

*the continuation of  
an msn instant message*

The Bronx 4 October 2000 - 8:54pm

Well my Sweetest and Dearest Friend, here it is. The completion (to-date) of that MSN Instant Message that was begun on the 22nd August of this year. My guess is that it's a good thing we experienced technical difficulties or we'd probably still be connected, and I'd still be typing!

I need to thank you for this. For pushing me on to keep it going. It most likely would have been deleted long ago. But, remembering and recounting these events has been very helpful these past few evenings as I pored over the key-board to get this much done on it.

Spaces have been filled-in. Events recalled as I typed. Quotes (and you can be quite certain that they're almost, if not completely, verbatim) of what men in the past have said have come flooding back. Almost as if they'd just been spewed. It's been amazing.

It's also helped me to feel a little bit better about my current "situation"... being very much single. And, with the holidays approaching, I'm certain to read over it (or add on to it) and just as certain to ask the same question I've always asked at the end of every "trist" (a.k.a. "relationship"):

"Why?"

Truly, I'll never get an answer. I'll never know. And it will bother me. It doesn't seem fair to be "used" for a while and then dropped with-out so much as a simple "Because". But seeing these events in print does help take the sharpness off. And perhaps, one day, I'll find the "Because" in here some-where.

Meanwhile, here it is. We don't ever have to discuss it. It might be best if we don't. Let's just look at it as one of J.D.'s lost manuscripts or pages from his diary and leave it at that. Shall we?

"Enjoy it" isn't appropriate. But, read in good humour.

Thanks again for getting it out of me... in any event.

*Written, Remembered & Sent  
with Love,  
K*

(002208)

But it's fun at this end... I'm typing this, waiting for your next line or lines and just having a time of it. I should be doing my laundry. It's been soaking for just more than an hour in the kitchen (which is very clean again, by the way. I'd put the geraniums up on the little shelf and apparently, they weren't comfortable there. I came home to a table covered in soil and plants.). I sorted it all out by the nights of the week. So, by Saturday, it'll all be done!

And I'll get to bed on time on Sunday (yeah, right.... dream on) and get the car at 9am on Monday and it's off to something I'm not certain of... in more ways than I want to think about. (There's been a lot of Xanax consumed in the past couple of days). I'm looking forward to seeing you. Looking forward to seeing Viv. Looking forward to Montréal. Just can't help thinking about how I thought this year was "going" to be and how it's not going to be that way at all. It's a little hurtful. But, if it had been as it could have been, I probably wouldn't have been able to spend time with you. (One of the several things I'm certain I was supposed to be "broken" of... if you want to hear more about that, you can remind me to tell when I do see you)(\* I've added this information in the Bradshaw section\*) So, I do feel it's turning out for the "better". If the situation had remained the same, I'd be forfeiting too, too much. It's been a Summer of re-connecting with the important people in my life. And I must admit that I'm happy about that.

(So that got typed and we logged-off, I did the laundry, showered, had a Xanax and went to bed. And here it is, 6:44 on Wed. and to continue...)

You mentioned the bit about meeting somebody new and dating and dropping out on you again. And I guess I hit the whole idea pretty well in those few lines we managed to exchange last night. But, it bugs me to think that you think I'll be doing that (again). The truth of the matter is, I don't want and I don't think I can stand any more of that whole disappointment thing that seems to be the story of my life. You admire the fact that I've always picked-up and given the whole relationship thing more tries. And yes, I suppose I did that. But now I have to say I've lost all desire to even ponder the possibilities again. Let's face it, I've found a large chunk of the most insincere lot.

Let's see:

Back in high-school (c.1973) (Newburgh) there was Dennis Nixon... the very first "love" of my life. Taught me right from the start what to expect from what was to come. He tried to keep me away from it. But I was the inquisitive little shit back in those days. He wanted to keep me away from "G's" but... sure enough, didn't I get Mom's car one Saturday night, got Dewey drunk and off I went... into the pits. (Denis was SO mad at Dewey for showing me how to get out to "the Lodge". I'll never forget that night.)

