STUNTMENSCH

SEAN ABBOTT

> Why are people stuntmen when the chances of getting seriously hurt are very large? It's because that's their cure.
>
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>
> —Norman Mailer

Stuntmensch died on October 12. The cause was CGI. The notice in *Daily Variety* said cancer. Among the stunt community, this was an imposture of the first order. But no worse, in its way, as "Born Jebel Heckelbaum, IMDB'd Peter Fever." He was always and would ever be—Stuntmensch. The guy who'd take the fall for you. Or the full-body flameout. Or the triple-flip car crash.

Don "Scarfist" Dubois: "Stuntmensch? Great guy. *Great* guy. He does that slide under the 18–wheeler for me back in '93. I wasn't gettin' on so good with the ol' Breathalyzer" [chuckles, winks].

Stevie "II" McQueen: "Stuntmensch subbed me on that knee-to-the-groin. Eighty-eight takes and Fincher cut the fucker! It was back when Marie and me, see, we were trying to start a family, and me already with that one undescended testicle."

The encomia were all like that. By stuntmen who were alive, intact, not divorced and never to be, enjoying progeny aplenty because Stuntmensch had been dragged by the hysterical horse, barrel-rolled the curtain wall of blue fire, coded during the tsunami scene. It wasn't ever about the money. "I need to do this for my *self*," he'd say, signing over the hazard++ pay. Nor was it about the glory, because Stuntmensch also emphatically refused the credit, legally and quasi-legally weaving and dodging FUSTI's rulebook, despite how much he loved being an otherwise faithful and activist union man.

Stuntmensch had family himself, somewhere. A pecky bird of a mother.

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In France or Arizona. That was for sure, maybe. And there was tell of a wife once. But you go back, you try it. You check all the waivers and next-of-kin-inform forms and, true, certain names pop in Basra ("Finster, maternal uncle") or Potsdam ("Körnstein, niece-in-law"), but the addresses couldn't possibly be right. Stroll that part of 14 Tamooz Street and you're up to your armpits in the Shatt al-Arab. Teleport to "No. 25 Friedrich List-Engels Straße" and you're jumping clear of a bulleting S7 on the S-Bahn commuter line.

Why'd he do it? Why'd Stuntmensch put down phony addresses? Phony phone numbers. You'd call and no way, ever, was that a phone number, even leaving out the 0 or the 00 or adjusting the country code to account for East and West having since become the same place.

So it was only stunt people at the memorial service. And one elfin old man who shuffled vigorously with the aid of a death's head walking stick, chest-paunching the elegant vest of an elegant suit, his white mane whorling twinned fleshtone hearing aids, his blue eyes glinting charm and wit and kindness and also *I dare you to*—. This man who was not a stunt man introduced himself simply as "Oncologist," full fathom five from the throat and with the same unlocatable accent that reminded everyone of Bernie Brillstein. "Strange, how similar they sound," Mrs. McQueen whispered to her eldest. But Stevie "II" Jr. wasn't the least interested in this seeming reincarnation of the producer of *Hee Haw* and *The Sopranos*. Nor even that Stuntmensch had sacrificed his own balls so that this man-brat might suffer here this day under an unsteady yarmulke at the corner of La Brea and Oakwood.

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In life, Stuntmensch was full of interesting facts about death. About what he called, and you could hear the capitalization when he said it, the Performance of Death. He was fascinated by J. Robert Oppenheimer, who'd pancaked his face at Los Alamos so he could play a "living corpse" in an amateur production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. "You see the irony, yeah?" Stuntmensch would say. "Here's this guy, whose profession is mass killing, the most dramatic mass-killing in human history, and he's playing at this jokey one-by-one offing."

Stuntmensch loved telling the Oppenheimer story; loved talking about the man who famously described himself as Brahmanically "becoming" Death; loved thinking of Oppenheimer lying there under the stage with the

other make-believe corpses (Mike Michnoviicz, Deke Parsons, Herb Lehr, Ed Teller, Izzy Rabi, Lou Hempelmann, Ric Fermi), everyone pretending to be dead till the big reveal, Opp'y sonorously reciting Donne in that dank crawlspace, Ed Teller trying so hard not to giggle: "That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee,'and bend / Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new . . . "

This was when CGI was just coming in, all this Oppenheimer talk. None in the stunt community had a clue what would hit them. Except Stuntmensch. "Computer Generated Imaging," he'd said, "is the Ground Zero of our profession."

