

## Cocktail

I was working as a waiter at the Brixton Country Club in the questionable suburbs of New York a year after 9/11 took place. The caution bar was at an all time high, with paranoid juices filling up the void where the Twins used to stand. Orange, red and green were now threat levels, reminders that you were not going *apeshit* as much as you should.

I lived in the golf club with members and staff. The cast was vivid, the place - not so much. Sarah, the heroin addict, was getting obliterated with every visit to the bathroom, Band-Aids falling off of her depending on where she stuck the needle that day. Sam, the constantly stoned pro-golfer, when not playing golf, indulged into inventing swings and drawing them all over his bedroom walls. Think Shawshank Redemption, only with nothing left to redeem. The life of a resident staff member consisted out of copious amounts of drugs and a shitload of golf. We were like hedgehogs on cocaine rolling around a misty meadow, trying to squeeze in that hole-in-twenty as mosquitoes the size of lions bit us in the ass.

I hung out mostly with Justin and Moler. Justin being local and Moler devolving both as a Russian and as a human being. Our more expensive drug dealer Omar provided *nuttin' but high qual shit*, driving around neighborhoods with windows of his fat blue Mercedes tinted black. He marketed his stuff not as "the purest powder you can get your hands on" but as "*this shit was flown in straight from Peru last night, stashed in the bitchez pussy, cuz*".

On that particular evening we rode the subway high, going over and under like a rollercoaster avoiding a meteor shower. I looked forward to anything, anything that would get me through that yuppie night in one piece.

Moler:"I wish I was back home, riding like this."

Justin:"If you were back home, you'd be riding a donkey."

Me:"Yes. A donkey." – screeches teeth.

The cocaine kicked in, pulsating through my spine like alien adrenaline, making me silently shriek with excitement as I turned my tingling head left and a wave of cold sweat splashed over my cowered hands. The eight ball was sliding down my pants, making a run for it. 'Hold on, eight, we can make peace, you and I.' A 12-year-old girl started giving me the evil eye. I tightened my jeans, revealing a bump on my knee, right where the eight ball stopped.

A line of over-enthusiastic self-esteem later and the three of us got of at Penn Station. "God damn it."- I thought. "I need a bathroom stall as soon as possible." I stepped into the toilet room and walked into a clichéd Reservoir Dogs tribute scene. Four cops, two male, two female, all Caucasian, in their mid 20's, fresh out of the academy, were rapidly disemboweling a huge bag with the assistance of their two drug sniffing dogs. The presumable owner of the bag was standing stiff widening his eyes in disbelief as if he was smuggling endangered parrots. I walked towards the stall with each thought freezing in its conception, trying to act normal, begging for one more chance with the Almighty Judge.

Upon arrival at this weird, empty, yet *simply* dashing restaurant, we ordered veal and a couple of bottles of wine to keep us going. Going where? I thought. Is there a clear goal we have tonight? A certain route we have to follow? Maybe we shouldn't have done that much blow before dinner. That veal better be soft.

'Really, Moler? A camera? Are we 14 now? 14 and horny? – I asked the moment I realized we were being filmed.

'Turn that thing off, dude. You look like a tourist.' – Justin smirked.

"So? What it got to do with you?" – Moler asked

Me being in the fucking video, that's what *it got to do with me*.

"That's ok. I show this in Mother Russia, nobody knows you there."

'Mother Russia? Really? - I asked surprisingly.

"Haha, you ask to much, my friend. As we say back home, a guy that asks too much, eventually gets too little." – Moler mumbles while lighting a cigarette, still in his full on peacock posture.

'I hope that's Yoda-talk because what you just said makes no sense.' – Justin replies.

All of a sudden, our waiter materialized, swiftly taking the cigarette from Moler's hand and dropping it in a glass of water.

- No Smoking. Sign. Do you see it? – he asks holding back on his daily suppressed dose of rage, carrying a forced smile while he points his finger at a wall sign just behind Justin's head.

"No, I didn't. I see it now. Ok, ok, I will obey." – he blurted out. I face-palmed myself. The waiter disappeared into the dark side of the empty restaurant.

The veal was really good. Probably the softest veal I had in my life. Wine went down smoothly, accompanied by a random cigarette on the restaurant patio. I felt invigorated and confident because I knew we had more drugs to do and enough time to do them. Walking down Canal Street, we noticed a medium size dive bar called Pistil's. The DJ was indecisive, playing tracks from electro house to Britney Spears, but we didn't care. Except for Moler. He cared so much that the first thing he said when we walked in the bar was, when translated from Russian, something like: "What the fuck, guys? What are we doing here? What the fuck is this?" No idea what he was getting at there, but I pretended I didn't know him and sat right at the bar where I demanded a J&B on the rocks; I'm just that kind of guy.

