

Part 3

An Ordinary Life

Shopping At The Weekly Market

"We have the vegetables, do we need meat?"

"Not for me. A curry, vegetables and potatoes?"

"Sounds good. Do we have still from the curry paste?"

"In any case. What do we still need? Cheese definitively."

"And we should not forget eggs and milk."

"Some herbs?"

"I fear we will need some more time, till have all."

"No need to hurry. We've still two hours till we have to open the shop."

"Would give us even time for a coffee?"

"A coffee is never a mistake - wow, these tomatoes are looking very nice."

"Let's fetch some."

*

"We could have our coffee also when in the shop?"

"Sure, but I think they have also some nice Danish pastry."

"You're eating too much sweet stuff, since you're my employee."

"Well, that's the curse of dealing no longer with criminals, but with stuffed animals. It's not so a problem now, that you trousers are a bit tighter now."

"Maybe it becomes a problem for me?"

"Do you think that I get fat?"

"What does the scale tells you?"

"The battery is empty, I've to buy a new one."

"You should do this very soon."

"Okay, one?"

"One together I would say?"

"Okay, let's enter."

*

It was nice in the café, the coffee excellent, the Danish pastry as well. One with poppy, one for us both, but that was okay. Without any doubts, I had started to gain weight, never I had been the most athletic guy, but as a private dick also no couch potato.

I needed compensation, I had to compensate the fact, that I had a very different lifestyle now. All very regular, all very plannable now. I found enough sleep now, ate mostly healthy food, less coffee and more tea. No longer I exploited my body so much, perfect, would expand my lifetime maybe, but in a way I felt irritated. I had started to eat chocolate in the evenings for instance, how many evenings and nights I had spent on the streets or sitting in the car, some hot coffee with me. A lot had changed, and I was happy about it, only that I had some problems therewith to.....

".....and maybe I'm still here, Peter?"

"Sorry, I.....we're sitting here in this nice café, and everything is fine. Okay, nothing is okay in Washington. Nothing is okay in Texas, Florida, the pandemic, we're still on the track to gamble away our democracy. I no longer carry a gun with me, I no longer try to solve cases. I try to live a balanced life now, and it's nice to sit in this cozy café with you. But it's like sitting in a beautiful castle and looking at a hideous world."

"And you should be the chevalier, leaving the beautiful castle and his.....wife, to pass adventures and to rescue the world?"

"The chevalier is old now, he knows that his adventures will not change the world. He likes it now, to sit with his wife, watching the flames at night. We should decamp, the shop waits."

"And in the evening?"

"Neither your nor my condo has an open-hearth fireplace, but we could sit together?"

"Like an old couple?"

"Yeah."

*

"Had been a nice day in the shop. Some good sales, but I also enjoyed the rest."

"Yeah, let's prepare dinner with the food we have bought in the morning."

"And then we can sit together like an old couple - I only switch on the TV for the latest news."

"What is, why you don't come?"

"Again and again, always the same, the next mass shooting."

"Where?"

"A town, somewhere, but will find not that much attention."

"Why?"

"Only three women have been killed, and a thirteen-year-old girl. The police has killed the shooter as he tried to escape. They are not sure at the moment, but all points to the next white male psycho."

"No political background?"

"No, but I'm not certain if this should be a good message. I mean, a terrorist is a terrorist, but we have no problems therewith, to sell every psycho guns and ammunition not even a normal soldier will ever see. This is simply sick."

"Yeah, dinner?"

"Yeah, dinner."

A Good Agreement

"You're confident?"

"Yes, it makes no sense to deny your past."

"My sordid past?"

"Not a movie from the 50s, or a song thinking about that time. But we should accept that you have worked as a private investigator."

"Especially because my last case has been facilitated by you?"

"Maybe, and as long as you can see the shop as the most important part?"

"In any case. Yes, I think that this could be a good basis for the following. The shop, my ambitions to become maybe more political, our living together.....and maybe, why not, from time to time, a little special."

"But the real big cases you can leave to the others, or what's your opinion?"

"Yes, they are younger and have more ambitions. I have the shop now, your shop, as the middle of my life."

"Our shop?"

"Me as your associate?"

"Well, somewhat in that way....."

New Goods

The days passed by.....well, soon it would be November again. Much had changed during the last year, but some aspects not, and they would have been so important. Still a democracy on the brink, still a pandemic. Still fucking conservatives, and Joe Biden had lost at least some of his momentum. Should the committed give you hope, when would we see the man in court, who had stained the White House for four years? They demanded, in Brazil, that Bolsonaro should be prosecuted. Had not found the impulse to get political, at least actively, thought about to start a blog or so. It

would be the easy way, sitting at home and writing words, not starting to become directly involved. But who would read my words, enough blogs were still there, could I say something not already written a thousand times in the newspapers? I could write down my thoughts, and even if not something "totally new", it would have been my thoughts in any case.

I loved it to work at the shop, to have this regular course of the day. I had the feeling that it gave me a certain feeling of security, as well as that there were somebody at night, not only hearing my breathing, not only feeling the cushions and blankets. A feeling of security and caring, warmth in a cold world.

We had received a delivery from Sweden today, now I knew what a Dala horse was, and they looked real nice. Some blankets, the Swedish loved their blankets, blankets for kids, but also some for parents. Of course, some items related to Astrid Lindgren, even some of her books written in Swedish language. I had not known it, but in the city we had a not small share of population with Scandinavian roots, mostly from Sweden. Many Swedes had left their country in the 19th century. They had immigrated because they had hopped to find a better live in the "new world". For some the dream came true, the American temptation. And today? I had no numbers, but why the hell a Swedish citizen should decide to emigrate today, to the USA at least, giving up all that what the Swedish nation offered him or her? To have no longer good health care, worker rights, a government that cared for all? Not all perfect in Sweden, they even had their Nazis, but not the problem that a significant part of the (conservative) politicians and (conservative) population tried to destroy the basic democratic order every day.

I had finished work first today. We started the day always together, decided later who would end the workday first, to have time to do some shopping, other things that had to be done, and to prepare dinner. Today it had been easy, nothing had to be bought, I had had time to prepare a very fine dinner, four courses. A salad, a soup, a main course, and a desert - we would have time, Saturday night, the shop would be closed tomorrow. We had decided to stay at home, like an old couple. I smiled and tasted the sauce, a sauce made with Pernod, fish stock and cream, flavored with garlic, Chinese anise, and other herbs. I was satisfied, it would become a very nice evening.

A Conversation Of Two American Citizens

"The COP26 summit has started today."

"Yeah, but should one have hope?"

"They have to start with distinct steps this time, or it will be to late."

"As if this could be a reason for them to get a global view, no longer this national shit. Have you heard their warm words today?"

"Yes, and they can frighten you only, I have to say. When this "world leaders" talk this way, then you know that nothing will happen in the end - nothing again."

"The role of Biden?"

"With his problems at home? His approval rates are devastating now. And all because of an idiot like Manchin."

"That's maybe too simple, but it always fits. The worst enemy for a Democrat is another Democrat. If I was Mitch, then I would laugh a lot these days."

"It's only to hope that they will get to the ground of the happenings of January the sixth, this would be important for 2022."

"But this will not rescue the climate."

"No, I hope that the coming elections will have a good outcome for the Dems."

"And that the Supreme Court will not act totally corrupt."

"The next days will be very crucial, for us, in the States, as well as for the rest of the world."

"And what is more important now? That our nation will not become a fascist nation, or that the summit would yield substantial results?"

"For the world as such, COP26, for us, that we do not lose our democracy. But it would be a

disaster for the world, would the US become a failed nation, and we would have no future would we keep our democracy, but the fires and storms would destroy our nation."

"Yeah, it doesn't help. It will be nothing, to solve one problem and the other one will kill you. And even if we will solve these problems, we have to deal with racism, a corrupt white "upper class", a horrible school system.....no good presuppositions to be relaxed."

"We will be, at least somewhat, "wiser" at the end of the week. More relaxed? I've no good feeling."

"Ice cream?"

"Something sweet wouldn't be bad now."

Worries

"No good election day it had been. And now? Again they search for enough votes, again the same DC farce."

"A representative has a right to an own mind."

"Yeah, because fucking Manchin cares for anything else than his coal. It's this petty-minded thinking that will kill us all. Manchin has no scruples to kill the nation for personal reasons. It will not be relevant whether he will be reelected, it will be important that the Democrats will win in 2022. All this fucking nations in Rome and Glasgow, they will kill us all because every nation sees only itself, but no one the planet. And meanwhile, thanks to our fucking political system, one of the two parties we have, they do everything to stain our democracy. I'm hacked off."

"A lot of "fucking" in your sentences. You're so skeptical."

"Give me a glimpse, fifty years in future. I fear that the world will be an entirely different world then. Worse than now, if I have to say it. The USA after a civil war, and I mean a civil war. Larger parts of the world unlivable.....I'm no novelist, but I fear that it will be as always. Look at past utopias and dystopias. Yes, they predicted some, but many of the most incisive developments nobody saw. Look at what already happens at our southern borders, what happens at European borders, this will become so much worse. No, I'm not very hopeful. Whereby, we're white and live in the USA? The day we would really suffer, that day the world would.....have we any problems therewith, I mean real problems, no hypocritical ones, therewith, that children around the world have to suffer every day, suffer, to "bestow" us our richness?"

"No, but....."

"I feel so empty."

Having Some Good Tea

"You're enjoying your tea?"

"Yeah, it's a very fine tea."

"In no good mood? Biden has done the next step."

"More a baby step. And Obama finished me off, his talking. He had been never president - or. He had never the opportunity to change something - or. It's pathetic to hold such a speech now, now he has only to speak, but has to bear no consequences anymore. I get sick of all this babbling, even if I will have not to bear the consequences of their refusal to act, I will be dead when the real severe consequences of their failure will take place. But has this to make me happy?"

"Still some time, maybe there will be a rethinking when the consequences will become even more noticeable?"

"Would be the first time that the human beings would act in such a clever and foresighted way."

"The CFCs?"

"Yeah, but I fear that this problem had been a triviality compared with the problem of climate change. And we have still to fight for our democracy. The tea is fine and my mood chastened."

"Difficult times, if you only be somewhat interested in, what happens in the world and in our

country. Living your little life, I assume that reality will destroy even the last ivory tower, or little cozy rosy dreamworld, in the course of the next years."

