

End of the World
Jason Shannon

The flight back to Toronto was on a Thursday. Of course, we hit rush hour traffic leaving the airport.

After a week of drinking and touring Maya ruins in Mexico, the party was continuing in my living room. My friend Bryant and I had been in Cancún for a week, Thursday to Thursday, at a resort for my sister's wedding. It was hot, it was sandy, there were assault rifle-wielding commandos patrolling checkpoints on the highway, there was seaweed and broken bottles strewn all over the beach, and there was a bevy of all-inclusive alcohol – which, deceptively, was all watered down.

No sooner had I dropped Bryant off and arrived at my place, than Andy's truck appeared at the end of the street. Andy had not come to Mexico. But he had driven the long way down from Golden Lake for a makeshift long weekend.

Ostensibly we were recording my novella, *The Bandit's Wench*. It was about thirty thousand words, and we had two and a half days. Previously we'd recorded my earlier novella, *An Evening in the Capital*, slightly longer in length, over a snowy Valentine's weekend in Ottawa. It had been a long haul trying to bang that one out. This time around, we planned on not leaving the last three chapters to record after midnight on the final night.

"How was Mexico?" Andy asked once he'd brought in his cot, relaxing in my easy chair.

"Would you believe it, Martin gouged his foot open the first night there."

Martin was my sister's fiancé. Husband now, I guess. He and his groomsmen had a tradition of downing a few shots and dashing into the ocean the day of arrival, whenever they travelled someplace tropical. On this trip, our rooms weren't even ready for us before he'd done this, drinking copiously at the bar, then dashing into the water, and found a shattered bottle six inches beneath the surface. It tore up the bottom of his foot and required forty stitches. Days later, he walked down the aisle in crutches. He'd actually tried to encourage me to get wasted as well, barely thirty minutes beforehand.

I powered up my laptop. I came prepared. Weeks earlier, I'd developed a PowerPoint to sell Andy on my next vacation – five days Seoul, five days Ulaanbaatar, two days Kharkhorin. So, less than six hours after landing back in Canada, I was heavily engaged in my next international trip. I wanted Andy to come with me. In fact, I had an open invite to a lot of friends and family. But Andy was worldly, and had never been anywhere except Cuba and the States, and would appreciate a trip like this far more than a beach in the Caribbean.

I ran through the PowerPoint. The Korean War Museum in Seoul. The old Joseon Dynasty royal palace. Namhansanseong, the mountaintop emergency military capital used when facing off against the Manchus in the eighteenth century. And, of course, the tour of the DMZ. I had a safety section in the PowerPoint, and, concerning the risk of military aggression from the North, I included a video of Kim Jong-un addressing the people's presidium, and dubbed in the voice of Dr. Evil saying, "Oh, hell, let's just do what we always do – hijack some nuclear weapons and hold the world hostage, hmm?"

In the next section, on Mongolia, I really hooked him. Andy was a big gun nut, and Mongolia is one of only a few places in the world where you can go off into the hinterlands and fire off old Soviet munitions – AK-47s and Dragunov sniper rifles, but also rocket powered grenade launchers. This isn't, so far as I understand, one hundred percent legal. But it's common (inasmuch as any tourism in Mongolia is common), and goes entirely unprosecuted.

The following morning, Andy and I caught up. My place was a mess. I hastily threw in a load of laundry while I told him about Chichén Itzá, about the couple who almost got left behind two states over; I told him about the lamp in our room which looked like a giant set of anal beads; I told him about reading a plain, black-covered Ph.D thesis on the Japanese Black Dragon Society while in the air, and realizing a nondescript booklet with 'Terrorism' in the subtitle might not be wise for an international flight.

I went downstairs to throw the laundry in the drier. Andy pulled out his phone and began watching a

History Channel program. When I climbed back up the stairs, he told me, "There's a theory out there that Hitler was blasted on meth throughout most of the war."

"Really?"

"He had a personal doctor dosing him with 'vitamultin,'" he said in air quotes, "which is just German for vitamins, but he'd be ranting and raving and bouncing off the walls after these doses. They figure it was Pervitin, which was like the German brand name for methamphetamine."

"Huh," I said. "I know that the Japanese basically invented meth back at the turn of the century. It was helpful for the rapid industrialization of the Meiji Restoration."

