

FROM THE CURIOUS MIND OF ROB MORGAN

4 Sacred Laws *of* Creating Badass Work



PROLOGUE: "On Surfing"

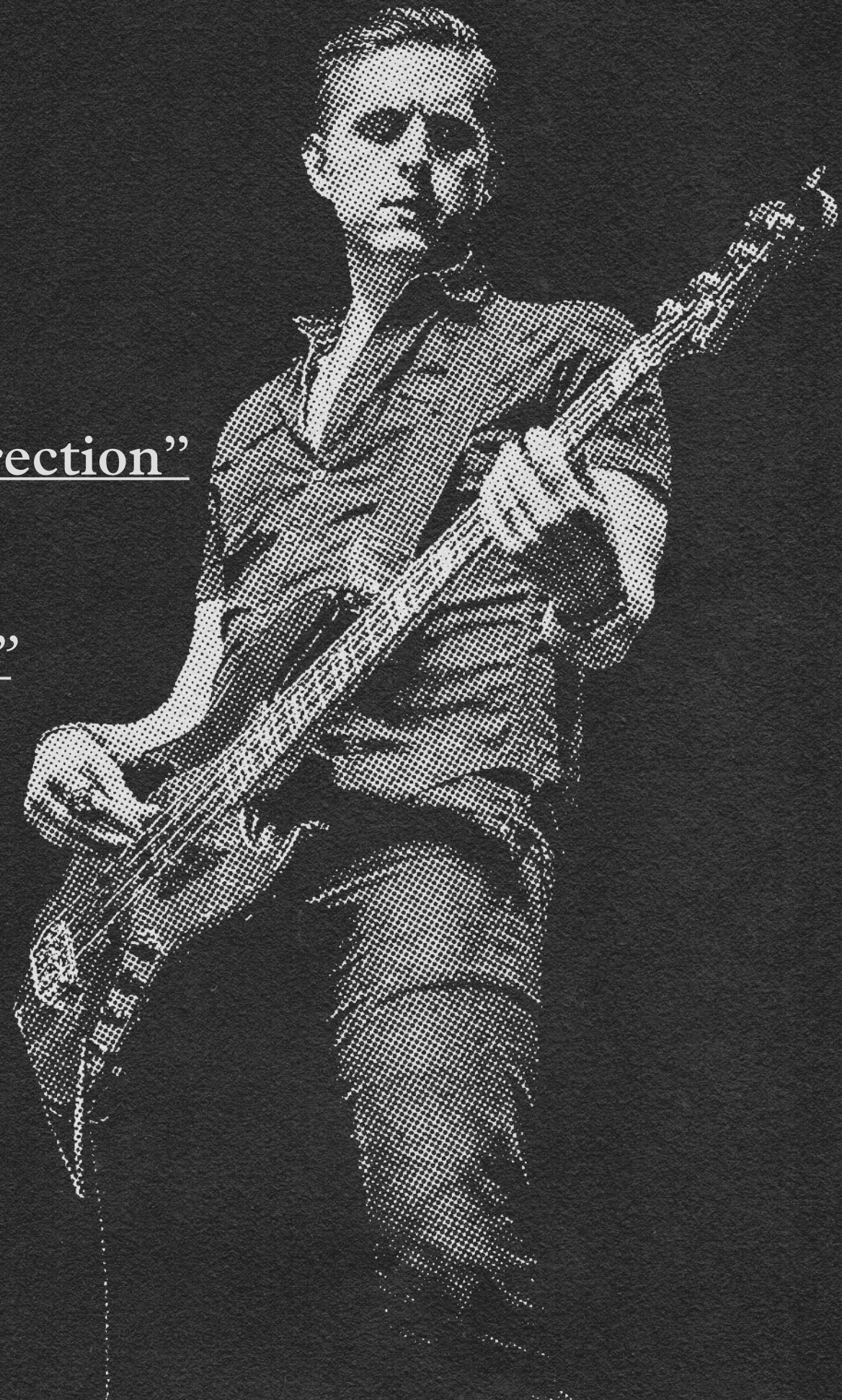
I. The Doctrine Of Multiple Drafts

II. The Rite Of Writing Shit Down

III. The Law Of "Motion Preceding Direction"

IV. The Myth Of Intentionality

APPENDICES: "The Iniquity Of Counting"



PROLOGUE

I once heard someone say that the creative journey is a lot like surfing. You work your ass off to paddle out and you wait a long time hoping to catch a wave. You'll try and catch them.

