

# **UNDER ICE** **(Unter Eis)**

Falk Richter

Translated by David Tushingham



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## *Characters*

PAUL NIEMAND, *a consultant between 40 and 50*

CHARLIE SUNSHINE, *consultant, around 35*

AURELIUS GLASNIP, *consultant, around 28*

A CHILD – *a boy of between 9 and 13*

## *Space*

*A large, anonymous conference hall. The characters sit behind a large, long table with microphones like a press conference or a business presentation. Everything should encourage the impression that their entire lives are spent in this space, they never escape from here, they have been installed permanently.*

*My thanks to the Berlin filmmaker Marc Bauder and his excellent documentary “Grow or Go”, which provided a great source of inspiration for the consultancy scenes in my play and the characters’ professional jargon.*

# 1

## PAUL NIEMAND – AT THE OTHER END WAS THE SKY

PAUL NIEMAND

At the other end was the sky, crashing into the horizon.  
And here was I, with a head too heavy.  
Between us, the field.  
I started running.  
I ran and ran.  
I wanted to crash into the sky at the other end.  
I wanted to swim in a sea of molecules.  
Everything in my path would part and let me through.  
I screamed at the sun.

But it didn't hear me.  
The sun didn't hear me.  
The universe was silent.  
The universe hadn't even noticed I was there.

But I was there, I was there, wasn't I?

I was a little boy under the sun  
and I talked in a thousand voices  
because no one wanted to be with me,  
nobody wanted to play with me.  
So *I* was all these people I needed to survive.  
I wasn't alone any more I was the whole world, everything I needed,  
and I talked to myself and I fought with myself  
and I was all the people and all the ideas,  
I was everything!

Planes taking off and landing behind the house:  
the runway,  
day and night,  
day and night the noise  
everything was vibrating,  
everything was really dark,  
dark wooden panelling,  
dark walls, letting in no light,  
a hatch between the kitchen and the living room, a microwave,  
frozen food, my mother, my father, a prefab.  
It was always dark  
they'd forgotten to put in enough windows,

somewhere in the darkness, my mother, my sister, my father, indistinct,  
hardly recognisable.

My mother plods downstairs to the freezer, takes something out, puts it in the  
microwave, presses a button, watches the plate go round and round, waits, ping,  
puts it on the table and disappears back into the darkness,  
I looked through the door, there was a little spy hole in there, and saw my father  
over on the runway, nervous, anxious on that tiny airfield

It was his job to guide the planes onto the landing strip, but whenever they got  
close, he'd get nervous, flustered, he forgot everything, he just wasn't very  
good, he couldn't do it, he'd learned it all then forgotten it again, even on the  
training course he was one of the worst, he was the worst, he got the signals  
mixed up, (minor cut) the planes would come down with a loud crash every time  
or they landed on the wrong runway, my father smiled anxiously, he was  
embarrassed, he wanted to get away from here but he didn't know how, this was  
a place nobody wanted to be, it was always dark here, and always cold, (minor  
cut) they couldn't find anyone to take his job, he had to go for retraining almost  
every month, but it didn't help, he was afraid of the planes, afraid of the sound  
of the engines, he put his hands over his ears every time a plane landed,  
when they accelerated over his head, he'd shut his eyes and hum softly to  
himself.

Frozen solid under the ice

snow

cold

cold cold cold ice ice ice

everything's covered in ice, nothing moves, it's all still, the shock of the cold,  
frozen cold

deep frozen frozen food cold cold everything's buried

under the ice, buried under ice, a deep blanket of ice, a deep, deep blanket of ice

cold cold dark loud crackling ice

break go on break!

I slammed the doors shut behind the sky behind the sun the field the universe

I'd run so far that I ran into something

I could hear a crash

I heard myself falling and something snapped inside me

A loud noise, suddenly my heart tore apart - I could hear it tearing  
then a door opened. I'd arrived: The world was in pieces!

This tearing, I thought,  
this noise,

in the night, when everyone's sleeping,  
only I'm lying awake  
listening to my heart, tearing, slowly, a terrible sound,  
and this confused mother and confused father,  
these fearful, lonely people, these confused, uncertain people,  
bumbling through their lives,  
uncertain, powerless,  
falling, getting up again, falling, getting up again, never moving on,  
they can't see me  
they can't hear me  
they're frozen solid UNDER THE ICE  
the only reason they had a son is because it's what you do,  
they don't love me and that's why I'll always run and hurry and look and search  
and crash and fall and break and scream.

I can remember long walks through the deep frozen forest, before that we'd  
been watching television and my parents were telling each other what they'd  
both been watching, they replayed it all,  
they told each other all over again what we'd all just seen  
every picture got a sentence  
time froze completely, we didn't make any progress, our thoughts stood still.  
Frozen stiff cold cold deep frozen standstill

I fell back, I wanted to walk alone, I enjoyed the moment when my parents  
disappeared over the horizon, I was alone, at last.

Then it grew dark and big and cold and huge: Everything was grey, November,  
me alone and around me: the rest of the world! This moment frozen. Inside me.  
Ever since.

My parents standing on a frozen lake with planes behind them taking off and  
landing.

Slowly I ran back to their side,

They hadn't noticed I'd gone: they hadn't even noticed, they just carried on  
talking,

If I'm not there, no-one notices.

(minor cut)

The universe hasn't even noticed that I exist!

“You don’t exist! You don’t exist! You’re not here!” I heard it shouting in the night.

And the others didn’t hear me  
didn’t hear me running through the house,  
at night,  
up and down stairs,  
again and again,  
up and down,  
till I collapsed,  
got up again,  
carried on,  
up and down  
louder and louder,  
stumbled,  
fell,  
threw myself down on the kitchen floor,  
banged my head on the lino,  
for hours,  
they didn’t hear it,  
they didn’t want to hear it,  
CAN YOU HEAR ME CAN NOBODY HERE HEAR ME all asleep  
all asleep  
they didn’t want to hear me,

They were afraid, afraid of me,

My colourless little sister,  
my stern, confused mother,  
my terrible absent father,  
you sleep, go on sleep,  
then I’ll just live this life ALONE  
then I’ll be on this earth WITHOUT YOU.

Is anyone there? Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? Can anybody hear me?

Cries from under the ice  
everything freezes  
my words freeze as I speak  
time freezes as I’m living it, trying to use it up, it stands still, the hours are all  
the same, they don’t march on, they freeze solid, and here I am, in the ice, not  
getting anywhere.  
Paul Niemand, too old to start again, too young to retire, in a few years’ time  
it’ll all be over,

in a couple of years I'll be one of those men, who wear those saggy corduroy trousers and talk nonsense on the stairs while they're carrying out the rubbish, who no-one listens to because what they're saying doesn't matter anyway, who people always agree with and say yeah yeah and walk on, one of those men who don't really get in the way because it hardly matters whether they're there or not, (minor cut) I WANT SOMEONE TO HEAR ME I've got to get out of here, I've got to get out now, stumbled and fell, Gate 1, Gate 2, the stairs, up and down, in my parents' house, stumbled, fell, got up again.

Is anyone there? Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? Can anybody hear me?

All this shouting and running and dashing and crashing and falling, it all caught up with me again, at airports, in the lounges, in the control rooms, while I was checked and inspected and x-rayed and PROCESSED and flew on and searched and arrived and had to leave again right away

- Mr Niemand, please proceed to immediate boarding

No, I'm staying here.