"It's to hope, it's definitively to hope."

*

"The dead body of a teenager was found this morning near the closed cupboard factory at the river. The police gave no details so far, but has hold out the prospect for a press conference later the day. Sources have told us that the police considers the case as a crime, and that it would be a female of South American descent. We will keep you informed, should we get new details."

The Party Is Over

"Wow, no kidding, they, in fact, came to a final agreement. Of course, the usual empty words and bombastic phrases, but the world can go to bed now, to find cozy dreams, when they will awake again hell will await them. You know what history books write about the conferences, where they discussed how to deal with Adolf Hitler, their insights: It all will not get that problematic, we do a little to please him, then everything will be good. The gas chambers and millions dead on the battlefields had been the result - a fatal misjudgment. But this time it would be pure science, scientists predicted everything thirty, forty years ago. Scientists are telling you today what the world will look like if we will not act. Future generations will be shocked by our today's behavior."

"Sorry, if I say this. But it's the conservatives who still deny climate change."

"And the Dems? Nice words, but a few deeds only. You're not telling me that Wall Street can love a Republican even more, than Wall Street loved and still loves the Clintons - or. And to call Barack Obama a progressive.....would be not only a little joke, I would say. The lefties always know how everything could be so better. But if in office, not much eventuates in the end. I mean, their committee? They needed how long, to indict Bannon? Wow, they show the right-wing how strong and resolute they are acting."

"I'm not convinced about, that you will not have to argue very differently in a few weeks. Yes, I share your concerns - a dead Dem at the side of the road. Best is, to question the Dems who had been around him first. I'm pretty confident about, that the committee will get the documents in the end, they will be much more interesting than a Bannon talking shit or nothing. It's still time until 2022."

"Yeah, like the tax returns of the former president. It was so shocking what we all know now, what information they have provided us. Two impeachments, what a farce. Two Republicans awaiting you to kill you? You're dead. Two Dems? They will start a discussion about, what would be the best way to kill you, and whether it's more morally acceptable to do it in this or that way, you could simply walk away. The Dems talk a lot, but....."

"Yeah, but all this Republican lunatics? All the shit, they are saying, funny videos?"

"It's shit, what they are saying, but they would have no scruples to destroy this nation and our democracy. Not much, and our democracy would have ended in January. America fears communism, what a stupid idea. America will never become a communist nation, but a fascist country? This cannot be ruled out."

"But maybe all this, as well as the pandemic, is of less importance in the end. They failed that much in Glasgow, maybe we all will have soon only one real problem, how to survive, the sheer existence."

*

"After nearly a week, the police can still not say much about the found dead body. A young woman, around sixteen years old, most probably from Venezuela. The young woman was illegally in the

United States, no legal entering could be verified. She had no documents - even after all these days also today the police provided no distinct information about the circumstances of her death. Many rumors.

According to our sources it's a case about drugs, human trafficking and illegal prostitution, about links to celebrities, politicians and some of the most wealthy in our nation. Too much Hollywood? But why then the police gives us no better information? We will keep you informed."

Two Dead, One Wounded

"Surprised by the verdict?"

"In all charges? It's hard for me to believe that he has no responsibility at all. Give a boy a weapon and something bad will happen - but of course, we will not discuss this. We're in a war, call it collateral damage if you like."

"To be honest, I'm a woman, and they say that women are too emotional. That women can be easily dazzled by emotional outbursts. But he? His two "meltdowns" were too much for me, in the sense, that they appeared for me, too much like rehearsed performances. Okay, there was a lot of self-pity, in that aspect they could be real in the end."

"Wow! I'm surprised that your assessment is that harsh."

"Don't understand me wrong. The guy with the handgun? Sorry, but give two immature guys, and guys are so often immature, a gun, normally at least one will be dead at the end. Get this fucking guns off the streets! And, a guy killed two guys and wounded another guy? Any conspicuousness?"

"Yeah, I know a British sketch about hooligans. The punchline is, cut off their goolies. Have you seen women in these videos? How many women have stormed the Capitol? Fucking white men, they are the cancer of this nation."

"White men like you - I'm at least a woman! And come on, at least the president has done an important step forward today."

"And now we have to deal with fucking Manchin again. And I'm not convinced that the Dems acted that clever a few days ago."

"Gosar?"

"Yeah, one of this totally nuts GOP freaks. But come on, AOC? She's a tough woman, she would have been able to kill this asshole Gosar with one speech. They have to concentrate on 2022, they have to tell the people again and again that it will be an election about no less than the future of our country, our republic, our constitution, our flag, our democracy. But hey, we talk about the Democrats?"

"I've the feeling sometimes, that I'm more confident about that the Democrats will be capable to accomplish their goals, than you."

"I'm too long a supporter of the Dems."

*

"Breaking news! Nearly two weeks after the dead body of a young, presumably Venezuelan, woman has been found, the police department still has provided no distinct information about the case. But a major new development has occurred now, the FBI has taken over the investigation.

Our sources have told us that it would be no longer only a matter of our city, not even only the state, but of national interest. Interesting in that regard seems to be a tweet from our Republican governor. Yesterday, before the involvement of the FBI became public, he tweeted, that he would follow very interested the investigation in this case. He continued, that he would not be surprised if this case had severe consequences, especially also for some democratic politicians in our city and the state, maybe even nationwide. The governor was not within reached the whole day, his office refused any comment. Of course, we also tried to get a statement from the FBI, but they told us that they could give us no details at the moment, because of investigationwise reasons. Rumors are heard, that there

should be a connection to the Epstein case. It seems, all points to the fact that, this case has the potential to become a political scandal for the Democrats, at a time, it could be not worse for the president. We'll keep you informed"

Between Two Trials

"I've the feeling that someone is interested in, that this nation comes not to a rest. And I don't mean with that, that there are interest groups that are still trying to destroy our democracy. But when thinking back, I cannot remember any time when that much happened, and any of it would have the potential to become a threat, a real danger, if not a catastrophe, if not the final disaster. It nearly seems as that someone would do all that in the hope, that at least one of these attempts to harm or destroy our nation would play out. If I believed in God, this God, I would have to ask him: What did we wrong that you punish us that much? And He would answer: You really have still to ask?"

"We've done a lot of wrong as a nation. Maybe it's the time now, to pay the bill? Wait till a dirty nigger runs down the street, in his shabby shorts, and shoot him. As Biden said, we will be a beacon for the world again - was not aware about that Biden can be that sarcastic."

"I fear that he meant it seriously."

*

"I found a letter in my mailbox."

"Is this not wherefore mailboxes are, that one can find letters in them?"

"Yeah, but it's a letter without a stamp. Someone threw the letter in, it's no posted letter."

"Well, not that mysterious - or. The content?"

"Someone gives me a tip."

"Okay?"

"Ask your friends from the Democrats, if you wish to get answers about the found dead body of the South American underage woman. You should ask our mayor especially, the one you always elected, supported and about whom you think that he's such a nice guy. - Apart from, that I've never met our mayor, it's all the details that disturb me. The letter is longer. It ends: Maybe you should not play with children's toys that much now, maybe you should be more interested in the fucking truth regarding our city?"

"What will you do now?"

"Maybe asking for a meeting with the mayor? Maybe I should throw the letter in the waste-basket? Whatever, whoever wrote the letter, this person knows me very well. Let's have dinner, I have to ponder about it."

Meeting The Mayor

"What can I do for you, Mr. Maurer. What I know is, that it would be important, would be connected with a crime, a recent crime - the South American woman?"

"Is this the reason why I got that fast an appointment? To make it short, yes."

"Gosh, you're not an unknown person in our city. I mean.....I will not ask you for the detailed circumstances now, but I can tell you that I was on your side. And I always thought that you would be on my side of the political spectrum - do you have information? Should you not speak with the police then?"

"I've elected you, if you mean that. But we're not talking about politics now, we're talking about a crime. I got an anonymous hint."

"Okay?"

"Someone thought that it could be interesting to speak with you, would I be interested in, to get

answers about her death."

"Well, you don't take this seriously - or."

"What?"

"That I could be involved in this crime."

"As I said, it's not about politics, it's about a crime - in this crime? In what crimes are you involved? Whatever, I think that we can agree therein, that even Democrats commit from time to time a crime, even a murder."

"Of course."

"You ever met Mr. Epstein?"

"Is this an interrogation?"

"I'm a private investigator, no prosecutor. But there are aspects that are not connected to wealth or political convictions. Men cheat their wives, not only the fucking former president, even Dems are doing this. Men kill, men have their "difficulties" with their sexuality. Some can only get a boner when they can dominate their sexual partner, young women are easier to dominate - the younger, the better. And being illegal in this country is also a good aspect. And this has nothing to do with your political convictions."

"I highly agree with you. But, and this is my perspective - you got an anonymous letter? And now you're sitting here and speaking with me in this way? About what we're talking?"

"Yeah, wasn't I your darling a short time ago? The letter was long, it included some very private details about me, but also about you. I can only talk about the details that touched me, but those were well-researched. The details about you? I could give you the parts of the letter that mention you - interested?"

"And the parts that mention you?"

"They are private. Those who should know them are knowing them. Interested?"

"Would you conclude that I'm involved in the case, would I be interested? You're a private investigator?"

"Maybe it's pure curiosity?"

"Why not."

I handed him a copy of a part of the letter and sipped at my coffee. He started to skim-read the text, then he looked at me.

"You're awaiting a statement now?"

"Not now."

"What will you do now?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing? Why're you here then?"

"Call it pure curiosity. I give nothing on anonymous letters. Can you tell me why I got this letter? I would have sent it to the press."

"That's a good argument, maybe we should not end our conversation?"

"I've time, a new coffee would be nice."

"No problem, my secretary will bring us two new ones."

"Only one question I would have."

"Okay."

"You know the name of the killed woman?"

"That's a strange question. I could have killed her without knowing her name. On the other side, maybe the police gave me information the public has not. Why this question?"

"Luisa Castillo, that claims the writer of the letter at least. As said, interesting details in it."

"What's your conclusion?"

"All ,or at least most of, the details about you in the letter are correct. I'm not sure about the murder case. But I still don't understand why I got the letter. As said, I would have sent it to the press. If this letter gets public, your political career is at its end. No chance any longer to become our next governor, maybe even more in the future?"

"And you, will you make the letter public?"

