

CHAPTER 3— Notes by Michael Grammer

53, faith and reason as partners, not enemies. I've said many times---religion is the science of faith and science is the religion of knowledge. Each of them have many similarities in how they are conducted

56, the footnote is most amusing and I really enjoyed it.

57, contemplation is any way one has of penetrating illusion and touching reality. I want to give this a whirl and a spin, because if the message is "abandon illusion, embrace reality", I don't fully agree. You see, above all, we humans are creatures who revolve around stories. Most critically, the stories we tell ourselves. We **need** to retain **some** illusions—because they are the basis for dreaming, for imagination, for aspiration. **some** illusions are worth questing after to make real. And some illusions are needful to keep us stabilized. I do want to live more in the real than the make-believe, but I don't look to shunt aside or discard the make-believe as irrelevant. Far from it.

A long-ago journal entry illustrates another "danger"---though I don't mean to necessarily directly equate truth with reality:

"truth is a drug". "The truth will set you free". Uh huh. Catchy phrases. Some "truth" in those phrases. But maybe not the whole truth. How about adding "drugs are dangerous. Freedom is dangerous"? I've been reading a terrific book by Stanley Bing called "Throwing the Elephant---Zen and the Art of Managing Up". It's about understanding and controlling your boss. And I have laughed my ass off. Because everything he says in there is so unabashedly true. How about the funnier movies? Never mind funny. How about the documentary movies of things that you know happened but weren't ready to face. Tears? See, truth IS like a drug. It's expensive. It's <rare>. It's harmful, in some ways. It plays with your mind. And the truth DOES set you free....or, maybe, it intensifies the emotions that you experience when confronted with it---or, for that matter, when dispensing it! But there is equal validity to Nicholson's famous phrase, "You can't Handle the Truth". Yeah. Most of us, I don't think we can, at least not in continuous, large doses. Truth is hard, it often involves admission of our own guilt, or weakness or inadequacy or mistakes, and it comes (like when I dissertized on ambition) with a known cost to the dispenser and receiver of truth. And it darned well is dangerous. Both from the point of view of what people do when their emotional responses are intensified and from the point of view that a) new and conflicting information often gets conveyed as a result, and a confused human is not a stable human and b) having heard a truth, a common result of that is that a decision is taken, and it can often be a decision taken without properly integrating the truth into the context that you've been living in up to that point. So, very like ambition, it'd be good if people were aware and conscious of the ripple effect. And used truth wisely. Don't go around being a compulsive liar, by any means, but it's too easy to use or say the truth and not think about what you're doing when you do so

58, valued not for what you do but for who you are. This has been a guiding principle of mine for some time. It is a critical factor in any choice of client that I provide legal services to. It is definitely how I want people to value me.

58, bottom, I hear him. Not always, but more times than we think....we're built for what we need to do

59, hello to the practice of the art form of being less.

59-60, so---in our small group current book study, I have noted what I hope will be the saddest thing I ever say about my species. That today? It is **hard work** to be hopeful. But I'll tell you this. I am ready

to do that hard work. I am willing to do the hard work to be hopeful. And maybe, just maybe, that will give that hope all the more meaning.

60, Merton's thought. *can we*? Can we be in a world without speech? In a world where you don't communicate? Look at anyone who has a cell phone. Measure how long they can go in a day without effecting some kind of communication. It won't be very long at all.

61-63, some of what he's describing, I would call it "personal spiritual resonance". I will be talking about the resonator that is accompanying me on this book journey, my personal Thomas Merton, in my opening.

63 bottom, we have, of course, taken this up with Rohr's Immortal Diamond

64---participative divinity?

65, paradoxical living. It's also unavoidable. We humans are constructs of contradiction. Always will be. The sooner one accepts that, the better.

67, "rejoin soul and role". Now *that's* some mission statement!

68, what he's maybe getting at, I wonder----we are beginning to express an awareness and need that we have canted too much of our lives to the artificial---to artificial constructs of politics, corporations, even the metaverse, at the grave expense of the part of our lives that needs to connect with the natural from which we sprung.

68 bottom, or put it another way—an authentic whole must have broken parts.

70, bottom, and part of the curse of being wedded to results is that you automatically shrink your effort and effect because you unconsciously shape and skew the results to your own viewpoint.

71-73, mesmerizing reading, perhaps the best part of the book yet for me. Back to perception deception. Being who you others think you should be, or who you think others think you should be, or even who you think you should be, and not being who you really are.

Remember, too, that we have been conditioned for a thousand years as the children of colonialism, to reach and to say "never enough"---even with good and moral things. "As a result, important parts of the life I was living were not mine to live, and thus bound to fail". Gorgeous statement.

76 bottom. One can see beauty, hear it. But does one listen? Does one appreciate? World of difference.

78, "solitude does not necessarily mean living apart from others; rather, it means never living apart from one's self". That's one to take away and chew on. Instinctively, I might add that one's self is a better self with caring people admitted to its company. But I *will* chew on his statement.

79, 2 am mind = deranged. True!! I do not trust any musical creation that happens after 12:30 am.

81, love the mail story. In a way, emails that fall off your first page are a little like that, but the problem is that most people don't go back to reference their emails of 5 days previous.

83, the poem. Wow. Starlight could have written that.
