

Re: Hello

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: Jojo69@blacksails.net

Hey Jojo,

Things moving along here. Feel like a fish out of water. Got a beautiful wife who's an artist, a mystic and professional philanthropist, a four-hundred-pound mother-in-law, and two brothers-in-law, a gay priest who's looking for a better gig and a tough-guy type who might possibly be a psychopath. I only slightly exaggerate.

Company I work for is a Mexican restaurant chain—lousy food, cheap prices. We seem to be making plenty of money, though—don't know how, maybe by magic. I used to be the CEO. Now my tough-guy brother-in-law is. Good for him. I really don't care. To keep from being taken advantage of, I try to convey I haven't entirely lost my memory, but stink at it, and some people have already guessed that I'm not really the same Travis Quinn they used to know and love. Again, I really don't care, except I wouldn't wish this on anyone. Total loss of memory = clueless, and people will take advantage. Actually, I think I was happier living on the streets than living in my mansion here.

Pretty much do as little as possible at the company. Spend my time trying to find out as much as I can about my former life. Not making a whole lot of progress. Apparently, I was already quite wealthy when I first arrived here. Not sure how that happened. Very cloak-and-dagger. Even had a different name. Big shot rides into town with money to spend. Not doing me much good now, making it much harder for me to find people who knew me. Did I have something to hide, or was I just paranoid? As much of a head case back then, as I am now? Something to worry about.

My memory shows no sign of coming back, and those periods of dissociation show no signs of going away. Got my own built-in LSD dispenser. Keeps lighting up the inside of my head. Great fun. Can't tell if it's getting worse, but it does seem more frequent. Now know what "losing your mind" is like. Most of it washed away all at once in a big flood, the rest trickle by trickle.

Yeah, my kidnapping. They still don't know who was responsible, and some people even think I arranged it myself. Not as crazy as it sounds. Just might be possible. Remember how I was always a bit paranoid about being recognized? Well, there's probably a reason for that. Distant thunder getting a bit louder every day.

Not much I can do about it. I'm a man on a mission. Thanks for your email and for the opportunity to invest in the Tosca expansion. I'll wire you the money. Let me know what else I can do to help. Say hello to everyone.

Darren

Candor

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: justine@fortuity.com

Hi Justine,

Appreciate your candor. I didn't handle my departure well. Badly is probably the better word. Even deplorably. Dastardly. I'd love a do-over, but it's not possible in the game I'm in. Deeply regretted having to leave you, and yet also relieved not to have to deal with the complications. So maybe cowardly. Now not so sure. This is all uncharted territory for me. Remember, my experiences go back only for the last three years. I barely understand myself.

Need time and patience. Right now flying by the seat of my pants just to remain sane trying to navigate a crazy Mexican family and their unfathomably profitable company. Something I have no interest in. What I want to do is find out who I am, or who I was (hope they're the same thing). Or even better, figure out a way to get my brain to free up a lifetime of memories.

Let's keep the lines of communication open.

Travis Quinn

My new life

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: justine@fortuity.com

Justine,

Notes on Life among the Houstonians

First of many surprises after becoming Travis Quinn happened on the plane back to Houston with Tony, my thuggish brother-in-law. Knowing me better than I know myself, he saw fit to have a company employee named Candy Sweet (legal name, Candace Sweet), stowed away in a sleeping compartment just to help me wile away the hours of a long flight. Got an excellent debriefing of what life is like at FrijoLoco and chez Mondragon.

Told me I had a rather sexless marriage to my wife Alma, who preferred having affairs to a reliable but sexually prosaic husband. Which hasn't been the case since I've returned home. Seems she really despised me prior to the kidnapping (she had more or less been forced by her father to marry me in order to save the company from going bankrupt). Now she says I'm a totally different man. Like her mother, she has a spooky ability to get into your head and sometimes see what's coming. Almost as soon as I walked in the door, she nailed me as a fraud. Fortunately, she's so pleased that she doesn't have to deal with the old Travis anymore, she's been happy to keep my secret.

Last weekend was the fishing trip aboard the Paradiso with the CEO of our meat supplier and the owner of one of our franchises. Two days of being continuously water-boarded might have been more pleasant. Discovered I hated boats (even a fancy yacht), hated fishing, hated small talk, hated the company of businessmen, hated the open ocean, and hated playing the grateful host to wealthy morons.