"No, you know what's to do. There's someone out there who knows a lot about you, shall he make it public."

"And all the details about you?"

"Well, I've no wife and children, I'm no politician. It's publicly known that I hate racists and supremacists. I'm over twenty years older than you, my life comes to an end now. Any idea about, who could be the sender of the letter?"

"No, not with all this details. I would have an idea who could be behind all that, but why also you?"

"If you have our governor and his bunch in mind, then it would be obvious."

"That would make sense."

*

"Satisfied with this conversation?"

"Well, there's a strange aspect."

"Yes."

"Why I got this letter."

"And what's your conclusion? Or should I say, the mayor's and your's conclusion?"

"It seems, as that someone is interested in that I end the mayor's career."

"So, you would say that the mayor's career is at its end? You gave me not the complete letter."

"I gave you the parts that deal with me. I'm not convinced about, if everything in the letter about the mayor is true. Especially about the dead woman, even her name is still not verified. But already one or two of the mentioned points would end his career. Looked at that way, his career is dead, whatever will be true in the end."

"Maybe all is wrong?"

"He did not react in that way. But I still ponder about the question, why shall I be the one who would end the mayor's career? Is it only about me? I'm no important figure, I do not understand this."

"Well, maybe it's only a kind of game for someone, to end two careers in one whack, and having fun while doing it?"

"Okay, the mayor. But, I and career? I had never any kind of "career"."

"Reputation?"

"No, there's not much in it, I've no real skeletons in the closet - or. I've ended my "career" as a private investigator, will you end our relation because of this letter?"

"No. It was not that shocking.....well,.....you know what's somewhat critical."

"I regret nothing."

"And I will not leave you."

"What was the intention of the sender? Answering this question could lead to the sender of the letter."

"And the dead woman?"

"I've the feeling that this is also my case now."

Death In America

"Have you heard about that school shooting in Germany?"

"No."

"Nine incidences, most of them not with many victims, most not with guns, but one with sixteen shot dead school kids."

"This year?"

"Since 2000, in the last twenty-two years. And these are surprisingly many incidences, at least for Europe. Not more than three happened in other European countries. So much about that topic."

"The United States is as large as Europe, one should consider this as well."

"Yeah, and their streets are not flooded with guns. Outrage for two weeks, ask in two weeks again."

"The dead South American woman?"

"She was illegal in the USA, a Latina, a woman, most probably a bitch. Why should one even waste only one thought on her? More tea?"

"Yeah, and I'm as tired as you, as disappointed as you."

An Evening In The Bar

I had decided to spend the evening in a bar, my old favorite bar. There had been times when I sat at this counter definitively more than one time a week, and had a talk with the man behind it. But I lived, most oft the time, in a different part of the city now, had a relationship now, no longer I walked through the streets alone. But I had the feeling today that I would need an evening, and most probably a night, for me alone. I had to ponder on some important questions. Where better one could do this than being in a bar, a strong cocktail in front of you, speaking with the bartender.

"Alone, or is Caroline coming later?"

"No, I need some time to mull some matters."

"Relationship problems?"

"No, at least not regarding Caroline. I've the feeling that someone tries to fool me, only not sure who. Caroline is wonderful, she gives me security. Without her? - Give me a cocktail first."

"I would expect, if no problems with Caroline, no hard one?"

"On the contrary – not Caroline. But I would prefer an Old Fashioned with overproof rum, like in the "old days". But maybe it should become the only one, the only hard one, the one or other lighter drink later? And you're also known for, that even your non-alcoholic cocktails can be very sophisticated. You prepared for Caroline one of this non-alcoholic cocktails one time who had been fantastic, with black sesame."

"I can remember. But we will start with a hard one?"

"And we will end with a non-alcoholic one."

"That's a deal."

*

I sat alone at the moment, my dialog partner had something to do. The bar was not much filled this evening, but four tables - two, two times four, and a group with seven women. They drank the normal women's stuff, but then they drank fast, the man behind the bar had some to do – some sales, not the worst in those times. I had my second one, again an Old Fashioned, but with rosemary and a rye this time.

I sat alone at the counter, until the door opened, and a single man entered the bar – no breathtaking redhead in a tight dress. Yeah, the lonely private dick sitting in a bar.....what nice topos. He walked straight to the counter, let one bar chair empty, on the second he laid his long woolen coat, on the third he sat down. Black leather shoes, looked very normal, black socks, blue cotton trousers, a white shirt, a blue single-row jacket, no tie, one button open. He looked like a guy who would try unsuccessfully to pretend that he would be a successful businessman – I started to ignore him as he placed his order, a standard Whiskey Sour. No big deal for a bartender, he had therefore time for me very soon again.

"I agree with you, 2022 will be a crucial year for our nation."

"Yeah, so much turmoil in our nation today. But be honest, when it had been better? The time of slavery? The time when they assassinated JFK and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? The McCarthy years? The Bush father and son and their fucking wars? One could continue, the time we killed all those who had lived here for centuries, the time when immigrants from Western Europe fought against immigrants from Eastern Europe? We could lose our democracy in 2022 and 2024, but how democratic has this nation, the South for instance, been all the time - a state like Georgia?"

Whenever has Georgia been a real solid and modern democracy? But even California, most of the Californians still like it to kill criminals, very modern. And you don't tell me that the Latinos and all the other "minorities" have equal rights, that California has not also their white gentry? Only one look at the fucking Hollywood sign tells you all."

"Because we're better in our state or our city. Sorry that I interfere, but we're no inch better."

The "businessman" had said something – I was no fan of speaking with strangers, not even sitting in a bar with a cocktail in front of me. I was no fan of, while having a private conversation, that somebody interrupted me. But obviously this was no reason for the other guy to do exactly that. And even more, he was not willing to leave it at this comment, he had to say more, much more. Come one, still your first cocktail, a fucking simple Whiskey Sour, one cheap cocktail and already drunken? Even the girls had a higher tolerance, it seemed even higher than mine. They gave, unfortunately, a sign that they wished to order a new round of drinks. My bartender let me alone with this guy.

*

"All these progressives "Democrats". They are a pathetic bunch, but not more. In front of cameras they talk about this "Me-Too-shit", behind closed doors they fuck their secretaries and get girls from Epstein. I get sick when I hear our mayor speaking in TV, posing with his "beloved" wife and his "nice" daughters – he's a pedophile, everyone knows it."

"Could it be that you have sent me a letter?"

"No idea, who are you?"

"If you really don't know me, then I would say that I haven't received a letter from you. All this information, where you get it from?"

"First a question."

"Okay."

"You are a lefty, right? You're one of those who have voted for this hypocrite asshole, right?"

"To be honest, yes. But I have no idea about what you're talking. This man is not dishonest for me, I think that he's doing a good job, the city performs excellent, especially also regarding the virus. What sources you have?"

"Not the fake news, the fake news tells you everything but not the truth. They tell you that he's a good guy, but he's a swine."

"Well, and the conservatives, the GOP, our governor?"

"Do not try to distract me from the behavior of the pathetic Democrats. The Conservatives are true guys, mostly in any case. And the women are no pussies like AOC or this Muslim woman – the skinhead one? They complain about racism and demand unlimited women's rights, but have no problems with disgusting hate speech when talking about Jews."

"They will not replace us, such slogans?"

"For instance."

"But what are your resources. My problem with alternative sources is, that they claim everything. Some say that right is left, others that this is totally untrue – you understand. This alternative sources are a jungle for me, I'm not sure about what I should believe or not."

"Yeah, you have to invest some time, you have to press forward, you have to reach the ultimate sources. This is not so easy, but it pays. Then you get the very true information."

I had already noticed that the man behind the counter had made all his cocktails, and the man behind the counter had already understood that I tried to get information from this guy, that he should not come back and interrupt our conversation. Jack was a smart barman, and he knew me very well.

"Can you give me some advice where I should look?"

"Of course, but be prepared for the truth. You will never again elect this guy who stains our town hall. You will start to hate him and his progressive followers, you have not to love the Conservatives, but the Democrats are a lousy pack."

He gave me his sources – Facebook, YouTube, instant messengers as such, even the "mighty" dark net, all the fantastic places where one could find the ultimate truth.

"But especially concerning our mayor? As said, I've voted for him, but maybe this was a mistake? I would be interested.....especially about information about him."

"Telegram," he pointed to a line of the piece of paper whereon I had made my notes. "You will be astonished what a hypocrite he is. Maybe even a murderer, this hot Latina? He's involved, in any case, he has fucked her."

His next drink I paid, also his drink after next, but I got not more. I was still not convinced about that he did not try to fool me, but he had to visit the restroom. He had put his wallet in his coat, so that he had not to sit on it. I took it and looked at his driving license – Tim Garner, living in the city, but not in this area. All seemed to be coherent, he came back, we had some more small talk in a threesome, then I had to leave. I had not to say to Jack that he should continue the conversation with him, maybe it would yield something. I drove to my old condo, laid my smartphone on the desk, started the PC, it would become a long night.

Fucking Social Media

"Social" media, it would be nearly like calling Fox a news channel. A fucking hate machine, misinformation was their aim, to dull the people's minds, make them to stupid sheep – sorry sheep. It was sad how clumsy the politicians reacted and acted, no clear position. Zuckerberg was a ruthless swine, greedy, those people enabled Hitler in the 20s and 30s in Germany. The liars from Fox, the GOP, like the "Zentrumspartei" in Germany they would vote for the Enabling Act to give "Hitler" all those power he needed. All those would kill our democracy for their advantage, to satisfy their personal greed. And those were only the inside dangers, not a word about Russia so far, China, or all the others that would love to see the United States fail. I got sick of all this shit!

*

Of course, I could not simply join those groups, but I got further information. Tim Garner, found interesting information about him – thanks to social media. Had it been a coincidence that he was at the same time as I in the bar, chose a seat next to me? Could not be sure about it at the moment. I knew his name, his address, his workplace, restaurants he loved, his gym, I even knew that he likes it to spend the Wednesday afternoons at the lake of Echo Park. With other words, it would be effortless to meet him again, too easy I would say.