"Well, the Japanese were 'honorary Aryans,'" said Andy with a shrug. "Apparently, in Lithuania and Latvia and places like that, the Nazis would just go mad blowing their entire clips shooting at phantoms and hallucinations in the middle of the night. The Red Army would hear them from miles away, then show up the next day and the Germans would have no ammo left. It was all Pervitin. That's what literally fuelled the blitzkrieg."

Mid-morning, we got ready to record *The Bandit's Wench*.

"I'm gonna need some coffee," said Andy, going through my cupboards. "I forgot my instant coffee."

I don't drink coffee. I never have. It tastes like ass. Perhaps there's some correlation between millennials being the coffee-fiend generation, and also the rimjob generation.

"I need something with caffeine," said Andy, realizing even my diet Coke was caffeine-free.

"I've got C4," I joked.

"Does it have caffeine?" he asked seriously.

C4 is a pre-workout supplement, a fine powder mixed in a shaker cup to get you pumped. It contains a high dose of caffeine, alongside another stimulant, theacrine, as well as vitamin C, B vitamins, niacinimide and other agents. It opens all you blood vessels, gets you flushed, gets you laser-focused on the task at hand, and makes you need to expel energy.

I made him a shot. He took it.

Andy sat in my easy chair, the microphone hovering in front of his face.

Andy's Australian accent kept wavering in and out. I, directing, had to keep reminding him. We retook many lines. The manuscript had not been edited, and he found a few typos.

"Man, whatever's in this C4..." he said after finishing the first scene.

"It getting to you yet?" I asked.

It usually kicks in after about fifteen to twenty minutes. He was looking jittery. His face was turning red like a tomato, and he kept rubbing at his eyebrows like a meth-head.

Somewhere along the line, he flubbed a line, and went off on a massive tangent. Bryant and I, every weekend we get together with Andy, take bets on what accent or impersonation he'll adopt. He's gone through Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bill Cosby, Borat, Sean Connery, Genghis Khan, Woody Allen, pirate captain Semenbeard the Crusty, Chinese pirate captain Ximin Biered, Susan Boyle, Elvis, Billy Mays, an obnoxious Quebecois Frenchman, Al Capone's dimwitted younger brother Donny Capone, and the 'ex-gay' former porn star Louisiana Republican senator now running for president, Locomotive Johnson.

On this particular weekend, he became Donald Trump. In the manuscript, there was a reference to a fifteen-storey building, and his mind (and lips) autocorrected it to a twenty-storey building.

"Sorry," he said. "It's like Donald Trump math. I see numbers and I just inflate them automatically." In a Trumpian voice, he said, "Believe me, yuge – it's gonna be yuge!" By way of commentary, he added, "You gotta say everything two or three times, you know?" Then he continued as Trump. "Major, major conflict with South, possibly North, North Korea!" In his own running commentary he went on, "Ah, yes, North-North Korea. It's like the Atlantean continent in between Korea and Japan there, in the Yellow Sea, I gotcha. This is fantasy place!" As Trump: "We're gonna nuke all the sea turtles! Galápagos don't stand a chance! It's gonna be yuge! Environmental damage is gonna be yuge! Believe me!" Back to his running commentary: "I believe you. I'm terrified of what's gonna happen. So you're telling me we're gonna nuke the Galápagos

Islands?" Then he laughed clamorously. Continuing as Trump, he said, "I'm gonna put all the social justice warriors to rest. We're not gonna talk about Darwin's Evolution of Theory anymore, we're gonna get rid of the Galápagos Islands. 'Cause I've been offended for one time too many by the swimming iguanas. Iguanas don't swim, they sit on rocks. It's gonna be yuge!" Commentary: "This is the new political platform for Donald Trump: bombing the Galápagos – the Galápagos Islands, you know! Environmental damage is gonna be yuge!"

Regaining momentum, we went for a page or two, at which point he cracked up on a line I'd included. "A lay's a lay, even if it's A," he read in the Aussie accent, and then rolled his eyes and chuckled. "Every time. Like, I'm the dirty piece of shit, but sometimes you astound even me! God bless you, sir. God bless you." He then looked back. We'd read about six pages into the manuscript. He said, "You know, I'm impressed. You waited six whole pages before you had to sneak that in."