- Paul Niemand, paging passenger Paul Niemand

I'm not moving

- Mr Niemand, please proceed to Gate 17

Let them all wait

- We are paging Paul Niemand

- paging passenger Paul Niemand

ran through the house and opened the door to my parents' room and saw them sleeping and went right up close and looked into their faces, looked into my parents' faces

Nothing

no emotion

nothing at all

nothing

And thought what I always think when I risk gazing into someone else's eyes  
You don't interest me, to me you don't exist  
My mother opens her eyes, we look at each other



- Mr Niemand, please come forward now  
we are waiting for you  
we need you for immediate take off

Who are these people?  
What do they want from me?  
Did I make them all up?  
Are they dead?

I look at them and I don't recognize anything, not me, not anyone else, no world, no thoughts, no emotions, no people, I don't care whether they're alive or not. Are they alive? I don't know, no idea, I don't care either, nobody, nothing

- This is your final call

- We are paging passenger Paul Niemand

At the airport I'm always the last one to go to the Gate, I like that moment, when everyone's got to wait for me, i enjoy that moment, when my name is echoing from all the loudspeakers

PAUL NIEMAND  
PAUL NIEMAND

And these men next to me are starting to get nervous because they're going to be late,

PAUL NIEMAND  
PAUL NIEMAND

Because they're all afraid,

CALLING PAUL NIEMAND

Walking very slowly I PASS Gate, Gate 1, Gate 2, Gate 3, Gate 4, I turn around and look at the displays in the shops for a while, Gate 5, Gate 6, Gate 7, they're waiting for me, I know they are, it's too much trouble offloading my bag, Gate 8, Gate 9, Gate 10, now I turn round once more, sit back down again

PAUL NIEMAND  
PAUL NIEMAND YOU ARE URGENTLY REQUESTED TO GATE 17

They're all going to be late,  
I've stopped running,

If I'm not there, everyone notices.

## 2

### CORE VALUES

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Manage risks

AURELIUS GLASNIP Create openings

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Operate outside the box

AURELIUS GLASNIP Rollout into new markets

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Energize others with blue sky thinking

AURELIUS GLASNIP Demonstrate motivation, accept new tasks, learn new skills

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Push the envelope 24/7

AURELIUS GLASNIP A living paradigm for the whole team

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Strive constantly to optimize working conditions, products, services, and your own performance

AURELIUS GLASNIP Appreciate that time is our most precious commodity

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Be sensitive to others' time issues

AURELIUS GLASNIP Give the team appropriate, concise and constructive feedback at all times without waiting to be asked

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Never withhold information

AURELIUS GLASNIP Use sentences that charge the listener with enthusiasm

PAUL NIEMAND We used to have this calorie counter my mother stuck it to the fridge and every time I wanted to take something out of there I had to recite the whole list out loud – now I can't forget them, they're in my head and now every time I open a fridge anywhere in the world, in a flat, in a hotel room, I always think

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Make the client the hero of his own personal success story

AURELIUS GLASNIP Be creative, storyboard your pitch to make the client hungry to know what happens next. Consulting means adventure, it means excitement, it means new opportunities, it means the client feeling now they're alive.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Never forget: The client is the patient and you're the doctor. If you don't have the answer, say something that sounds like an answer, throw together a couple of standard concepts, they always grab people, stay spontaneous

AURELIUS GLASNIP Consulting means healing, it means being able to make a fresh start, it means wow, it means go for it.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Being able to take on new challenges in a fresh and open manner at all times

AURELIUS GLASNIP Keep learning

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Never stay still

AURELIUS GLASNIP Come to all market developments with an open and innovative headset

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Learn to love the market as your closest and most trusted partner

AURELIUS GLASNIP You've got to regard what destroys you, as a partner that can help you

CHARLIE SUNSHINE It helps you come to terms with a system that you'd never understand otherwise

AURELIUS GLASNIP Open to new information

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Open for new tasks

AURELIUS GLASNIP Constantly rolling back your own boundaries

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Offering solutions before the problem can be fully articulated

AURELIUS GLASNIP Never stand still, never look back, free yourself from values that aren't consistent with market demands

**CHARLIE SUNSHINE** As a successful partner/manager you've got to win over key members of the client team. This requires an interesting mix of intelligence, charisma and confidence. In the ideal scenario, the client thinks the consultant is his smart friend, who's got a much faster and firmer grip on the situation than he has. So impress the client occasionally with a few bits of mental gymnastics, imaginative solutions to problems etc. At the same time the client shouldn't think the consultant arrogant. So every now and then you should let the client bore on proudly about his most recent golf trip, without giving the slightest indication that you know what he's talking about.

**AURELIUS GLASNIP** The client has to think, really sharp guy, knows his stuff but he's still a decent bloke.

### 3

#### THE LION KING

PAUL NIEMAND: At OUTSOURCING UNLIMITED the first company I applied to, during the BOOTCAMP phase – the training course for new recruits or “rookies” as they called us, after a whole series of interviews, case studies and outdoor activities, like having to set up a portable office, blindfold, in an airport lounge, there was a big farewell dinner with all the company employees and all the rookies and the management decided everyone had to act out highlights from the musical THE LION KING.

I didn't want to  
I didn't want to do it  
I found it embarrassing,

But we were being assessed on team spirit and personal effectiveness and being given marks for sociability – if you didn't join in or you weren't really funny, you just wouldn't make it into the next round, or the next project you get will be a level below what you'd actually been hoping for, as a kind of punishment or warning, you might get sent to Dresden or Dortmund even though you'd actually been pencilled in for London or Tokyo

–  
Betty from bookkeeping, whose real name's Barbara, played a giraffe and I was a rhinoceros that got taken down by three hyenas from the Finance Control Team –

Africa was breadth and soul  
in Africa man is truly man and connected to nature in the most intimate way, we had to sing a duet about it, while we were both dying, it brought us together, we ran home drunk, hand in hand, fell over, lay on the ground, kissed briefly, ran a bit further, in front of my apartment building she collapsed and was sick in the canal, I still had my rhino armour on, I bent down over her and laughed, she undid my flies, took out my cock, then suddenly keeled over backwards and went to sleep,  
I stared at her, stared at the canal,  
cold  
it started snowing  
silence  
suddenly a window opened, I could hear shouting,  
a man and a woman having a serious row  
suddenly a cat comes flying out of the window,  
the man's got hold of the cat by the tail and swings it in a high arc towards the canal,  
the cat sticks out all fours,

fear in its face, trying to save itself but it has nothing to hold onto, it's in freefall, it's so cold outside, it's snowing, it's freezing, everything slows down, the cat looks at me, like it's looking for help, I look back, I can't help you, I'm in an equally bad way, and it flies panic-stricken towards the slowly freezing surface of the canal, breaks through, stops a few centimetres under the ice with an expression of extreme horror, of fear and desperation, it stays there freezing slowly, twitches for a few minutes or hours, I don't know, and dies, I watch fascinated as the cat freezes solid, freezes stiff in its deathly fear, I stand there, put my cock away again, completely forgotten about that, and go upstairs to my apartment, it's cold, I turn on the tv  
applause

I fall asleep  
Betty's still by the canal  
under one of the surveillance cameras  
that cover the entire company compound  
including the apartment blocks  
the next day we were both asked to seek alternative employment outside the company  
our Africa duet wasn't convincing, in the management's eyes, there had been a clearly discernible ironic undertone to our performances, and that really wasn't the objective:  
irony is not the objective, sorry, and we could have practiced, in secret at least, and another thing: they had the videos of us lying drunk by the canal, trying and failing to have sex and almost freezing to death, they'd graded them that night – personal effectiveness zero per cent

## 4

### CONSULTATION 1 – CLEAR REJECT

**CHARLIE SUNSHINE** Er- on the analytical side you've not given me enough structure. In contrast to your cv there was a certain structure missing and that's what got you into trouble.