*

Had found a photo that showed our mayor with a younger woman, a girl maybe, very intimate it seemed. I called a friend from the news, knew that I could do it in the middle of the night, asked about this photo and some information I had found. He told me that all this stuff and information would be an open secret. The problem would be that some stuff was definitively faked, but some seemed to be real. But no one from the reliable news would risk to publish them at the moment. The risk to become disproved would be simply too risky at the moment. I asked him what he thought would be real, only that he would cheat his wife would be relatively certain at the moment. The death of the South American woman? Absolutely no indications. Why even her name was still not figured out? Not politics, the fields of economy would be more interesting, but at the moment vital parts of the investigative authorities seemed not to be very interested in severe investigation. In the city? No, in the state.

*

"You look exhausted?"

"Yeah, found no sleep."

"You have not come to the shop if you need your time for other matters."

"No, I need the time here. This here is my safe haven."

"Will you speak with me about the case?"

"I'm uncertain whether I have a case or not. I've the feeling to be the person at the sideline – do you understand cricket? I've the feeling to watch a cricket game, who understands this game? Baseball is sometimes not that easy, but cricket? I long for football."

"The "good old days"?"

"Have read too much Chandler, Hammett, and that stuff."

Meeting Mr. Garner

As said, it was not difficult to meet him again, to wait for him, sitting in the park, looking at the lake.

"Hi, Mr. Garner. Nice to meet you again."

"Do I know you?"

"Jack's Bar, a few days ago?"

"Oh, I fear that was not one of my best days."

"What means?"

"I was already not sober as I entered the bar – too much stress at the moment."

"Stress with?"

"Is this an interrogation, Mr.....?"

"No, Maurer, private investigator."

"So, this is an interrogation, or."

"No, but you told me something that gave me a reason to ponder on it. "

"Well, as said, I was not sober. I cannot remember everything."

"Can you remember that you gave me some hints where I could get good information?"

"Information about what? If this is no interrogation, then I would like it to continue with my walk."

"And I don't like it, when someone tries to play stupid games with me."

"And I think that this conversation is finished now. Mr. Maurer, nice to have met you."

He started to continue his way.

"Wednesday evening, next week, in your favorite restaurant. I've made a reservation, a table for two, eight o'clock. I think that we should have a more sincere conversation then."

"And if I don't come, what will you do then? It's the twenty-ninth, or."

"You will come, you will come."

You Got My Vote

"I normally have not always time for such last-minute meetings, Peter."

"Yeah, but you're my preferred mayor, and you know that I'm the good guy."

"Okay, what can I do for you today."

"Well, we all know that there's a great difference between being a Democratic or a Republican politician. A Republican can chatter the biggest shit, can try to destroy our democracy, can be as sexist as he wants - all no problem today. Their "base" has stopped to use their brains, have lost all moral values. But you're no Republican, unfortunately you're a Democrat. Therefore, you have to act regarding the Democrat's rules – bad luck for you."

"And what's your message now?"

"You know that your political career is at stake, not to say that it's over and gone?"

"Of what reason?"

"Well, as a Republican you could cheat your pregnant wife by fucking a porn star – but as a Democrat?"

"Again, what's your message?"

I showed him the picture.

"Not very old."

"She's....."

".....do not try to tell me a fancy story now. I've done some research – social media is sometimes very helpful."

"If you know everything, why you're here then?"

"I have still no clue, why I should be the one who ends your career. And I'm still puzzled regarding the South American woman. I would not say that you had necessarily sex with her, although it's obvious that you like younger women. But I've the feeling that you're not that clueless, you know something."

"First, she's nineteen, not that young. And, I've no time to create tales with you. If you have something reliable, okay. But, if you only steal my time – you're a fool if believing that there is a connection between me and this South American woman. Maybe that's the reason why you got this letter because you're easy to sway?"

"And when will you tell your wife something about the nineteen-year-old girl? Well, not so old, as a man of forty-two."

"I think that's not your problem. You're a good henchman."

"I think that you should not try to insult me....."

".....what an arrogant cocksucker you are! You saw the pages about me, have I seen the pages about you? What a smug monkey you are? Get out of my office!"

"Can you remember the canvassing that you did for your last election campaign? You call me a smug monkey? Credibility, once I thought that you would be credible. But you're also only one of this pathetic wankers. My regards to your wife and your two lovely daughters. How old they are?"

I left the room, no longer interested in his words. Was it unfair? Would his name Jordan or Cruz, everything would be okay then. The nice GOP "ladies" would tell you that everything would be only a hate campaign, that both would be in church every Sunday. I felt lousy.

Spaghetti

"Spaghetti with mushrooms. I've made also a salad - I had not so much time."

"Sounds good. How was your day?"

"Yours? I let you alone in the shop."

"Was no problem, not so many customers today."

"Well, three days until Christmas? You're kidding me – or."

"Okay. It was a long day, but I had assistance. Kathy and Tammy were in."

"Tomorrow I will help you."

"You got some new insights?"

"Not really. I think that the next days will not yield much. I've a "date" Wednesday evening next week, but I fear it will not yield much."

"With a beautiful woman?"

"No James Bond, a man."

"A good-looking man?"

"You want to go?"

"Maybe this would do better?"

"Maybe. I ask myself if there is anyone left whom one can trust. I don't mean you. Generally, whom you can trust? I would trust science, for instance. Especially because science is all the time in change, in progress. And....."

"And?"

"There's so much hypocrisy, I'm sick of it."

"Is this a new insight for you?"

"The South American woman who's dead?"

"Yes?"

"Why I should be interested in, why I should try to solve the case? It happens every day, every hour, a hundred times everywhere. We would need general change, not a little "make it better" here and there."

"You're depressed, have some more pasta. Very delicious, a skilled cook made it."

"It's no wonderwork to cook such pasta. And I'm not depressed, quite on the contrary. But I'm disappointed, I'm angry about to have no choice."

"Regarding?"

"Take politics. I can elect the Dems or the Republicans, what a fucking choice is this. I've elected Hillary because I thought that she would be a good president? You've elected Biden because you became a Dem suddenly? Our electoral system is a mess, our parties are a mess, and I mean "parties". I do it to serve my country, who shall believe in this shit? Manchin, he is doing this for his people in West Virginia? Who shall believe in this shit? Look in his pockets, and you'll get the answer. It's so disappointing. No, I'm not depressed, but I'm sick of it."

Happy Christmas

Christmas Eve, not being alone? Well, sometimes I had spent this evening sitting in a bar or so, one of the strange places not closed this "special" evening. I was not religious, no day with a special meaning for me. It was a day that had to be passed, not more, not less, a boring day in the end. At least if I had not managed it to have a case at this time, then I could occupy myself with it. Too much people too happy at this time, at least in public, before the doors had been closed, then.....

This year was different, I wasn't alone. I had even become asked whether I would like to spend the Christmas holidays with her and her relatives – I declined. I feared that that would be definitively too much for me. But I enjoyed this day and evening very much.

*

We had spent a longer time in bed now, Caroline and I – she had missed Church service. We had no interest in having any lunch, had bought something for dinner. We would cook later, at least if we decided on getting up. Caroline would spend the next days, till New Year's Eve, with her parents and siblings, but today she had decided to stay with me.

"I've still no motivation to get up."

"Neither I have."

"Still enough time to cook. A simple meal, easy to prepare."

"You're convinced that you're not want to accompany me?"

"No. Too much family business is not good for me, especially at such a time. Apart from that, I've already an appointment next week."

"Yes, do me a favor and do nothing stupid."

"No, I've a New Year's resolution."

"That not fits to you."

"Never did it before, but times are changing."

"You want to tell me?"

"Well, I acquired a taste for that family life."

"Are you really convinced that you're not want to accompany me?"

"Step by step. Hey, I never ever had a Christmas tree in my condo. That's very strange for me, self-made Christmas cookies? Give me some time."

"To be honest, I feel uneasy to leave without you."

"I'm a big guy, I can take care of myself. Too much on the stake now, I count the days till you will be in the city again. Come healthy back."

"Because of Omicron? The chaos at the airport tomorrow will be bad, but we both had our boosters. Or what do you mean?"

"I'm not sure, I simply look forward to next year. I've the feeling that it will become a fantastic year."

"Yeah?"

"Sure, shouldn't we start with cooking?"

"Maybe we can have some extra time?"

"Why not, it's Christmastime, the time for wonders."

Dinner For Two

"Are you happy about that I've accepted your invitation and be with you this evening?"

"I would not say happy."

"And what do you hope for? A one-night stand?"

"I thought about killing you on the parking, after we had a very fine dinner – seems to be a very fine restaurant."

"Very expensive, can you afford eating here? Maybe I should pay the bill?"

"No, the fun to kill you will be worth a big deal of money."

"You said, "thought". "

"Not necessarily past. But yes, I think that would be too easy."

"So, what's your plan now? I could recommend you the veal – at least if killing baby cows is no problem for you?"

"I think I will try fish. I thought we would have dinner, not more."

"And the topic of our dinner conversation?"

"What about Omicron? Do you think that the Biden administration acts clever? I do not assume that you've elected him?"

"Okay, let's play your game. Could it be that I plan to kill you after our dinner?"

"Even if you would be able to do it, what I doubt, it would be your death sentence. Kamala Harris, sidelined, maybe our next president?"

"Okay, let's play your game."

*

"Wow, this was one of the best meals that I ever had."

"You have to pay the bill."

"Yeah, and your wine selection.....but I have some savings."

"Oh, I thought to choose some medium priced wines.....normally I choose the real expensive ones. And why now we had been here?"

"Come on, you will get the answer when you're at home again."

"Let's see, maybe you're a dead man now?"

"Maybe, has been a nice time with you."

"Valet parking?"

"No, I've used public transport."

"Can I give you a ride? Would be maybe a nice closure of the evening, driving home with a Maserati?"

"Thanks for the offer, but it would be better now to drive home directly."

"If you made something, then you will be dead."

"Let's see who will be dead faster."

*

"Had been no long dinner? No cocktail in a bar thereafter?"

"No, we had other plans."

"What plans?"

"To die."

"Not so funny, at least to me."

"He will die this night, I will die New Year's Eve, just between the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year."

"Okay, he tonight, "will". You're here, you will not kill him?"

"No."

"And your death?"

"Well, there's a difference, to be honest. "Dying" can be used in different aspects. You can die literally, your body, your brain can die. But it can also be meant metaphorical."

"I think I should not talk about him, what will be your death?"

"From next year on our story will change, a new chapter will begin. No longer this "private dick stuff", we will live a normal life. The shop, you and me. It will be about living in the United States, just as a normal couple. "

"About what happens in the US?"

