

RAN DUMB-ER

THE CONTINUED ADVENTURES
OF AN IRISH GUY IN L.A!

MARK HAYES

TO MY GRANDPARENTS...

EILEEN AND NICK HAYES

JULIA AND JOHN RYAN

DANCE. ON!

(I HOPE TO GOD I SPELT ALL THEIR NAMES RIGHT)

“IS FREEDOM ANYTHING ELSE THAN THE RIGHT TO LIVE AS WE WISH? NOTHING ELSE.” ~ EPICTETUS

“PANTS OFF. FREE. DUMB!” ~ ME

INTRODUCTION

When Murk asked me to write the introduction to his new book, I said... Mighty!

Then I asked Murk... Does it have to be long?

And I think he said... No.

Even *mightier!*

I do hope you enjoy *RanDumb-er*.

Read. On!

Robbie Williams
Los Angeles
2012

Chapter 1

BIG BAG OF NUTS!

It was the best of times, it was nuts at times.

Bright lights. Dim city. Big dreams. Harsh reality.

Extravagant. Intense. Insane.

Celebrities. Porn stars. Married women.

I'm back. I'm in L.A. And it's Halloween.

Little did I know how underprepared I was. Halloween in L.A might just be the most nuts time of all. Randumb. Bizarre. Mighty. Seeing little green and orange oompa loompas running around while your senses are being pummeled from all angles. Hot women seem to be everywhere. Half of them naked. The rest half naked. Almost all of them sporting the best bodies money can buy. Imagine all that, if you can.

OK.

So.

Past few days have been kind of like that. Except. Actually even harder to describe. Particularly as I'm now packing my bags again. As I think I'm off on a private jet to the Bahamas.

As.

You.

Do?

I'm getting ahead of myself...

Halloween night, land at LAX. Collect my bags. Nervously queue up for the visa inspection. Get through. Skip past customs. Delighted. No pat down. No cavity probing. And my visa is real? *Mighty!*

Turn back on my long-awaited American phone. Call my buddy Chowder, who kind of looks slightly like Jude Law. Or so he says. Maybe a rounder version, I might add. He's outside waiting with his girlfriend Charlotte,

who Chowder also likes to describe as his Megan Fox lookalike (which in fairness is the more truthful of the two). Stroll out the sliding doors of LAX. Suck in a deep breath of warm L.A air. Ahhh. Fast food. Smog. Heat. Betsy (Mighty!). I'm back! Dancing!

“Chowder - Hope you've been taking care of L.A for me.
Charlotte - Long time no see!”

Throw my bags in the boot of Chowder's car. Jump in the back. Feel funking mighty. I think. I'm back! Drive on!

Weirdly enough L.A smells and looks like home. In the sense that my senses were instantly used to it again, even if it's been 3 months since I was here last. Body temperature readjusted. Air didn't look foreign. Smells didn't seem like I was in a foreign land. Felt good. Seeing all the McDonalds, Starbucks and Subway signs. Sucking in the fume-filled air. Basking in the warmth. Complete opposite to Ireland. But still. Duck to water.

Felt like Chowder and Charlotte's adopted child in the backseat. Both of them asking how I was, how was the flight, do I have my seatbelt on? This would be a reoccurring theme. Chowder turns around,

“What time are you going to the Playboy mansion then?”

“Hmm. Let me check. I'll make a quick call.”

Phone. Dring dring.

“Howdy lady! I made it back- It's Mark... MARK... MARRRRRRKKKK. (Accent issues? Not a-funking-gain!) Not Merrick. M-A-R-K. Irish. Irish Mark, that's the one! How are you? Where am- I'm on the way to West Hollywood! WeHoooo. Yeah, just got back. How are you? What's the jam with later tonight? The Mansion? What time- You which now? Seriously? Why would you do that? But I told you I was coming back... OK. Funk. Yeah, no. How much to pay? Ehh. Yeah. No. No worries. Ciao ciao...”

Balls. Ehh. So then. Hmm...,

“Chowder. What are ye up to tonight?”

“Big night planned. Charlotte's Dad is in town. Going to dinner first. Party in the Roosevelt afterwards. Halloween is

nuts here. Should be fun. Pity you can't come mate!"

"Yeah. Pity alright. Although, you know what, if the offer's still open, I will come! Ye've been kind enough to pick me up from the airport. The least I can do is come out to dinner with ye."

"Are you sure? We are going to Chaya, really nice restaurant, food is amaaaazing."

"Yeah. I'm sure."

"Will the girl not mind you canceling on her? What's her name, Tammy?"

"Kammy? Nah, she'll be cool. No worries."

(Particularly as she just informed me that she gave away my free VIP invite. Thought something had happened as I didn't phone earlier. Asked someone else to go with her instead. Tut. Ape. Say nothing.)

Half an hour in, my plan had already changed. Halloween party at the Playboy Mansion: Out. Dinner and see what happens afterwards: On.

Get to my new temporary abode in West Hollywood. Chowder's friend Tara has a spare room. Quick hello. Dinner in half an hour. Dump my bags. Two minute shower. Whip on my costume. Back out the door. Barely even time for a movement. Jump in a taxi. Hubbulla. Hub-bulla? Hubbulla! Eventually he understands the name of the restaurant I'm saying. Arrive at Chaya. In I stumble.

Introduced to Charlotte's Dad, his girlfriend and glamorous side-kick, Jackie, along with two directors from his company. All over from London for a few days. Sit down. Beer already waiting for me. Take a swig. Realise they're all looking at me. Oddly. Charlotte asks,

"What are you meant to be?"

"Eh, a banshee."

Obviously.

"Banshee? What on earth is that?"

"You know: Red top hat. White shirt. White tie. Pair of jeans..."

Typical Irish banshee!”

“Oh right.”

Cue laughter. Ice broken. Bluff on.

Smile and thank Charlotte’s Dad for inviting me along, ask if they've already ordered? Cue a perplexed look. Repeat myself. Realise that even though they're all English, they don't understand my accent in the slightest. Maybe I was slurring my words from the jet lag.

“Not too sure what you just said but would you like something stronger than a beer, a gin perhaps?”

“Ehh. Yeah. Please. Make it a double!”

Two gins arrive in front of me. Sweet Jesus. Dumb last words. Dinner. Unreal. Ridiculously savage. Cajun style mahi-mahi with an asparagus and poached egg starter. Chowder. Spot on. Some feast. Cheers to Charlotte’s Dad, or as I started calling him: “The Man”.

Dessert. Coffee. Port. Mighty! (Although the port was an acquired taste. I required my mouth to enjoy it.)

“What's the plan?”

“Roosevelt Hotel. Hollywood strip. Massive Halloween party.”

“Sounds good. What about tickets?”

“Taken care of.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. Don't worry about it. Just have a good time.”

“Well if you insist...”

Limo waiting for us outside the restaurant. (Ha, mighty to be back in L.A!) Drop The Man and company off at their hotel in West Hollywood. Not up for the crowds in Hollywood.

Three of us head down in the limo on our own. Buzzing now big time. Delighted to be back. Night is shaping up nicely- Until. We hit gridlock. Almost midnight. And the traffic is that bad? Wuu. Good old L.A.

