree with that. Do you disagree with that? I don’t disagree with that. We need to climb up into a hole. We need to fall down on the icy floor. My mother made me an offer. I am slowly coming down to the moment of truth. I am slowly coming down to the moment of truth. What are you going to buy with all of that I influence? What are you going to buy with your single road return? I came up on him in his inelegance. Ranging from A and then back to Z. We are fickle. We are fine. I am partaking in the finest of wines. We drink it deeply. We court the Starmoon Tourbillon. We sing their sweet praises. All in all we move the heaven. We move the earth. And where was the rhythm? Where was the mirth? All life begins with sweet questions. All life begins with ill will. I stand at the entrance with my companion, shattering startled reactions from the elderly pepanut gallery. The grey panthers and the answers they seek. The weak movement that killed the movement within a week. We can make amends can’t we? Does that need a question mark? We can make amends can’t we. The temperature is shifting. Is it hotter outside or in? The sun came up at 5:20. I didn’t see it.

CB’s basement- the strange, fantastical, polished brass watchmaking loom. The fine carved cabinet housing his collection. Cuddling in bed with clients is never a good idea. Sorry, not sorry, but I am in a married, monogamous relationship. The fake lips, the fake boobs, the fake ass, the makeup, where does it end and does it truly make much of a difference. These moneyed old men traveling the world for pleasure. He has albums on his iphone of all the places that he has dove. He tells me BLANK is the best diving in the world and then answers in a half-exasperated way when I ask him where BLANK is.

The Maldives, he says half exasperated. The Maldives he says with his face all full of filler. He is that indeterminate age where youth and age divide. Let’s call him sixty-five. I have a general idea of the Maldives… somewhere in the Indian Ocean, but where exactly, not super clear. Sometimes I like to lob people softballs so they can tell me more about what they seem to be excited about talking about. It burns a little bit when people react with that indignate, dismissive “What!” , “Huh!” when you were just trying to make conversation.

I want to be a good creative. Basking in the light of the high polish that I give to everything. And then maybe I will have my DLC phase. My candy coated phase.

My father comes to me in dream dressed up as CB. He puts his arm around me. It’s not as creepy as I expected it would be. I am a child being comforted by a man who truly has my best intentions close to his heart. I am running through to the other side of this. Dynamics of making the most of this shit in the sun. We fiddle around with some bullshit and then get acquitted when the trial starts. When the jury hangs. When we fashion our cool response and go running into the haze. Layered pages skip and split.

**07/01/2019**

What the fuck are they talking about? Where are we at exactly? Are we making progress? Are we regressing? Will my head being clearer help me do my job better, more efficiently? I am seeing Julio push for people that don’t seem super qualified for these pieces. I want to be kind. I want to be kind. I have to work hard and make sure that I am kind to people. I have my work cut out for me. I have my work cut out. I need to be very careful with this next step. I was not super careful with Danqi's piece and that fucked me. That was a set back, but I think I got through the whole thing fine and I got through the whole.thing under the radar. We know that the witch of light does not necessarily have our backs. We know that the witch of light does not even necessarily will us well. You don’t work Sundays! What the hell? They’ve got to be exhausted. They’ve got to be at their wits end. They’ve been doing this for decades. Talk about stamina. I can respect that.

Leaning in to on-line shopping. Mirroring *Invisible Man*. Going underground. Disappearing. Trying to get ahold of the people in his own life that he has lost track of getting burnt out on relationships with all of his CRM work. He longs to write and sits down and tries to write these relationships back, without a clear idea of what the way forward is—without a clear sense of the future geographically, vocationally and network-wise, heading deeper out in o the ocean, throwing out a buoy, calling a sounding, building a fire, cracking a cold one.

**6/24/16**

And there are things to do this quarter- July, August and September…

There are other things to do in these days. To prepare for the next quarter- October, November and December and the next quarter after that and years and years to come and so on…

I am dug in right now. Feeling better and feeling worse all at the same time. I can get better at saving money now can’t I. I can get myself into a position to succeed. To succeed in being a support for my daughter and a support for my wife. My story is many people’s stories. Trying to live a good life and a stable life and not having things fall apart on me. The spring is always expensive. And I am making more money, but we are still treading water. What can I really afford to do? The reality of our situation is just that- treading water as we make our ways through the days. Should I bike my way to work and try to break out of this funk. Bike home from work to see if we can’t limit the amount we are using the CTA. We could see. What is a good bike route from home to work?

My head needs to be in a better place.

Up early

Limit expenses (on day to day things, so I don’t have to sweat the inevitable)

Limit drinking- this is an expense and something that takes energy rather than increasing energy reserve

Exercise more.

Use time better.

Stay on top of things.

Research future.

Watch less TV

Go to bed earlier.

Be ridiculous with writing.

Observe and absorb.

Engage and challenge.

Do things that elevate my sense of self and energy level.

Feel good about feeling good.

Accept your spirituality.

Acknowledge the genius of others.

Be Rolex at work.- Don’t fall into wasting time on the ipad on random things. Enter the meditation of sales. Don’t be afraid to take risks. Risks are what we take. They are the breath of life.

Be ridiculous with language.

Get Chinese in your mouth and not just eyes and ears.

Get Spanish in your mouth and not just your eyes and ears.

Get English in your mouth and not just in your eyes and ears.

Research language learning and mediation and hypnotism.

How do you fix a stutter…how do you fix second language brain blocks.

Accept boundaries and respect boundaries.

Encourage and bring good energy wherever you are. And that of course starts at home. You are not just home to recharge. You are home to energize- your daughter, your wife, etc.

I need a briefcase bag thing and a helmet.

06/13/2016

Work life balance. Feeling satisfied by the work that I do. Keeping my head above water. My spreading spare tire is a symbol of lack of balance. My lack of following through on my desires. I see the ideal and then I can’t get up. I see the ideal and then I can’t follow through. I see the ideal and then I can’t not drink eight drinks just sitting at home. Weird poos are my punishment. A sleepy head is my punishment in the morning when I should have the inspiration to get a foothold on life. Empty hands and empty head, I report to work and fall asleep instead.

**Achilles Heel**

2/24/2021

**Carelessnes; Wherewithal; lack of vision;**

I’d like to make my mistakes with a little more conviction. Good! You did it wrong! Now did it again. Wrong again. But with a little more conviction.

If I make a mistake, but I don’t tell anyone about it and I don’t make a big deal about it then it is almost like the mistake did not happen at all.

7