"Yes. About a dead fourteen-year old girl for instance, or that the rich think also today, that they are above of the "average people". And the same moment they are in panic about, that they could lose their "white privileges". And this has nothing to do, whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or independents."

"A family series?"

"Well, I fear that we will be not necessarily a normal family."

"A modern family?"

"What a pathetic TV series. Nothing than a pile of clichés – one person with South American descent, in a city with a population of fifty percent Latinos. And of course, she's the hot, super-sexy Latina. I have been in this city for several weeks now, have seen many Latinas, but ninety-nine point nine percent looked different."

"Well, it's TV, it's comedy, not the reality."

"It's a fucking lie in the end. Married with Children, 1987 till 1997, one child is dump and hot, one child smart, what progress in all those decades? Modern family – the same old shit as always, old wine in new bottles, that's all."

"Is this a preview of the coming chapter?"

"I think so. All will be spontaneous as always. But yes, I think so."

Part 3.1

A Real Ordinary Life

New Year's Day

New Year's Day, I sat in my condo, alone, to say goodbye. Caroline would come back tomorrow, I would fetch her at the airport, like couples do it. We had had a phone conversation two days ago, this had shown me quite plainly and ultimately that I behaved very selfish regarding her. Yeah, the big private dick, the man with the big gun. And even I had never seen me in that way, I could not have it both ways. I had terminated the contract for my condo, my office as well. We had talked about it already before, I only had not the nuts so far, that her condo was big enough for two persons. I would say it to her tomorrow, had reserved a table in her favorite restaurant for dinner, that I had decided ultimately to become her staffer, maybe her partner in life, more, if it were okay to her.

A regular job, fixed working hours, no work at weekends, at holidays, at night – suddenly this was a goal for me, was it only because I had become old? Whatever, it was a cozy feeling, to imagine that it would be so. Well, I feared it also, in a way, I had to endeavour, it would be no no-brainer. Someone entered your office, you had a job, you did it, all happened as it happened, in a way an easy way of living. Perhaps now was the time to.....perhaps I should not run too fast, not faster than I could.

A quiet day it would be today. Tomorrow I had to get up early, to be sufficiently early at the airport. I liked airports, all the people, coming and going, from all around the world, airlines from around the world, stewardesses.....well, this time I would not simply sit around watching. This time I would be there to fetch someone, to fetch Caroline, to drive with her to her condo, our condo.

January 6, 2022

Had fetched Caroline a few days ago, as she came back from her family, Christmas holidays, at the airport. Every year, so also this year, the shop was closed for some days after New Year. This year she would open the shop on Monday, the tenth, again – today was Thursday, the sixth.

The last days had been cozy days, secluded days, not today. We had spent quite a lot of time in bed – breakfast in bed, no lunch very often. Dinner in bed, TV sometimes, or listening to music. On one day it had been a sunny day, much too hot for the season, we had had a picnic.

"It nearly seems as that the world would be a peaceful place, sitting here and enjoying the sun. And yet, who knows what a nation we will be at the end of the year."

"Well, the world watches us, is concerned about what happens in the US."

"Some are very pleased to see that we have to struggle, to fight for our democracy. The Russians and China especially, they would be happy would we fail."

"And it's all because some greedy white men cannot satisfy their greed, they hope to destroy democracy, like Peter Thiel. The United States is infected by two viruses. Greed, symbolized by worshipping money, that money can buy you everything, especially political power, even elections. Violence, symbolized by worshipping guns, that guns are always the appropriate way to solve conflicts, with your neighbor, people with other political opinions, with other nations. And, that we have been, from the beginning on, a nation of rich white men, and we have this never overcome."

But today, today we waited for the president, to hear him speaking. Would he find distinct words, would it be a powerful speech?

"And?"

"I'm surprised."

"Yeah, he named him a liar, frankly, no one have to interpret his speech."

"And yet, to hear him saying that we all, we all Americans, would be equal? The same rules for every of us? This has to sound for many simply phony."

"Yeah, but also for a farmer in Oklahoma or a worker in Indiana, looking at Silicon Valley or Washington. Yes, his words were strong, much stronger than I expected, but I've the feeling that no words will be any longer able to rescue our nation."

"We have to speak it out, we have to point on people, but I think that the former president is the wrong person. Murdoch, why not talking about him, his aims? Zuckerberg, why not talking about him and his greed? Musk or Bezos, are they the "good guys" or the real threat of our democracy? We should have to start a discussion about them. Compared with them, the former president seems to be only a puppet."

"I'm uncertain if I shall agree with you, at least totally. But without any doubt, the former president without the backing of real powerful people would be only an intermezzo. It all has begun long before him, and it will be not over after him, even if he would be imprisoned or dead. Yes, we would have to talk about other names, also, at least."

"Especially, also. We have to put them and their aims into the spotlight. Visible to everybody, we have to fight them. Yes, the Russians and the Chinese, but the real enemy is domestic, not foreign."

"And now?"

"Let's name their names and point on them, let's be consistent."

"No longer Facebook?"

"This would be pure cosmetic. You cannot switch off the Internet, and it would be stupid to do so. Like private ownership is not evil, even means of productions, but this not excludes that one can bring regulations into force."

"And his speech?"

"Let's see, I hope that we have not to say, in a year or so, it had been a good speech, but it came too late, a year too late."

First Work Week Of The Year

"How has your first work week of the new year been?"

"As what?"

"Well, as my employee."

"Has been an excellent week. It's good to focus on one job, to have one living place, to have regular living conditions – do I become a stuffy old man?"

"I've heard that Hillary will run for the presidency in 2024 again?"

"Not her again! Could be the first time for me to vote for a Republican."

"McCarthy could become the new Speaker of the United States House of Representatives in 2022, he could inherit Pelosi?"

"Gosh, that would be a nightmare for the American nation. If the Americans will be that stupid, they would have deserved it."

"No, I see no threat that you become a stuffy old man. Well, an old man maybe, but not stuffy."

"Then I feel relieved."

"Why you consider that you could become a stuffy old man? Because you share more and more my lifestyle? No longer spending the nights on the streets or in bars? No longer hunting the bad ones, having a boring normal job now? Is it that?"

"Well, looked at it in that way it sounds bad.....you know that I like it to be with you and working in the shop."

"At least I thought so."

"I've lost weight, I'm fitter than in the years I "hunted criminals". I sleep better, see the short sun even in January like now, not only being awakened during the long night. This all is good for me, and not at least your presence. No, it was a silly comment, I should end trying to be the tough guy. Tough, tough is a "normal" worker, struggling with the pandemic, the working conditions in the United States, struggling with health, fearing to get bankrupt because of illness."

"Or a young mother who has to raise her child alone because the father has been a fucking coward."

"Yeah, the really tough people in the United States you can see on every street, in the factories, the small shops, the farms. They are the heroes, but we're fascinated by mass murderers and ruthless people if they make millions and billions. This illustrates the sickness of the nation."

"You're becoming a "Biedermeier"?"

"I enjoy it more and more at least, after a workweek, sitting at home with you. After having a nice dinner, drinking a nice cup of tea, having a conversation, listening to music – do we have a favorite TV show?"

"Let's see, would you favor a crime series?"

"No, had enough over the years. Comedy, sketch comedy?"

"K&P?"

"Well, not the latest. I think I know the most of."

"What about some classic stuff from the UK?"

"The English were the best, that's common knowledge. Monty Python's? They are not on TV - or."

"We can watch a DVD? I've a very nice British comedy show on DVD?"

"Well,.....do I know it?"

"I do not think so, was never in US TV – Coupling."

"Okay, let's start tonight. I think we should have some cookies?"

"Damn, we should have some English ones."

"Not to be perfect the first time has not to mean that it could not be perfect the next time. Let us begin today, for next week we have to buy English cookies."

"That's a good solution. Coupling, I'm certain that you will like it. Patrick for me is and.....I think Sally would fit very well to you."

"Sally?"

"She's Labour and hates Maggie."

"That fits."

"She's a beautician and obsessed with her appearance."

"Well, are there other women?"

"Yes, two more. Three men and three women."

"Now I'm curious."

The World We Lived In

It felt good, to have left hold of my past, no longer to have to perform the private dick, knowing that this was from now on and forever past. It was time to look forward, to plan, and maybe enjoy the time until retirement – well, living in a world like this? Your little domestic bliss, still a democracy in danger, in a few months perhaps a democracy at its end? A nation, hardly to name a true democracy, riven by racism and the greed for money. And yet, the daily routine in which I had fallen in love with, no longer being alone, to have fix points, I had fallen in love with.

But what this all would count, would this nation become a failed nation ultimately? Well, potentially one could find even an arrangement with the regime, then would be in power. The Germans, my ancestors, by a majority, if not even delighted, could find an arrangement with the Nazis. And hey, my skin had the right color, I had the right ancestors, it should be possible, I would have only to betray all my principles. I was concerned, I feared the next months, I was anxious about the future of the nation, about my future.

All could be so nice now, even the pandemic had changed, had my booster of course, possibly soon only an endemic infection? The Dems, we could celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. every day, could augur freedom and liberty every day – if the Dems not started to live up to their historic responsibility very soon? Not even able to implement their propositions?

In former times, always with my gun at the side, I had performed as the tough guy, not even true at that time. But, "Peter Maurer - Private Investigations", it at least pretended toughness. Had not been capable to protect my clients, had not been capable to end it, never had been a tough guy, all had been a mess. But today, for the first time in my life, I felt calm and centered, and I feared what could happen within this year.

The fucking two party system, one party mad, the other party occupied with the usual party

infighting, just as all would be "normal". But nothing was normal, I had started to live a normal life, and I loved it very much. Having fix points, having halt, no longer being alone, and yet, all called into question. Yeah, I would have the right to vote, but all that crazy laws in many states, all that actions to undermine fair elections, all that lies offered by Fox and social media? A few states would be enough - and the Dems acted like it would be 2009. I was anxious about the coming.

"On what you're pondering?"

"I'm happy."

"But?"

"Today in a year, in what a nation we will live?"

"Would I be able to answer this question, I would be happy, or maybe sorrowful."

"The first time in my life I'm delighted and relaxed, have the feeling, for the first time in my life, that this it could be. Would this be for the rest of my life, I would await death with a smile. And yet, I was never so anxious than today. I fear that I could lose all this, because of this political shit."

"Yeah, would you take leaving the US in account, if.....?"