Anyway, after all the promises of being together and being happy together and all the la-dee-dah, didn't I get to the park one evening (to meet Denis) (I'd walked from Meadow Hill to Downing Park that night) only to find Denis strolling about with Bern and Co., crying his eyes out over Dino and saying how much he loved him and how he wanted to be back with him. (I think of all this every time I hear: "It's Too Late To Turn Back Now" by Cornelius Bros. and Sister Rose.)

(Note: I hadn't much settled in at Estie's when, one night the phone rang and it was Dennis calling. Slightly drunk, he immediately began a sermon of how much he regretted having let me go all those years gone by. How truly happy he was when I was living in Newburgh again - though he never beat a path to the door to see me or broke a nail dialling the phone to talk with me. Said that he knew now (then) that I truly loved him and that I was the best person he'd ever met in his entire life. And that we could certainly try to be together again and that would make him so much happier.

Well, I pointed-out to him the two facts I mention here. He apologised for them both. Admitted he was wrong. Made no excuses. And then asked him if, in fact, he was drunk. He admitted that as well.

As the conversation continued and I grew a bit angry at the fact that he would call all these years after we'd been together, and now that I'd left the area again, another truth came to the light: He'd been diagnosed with advanced HIV and the prognosis wasn't very good. As he alluded to: He was dying and wanted to do it with me at his side.

I asked him, point blank:

"So, what you're telling me is that you're dying and you want to be with me for what-ever time you have left. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"So let me ask you Dennis; if you were perfectly healthy and not at all dying that you know of, you probably wouldn't have ever called me, probably never would have said all these things you've said and I could have gone on with my life and never heard from you again. Am I right to think that?"

"Y.....y.....yes."

"OK Dennis. So you've got the virus. The prognosis isn't what you'd like it to be. You're drunk. You miss me now like I missed you for all those years after we separated whilst you dated every man you could set eyes on... most of the time right in front of me. I lived in the area for some 5 years and we saw each-other only two or three times, spoke on the phone maybe three times.

Dennis, I'd pretty-much have to say you made your decision a long time ago. And I wasn't a part of that decision. So now I think it best if you lived according to your decision and left me alone to live my life according to the decision that was made for me back then. Please don't call me anymore. OK? Thank you. Oh. And good luck."

I put the receiver back on the hook and returned to washing my dinner dishes.

The phone rang again. It was him. I repeated my request that he not bother me any more and put the receiver back.

The phone rang a third time. "Collect"! I told the operator that I would not accept the call and to please ask the caller not to call this number any more.

That, in November, 1993, was the last time I heard from or of Dennis Nixon.)

Denis Pearl would happen next (Spakenkill) : Week-ends of running away from the MHV to Saturday nights in The Village. Wonderful nights of walking through Central Park, getting caught in the rain and finding shelter in the one cave there. Day trips to

Minnewaska (he was the one who "introduced" me to Minnewaska. So I can still be thankful to him for that...) Helping him put in a privacy-fence round the house; meeting his pregnant wife whom had no idea of what was going on between her husband and me. More promises of basically being "the other man". Not to mention the promise that he'd never leave Susan for another man (only to find that after telling me that he couldn't continue living that double life, he did leave here for Richie, who was one of the county's biggest queens). They bought a house and a business together. And me? Well, Stupid here went off to "try again". ("When Will I See You Again?" by the Three Degrees is the tune that brings all this back... every time!)

Steve Landes (Monroe)... I actually moved to his house on the mountain out there. A lovely little home, which he'd, converted from a Summer house to a year-round. There were mornings sitting together at the kitchen table, planning for his new business in the new Dutchess Mall (the hair-cutting biz). I picked-out the pattern for the wall-paper for the shop and was going to be written into the business as a partner. Well, as it turned out, there was another "partner" lurking in the mall who tickled Steve's fancy a little "better" than I could. And the prize went to the best "tickler"... not me. He came home one evening to say that "it just wasn't working the way he thought it would" and I found myself living in the back of the car on the side roads, until I went back "home". ("Could It Be I'm Falling In Love" the Spinners)

Joe Contarino (Meadow Hill): A Town of Newburgh cop with a wonderful disposition, a penchant for the wood-lands, a lovely home and a lovely wife (and a child in my brother Joe's class in school... not to mention the Mrs. and my Mom knew each-other from the local PTA meetings and such!). ("Bless the Beasts and the Children" - The Carpenters)

Well, those were the high-school days (daze?). We head North here and we find Nick Gregory (Albany).