You made one or two miscalculations, had a couple of problems – estimated hourly earnings, payroll numbers . There was one creative task: how can I translate workforce morale into an effect on the bottom line, where you didn't really get any creative juices flowing. Overall, you're underachieving analytically. On the plus side, I gave you a very good rating for personal effectiveness. You come across as really substantial. You speak clearly, openly.

I don't get the impression that you're hiding anything from me.

You come across nice and direct, straightforward. The only issue that I've got there, I couldn't see any bite, any aggression, the ability to grab an issue by the balls. That's ultimately the dimension that I've marked down on the personality profile, you're a bit too steady for me, You're not really incisive in attack mode. I can't really detect to what extent you embody the entrepreneurial spirit. You say the right things, but I'm not really seeing it actioned or in your cv. Overall I've scored you at 40 per cent which puts you under the cut-line.

**AURELIUS GLASNIP** I've focussed on a case study of the interviews about industry consolidation. You did very well on the analytical side. As I'd expect from someone with a management degree. On the structural side I felt you didn't always push the questioning as far as it could go.

I missed the curiosity, sticking your nose in. What's going on here, what's behind the success here, why are some businesses more successful than others? I would have expected more from someone who's got to get to the bottom of things, you didn't show any bite.

On the communication side, I agree with you completely, he's very eloquent, his languages are very sound. Though he doesn't really give the impression he wants to get straight to the core of the problem

On the subject of pressure – when you are put under pressure I'd say you deal with it very well, but you tend to ignore it. You never get really charged.

As far as your personality goes overall, I couldn't quite tell whether you've got a genuinely entrepreneurial mindset. That's because you're not really incisive, you've not got that bite, in conversation, you're quite risk-averse. If someone's really got that entrepreneurial gene, then he's going to drive things forward faster, force the issue. That's why a good impression doesn't do it for me. I've scored you at 45 per cent and would therefore say we ought to reject you.

**PAUL NIEMAND** I've got the same question marks – particularly on the analytical side: structural ability shows weaknesses and builds a logical



argument in the case study involving fundamental points; I only got part of that. And that's why I – despite my personal effectiveness, which is good - I'd put myself under the line on 45 per cent and what I'm going to do is hold on to this feedback and concentrate on using it as a foundation from which I can take my personal and career development forward.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE You've got to show that you want to find the root of the problem. With the right enthusiasm, curiosity. You've got to be dissatisfied, the adrenaline's got to get flowing, you've got to find the optimum solution. And that means; an enduring competitive advantage for the client, the client has got to believe in you.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Let's talk about your Tool-Box. Always keep three or four basic ideas ready to go in the back of your head, just to get yourself through the first three or four minutes and establish a clear structure in your mind. It would definitely have helped if you could have said this is an issue that affects costs on one side and turnover on the other.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE But we do say he's got a clear strong point in the area of Personal Effectiveness. You do come across well... that jumpstarted with a couple of espressos, and you'll be fine.

## 5

### IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT GOING THAT EXTRA MILE

CHARLIE SUNSHINE It's always about going that extra mile, standing still is going backwards because everyone else isn't going to just stand still, everyone is going to carry on going forward.

AURELIUS GLASNIP It's got a lot to do with passion and that's hopefully wired in genetically. It's about: is this a thinking person, have they got substance, (minor cut) how are they in a team context, how do they deal with crises and how extreme is their learning curve.

PAUL NIEMAND Today I went shopping and fell into a freezer I was lying there for two hours  
it was nice  
it reminded me of home  
I could finally grab a few moments sleep

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Don't confuse your audience with too much information, have a concept, make the client the hero of your narrative.

AURELIUS GLASNIP You've got to imagine you're on a river, everything's constantly flowing and if I stand still, then everything is going to pass you by. The river carries on flowing, you've got to keep flowing with it or else you'll be left behind. Technology keeps developing, there are new ideas, new approaches, and if you just stay where you are, then those advances pass you by.

PAUL NIEMAND

I parked my car somewhere and I don't know where, it's somewhere, somewhere I'm not, it's there in the ice somewhere frozen stiff, it's freezing, it's driving around without me, looking for a parking space without me in the snow, every morning I look for it and can't find it, I can't remember where I left it, it's still there now, what's it doing?

What's it doing there now without me? All alone?

What's it doing there?

I'm cold,

I've left my warm coat somewhere too in some hotel in some office in some meeting, I don't know any more, it's hanging there somewhere, hanging there where I'm not, it's just hanging around somewhere now, all alone, without me, just like my car, my warm coat, my car, my warm coat, I'm cold, I can't find it any more

they're the first things to go missing

I can't concentrate any more

Where is it? What's it doing there? It's driving round without me, trying to find a parking space, looking and looking and not finding one, driving round without me, looking for something it can't find

it's all gone, everything's getting away from me, everything's going, everything's gone, I can't find anything any more, nothing, nobody, all that's left now are the tv and the aquarium.

(Few lines cut)

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Strategy means targeting enduring economic advantages, it means defining a brand new position but still with reference to the competition, a position which is different and which promises an enduring advantage. When this advantage eventually disappears, then it means working out another new one and defending it

AURELIUS GLASNIP To do that, to be a consultant to a company, to develop strategies like that, you need a particular profile.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Competencies with a strong analytical basis

AURELIUS GLASNIP Repeatedly being able to grasp new and highly complex questions often on the basis of incomplete information

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Internationalism is key

AURELIUS GLASNIP Build on your core competencies

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Being goal-centred in building one's own career path

AURELIUS GLASNIP And of course the ability to do people very well

CHARLIE SUNSHINE To understand them above all

AURELIUS GLASNIP That is, not just the facts

CHARLIE SUNSHINE But their personality, their motives, and the political geography inside a company, in order to be able to work together with the client teams on problem solving and delivery

AURELIUS GLASNIP That also means – back to the point about economic advantages – you've got to be in a position to see questions in a fresh light, from new perspectives

CHARLIE SUNSHINE You can put all that under the heading Creativity

AURELIUS GLASNIP But it's also got a lot to do with the whole mental flexibility thing

CHARLIE SUNSHINE I say client-centred and not opinion-centred – facts, facts, facts and zero opinions, that's what's going to save your ass

PAUL NIEMAND

Hello? Can anyone hear me?

I'm too quiet

Or have I just been brought to the wrong place here?

The only post I got this Christmas was from my financial adviser Tom, apart from that nothing, empty

he'd made a real effort and even made his own card, everything written by hand

he'd even drawn something using different coloured felt pens

A peaceful Christmas and a healthy, creative, successful and fulfilled 2006 from Tom

healthy, creative, successful and fulfilled, he's lost it

he wants my money for his fucking worthless media funds, which have already eaten up half my savings, the bastard,

the only one to think of me is this share shark who sends me

hand drawn Christmas cards

PAUL NIEMAND PLEASE PASSENGER PAUL NIEMAND

WE ARE PAGING PASSENGER PAUL NIEMAND

Gate 11, Gate 12, Gate 13,

let them call me

they won't like it when I arrive where I'm going

I've got the list of names with me and I'm taking it to the office that's being closed tomorrow

Gate 14, Gate 15, Gate 16,

they're all waiting for me to board

they don't know that tomorrow they'll all be gone, they're all still scurrying

happily through the Business Lounge collecting their bonus miles, they're sitting

there with their laptops working on their presentations, all keeping watchful eyes on each other, in their flattened hierarchies, working to put as many people as

possible out on the streets, so they attack each other and rightsize each other

away until there's nobody left, the company works practically without any

employees, everything's been delegated, everything's been outsourced, and only

the CEO himself is left somewhere writing the occasional email to one of his

partner companies, the share price points towards infinity and the shareholders,

pensioners most of them who've emigrated to Florida, offload their shares at a

vast profit, buy another couple of houses and then the company is closed down because the profit margins can no longer be increased.