"Not sure, would it be cowardly? Mexico or Canada, hot or cold, what would you like more?"

"Your ancestors are from Germany, mine from Italy – maybe France or Spain?"

"Yeah, California or Maine. This fucking Dems kill me."

"Well, and the GOP? Where is Mitt Romney now, for instance? I cannot hear him now? If this nation fails, and there's no doubt that it can still be, then it will be the failure of a political system. It all has begun a long time ago."

"I feared the future not that much my whole life. In fact, I had never such a feeling, not in that way, that gravity. Could you hold me tight?"

"We could each other."

They Will Screw It Up

"Saturday evening, and I'm sitting at home – strange."

"I've asked you. But you said that you are not want doing something, that you would prefer to stay at home?"

"I did not say that I'm bored, or something like that. On the contrary, and tomorrow we will be at the zoo, by the way. No, I like it, and the dinner has been rich."

"Maybe you should not use that much cream that often? It gives sauces and soups a rich flavor, but is also rich on calories."

"Do you fear that you could gain weight?"

"Seriously, you are seriously asking me that question? When you saw yourself the last time in our large mirror? You know that we have this nice large mirror, in which you can see your whole body?"

"Ah, you meant it that way."

"Absolutely."

"Yeah, shall I go for a jog? It's a safe neighborhood, even if it's dark outside now, and icy."

"No, it would break my heart would you become lost, would you not find your way back. It's so dark outside now. Tomorrow morning it would be bright again, before we drive to the zoo?"

"But still freezing. Even colder eventually than now. - Okay, I will pay attention on my weight. The news?"

"Yes, the news, but I fear that there will be not that much new breaking news on a Saturday evening."

"No, but possibly some response from the former "president"? Has been a massive defeat for him."

"Yeah, the same as he had to hand his tax returns some years ago. All that shocking insights."

"Well, I think that this time it could be different."

"Whatever, the Dems have to hurry. Some months and their majority will be past, at least most likely."

"That's true. The Dems act currently as they would be the Dems, they act simply stupid. Okay, perhaps acceptable in "normal" times, but our democracy is still more dead than alive. Manchin is a wanker, and Sinema not better. Biden is not interested in speaking with Republicans – wasn't there a chatter about compromises and working together with the Republicans? Nothing lost so far, but one cannot be relaxed when thinking about the midterms. Are you relaxed?"

"Not knowing who could be the Republican nominee in 2024? Isn't it a joke that it could be again the same as in 2016?"

"Yeah, that would be the declaration of bankruptcy of the whole political system in the USA. Just even that it's thinkable, that there are signs that it could be, should be an alarm signal for all democratic Americans."

"Yes, and you would elect Hillary again?"

"What other possibility I would have? And you, "him" again?"

"I hope that this is meant as a rhetorical question! Well, as a conservative American? Gosh, voting for Hillary, it's even hard for many Democrats. Not voting? No adequate alternative when your democratic system is under fire. I think that this would be the worst-case scenario. - By the way, I've the numbers from last week."

"And, can we retire soon?"

"I fear not that soon. Nevertheless, the sale was not so bad last week. We could sell some high-priced toys, but we have more and more drop-in customers again. That's an excellent sign. It would be so fantastic, could Omicron be the beginning of an endemic infection. The summer should be not the problem, but would the next winter be a winter with a new severe variant and restrictions again.....I'm sick of this shit!"

"Yeah, who not. The world fights with a virus, the United States not only with one."

At The Zoo

"Still in the bathroom?"

"We've still time."

"Yes, but breakfast is ready."

"I'm a man, we men need a bit longer for our morning routine."

"If there were a use."

"What?"

"Nothing, the eggs are getting cold."

"I'm ready. - Wasn't it worthwhile?"

I stood in the open door to the bathroom, Caroline looked not very impressed.

"Yeah, ten years younger. Your beauty is blinding me."

"That's our fate. If we do nothing, it's not okay. If we do something, we're too slow."

"Okay, you've shaved and you've taken a shower – ah, now I see it. What an extraordinary hairdo and what an subtle make-up."

"Let's have breakfast."

Well, Caroline had stood up first of us, had taken a shower, her morning routine and had made breakfast, I had needed more time to leave the bed.

"I like it more and more to have breakfast in the morning,....."

".....especially if you have not to prepare it. A well-laid table is always a nice place to sit down."

"Come on, Caroline. I've prepared breakfast most of the time last week."

"That's true, you get better with every week. You look forward to the zoo?"

"You know that I like it to be at zoos. Yes, I look forward to being at the zoo with you."

"Let's have breakfast, before we drive to the zoo. I've the feeling that this will become a very nice day."

"Every day with you is a nice day."

"Wow, Peter. I've the feeling that you have not enough to do at the moment. Maybe I should expand

your working hours."

"But then I would have less time to be with you."

"That's enough now, Peter. Let's have breakfast."

*

"You're like a child."

"That's the zoo."

"You enjoy it really to be here."

"Yeah, okay, the animals in their cages. Of course, one can argue that they should live in nature. But, what's often not seen is, that nature is very often a very cruel place. I also like all the plants, the flowers, and the trees, but also to have the possibility, to see all this different animals. Yes, I enjoy it totally to be here."

"A snack?"

"Sure.....and something sweet."

"Of course, for my little boy, something sweet."

It was nice, being here. The flora and also the fauna, and not to visit the zoo alone. In every city I was, I always tried to visit the zoo, if it gave one.

The zoo in our city was not the largest zoo, not with the most animals, not an extraordinary conservatory. And it had been a longer time now that I had been here, but it was good to be here again. Not only one time I had tears in my eyes, tried that no one saw it, especially not Caroline at my side. It did not function that well, but maybe it was not the worst.

"Memories?"

"In your youth, you and your parents, you were here sometimes?"

"Yes, from time to time – what parents do with their children."

"I was nineteen, the first time I was here. I liked the small animals most, so often overlooked."

"In my childhood I like the penguins the most, I feared the big cats. Later I liked the big cats the most, today I like them all."

"I was once in a zoo where they had a butterfly-house. The combination of the exotic plants and the wonderful butterflies had been very impressive."

"You're becoming more and more romantic, sentimental."

"Maybe it's not so much a question of being something, but of being able to express it, to stand by it."

*

"Had been a nice day."

"Yes, very nice. A day to forget the rest of the world. Is entering a zoo not like entering a world far beyond ours?"

"Yes, I understand what you mean."

"And many children. Many laughs and smiles, like in a circus."

"This sounds as you would go the circus, if one is in the city?"

"Of course."

"When you were the last time in a circus?"

"Well, the virus, not sure about."

"But you visit the circus, if one is in the city?"

"Not necessarily every all the time, but as often I can."

"Wow, not thought.....you also visit the animals during the break?"

"Why not."

"Do you think that they suffer in the circus?"

"A horse, a dog, or a cat? We have no problems with house cats, or dogs in cities. Sport horses? There are no simple answers."

"No. At least not, should you not lie or try to fool and betray others."

"An omelet with salad for dinner?"

"Yes, something light in any case. I brew the tea."

An Unstable Moment In Time

"The chancellor of the nation of your ancestors' origin is in the States."

"Wow, that was very directly spoken."

"Yeah, you're interested?"

"Well, not more as if the presidente of the nation of your ancestors' origin would be in the States."

This was no understatement. Living in the United States, Europe was far away. Canada and Mexico, South America or the Caribbean. Sure, the Atlantic Ocean smaller than the Pacific Ocean, but from the West Coast Russia and Chia was not that far away, not to mention Alaska. It was interesting to what an extent your view of the world changed, by jumping from continent to continent, even from nation to nation. And not to forget, Europe more or less the same extent and population as the United States. A state in the States, a nation in Europe. Would it be that much spectacular news, would a governor from the States visit a European nation – well, maybe Newsom from California, California with many similarities, compared with Germany.

"They talk about the Ukraine - later a press conference, of course."

"Yeah, maybe it would be better would Biden talk with Macron."

"We talk about the possibility of a new civil war in the United States, a war that would impact the whole world. They talk about the possibility of a war between Russia and the Ukraine in Europe, a war, between the from China backed Russia and the from the USA and Europe backed Ukraine. I would not say that we live in stable times."

"No, not really. And yet, can Mike Pence give you at least some hope with his latest statement, that Russia and especially China can't be that crazy, that they would start a war? If this became a severe conflict, then COVID-19 would be no longer of interest."

"I cannot imagine that Russia and China would be that insane."

"Yeah, I fear that they said this also at the eve of WWI and WWII."

"And that's really a problem, at the eve of climate change, if not already a day later."

A Normal Working Day

Getting Up And Breakfast

I looked at the alarm clock, very soon the alarm would be to hear. It was interesting, nearly all the time I woke up somewhat before the alarm would start. Yeah, habit, one could say now, but what habit? I had no regular stand-up time my whole life, quite on the contrary. But, early or late, very seldom I needed the sound of the alarm to wake up, whenever it was time to do so. It even functioned when I had to get up in the middle of the night, for a tailing, for instance, in my former life.

"I get up and prepare the breakfast."

"Yeah, it's Thursday. And Thursday is Peter's breakfast day."

"Last week I've made nearly on all the days breakfast."

"You mean.....it's on me, to return the favor now?"

"No, it's no burden to prepare breakfast. I like it, to do it."

"If this is so, what about preparing it every day? I on my part, I would raise no objections, I would love it to have the opportunity to sleep somewhat longer every day."

"Okay, let's discuss this later. Any special wishes?"

"No. Only two eggs, over medium, and some toast, golden brown. A small fruit bowl would be nice."

I....."

".....we have still some grapes. Would you like them peeled and deseeded?"

"That would be nice, you know how to please a woman."

"What kind of tea?"

"Such a cold and wet weather. The second flush Darjeeling would be delightful."

"Give me a head start of fifteen minutes. Apart from, that I will not spend that much of time in the bathroom."

"Apart from, that a longer time would not make quite a difference for men. They can reach a certain level of beauty, but from this point on real improvement is difficult to reach."

"Over medium, you said?"

"Yes, and you know that I can be a fucking Karen when my eggs aren't perfect."

"You know that I even would love you, would you be a really fucking Karen – okay, that's a lie. But, because you're no Karen in any respect, is this no problem. Second flush Darjeeling, very good choice."

*

"Are your eggs okay?"