Eventually we arrive at the Roosevelt. Massive crowd outside. Huge. Thankfully, Chowder knows a guy. Sorted out the tickets. Greets us. Skips us past the crowd, who give us the nicest of dirty looks. Who cares, we're in!

Just as we enter, a girl who looks like a mix between Lucy Liu and a Barbie doll tells us to follow her. OK? Charlotte's on crutches (trampoline accident, snap of the ankle) so safer to come this way, she informs us. Seems dodge until we find out that the girl appears to be running the VIP lounge upstairs. Takes us the back route, asking if we would like to go in to the VIP lounge? This is weird; no doubt we're getting stung somehow... Ah who cares, we're in!

Placed is packed. People everywhere. All dressed up. All in ridiculously good costumes. (It is Hollywood after all. Not your raggedy Ann outfits that most people plump for back in Ireland. Although my banshee outfit really was top notch). Hot-looking nurses. Cops. Avatars. Witches. Village People. Clowns. Cavemen. Star Wars. Playboy bunnies. Tarzan girls. Playboy girls. Hustler girls. Lingerie models. Girls wearing bits of string barely covering an inch of their body. Girls in body paints. Girls. Girls. GIRLS! Seriously: Unreal.

(Did I mention it's great to be back in L.A? In Cork you wouldn't really see girls in such outfits. And in most cases if you did, you probably wish you hadn't looked. My eyes!)

Roosevelt is big. Historic Spanish-style hotel in the middle of Hollywood, named after Theodore Roosevelt. Hotel lobby inside, DJ playing there. Next to that is "Teddy's" which is a dark, swanky club that almost feels like a wine cellar, filled with beautiful people. Another DJ in there. Big room off of that where I think the first Academy Awards was held way back in 1929. Another DJ in there? Jesus, they're everywhere. Pool area outside called the Tropicana Bar with cabanas all round. And to cap it all off, there's another DJ on a little stage in the middle of the pool outside. Impressive work all round. (Apparently Marilyn Monroe stayed in one of these cabanas for a while, and now haunts it. Apparently.)

Anyway, amongst all of this we had somehow ended up at a private party in a VIP suite outside, overlooking the pool. Our new friend, Maggie Wong worked for a company who had rented out the suite. Only cost them \$60,000 to rent it out. For one night. Great value! Unfortunately for Ms. Wong, hardly anyone from the company decided to show up. Which is why we had been invited along. Make up the numbers. Seat fillers. Works for me. Particularly as it was the only part of the hotel that had a free bar included. Betsy! Maggie Wong utters the magic words,

“Help yourselves to any drinks you want.”

And we're off! Myself and Chowder made a beeline for the six foot tall fridge full of vodka. Oh sweet Jesus. Booze. On,

“Would anyone like a booze?”

Girls want some wine. No worries. Lots of expensive looking bottles in this fridge. Except. Balls. No corkscrew. Not to worry... Found a coat hanger! So now, like a banshee I'm ramming open \$200 bottles of wine with my coat hanger corkscrew. Call me MacGyver! Oddly enough, my quick thinking has impressed Maggie Wong. Or maybe it's the banshee outfit,

“Loooooooooveee your red hat!
Love it!!!”

Either way, she seems to have a soft spot. Myself and Chowder booze on. Guzzling down mango vodka. Doing a bit of mingling in the VIP suite. Big room inside. Leather couches. Plasma TVs. Chandeliers. All that lovely VIP gibber. Big bar on one side. Big balcony outside. Only twelve people in here. Meet the folk outside. Nice people. Doctor. Writer. Candlestick maker. Only now do I realise that the pool area below us is rocking! Way better than this suite. But. No free booze out there. Hmm.

Free booze or rocking party? Drink on or mingle? I know: Drink drink drink. Ahhh. Now. Let's go for a stroll and have a laugh!

Unfortunately Charlotte is ruled out for strolling around. On crutches and all. Meaning Chowder is staying put too. Tut. Time to go for a solo wander. Looks mighty, back in a few. Actually, seems Maggie Wong wants to come have a look around too. Come on Maggie, let's go on an adventure!

After the relative calmness upstairs, it feels like we're thrust into a zoo full of models down below. Beautiful people gone wild. Music, drink and whatever else, has them all pumped up to the max. Jumping. Dancing. Creeping. Rocking. Boozing. Spilling. Screaming. Hooting. Hollering. The dogs have been left out. Gridlock everywhere. No hope of getting inside to the hotel. So far this stroll has been ten feet. Maggie grabs me by the arm,

“Follow me.”

Lead the way, Ms. Wong! Around by the far side of the pool we go. Mingling. Saluting. High fiving. Going well. Until. Hit another gridlock. Jesus, this place is packed. What should we do? Go back upstairs? Chill a minute? Maggie Wong says chill,

“Let's just hang here.”

Cool. So we chill. I'm looking around. Gazing everywhere. Taking it all in. Where have all the green fields gone? Hang on... Realise someone's hand is rubbing my banshee pants. Maggie Wong? Hey hup. What's going on here? Look at Maggie. She smiles. Keeps rubbing. Tells me she likes my banshee costume. Loves my accent even more.

“Why thank you. It is my best asset, to be true.”

Well besides my... location. Duu. While Maggie is rubbing my wong, she asks if the people are still on the balcony.

“Ehh, let me check... No don't think so. Why? Who are they actually?”

Hmmm. This feels nice...

“Oh, well, that's kind of my husband and a few of his friends- ”

“Emmm what now?”

My wong wangs.

“As in *your* husband or just someone's husband?”

“Yeah, mine. Ha ha. Why, can he see us?”

“No he can't see us but I can feel his wife rubbing me!”

Wong looks at me.

“Should I stop? Do you not like it?”

“I do, Ms. Wong, but it's kind of wrong, so probably for the best. Call me when the divorce goes through.”

Night ends with me back up in VIP. Wondering if the husband saw. Deflecting Maggie's eye daggers. Sipping on boozes. Dancing around the balcony. And repeatedly singing what appears to be the new anthem of

the moment *Empire State of Mind*. Loving it! Even if it is a song all about New York and not L.A, it will have to do. Cheers-ing everyone with my bottle of mango vodka. Great to be back...,

“In New Yorrrrrrrrk... there's nothing you can't do, now you're in Newwww Yorrrrrrrkkkkkkk!!!”

Cheers everyone. Mighty VIP welcoming party for me. Banshee is back in town! Greatest return night ever!!!

Slug. Chug. Dumb. Done. Maggie *whaaat?!*

Chapter 2

WAIT. WHAT. I FORGOT? MY SCISSORS!

Next day.

Woke up.

Face in the pillow.

Drool everywhere.

Pants still on.

Red top hat next to my face. Sweating buckets from the heat. Eyes blurry. Slightly blinded. Where the fuck am I?

Oh yeah.

OH YEAH!

I'm back in this beautiful land of WeHo!

Do the check:

Phone.

Wallet.

Passport.

iPod.

All good. All accounted for. Text on my phone:

'CHOWDER: Come up to the SkyBar pool at the Mondrian hotel. We're all laying out. Maybe have a booze?'