Tomorrow you'll be gone  
all of you

I've got the list of names here and you're all on it.

All resources which have become superfluous  
there are people no one needs any more  
and there are countries no one needs any more, there are whole continents  
nobody needs, Africa for example – we don't need that any more, we only need  
it a backdrop for musicals. And the people we don't need, we can ship them off  
to our t.v. shows, they can sit there and clap all day long, at least there they've  
got something to do.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Ultimately we're advisers, we represent „pure  
knowledge“, we represent economic logic. Fact-centred not opinion-centred.  
We collate information. Make suggestions. The decisions are still made by our  
clients' boards. We don't make the decisions. Why are some companies more  
successful than others? We've got to let some people go, sometimes there's no  
alternative. Is that a problem? If we didn't let them go, then maybe soon the  
whole company would go bankrupt and then everyone would be out of a job and  
that wouldn't have helped anybody. Ultimately the whole of society benefits  
from our work, because when the economy is healthy, everyone is healthy,  
that's been proved scientifically. We have to fire people, ultimately it's good  
for everyone.

PAUL NIEMAND

At school we used to have this game, two teams got picked, and someone had to  
go in goal and then everyone would shoot like mad at the goal, you're in goal,  
no I don't want to, you're in, go on, shut up and get in there, you'd always get  
hit and then continually straight in the face for hours, nobody even tried to score  
goals any more, they were all aiming straight in the goalie's face, even the coach  
shot at his face, your reaction time leaves something to be desired, faster, my  
friend, faster, your performance is unsatisfactory, faster...

## 6

### CHARLIE SUNSHINE – ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

CHARLIE SUNSHINE There's a really sophisticated system of assessment, appraisal and feedback because for us it's a given that our co-workers want and have to be part of an ongoing development process, and the way that this works is that for every consultant there are four mentors, who keep an eye on his or her work and back him or her up in thought and deed, and then there are two further mentors, the covert monitors we call them, who monitor his or her performance undercover, that means he or she doesn't know who they are, they could be anyone, he doesn't know, what's important to us is that both the mentors and the covert monitors are all themselves active as consultants on projects and are only devoting part of the working hours to their monitoring duties, the network of mentor and agents has now become so widespread that I think we can say practically every co-worker is now also employed as a covert agent, though of course this is a matter of total secrecy in terms of which of their co-workers they are monitoring, this could be for a period of six weeks, sometimes it might last several years, the monitor delivers their intelligence on the co-worker they have been observing in the form of a confidential dossier addressed to that co-worker's mentor who then discusses specific points with the consultant and recommends appropriate training or booster courses to enable him or her to work on their weaknesses and improve their overall performance, on rare occasions they can even refer the matter to the directorate and where necessary alert them, tell them that this is someone who requires particular attention, a specialist needs to take care of them. We expect all our co-workers to offer 300% excellence in the area of quality, that means continually learning new skills, keeping abreast of the latest market developments, it also means putting in that bit extra without being asked, and suggesting solutions before the others realise there's a problem, it means too that their drive has to be constantly visible, their desire, I want to perform, I want to be the best, I can't sleep if I've not managed to provide my clients with the optimum solution, this permanent superfast jump started high bandwidth delivery thing, that I put the rest of my life on hold for, so that when it really matters, I can go all out on the attack and achieve my objective in every battle, and that means: that's it, an enduring competitive advantage for the client and if I can't achieve that any more, if I start to feel there's something here inside me, fatigue let's call it, a more frequent desire for rest, then you've got to draw your own conclusions and say, right, ok, I'm going to go and seek alternative employment, it often happens, past forty, desires keep cropping up more regularly, I want to see my wife for more than two hours this weekend, I want to drive my son to football training this afternoon, the moment you feel anything like that, you should quit, stop being dead weight for the company, by that stage you should have earned so much money, that you can take some time out or what do I know take some low pressure job in the public sector or on the board of a rail company or in politics

as an adviser, something like that, but if that isn't the case that a co-worker comes forward voluntarily and says I can't go on, send me away, then the monitors have got to intervene, a lot of co-workers present a flawless mask of efficiency on the outside, they seem fit, they're always last to leave the office, everyone thinks, well he may be forty-two but he's got everything under control and he's enjoying himself, but then if you look more closely, you'll see, the returns are falling off, the efficiency curve is nosediving and in the evening he's so knackered he doesn't go on with the others for a game of squash or have a beer together with everyone in the hotel going through the lists for the next day, he's got to go, a lot of these old guys for example just sit around the office at night doing nothing at all, they just want to be SEEN, they want people to see, alright, he's still there, it's half past two and he's still there but they just sit there, drifting, thinking about I don't know their childhood, their parents, or what they should do now with the thirty years they've got left, what can you do, lacking strength and lacking vision, they're sitting there like pale copies of their former selves, (minor cut) that's why we've got the monitors, but, this sounds pretty brutal, but ultimately it's in the interest of the entire economy, I'd say, because it's not in anyone's interests to have poor returns and businesses floundering because then the first things to get cut will be the arts and health and then everyone'll be up in arms again. Why should people be left in posts forever that they basically CAN'T discharge effectively any more, even if they want to, we don't need them sitting around doing nothing, it's inhumane, but some of them are so stubborn, obviously, they're afraid, what are they going to do, the job's a drug, I mean if I'd been taking cocaine for twenty years and suddenly I was told from now on it's peppermint tea, who's going to do that, I'd be frightened, so that's why we have training to prepare them, we don't just chuck older co-workers out straight away, we phase them out gradually, in practice what that means is we give them fewer and fewer responsibilities, assign them to smaller and smaller projects, so in their prime they would be based in New York and at the same time be shuttling back and forth between Paris and Tokyo, then you let them down gradually, London – Berlin - Budapest – Dublin - Lille – Manchester – Stoke-on-Trent – Fürstenfeldbruck – Cork – it's a kind of euthanasia, I'd say, letting them depart in dignity – by the time they get to Manchester at the latest they know it's time to get their pension sorted out – either that or they get another lease of life and really pull their fingers out, that does happen, they suddenly finds themselves getting off a train in Stoke-on-Trent and realise, now I've really got to do something or it's all over.

*Silence.*

At night, when you walk through the streets, you see all the unemployed, holding on tight to something or hiding behind cars because they're afraid they're going to be caught in giant nets and taken back to their places of work, that they keep running away from like children in care, the whole city's full of

them, immovable, badly dressed, unfit, ugly individuals, incapable of completing a sentence, hanging round chippers all day, whingeing about „the powers that be“ while they pour cans of supermarket lager down themselves. Sitting round waiting for something to happen. Initiative? It's like a foreign language.

What are we going to do with them?

I've examined a lot of firms and in every one there's at least twenty per cent of the workforce not genuinely working, they might be sorting sheets of paper over and over again or misfiling them, not passing on information, or passing on misinformation, constantly creating more work. What are we going to do with them? Should we hang on to them? In every EU country there are professions that have only survived because of extremely high subsidies, subsidies which the more successful countries, like us, are paying for – we don't need all the farmers, we're keeping them alive by artificial means because they have such a powerful lobby, because no government dares to say out loud that they are no better than a coma patient on a life support machine with no chance of ever regaining consciousness. The German's don't need the coal industry, which is subsidized to the extent of a hundred thousand Euros per man per year, we could just hand it over to these guys in cash, it would be a lot more useful to them than these fake jobs that completely destroy their health and mean that they turn into chronic patients who ultimately cost us even more. Forty per cent of all work in Germany is simulated work, it's work that nobody needs and it only exists so that no-one notices the real state of our society.