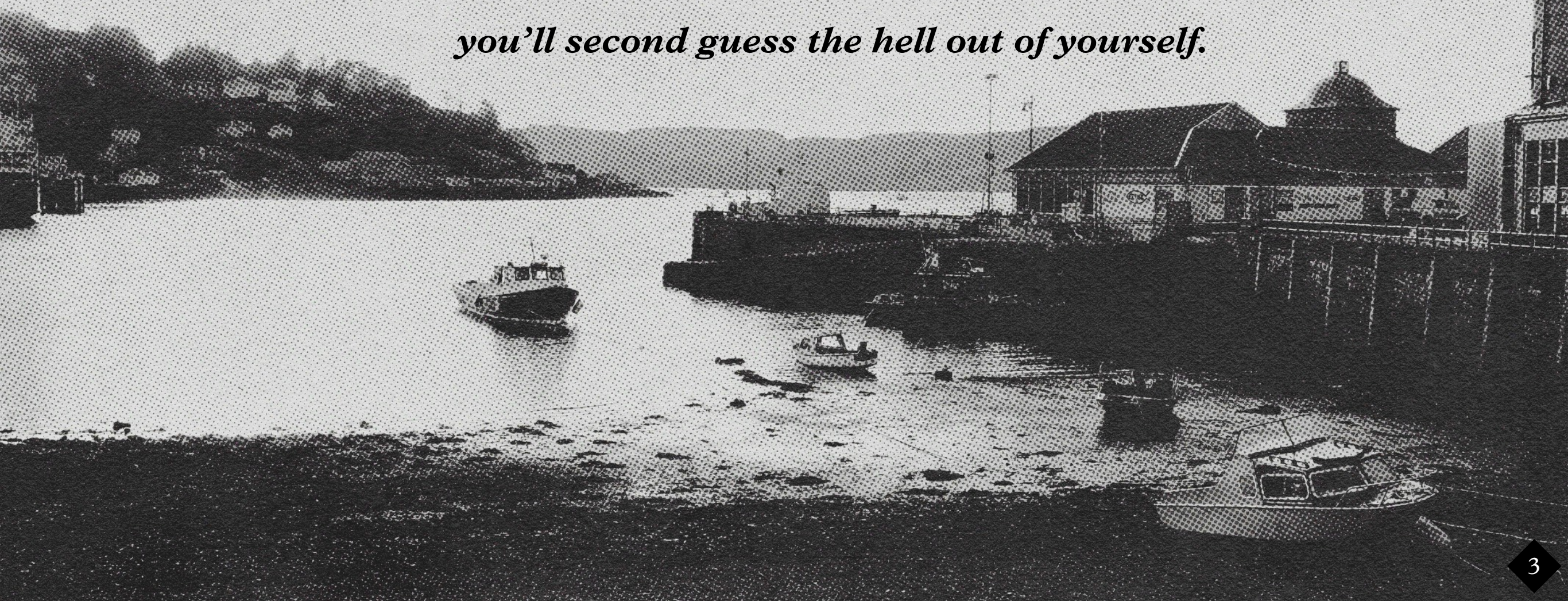
You'll miss them.

You'll see someone else catch them.

Everyone will cheer for them.

And if you're anything like me...

you'll second guess the hell out of yourself.



But eventually, you'll catch a wave.

And you'll ride it.

And it will be incredible.

And you'll get to the end.

And inevitably, the wave will crash.

And when you look up, It'll look like you're right back where you started.

And you'll only have one choice: call it a day or turn around and start paddling again.