It was the 26th December that year and I was coming home to 419 Quail Street from a holiday with the folks in the MHV. It was raining/sleeting and I took a drive through Washington Park (as I was wont to do in those days), pondering how really comforting it would be to "come home" to that "certain somebody", mulling over what that somebody would be like and suddenly, as if dropped by Santa Claus himself, there appeared, through my fogged windshield, the manifestation of my thoughts! I took the chance; asked him if I could "honestly" offer him a ride to someplace out of the rain. When he said "sure" and "thanks", the next disaster began. OK. Short-lived. But I thought I was older (and so was he) and could actually get it right this time.

Nick was: trips to Plattsburg, Montréal in February, playing in the snow and ice in Montréal and Albany. Dancing in the clubs and quiet nights at home, on the sofa (and listening to "Love's Theme", Love Unlimited Orchestra) and finding Lance in the men's room at Macy's Colonie and avoiding me, not telling me that he'd "found" somebody new.

Nick was: John Yavonditte taking me to the "CA - Central Arms" to say: "I think it would be better if you heard it from a friend - I am your friend, right?"

Nick was: going home in the middle of a frost-bite warning on WTRY, swallowing about 5 Librax with white wine, putting on a ski-sweater and walking across Albany in the middle of the night, sobbing, not caring if anybody saw or what they had to say. Sitting in front of their house on Lark, in the snow and crying more and more. Knocking on the door, ringing the bell... no answer. Writing: "Nick I love you" in the snow on his Cougar.

That's where the "doin' the town" part of my life started. I didn't want any more hurt, any more lies, any more of the turmoil of sitting by my-self, playing sad songs on the guitar, sitting under the Meadow Hill Road over-pass on the Thruway, contemplating the results of my just walking out into traffic to stop all the emotional pain. That's where all those "places where I had sex" came along. And when I got to NYC, it only got worse (or better, depending on your point of view). I learned where all the "clubs" and bars and such were and I headed out to just be with somebody for the moment and, to be brutally honest, I don't even recall (if I ever actually "knew") many or any of the names... never mind any of the other "specifics". That would be until the one night, at a Christmas party on 3rd Ave. (at the apartment of Larry Bash... who gave me the umbrella tree which presently stands in the corner of my living-room) when I met Zur Atzmon. A civilised meeting place. Not a bar, club, park or curb.

Zur was a change from all the rest. Israeli. Not American. Different language. Different culture. Shortly after meeting him, probably only a few weeks, his father died and he had to go to Israel for the funeral. We were living together at the time and he trusted me in his home, with his possessions, money and the whole thing. He supported me in my endeavour to become a textile designer, an employment agent, pretty much anything I could think of trying. I hauled lumber from 14th and 8th to 24th and 3rd to build shelves in his kitchen. Every night for about 3 weeks, I'd come home from work, have dinner, do the dishes, put them away and strip and re-finish the kitchen cabinets because he wanted a "new look" there. I met his Mom. We had the most wonderful time talking... the only language we had in common was my Quebec French, her school-French (with a Bulgarian/Hebrew accent). But we had wonderful chats. When she died, I was there again for Zur... staying home. Waiting for him to come back from Israel again. (Most of the time, listening to Esther Ofarim singing "Bird On A Wire" and "Port Sunlight"). And so, perfect to the programme, he found "EST" and I found my-self moving to Valentine Avenue, paying the rent and security with rolls of pennies that I'd saved in a jar and cashed-in, little by little at the little bodega across the street on 3rd Ave. (We weren't on the same level, said he. He had "it" - the "EST" "it". I didn't. He couldn't communicate with me anymore. I came home from work one evening, with dinner from the take-away on 3rd Ave to find he'd changed the lock on the door. Subtle, wasn't it?)

