

survival +

For Catherine.
With thanks to Susie, Sabine S., Kathrin P., Timon and Luke.
English translation by Luke Tudge

Dramatis Personae

JUNIOR CONSULTANT
SENIOR CONSULTANT
OWNER OF THE AGENCY
THE CLEANER
CHILD
THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR
MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT

0:40 at the agency

SENIOR CONSULTANT I'll tell you straight up and honestly: This could be better. You're still missing that little subtle twist, the pinch of pep that will spice the whole thing up. Listen, I'll tell you the way it is: frankly, I just write better than you. Which is totally ok; I mean, you can probably do other things better instead, right?

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Um, so you mean as it is it's not quite polished yet?

SENIOR CONSULTANT I mean it as a positive criticism.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT So what should I do now?

SENIOR CONSULTANT Alright, I'll give you (another) positive criticism straight up: You need to go over it again, iron it out. As it is it's still a bit rough around the edges. As if you were a bit cack-handed or some sort of imbecile.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Yeah, I see it now as well. I just thought I'd do all that later. In my new draft on my computer I've already ironed it out a bit. (*a sort of a glimpse of something distant, serene, n o s t a l g i c. to be a child again*)

SENIOR CONSULTANT Disimproved it. Heh, yeah... So... what was the working title of the campaign again?

JUNIOR CONSULTANT "Bridges for the Media, and for Cattle"

SENIOR CONSULTANT Great. Nice and C A T C H Y. Was actually my idea, wasn't it? Sketch me out a quick cost estimate for first thing tomorrow and get a road map drawn up. You know what, I really think genius is multiform.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Oh right, yeah? Ok. (*whenever someone suddenly lands another success I find I have to check what age that person got successful at, at exactly what age and I find time slipping through my fingers I'm already so old and somehow I haven't really achieved anything and then when you're overtaken by somebody you're basically just that little bit more totally superfluous and I've already found grey hairs and wrinkles*)

SENIOR CONSULTANT Genius is really not reproducible. Inspiration on the other hand is contagious, like multiformity.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT ((but I'm just so uninspired although in theory I consider myself creative I feel like I'm drowning I'm so useless and I get bored so quickly and I have to masturbate all the time))

SENIOR CONSULTANT The Key Question is really: Who is actually the "Visio Genii" in this company? The old man just says: oh well, people come and go. Everyone is replaceable. That's my view too. But just swim a few lengths in the morning before work. Eat salad and get out into the fresh air. Do a couple of laps in the pool in the morning and afterwards you'll be like, totally ZEN. And every little fucker of a muscle that didn't want to hear from you before will guaranteed pull its weight for you, one move after the other. I guarantee you. If you're good. IF. YOU'RE. GOOD.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT To be honest, when I got up this morning I didn't really imagine it like that. But then I shook it off and I said to myself: "This is going to be a good day. Full fucking stop." Then I got out, just went for a run in the sun - 4.6 miles, 1 hour." Then I was like: "Deutsche Bahn? My arse!" Tonight I wanted to take a quick trip to the gym, then a banana and a Becks Gold and then bedtime. Then Sunday: Grandma's potatoes smothered in cream and it goes straight onto the hips. Haha, "Welcome to the world and sorry about the mess."

SENIOR CONSULTANT Haha, or as Slavoj said: "It's like buying stuff at Starbucks." Yeah, and that's exactly why you should vehemently oppose states, nations, borders. Without exploitation and oppression our quality of life wouldn't even be possible. It's all about one thing: you've got to deliver, and you've got to keep delivering if you want to get established in middle management. But what you're asking for is a concrete idea about how to improve the world; well what you need is what I always call the helicopter view. First get an overview, get a look at what the overall structures are, then you can decide whether it's time for napalm or for something sort of more constructive, right? Am I right? Basically what we want here is something striking, bold, CATCHY. That's what gets through. Like, really GETS THROUGH. Strip the fat pigs and drive them out of their penthouses and flog them through the streets. MAYBE? BE!

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Hmm. I find it, well, really unbelievably beautiful not to be perfect.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah, Captain my Captain and so on. My arse. You're such a dumbass.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT LOLROFL.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Just ask me again how it felt to sleep through... They even stole the MacBook from my flat. Ground floor.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Oh man! Ouch! Straight to the heart!

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah. That was quite a blow, I'm telling you.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT You're putting on a brave face though.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Kiss me you sexy beast.

Senior Consultant and Junior Consultant embrace, at first like two intimate friends, then they snog each other deeply like in a porn film.