What do we do with them? Are we going to keep them? One day they're going to find out that everything they've worked was thrown out – it's all lying there in some landfill in South America. One day this subsidy idea just won't stand up any longer – wouldn't it be more sensible to restructure these people earlier, so that they can learn something else, something that has genuine economic benefits? The politicians aren't going to solve these problems, because they're not allowed to tackle them, they're not even allowed to put the facts on the table and describe the situation as it truly is, they're so restricted between the constant threat of annihilation by the media machine and the capriciousness of the electorate that they're just simply trying to survive the whole time, hoping they'll limp through to the next election, you can't expect any reform from them – the ideas are all there, we've got them all worked out – but nobody is going to implement them, nobody dares, because everyone's afraid of putting people off and losing votes. In the end it would not be unreasonable to leave this area in our hands and let us decide purely on the basis of study, simply make pragmatic decisions about what has to be done and then get on and do it. Democracy is all very well and definitely the ultimate goal and for an intact society with a healthy, functioning economy it's also the best social model but at the moment I think we're completely stymied by this system and let's be honest, we shouldn't be under any illusions here: what exactly do we get out of a democracy where all the election campaigns are prepared by advertising agencies, all the



candidates say the same things and television with its faked up polls and projections is continually intervening in the decision-making process that it so confuses the electorate, it drives them mad with all its scandals and false reporting when they're in no position anyway to make any choice on the basis of fact – ultimately we live in such a completely hysterical mediocracy, where votes are given for such subjective and arbitrary reasons, maybe out of sympathy, which candidate is better looking or did best in THE WEAKEST LINK or BIG BROTHER – what do we do about this? This system? Do we need it? Are we going to keep it? Or would it be better to give this system a break for a while, to let facts and clarity speak for once, get in a team of non-partisan consultants who aren't all stagnating in this party circus and jungle of vested interests or being neutralised by inefficient hierarchical structures and they can make a presentation: what is needed, what isn't, what has to be changed and then come up with firm proposals and finally develop strategies to implement these reform and restructuring plans which means it doesn't all get talked to death beforehand in the press and revised over and over, just actioned and left in force until a change has been produced – it would also be important to take over the press for a time, the media we have now has nothing more to do with free opinion, it's all lobbying and blocking tactics.

We have a vision and we can make this vision reality, we know the situation and we want to act. So let us take on this great Project that stands before us – and what I'm talking about here is nothing less than making this new millenium work, surviving the hurricane of the globalised marketplace – let us tackle this project together, each to his capabilities, each there where he is needed, we're all one big team, the work can begin, another world is possible, we will make it.

7

LONDON ABERDEEN GLOBAL

*Enter Child / Paul Niemand Double –the child enters the space slowly and leafs carefully through the men’s files, it whispers lists of numbers and share dividends into the microphone, then afterwards sits down opposite Paul Niemand and listens to him*

*CHILD Paul Niemand Double whispers into the microphone*

LONDON Aberdeen Global AMSTERDAM ABN Amro Investment Management TOKYO ACM Offshore Funds NEW YORK Activest Investment GmbH HONGKONG Adig Investment Lux FRANKFURT SA Alsa AEB Asset Management PARIS Allianz Invest KAG ROM Axa Rosenberg Management ZURICH Baring Fund Managers SEATTLE Baring International SYDNEY BB-Invest Belgrave Capital Management SINGAPORE Carlson CDC IXIS AM CICM FUND Management Ltd Citigroup Asset Management TORONTO KAG Comgest Far East Management Comgest SA Comgest-Ofivalmo Credit Suisse AM MILAN Lux Davis Funds Sicav Line Graph Bar Graph Pie Chart Point & Figure Advance Decline Line Beta Factor Climax Indicator Momentum Chart Money Flow index Statistics Trend Oscillator Volatility Fundamental Analysis

3U 31 DE0005167902 UUU 8,25 +114,3 9,25 3,66 75,2 65,97 68,00 1,1 0,20  
0,76 0,87 11 9 0,7 14 (12) ADVA OPTICAL 26 DE000513006 ADV 3,10  
+152,0 3,95 0,50 102,7 88,06 93,00 1,1 –0,04 0,15 0,19 21 16 12 (5) ARTICON  
19 DE0005155030 AAGN 2,18 +74,4 3,30 0,92 22,4 210,54 208,90 208,97 0,1  
–3,45 –0,86 –0,18 FORTEC 13 DE0005774103 FEV 32,10 +28,73 –21.34  
+13,43 MEDICLIN DE0005998762 UUU 13,79 +500,23 45,33 92,34 +44,31  
+23,87 KANGOL DE0003726319003 UUU 5,43 +8,23 –34,2 26,39 9,2 5,44 0,2  
0,34 0,43 YAHOO-DE DE0000534452990 –232,1 –243,2 –192,32 PP SA 9,321  
3,2 9,3 –3,2

ARTICON ATOSS AUGUSTA BAADER CANCOM CENTROTEC  
CONDOMI CONNECT CONTSANTIN DATA MODUL DEAG DIALOG  
EALG ZERO FREENET GESCO HEILER INIT INFOR INTERSHOP  
LAMBDA PHYSIK LPKF LYCOS EUROPE MACROPORE MASTERFLEX  
MATCHNET MAXDATA MORPHOSYS MHT OPEN OHB TECHNOLOGY  
PANDATEL PANKL RACING PARSYTEC PSI QSC QTS Q 50000 MIX  
TECJ TRANS ROFIN SINAR SANOCHEMIA SARTORIUS STEAG  
HAMATECH SYSWKOPLAN SYZGY TECHNOTRANS TELEGATE  
TELES TOMORROW FOCUS USU OPENSHOP WAVELIGHT WLS  
LIMITED X-TRAG X-RAW X-5 X-SEVEN X-NET YAHOO YAVA-SMITH 5  
YANK-ZERO YY-TT-AH ZERO F ZERO SUBLIME

## 8

### PAUL NIEMAND – REDUNDANCY PORN

PAUL NIEMAND *simultaneous with the child in 7*

That wasn't me who ran in here to work every morning

My life was slowly oozing out of me

It was somewhere else, not here, not inside me.

In the evenings I sat in front of the tv, staring at RTL or that neverending ad for telephone sex

I couldn't get away from the stuff

I disgusted myself but I couldn't get off the stuff

It was like a drug

Fuck, fuck, fuck, buy, buy, buy,

Dominatrixes, randy housewives, they all want me to call them, all want sex with me

The roar in my head! I couldn't sleep Porn porn porn sacked sacked sacked constantly developing new ideas of how to get rid of someone

The best was always when they just died, when the old ones died, that was the best

The old ones were the hardest to get rid of

They had their social entitlements all that crap, the sick old ones had to be kept on, while the young ones who could do the job got fired

So we had to think up tricks like shutting whole departments, sacking everyone and then opening it again under a different name and rehiring everybody except the ones we didn't want but weren't allowed to lay off.

Dying was the best, if they were suddenly dead somehow, that was always the best way, rationalising porn, flexibility porn, fucking outsourcing porn for God's sake, go out, get milk, beer, mashed potato, bags of mashed potato, then the neverending ad, porn, check through the Excel stats one more time,

How can I still believe in it?