Stuntmensch did not believe that stunt work was actually acting. So he bristled all the more whenever he read that the movie star had "done his own stunts." One of Stuntmensch's dreadful approximations of a downtrodden accent would inevitably result. "Yoo know oo done 'is 'own stunts'? Robert Re'ford, at's oo. And look wot 'appent t'im."

Everyone thought Stuntmensch was confusing Robert Redford with Christopher Reeve, but Stuntmensch said no, he was referring to the jump from the train in . . . some post-Classic Western . . . that Robert Redford did himself. That Robert Redford was very bitter about. Because the second unit putz who'd shot the thing lied to Robert Redford and said he could see "very clearly" Robert Redford's face. Yeah, maybe through binoculars. But to anyone watching what the camera saw, the moving train trestling the rushing river, the guy leaping to his possible doom—well, it may as well have been Stuntmensch's possible doom. Those were the days that Stuntmensch still had a face. *Handsome as Robert Redford's*, as they say. How many men of a certain prettiness got compared to Robert Redford over the years? But the comparison betrayed its own denial: *You're not as.* Or, *Almost, not quite.* Stuntmensch was therefore "generically handsome." And his face didn't warp in the interesting way of so many unlikely leading men, Bogey having set the standard by which the John C. Reillys will ever have their day. *Smart as Robert Redford*, Stuntmensch was said to be, too. So *not as, not quite.*

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As a kid, Stuntmensch had been part of the famous "kindergarten cookie experiment" on impulsivity and self-control and Free Will. He'd horribly skewed the data—by carefully snapping the cookie in half, eating half, and

fussily setting aside the other half "for after my lunch," as he'd explained it to the baffled and badly burned researchers when they returned to the room.

Stuntmensch was all about reality. He despised realism. That terrible fracas with the historical accurist on, what was it? Some D-Day movie. "They *did* have screwtops on their wine bottles at Normandy! Cork? Cork was the luxury then what it is today!" Stuntmensch knew that he didn't know for wine. He didn't want to know. "Because *no one* knows," he'd say. "Oenophiles," he'd mutter. "No accident there, how much it sounds like *paedophiles*."

Whenever Stuntmensch discovered an oenophile working craft service, he'd invoke one of those studies that scientists do from time to time to reestablish that people expect what they expect to expect. This experiment being how a scientist assembled a bunch of oenophiles and asked them to describe a red and a white. The white was "airy, etc." while the red was "earthy, etc." In fact the red was the white, dyed red. "That's realism, man," Stuntmensch would say. "You want reality, you hang in a cage off a cliff face while they try to figure out in which order Nic Cage's trailers need to be parked."

Stuntmensch had no problem with the so-called talent, except when they wanted to "do their own stunts." Those days were over, mostly. No way was Robert Redford going to tangle with FUSTI, the Federated Union of Stunt Talent International of the United States, Its Territories and Canada, AFL-CIO, CLC. But it didn't stop the talent from lying about it, about doing their own stunts. It's weird what will come out of the talent's mouth, unscripted. "She needs a stunt double for her *E!* interviews," Stuntmensch once snarked about an intense young actress who seemed to have sprung fully formed from the brow of Jodie Foster and who claimed having jumped between two moving elevators. (A creepy foreshadowing of her untimely death, video chattering while stepping through defective accordion gates and into oblivion at the NoHo loft building where she'd been pricing "raw space.")

Stuntmensch was a union man, a proud steward of FUSTI. Otherwise, Stuntmensch was apolitical. "You count-down the things what do not matter, waitin' for the foam," he'd always say. The foam might be the AR-FFFP by which other FUSTIes risked their own lives to extinguish the flames buffeting his body. The foam might be whatever would theoretically break his fall while not also pluming "breakaway" glass into his eyes. The foam might be the stinting strip of cellulose sponge taped to his head in lieu of a crash

helmet, because the star's face would digitally overwrite his own for the collision with the meth trailer stopped in the fog.

The foam that Stuntmensch really counted on was quantum foam, the supranatural stuff of magus physicists' pipe dreams. Like everyone in Hollywood, Stuntmensch was orthodox unto himself. Many had a *houngan*, or "voodoo physician," of one chickenscratch school or another. They'd be called in for a consult when cupping was too obvious or Dianetics™ too dear. But as in his work, Stuntmensch in his faith edged and extended even these outer limits. What Stuntmensch believed won him no apostles in life; nor did he persuade by his few and peculiar preachments. In this way, too, was Stuntmensch so much like our Redeemer.