Mind if I come in and clean a bit?

Enter OWNER OF THE AGENCY.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Oh you! Hah! Still working here! Very good, carry on. D'you read that in the BILD today? GERMANY IS DEPRESSED: ONE IN THREE EMPLOYEES ALREADY HIT BY BURNOUT.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Pfff, yeahahaha. Yeah, that's, you know, such a... yeah.

INHABER DER AGENTUR Pansies, parasites, fag-cadgers, wimps, fibbers, layabouts, fakers, scabs, vermin, losers, pests, whoopsies, snivelers, mongrels, wufters, lumps, dullards, big, fat wastes of space, namby-pamby, useless human specimens, stupid, baaing, bleating sheep, spineless, degenerate, poor, lost Germany. He should take a leaf out of the Jap's book, should the average German worker; look at how they managed in the 80s. Capitulated in the Second World War and then just forty years later, got the Americans b y t h e b a l l s. With discipline. With innovation. With endurance. WE. SERVE. JAPAN. Nobody ever got ill in Japan, people. Nobody got fucking burnout. Wake up! Wake up and smell the coffee my friends! No more Mr Nice Federal Republic-whats-yours-is-mine-is-ours-unity-and-justice-and-freedom-for-the-German-Fatherland, for fuck's sake.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah right, just what I meant.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY What. Exactly. Did. You. Mean?

SENIOR CONSULTANT ((*I hate you so much that I want to humiliate and kill you torture and slaughter torment hang draw quarter and slowly saw in half*)) That, um... the.. the, the doctors are really, you know, they're responsible for all this, as well, sort of.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY I see. That's what you think, is it? You just thought of that right here and now all on your own in this lovely office, in the middle of our dear federal republic, nestled in beautiful Europe, did you?

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah well, I...

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Yeah. Well I. Why don't you shut up now, eh? I mean, you can either speak our fair language half way intelligibly or you can just quietly listen. What do you think?

SENIOR CONSULTANT ((*slowly, leisurely roast on a spit, lightly seasoned*)) I'll just quietly listen.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Good. And who are you?

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Oh, yeah, I'm the junior consultant round here.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Fivestrengthsfiveweaknesses. Now.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT My five strengths: First, I guess I can express myself pretty well.

SENIOR CONSULTANT (*f u c k i n g l i t t l e s l i m y p i e c e o f s h i t*)

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Second, the clients tend to find me pretty friendly.

SENIOR CONSULTANT (*f u c k i n g l i t t l e f u c k i n g s l i m y p i e c e o f s h i t*)

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Third, I can look damn good when I want to, I would say.

SENIOR CONSULTANT (*f u c k i n g l i t t l e f u c k i n g s l i m y p i e c e o f s l i m y s h i t*)

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Fourth, I am punctiliously, punctually, fan-tucking-fastingly hard-working and I always have a smile ready at exactly the right moment.

SENIOR CONSULTANT (*f u c k i n g l i t t l e f u c k i n g s l i m y p i e c e o f s l i m i f e r o u s...*)

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Now weaknesses.

SENIOR CONSULTANT (*ohhhh yyyeeeee, thankkk goooooddd*)

JUNIOR CONSULTANT (*humiliated again and again and I'm so exhausted and I'm such a wreck that fear has become a totally normal part of my working life no the only totally normal part of my working life I'm covered in blistering acne and I find I panic and I can't breathe when my superiors or my colleagues talk to me and I've never really had a proper relationship and I've given up hoping that someone will ever love me again and I should never have left my home town and everybody here knows it and so I'm always the butt of jokes an easy target and to cap it all I come from southern Germany and I can't even speak proper German and everyone calls me Swabian and hates me and to cap all that I have rich parents as well and with their help I'm gentrifying everything and driving out the poor people and the immigrants from where everybody wants to live and most people just ignore me because I'm such a nobody and*

it's easy to ignore me since I'm nothing and since I hate myself and I just can't go on and I don't want to either))
Don't think I have any really.

Enter THE CLEANER with CHILD.

THE CLEANER Evening all. Mind if I come in and clean a bit?

OWNER OF THE AGENCY But of course not! A very good evening to you my dear woman! Do come in, we can all just shift over a bit, then you'll have more room, alright? Well hello there young man! How are we this morning?

CHILD Very well, thank you.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Can I help you? Here, my waste paper basket.

THE CLEANER Thank you.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Here, my chewing gum.