There's one old fat guy, sits opposite me, I hate him, I want him out, I've been wondering for weeks how I'm finally going to get rid of him,

Bags of soup, bags of living out of bags, sad bag man, I'm the sad bag man, the geezer in the freezer, I want to freeze to death, I couldn't sleep, I was always awake, even asleep I'd see the images, it went on for days, nights, weeks, filled up and up, covered in snow, blown over, buried, dead, I'm going to throw them all out, everyone who's not absolutely necessary has got to go

And now I'm going, I created the plan to throw myself out when everyone else has gone I'll go too and the company can carry on working by itself, I'm alone in the world and I'm only there to make all the others disappear and I'm transparent, invisible, no-one notices me until the moment they themselves disappear:

The moment they disappear they can sense my existence and the earth shudders gently because I've extinguished a life, rationalised an EXISTENCE, and the dividend per share will increase by 0,00000789 per cent per person, I've worked it out I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE! I want to escape, I've got to get out of here, something inside me that wants to get away is screaming, and I dream myself back to the house behind the runway, with my father the air traffic controller who guided planes through the fog, that noise when he'd made a mistake, not looked properly, was absent, tired, when somewhere behind the runway a heavy plane crashed into a field and burst into flames and you could hear screams, explosions, the fire brigade, sirens, flashing lights and people had to be cut out of the fuselage,

Am I there, am I already here?

No, I'm sitting in the plane, next to me all the men who'll have redundancy notices on their desks tomorrow morning because TONIGHT I'm taking the list of names of proposed redundancies to MANCHESTER, we're flying through minus fifty degrees and I can feel the cold, just this thin sheet preventing me from freezing, if we crash now, into the sea, if we crash into the sea now, we'd freeze before we hit the surface.

At night, when I can't sleep, I look at the frozen cat in the canal, stretching out all fours,

frozen stiff in the ice, a look of panic on its face

I see it every night, every morning

on its death flight FROZEN TO DEATH,

slowly frozen stiff UNDER THE ICE, between two tower blocks (silos) each with ten thousand single room apartments

and every morning before I get the train to this fucking open plan office, I spend twenty minutes looking at the frozen cat and think:

"I'll be in there soon, soon that's where I'll be too" and then I won't feel anything any more, I'll just lie there and slowly freeze solid. On my next business trip I'll throw myself out of the window twelve thousand metres up THEN SOMEHOW SOMEONE'LL NOTICE ME

if I throw myself on the ice now, throw myself out of the window, and try in vain to grab hold of something, slipping and screaming, knowing that absolutely nothing and no-one can save me, I'll end up down beside the cat...

and the universe would keep on moving, empty, fast, aimlessly towards its end.

## AURELIUS GLASNIP – OF COURSE MENTAL BURNOUT’S A MAJOR DANGER.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Of course mental burnout’s a major danger so we take early counteractive measures. Right now we’re working on the „personal interface“ team. This can be a book group, a climbing club, action painting, even disco dancing, or simply engaging with the opposite sex, inviting someone of the opposite sex to dinner and then after a stimulating glass of wine going ahead and doing the business, it releases tension and makes people amenable to change. In the company at present we’ve got a twin-track programme parallel to our extensive repertoire of sporting activities called „adventures in the arts“ – building a relationship with the innermost kernel of our souls, our desires, our hidden talents, for example I write poetry and in the evenings I do dancing with our musical group. For the last two years Charlie and I have been working on a musical we’re putting on with the staff here and next summer we’re going to perform it for senior management as part of a four day surf tour we’re all doing in the Pacific, we’ve researched it and discovered that one of the most difficult problems people have relating to culture today is that the client won’t buy it, mostly because it takes too much preparation time to really get into whatever art form to the extent of getting a tangible benefit like increased pleasure or insight. Animals make very popular protagonists, that’s something our internal study bore out, clearly comprehensible plot structures whose refreshingly irreverent dialogue transposes the depths of the human condition to the animal kingdom, while eschewing overtopicality or clear allegiance to a specific political faction, offering consolation, in a suitably colourful form and easily accessible humorous prose with feeling, acknowledging the baffling contradictions between man and woman, who seem destined never to be reconciled - all of this with inventive costumes and avoiding too prominent a message, more of a knowing shrug, charmingly seductive special effects and music everyone can tap their feet along to and evidently accomplished performers with a solid technical training and a little touch of eccentricity, possibly cool or even rebellious. Any crises the drama sets up must also be resolved within a visible framework. With the aid of a detailed questionnaire and three months’ company-wide research, we’ve discovered that 47% of those asked would like to see the story of a lost seal who manages to find himself after an epic journey across storm-tossed oceans, all of it danced in burgundy coloured setting using a form of movement which should be narrative based and not abstract. The music should be pop in origin, but played by a string quartet, although the songs must be easily recognizable and remind the audience pleasantly of their youth. My musical actions the collated results of Charlie’s questionnaire and bases its plot for Act One amongst a group of sealions in the Antarctic, singing and dancing in very poetic language about the essence of humanity. Act Two is done on roller skates, Act Three takes place in Nepal where the central character, a seal who’s

reached rock bottom... finds himself... all of this with an authentic Bollywood score backed by a pan pipe orchestra, to which I've choreographed what's basically a group of polar bears on ice skates who debate political issues in a non-partisan solution-orientated way, allowing each issue to be considered from all angles, they, however, have a problem with the opposite sex, which they manage to solve by Act Five, Act Four takes place back in Dublin, in the office, where the lost seal is almost immediately able to put everything he learned on his journey into practice because thinking is doing, that's our most important motto, what use is experience if I can't make it useful? None. I need a concept, a programme in order to integrate my experiences directly into a maturing process, which must be visibly apparent to those around me. Human relations can only be of use to me when I can make them useable. I also enjoy cycling while watching nesting birds. The lost seal is integrated back into the team and produces excellent results but the important thing is: he has used his journey to become human and communicates this very effectively. The arts can also be useful to realign your thinking and that's good, it's been scientifically proven that a certain diffusion stimulates the brain to such an extent that it can find completely unconventional solutions in situations where factual analysis yields no results, that is ultimately the value of culture, it presents us with different ideas, it creates compensations, if culture is done well it can almost be as beneficial as sport: Listen, sick child, the starry-souled honey drinker sings in the spring wind. Listen, sick child, your star's shining in the evening wind.

10

CHARLIE SUNSHINE – ADVENTURE IN THE ARTS – A POEM

CHARLIE SUNSHINE

Who are my friends?

Birds who've lost their way over the ocean,  
shipwrecked sailors without a ship  
a herd of animals whose guide is leading them the wrong way  
fog, silence, light broken into blackness,  
the starless evening sky silent, silent blue  
stillness, cold, night, the wind that's never understood.

I'm an evening star, with contempt for the world, driven, distracted, my most  
intimate parts lost, cold, looking at the world through staring eyes.

This night of silence is my gift to you.

Leaves sway again for me  
the evening light startles me,  
shivering foliage, I want to be near you, your fear, your haste,  
your dumb understanding.

Crinkly orange beetle skin, bloom again for me.

Show me the way that studies all the winds blue.

Give me strength.

Star shine brighter.

The hopeful wanderer discouraged lets his head drop,  
abandoned fire, I am silent and judge.