"Delicious, simply delicious. Just as I like them. Would I have the money, then I would hire you as my personal cook – you've really peeled and deseeded the grapes? That's crazy."

"Well, you don't have to pay me, at least not with money. I feel bestowed by your presence."

"And I need longer for my morning routine?"

"Obviously."

"What about the idea that you prepare the breakfast from now on every day and I can invest the given time in becoming more beauty, to bestow you even more? And do not tell me now that I couldn't become more beautiful – one could interpret this also in a negative sense."

"But you're right, this could be a good agreement. Lunch break we spend normally in a coffeehouse or diner anyway – what about dinner?"

"Could we make together, like we do most of the time already?"

"Or, whoever is more keen on it?"

"Okay. I know that we will do it together anyway, most of the time. You have the men's privilege that unkempt ranks as "masculine"."

"Well, what about a metrosexual man? You could spend hours in the bath together with him? This European soccer player?"

"We've spent quite a long time in the bathroom together, last Saturday."

"Yeah, and it had been very nice. But not in front of the mirror."

"If you prefer it, then we can stand in front of the mirror next time, and not sitting in the bathtub."

"I've the feeling that I can be only the looser, maybe it would be better to change the subject?"

"For you in any case. But you're lucky, we have to leave."

We cleared the table, put the plates into the dishwasher, I had never used any cream my whole life. Caroline owned not only one - for the morning, the night, and so on. Maybe I should try to use at least one? What a strange idea, had long nails now, had to cut my nails, had even to use a nail file now. And I liked it, it felt good, better and better. I had tried some men's perfumes a few days ago, but none I had liked. Had found one for women.....started I to miss my .45?

On The Way To The Shop

The way to the shop was short, we walked, as nearly all the days. We used the car sometimes, when we had to transport something, but otherwise it was much easier to walk the short distance. I thought: I had monitored you the first times, on the way to the shop, had followed you, had protected you. Now we walked side by side. At the beginning she had been my client, she had hired

me, now I was her employee - and a bit more.

"Nothing special we have to do. If we have not many customers, I would use the time to do some shopping. Would this be okay for you?"

"Sure. If you think that you can trust me with the shop?"

"Yeah, I think so. Give your employees the opportunity to grow. And I doubt that I will need very long. Some from the grocery and some bread, just round the corner."

"Still no shortages, at least so far."

"No, but maybe if the truckers will start to protest in the US now. It's interesting that they start their protest now."

"But isn't it also interesting to see how they handle it in Canada. The protest as such, and now the way how they end the protest."

"I've heard that they refused to accept that radical groups joined them. And have you seen, no guns, no gun violence, I've not seen that they threatened the reporters who reported on-side."

"Yeah, Canada and the US, not only a border separate us."

We reached the door of the shop, Caroline opened it, and we entered the shop. I looked around, all the toys, was a very nice place to work, to spend your day.

"You're smiling?"

"Yeah, I'm simply a fucking lucky bastard."

Opening Of The Shop And The Morning Sale

"Well, the customers can come now."

"Yes, but you know that we normally have not much customers in the first hour - will you brew a tea for us two?"

"Yeah, an oolong?"

"Would be nice, the Chinese one."

"Not so much fermented than other oolongs."

I prepared the tea, Caroline looked around the shop, arranged some pieces anew, did some cleaning. Then we used the fact that still no customer was in the shop, sat down in the little office, enjoyed the tea.

"Seems as that it will be a quite day, at least morning. I would say, if after the tea we have still no customer, that you could go shopping straight away."

"You know. The moment I leave the shop, the shop will fill."

"But you wanted to go shopping. It can happen now, or in two hours."

"That's right. Would you like to have something special?"

"No, something from the bakery maybe?"

"Something sweet?"

"Well....."

"Well.....you should still lose weight. Sweet stuff will not help you. I buy you some apples and carrots. It both will help you to lose weight."

"Fine. And I will earn some money in the meantime."

"Let's see, wether I will spend more or you will earn more."

Caroline left, and not much later the first customer entered the shop. A new customer? Not really - or. Caroline hated it if I could not remember the customer's names. I had a losy memory for names.

"Good morning, madam. Can I do something for you?"

"I'm not sure, I was here a few days ago. But.....I think it was the owner of the shop who provided me with her professional advice?"

"Yes, in fact. Mrs. Miller is out at the moment, maybe I can help you?"

"I don't know....."

"I'm back, no customers?"

"Not at the moment."

"You had one?"

"I had two customers, in fact."

"You've sold something?"

"Yes, one of the little stuffed animals we got recently."

"What?"

"A rabbit."

"Nice, twelve dollar. But I have to say that I've spent more at the grocery and baker."

"And I've sold the hand-craved Scandinavian toy box."

"What? You know that Mrs. Thompson was interested in it – or. It has been a vintage box, over a hundred years old."

Thanks, Caroline. Now I had a name.

"No panic, I sold the box to Mrs. Thompson. You advised her excellent the last time, a few days ago."

"You remembered her?"

"Of course. I had not much to do. She said, that she fell in love with the box immediately, as you showed her the box. But because of the price, she wanted to speak with her husband first. She had already decided to buy the box as she entered the shop. There was nothing left for me to do."

"Nevertheless. Mrs. Thompson can be a difficult woman, and the box was costly. Well, we've still some time until lunch. If this functions that perfect, could I use the time until lunch to visit my girlfriend next door?"

"You mean your girlfriend who runs this exclusive shop for women clothes next door?"

"Yes."

"Lunch in the café?"

"Fine, let's meet there."

Lunch Break

"A Viennese mocha and a wonderful salad with king oyster mushrooms, a wonderful lunch."

"Yes, looks very delicious. But I tended definitively to a sandwich today, they make this wonderful sandwiches here."

"With farmer cheese, lox, and avocado – always wonderful combination. But, after your today's selling....."

"It has been easy, you had convinced her already. Do you think that we will have many customers in the afternoon and evening?"

"On Monday? Very difficult to say. Sometimes nothing happens at all, sometimes the shop is crowded. Mondays are very difficult to appraise – do you need some time to do some shopping as well?"

"No, but maybe you would have still something else to do?"

"Hey, do you want to get rid of me?"

"No, but I've the feeling that I should take over some more responsibility?"

"I would agree, but Mondays can be very cunning. What about next Wednesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays are our weakest days?"

"Sounds good."

"Would you like to open the shop alone? I could do something at home then, cleaning for instance. I could be very fast in the shop, would you run into problems?"

"Sounds good."

"Then I would say, that on Wednesday the shop will be yours."

"Sounds good."

"Yeah. Would it sound good also, would I make a detour and would visit the dry-cleaner before I return to the shop? - Sounds good, or."

"Yeah."

Afternoon Sale and Closing Of The Shop

"Not that much sale during the afternoon, I'm a bit disappointed."

"Come on, you've managed the best deal since months this morning."

"You've sold it, I only handed it to the customer."

"Well, time enough to screw it up."

"That's maybe true. Shall I close the shop?"

"Yes. Let us walk home – cooking?"

"I'm not that hungry."

"Then.....let's have a coffee and a snack on the way back?"

"Would that mean that we have to make a detour?"

"Not much. I saw a new interesting small restaurant on my way to the dry cleaner."

"Sounds good. No cooking, no cleaning up."

"The walking will do you good."

On The Way Back Home

"Really, a nice new restaurant. The Arab kitchen is a very fine kitchen, a kitchen of interesting spices and herbs."

"Yeah, all this small dishes we had. I also liked the bread very much."

"We have to visit it again, very soon."

"Definitively, when we are more hungry. It has been enough for you, right?"

"Yes, it was very fine, all this various small dishes."

"It would be sad if you have to eat later something from the fridge, because of still being hungry."

"No, I not wanna destroy the fine aftertaste of all this different spices. When we're back home, TV?"

"I would have a book to read. But what about a little walk? It's cold but dry?"

"Okay, as you said. Walking will do me good."

The Evening At Home

We had a nice walk in the cold nightly air. It was a delightful calm atmosphere, well, not everywhere in the city. I thought about my old quarter, there not everything was that calm. Something moved, a shade in the dark, being here I would say a cat, not a rat.

We arrived at our block, opened the door of the condo, the warmth of your home. Not only a blanket, a piece of cardboard, on the street. Had been a gorgeous vintage box, a beautiful box for fine children toys. Not many could afford a piece like that. Not many.

The Brutal Reality

A Kind of Solace

I woke up early, too early, looked at the clock. I was thirsty, sipped at tea from yesterday, switched on the TV – the president, that early at night? Russia has started to invade the Ukraine, he said, I was shocked.

Well, imagine, you would have found a relationship in the end, would work surrounded by children toys all the day? Imagine that you would be happy, at least as much as possible, and then someone far away would decide to flip the switch?

I thought about to wake up Caroline, but I did not. I went back to bed, clung to Caroline, felt her body and heard her breath, felt my tears running down my cheeks.

There once was a gorgeous box, a gorgeous box from Scandinavia, destroyed because of a ruthless bloody war, unleashed by a greedy insane war-hungry tyrant.

It was nice not being alone at this moment.

Time Moves On

It had become Sunday, we had not to go to the shop. I had not been alone in the shop on Wednesday, this was no time when one wanted to be alone, alone as the people in the Ukraine were now. Should one be pleased, that even until today, the Russians hadn't been able to seize the capital of the Ukraine, that obviously also many Russian soldiers had to die? And our fucking former "president" applauded the Russian slaughterer, showed again his ugly visage - how one was still able to support such a disgusting swine? Could it be that dying Ukrainians could bring together the American people, at least to a certain degree?

"The Democrats and Republicans agree therein that the war is a crime, and that we have to support the Ukrainian people."

"Well, not in total. The biggest wankers from the GOP like Taylor Greene or the man who stained the White House are applauding Putin. And also among the Democrats there are people with strange positions. But yes, it's interesting that we have a kind of united majority again. It would be bitter, would we need the dying in the Ukraine to return to at least some normality in the States."

"Also in other nations they change their standpoint. This report about the speech of the German chancellor? He's a Democrat, and they had a long pacifist tradition – well, after WWII. But now they will spend more for their military, they will send weapons to the Ukraine. I've the feeling that Putin has misgauge the situation severely."

"Yeah, but many have to pay for this miscalculation with their lives. This man has to go down, like the swine who stained the White House. Everything else would be a devastating signal."

"And what shall we do today?"