It was enough for the stunt community to know that Stuntmench's body was "riddled" with cancer and to respect that his cure was stunt work. The riskier the stunt, the more secure was Stuntmensch in his remission. *The dare is the cure.* He didn't know how he knew it, but he knew it. The phrase had come to him, as if spoken on the breeze off a burning bush. But CGI was ruining everything. Not just by the diminished quantity of the work but also its quality as therapy. The green screen's harness was merely anodyne, the worst danger. Live performance was prone to salubrious error, true, but the venues were limited and required a whole new deb season of union chinwags. "Plus you're no spring lambkin, Stuntmensch," said Clarkie Purell, who'd made a career of being flung through the air by the Cetacea of Aqua-Parq® till one day a disgruntled beluga bit his arm off. So Stuntmensch had resorted to "doing his own stunts" on L.A.'s highways and byways. No one shouting out "And . . . *action!*" No one standing by with the foam.

* * *

When Frank Gehry heard the crash, he did what he always did—grabbed a camera and hustled to be first on the scene. He snapped away, gasoline and blood pooling his hightops. EMT arrived and started screaming at him. "Fuck off!" Frank Gehry screamed back. "I have First Response!" And he flashed his Pritzker Prize. The EMT guys glared, but they knew Frank Gehry was right: Jaws of Life® had a way of contaminating Frank Gehry's artistic integrity.

"Here," Frank Gehry finally said to his swishy assistant, tossing the camera to the panting little prick. "Render those, *eff-tee-pee* Macao and tell them

to *fuck-ing-pay-me*." Then the great architect watched as EMT ripped apart Frank Gehry's vision in an effort to save the life of whoever was bleeding-out inside. When the man-mangle emerged, Frank Gehry was surprised that he recognized the driver. *He oughtta get some kind of finder's fee*, Frank Gehry mused. This same loon had been responsible for the spectacular crumple now gracing the campus of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah University in Hyderabad—the café cum call center where students earned tuition "points" by speaking palliative gibberish to murder-suicide imminents, clients of a coalition of belly-up Anglo-American banks.

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A right merry old elf was in the visitor's chair when Stuntmensch awoke. The room was illuminated only by the light-emitting diodes of the many pipping machines signaling real-time conditions.

"Ho-ho," said the elf. "Finally I can go home." The elf grinned, then frowned. "You're supposed to say 'Home? What home?'"

But Stuntmensch was intubated.

"Oh, right," the elf chuckled. He hoisted himself from the chair with the aid of a death's head walking stick. The doctor's coat went well with the mayhem of white hair on the elf's large square head. Like Stuntmensch, he looked like he'd taken some hits to his handsome face over the years, but a handsome chap has a way of staying that way, scars and all. The handsome old elf bent over Stuntmensch and yanked out the breathing tube. Stuntmensch gagged and dry-retched. The pipping machines went haywire but no one came running.

"Night Nurse is upending Attending's downspout," the elf chortled.

"So— who are you?" Stuntmensch croaked.

"You may call me the Oncologist."

"Oncologist!" Stuntmensch shrieked.

"Yeah."

"I was in a car accident."

"No, sir. You were in *a cure*!" And the Oncologist brought the death's head down heavily on the head of Stuntmensch, returning him to the void.

* * *

During his rehabilitation, Stuntmensch spent hours splicing together two contemporaneous Leo DiCaprio movies, *Shutter Island* and *Inception*, to create if not a better or more coherent picture, certainly a more interesting one than either, if *What's reality?* or *What's filicide?* be your idea of "Fun and Games." Stuntmensch wisely simply outright cut the eleventh-hour grafting of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?—overkill*, he thought. The result, *Inception Island*, was Stuntmensch's most accomplished Leonardo-related remix, following naturally upon the alternative ending to *Titanic* afforded him by *Revolutionary Road*—with a pinch of *Mildred Pierce* and a dash of *Holy Smoke* and a jigger of *Hideous Kinky*. Arriving typically late (it had been #13 on YouTube for almost as many minutes two days prior) *EW.nit* blogged of Stuntmench's *Spit Like You're Not a Man*: "They walked smack into it, Cap and Kate! Of all the things to avoid, beyond the obviousness of never, ever making a movie together again (and with Kathy Bates!), what was the specific error but of setting up a tale of the iceberg unstruck, of the ship docking, of the marital inevitable, of a life of routinized misery commencing everlasting." It was an idiocy, true—*EW.nit*'s blogger had missed the point completely—but it was ink, the only time Stuntmensch ever got any, apart from the death notice in *Daily Variety*.