## 11

### CONSULTATION 2 – WE HAVE GOT AN AWESOME TEAM

*The child is now sitting where Paul Niemand sat in Consultation 1 and is the object of this appraisal. The situation dissolves and the characters enter a strange delirium: Aurelius Glasnip and Charlie Sunshine start rehearsing their performances as seals or sea animals in their musical, making oddly suggestive dance movements, ice cubes fall down from the flies onto the table, this is Paul Niemand's nightmare.*

AURELIUS GLASNIP Let's go through, check out the different perspectives and see what we can do for him in the sense of giving him more exposure, getting him more out there.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE He's happy with the team, he's said lots of times he thinks it's brilliant, he's also explicitly thanked us for him being in this particular team. Er- what he's really good at is the whole thing of taking his existing skillset from BCG and building on that, so he's got a very solid grounding and then he can factor in the data that's available and the information management techniques, he does that very well.

PAUL NIEMAND Yeah, what I like when I look through his analysis or hypothesis-driven work is that for someone who's inexperienced he really gets the big picture. The bird's eye view. What does the deep drilling stuff look like, the market analysis he did? Are the numbers really watertight, is there anything there?

AURELIUS GLASNIP Yeah, he still appears relatively young but that'll change with time. His self-confidence will also grow, so I basically don't have any worries, no, I think he was a good catch. If we go onto the points further down the list about the team, whether he is an intern or not, I think he enjoys being part of something, we have got an awesome team.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Yeah, they get on so well.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Yeah, you can see that at dinner, or other places, it works brilliantly. He's integrated himself totally into the team and, yeah, I do, I think he enjoys it.

PAUL NIEMAND Then I'd say let's put that to him directly, that he really needs to open up a bit more, he can and should start putting some active



input in other modules too but we can talk that through with him tonight in the Team Case Meeting.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Let's do that tonight. The one thing we have actioned is because within the existing project he's got what you could call an autonomous subteam, which he's personally piloting, personally accountable for the results too and you can see the moment he gets outside his comfort zone, he's cooking. It's like it is with all of us, it always takes a while, sometimes they need a bit of extra incentive to get it started.

PAUL NIEMAND A push.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Yeah, a push.

AURELIUS GLASNIP I can see from recent weeks that there's already been an improvement, partly enforced to a certain extent, because suddenly he's been standing in front of a client and he's got to say something.

PAUL NIEMAND He chaired that meeting with 17 people, or was that 13?

AURELIUS GLASNIP Suddenly he's got to, he has to. The issue was a time clash with other client meetings which meant he had to do it, he had to go over the top, and it was all fine.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Yeah, he's got all his ducks in a row.

AURELIUS GLASNIP He's understood what it's about, he can fit that into a wider picture, your typical worm's eye view you so often get at the beginning, he hasn't got that, he understands how it all fits together.

PAUL NIEMAND Well, thank you very much for collating all that. What about all doing the feedback together?

AURELIUS GLASNIP Yeh, no, from the Optical Point Of Aggression in the Audiomotive area I don't see any problems.

PAUL NIEMAND Yes, I've got that, so let's work out a date at the case meeting, where we can get him to focus on keeping up a front and out of area compatibility fix him up with one or two training sessions to get him super fit because otherwise he's a good soldier.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Spot on.

CHARLIE SUNSHINE One of our best weapons, I'd say, we just need to make him a bit more adventurous in his manoeuvres and then we'll all have got where we want to be.

PAUL NIEMAND Ok, so let's sort out a time and

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Are we all playing squash tonight?

*Short Pause.*

AURELIUS GLASNIP Er- I've got a whole pile of stuff

PAUL NIEMAND Yeah, I've got an external meeting, a case meeting after the case meeting, a so-called internal case meeting, no-one's supposed to know anything about it, but I can tell you so, no sorry

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Come on, it's just two or three hours' squash, we can take the work with us.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Well, yeah, but, you know I

PAUL NIEMAND But then you can

CHARLIE SUNSHINE C'mon it'd be nice, just the two of us, you and me, eh?

PAUL NIEMAND Yeah, that would be nice.

AURELIUS GLASNIP Well I

CHARLIE SUNSHINE Come on then, two or three hours of squash followed by some waterskiing and para-gliding, we can review the debrief while we're doing that then go bowling then para-gliding again then do some extreme rollerblading then review the debrief once again, another game of squash then swim once up the river and back down again and add on a weekend's white water rafting then go through the list for tomorrow and another lot of para-gliding and a game of chess or risk or cluedo or frustration and while we're doing that we can be preparing the conference call and once that's done we can have another game of squash and extreme rafting then climb the wall here wearing roller skates then go up to the top floor ten times on one leg and while we're doing it we can be preparing the team case meeting and reviewing the debrief and passing on unsolicited feedback, using sentences that produce spontaneous bursts of enthusiasm and then we can really go para-gliding and write a couple more poems have another game of frustration and chess and extreme canoeing, bungee jumping and dance the tarantella and rearrange the

hotel foyer set up a portable office, blindfold, in an airport lounge and go through the lists for tomorrow, proof read the Times and then go walking climbing singing dancing squash rollerblading one more time and para-gliding and not miss the plane and in the taxi we can go skating and then get the taxi driver to help us review the debrief while we go bowling again and go through the Excel stats one last time.

## PAUL NIEMAND - DELIRIUM

## PAUL NIEMAND

Sometimes I'm gone for hours, just gone, I don't know where, in the company, at a meeting, I come home and hide behind the radiator or lie down on the floor beside the bed, I'm still reading the material, normally I get up on time, get the train or a taxi, I can't find my car any more, it's there somewhere, somewhere I'm not, I don't know where it is, it's driving round without me looking for a parking space without me, driving on and on, it never stops, I don't look at anyone any more, I glance past all of them, I sit here working and thinking:

This isn't my life, but I'm living it anyway, I'm living like this for you, to make you all better off, and the other life that I can't live any more because I haven't got time and keep missing the runway, I'll live that differently some other time, somewhere else, inside, now, simultaneously, in my thoughts, something like that, that's living somewhere without me, there's some place where it is and I'm not and it lives there without me ever meeting it, it just passes me by and looks at me in panic, because it's hurtling towards a vast expanse of ice, it crashes into some forest and bursts into flames, it breaks up like one of that bastard Tom's fucking share funds that I've lost all my money in.

What have I done in the last few years? I don't know any more, was I married? No, did I have kids? No, sex? Occasionally something happened, I can't remember any more, except that it was quick and relatively expensive given the rather brief moment of climax,  
quiet, gentle humming, cold,  
my tv looks across at me so strangely, what's it up to? It wants to get close to me, it wants affection, my tv wants love, my tv wants intimacy, but I don't want it, I don't want intimacy with anyone, it wants to touch me, but I don't want to be touched.