I met around sixty people that night. The only person I remembered the next day was a hooker who pretended to want me. I said I was gay. She said she knew it. I said I knew she did. Ironically, we all ended up in a gay bar at four o'clock on Lafayette Street where a gay remix of No Doubt was pumping on the dance floor making the gayest of them all dance like animals let loose out of a cage. And they really let go. They seemed to be taking dancing very seriously, using their arms as some sort of propellers. You felt like you just entered a blender factory when you hit the dance floor. They weren't all gay men; there was a fair amount of

lesbians making out as well. But Moler and Justin weren't feeling it. The gayness was creeping up their skin, with anal images flowing through their cocained mind. But, in reality, nobody was going to put them on a pole and ass-fuck them to death. If you don't let them, that is. And you're afraid you will. Phobos.

After the escape from Cockatraz, I ended up in a supermarket trying to explain to the store manager how there is no such thing as glass. He was insistent on convincing me otherwise but I stood by what I said by muttering utter bullshit at him until Justin and Moler dragged me away towards the register.

In the cab on the way to a house party in Queens, I looked to my right and there was this girl we picked up from I don't know where. Maybe she was in the cab all along. She smiled at me and pulled out a chicken leg from her pocket and started casually chewing. I puked a little inside my mouth but then I swallowed it back.

Somebody shook me hard and put me in a living room of some orange apartment in Queens where I was amazed at how much blow can make way for even more blow. That experience was enhanced by this pseudo fucking narrator of a guy named Seth or Slith or Smth., who works as a bartender on Canal Street, has an inside little Buddha who talks through him in suave waves of bullshit and has just completed his 12<sup>th</sup> degree as a sommelier. The way he talks about *vino* is mouthwatering. He can turn a pedophile-kindergarten news bulletin into a fairy tale by the time he's done with it.

Every once in a while somebody fainted. Slith didn't mind that, though. He kept shooting the shit with stories on how glue was discovered. By the time he switched to global warming, we were glued to the coffee table like it was an Ouija board.

Instead of a joint, Justin, who was sitting right next to me, passed me a small bottle mimicking how I'm supposed to consume it. I asked what is it. Somebody said its mushrooms in acid. Why? I asked silently. Why put mushrooms in acid? Aren't they psychotic enough? I refused to answer these questions because I couldn't resist the temptation. I inhaled, my brain turned for around 180 degrees but instead of fainting I got the urge to jump out of a window that was in front of me.

Me: "Listen... Justin, I'm gonna go jump out of that window."

Justin: "What?"

Me: "Could you, uhm, uhm, not tell everyone I'll do it?"

Justin: "Come again?"

Me: "Even after I do it, y'know, don't spread it, y'know wot I mean, y'know wot I mean?"

Back on Penn Station, Moler was stumbling behind me, wasted out of his mind, trying to compose a decent thought that would distance him from the wall that was leading him in the wrong direction. Justin picked him up and dragged him towards the train station.

I stood guard and tried to act normal while Justin ran around like a beheaded chicken, looking for the train schedule. Moler just sat there on the floor while the cleaning lady mopped around him. But only then did Moler decide to puke all over the mop making Mrs. Ching completely loose her shit. This alarmed the armed guards who started assembling and approaching us with caution, just in case we turn into mutant ninjas all of a sudden. As the heavily armed guard approached, I noticed he was putting on white gloves. Could be better, I said to myself.

Me: "Moler, do you have anything on you?" – I whisper.

Moler: "Again with the questions, you *popugaj*. Why?" – he mumbles still semi-fainted.

Me: "Oh, nuttin'. Just 20 guys with guns coming right at us."

Moler: "Hehe, crazy...american...not falling for that one." – he puked a little on his left shoulder.

Me: "Moler, we're in deep shit, do you have anything on you?" – I shake him.

Moler just grabs his crotch Michael Jackson style and passes out. My head swells up and I calm down. I stood up as the guard threateningly walked towards me and I started making these hand gestures like I just got a yellow card in the middle of a friendly football game. The guard didn't follow my lead.

Me: "No, officer, its ok."

Officer: "Oh its pretty far from ok, son."

Me: "He's my friend, he got a little drunk. Im fine, Im taking him home, I didn't have that much to drink."

Officer: "It's not ok, it's a problem!" – he yells.

Me: "No, really, its not your problem."

Officer: "You're making it my problem!"

Me: "Ok, listen, I am not supposed to be here anymore than he is, we just missed the train, he got a bit drunker than usual, he's not a heavy drink..."

Officer: "Shut up, just shut up. Take his ass home before we do. And don't make me come back here again."

Me: "Yes sir, of course, sir!"

I tipped the cab driver seventy dollars but he said that wasn't not enough to clean up Moler's vomit on the back seat. I said *go fuck yourself buddy* and tapped on the windshield. He started swearing in Spanish and drove away. We entered the country club, put Moler to bed and went to the roof.

On the roof, Justin and I spread three more lines of pure wisdom celebrating the celebration on intoxication. Justin went first, and as he was about to snort that first line, a drop of blood ran through the \$20 bill and dropped on the coke in front of us. He screeched into a short high-pitched laughter and I finally lost consciousness.