We went through a half-dozen more pages. His Aussie accent slipped a few more times. Starting a new chapter, he launched in with an over-the-top Schwarzenegger accent: "'Ya, ya, ya, someone needs to point in the direction of Leif Erikson!' Penny demanded. But a camel bellowed at the same time she said it, drowning out everything she was trying to say!" He looked over to me, and energetically said, "We should do an entire one of these, but in the Arnold accent." Continuing as Arnold, he went on, "At the same time, the camel began urinating where it stood, and she took a big step away." To me, he said, "Like I would listen to that whole book of it was just hours of" – switching to Arnold, he blathered on with hodgepodge of elements from *The Bandit's Wench*, and it's related epic series, *Imperium Mongolica* – "And then Genghis said, 'Come over here, and sit on my face, you dirty bitch,' and she whipped out her third titty, and she put in my mouth, and I said, 'Ya know, Itugen's tits!' and Itugen's gonna come over there, and give you the kumiss, get you drunk because you drank three percent alcohol until your bladder exploded, and it was a party, and then the red raven came, and it wasn't painted, it was actually red, and nobody knows what that means, because they're taking mushrooms and hallucinating and having a good time in the desert." Taking a breath, he said, "Like, I would listen to a whole book like this. *The Destynii Rebellion* should be" – he chuckled – "read by Arnold Schwarzenegger. But you have to misspell it, like A-R-N-O-U-L-D – Arnould Schwarzenegger – so there's no copyright."

Just after noon, Bryant came over. We started with some white Russians.

After the white Russians were downed, I moved on to a new experiment: soju and Yakult. By this point, I was long done with trying to learn Mandarin, and had moved onto attempting to learn Korean, in my pursuit of all things Korean for the trip. Unlike sake, which I never developed a taste for, I rather like soju.

My brother stopped by briefly. He had a bottle of 151 he'd smuggled out of the Dominican Republic, and drank hardly a sip of. While in Mexico, Bryant and I experimented with new cocktails. We found a website that listed over a thousand different mixes, and would go up to the various bartenders to try things out. The worst of them was something called a bloody tampon, which contained V-8 tomato juice, lemon juice, tequila, vodka, and Bailey's. The best of them was called an end of the world. It was equal parts vodka, bourbon, and 151. We ordered it the night of Kelly's wedding, from a Russian bartender at the beach bar, who told me "We can make do" when asked if they stock 151.

My neighbour Rick had agreed to come over later on, so I chilled the 151 for now and made a few more soju-Yakults.

Chatting away, Bryant, the big movie buff, was telling Andy about some movie he'd seen a week ago. Shrugging, Bryant said, "Still a better love story than *Twilight*."

Continuing the joke, I added, "Tom Hanks and Wilson: still a better love story than *Twilight*."

Bryant said, "Bambi's mother and the rifle: still a better love story than *Twilight*."

Andy was contemplative for a moment. Then he said, "*A Serbian Film*: still a better love story than *Twilight*."

"Ooooh," both Bryant and I said in unison.

Rick arrived. I'd invited him a week before. We did some burgers and I introduced Rick to Andy and

Bryant. I told him about the wedding, about Martin's foot. I showed him some pictures of the Maya site of Tulum. He opened my liquor cabinet, and poured himself some rum. With the chilled 151, I made an end of the world for Andy and myself. Bryant, a lightweight, declined.

Rick asked what we were doing for the weekend, with Andy having made the long drive.

"He does my audiobooks," I explained. "We recorded about ten thousand words this morning."

"He can do all the accents," said Bryant.

"It's not only that, but he has good diction. He can read well and put the right emphasis where it needs to be, and not stumble on every second word. It's a pain in the ass to edit when there's a hundred retakes."

Rick sipped more of his rum. Andy and I sipped from our end of the worlds. Andy was impressed. He said, "That's actually quite smooth."

"Like gasoline," I said with a smile.

"Like jet fuel," he corrected.

Indeed, though it was smooth, it did go down with a slight feel of alcohol disinfectant in the throat.

Rick made a comment about the new *Captain America* movie.

"What was the joke from earlier?" Andy asked. "Something love story."

"Oh," I said eagerly, "*A Serbian Film*."

"What's *A Serbian Film*?" asked Rick.

"Oh, you don't want to know," I said.

But we'd already opened a Pandora's box-sized can of worms.