THE CLEANER Ah. Thank you.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Yes! Actually rather good, isn't it? To keep in touch with normal everyday people and to have a normal, everyday chat. AHHHHH! A sort of liberating redemption!

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah right, just what I was thinking. Flat hierarchies. They apply downwards as well as upwards.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT I can clean my own keyboard, don't worry, you don't need to do that right now. Thanks though.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY People, how lovely! I have just had one of those serene, blissful moments of revelation: that we can all get along so well if we just make the effort people! AND MY FRIENDS, look at that: Fantastic shoes, fantastic legs; this cleaning lady is living proof that motherhood can look fabulous and that children can be the best accessory. The sight of her inspires both pleasure and respect; she shows us that someone can juggle family, work, leisure and career, all with a wink and a smile.

The OWNER OF THE AGENCY grabs THE CLEANER. They dance. Waltzing at first but then wilder and wilder. They fall down. He lies on top of her and consumes her. The others are not really sure what to make of it.

Brain death and organ transplants:
New insights into the end of human life?

Enter THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR. He searches around for empty bottles.

CHILD Mum look, what's that bottle collector doing?

THE CLEANER That's your father. He's collecting used bottles to get the bottle deposit back from the supermarket.

CHILD Really? Why?

THE CLEANER Because otherwise we don't get enough money.

CHILD Really? Why?

THE CLEANER Because I don't earn enough, because your father can't work at the shipyard anymore and because the unemployment benefit on its own isn't enough.

CHILD Really? Why?

THE CLEANER Because I don't receive a guaranteed minimum wage and therefore I can be ruthlessly exploited, because the shipping company sacked your father and because he's been moved down from full unemployment benefit to basic welfare.

CHILD Really? Why?

THE CLEANER Because we can't really market ourselves. Because we can't reconceptualise our own lives as a self-made enterprise. Because again and again we are overtaken by new technologies. Because we simply get ignored. Because we aren't needed anymore.

CHILD Really? Why?

THE CLEANER Because our dear father in heaven wills it to be so.

CHILD Oh right. Give us a ciggy.

THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR In the train today I saw an advert just above the window: "Brain death and organ transplants: New insights into the end of human life?"

Stage hands cross the stage from right to left carrying a banner in front of THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR. It reads: "This bottle collector is brought to you by www.pfandgeben.de and www.pfand-gehoert-daneben.de."

THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR Take part in experimental studies! Easy money! Winking smiley! Call us on 01805 and so on. Then I went to my parents' place and there was a bit of a bust up. I'm schizophrenic. Spent quite a while in the clinic. Been clean now for ten years. Really just took early retirement. Or maybe early redundancy more like.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY, SENIOR CONSULTANT and JUNIOR CONSULTANT carry a much more professionally-designed banner from left to right. It reads: "This honest, down to Earth bottle collector is powered by www.pfandgeben.de, www.pfand-gehoert-daneben.de and Marlboro: MAYBE => BE".

CHILD Mum, give us a ciggy.

THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR I've come to think of myself more as an animal really. Though my motto isn't "Survival", it's "Survival plus." Nobody really gives a toss though. Yesterday I'd just parked the shopping trolley for a moment in the car park, with all the bottles from the night before. Came back and it was gone. Survival minus.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Hey, people. Man. Cute. That's so sad. *Straps on the guitar and sings falsetto:*

*This my excavation and today is Kumran
Everything that happens from now on
This is pouring rain
This is paralyzed*

*I keep throwing it down two-hundred at a time
It's hard to find it when you knew it
When your money's gone
And you're drunk as hell*

*On your back with your racks as the stacks are your load
In the back and the racks and the stacks of your load
In the back with your racks and you're un-stacking your load*

*Well I've been twisting to the sun and the moon
I needed to replace
The fountain in the front yard is rusted out
All my love was down
In a frozen ground*

*There's a black crow sitting across from me
His wiry legs are crossed
He is dangling my keys, he even fakes a toss
Whatever could it be
That has brought me to this loss?*

*On your back with your racks as the stacks are your load
In the back and the racks and the stacks of your load
In the back with your racks and you're un-stacking your load*

*This is not the sound of a new man or crispy realization
It's the sound of the unlocking and the lift away
Your love will be
Safe with me*

Beautiful, no? The story that bottle collecting person - YES, P E R S O N - just told really touched me. Man, I've got tears in my eyes and I think that's something you ought to be allowed to express from time to time. The world is like, really heavy sometimes, but also, as I was just saying, really amazingly beautiful! If we just make the effort and pull together we can make it if we want to. Each to his own. We've got TV, we've got radio and we've got railways. We've got automobiles, we've got jetplanes and we've got trees. We've got flowers, we've got animals and we've got the smartphone. We've got cats, we've got birds and we've got pashminas. We've got big beards, we've got 'irony' and we've got our dear friends with big, fat, steaming hearts.

THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR takes the guitar from the JUNIOR CONSULTANT, taking his time to unstrap it at great length, then smashes it slowly and clumsily on the ground. The SENIOR CONSULTANT and THE OWNER OF THE AGENCY watch and laugh, apparently hysterically and with great malice - but in fact completely silently. After a while, the stage hands walk hesitantly across the stage, looking a little out of it and carrying the banner past the furious BOTTLE COLLECTOR to show it to the audience again. The others don't really know what to make of it.

The CHILD lights himself up a cigarette.

as if I were scared or something

Enter MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT.

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT Sorry to disturb your meeting in here.

She sings out loud:

oh God oh God oh God

*I've probably just disturbed a mega important meeting here
and everybody's staring at me with their big wide open eyes
and they can surely see I'm really tired
and they must have noticed how I've aged recently
and that I'm totally out of my depth
and am struggling with a huge cellulite problem
and my insecurity makes me seem so insecure
and I'm sure I'm not thought of as anything more than slightly
attractive
and I'm really far too chubby*

ALL THE MEN *respond as a Gregorian chorus:*

oh God oh God oh God

*just look at that cracking pair of tits she has inside her
blouse
imagine if right here and now she just unbuttoned and let them
loose
let her great big udders just hang out
and we all got our dicks out
and then she got down and sucked us off one by one
and then we could all have a go and fill her every hole
and then to finish we could cover her face in cum
oh God that would be great
oh God that would be great*

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Yes my dear? Get on with it, come on. As you can see we've an important, um, strategic meeting going on here.

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT Ah, aha, um sorry again, really sorry, but the anarchists are downstairs in the lobby and they would like to inform you that this agency is now under occupation. Okay?

OWNER OF THE AGENCY The anarchists? What do they want?

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT They say they want to dipossess you, tear the clothes off your body and whip you through the streets like a pig.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Oh right, aha. Hahaha. Excellent. Thank you. You there!

SENIOR CONSULTANT Who, me?

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Go downstairs and check these people out. Maybe we can tease something out of them. A trend. A code. What makes them tick? What are their core characteristics? What are their dynamics as a target group and where are they heading? How can we get through to them? Grab them by the balls! How can we take their message, their style, their coolness, their hipness, and turn it into cash? Cappiche?

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yup.
exits

JUNIOR CONSULTANT *(so unfair he didn't give me the mission well he can just shove his mission right up his arse I'm out of here I don't need this job that badly anyway as if I were stupid or something or as if I were scared or something or maybe I am actually oh God)*

OWNER OF THE AGENCY You there!

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Yes! Sir!

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Lead these good folks here down to the bunker. I'll be right with you.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT But sir, we can't just leave you here...

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Shut up you arse and go.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Yes! Sir!

He and all the others exit except the SENIOR CONSULTANT and the OWNER OF THE AGENCY. The SENIOR CONSULTANT is still looking down the stairwell to see what the anarchists are up to.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY So, report. Give. NOW.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Oh right, well it's the usual mix of smelly anarchists, grizzled old punks, skinny little indie mummy's boys, boring leftists, worn out old East Germans, beered-up pirates and squawking, furious, poor victimised citizens. And they all want your head.

Occasional angry blasts on a vuvuzela can be heard from below.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Oh right.

Pause.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yup.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY How are your kids?

SENIOR CONSULTANT Hm? Oh them... well no I haven't got any.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Oh. Lucky you. Haha.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY and SENIOR CONSULTANT both laugh in a fake, office-humour sort of a way, their faces shining with terrible, abysmal boredom.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Oh well. Yawn. Time to clock off I suppose.

Come here, let me give you a hug

*Discreet military drum roll announces the entry of the
MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT, followed by the others.*

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT Sir.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Hm?

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT Our Dresden branch have just called.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Uhu. And? What do our dear comrades in
the east want? Haha.

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT Beginning at 7 o'clock local time the
NPD have occupied the local parliament in Saxony and declared
a new Führer.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Hm?

SENIOR CONSULTANT Gloria!

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT A certain Apple.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Hm?