Taaaaxi! And we were off once again. Heard the Mondrian was a nice hotel. Not sure what to expect. Obviously some sort of a nice pool. Turns out to be *savage*. Looks like a pool the Greek Gods might've had. Or one you'd see in an American Gigolo remake. Marble. White. Trees. Loungers. Blondes. Brunettes. Meatheads. Beautiful people town. Lifestyles of the rich and famous. Plus: me.

Spot the group. All panned out on a big white poof under a tree dripping with mini-chandeliers. Surrounded by food platters and drink buckets. Chicken. Shrimp. Lobster. Grapes. Strawberries. Berries. Orange juice. Dom Perignon. Gin. Oh Jesus. Chilled house music playing from hidden speakers. Perfect weather. Hot but not sweltering. Even the fact it was November and this hot was mighty. Far from the wet fields of Ireland now. Top off. Tan on. Betsy. This is the good life!

High fives all round. Recap the night. Struggle to make sense of it. Time for a Bloody Mary. Daytime boozing. Back up on the horse. According to a text in my phone, I'm also meant to have a date today. Met a girl in the taxi on the way home last night. Or so she told me. No recollection. Nobody had.

Told to invite her up to the pool. She's in, would love to come. So we all sat. Drank. And looked around. Mighty views from the pool overlooking L.A. Mightier views around the pool. Forgot how good-looking the women in L.A are. Not saying women in Ireland aren't, ahem. Just that here, they are tip-top of the pile. Mix of everything. All perfect looking (no wonder so many girls are beyond self-conscious here). Models. Dancers. Porn stars. All-American. Asian. Latin. Europeans. Russians. Australians. African. Every corner of the globe. Quality is *ridiculous*. Even better... The *amount* of good-looking women here. Everywhere you look. Or maybe it's just in this part of town. Either way: Unreal. Got me half pumped for my blind pool date. More the merrier!

Chowder had a flashback that it might've been a blonde girl. Good-looking, he thinks. Happy days! So we all kept an eye for a blonde girl. Kept seeing good-looking blonde girls. Distracted by all the good-looking blonde girls. So much so, none of us noticed the, eh, sound-looking brunette who appeared out of nowhere.

“Mark?”

“Ehh, yeah, why so?”

“It's me.”

The non-blonde-sound-looking girl from last night.

“Oh yeah. So it is.”

Balls.

“Do you not remember?”

No I do not.

“Oh yeah, I do...”

Dose. Turns out to be really sound (as in she had a very nice personality). Just slightly odd.

“Where do you live?”

“On the sea.”

“Oh yeah, what beach?”

“No. On the sea. I live on a boat.”

“You live on a boat?”

“I live on a boat.”

Was not expecting that.

“Where's your home?”

“Well, I have no real home. I live on a boat. Just stayed in my friend's house by here last night. Didn't want to get a taxi all the way back to the boat.”

Hmm. All I heard was: I have no real home. You might say: My pool date was with a homeless person? Or am I now just drunk? What's going on? Where am I? L.A?

I must text home to Ireland actually, tell my parents I'm alright. But am I alright? Yeah. Just have one more drink. You can decide what to do then. OK. Great plan. Hang on. Back at the poof. Girl has gone. Seems the mermaid had to go back to the sea. Short. Sweeet. Date over. Night time on!

Again. Same enjoyable rigmarole, a routine I will never get bored of: Home. Shower. Put on my gladdest of rags. Get picked up a car service. (Pam the driver. Older lady. Jolly laugh. Mighty woman!) Chauffeured down to a restaurant called Koi. Again. Unreal food. Ridiculously good. Healthy too. Giddy up. Japanese style this time. (French last night?)

The Man, Jackie and the rest of their crew are in great form. Fans of the mighty L.A lifestyle. Banter flowing at the table. Bottles of wine and champagne trying to keep up. English quip. Irish charm.

Dinner. Finished. Back to the SkyBar. Gallons more booze. At one point I'm behind the bar, showing the head barman how to make Baby Guinness, which is a shot consisting of Kahlua on bottom and Baileys on top. Looks and tastes mighty. Shots for everyone! Yay. Party on. Gets a bit blurry.

Last call. Chatting with two girls. Two sisters. Both blondes. But they kind of look like Kardashians, in a good way. (No one said they were natural blondes.) Dark. Dirty. Hot. New Yorkers. Staying in the hotel. Lights come on. Bouncers start barking at people. Herded out of the bar. Sisters invite me up to their room for a nightcap. Giddy up! Up we go. Penthouse? Penthouse! Jesus. This is unreal. Big huge living room in the middle of the suite. Couches to the right. Bedroom to the left. Glass windows and doors. Wrap around balcony. Big. Huge. Giant. Billionaire. Penthouse! Girls... What the funk do ye do??!

In we go. I've got my arm around one sister. She has her hand on my belt. The Other Sister goes to get drinks. I excuse myself. Bursting for the bathroom. Like a racehorse.

“Ahhhaa.”

Knock on the door. Other Sister comes in. Bottle of vodka in her hand. Two glasses.

“How's it going? Can I come in?”

Obviously. Hands me a glass. Fills it up.

“Cheers.”

“Cheers!”

Slurp.

“You know my sister's married, right?”

What the funk...,

“No. No I did not. Are you serious?! Does everyone here that's married have roaming hands?!”

“I'm not married...”

Cue embrace. By embrace I mean we kiss for a second, she opens my pants and drops to her knees. One fabulous swoop. Oh Jesus. Forgot how good American girls are at tooting on my ponder pipe. Slurping for dear life. (Me. Obviously. Drinking the vodka!) Slurping it down. Heaven. Drunk. But in heaven. Except. One problem...

Her giving me a toot feels unreal. So much so I'm closing my eyes,

mmm'ing away. Unfortunately whenever I start doing this, I also begin to sway. And, as my eyes are closed, start to get the spins.

“Oh no. Jesus. Stop. No no, not you, Other Sister.”

I'm talking to The Spins.

“Mmmm.

Ohhh.”

Spinning.

“Mmmmmmm.

Oohhhh noooo.”

Can't stop spinning. Funk. I'm drunk. Realise now I've been served straight vodka. One of my nemeses. Hits me hard. Suddenly I'm *waaay* too drunk. Survival mechanism kicks in. Get out of here. Must. Go. Home. Now!

“Schorry I'm reallee sohrry but slorry I musthh guh. Goosed.
Too drunk. Noo.

Must.

Go.”

Other Sister understands. I open the bathroom door. Scuttle out. See the first sister on the bed.

“Where have you been? What were you doing in there?”

She asks with a wink (or maybe I was just blinking really slowly and drunkenly at this point. Who knows?)

“Ahh shaba. I'm lorry. Musty eh goes.”

Make a beeline for the door. Clip the couch on the way. Pan out face first onto the couch. One bounce up and down. Lie there for what feels like a deep sleep but really only ten seconds. The Spins. Back. Bad. Funk. Don't want to puke. My brains shouts at my dumb body: You know what to do: Get. Home. Now! Haul myself up. Scuttle off. Out the door. Down the elevator. Into a cab. Might have walked into a bush. (Walked. Fell. Tomato. Potato.) Either way. I'm home. Safe. And. Sound?