A thought comes to mind here... Zur used to bask in some sort of glory when people, any person really, would compliment him on the wonderful "find". They'd make comments on how truly great it was that he "found" such a handsome man. One in particular made the comment that he'd been "trying" to "get" me for a long time and I never even acknowledged his existence. (I never got the name of the "complimentor". I truly didn't know he had any interest in me. It bothered me to think that people saw me in such a horribly cold light. Even then.)

One night, in the midst of an argument with Zur, the possibility of my moving-out had come up and his reaction was, as I recall, more of what he stood to lose in an ornament

and conversation piece than much else. When I interjected that he saw me more as a trophy, a "conquest" than a Lover, he most vehemently denied it. But his reactions continued along the same lines of what his "friends" would say if I left him.

For the time we remained together, I would often ponder the possibility of my being not much more than some shiny little bric-a-brac for him to display with his lacquered table and other trinkets round the house. Only I could be brought out into public. Public didn't have to come to the house to see...

Thought I had a chance with Clark Shockley (Decatur Ave) when we met in the Botanical Gardens and watched a Summer storm roll in. He was the Tuesday night canasta games with Dottie. A few months later the story went along the lines of: he and Michael were having a period of cooling-down after a disagreement and Michael wanted him back. Being the stoic idiot, I stepped-out. They'd had a relationship that obviously meant a lot to Michael and considerably something to Clark. And off I went, on my merry way again. (Clark liked to run in the Botanical Gardens listening to "Chariots of Fire").

Mack Bradley (Wappingers) dropped into my life as an introduction via a mutual "friend/acquaintance". Another respectable meeting. Nothing sordid. Mack introduced me to Cape Cod, Boston, Provincetown, and beautiful walks along the Cape shore at sun-set. He also introduced me to walking home from the Poughkeepsie train station at 1am along Rte 9 (until I found it was easier to walk home along the tracks and it was much prettier too, walking along the Hudson river at night). And driving up the Taconic at 95mph to get home to a night alone because he was at the bar in Middletown, having drinks and watching the drag shows. And when I mentioned that it hurt me to rush home, looking forward to seeing him at the end of the work-day, to find him not there and knowing he was at the bar. I was told that it was difficult for him to be "left alone" and he only went out for "the company and the show". (That and that I reminded him SO much of his ex of about a year. Compliments!) (Mack would turn on the stereo at night to listen to music as he fell asleep. WBLS which, back then would play "Hey Lover" by Freddie Jackson)

Lou Triggiani, whom I'd met whilst going out m'self, while Mack was in Middletown. I'd taken to going to Woodstock, to the Maverick which was the next best thing to a real country saloon where I could have my beer, get slightly plastered and head back to Wappingers and take the Rhinecliff Bridge at 95mph. When Lou and I met that night in the rain, he was "with" Charlie (who was, at the time, dying of meningitis) and I was "supposedly" with Mack. But there was a spark and we were both too civil to act on it at the time. We just held each-other close, gave each-other an innocent kiss (if ever there could be such a thing under the circumstances) and a caring, long hug, in the parking lot after closing time, as the snow fell, and Lou disappeared for a year until New Year's eve when, just after mid-night, there he was, sitting on the bar-stool at Christopher Street (Middletown); very much alone. I remembered him... he remembered me. We sat. We talked. We had a few drinks. We caught-up on what had happened since that night in Woodstock. And over the months to follow, we worked together (bringing the Christopher Street bar back from almost gone, opening Lechter's very first "HomeStore"), took drives through the Shawangunks and Catskills. Spent nights together in New Prospect, crocheting while the snow piled up outside. Taking drives through Northern NJ and Port Jervis and such. I moved to Roosa Gap and brought the hope that I was

getting the house for the both of us up there where we could enjoy the simpler life together... working toward a common goal... key being "together".