Bryant said, "Hey, why don't you narrate the details?"

"Yeah," said Andy enthusiastically. "I'll do a dramatic read of the Wikipedia article."

"Oh, God..." I grumbled.

Rick was game. He didn't know what he was in for.

We all sat down in the living room. Andy brought up the Wikipedia article. He mentally prepared himself.

With dramatic flare, he began reading:

"Miloš is offered a starring role in an art film directed by Vukmir, an independent pornographer who wishes to cast Miloš for his powerful erection..."

Rick's face looked like he'd immediately regretted this decision.

"Miloš discovers that he was drugged to induce an aggressive, sexually aroused, and suggestible state. At Vukmir's manipulative direction, Miloš beats and rapes the girl's mother before decapitating her, and later, a catatonic Miloš is sodomized by Vukmir's security..."

I have never seen *A Serbian Film*. But I've heard about it. It holds a certain reputation on the internet.

"What the director was calling a new genre: newborn porn..."

This was the first time Rick had met Andy.

"The woman then staggers into the warehouse, clothes dishevelled with her vaginal area covered in blood. She is holding a bloodied metal pipe in her hand, implying that she masturbated herself to death after being shot up with the same drug she used on Miloš to make him sexually aroused and aggressive..."

Bryant and I stared at the scene in horror.

At last Andy finished. Rick said, "Well, that was something."

"Let's get another drink," I said.

The problem, I would realize later, was that at the resort, they would water down the alcohol to stretch it. After a week of drinking at a healthy rate, I had an inflated sense of my tolerance. Andy poured himself a healthy dose of tequila. Brian made himself another vodka ginger ale. I had discovered a drink months before called a Jackknife. I had bought a bottle of Jack Daniel's in an attempt to branch out to American whiskey, and had hated it. Not wanting to waste it, I'd discovered the Jackknife to make it palatable; it was a one to one mix of Bailey's and Jack. I did two to one. Now, however, the Jack was gone and I'd altered the drink with Wiser's rye. This is what I made for myself, and topped up Rick's rum.

I told Rick about my planned trip to Korea. Andy asked if we could extend it from two weeks to two and

a half or three.

"Part of me would want to get a tattoo in Seoul," he said, "to commemorate the trip."

Andy had full sleeves of tattoos, including one Jules Vernean squid being harpooned, which was facing downward on his forearm and therefore looked like a swollen, red erection poking out of his shirt sleeve.

"We should all get tattoos," he beamed. "Bryant, would you get a chollima with me?"

Bryant was debating this with himself. Andy swung his gaze to me. "What about you? Would you get the coordinates for Seoul and Ulaanbaatar on your ankle?"

"I'm not getting a tattoo," I scoffed, feeling the alcohol. I was never a tattoo guy. If there's something I want to proclaim to the world, I can write a book about it. Rarely does a slogan or a label or a logo suffice.

"Ah, don't be such a baby. Hey – you could get a tattoo of a Korean babe wearing a monster strapon," he argued passionately.

"I'm not getting a tattoo."

"You love big-titted babes with strapons," he roared, gesticulating wildly.

I wish he hadn't have shouted that in front of Rick.

"What about a dot?" he argued. "A single dot on your ankle? A black dot?"

"No," I said, exasperated.

"You wouldn't get a single dot?" he exclaimed.

At this point Bryant asked Rick if he'd like another drink. They disappeared into the kitchen and didn't return for about fifteen minutes. Andy, almost belligerent now, continued arguing stridently about getting tattoos in Korea.

At last, I went to piss and left Andy to vent. When I returned, he'd calmed down, and was pouring himself more tequila.

Rick bid us adieu. It was getting late, and he'd had more rum than he'd intended. Indeed, my Havana Club bottle was empty.

I was feeling quite buzzed. Someone suggested we do a shot of *baijiu*. I immediately yanked it off the shelf in my liquor cabinet and grabbed a couple shot glasses.

I'd picked this up at the duty free at Beijing airport, a year before. It, like all *baijiu*, tastes like a mixture of fresh grass clippings put in a blender with some diesel fuel.

Andy shot his back and grimaced. Mine went down the hatch. Bryant, giddy and giggling, said, "Hold on, hold on, I need a chaser." At last he had a full vodka ginger ale and psyched himself up to drink the *baijiu*, while standing over the kitchen sink. One taste of the liquid, and he nearly vomited, dumping the rest in the sink, and saying, "Nope, nope," amidst a fit of laughter.

