

The Practice Of Business Takes Practice

By A.T. Mango

Marco hustling down the street, all 350 pounds of him - as fast as the fat fuck's legs could propel him, as fast as the fat fuck's lungs and heart could generate fuel for those obscene thighs to pump. As fast as this huge intrusion of space known as 'Marco' could insert itself among passersby, knocking them out of the way with his flailing arms, the huge torso. As the air surrounding him advanced ahead, thousands of years of evolution made his fellow striders inspect the bottoms of their shoes knowing instinctively that such fetidness must represent something that had separated from a body - nothing that awful could remain attached.

But they were wrong.

The stink was pure Marco - his essence. You know how sometimes you take a piece of meat from the refrigerator that you had meant to cook a few days earlier, maybe even a week earlier? And you sniff it and it's not bad enough to throw away, though perhaps something more than meat is present? So you cook it, but as the fat starts to heat up, the smell becomes overwhelming and no matter how hungry and obviously lazy you are, you have to toss it out and look elsewhere for repast? It is the heating of rancid fat that warns you away from future intestinal mischief. So it is with Marco. The hot humid day makes each of his many ounces emit hot smell molecules that assault strangers on the sidewalk, make them contract their noses, hold their breath, and hope the wind direction changes.

Know what Marco would say to these pussies? What argument he would make? Not in whining excuse, but simple explication to these assholes about why he is in such a hurry? Well, first he would say "Fuck you!" Which, coming from someone with his mass, usually carries the day. If further rejoinder was required, he would say, would Marco, "It's hot, motherfucker. That's what you do on a hot day, you sweat. Don't you sweat too? Ah, you motherfuckers make me sick."

Now, both of these parries would be spoken with due belligerence, the mark of a bully: 'I'll hurt you up good if you disagree'. But the third reason would have been uttered slyly, making Marco's puffy face take on the aspect of a simpering hamster. Against this tack there could be no counter. This third convincer would go, "Boss Paul sent for me. I'm trying to get there on time." And after you heard this, Marco knew, your complaint would be silenced, for no one controverts a whim or desire of Boss Paul.

Marco had never actually been in the same room as Boss Paul, though he had labored decades for both him and his father before him. Because he wasn't very bright, Marco was assigned jobs which merely required strength and lack of imagination. If any decisions were to be made, someone else went with him to dictate instructions. Like, "Now, Marco, now. No one's around. Get out of the car, knock him down, pluck out an eye" - or remove a testicle, or shatter a knee, or any like bit of Spanish Inquisitional recriminatory behavior to convince someone they had erred. Should they not 'get it' and continue to tread this mistaken path, there would be no further warning, merely a cessation of everything.

The call had come from Ronnie C. It was terse. “Marco, you stupid fuck, Boss Paul wants to see you. Tomorrow. Three o’clock.”

Nota bene: Ronnie did not ask if this was convenient, did not inquire if Marco would be available, or provide details on where this meeting was to take place. All this was assumed, and rightly so. Boss Paul ran the only neighborhood left on the South Side not taken over by niggers and spics. He had matched the Columbians’ outrageous cruelty for outrageous cruelty. He was a man to be regarded highly.

Marco was a loyal employee and this was now being acknowledged at the very top. That little mistake a few weeks ago, leaving the shovel behind after he had buried some asshole in a toxic waste dump, was all in the past. Alberto the Carrion, Marco’s mentor that night, had picked the spot and supervised the grave digging while smoking underneath a tree. It was because he did not pay proper attention to the details, (although he paid final homage by pissing on the grave) that Alberto had lost an ear in reprimand. But nothing was done to Marco, and all this happened weeks ago. The organization recognized years of fealty. Perhaps he would even be promoted. Maybe he, Marco, would look after someone else, someone even dumber than himself, though he couldn’t think who that might be or whether such were even possible.

Everyone knew where Boss Paul’s office was. He owned the fucking building, for Christ’s sake. They made Marco walk up three flights of stairs. They wouldn’t let him take the elevator because they didn’t want to stand in the same enclosure with him. One of them accompanied him up the steps, knocked on a door and waited with his ear against the door till he heard a response, then opened it to let Marco inside.

Such a big office, like a lawyer’s – plush, everything first class - dark leather, thick rugs, the smell of fine cigars. And there he was, Boss Paul himself. Marco had seen him outside funeral homes, had watched him being escorted into limousines at family gatherings, and testifying in court. The same class, the same suavity his father had displayed. A pleasure to work for such a man.

“Marco, thank you for your punctuality. This will be quick. Please, don’t sit down. We might have to fumigate the chair, and it’s hard to remove odor from real Corinthian leather.”

Would he feel bad having to stand in Boss Paul’s office? Fucking kidding me? Grateful merely to be in the presence of such a giant. He would stand here for days if so requested.

“Marco, this man sitting next to me is Yevgeny. He was in the Russian secret service. He has access to new weapons, Marco, and is trying to sell me a powerful new pistol he says will evade monitors at airports. We just tested one of them and that is true, though we have not yet assessed its force. We have a chance to pounce on this market before others... Ahh, waste of time. You aren’t following any of this, are you?”

Marco smiled at Boss Paul for confiding company secrets. He smiled at the Russian too - a bald headed man with an earring. Now see, if Marco had been in the room alone with a man with an earring, he would have kicked the shit out of him for being a faggot - as you are supposed to do if you are a real man. Boss Paul wanted something else from the Russian, and was waiting to first get this something. *Then* he would direct Marco to beat up the Russian faggot. This was why he summoned Marco to his office. Boss Paul himself was going to be Marco’s guide today. An honor.

Yevgeny handed Boss Paul a very tiny pistol, like a derringer women used to carry in their purses when they went to the opera. Boss Paul fired it twice into Marco's stomach. Because the bullets had been purposely scarred in ways that made them fragment when they emerged from their target, whole chunks of Marco plastered against the back wall of the office. Volumes of bodily fluids flowed from the exit wounds onto the floor. Marco (or what was left of Marco - or the former Marco) remained standing, an expression of idiot surprise on his face.

“Well, Yevgeny,” Boss Paul was saying, “it's certainly powerful. I aimed at the very thickest part of this fat fuck's body. Are you a gambling man, my friend? Care to place a wager on how many seconds before he falls splat onto the carpet? Ah, too late. Well, Yevgeny, I think we have a deal.”

A.T. Mango is the pseudonym of a scientist who lives in the west. I like long hikes in the mountains, especially at sunrise, and attend art gallery openings and...I'm fucking lying to you. I lift weights. That's all I do is lift weights. I never go out. I am so buff, so ripped that my head has shrunk so far into my neck that only my eyes and nose remain above my clavicle. When they feed me my pabulum, the spoon must travel in a downward direction. This is my first published story.