No matter who you are, whether you're paddling out for the first time, or find yourself once again stuck Between 2 Waves, if you're curious enough, you can start to see patterns in the water.

These are a few of the *Sacred Laws of Creating Badass Work* that have helped me continue to paddle out.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robby McElroy'. The signature is stylized with a large 'R' and a long horizontal line. Above the signature, there are small handwritten marks that look like 'x x x' and a small square.

I. THE DOCTRINE OF MULTIPLE DRAFTS

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Winston Churchill was wrong when he said,
“Perfection is the enemy of progress.”

*It’s not. **Precipitancy** is.*

No, I’m not talking about something falling to the earth's surface as a condensed form of water, that’s “Precipitation.”

Precipitancy means, “to hasten the occurrence of; bring about prematurely, hastily, or suddenly.”

To rush, or put the damn cart before the horse.

(Bullshit Alert: I got this word just now from a freakin thesaurus app as I was looking to see if there was a good word for ‘hurrying’ that started with the letter ‘P’. But come on... you have to admit, this is perfect! I’m going to use it from now on even though I have the same vocabulary level as Koko the sign-language gorilla.)



John Cleese once said, when writing *Mighty Python And The Holy Grail*, they ended up throwing away 90% of the first draft!

“Perfectionism is goal-oriented instead of what you need to be, process-oriented. Be a perfectionist but focus on achieving it over a long period of time and over multiple drafts... Your job is to get things down. Don't worry about if it's any good, you can come back to it the next day and decide that.”



II THE RITE OF WRITING SHIT DOWN

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Here's the truth friend, that badass creative brain of yours is wired for coming up with ideas, not storing them.

Have you ever been in the shower, or hanging with a friend or... maybe even hanging in the shower with a friend... when suddenly you had this great idea for your next podcast, song, book, or whatever it is you're working on? Then later, when you finally have a second to sit down and work on it, your mind is blank?



As David Lynch says, "Ideas are like fish. You don't make the fish, you catch the fish."

You can't control when the muse of creativity calls, but she rarely leaves a message so you need to be in the habit of writing it down!

When it comes to keeping track of our ideas, the two most common Idea Inequities we often commit are: judging if our ideas “good or not” too quickly & complicating where to put them.

Keep it simple! Make an “Idea Inbox” and write your ideas down quickly and without judgment.

Actor, writer, comedian, and director, B. J. Novak (The Office) carries a Moleskine notebook on him at all times to write his ideas in and, only *later*, revisits them.

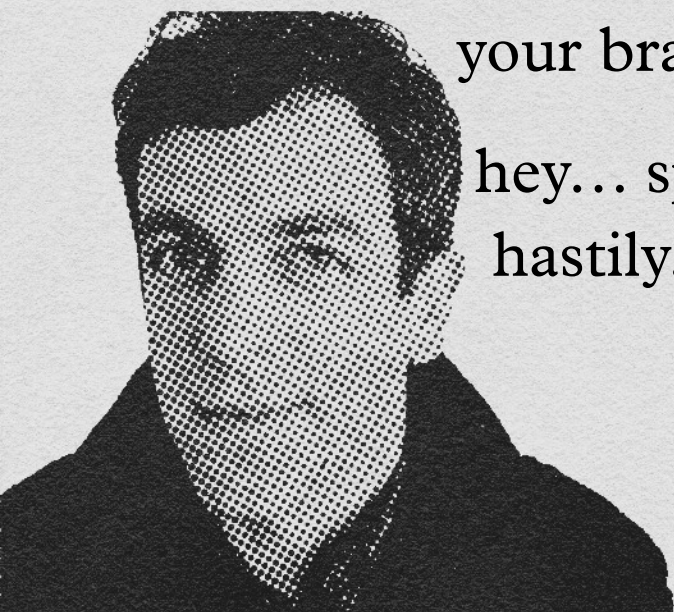
[These are the ones he uses and I carry mine in [this wallet made by my friends at MN Leather Works](#)]

Or just use the “Notes” app on your phone. (*The new iPhones are waterproof now so you can write something down even while in the shower with that friend of yours.*)

iPhone iOS Tip: Go to “Settings” -> “Control Center” and add Notes to your list of “Included Controls.”