Appalled that he would pour the drink down the sink, I ran into the living room, grabbed the Chinese *dao* sword off my bookshelf, marched back in, unsheathed it, and boldly declared (in a Russian accent, that is), "How dare you waste valuable Chinese liquor?!"

Bryant guffawed. Through choked laughter, he said, "We should have a sword fight!"

I had a smaller Chinese dagger mounted atop the door leading to the living room.

I thought quickly. I said, "I'm sober enough to know that I'm drunk enough not to have a sword fight."

Andy was riotously laughing. He told Bryant, "This is why you've got to come with us to Korea!"

Bryant had not yet agreed to come.

Andy said, "Have you shown him the PowerPoint yet?"

"No, I'll show you next weekend."

"Hell, show him now!" exclaimed Andy. "Let's go through this thing right now."

"You want to?" I asked.

It was agreed that I'd run through the PowerPoint again. We all sat down and I powered up the laptop. I ran through it all once more. I showed the video of the US Marine giving the tour of the blue building at the DMZ, the waiver you have to sign acknowledging the possibility of death as a direct result of enemy action.

I got to the part on the guns in Mongolia. I didn't have this in the PowerPoint, but I knew of one

Mongolian tour guide who offered this service. His name was listed in many travelogues. And he had a YouTube channel. Ten subscribers and only five videos, and video quality that was closer to 10, rather than 1080p, but it gave a nice demonstration as to what this experience would be like. Skimming through YouTube, I found the channel, and played a few of the forty-second-long videos. Andy looked like he was about to ejaculate in his pants.

Andy worked for an arms supplier in Ottawa. Ordering in American guns for military or police use. Part of the certification for this meant he needed to be trained directly by the Glock American headquarters in Georgia. He'd done this a few months before. He prided himself on being proficient with many guns not civilian-legal in Canada.

"What about the Mongolian death worm?" asked Bryant.

"That's down in the Gobi Desert."

"Well, could we go there?"

"It's like an eighteen-hour drive across the Mongolian badlands." I already had a stop to maybe, possibly see Przewalski's horse; I didn't particularly fancy a drive across landscape as remote as Antarctica to seek out a mythical, six-foot-long, electric, acid-spitting worm.

The final leg of the trip was Kharkhorin, the one-time capital of the old empire, known then as Karakorum. The route back was going to be the most strenuous part. In addition to the three-hour flight from Ulaanbaatar to Seoul, thence the fourteen-hour flight to Toronto after some significant layover, there was the matter of getting from Kharkhorin to Ulaanbaatar. Although the small town had a regional airport, with small biplanes, no regular flights were scheduled. The road between the two cities was probably the most travelled and well-maintained road in the country. Despite that, the three hundred and fifty-kilometre journey took anywhere from five and a half to eight hours, most like inside an old Soviet UAZ or equivalent. I've read travelogues before of lesser-travelled roads washing away in shifting weather and being hastily reconstructed with felled logs and gravel.

"This is why I want to spend another few days in Seoul," said Andy. "We can get our tattoos."

Feeling the drink, I said, almost to myself, "It's going to be impossible to record tomorrow."

"Well, fuck, let's bang out a few chapters right now," beamed Andy.

I didn't want to subject Bryant to sitting and listening to another man dictate my book. But I was swept along in the mood, and Andy was grabbing the microphone, and Bryant was running off to refresh his drink before we began.

Andy went to the washroom. I posted the Mongolian tour guide's video onto Facebook and tagged Andy. When he returned, and positioned the microphone, I told him to check his Facebook.

He hit record. He spoke into the microphone in a Russian accent, while opening Facebook on his phone. The recording began, "I have been instructed to open Facebook application. It is article and video about firing rockets into Mongolia from..." he sputtered, "southern Mongolian border area..." and broke out in riotous laughter.

From the kitchen, Bryant was giggling as he prepared his drink.

Andy continued in the Russian accent. "Salamander Penisface says, 'You will never be able to go to parties with me again, if you do not come with me in my own mouth.'"

The line had actually been 'to Mongolia'.