"It's a very sunny day. It does not help, what about some time in the park and a nice lunch in a restaurant thereafter?"

"Good idea, and let's hope that we will not make the same mistake in the USA. We do not need a wannabe Putin in the White House again. Last time we had luck, but.....let's go."

About What One Should Make A Conversation At Those Times?

"Has been a nice dinner – excellent, Caroline."

"Thanks, Peter. A compliment from your side, such an excellent cook, is always something special."

"Well, I'm mainly the breakfast cook now. You're our dinner cook."

"That's a tainted compliment now. But don't worry, you will have also in the future enough possibilities to prove, what a fantastic dinner cook you are – apart the fact, that you're an excellent breakfast cook."

"I surrender. What shall we make for dinner tomorrow?"

"You or me?"

"Me."

"What about a pasta?"

"Really? I cook, and you're satisfied with a pasta dish?"

"Well, I would say, also a pasta dish can be something very "sophisticated"."

"I will ponder about it. I've a certain idea."

"I'm absolutely convinced about, that you will surprise me. Tea, some music?"

"Better than the news in any case. Conversation?"

"Why you ask?"

"I don't know, but I'm not in the mood."

"To speak with me?"

"Well.....it's more about, about what to tal?. I've not much nice topics in mind. I've no motivation to discuss this fucking war, it's over a week now. Or all this other topics, which suddenly are no longer in focus. Such unimportant topics like the pandemic – there's still this virus, or. Climate change, there's no longer climate change. And such petty topics like racism, the so weak and disappointing speech of our president. That parts of the GOP applaud Putin, that they hope that the USA would transform into a second Russia, with Donald Duck as our own personal Putin."

"We have not to talk about these topics. In fact, we have not to talk at all."

"I would appreciate this very much today, to be honest."

For the rest of the day we spoke nothing anymore. We drank a fine Chinese green tea, which we later brewed for a second and a third time. We listened to music, ancient English music. A time when the life of an individual person not counted much. A very brutal and violent time, a time with severe plagues like the sweating sickness, of countless wars, kings and queens who ruled absolutely. Who would want to live in such a time, if one could choose? Byrd, we listened to William Byrd.

Being Affected.

With every day more dying, with every day more brutality, with everyday more crazy actions, with every day more desperation. Seeing an old woman screaming for pain, the blurred red of blood on the street.

How old she would be, old in any case, old enough for the Cold War in any case, at least the end of WWII. And now, now she maybe had to die because of a fucking Russian swine in Moscow – fine, that you rescued your super-yacht from Hamburg.

Many lessons could be learned now. For instance, to question the source of the richness of the super-rich. Or that political power has to be limited, for instance. But what a twat one would have to be, would one really think that this could have consequences.

WWII had had consequences, the formation of the EU and the NATO as examples. One was obvious, only one aspect would decide about everything – what would be the future of Putin. Right at the moment, whatever yet still would happen, would only one western politician shake hands with Putin again, than this world would be doomed. Would only one nation make deals with Putin again, the same.

Putin, three possible outcomes. Losing all his political power, the minimum. Dying, from own hand like buddy Hitler, or someone would kill him, the essential would be to see him dead, Hussein. My favorite outcome, to see him in The Hague – Karadzic, Mladic, Milošević.....I had started to clean some shelves.

"I doubt that it was necessary to clean the shelves already again."

"Better than pondering all the time."

"Yeah, we have Russian customers as well as customers from former Soviet republics. It was no matter so far, but now? Have I to ask a Russian customer now, what his opinion of Putin is? Would it be adequate to sell to someone who justifies this war? Like this former president and his radical right-wing people? It's simply insane."

"If this war will have no consequences, then everything will be wrong. But we said this as well after 9/11, and what happened? We have the DHS now, maybe other consequences would have been more important and efficient. But.....we have to protect our wealth and economic security and stability. Nice that the super-rich could "rescue" their super-yachts, Bezos will have soon his new

one."

"I will tidy up our storing."

"I am not convinced that this is necessary."

"I'm aware of."

Trying To Live Your Daily Life

The Daily Easiness

The days died away, the days, not lives. Lofty words from an old white man, in what a world he lived? At least some action, bipartisan, sometimes the snake worked together with the white rabbit. The lies of Putin, the lies of Moscow Mitch – sorry, this honorable man, honorable like honorable Putin.

You lived your daily life – well, the gas at the gas station again more expensive, the shopping at the grocery, but still no reason to get panic. Yeah, of course, not everyone could say this, but many couldn't say this even before this fucking war had started.

Rearranging stuffed animals while children died – would be a nice world if one could say, this has begun around two weeks ago. The simple problem was, that this sentence was not only valid today, last week, maybe a week before last week, or a month ago, this sentence had been valid throughout history until today.

I tried to find other thoughts, at least it did not function as the Russians had thought. It seemed as they could never win this war, Russia would fail miserably. CNN, the daily pictures of the suffering Ukrainians, especially the children. Russia had lost the war, it was only to hope that they would realize it very soon.

And our wars, the wars we waged domestically? No, not with tanks, but with racist laws, restricted access to education, the deeply rooted idea of, that white, and especially white and rich, would mean automatically the good – yeah, Hillary, or.

And as long as Joe loved Mitch, two old white men together in harmony, that long the American democracy was in severe danger. But, as for Boris in the UK, also in the USA, for some this war was a gift from heaven. Godsend, God always on the side of the good. But, would he listen to the Russian Orthodox Church, or, would he listen to catholic Biden? Whatever, let us pray for the brave Ukrainians – I loved this soft rabbits the most.

A New Day, A New Workweek

Monday. Monday, March the fourteenth. I opened the shop, Caroline would come later, the last days of last week we had not so many customers. The mood not the best, not so far away there was a very nice Russian Orthodox church, not only a few wealthy Russians had real estate in this area. But also Ukrainians liked it to be here, for vacation, business or to live here.

Charity, or better, giving alms? Would it be not better to give them better weapons? Would have it not been better to act foresighted? Who should ever could have known that Putin would start a war, after encircling Ukraine with more than 150,000 soldiers? Putin, the dear uncle who had been the slaughterer of Chechnya? Whoever should have anticipated this all?

We had donated some money, it would have been a pleasure to me to donate a bullet to Mr. Putin. All this suffering, all this dying, also in Syria and other places. This man had to be stopped now, if not.....like the white supremacists in our country. What would the swine from New York do, if he had free rein? And Joe, really that naive? I opened a parcel with new goods.

After The Workweek

The workweek was over, Sunday it had become, a day to relax, to gain new power, for the next workweek. And if every day was the same, a day with war and dying? Kyiv still not fallen, the Russian army looked helpless. I had never thought, at the beginning, that it would last more than a week or so and Kyiv would have fallen. A symbol for, there's always hope? Had anyone knowledge about, how much support, weapons and logistic, Ukraine had gotten so far? But the Russian army? Well, no bomb war like in WWII, but nevertheless? The Russians lied, of course, but also Zelensky and CNN waged a war, an information war. Why you saw always cute little girls, were there no "ugly" ones who had to flee or were desperate?

"I would never have thought that the Ukrainians would be able to stop the Russian army. Not even with support from outside."

"Yes, they are real heroes."

"Well, I've always a problem with this word. I'm uncertain if dying in a war should be connected with heroism, war is something so senseless. I would turn it the way around, would look at the one who has started it, he has to pay for it, and the price has to be devastating."

"Death?"

"Well, some say that he would be the richest man on earth. I would like to see him behind bars for the rest of his fucking life, in an international prison for war criminals."

"Yeah, that would be a good outcome. But nevertheless. For me, the Ukrainians are heroes."

"Yeah, with what other attribute one could designate the Ukrainians. Well, not everything was okay in Ukraine, by far not, but it developed that positive that Putin feared it more and more. And come on, is everything okay in our nation? Who are our heroes? Sorry, but I do not see them in Washington, at least only a very few."

"In any case, it's to hope that our nation will not be confronted with such a dark hour. But we have to fight for it, even if our fight is not fought with weapons."

"Not now, not so far, but some tendencies are there. The end of the year will tell us more."

"Some say that this war could strengthen democracy at the end."

"But therefore Putin has to fail completely, as well as the GOP at the end of the year. I do not see that these are automatisms."

"No. But with every day it becomes more likely, and every day is a day bestowed by the Ukrainians. If the Ukrainians win, we all will win, and we all will be deeply indebted to the Ukrainians."

"Yeah, they die for us."

What Day's Today?

"What's the date today?"

"Twenty-seventh?"

"Yeah, it seems so."

"About what are you pondering?"

"What would normality mean, should mean, I mean to us."

"For us here in the States, in this city, in this quarter?"

"Yeah, whatever, we have no war for instance. The pandemic? Yeah, a new variant, but hospitalizations and deaths? I do not understand what "normal" should mean today.

Innocence lost, or awakened finally? I've the feeling that I should live the rest of my life and all around me should no longer be considered by me. But, what if the GOP madness will conquer our nation ultimately? If a new deadly mutation popped up? I've the feeling of getting old."

"I would say that this feeling is not connected with your age. Over two years of pandemic now, and now this war on top, as if the pandemic alone wouldn't be enough burden? You're not the only one who's tired of all of this."

"But what should be the consequences? I'm discouraged at the moment, but what helps me is to be

not alone."

"Yes, it's good to be not alone."

"And what shall we do now?"

"Unlocking the shop tomorrow morning again, I would say."

"Yeah, and acting as if all is okay?"

"Not necessarily, but we should try to find a balance."

"Yes, it's good not to be alone."

Trying To Get Back To Normality

It was wonderful, lying in her arms, feeling and smelling her body, hearing her breath, her lifting and lowering chest. On a couch, under a blanket, outside it was cold, it drizzled.

"You like it?"

"Of course."

"I would like it too."

"But I'm only a weak man, and you're a strong woman?"

"You're my personal private dick."

"Former."

"You've still your gun."

"Pure nostalgia, the fucking .45."

"And?"

"What?"

"Switching?"

"But....."

".....yeah, all we strong women know how weak you men are in reality, with pants down, the manhood clearly visible. But even the strongest woman needs some tenderness from time to time on her behalf.....you understand?"

"Of course."

It was wonderful, holding her in my arms, feeling and smelling her body, hearing her breath, her lifting and lowering chest. On a couch, under a blanket, outside it was cold, it drizzled,.....