Woke up. Face down. Arms out. Legs together. Crucifixion style. Eyes look to the right. Quickly to the left. No one next to me. Mouth tastes dry. No puke at least. No wet on my bed. Tongue just feels like a carpet. Quick check: All allocated and accounted for. Look at my phone. Text:

'CHOWDER: Come up to the pool at the SkyBar. We're all laying out again. Maybe have a booze?'

Deja-funking-doodle-duu? What day is this? Did yesterday just happen? Where am I? Did I dream that? Run my hand through my hair. Confused. Lost. Although. Feel a few twigs in my hair. Maybe that did all happen. Only one way to find out... SkyBar on!

Again. Repeat. Pool. Poof. Sun. Music. Food. High life. And. Booze. Wash. Repeat.

Had to be done. Only way to avoid the inevitable down I was running from. Putting off jet lag. Now ducking and dodging a cruel hangover. Don't worry about that now! Just have one drink. Only cure. Just the one... OK! dumb part of my weak brain, you've sold me. Yeah, I'll have a mojito please! Again. Ended up all over the place. Daytime, poolside. Nighttime, randumb. Dinner. Italian place this time, Cecconi's, which is apparently where all the stars come to hideout and eat pizza and meatballs. Needless to say, quite tasty. Greatest octopus I've ever had. Although have I had octopus before? Not too sure. Also discovered I am a fan of rosette. Like all real men. Obviously. After the dinner: Drunken Hollywood Haze. Very. *Very*. Blurry.

This is how blurry. So after dinner, we went back to the Mondrian Hotel. The Man and The Jackie went to bed (early flight). Chowder fell asleep in the corridor. Leaving Charlotte and myself in the SkyBar, wondering where everyone else was and why the SkyBar was so dead. Where else should we go? Body Shop! Which is a place where girls dance on tables and the likes, you know, sans clothes. I think that's how we ended up in there so early anyway. In we go. Charlotte sits down. I go to the bathroom to relieve my tiny bladder (maybe I just fill it up a lot). Come back from the bathroom. And must be drunk. Seeing as I am strolling around, like I'm lost. So lost, I randomly sit down. Next minute, I see Charlotte,

"Sharrllot?? Is that you?? What are you doing here?"

"You just came in with me. We came here together."

"We did? As in, *we* did? Really? Jesus. Don't remember that. Where are we again?"

So it was time to go. Back to the SkyBar. By now I was feeling a bit

ragged. Tired. Worse for wear. Charlotte made the smart choice. Went to bed. I made the ape choice. One last night cap.

Sitting at the bar. Up on a stool. Eddie Griffin (comedian, odd ball, angry man) to my left. Denis Rodman (former NBA player, odd ball, eccentric man) to my right. Some actress is talking to them/at me. Telling me she was a porn star. Not sure if I believed her. Not the brightest shining star I'd seen. She did look she was in porn though, I'll give her that. Enormous fake boobs. Big fake lips, like two little bananas. Tight silver dress that looked like it was painted on. Smart expression on her randumb face.

While she's talking to D Rod (as I call him, not sure if he liked it) Eddie Griffin is looking at me. Pretty sure it's the look of a man who doesn't like white Irish guys named Merrick. Jealous of my... I don't know. Maybe I'm paranoid. After a few jibs and jabbers about who I am, and what I'm doing here, Eddie tells me the world is about to end. Tonight.

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah man! You don't believe me?”

“No no, I do (*not*) believe you. Could you tell me why though?”

Eddie swivels on his chair. Points to the sky. From the SkyBar. I look up. Eddie tells me solemnly,

“There's a ball of fire headed straight our way. All y'all motherfuckers better believe me. It's ending... TONIGHT!”

“What now?”

Try to follow Eddie's finger. See a red light in the distance. Red light of a radio pole it looks like. Some sort of flashing red light in the distance. Not a fire ball. Not the impending end of the world. Merely the rambles of a drunk man.

“Here, Eddie, that's just a red light...”

“Hush your mouth, homeboy! You calling me a liar?”

“No, Edward, I'm not. I'm merely saying that's a red light of some sort. Never said you're a liar. Just you're either drunk. Or a dope?”

Don't think he gets the meaning of dope. I do know he gets angry. Guzzles down a drink. Swivels his chair. And starts just eye-balling me

for dear life. Sitting on the stool next to me. Giving me the dirtiest look. Infected stink eye. On cue, D Rod pops his head in,

“Me and Molly here are going upstairs, finish this party off right. Come if you want.”

I assume he's saying this to Eddie and his other friend, more so than me. Either way, I take this as my cue... to go upstairs to what seems like an orgy! Obviously!!! (I joke.) Three black men and an Irish baby, plus one dodgy lady? Nay for me.

Home. Collapse into bed. Dodge the dudes. Dodge the Molly. Fall asleep. Wondering if the world is really going to end. Or if the sick pain in my stomach is down to the fact I've yet to go to the bathroom since I've arrived back in LA. Still yet to have a movement. Delightful.

Groundhog. Woke up. Eyes bulging. Deep breath in my nose. Deep growl from my stomach. Heaved myself straight up onto my knees. Looked around. Realised where I was. Realised it was Monday. Realised I can't hack more drink. Wondered why the song *It Was All a Dream!* was singing in my head. Checked my phone. Text:

‘THE MAN: Are you alive?’

‘ME: I believe so?’

Another text:

‘CHOWDER: Just checking to see if we can get you on board with us. Pack a bag and I'll let you know!’

‘ME: On what board? Let me know who? Where am I? Why am I? What's going on?!’

‘CHOWDER: We're going to Antigua. Seeing if you can come on the private jet with us! Do you not remember?!’

‘ME: Eh. No. I knew ye were all going down with Charlotte's Dad for a week. Didn't realise I might be going too!’

‘CHOWDER: Well, get ready. I'll let you know.’

Sitting on my bed. Boxers and socks. Shoulder slumped. Pretty goosed. Wondering: What's going on?! Who is: The Man? Am I going on a private jet? No way. Am I just dumbly drunk? Should I pack? Do I need to? Still

haven't unpacked since I arrived. Haven't phoned home either. Must check my emails too. Oh God, my life is either all coming together or quickly falling apart.

Laptop. Online. Loads of emails:

'Are you in L.A? Did you leave already? Where are you?'

Oh yeah. Forgot to tell most people I was leaving.

'Ha ha, yeah, I'm gone. Back in L.A! Mighty!'

Copy. Paste. Send. Need to brush my teeth. Grab my wash bag. Must shave too. Look through my wash bag. Mind starts running circles. Past few days felt like an acid trip. Jolts. Bolts. Twitching. Brain struggling to make sense. Calm down. Calm down. It's OK, it'll all be OK... Oh. Dear. Jesus.

"Where are my scissors?"

My scissors.

The little scissors that I've had since I was young. Went with me on that school trip to Germany. Journeyed to Hong Kong. All over Greece. Europe. The States. They've been everywhere with me! One of a kind. How could I not have brought them?! I always pack them. Must be a mistake. Please God, no!!!