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT A man called Apple has just appeared on
the balcony of the Saxon parliament and proclaimed the Fourth
Reich before declaring himself the new Führer of Germany,
reports the Dresden branch. The message has just been sent out
on national television.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Gloria!

OWNER OF THE AGENCY A man called Apple has just appeared on
the balcony of the Saxon parliament and proclaimed the Fourth
Reich before declaring himself the new Führer of Germany,
reports the Dresden branch. The message has just been sent out
on national television, says our management assistant. From
the balcony of the Saxon parliament. An Apple. For Germany.
It's that simple. Quite simple. Ah.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Gloria!

JUNIOR CONSULTANT (*ha is this good or bad now I don't really
know what this is all about and what position I should take
who is this Apple what is this and why is the senior
consultant shouting gloria always new positions new postures I
always have to keep changing and switching and I don't want*

them to find out I've absolutely no idea what this is all about so I guess I'll say nothing to begin with and just listen maybe I'll learn something)) GLORIA!

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Apple...Apple...The name has to go.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY The man can't be called Apple, it just won't do, not if he wants to be our new Führer. Hitler wasn't called 'Melon', was he? He was called Hitler.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Oh God, I see huge potential here: National Socialism finally fit for civilised company again. Oh God. We could make an absolute fortune out of this, milk this cash cow for all she's worth. Kickstart a career in politics.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Apple, Apple. The name has got to go. The guy just can't be called Apple, not if he wants to be Führer. Apple. Makes me think of Steve Jobs.

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Steve Jobs! Saviour of business marketing communications, God of digital development. From basement nerd to parting the sands of the Sinai desert. This Apple can keep the name Apple! He can lose twenty kilos. He can wear frameless glasses and polo neck jumpers. Digital surveillance! Keep the international community happy with superficial political correctness, we'll do a Benetton first, a nice subtle start, just until the Wehrmacht is ready for Blitzkrieg again and then final, absolute victory! God I'm the new Goebbels! It's all so clear! The new Führer will be managed by a PR agency! WE are that PR agency! I am that PR agency!

SENIOR CONSULTANT Gloria!

OWNER OF THE AGENCY If that man says 'Gloria' one more time he will be shot immediately.

SENIOR CONSULTANT Oh, hey sorry, that was, you know, I just wanted to show that I, you know...

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Alright don't shit your pants man! We're not the Gestapo, hahaha!

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah, haha, just what I was about to say.

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Hmm. We could perhaps just rework the DG Enlargement Communications contract for the European Commission a bit - The objective is still expansion to the east, after all. We don't need to reinvent the wheel. I bit of copy-paste, a couple of mood boards for the target group analysis; they'll come in handy for the selection criteria later anyway. Title: "Yes we can! It's finally here - New Greater Germany 2015: Enlargement through Europe and Beyond."

Pause.

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Excellent work young man! Very good! What inspiration people! Bloody hell, well done! You! I promote you forthwith from Junior Consultant to Senior Consultant!

SENIOR CONSULTANT Yeah, right on. My opinion exactly; I think it's a genius idea - really, really just very good. Really. I am really, totally honestly very happy for you, you've earned it. And sorry if I was sometimes a bit of a dickhead, I meant it in the best way, as a positive thing for your own personal development. And now look at you! Come here, let me give you a hug.

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT Amazing. I didn't totally understand all the details, like what your idea's about and stuff; it's more on the concept side and not in the service field. But I think you're looking really good today, and of course you're a really intelligent guy anyway, and witty and really muscular - at least you seem really muscular - and I'm actually kind of secretly in love with you and I often have sexual fantasies about you. Haha. Listen to me waffling on!

THE CLEANER I think you're really brave. You've got that working class charm, and in the middle of all your masculinity (I bet you're hung like a donkey, and anyway no matter if you aren't) you've got lovely young lady's almond eyes. So if you feel like you need to relax in the evening after a hard day in the office I can come by after work and give you a blow job.

THE BOTTLE COLLECTOR Laddie. You're not my son, but in the grotty old bar where we real men drink real, honest beer right through the dark and dingy Kreuzberg nights until the early hours, and where coarse but friendly humour binds us comrades together, you will always be welcome. As a true brother.

CHILD Ciggy?

JUNIOR CONSULTANT Thanks you guys. You're too kind. ((*this is the happiest moment in my whole life I think I'd like to cry or maybe just die right now or better die crying*))

OWNER OF THE AGENCY Righto, happy ending, all's well. Heil
Apple!

ALL Heil Apple!