One night, Mark happened into the bar in Middletown ("Fire Island" of all names) where Lou was working as a bar-keep. He (Mark) got up to the bar and asked Lou:

"So where's your other half?"

"I don't have another half."

"OK. So where's your Lover?"

"He's dead." (Charlie)

Mark had a few drinks that night and the next morning called me to come to his house.

With tears in his eyes he looked across the table and told me about this incident and asked, "Is there something wrong that you'd like to talk about?"

There wasn't anything that I knew of.

Only several months prior to this, Julie (a very dear and close friend of Lou's) got rip-roaring drunk and, whilst driving me home after I'd put in a hard night's work at the bar ("Christopher Street") told me that Lou had told her that he didn't love me, could never love me and would never sleep with me because he'd felt he was cheating on Charlie.

Meanwhile, I'd prepare holiday dinners, special dinners, or just dinners so that I knew he'd have a meal in the evening (since he wasn't good about taking care of that himself), and there I'd sit... table set; food prepared and no phone call, no show. (Most of the lush vegetation behind the house in New Prospect can be attributed to the wonderful dinners that got tossed into the woods at night's end.)

OK. So Lou found Jimmy in one of the bars in Middletown. Jimmy was considerably younger than I; had considerably more money than either Lou or I had (since he was a drug-runner and hustler). So youth and cash won out.

Next Lou "found" David (who worked with us at Lechter's) whom, for some strange and never understood reason struck a spark in the cockles of Lou's where-ever. And there I found me, sitting in the little house on the mountain, alone and wondering what the hell had happened again! Where the high-light of my waking hours was going to the Burlingham General Store for more beer and cigarettes, keeping sufficiently drunk to pass most of my waking hours asleep on the sofa or on the grass in the back yard. Then came the clincher: Gay Pride wk-end '93. Lou, David and I came to stay by Emmy's for that wk-end so that we could do a bit of celebrating (I didn't know about the tryst between Lou and David at the time... until...). That Saturday night, I took the boiz out for a few drinks to some of the local watering holes I knew in The City. Went to the bar for another round only to come back to find Lou standing against the DJ's booth, David to front/side with one hand in Lou's shirt and the other down his jeans! OK. So you don't have to run me over with a Concorde. I can read subtle hints. And so, that brought the chapter to a screeching halt. Lou and David moved in together in a one bedroom in Middletown where, of course, nobody slept on the sofa. Tah-duh!

I left the mountains... hoping to leave all of what I've recounted here already, up there.

Ah well.... The plans of mice and morons,

I left the mountains on the 23 September 1993. I'd spent almost a month, packing my entire life together in boxes, crates, bags. The little house on the mountain that I truly loved looked almost empty. Not much more than a large storage bin with big windows, lots of light and plenty of space.

How I loved living in, loved coming "home" to that house. Especially at night when it was so dark, so quiet, and the sky was so full of stars you'd think they'd all fall on your head from sheer weight. How I loved the days: Summers in the back-yard with Noël, hanging the wash and watching it in the breezes; Autumns and the huge maple in the back turning bright crimson, Winter when the snows covered everything in a beautiful blanket of "real" white that stayed that colour; Spring and planting and watching the flowers grow.

And how I loved the dreams I had when I moved in there: the dreams of having a relationship, making a home for Lou to come to where we could sit quietly on the sofa or in the yard... together.

But on the morning of the 23rd, the sun was shining and there was a beautiful breeze blowing. I packed everything I could and everything I wanted into the big yellow truck out-side the front door that during the blizzard of the year before, I had to don my mittens and dig Noël and I out through so that she could run to "potty" and I could walk down the mountain to the General Store for food. The phone was the last thing to be disconnected. Just as I'd about finished packing the truck, it rang (for the first time in days!). It was Lou.

"How are you?"

"Busy packing the truck."

"What truck?"

"The one I'm moving in."

"Moving? Where are you going?"

"Back to The Bronx."

"When?"

"As soon as I finish packing the truck."

"Oh."

"Well, I've got to go now. You take good care of your-self please."

"OK. Bye."

"Yeah. Bye."