For some weird reason, this causes my mind to fall apart. Seriously. Maybe the past few days and the gin monkeys were involved too. But the scissors triggered it all. Straight onto Skype. Phone home. No answer. Phone my brother. No answer. Sister, nothing. Where is everyone?! Go online. Facebook. Chat. Who can I get to check in my house for my scissors? Chatting with randumbers online:

'Hey, how are you? Ok, look, I need my scissors. Can you go to my house and check if it's there?'

People asking me:

'Who's this? Have we even met?'

ARRRRGHHHH!!! Useless! I need help. I just need someone to get me my scissors!!! Roommate overhears me. Pops her head in the door. Sees me sitting in a mostly naked slump. Deliriously look up at her. Like Gollum, but with wilder hair.

“Do you need a scissors? You can borrow one of mine if you like? I have about five.”

Twitches kick in,

“Thanks for the offer. But they're not the same. You don't understand. This scissors is irreplaceable. One of a kind. I use it when I'm shaving. Trim my hair. All that stuff. Any other scissors can't do it like this one does it. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!!!”

Needless to say, she doesn't understand what's going on. Neither do I. Just asks me how I'm settling in. Hasn't seen me all weekend. I tell her I'm going home. I need to go home. Wasn't ready for all this. Not without my scissors at least.

“What? Are you OK?”

“Don't know.”

All I know is that I'm now checking flights back to Ireland. How much? When is the quickest I can get back?! I'll just go back for a day. Just one day. Collect my scissors. Say goodbye to people like I should have. Prepare myself a bit more mentally for this trip. You know, moving halfway across the world on your own. And then I'll come back. Then everything will be fine. Then my mind won't feel like it's falling apart. Then I'll be ready. I just need my scissors. That's all! Roommate looks freaked out. Asks if I want a cup of tea -

“No thanks, just need my scissors, ha ha, haahaha.”

That's all. Start to get frantic. Maybe it's in my bag. Maybe it fell out of my wash bag. Rip open my suitcase. Tear everything out in a wild rush.

“Isithereisitthereisitthere?!”

Nothing. Balls. Suitcase two. Same drill. Throwing clothes, shoes, underwear, books and teabags all over the place. Nothing. Jesus Christ. I know where it is. Next to the TV in my room. I left it there so I wouldn't forget. HOW DID I FORGET!?!

“AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY BOWELS?!!!”

My stomach kicks me in the bowel region once more. Uggghhh. God. Goosed. My brain kicks me in the head. Oh Jesus. I'm farked. *It Was All a Dream* pipes up once again. What's going on?!

Turns out my phone is ringing. Somewhere on my bed. Underneath all my suitcase stuff. My life belongings. Separating me from my phone. Throw everything off the bed. See my phone on the pillow. Jump on it like a naked mad man in his boxers. Chowder's name flashing on the screen. Not now Chowder, not now! I need to sort my life out. Phone stops ringing. Rest for a second. Immediately starts again. And again. Until I realise:

Oh Jesus. I forgot.

Chowder!

Antigua!

Private jet?!

Or am I going home for my scissors?!

Press the answer button,

“Heh-Hello...”

Chapter 3

THE FLYING GIN MONKEY

Woke up in a big huge bed, still drunk, I think, looked around and saw a tiny window next to me. Looked out and realised I was on an effing private jet! It was unreal! Amazing.

Walked through the double doors of the master bedroom, out into the main part and everyone else was dancing around to house music.

Jet was rocking!

Literally bouncing.

Up and

Down.

Stewardesses were stressed we were bouncing and dancing around too much but the pilots were cool, told us not to worry. They were loving the music! Ha-ha, it was amazing. Eight hour flight. Over *waaay* too soon...

Which is all that Chowder told me, in a voicemail, that I listened to when I woke up, in a bed, with no sheets, in a room, with yellowy white walls, and no A/C.

Beads of sweat all over me. Parched mouth. Furry tongue. Heavy head. Weak body. Wondering, yet again: Where the fuck am I? Oh God, what am I doing? And (most importantly), have the gin monkeys left yet? Can't hack another day of them. Not without my aforementioned scissors by my side, at least.

So Saturday, Sunday, Monday: Unreal. Beyond mighty. Maybe the most fun three days I've at any point of ever being in L.A. Although it's tough to get three good days in a row most places. Back in Cork two out of three would be the tip. Maybe have an unexpected mighty Friday night. Chase that high Saturday. Fail. Brutal. Go again Sunday, almost out of disgust with the night before. Best one of the bunch. End up getting a mini-bus down to Kinsale for the day with group of buddies. Adventure on. Two out of three, ain't bad. Anyway, couldn't really have asked for more of a bang to come back with here. Well. Except maybe getting a bang, if you know what I mean boss. And I think you do. Duu! Ehh,

yeah, great three days. Random. Dumb. Fun.

To balance that out, yesterday was absolutely, beyond belief, mind wobbling close to a meltdown, horrendous. Seriously. That bad. What goes up, must come down. And when gin is involved, that down was deeper than I've ever been. Debbie Downer was dragging me to the depths of downtown. All the way down. Dangerously to clown town.

At one point I did actually check for a flight back to Ireland. Escape the hangover. Just go for a week. Pick up my scissors. Recuperate. Come back again. This time, more prepared. Then I realised being stuck on a plane with such a bad hangover might make my brain explode out of my head. So that was canceled.

Just didn't want to be anywhere. Not here. Not up there. Just wanted a hole to go hide in. Couldn't even find that. Failed. Loser. Chump. So. Instead, like all good apes, I just freaked myself out as much as I conceivably could. Some ape. I blame the gin. Horrendous self-loathing. Covered in The Fear.

Woke up yesterday and decided I needed to get my life in order. So I did what anyone would do: I made out lists. Things I need to do. Really need to do. Kind of need to do. Long-term goals. Everything. Never ending list. Need to sort out a lot:

1. Social security.
2. Bank account.
3. Food shopping.
4. Gym joining.
5. DJ gigs.
6. Acting classes.
7. Stand-up venues.
8. Write new material.
9. Start writing my book (maybe this should be #1).
10. Get my camera fixed.
11. Get in touch with people here in L.A who I need to talk to.
12. Contact people at home in Ireland.
13. Tell some I'm OK.
14. Tell others I've left Ireland.
15. Retrieve my stuff from my old roommates.
16. Buy a new American phone as this one I have now is really horrific.
17. Try to make sense of all the stuff that just happened in the past three days.
18. Buy a desk and a chair for my room.

19. Get to know my new temporary roommate.
20. Microwave.
21. Sheets.
22. Buy a new or retrieve my old George Foreman.
23. Make out a weekly plan of what I need to do on a daily basis.
24. And, most importantly, buy a new scissors. Obviously.

Good old lists. Bring such tranquility and order. Except when they are never-ending rambles of gibberish. Reminding me that I am truly starting from scratch once again. Lots. Of. Lists. Too much to do. Oh Jesus. Where's the gin?

Writing all this down, while having a horrendous hangover; not helpful. At all. Freaked myself out like never before. Brain started spiraling. Muttering a new mantra to myself. Overwhelmed. Underprepared. Overwhelmed. Underprepared. Over. Under. Ovder. Oder. Oer. Or. Oh my sweet Jesus I'm going to lose my mind.