He continued, quoting me, "'Andy at party: I went to Georgia for Glock training. Salamander Penisface: Oh yeah, I fired off old Soviet munitions in Mongolian hills. Andy leaves party in disgrace.'"

Andy cleared his throat. He picked up the book. "Where were we?"

In *The Bandit's Wench*, Penny, the main character, is invited out to a night club on the eve of a business trip she's taking. She needs to be out the door early the next day, and declines the offer. The other party sneers at this, and says Penny can take an energy drink in the morning to even out.

"Now that's the spirit," Andy declared, ad-libbing his own commentary.

I immediately said, "The last person who told me I could get as drunk as I want, and didn't need to

worry, twenty minutes later ran into the ocean—

Andy didn't even let me finish. Cackling, he said, "Twenty minutes later was an evac ambulance! Like, yeah, twenty minutes later the coast guard showed up and evacuated him with a helicopter. Ah, you know, you really have a good argument with that. Before that you didn't. Because I usually I'm the one who's like, 'ah, get as drunk as you want. What's the worst thing that's gonna happen?' You say that and before you know it you've severed your leg!" Chortling, he continued, "You don't want to take your tap dancing lessons, get drunk and run through the minefield? Come on. What's the worst that's gonna happen? You got minefield insurance right?" With a titter, he said, "Minefield insurance! I didn't get the Blue Cross health insurance, I got the minefield insurance, because I knew if I was ever going to bee-line it across the North Korean border, I'd have to have insurance on at least one of my two legs!"

Bryant finally emerged into the living room with his highball. The ice cubes clinked in the glass. Andy, mid-sentence, added his running commentary. "James Bond's mixing cocktails in the background." Taking on a Connery accent, he said, "Shaken, not shtirred. Shtand-up shixty-nine when I'm shevnty. I believe I've had two hip replashements becaushe I'm shuch a hipshter."

We read for about forty-five minutes. We probably got around eight minutes of finished audio out of that. We were too drunk, and all of us kept interjecting with gobbledygook and nonsense.

The villain of the novel, a man known as the Sun Cat, had a harem of sex slaves to whom he'd given ridiculous porn names. These included Megan Fux, Anna Tendicks, and Bazooka Ho. I knew Andy was not going to be able to get through the sentence where they're all spoken of.

He read, "'Anna Tendicks thought we were going to be killed.'" He continued, in an incredulous tone, "'Bazooka Ho...?'"

Bryant cackled.

Andy said, "I barely passed Anna Tendicks. I saw it, I read it, I didn't fuck it up, and the very next line is Bazooka Ho? Really? Bazooka Ho. Like, I wouldn't fuck Bazooka Ho because I'd be afraid she'd fuck me!" Changing his voice, he continued at breakneck speed, "You want to know why they call me Bazooka Ho? Well surprise, I've got a heat-seeking rocket for your brown-eye!"

Five more minutes. We were still on the same page. Andy said, "Fuck, a lay's a lay even if it's Stockwell Day!" He chuckled. "Remember those Tory bastards? Remember Stockwell Day showed up in a wetsuit on a Sea-Doo to one of his press conferences? Here comes the leader of the opposition. *Vrrrrrooom*. 'Let me tell you why I'm cool with the hip kids!'"

I just let the mic go. It was going to be a bitch to edit, but it would be worth it.

Andy completely disregarded the Australian accent on one line. I said, "Do the Australian accent."

Immediately, he said, "Arr!"

Bryant and I were in stitches.

Andy said, "Oh wait, that's pirate!"

"You're going to have a lot of fun editing this," said Bryant.

Andy said, "Hey, it could have been worse. At least we weren't doing meth the whole night."

Bryant, who didn't understand the reference, guffawed and nearly spat out his vodka.

Leaning in close to the mic, Andy said, "For everyone's information, we've been arguing about Pervitin and the Third Reich. We don't do meth!"

I'm pretty sure I was crying.

He added, "I just felt like we should get that on the tape."