Not more than 10 minutes later, I saw his truck (the truck I'd saved from repossession by secretly putting money into his chequing account to pay the loan) drive by on Roosa Gap Rd. He didn't stop.

I was off to live at Emmy's for a while. Full of goals and ambitions: getting a place of my own back in The Bronx, to get a job back on Wall Street, to go back to college full-time. And yes, I did manage to accomplish all of that, and in only a few months. But that's not the point, of course.

By the 31st October, I find myself with John Maughn. And once again I'm actually listening to the praises and claims of joy from him: how happy he is that I'm in his life,

how much he loves me, how much I mean to him, how I make him so very happy. I hear him talking to his friends about how I'm the first "real man" he's ever met in his life and how this is the "real thing" and how it's going to last!

Because of, let's call them "religious differences" (apparently Em, being "Born Again", was distressed at having a heathen - Jew - in her home), by November, I was living in John's parents' house until Em's ex-daughter-in-law re-married and gave me her condo in Parkchester. So, John and I began living together only several weeks after having met; first in his parents' house for a few weeks and then, by the end of November, we moved into Estie's place... together.

I spent Thanksgiving with John and his family that year. But, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, one evening, John came to me asking if it would be OK if he went out for a few drinks with some friends. He worked nights and I worked days, so our schedules were opposite, more or less. Of course, being the "trusting" oaf, I sucked-up to the lines about it being only for a few hours, how he wished I could go with him, and how he'd be back "home" early. A kiss and a hug and out the door he went that night.

4 nights later, I stood in the kitchen, on the phone with Peter, whilst John and his Mom moved John's things out. He'd left 4 nights prior, met up with his "friends" and had gone on a 3-night coke binge with them... as usual, expecting that I'd simply sit at home waiting with open arms and heart for him to return (no phone call, no word from him, no one having any idea where he was). There was no remorse, no apologies from either him or his Mom. I truly was expected to accept being left at home, alone, and welcome him back with no questions, no comments, no hurt.

And so, yet another Christmas, Chanukah and New Year spent at home, alone, wondering what the hell I'd done wrong... again. And my first Christmas, Chanukah and New Year back in The Bronx... doing what has been so common... wondering why I had to be alone, just like too many years in the past.

I let the time go by, being alone and getting used to it when suddenly, in September '97, Bradshaw Smith hits the scene. Apparently "adult", self-employed, successful business established. By November '97 he was already using the "L" word, and talking about being together for periods of "20 years" ("When we're still dating in 20 years..."). I was reluctant, wasn't going to fall in love again so soon, wasn't going to just give so much to somebody who would talk about "love" a mere 2 months after having met. I thought it the best way for me and for him and that if we ever separated, at least I would have many lovely memories but none of the hurt of losing the companionship on the holidays, the sense of "family" I always thought I deserved and wanted.

Yes, there were many wonderful times. Bradshaw knows how to "give", as long as it comes from the cheque-book. But when it comes to fidelity and monogamy, well, you can't write them on a piece of paper. So, 2 years and 7 months exactly to the day and almost exactly to the hour on which we met, I find that for most of that time, he'd been going out to have anonymous sex with total strangers and then getting together with me to tell me that I'm the only one who makes him "so happy". I made him "happy" and yes, he expected the "20 years"... but I was expected to accept that when we weren't together, he would spend his "free time" satisfying a lustful urge for something different,

sampling the strangers in The City, "satisfying" his psychotic need for multiple copulation with nameless partners. And, once again, I was expected to settle for the fact that, when he'd temporarily satiated HIS needs, to be there, waiting for him with open arms, open heart, and to be satisfied with knowing that after he'd had done, he came back to me.

As with Zur, Bradshaw too had his narcissistic needs filled by my presence in his life. At one of his holiday do's, an old "friend" (Little Brad) asked him (in ear-shot of Peter and Napoleon): "So. How long have you been doing that one? Oh Daddy! He's beautiful! I could get lost in that!" Preston had passed a comment at one of our theatre jobs that "Brad really got the better end of that deal."