Realising I kind of left Ireland in a rush. Visa arrived. Wasn't that what I was waiting for? Holding me back?! Eh, yeah? So now, it's here, invite to Playboy Mansion too... Go, go, GO!

Go I went. Left Ireland quietly. Told a handful. Not really a fan of going-away parties. Particularly seeing as most these days are for folk who are going traveling for three months. And they're having a big going away party? I haven't seen him in about four months as it is! No thanks.

I'll just slip off. My going away party should be after I've left. People realise... He's gone, has he? Ah that's just great news! Wuu huu! Let's celebrate! We got rid of him, finally, finking ape. Party on!

So when I went online to try and talk to someone from back home, my conversations were a bit scattered. Gin monkeys. Surreal few days. Melting down over a scissors. Wondering if I'm going private jet flying to a Caribbean beach? No wonder I was having harebrained conversations with people.

Juggling all mediums. Facebook, Skype, Twitter, email. Making little to no sense of anything to any of the people I sparked up conversations with:

'Hiya boyo! Yeah, long time no talk. What's it been, four months? I'm good. Well, no. I'm bad. Can't find my scissors. I'm in L.A! For how long? Not sure. Might be leaving again today. No no, got here just three days ago. What's going on?

*No clue! Still there? No. Hello? No. Well funk you anyway!
Your going away party was crap too! Oh, you're back. Just on
the phone. Sorry about that. Ha-ha ha ha.'*

Shut down my laptop. Went downstairs instead. Tried to talk to my roommate, Tara. Realised my voice was absolutely goosed from the past few days. Too much boozing. Shouting. Roaring. Laughing. Kind of had no voice left. Strained, husky mouse. Plus. No energy to string out a proper sentence. Just littering the air with random, pointless words,

“Hi... High... Ha.”

Laugh...

“Cat... Life... Yeah.”

Mumbling. Clearing my throat. Making Tara immediately regret letting me move in with her.

Around now is when I remembered the unimaginable: Left my scissors at home in Ireland! My scissors! The one I always use!!! The one that cuts in a certain way that no other scissors I have encountered cuts the same. How could I?!

Had to start taking deep breaths. Almost came close to making myself pass out over the thought of not having a scissors. (Out of all the home comforts, a scissors? Really?)

Cue Tara telling me she has plenty. All shapes and sizes. It was a nice gesture. But I didn't care. They weren't the same. They wouldn't do. I needed air. I had to get out of the house.

So, I decided to go take care of something really important of my never-ending list: Buy a new phone. I really needed a new phone. That would sort everything out. A phone. Even though I have two already. I needed a third. Right? Yeah.

Zombied my way up to the phone shop. Up to Sunset. Found a store. Guy behind the counter couldn't understand my accent. My slurs. Took a pamphlet from the shop. Went back outside to read it. The pamphlet would help. Tell me which phone I needed for everything to be OK again. First step in the right direction. Except it was a confusing pamphlet. Picked up the Spanish version. No help. Head got dizzy again. Needed assistance from someone working in there.

Walked back into the shop. Well, I walked into the clear glass door of the

phone shop. Bumped face first off the door. Stumbled back a few feet. Stood there. Staring at the door. For longer than a few seconds. Decided I couldn't hack it. Defeated by a closed door. Wondering why it wouldn't open for me.

Feeling freaked that I couldn't even manage to buy a phone that I didn't even need. Took it as a sign. Just left instead of trying to open the door again. Guy behind the counter giving me strange looks. Not sure why.

On the way home I walked past the SkyBar. Decided to call in. See if anyone was by the pool that I might recognize. Maybe have a drink. Only thing that could cure me surely. Saw a few English girls we had been hanging around with one of the days. I could bounce my hungover buzz off them. They'd be in the same boat.

Big wave when they saw me. Felt at home. Sat down with them. Felt better. Until I realized they were in a different boat. Big boozing boat. Full of energy. Full of questions. I could barely grunt out a yes or no,

“Ugh. Yuh. Ugh.”

Attempted to be normal by asking regular questions. That didn't really make sense...,

“Why are ye on holidays this time of year?”

(Why wouldn't they be? My mind still sometimes thinks that other people take holidays only during the summer holidays. These girls weren't teachers or students. Could holiday whenever they want. I knew all of this already!) Told me they wanted to go on a holiday. Decided to go at this time.

“Oh right.
Em.”

Tried to explain my school holidays thinking process. In ughs and yuhs. Kind of threw me off. Told them I actually had to leave again. They all laughed,

“Sit down, chill out.”

“How long have you been living in L.A?”

“About three days now.”

They laughed,

“No, seriously...”

“About 72 hours or so. I think I must go home again though.”

They laughed, although not as heartily this time. For some reason I said I really must go home. Almost close to tears at this stage (not sure why).

“Why are you leaving?”

“I have to buy a scissors.”

They laughed. I left. Puzzled looks and shouts of,

“Come back.”

“Sorry. I have to go. Must buy a scissors.”

Which I did. Along with a George Foreman. And then I went home. Slightly less freaked. Jumped into bed. Found the hole I had been looking for all along. Lay there. Under the covers. Staring towards the ceiling. Wondering why I was close to tears.

Realising I was scared.

Surrounded by The Fear. Big move. Big step. Easy part was actually getting back here. Hard part has only just begun. How was I going to achieve all my lofty ambitious plans? I couldn't even buy a new phone! Oh Jesus. By now, almost hugging myself. Vulnerable ape. Overwhelmed. Underprepared. Fully freaked. So I just lay there. In the fetal position. Until I fell asleep. Wish I thought of doing that earlier. Dose. Live and learn. Sleep on!

On the plus side, woke up today, unpacked all my stuff, bought some chicken, went to the gym, bumped into a nutter there who stared at me like Herbert the Pervert from Family Guy, my voice came back, realised people are back to looking at me with confused expressions as they struggle to understand I too am speaking English, think I sorted out two DJ gigs, came home, cooked the chicken on the George Foreman and I was, eh, normal again. Back. Detoxed. Weird hangover, gone.

Finally ditched Owen, my own worst enemy. Goodbye, Owen!

Seeing as all of that has now happened, I can safely say that it is savage to be back in L.A. Pumped! Not that I was ever not. Although yesterday...

More that I didn't really know what was going on. Overwhelmed. Underprepared. All on top of a gin hangover? Dodgy start. Got over it. Just been wined and dined for three days straight! Me whining about that was pretty pointless. Moan off. Own off. Baby steps on!

No more sitting and staring in despair at what I need to get done. Just. Go. Duu! Who cares if what I sorted out so far are more like baby feints in the right direction. My bigger goals should be right around the corner at this rate!

Sure.

Gymed.

Georged.

Settled.

Back in the bubble!

Now. Let the adventures begin...

Chapter 4

FORGOT A LOT

Realised I've forgotten a lot of things about L.A.

Feels like I just woke up from a coma. All kinds of things. How people like to stare each other down here on the streets. Seriously. Stop and stare. Everyone constantly watching everybody else. Necks craning. Who's who. Everywhere. All the time. Judging. Hoping. Do they recognize this person? Are you famous? Can they go home and say they saw Joe D-List walking on the street?