I've got to get out of here, get away, I want to be collected, what have I got to do to be collected? Shoot them all, yeah, maybe, maybe, when I began, it was all a very different life here, wasn't it? I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE GET AWAY IT'S GOT TO STOP IT HAS TO STOP OUT OUT QUICK OUT AWAY FROM HERE

*Quiet*

Here I am  
and here the world dissolves before my eyes  
what I can see makes no sense  
everything explodes into pieces

everything runs away from me  
I see people running away from me in fear, screaming, and I shoot  
Into the crowd  
faces explode  
beautiful they're gone at last  
no-one wants them  
no-one needs them  
no-one ever needed them  
they can go

I feel the blood, the human blood that's running down my face, in this building only the dead are left, masses of them, (minor cut) now they're not screaming any more, (minor cut) I like that, I was never so alive, so present, so in the world, so in the moment, (minor cut) Quiet now, hmm, all dead, all gone, I run outside, there's a woman by the door, a child is holding onto her tightly, the doorman runs towards them, wants to save them, I hear him shout, I hear him breathe, shoot, shoot in the leg, shoot in the back, shoot in the head, brain sprays out onto the floor, some shadow stirs, dead, a woman screams, dead, someone sticks out a leg, dead, a camera points at me, dead, all gone, all dead, all quiet, I'm quiet, I don't move, TARGET THE LOSER KILL KILL my favourite game – you find the losers and shoot them all, everyone the market has no use for is out, TARGET THE LOSER KILL KILL I can see myself chasing the losers through a shopping centre, through airport lounges, across school playgrounds and bank headquarters, TARGET THE LOSER KILL KILL there is no such thing as society, there are only individuals, everyone's afraid of losing his bloody job, even though no-one likes their job and nobody likes going home at night, at night they all go back to their wives and throw the cat their mothers in law gave them as a wedding present out of the window the whole canal is full of these frozen cats, everywhere, all over the place, there are cats flying out of apartment windows, there, can you hear it? Can you hear that sound? It's planet Earth racing through the cold emptiness of space, its inhabitants are all throwing cats out of windows, what a noise there is when they're all flying towards the ice, faces full of fear, screaming, missing the runway, splitting open, smashing to pieces, before they were even properly born, lying there, not moving any more, screaming, very quietly, very very quietly, barely audible, I can hear all that now, I can't go on, I can't go on, flying through the air, splitting open, lying there and turning on the tv and and just watching this permanent ad where everyone's supposed to buy this stomach exerciser or laminating machine, that you can use to seal everything you own in see-through plastic or telephone sex or floor cloths that can wipe away simply anything  
London – Berlin – Budapest – Dublin – Manchester – Kiel  
my enthusiasm is waning, my energy is waning,  
I could feel how I was slowly freezing during the flight from the twentieth floor of our offices, stretching out all fours, an expression of panic on my face, as I

headed for the ice and ended up lying next to the other cats in the canal, frozen solid under the ice, we lay there stunned, staring into each others' eyes, no-one spoke, even here, everyone hoped they would survive somehow, just them anyway, and we lay there, thousands of us, thrown out, frozen solid in the ice, motionless, capable of nothing, a statistic to embellish, surplus to requirements, frozen solid under the ice.

One last memory while I froze to death in slow motion:

The hallway at night

I'm the last to leave

The open plan offices breathing away softly to themselves, everything waiting for the next day.

The flow of money continues, I can hear the roar, a swift empty gushing, there's a swift loneliness in these rooms.

When the universe gradually begins to contract, hurtling through the void with stark indifference and pulling you with it as it goes whether you want to or not, this ear-numbing noise and this fissure between myself and people and the planet which is flattening out again, which folds in, collapses on top of me, this scream, falling alone through space, knowing that the universe won't notice me because it isn't interested in anyone or anything, sucked into an empty black abyss with all the others and no-one can hear me and no-one can see me...

## CHILD – NOW IT'S QUIET ALL AROUND ME

CHILD      Now it's quiet around me  
I can't see anything any more  
it's dark  
nighttime  
I'm lying in my room  
there's nobody here  
the red light on the tv is blinking  
the minibar hums  
should I turn the hotel channel back on  
should I watch a couple more films  
to compensate  
I'm lonely here  
I'm lying on my bed exhausted  
my wife – where is she now?  
do I even have a wife?  
I don't know.  
All forgotten  
it's so quiet  
my computer breathes softly  
it understands me  
I don't understand myself  
but my computer knows exactly what I should do  
that comforts me in my loneliness  
yes it comforts me in the emptiness that I'm providing here to keep  
the system running  
I give you my life and you turn it into an empty space  
an absence of feeling hurtling through space that's me  
an absence which tolerates loneliness, the emptiness, the  
unbearable  
I'm not complaining I can handle it  
I've got nothing more to expect  
my path is already planned  
there's nothing waiting for me any more  
I've got no life in front of me  
the life in front of me's been lived a thousand times already

AURELIUS GLASNIP Strange, strange here under the ice... I can see my car, over in the multi-storey opposite looking for a parking space, it keeps on looking but can't find one, keeps driving backwards and forwards up and down, strange, my car goes shopping now, together with my tv, my tv buys everything there is , people, whole tracts of land, extinct tribes, piles of corpses, mute little children, happy girls who wear Versace shirts and put their Puma bags down next to the photocopier, my tv buys a lot of sunshine and that's what it's now showing my car, and the car's pleased, they go hand in hand back to the multi-storey and carry on looking for a parking space, they do this every Sunday, every Sunday my car and my tv go to the multi-storey together and look for a parking space, and they never find one, they find love at the shopping centre, love, freedom, unlimited possibilities, inspiration, individuality, growth, security, they can find all this at the shopping centre and of course: sunshine. World peace and sunshine, that's what makes them happy, they are happy, very, very happy, my car and my tv enjoy world peace, they buy a couple of DVDs and a couple of Smart Bombs, they put a couple of little toy puppets in their basket, they buy ancient Rome and a couple of porn videos and an action film with Arnie and a couple of ancient customs, feather jewellery and a recovery massage, they buy a couple of mass graves and a pair of shoes, a new ring tone for their mobile and a couple of ragged half faces belonging to supermodels from Uganda, everything's really lovely here, really really lovely, there's liberty, equality, fraternity, we humans are just obstacles to the flow of goods, we've got too many defects, we don't belong here, the world we've created isn't actually for us, we made it for someone else, only who? Don't we know? Maybe for the newspapers, then they can write about how lovely it all is, so that their articles go with the ads, which is why they're printed, yes, perhaps we really did only create this world for television and television doesn't need us any more, it just keeps on talking without us, nobody notices whether we're still there or not, because we aren't needed, the world we created doesn't need us, it prefers living without us, it shows us at our best, it shows us as we never were, it can't even be meant for us, because all this has nothing to do with us, oh, it's so beautiful to see my car happily driving through the pedestrian precinct picking the sunshine off the posters on the walls, shopping, everywhere, it's happy, things are happy, things can accept life's happiness, people can't, that's their mistake, the world we've built isn't meant for people, it's meant for something else, television maybe or perhaps all those beautiful surveillance cameras we got installed before we all died, that now show uninterrupted progress, everything's so lovely here, everything that gets in the way has gone, anything sick gets edited out, and the cameras look at the world and they send the pictures to my tv and it shows them to my car which drives round and round in circles in the multi-storey with perfect equanimity, the car's not in any hurry, it can wait two centuries till it



finds a parking space, it doesn't care, maybe we really did only create this world for the cameras, to produce an image of ourselves that has nothing to do with us, but it delivers a good signal to all the lovely tvs or for something else entirely, something even lovelier? Maybe soon something will come that's even more beautiful than tv, maybe Lord Jesus himself and my car can put him in its basket or my tv can make him the most powerful man in the world where there won't be any other people any more just things and the things will be happy and cheer and applaud Lord Jesus and he will rid the world of all evil, and he will create light in the realm of darkness, and everything will be lit up bright so that there are no more stains on the world which is too dark for our cameras and our tvs will be happy, very very happy and our cars will drive around buying sunshine singing songs about happiness and freedom and love, running hand in hand with Lord Jesus through the tv and applauding for world peace, that will be so lovely, so so so lovely, everything here, that doesn't belong to us, only things have deserved this loveliness, people haven't deserved beauty, they don't even recognize it, they don't recognize the value of the world they create, people haven't deserved beauty, they keep driving straight past it, cars don't, cars stop and take their time and drive with Lord Jesus through the tv and buy sunshine and sing softly about the love, about the happiness of being in the world.

*Snow falls during this final monologue, the actors have frozen to death, the child leans on the table next to the files like the last guest in the hotel bar and drinks a whisky.*