When we went out on jobs, to functions, probably even to the super-market in his neighbourhood, once again, I was there for "display purposes only". For, god knows, when we'd be at home, the glitz tarnished and life went back to: Bradshaw at the video boards and I watched the television or worked on the computer.

\* It had been told to me, by Peter and Napoleon, and by Bradshaw himself, that there were several "habits" of mine that he would "break" me of during our "relationship". And "break" is the word he used.

To begin at the beginning, with the first "habit" I heard of, directly from Bradshaw himself: my cleanliness. Particularly round the house. For several months after we'd met, one of his favourite topics at gatherings of people (mostly friends and acquaintances of his... not mine), he made it a point to compare my apartment with "being at the bottom of an Air-wick air freshener! It brought tears to my eyes! I couldn't breathe because of the smell of pine in his house!" One night, when I was staying at his place, he pointed-out that my clothes smelled the same way. "But I'll break you of that soon enough. Your house doesn't have to be that clean".

The next I heard from Peter, as he was told directly. My going to the beach on week-ends. Seems this too bothered Bradshaw immensely. Why? I've no idea. But when Peter asked if he'd like to join us (we usually went together, Peter, Napoleon and I), the response was "I don't care that much for the beach. I'll break him of that habit soon".

Then there was the connection with my friends. And, as Bradshaw him-self point-out, there aren't all that many. Even as seldom as I saw Peter and Napoleon (the two who live the closest), our time together would interfere with "plans" already made by Bradshaw. Time talking on the phone (at my own home) apparently stole time that should have been spent talking with him (though he'd be the first to admit that he spent all day talking with people on the phone and didn't necessarily want to do more in the evening when I got home from work).

Visiting with my friends was fine, as long as the visit didn't last very long, take any of his time, deny him the right to me alone when he wanted it, etc.

And so, there we have yet another reason for avoiding any type of relationship that would or might involve anything more than a beer at the bar or a trip to the movies. To run the risk of entrapment of that sort again and to have such schemes plotted and

planned with-out my knowing? I should rather be sent to war with an enemy whom I don't know personally. Or be accosted in a subway train, late at night, with no witnesses.

And now, in the new millennium, approaching "mid-life", I've reached my own point of satiation. All those years of trying to keep a meaningful relationship, to avoid joining the already long-established "statistics" that have more than proven that these relationships don't last, of trying to be the controlling factor in the relationship, of trying not to be the controlling factor in the relationship, of giving my all and of protecting my all... There's no-where to go from here any more. I've tried the options. I can't see any more options. No more "roles" to take. I've tried the angles. I've put my-self in all possible positions. There's no-where to go, no-one to be. Being "me" hasn't worked. Being somebody, anybody, everybody else has lead to the same end. So, that admitted, it's time to face the fact that I always thought I'd come to accept at the age of 13 when I sat in that house at 61 Coach Lane and thought, in silence and solitude:

I'll be an old man, sitting in a rocking chair by a window, looking out at a Christmas Day snow-fall, hand-crocheted afghan over my shoulders and across my legs to help ward-off the Winter chills, reminiscing about the days when I thought I was "SO in Love", when I was so happy and content being with the one man I thought would stay with me through the young and old years. And I'll watch the snow fall and smirk just so slightly when I recall the bits about sowing my wild oats. And then I'll think about the real "Friends" my Mom told me were more important than anything or anybody else in life, I'll pull the afghan closer round me, cuddle in its warmth, and sigh. But I'll be like I'd always been up to then... alone... with memories of "better" days and happy moments.

I thought that at the age of 13. Fulfilling prophecy? I don't think so. More like being blessed with a vision of the future. I should have been wise enough to hold on to that and simply let go to it, stop trying to avoid or change it. Just roll along with it over the years. It would have meant a lot less hurt and disappointment. And I probably could have done much better with all the years between then and now if I'd channelled all the energy I put into failed relationships into more tangible goals... what-ever they may have been or are. But part of growing older and smarter is accepting where life puts us when we finally get to the point where we're able to comprehend the consequences of living as long as we have. And I do believe that I've approached the point where I'll acquiesce and stop the battle.