And then you take off your sunglasses.
See the hope disappear from their faces.
Replaced with disappointment.
Realised you're a nobody to them.
Or at least you're nobody to the people they were going to tell.

In Cork people on the street really only stare at you for that long if they want to fight you. Slight chance if they want to hump you.

Here in L.A it's different.
Intense.
Weird.
Obsessed.
All the time.
Welcome back!

On the other hand, I did also forget how there are so many celebrities everywhere here. Hence all the eye-balling. Sitting at a bar. Hmmm, this girl next to me looks like Rihanna. Oh right. It *is* Rihanna.

Getting coffee. Ladies first... She looks a lot like Dita Von Teese - Oh, it is her.

Oh right. All over the shop. No longer that people kind of look like famous people. Now living day to day amongst the famous people. Although better off not knowing who anyone is. Can't mistakenly mistake them for being themselves then. If that makes sense? Moving on...

Forgot how there's always, always, *always* something going on in L.A too.

Seriously. All the time. Everywhere. All sorts.

Gigs.

Clubs.

Openings.

Closings.

Premieres.

Galleries.

Launches.

Every. Single. Night.

Heaven.

Hell.

Heaven: Brilliant that there's so much going on. Particularly compared to Ireland where your options are usually:

1. Pub.
2. Watch TV.
3. Drink at home.
4. Cinema.
5. Read.
6. See a cover band you don't even like.
7. See a band you don't even know. Or really like.
8. Tommy Tank. (Which means... Hmm. Google it.)
9. Cry.
10. Sleep.

Not an abundance on offer, really. One, eight, nine and ten would be the most popular choices, I do believe, in that order. Hell: If you've got a rubber elbow. A need for adventure. And an inability to decline appealing offers. Offers which would seem like a competition prize back in Ireland,

“Want to go V.I.P to an exclusive Crystal Castles gig held by Adidas with a free bar, gift bag included?”

“Eh, I was just going to chil- what am I on about, I'm in!”

Not that anyone is moaning about these daily offers. Always more fun to go with the flow. Especially when the invite mentions exclusive, V.I.P and free bar. Hard to say no. Even if twenty minutes earlier you swore you'd stay focused until you got your life in order a bit. Although when you have a rubber elbow, any invitation is pounced upon.

“Exclusive opening of an envelope filled with anthrax... Want to come?”

“Opening of what now? Actually, I don’t care, will there be a free bar? Will I get a V.I.P sticker? Yes? I’m in!”

Gig turned out to be a good laugh. Free bar, not so much. Two barmen for 300 (select few?) people. In a hot, sweaty room. Clever sneaks whoever organised it. Took ages to get a drink.

Weird seeing so many people at a gig form such an orderly two person wide queue as well. Probably would’ve caused a riot back in Ireland. At least a scrum shaped formation heaving at the bar.

“GIVE US DRIIIINNNKKKK!”

Not here. Too many hipsters. Scenesters. All types of “sters”. All looking cool. Funky as funk in fairness to them. Forgot people push the fashion limit. Full to the brim of every imaginable kind of hats, gloves, scarves, glasses, dicky bows, braces, feathers, peacocks, and the kitchen sink. Funky town.

Speaking of funky, the after-party after that first party was on in a place called Bardot. Cool bar full of ridiculously hot funky women. I remember my old roommates (ridiculously hot models) rarely bought anything themselves. Gifts coming in from all angles. Flowers, handbags, clothes, shoes. Even groceries. Men always paying for everything. Wined. Dined. Boozed. In return, they go places and look hot. Rich men. Hot women. Really hot.

Everywhere.

Wall to wall.

Good. Looking. Women.

Completely. Forgot. About. Them.

Calm down, I obviously mean that in quantity. Plenty of good-looking women in Ireland too. Just seeing as there are about 9 million people in L.A, and not as many people in the whole of Ireland, the difference is obviously going to be massive.

MASSIVE. Different levels everywhere. In quantity. Quantity. Quality. Tomato. Potato. Personality. Thankfully, I have a secret weapon. Which so far has been razor sharp!

My most talented instrument: My accent.

Having an Irish accent is like handing out little bags of gold to strangers. Amazed by it. I'm amazed at how they take everything at face value. Sometimes it's baffling. Other times it's too easy. Funny when things unintentionally get lost in translation.

Telling an American girl that the reason I'm not up for talking to her buddy anymore is because he keeps 'licking my hole'. In Ireland, this is a figure of speech when someone is just being a kiss-ass. Not an actual literal act. Hard to explain that in a crowded bar. And when the guy you're referring to is a highly homosexual man.

On the other side of this forgetful coin, I also forgot how you might oddly end up getting someone's number in very randumb scenarios.

In Ireland, I'm guessing at least 90% of numbers are exchanged in bars or nightclubs. Here, anywhere, everywhere. Out buying porridge in the shop,

"How's it going..."

"Oh my *Gawd*, where are you from? Take my number, call me!"

On the way to the gym. On the way to the bank. While on the phone outside your apartment. While buying a microwave from a girl whose ad you saw on Craigslist. Turns out she lives around the corner. And. She's a model. Ahem. With a weak spot for an accent,

"Let's get drinks?"

Sure thing, microwave woman! Nuts. Random. Everywhere. In the coffee shop, girls just lash out numbers,

"Call me. We'll do coffee."

Even though we're in a coffee shop right now, both holding coffee.

"Yeah, let's set a date!"

"Ehh. How about right now? I'm Irish. Raring to go!"

"Ha-ha, you're *funny*, call me."

Now don't worry. I'm well aware that the majority of the numbers being handed out to me are pretty pointless to get. I did not forget what usually

happens after a number is given. Send a text:

'ME: How's it going? We met in the coffee shop. You asked me out for coffee.'

'RANDUMB GIRL: Coffee?'

'ME: Coffee.'

'RANDUMB GIRL: I forget, who are you?'

Rinse. And. Repeat. Thank you. Seriously. Over and over. Slightly different to home. In Ireland numbers are kind of guarded. If they're exchanged, something's probably definitely going to happen between ye. Here, it's the second thing people say after telling you their name and most of the time counts for nothing.

"Hi, I'm Amber, 310-310-3100, CALL ME!!!"

Two final things I kind of completely forgot amongst all of my moving motion.

Firstly, I must write a book.

My first book.

And secondly, I must find a job.

Quick.

DJ gigs.

Time to go hunting.

Although speaking of which, I did just get an offer. And the only, only, *only* reason I said I would go was purely as I thought it would be good for the book... Ah for book's sake! That might be used a lot from now on for any dubious offers. Plus I ehh, did think it was a wildlife convention. Something like 'Save the Lions!'

Except this one was for cougars.

Just not that kind.

The older type.

Invited to a Cougar's Convention. Where Ms. Cougar USA would be crowned.

Ha, go on the L.A!

Tough to say no. You know, for the book and all... Duu!

Chapter 5

Me Loose Ends

What a difference a day makes... A whole week or two can be huge! Not so long ago I was freaking out over a pair of scissors. Sweating the small stuff. Beyond belief. Still blame that gin. Now, slowly but surely, I'm over a hump. Dealt with the shock. Kind of slightly settled back in. Ish. Almost.

