

ANOTHER VENTRILOQUIST

Adam Gilders



To whom it may concern:

Everything resolvable into information. Everybody running around these days like over-stuffed wieners, fresh out of the wiener factory ... marching around with determination, collecting information, feeding information into the various new wieners they encounter. Knowledge and information. A comprehensible series of gestures; structure and resolution, days go by. How to drive a car, how to get up in the morning. The infinite possibilities for deriving new segments of information. Learn to impersonate the rich and famous. Learn to urinate while driving your car. Forget understanding, information is all you need to get by. Substitute gratification, the fulfilling world of detached representation. Information accumulation is the secret key, the gold plated doorway, to a marvelous personality and a good life. Learn to impersonate the person you have always wanted to be. Learn to be the person you have always wanted to impersonate.

*Verily yours,
Adam Gilders*

Another Ventriloquist
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HAMBONE

I turn and I spin my dog on the carpet. My dog, the most supple of dogs, moves with me like a shadow. I feel how my dog moves also, and I am his shadow.

I have lifted Hambone the dog up on his hind legs. Hambone and I are dancing around the room. Hambone, regardless of my persistent efforts to keep him steady, has a hard time balancing when we dance with such abandon.

Since he was developing unseemly bald patches on his otherwise hairy body, I decided to shave my dog. When Hambone and I go down to the corner for a walk, I can no longer take more than a few steps without being interrupted by one of my officious neighbors, who will invariably stand gaping at Hambone for several seconds before asking, "What's happened to your dog?"

When I dim the lights and put on the soft music, Hambone knows it's time to dance. He runs over to the corner of the room and peers anxiously into my eyes, playing the shy schoolgirl. Hambone is quite heavy, so that it usually takes five or ten minutes to get his front legs slung over my shoulders. Feeling his bald stomach rub against my warm garments, Hambone remembers the good old days when he still had hair.

BUSINESS

All of my businesses have failed. I am an imaginative businessman. I am a resourceful and creative problem-solver. If you saw my meticulous business plans you would be baffled by the failure of my businesses. For as many years as I can remember I have been committed to the world of business. I am destined, in fact, to inhabit the world of business. I am destined to breathe the air of business and to swim in the ocean of business, to the extent that anyone is destined for anything. I have gone over my business plans countless times. I have compared them with the plans for other, successful businesses. The truth of the matter is that there is no explanation for the failure of my businesses.

GAINING WEIGHT

As soon as my husband started gaining weight I knew it would be a one-way street and that he would just keep getting fatter and fatter, so I had to make a decision either to leave him or to stay with him to the end. Last week I ran into him at the grocery store near our old house and, sure enough, he was obese.

When I notice an unusual odour the first thing I want to know is what is the source of the odour.

CONTACT

I remember thinking, after the second or third unreturned phone call, maybe this is how it begins with stalkers. A few unreturned phone calls, three or four, but it's the absence of a good reason that really sets you off. I mean, why isn't he returning those calls? There's no good reason. You want to address the problem, to set things straight. So there's a few more calls, like, why aren't you answering my calls? It's not that it's a big deal to me, it's not that I don't have anything else to do, or that my life lacks meaning, but there's no good reason to be avoiding me. We used to be pretty good friends, and it's not like we had a big falling out. I mean, it just came into my mind to give you a call, since we hadn't been in touch for a few years, and I thought maybe you'd want to know that things hadn't worked out with my marriage.

The point is, I suddenly had an insight about how stalkers are born: mounting frustration, burning resolution, determination to make contact. So you're thinking the stalker gives birth to himself, but the stalker, and I use the word loosely, very loosely, isn't necessarily responsible for the birth; there's at least two parents, I mean.

There was never any threat to your person. With the restraining order you reported that you had "reason to believe" that you were in danger. The only one who was in danger: me. I'm the first to admit that I went too far with some of my ... When I cut off the tip of my finger

and sent it in a package. Sent the tip of my thumb, with the note: "What would it take, Dale?" (What does it?) How did that add up to a threat to you, Dale? It added up to a lot of pain for me, but not a threat. If he stopped thinking about himself for five minutes and thought about ... Sent him my finger. Do you know what that's like, in terms of pain?

Friend is: Dale

If I share one thing
with Sandy must
we not share all
things?

ROSE

Rose liked to think of herself as small in comparison to her female friends, but the truth is that she was average in size, even in comparison to her own friends, who were, on the whole, somewhat larger than average.

WIFE CAN'T SAY NO

I was watching an interview with a former television star who was now acting on the stage after recovering from years of alcoholism and depression. When asked, in connection with his wife's recent pregnancy, whether he was "getting any" he said that one of the good things about marriage was that a wife couldn't say no. "A wife can't say no," he said.