He was full of digital tricks, Stuntmensch was. "How [pause, gropes for it] *ironic*—izzat right?" said Scarfist Dubois upon learning of his late buddy's sleight of handiness with VirtuGL, PerTurboVC, Chromorium, OpenSesameGraph, ParaLaxView, IMP and the glueware required to keep it all spinning in midair. But with Stuntmensch slabbed at last, so many matters became mysteriously unsettled. The Feds got involved, like it was a witching hour of bloodtrails leading from the back room of the Late Owl to the false-front of the First Peep. CHDS wanted to know why Stuntmensch was running the equivalent of a Swedish server farm out of his place on Monorchid Avenue.

Turned out to be just a hobby, "mashing" movies. A geeky bachelor's way of wiling the hours away while steering well clear of porn's Pieter Brueghel boxcars. Perusing the thousands of files on Unsub's Sealgate RHAM server, which they'd relocated to HQ Monterey, Center for Homeland Defense and Security arrived at the unsatisfying conclusion that Stuntmensch was motivated by little more than, say, underscoring the resemblance of Mia Wasikowska in Cary Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* to Kelly Macdonald in the Coens' *No Country for Old Men*, with a lilt of sound-lifting from Michael Winterbottom's *Tristram Shandy*. But for what? *Why?*

Don Dubois, as per CHDS Interview 53478000-2: "'To make the point that no decent dramatization of *Jane Eyre* exists because it's a shit novel, foundationally undramatic.'"

Scarfist was able to quote Stuntmensch verbatim. This amazed everyone who ever knew Scarfist, because Don Dubois had been born a moron long before all those concussions. But as Scarfist explained the integrity of this particular memory to CHDS: "Youz does t'irty-two takes wit' Stuntmensch where he's your kickin'-shriekin' ex-wife youz kept lockt in-ah attic and youz tryin' to save him from-ah burnin' manor house and not remember *dat*!" Scarfist practically spat this at the Feds and their *Is that so?* and their *He felt that strongly about Ms. Brontë, huh?*

* * *

Pace Homeland Security, Mia Wasikowska was irrelevant to how much Stuntmensch hated the Wachowskis. Stuntmensch had been the first to notice Larry's unfixed gender, but no one paid attention to Stuntmensch's zany theory at the time. "It's his way of cheating cancer. I've seen this before. Wendy Carlos did the same thing." Hell, *yeah!* Stuntmensch was *that old!* He went back to the day when Walter Carlos was pottering about Stanley's place, pushing and pulling Moog plugs to score *A Clockwork Orange*, and then returning for *The Shining* as Wendy Carlos, to do, ultimately, only the opening Dies Iræ. Wendy and Rachel Elkind(-Tourre) slaved over a through-score for Stanley to trash.

The Shining was Stuntmensch's sixteenth movie. That was Stuntmensch driving the yellow VW for the title sequence, rotors in the rear view, "rotors up the wazoo." Greg MacGillivray, the cameraman deranged as Stanley but way ballsier, gave the chopper pilot the trots, insisting on nudging the VW at the cliff's edge. Stuntmensch never accelerated. It was also Stuntmensch, in blackface (at Stanley's insistence), who took the axe for Scatman Crothers—the close-up, where Jack Nicholson is making good and sure that that axe is sunk true.

Stuntmensch couldn't stand the way Stanley shrewed at Shelley Duvall. "*You* are letting everyone down, Stanley," Stuntmensch said to his old friend after a particularly unpleasant afternoon at Elstree. Stanley and Stuntmensch never spoke again, but Stuntmensch hung around the studio and wound-up working for the man who would become the most

immortal of his mortal enemies—George Lucas. The movie was *Stars Wars V: The Empire Strikes Back* and it was there at Elstree in 1979 that Stuntmensch understood two things—that he was "riddled" with cancer, and that this insipid FX dork, George Lucas, was going to cheat him of his cheat.

* * *

Scatman Crothers was only the start of Stuntmensch's career as Al Jolson. Stuntmensch was Construction Worker Casualty #3, flambé plummeting ten storeys in James Bond #21, *Casino Royale*. The so-called Get Real Re-boot of cinema's longest-running live action cartoon series. But it's possible that no Bond movie's opening commotion is more reviled by physicists and stuntmen. No small achievement! Physicists can appreciate but only stuntmen can truly know that to jump thirty vertical feet and ten horizontal onto a rooftop cushioned by a two-inch layer of sand will produce only one result—the conjoining of your kneecaps with your sternum. You do not pick-up and continue running after that.