Loose ends have still not actually been tied up. For example, I've tried on a few separate occasions to meet up with my old roommates. Layla and Jess. The two models. Who also do other stuff. Not really sure what that actually ever was, to be true. Folk can be vague in L.A.

“What do you do?”

“Ah you know...”

“No, I don't. That's why I asked.”

Nice girls. Well, until I tried to meet up and collect the rest of my stuff from them. Dodge. City. Only had a few letters and postcards belonging to me. Delivered after I left the last time. Birthday cards with a bit of money, and the likes. Not a whole bucket. But still.

For whatever reason, the girls dodged me. Tut. And to think, I thought our friendship was unbreakable. You know, like all good roommate friendships. Don't they last a lifetime?! Never realised the high fives and deep connection ended the minute one moves out. Live and learn. So that's the end of that. Back to my loose ends.

Next on my list: Must write my first book. Oh yeah. Publisher is on my back. Need to sort that out.

Google... “How do you write a book?”

Also on top of the list: Must get a job. Savings are in the bank. Book advance money. But still. Only so long all that can last. Rent monkeys will be on my back. Need to sort that out first actually. Well actually, what I'm going to do first today is write a few emails home.

OK. Done. Great job! Next... Write up a list of things to do this week? OK! Done. Wuu! Big pat on the back. Good man yourself. Don't forget, you also had breakfast earlier. And made a cup of coffee with your new coffee press. Wuu huu. Good for you! You're flying. What now? Oh yeah - Lunch!

Jesus, what an amazing day. Almost as good as the other night. Cougar Convention. When the dates got messed up, missed the convention and I just ended up going to Barney's Beanery for a pitcher or two. That was amazing work too! Really hit the ground running since you got back. Good work, Mark, you're a winner. High five. You clown.

One positive did come from those couple of pitchers. I think I might've got a DJ gig in Barney's again. Toni, the bar manager, still seems to like me. Gave her a bit of Irish gibber and it looks like I'm back dancing. Giddy up! Come on the money! Although yet to be fully confirmed. Keep the faith.

Also. Chowder and Charlotte are back in town from Antigua. Meeting up with Chowder was like talking with an old war veteran. As if we were both in Vietnam. Re-telling our versions of what really happened those first few days. Did I imagine it all?

Everyone else I spoke to tried to empathize with my spiraling mental state after the first few days. Getting blank looks of: OK, well done, get over it. Me pleadingly thinking: You weren't there *maan...* You don't know what really happened!

Chowder was there though. He had signed me up for it all. He could relate to the madness that ensued. Filled in some of my blanks and vice versa. Dispel any grey areas of doubt where I might've convinced myself something bad happened. Turns out, in fact, it was the complete opposite. Banish The Fear for good! Mind can be put at ease now. Just bounced the funny stories off each other.

Told me about his little voyage to the Caribbean. Quite a trip. White beaches of Antigua. King-sized beds and leather couches on the private jet. Sounded unreal. Although I think my head might have imploded if I had woke up drunk on a king-sized bed on a private jet, so probably better off that I stayed in L.A for that reason alone. Baby steps and all. Gradually build up to that level of randumbness. Maybe I'll be ready for that next month.

Speaking of getting back to basics, I've been back playing soccer again up in Robert Williams' abode (or Robbie "sold over 70 million records worldwide" Williams, as the rest of the world might know him). Some pitch. Still the greatest 5-a-side in the world! Saw a lot of the lads from before as well. Jay Moe. Dave "No Longer the Angriest Man in the World But Now Just Kind of Funny" Jetski. Malcolm. Chris Dyson. Rob W. All as sound as ever.

Rob was pumped to see me back. Fan of my gibberish Irish slurs I think. Although he seemed slightly concerned my book wasn't finished yet,

"Do you not get distracted in L.A.?"

"Eh, yeah. I do. A lot."

"Well hurry up and finish it. Go find somewhere quiet."

This is true. Good point. Although I have already actually told myself no more distractions until the book is done and dumb. Seriously. And then I got a text after the game:

'JETSKI: Want to come out tonight for a while?'

'ME: No, cheers boss. New me...'

'JETSKI: Pardon? You want to bring Jordan – the Page 3 glamour model – over to my house to go boozing?'

'ME: Wait. What? As in Jordan? With the really big giddy ups?! Emmm.'

'JETSKI: OK so.'

'ME: For book's sake!'

Except it turned out not to be Jordan and her BFF coming over. Just Jordan's BF. Or boyfriend, as it's more commonly known. UFC fighter I think. Also a part-time cross-dresser, I was told. No Jordan either. Just him. And his manager, Jane. Who turned out to be kind of sleazy. Being weird towards me all night. Chatting me up. Not sure what they had been told, but at one point I overheard them whispering,

"Maybe he'll cast me in his sitcom?"

"Yeah, pitch him what you do - This could be a good move!"

Shaking my head. Fools. Trying to use me. If only ye knew the truth.
Jane giving me the eye. Telling she was also a producer,

“I could scratch your back if you scratch or massage mine.”

“Oh right. As in literally?”

I see what's going on: You're trying to sleep with me. Cop on now, no. Purely because you're not really my type. So please: Cop on. Trying to make me break my rule about not trying to sleep my way to the top. Integrity is key! (If I ever do get the chance to actually turn down that offer, I will make sure to let you know. As of yet, emm, no.) On the upside, I might've got another DJ gig lined up in a bar we went to, The Den. *Might*. Must wait and see. I did at least get some free whiskey shots,

“You're Irish? Here's a Jameson me old laddie!”

Free. Booze. On. And then I somehow ended up at a party in a mansion somewhere in L.A. Weird enough Persian party.

House reminded me of the one in Beverly Hills Cop II. With the shootout? You know the one. Although it did look like it was still in the 80's. Place was dripping in marble and gold. Leopard skin walls. Zebra rugs. Chandeliers swinging. Expensive 80's style.

No complaints. Savage bar outside. Looked more like a kitchen, if my memory serves me right. Stocked up with more drink than a small Irish pub. Brilliant. Blurry. Boozy. Trying to make cocktails. Horrific concoctions. Shot-gunning cans instead. Classy. You can take the boy out of college but you can never rar diddy rar...

Stood by the pool. Overlooking L.A. Feels like I've been here before. Back again in the L.A! Dancing. Now... Where's the orgy room?

Alas. No orgy room this time. Got talking to a Persian girl instead, Minoo. I am a fan of the dark hotness they possess at times. This was her parent's house. And me chatting with her and her chatting back did not go down too well with her brother. Something about me not being Jewish? Don't hate me because I'm Catholic. Religionism! Won't stand for this!

“I'm leaving, who's with me?! Minoo, are you with me?!”

Meh. No. She was not. So I left. Alone.

Realised I had no clue where I was. So I went back to the bar outside by the pool. And ended up fooling around with one of Minoos's friends. On a sun bed. As us non-Jewish folk like to do. Yee huu!

Quite clearly the new me is doing well. Job hunting and book writing? Off to a flier!

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