Being alone with the memories of the "better days" is better than being with some-one who'll only add to the already long list of disappointments. I can barely handle the memories and the resulting disappointments. But I don't want, and don't believe I can handle any more immediate let-downs, disappointments. There's no-where to go and nothing left to do to have that relationship I've been brain-washed into believing I should have. Best to just let life be as it is, and give-in to it. Not be bitter or angry. Just let it be. Not to accept it. Just not fight against it any more.

I met Bradshaw when we were both at an age where I'd hoped for maturity and at an age where I thought we both would appreciate having each-other in our lives when we could be together in old age. At the age where we could cuddle together, when we were no longer "young, handsome, desirable by the throngs", when the young men would

look at us and say things like "Why isn't that old man at home where he belongs?" or "Aren't they wonderful, being together, having each-other?" Some of us can have that. FEW of us can have that. I'm just neither of the "some" nor the "few" and it's time to come to terms with that fact and stop fighting it. And I've stopped. Hopefully it will make my life all the better for it. If not, well, I'll just continue doing what I've basically been doing for the past 32 years:

Enjoying the companionship of "Friends", being awe-inspired by Summer thunder storms, languishing in Winter snows, adoring the wonders of the mountains, feeling a bit sprightly at sun-rise, feeling a bit mellow at sun-set, enjoying music, looking forward to being surrounded by the open ocean and soaking in the sun on the beach and generally sitting, with a little remorse, quietly waiting for the moment when I can take that last breath of earthly air and not have to take another.  
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It's not out of any depression that all this has been recorded. Nor out of any bitterness. I truly can't say that I'm angry or sad about it all.

I shouldn't really say that I'm in the least disappointed, since it was 32 years ago when I first conjured that impression of my-self, sitting in that rocking chair. 32 years ago when I pretty-much accepted that what I am today is what I am supposed to expect and accept.

And if there is any disappointment or sadness involved, it's really and truly simply the results of having been successfully brain-washed as a youth into believing that people should not be a singular item. That we all need a mate of some sort or another. That we must not be "alone" and that being so is such a terrible thing to be.

My Grand-mother made mention of it one evening as we sat at the kitchen table, just having finished coffee after dinner. She asked me if I didn't feel strange, empty, alone when I went to bed at night and there was no one there with me. (My Grand-father had been dead several years already.) I asked her if that's how she felt and she replied "No. I had many years together with your Grand-father. And I have that to hold to."

Almost outraged, I asked her: "Why is it so important to have somebody there, all the time, in life? Who said it's wrong or bad to go to bed alone? Who dictated that we should all have somebody to be with at night?" She never did have an answer other than to say that that's the way it's always been.

Well, there's a new age upon us. Many of us have grown alone. Not lonely, but alone. It seems to be "de rigueur", as it were, to be solitary, to take full credit for one's accomplishments, (and it certainly makes it that much easier to hide one's mistakes). Precious few of us actually believe or want to be with another human-being... unless of course, it's on certain terms. (As Bradshaw said with regard to marriage vows: "For as long as we both shall love"... not "live". Well, judging by experience, I believe I've seen people wear under-garments longer than they have "loved". And now I'd have to say that I truly do believe that those people have never really and truly "loved" at all.)

So, again I must stress that this is not written out of anger, bitterness, sadness or depression. It's a recounting of events. All facts. The past. History. It is, of course, my own account of my own life and my own perception of it all. Surely, if the same were written by those who have been named here, it would undoubtedly read differently. But then, like the fish that got away, or the perfect game that friends had to miss because of other commitments at the time, the stories that accompany so many trophies tend to swerve and sway with each recounting.

I can only document what is in my heart and the memories that sometimes creep up from some dark recess and almost crush the life out of me (even here there is no mercy... just an "almost").

(000410) Having begun this and having edited and added to it has been supportive for and to me. To think it all started on an MSN Instant Messaging trial. I'll keep it. Keep working on it. And one day, when I'm sitting in that old rocker, I'll put on my glasses and read it. At least it takes the pains away.