That way, all you have to do is swipe down from the top right corner of your screen for a button that instantly makes a new note. If you “talk-to-text” your idea in, it’s out of your brain and into your phone in under 5 seconds.

hey... speaking of not being too precipitant and judging your ideas too hastily...



III THE LAW OF MOTION & DIRECTION

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When I was younger, my uncle bought a badass Jet Ski. Before letting my skinny butt take it out for a spin, he explained the number one reason people crash...

A Jet Ski works by sucking water in through the front and spitting it out the back to propel it forward.

To steer, you turn the handlebars, which point the jet of water behind you in different directions. To change directions, you have to be

GIVING IT GAS and IN MOTION.

If you let off the gas, no matter how hard you crank the handlebars, you'll continue to coast in the same direction you were going.

New riders forget this all the time...



When they get in trouble, the natural reaction is to let off the gas and slowly steer their way out of danger. (Like a bike or anything else on wheels.)

But unfortunately, they end up coasting right into their - now pissed off - neighbors drinking cocktails on a pontoon boat.

(Not that I did that... I'm just saying. A friend of mine told me. I mean.... they weren't even my friend, it was like... a friend of a friend.)

Your creative work is like a Jet Ski.

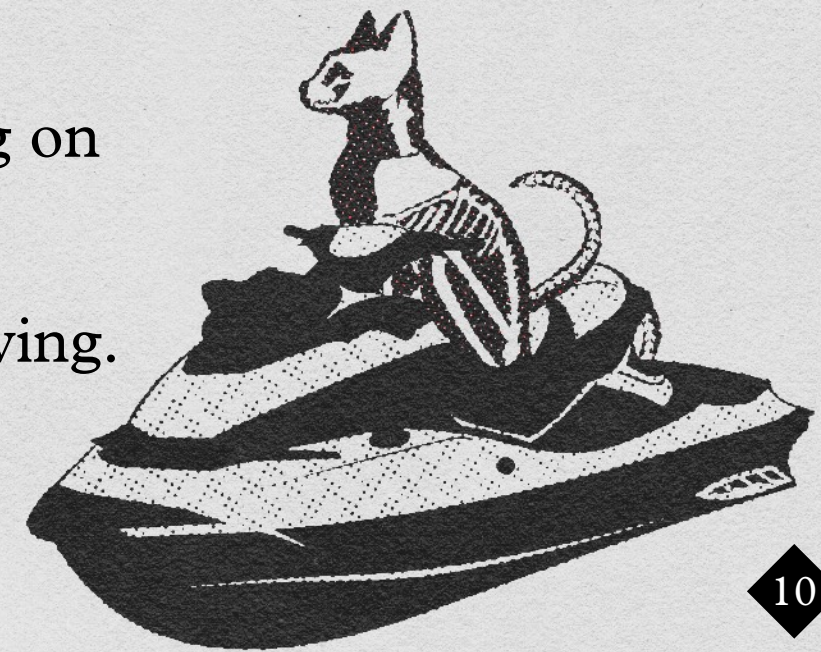
Sitting on your butt trying to figure out a direction in life or the “next right thing”?

I've found that, sometimes, the universe seems to wait till I start making shit happen for myself and **ONLY THEN** starts opening up opportunities or giving you clues on what to work on next.

Ever realize how many ideas come to you while you're working on something else?

Quit worrying if this next thing is the best thing. Just start moving.

Speaking about you being a badass in motion...

