

On Being Crazy

Male Model – excerpt

In late September, I finally got around to something I'd been meaning to try for a few weeks. I went to a cold-call at Next Model Management, in Beverly Hills. A dash of my intrinsic self-consciousness might have come in useful as I'd dressed that morning, since I was dressed in high manic style, the sort of look only somebody who was wildly self-confident could (but shouldn't) pull off.

When I arrived, there was nobody in the waiting room apart from a severe-looking receptionist, who wordlessly took my head-shots. I sat and began to write a new blog entry, to pass the time, not nervous in the least.

The physicality of my body has been, until very recently, the most formative issue in my life. Not that I'm handicapped in any obvious way; but somebody can be physically and mentally handicapped for almost their whole adult life while looking entirely normal, even healthy and handsome.

I thought that this would be the appropriate time and place to start writing this blog entry, as I sit in the waiting room for a small cattle-call in one of the top modelling agencies in the world, at the age of forty-one, waiting to see if I'm about to be "discovered."

I'm six-foot-six, a lean and muscular two-hundred-and-fifteen pounds, wearing G-star jeans, a J. Lindberg belt, and a very tight-fitting Miu-Miu black shirt, with my sleeves rolled up to the biceps, and three buttons unfastened revealing a couple of necklaces nestling against my spray-tanned chest. My mid-brown hair is spiked, and highlighted in blond. I'm carrying an expensive, Italian, brown-leather bag lined on one side with dappled fur. My Alexander McQueen gold skeleton key-chain is dangling by my side.

My face is a study in the years I've lived, the experiences I've been through: it's a strong face I think: good jaw line and cheek bones, full lips, and wide, deep-set blue-green eyes, surely betraying good humour and self-confidence. I've never felt more whole in my life.

Since my late twenties, I've been told many times that I should be a model. During these past few weeks, I was told it almost daily, as I flitted about the high places of West Hollywood and Beverley Hills, chasing my dreams. I'm here to see if this particular dream is for real, or can I put this ghost to rest? So, waiting, I sit here composedly writing these very words in the leather-bound writing book I bought in Dallas way back at the beginning of the explosion that marked the summer of my forty-first year.

I looked up as a harried-looking male employee popped his head into the waiting room and called my name.

I gathered my things and went through with him to the anteroom. I saw that he had my head-shots in his hands. He made a show at looking through them.

'Sorry,' he said. 'We're going to pass.'

I was curious to know the reason why.

'I'm too tall, right?' I asked.

'Yes,' he said. 'But also too edgy. If you toned your look down a bit, maybe one of the other agencies would be interested for lifestyle work.'

I smiled and thanked him. Once I was outside of the building I grinned. I checked myself inside for any sense of harm or loss, and found none. I'd been physically

rejected; something that would have deeply hurt me at any earlier time in my life. Yet now I could see that not a shred of my sense of self was in any way diminished.

I had my answer at last, about modelling, and I felt a sense of freedom. As I realized that it didn't hurt me in the least to get rejected as a model, I was confirmed in my belief that what I'd learned at San Diego gay pride was true: my inner sense of self worth was no longer dependent on how people assessed my looks. I picked up my car and drove over to Skewers, a restaurant in West Hollywood, and continued writing my blog entry, sitting at one of the tables outside on Santa Monica Boulevard.

I was still mildly manic, which meant that my mind was still privy to unique, powerful, and sometimes misconceived insights that I'd most likely have missed under normal brain function. And it was this facility that suddenly shook me to the core as I lifted the pen from the paper. Out of the blue, I understood what had always eluded me

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