

Retirement, almost 30 days; 2 years later

Rian Stone | 5 November, 2018 | by Rian Ston



On the developed side of the canal, there were always these pathways, if you looked, you could easily escape the desert

It is not a positive thing. It is not a negative thing. It is an attention thing. Acting because you want someone to acknowledge you or your grievance is validation seeking. In my case, I wanted to rub their noses into it. The letter from my commanding officer contained a last ditch effort to shit all over me. Accused me of being a bag of shit, functionally useless, stopping just short of calling me illiterate. The second paragraph had been one of the kindest things I have ever seen written about me in a military correspondence. They hated me, but desperately needed me. The place was falling apart without me. A

man's only value is what others can glean off him and for the first time in a long time I was valuable. I framed that letter, placed it at the front of my desk. I displayed it proudly, I wanted them all to know. Thatâ€¦I'll learn them! *Fuck me*, I roll my eyes when I remember this. I had another guy told me this plan, I would have laughed and called him a faggot. And here I was, a giant faggot with a framed picture[1]. It wasn't just the letter either. I had the timer. A big digital timer, visible to all, counting down the 6 months until I was a civilian again. A big fuck-you, down to the second. I have it in the first post here, T-minus 45 minutes until I was a civilian again.

I put together a plan, I decided that I was done. Once you see the "meritocracy", the paper-tiger camaraderie, the faux-nobility of *Queen and Country*, you can't do it anymore. After all that, it was impossible for me to stay and still pretend I had any self-respect. I would be the jaded sailor, sitting around for 8 years, collect my non-indexed pension. Fuck that noise, I'd rather eat what I kill, ride or die bitch. The military paid for a second degree of which I completed four years in three. Three boring, anti-social, hard study years. I had gotten enough mentorship to transition into civilian life properly. I had saved enough money. Enough that I would not have to work for years, not unless I wanted to.

I then sat at my desk, staring at that countdown timer. Every time someone came into that room, I would watch them glance over, read that letter, and then look back to me. Officers would always avoid the topic, enlisted guys would act surprised. Old salty chiefs would shake my hand and congratulate me on the war trophy. How cathartic. We men love to embrace the moments the world shit on us, almost as if belonging to a club with the event as our entrance fee.

â€¦Fuck you, I'm valuable and you're going to lose me! â€¦

What a horrible script. I made this theatrical production in response to theirs. And it wasn't the play I wanted to perform, that is the worst part. It was wasted effort. What were they going to do, make a request to have me stay? They had nothing to offer me and I would have refused if they did. The egos attached were not going to try even if the place burned down after I left. No, **I wanted them to desire me and I wanted to reject the offer**. That would have felt good. I always say I ain't shit, and that's OK. I was not OK with it then. That moment I secretly fantasized about would never come, and I shouldn't have even invited the thought of it. I had enough anger over my life at that point, I didn't need to seethe off it. It got me back to the gym, it got me eating better, it got me motivated to game. I acted as if that was not enough. Revenge fantasies are one of the biggest beta-tells around.

The opposite of love isn't hate, it's apathy.

As long as I can remember, I never got excited. I was never excited for birthdays, vacations, or paychecks. It was as if I didn't care about anything. I wrote this piece two years ago. I remember being excited about leaving the military. I was fucking giddy. The last months were filled with anger and excitement, spite and joy. The one thing it did not have was apathy.

I missed the obvious as many do when they're from the eye of the storm. This is the importance of the own your shit weekly posts in Married Red Pill, or ownership in general. You perform consistent action, reflection, and calibration. While you are acting and putting your pain out there, you can get the perspective of someone who both understands your mental outlook, and does not care to get in your way. I'd go so far to say they enjoy watching you solve it, especially if they can attach their notes onto the success story. Men, perfect strangers, focused on a similar goal â€¦ This is the only group I know of that would help a man when he's down. Better than paid shrinks, better than family, and way better than your fucking wife, girlfriend, or fat-full-time babysitter.

One other lesson that I take, after some distance and time, is how good it is to have fight left in you. I learned that validating that fight with others is wasted effort. I read about men committing suicide after a

divorce, a stock market crash, a false rape accusation. I realize they didn't have any more fight in them. I'm not comparing or minimizing what they went through as I see that they wanted to take the easier solution, just make the shocks stop. I will not judge a man for that. I can tell you, with absolute certainty, that I am not one of those men. The world may not give two shits if I live or die, if I succeed or fail

But I do. Someone has to.

Those spiteful symbols did not make me happy. They were my GTFO ice cream cake[2], a prop for their theatrical production, or my rebuttal production. Tastes delicious, and if chocolate cake was the only thing I ate I would be a fat fuck. I wrote on that old post about getting dragged into the boss office, heels together, berated over something my replacement had done. I didn't feel anything, it was surreal. I was an actor going through the motions, as if you were standing above it all while watching it play out. The play was wrapping up, this was the last show. I just sat there wondering, "she does know this is just a play, right?" Military theater would have me stand straight, eat shit with a smile, and profess how I would take action to rectify the situation. And on top of it all, I would thank the Warrant for the interaction like they were doing me a fucking favor by chewing me out. I don't recall saying anything, just a "K" and left it at that. Funny how pick-up always sneaks into interactions. That letter has more meaning than all the others. The director had already yelled to cut, the scene was over, and here this person was, still treating this as if it were live.

The difference was in being John Hamm, not being Don Draper[3]. This is what I learned. Never accept my fate if a door is open. Never expect others to validate it when I do, and to always remember, it's just theater, and I am another actor.

[1] There's an inside joke to go with this, I will leave it for another day. Some of the veteran MarredRedPill remember the story of the man with the gilded frame though.

[2] Frenchie was booted from fleet school. I remember as a last party, I had bought him a cake with GTFO inscribed on the top. We had a morbid sense of humor

[3] There is a post on authenticity coming, with a reference to the hit show Mad Men. The difference between incongruity of ones presentation (Draper, Whitman) and understanding it as a game (Hamm)

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