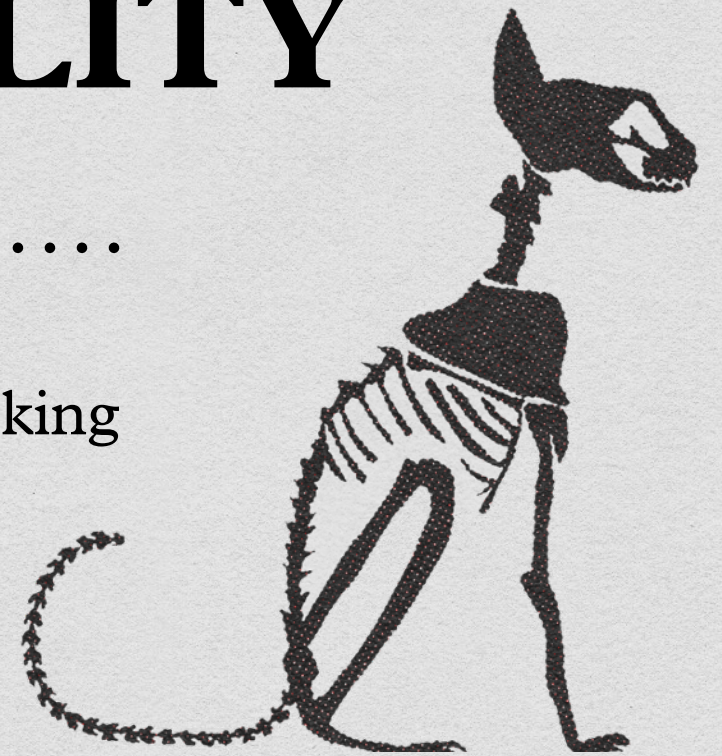


IV THE MYTH OF INTENTIONALITY

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Your sound or your style will most likely only be discovered by looking backward. (And most likely... by accident.)

*Hunter S. Thompson invented “Gonzo”
journalism on ACCIDENT!*



In 1970, he thought he failed a writing assignment (an article about the Kentucky Derby) and was scared out of his mind to turn it in. At the last minute of his writing deadline, he was ripping pages from his notebook, sending it to the printers, and was convinced he was going to get fired because it sucked.

People ended up loving it so much, they asked him what they should call this new style of non-objective, first-person perspective journalism he just invented. A friend of his read the article and said it was pure “Gonzo!”

I recently heard Jason Isaacs (*the actor known for his roles in The Patriot, Harry Potter, Black Hawk Down*) describe his career as,

“An unbelievable series of lucky stumbling accidents.”



Chances are, the most badass shit you'll ever do in life won't be planned, it'll be stumbled on.

So get out of your head,

get on your Jet Ski,

and give it some freakin gas!



APPENDICES: “The Iniquity Of Counting” (or “Quit *playing The Numbers Game.*”)

Ok, this one cuts close to the bone and is more than a little embarrassing to admit but... it’s important and I have a feeling I’m not alone.

When I was younger, I used to have this compulsion, a habit of comparison if you will.

I now call it “*The Numbers Game.*”

Here’s how it works:

Whenever I saw someone being a badass in their own life, I’d figure out their age when they became “successful” and compare it to my current age.

“Ok, they were thirty when they made it. I’m twenty right now, so that means I have ten years to make crap happen!”

This is seriously twisted – I know – but it got even worse when the person was younger than me. “Damn it! I’m five years behind!” (*Don’t even get me started on the numbers game survivorship bias that is “Forbes 30 under 30”!*)

I eventually got so sick and tired of comparing my timeline to other people's.

It's exhausting, and comparing my crap to someone else's is the number one reason why it took me so long to discover my own voice.

If you ever find yourself playing "*The Numbers Game*," here's the fix:

Remind yourself that **every life is like a lightning bolt**.

Not only does lightning not strike the same place twice, but it's also physically impossible for one bolt's specific path to be reproduced ever again.

Comparing your crap to someone else's is the best way to ensure that you never find your unique place in the family of things.

Sure, it's cheesy as hell, but Oscar Wilde was right when he said,

"Be yourself; everyone else is taken."

If it were me, I'd probably say,

Revel in the fact that there's Badass Work out there that nobody else but you can make! Creativity – like money, opportunity, success, and love – is infinite. So quit standing around with a chair in your hand, waiting to get invited to somebody else's table. Go make your own table and invite your badass friends to join you.



Keep me updated on your creative journey!

Let me know how it's going! If you feel stuck, feel excited, or have any questions.

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