Towards the end of the forty-five minute recording, Andy, as 'Arnould Schwarzenegger', broke out in a rambling, nonsensical, grotesque diatribe. It was almost a poem:

The prolapsed rectum,
Ya know, it's a good time.
You get the Ellen DeGeneres rubber fist out,

It looks like this,
With the index finger forward with the thumb on top,
And then you look down, and the rest of your knuckles line up, ya know,
And you go all rinky-dink,
And you spit on the end,
And you line it up for the prolapse,
And you say,
"Hail Mary,
Full of grace,
Ya know, don't be blasphemous,
While I put my fist inside of you!"
[Spitting sound]
And then, rock and roll,
Spaghetti-o!
Ellen DeGeneres is a degenerate,
So she's Ellen Degenerate;
She made gay cool,
She made cool gay!
Now she's going to turn you into Stockwell Day!
Everyone vote for the Progressive Alliance Conservative Party,
If, ya know, you went back in time,
And you had a wetsuit,
A Sea-Doo,
And it was a good Conservative ploy to get the youth vote, ya know,
But they forgot that ninety percent of the Canadian voters were not youth,
They were baby-boomers,
Who are gonna die in twenty years anyways,
And they didn't care about Sea-Doos,
Or snowmobiles,
Or land moose,
Or air moose,
Or party moose,
Moose-camel,
Moose knuckle,
Camel toe,
Ya know, the party words, you put in your mouth,
And you do the fentanyl,
And you die, ya know.
So don't get the Ellen DeGeneres fist-style wrong,
You've got the index finger going in,
And then the middle finger,
And then the ring finger –
And you don't want to have a ring on your finger,
Because that would be like, ya know, gender appropriation,
Cis, ya know,
You conform to marriage status,
Ya know, you wanna keep the rings on the fingers,
So that when you put the pinky finger in, everyone knows,

That, ya know, you weren't conforming to society anyways!

[Spitting sound]

Bend over, Maria –

Party time!

Bryant called a cab and departed. I chugged water until I felt nauseous.

I climbed up the stairs. The room was rolling like a shipboard cabin. I knew I couldn't go to bed right this instant, even though it was approaching 1am, because any sleep I got would mean absolutely nil. It was much better to rehydrate, rehydrate, rehydrate, while bearing through the worst of the spins.

I got in bed. I propped myself up in a semi-sitting position. I powered up my DVD player and began playing the next episode of *Boardwalk Empire*.

At some point, my phone dinged. I pressed pause on the remote, and slowly read the text. It was Bryant, saying he was home safely. He also included a recitation of a joke from earlier, about sword fights and *baijiu*.

I smirked. I began typing a reply, my mind combing the depths for another joke with which to respond. After a second, I realized my phone had gone to sleep. I opened it back up, finished the text, put the phone away, unpaused *Boardwalk Empire*, and continued watching under the glare of my overhead lamp.

Then I realized something. I said to myself – Why is the room no longer spinning?

I checked the clock. It was 3:30 in the morning. With my phone still in my hand, *Boardwalk Empire* on pause, the harsh yellow glow of my lamp bearing down, half-seated against a couple pillows, I'd lost two and a half hours.

The very first thing I did was chug as much water as I could. Then I turned the TV and the DVD player off, smoothed out the pillows, and tried to go back to sleep.

At around 4:30, I woke up again. I was wrenched out of a deep slumber, and – somehow – tore myself down the stairs and rushed to the bathroom. Just making it to the toilet, my bowels liquefied. It felt like someone had slipped me an industrial-strength laxative. For five or ten minutes, it cascaded out of me like a fire hose. At last, I wiped, then went back to bed.

At some point late in the morning, I awoke. I was more hungover than I'd ever been. I didn't exactly have a headache, as I usually do, but every other part of my body felt like ground hamburger.

I gradually went downstairs. Andy was still asleep on the couch, not even having bothered to set up his cot. My cats, snuggled in like loaves on my easy chair, stared intently at his prone form. I refilled my water jug and went back upstairs. The cats, Rain and Destiny, followed. Both passed out on my bed, as though they hadn't slept all night.

I watched YouTube videos for about an hour. My phone dinged. It was a text I from Bryant. Evidently he'd gone to the washroom in the middle of the night, and passed out, buck naked, on the toilet, where his father found him many hours later.

At last I heard movement downstairs. Andy was awake. I dragged myself downstairs. He was in the same shape as me, and had, apparently, the same bowel explosion halfway through the night.

I began making something carb-heavy and greasy for breakfast. It was not going to be a good day.

My phone rang. It was a call from my mother. She'd just heard from Kelly. Martin's foot was likely going to be fine.

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