Stuntmensch so frequently body-doubled Denzel Washington and Don Cheadle that he'd at separate times been a negotiating point in the actors' contracts. (Stuntmensch became Standard Rider for Denzel but not for Don after he lost Oscar® to Jamie Foxx in '05. Ultimately, of course, Stuntmensch body-doubled both men on *Flight*, and Jamie Foxx on *White House Down*.) Stuntmensch was Zelig. There was no describing him accurately. By the end of his career, it mattered—not whether he was white or black, small enough to be thrown over Scarfist's shoulder in a thirty-two-take inferno or strapping tall himself. All that mattered was making the cut. *Yes.* And so to that sorry story. The beginning of his end. His first arrest. Felony assault, no less. Which is no cure for anything.

* * *

It was for the most lily-white of actors, the stunt that came nearest to killing Stuntmensch. The stunt that got away. Lily-livered Wes Anderson decided it would be more dramatic, after all, to do just the long shot to C.U. through the train compartment as Francis Whitman (Owen Wilson) describes the motorcycle accident that rendered him "technically dead." Stuntmensch hated

certain movies for reasons that were uniquely his own. *The Darjeeling Limited* was one of them. But find a movie, any movie, where someone's best work didn't wind up in the old proverb of the cutting room floor.

The difference for members of the stunt community was that the cutting room floor so often took actual slices of the self. One stunt could have you set for life as Wile E. Coyote, post ACME-related mishap. But that stunt, cut from the movie—you may as well have klutzed it in the shower. The guy on the adjacent bar stool will never understand what you're talking about. "I don't remember any motorcycle stunts in *Darjeeling*. Do you mean *Fantastic Mr. Fox*?"

Stuntmensch had this callous oaf on the floor in six seconds, hissing into his face: "That puppet was me! That was me up there! Wooz Anderson just recycled my stunt cycling into a movie starring puppets!" Then followed a string of invectives against Heinrich von Kleist and babblings-on about *On the Marionette Theatre*. All who were in the bar that night believed Stuntmensch to be completely shitfaced. Except that Stuntmensch never drank. Not then. Not ever.

* * *

Attending was being peevish with Night Nurse. It was like '60s Dixie, seeing this slip of a white man sniping orders at the huge black man. Attending's Adam's apple was as prominent as his nose and might be mistaken in profile, actually, as his chin, which was miniature. Attending wouldn't've stood a chance in any police line-up of Ichabod Cranes. Night Nurse made extra cash doing police line-ups. Huge black men were hugely in demand and Night Nurse especially. He'd been incorrectly I.D.'d as the perp many times. (You got an extra ten bucks for false fingering, plus some elaborately calculated fraction of a point toward your SAG card.)

Night Nurse had a special talent, a spooky ability right out of the bayou if he'd been born in one and not in South Central on the same day, at the same instant, that Stuntmensch was entering his first coma up in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Pyrotechnics had prematurely crossed some wires before Stuntmensch could get his helmet properly fitted. Night Nurse's special talent was that he could smell cancer, like a beagle. It was cute, how so many cancer-sniffing beagles were named Snoopy, and "Snoopy" was always cute till he sat down and thumped his tail to Morse code *You've got cancer*. No one

ever thought of Night Nurse as cute. "Oooh, *nasty*!" said Night Nurse. One whiff of the tube this guy had somehow managed to yank out and Night Nurse knew, he *knew* that Stuntmensch was all rotten-up inside.

"Whaddya mean I should order a smear," Doc Ichabod snarled. "This patient was in a car wreck."

"Maybe the least of his problems," said Night Nurse.

Doc Ichabod ignored Night Nurse, except when he so desperately craved Night Nurse's attention. Then he'd instigate one of their graveyard shift pajama parties, flitting about in the pony-patterned examination gown he'd nabbed from Pediatrics, exposing the smooth pink lean curvy coccyx-dimpled rump that looked to Night Nurse's eyes (as it would look to your own eyes) indistinguishable from that of a Thacher girl or of any one of those horsey schools where the lasses are all slender long muscled fillies. Doc Ichabod couldn't decide which sensation he enjoyed more—the icy spurt of Other-Sonic® Generic Ultrasound Transmission Gel up his fundament or the Tree of Life, that big nigger Yggdrasil, abruptly taking root there.

