

Flirting With Immortality

by Nathaniel Tower

"I know I'm gonna die."

Famous last words.

"I know I'm gonna die."

Yet they never were.

"I know I'm gonna die."

And he never did.

"I know I'm gonna die."

A valediction of the eternal truth that man is mortal. He said it over and over. Pretty much any time anything happened, those five prophesying words would roll off his tongue as if they meant nothing.

That stupid bastard seemed to defy death at every turn in his life. His actions suggested invincibility, but his catch phrase indicated full awareness that he was indeed quite vincible.

And how fitting was his name. We didn't know if it indeed was his given name, for we had never seen a birth certificate, but the bastard swore his name was Vince. What a name for an invincible individual. Vince.

He didn't wear a seatbelt. Drove double the speed limit while not wearing it. Smoked. Two packs a day. Sometimes three. Drank. No way of telling how much. Ate raw chicken. I'm not sure why. It couldn't possibly taste good. Jumped out of upper story windows. Played with matches near leaking gas. Put his mouth over the tailpipe of my running car once. Had sex with a prostitute that told him she had AIDS. When he didn't get it, he nailed her again. Didn't wear a condom either time. If you could think of any way to shorten one's lifespan, whether it be as common as not wearing sunscreen for prolonged periods of sun exposure or as absurd as jamming a screwdriver into an electric socket while drinking Drain-O, he had either done it or was now going to do it because you gave him the idea.

After witnessing him surfing in the Pacific Ocean with giant hunks of raw meat tied to his feet, dragging behind him in the waters that were soon shark-infested and made those Baywatch people clear the ocean and the beach of all humans and canines, I determined that he was truly the one immortal being in the world. For some unknown reason, some special deity had decided to give this otherwise worthless human being the ability to defy death at every situation. Death himself could have walked up to Vince, held out his hand, and Vince would have happily taken it and led Death into a burning building, or maybe he would tandem skydive with the grisly figure without a parachute. He probably would have killed Death. I wonder then if we would all become immortal or if Vince would just have to resume the responsibilities. That didn't matter though.

My friends and I were tired of his stupid acts. We would sometimes sprain ankles walking up stairs or get hideous paper cuts counting money for a church. He would wrestle a bear in the woods, walk into a steel mill and call everybody a bunch of faggots, and he would never have a scratch on his ugly body. Perhaps it was jealousy. Or maybe I just needed to know that all humans were mortal. Either way, something drove me to come up with a plan. Vince had to die. And I was going to be the one to kill the dumb son-of-a-bitch.

I figured from watching all the ridiculous things that he had done, that I would have to create the most ridiculously elaborate plan to ensure his death. This would be a plan so complex and intricate that there would be no way to hide that it had been me when the trial rolled around. My only line of defense would be that the bastard was immortal, but since he would be dead, my defense would be out the window. I'd probably just confess to the whole thing, adding in my plea that he had it coming. Or I could just say he told me to do it. Anyone that had known him would be able to back me up on that.

So here's what I did. I purchased rat poison, a shotgun, an axe, a pound of cocaine, a tank of propane, a heavy-duty lighter, a

grenade, a black mamba snake, a gallon of rubbing alcohol, some rope, and a Celine Dion CD. Don't ask me where I got the money to buy all that. And don't ask me where I bought a black mamba snake. And don't ask me about how embarrassed I was when I had to buy that Celine Dion CD. Just be satisfied knowing that I got it all.

I took it to his house. He lived alone, which made sense considering how ugly and intolerable he was. When he saw me at the door with my hands full of all that crap, the snake of course in a thick glass cage, I'm sure he thought this was just another challenge for him.

I mixed the cocaine and the rat poison into the rubbing alcohol, reserving a couple ounces of the solution for later. I put the Celine Dion CD in his CD player, and turned the volume all the way up. I told him to drink the solution while pointing the gun at his head. He did. When he finished, I tied him up with the rope and chopped off his legs with the axe. Then I shot him in the chest with the shotgun. The bastard was leaking blood everywhere, just a bloody stump on the floor, and I couldn't tell whether or not he was alive, but I couldn't take any chances. He didn't much look like Vince anymore.

The rest I would have to do quickly. I opened the valve of the propane tank, poured the remaining alcohol all over it, ran to the front door carrying the grenade, mamba snake cage, and lighter. I threw the cage with all my might onto the hardwood floor adjacent to the body. It of course shattered and out came that huge slithering venom carrier. Without looking to see if it started attacking the torso or the legs, I opened the front door, pulled the pin on the grenade, tossed it with perfect aim right at the propane tank, and ran for my life. I noticed as I ran that I was still carrying the lighter, and I wondered why I hadn't used it in my plan. I made it across the street before the explosion took out the house and the two next to it.

I didn't waste any time admiring my work. Once I recovered from the force of the blast, I rose to my feet and ran about ten steps

before the police apprehended me. There were fire trucks and ambulances there already, too. I'm not sure who called them, but I know it wasn't me.

The judge told me that I was the sickest human being he had ever met. I'm not sure why I told him everything I had done. I didn't have to tell him anything. The blast took away all of the evidence. I could have just gone to jail for the explosion. Probably would have just been involuntary manslaughter or something like that.

They sentenced me to the electric chair. I guess I deserved it, although I wish I lived in a state that didn't have the death penalty.

Yesterday, the damndest thing happened. Vince came and visited me. I was stunned when I saw his face. Of course I figured that since he was alive that they would release me. He asked me why I did all of that to our friend Vaughn. Told me that I was a bastard and was going to hell. I told him to just drop dead. He of course didn't.