* * *

"That," said the Oncologist, "is his cure."

Stuntmensch and the Oncologist were watching Night Nurse bugger Doc Ichabod.

"Whose cure?"

"Why, the doctor's of course," said the Oncologist.

"What about the nurse?"

"Oh, he just wants to mount a white girl's little blushing bottom and not do time. Face-down like that, Doc's own genitals tidily tucked up and out of sight, Doc is a most convincing facsimile."

"Is that a cure then?" Stuntmensch was bewildered. Nor, alarmingly, could he remember the last time he'd mounted *anyone.*

"Have you not been listening?" The Oncologist glared at Stuntmensch.

Stuntmensch came-to. "Oh. Okay. It would be a cure if Night Nurse *actually* ass-raped a *real* white girl."

"Maybe," said the Oncologist.

"What do you mean *maybe*? I thought you said the dare was the cure."

"Well, it's what I was thinking at the time."

"How can you say that now?"

Night Nurse whiffed the neoplastic pong off Stuntmensch. It was just like that scene where Scatman shines *How'd you like some ice cream, Doc?*: Night Nurse, without breaking his rhythm on Doc's rectum, turned to Stuntmensch and—*You've got cancer*.

"Yeah," said the Oncologist. "I concur."

* * *

They'd reached the second checkpoint, on the shore of the Western Lands. Old Possum was punching tickets. Stuntmensch handed Old Possum his ticket.

"This one has expired," said Old Possum.

"You still have to honor it," said the Oncologist.

"Why?" said Old Possum.

"Cancer," said the Oncologist, and he thumbed a *Yeah, no joke!* gesture Stuntmenschwards.

"We're all of us ill in one way or another," said Old Possum, punching the ticket. "We call it health when we find no symptom . . . " He gazed reverently toward the Elite Class gondolas, bumping together in the grey breeze. "My first patient was an incurable cancer. How he fought against it!"

"How 'he' fought against what?" said Stuntmensch.

"The murderer trying to murder him by doing murder!" Old Possum stared contemptuously at the Oncologist.

* * *

They walked along the shore.

"Colleague of yours?" said Stuntmensch.

"You can't choose 'em," the Oncologist chuckled.

"What is choice?"

"The love of a woman who is your equal in your best and in your worst," said the Oncologist.

"What is cancer?"

"The triumph of a lesser ambition over a greater one."

"What kind of oncologist are you?" Stuntmensch demanded, at last. They stopped walking. The Oncologist pivoted his walking stick from hand to hand.

"The best kind," said the Oncologist. "The one who shows you the way to the death you might live with."

"Crap health plan," said Stuntmensch, and he kicked a pebble into the tarn.

The ferry had docked and it was time to board. Stuntmensch accepted the Oncologist's handshake and farewell. The ramp was at a pitch you could just maybe get three revolutions out of it at the proper insane acceleration and angle of approach. The things Stuntmensch knew. The ramp whomped under his feet as he trudged it to the top.

The Oncologist had the decency not to call after him: "Hey! You never married or raised children! Doing that, not doing what you did—breathing and eating fire! That was *your* cure, Stuntmensch!"

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The service seemed to be ending. *You can never tell with these people*, Mrs. McQueen thought. Stevie "II" Jr. yawned. His pants pockets were a flash-mob of genitals-fiddling. Life was very long.

Author's Note: *The epigraph is from my interview with Mailer, "America's Obsessions," published by Random House in the Summer 1995 issue of* At Random *magazine. I also discussed with Mailer his oncological ideas in the 1998* At Random *interview "Mailer Opus." J. Robert Oppenheimer's community theatre activities and his citing of John Donne's* Holy Sonnets *XIV are reported by Richard Rhodes in* The Making of the Atomic Bomb *(1986). Robert Redford showed clips of his stunt work at Dartmouth College in 1987. Stanley Kubrick praises Greg MacGillivray's camerawork in Michel Ciment's* Kubrick: The Definitive Edition *(2001). On May 30, 2012, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a "Class I Recall" of Other-Sonic® Generic Ultrasound Transmission Gel "due to possible microbial contamination that include organisms such as* Pseudomonas aeruginosa *and* Klebsiella oxytoca. . . . *The use of [the gel] may cause serious adverse health consequences, including death" (FDA.gov).*