There was some serious excitement when we were nearly boarded by "pirates." I put the word in quotes because I'm not sure what they were or what they might have been after. They didn't seem like your usual pirates. They were in a fancy speedboat and seemed to know who we were. I strongly suspect they were after *me*. One possibility is that they're the same people who kidnapped me. Someone on board had disabled our engines (the DJ was strongly suspected). We managed to keep them at bay until we could get the engines working again and take off. The speedboat followed until a coastguard helicopter appeared and we could make our escape.

Clearly all is not right with FrijoLoco. You can smell the rot. I'm not sure what to do about it. But my instinct is to run like hell.

Travis

Re: Follow up

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: junebertrand@alice.it

Dear June,

Glad you wrote. Things not going well here. Being rich and successful apparently has drawbacks. Didn't you say you warned me about this once? Or maybe not. I'm not too sure about a lot of things these days.

Whatever the reason for my kidnapping has not gone away. There was another attempt recently that luckily failed. Really lucky. Seems like they went through a lot of trouble. I might not be so lucky next time. It could be time to take a long trip, stay out of sight for a while. Frankly, I was safer panhandling on the streets of San Francisco than going fishing on a luxury yacht.

So I'm wondering if maybe a trip back to Assisi might not be a bad option at this point. You know the place well and could help me get settled in. It means interrupting the search for my past, but at this point I'm not sure it's safe and risk continuing my search in the future. I don't think it's paranoia. Someone or some people want me out of the way. I nice long European vacation, living entirely out of pocket might be just the ticket.

Let me know what you think.

Best,

Travis Quinn

Update

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: sylvialaurengerou@comcast.net

Hi Sylvia,

Wonderful meeting you and your family. Can't imagine how it must feel to see me again and discover I'm basically a perfect stranger. A bit weird for me as well.

Thanks for helping me fill in more of my past. Feel like I'm closing in on something. Each person I meet opens up an opportunity to meet someone else who used to know me. Feel I'm getting closer and closer, even as the destination slips further away. Still not giving up.

It's becoming clear that back in Houston, before I was kidnapped, I was involved with some bad people doing bad things. Got a private investigator working for me, and he's just a couple of steps—if even that— ahead of the authorities. Like everything else near the Mexican border, it has to do with drugs, mainly the financial part. Which likely explains why my company was doing so well at a time when Tex-Mex lovers were were eating out everywhere but Frijoloco.

BTW I might want to take you up on that doctor recommendation you mentioned—someone at Mass. General, I think? Dissociations seem to be coming more frequently and intensely. At first they were kind of interesting, even entertaining, now I won't if it's just a case of slowly going insane.

Best,

Travis

Lots to report

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: justine@fortuity.com

Justine,

I'm not bored. Keep going. I read your emails several times over. Guy sounds like an amazing character. You must be under a lot of stress. If he can help you Take your mind off Ethan, then why not. You're all alone, no support. Seems like you made a friend—and if he is who he says he is . . . nice to have that kind of friend!

Things moving along here. Meeting lots of people who knew me back when.

I have something of a family from my adoptive parents—mainly a couple of “cousins” I grew up with. I pretty much walked away from all that in my late teens. I was an only child. My father died first, then my other. Was adopted as a baby by my mother's friend.

Most interesting person I've met is Scott Luddin. You might have heard of him—runs a computer game company (check him out in Wikipedia). His latest project isn't actually a game but an attempt to create characters that develop “consciousness.” Unclear whether they do. Could just be a very elaborate simulations—just like us! Ha! Sorry, couldn't resist. If we are, a little bit more work on us is in order. Reminds me of your gardener.

Also met Dwight Luddin, my stepfather. Found him in a nursing home, half demented. Hard to imagine him as someone who had once made my life miserable. Unimaginably sad. Makes you feel so helpless. So useless. This is what we come to.

Travis

Slogging on

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: sylvialaurengerou@comcast.net

Sylvia,

Bit of an update. Talked to more people. Lot more information. Things are coming into focus. Not sure I like the picture. Had a feeling I was in trouble, now I know for sure. An exhausting day. Apparently I've always been good at getting out of scrapes. Not so sure about this one. Need to move quickly. A few puzzle pieces left. Hoping I can find them in River Run.

I'm beat. Long drive ahead of me. Fill you in later.

Travis

Nothing

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: scott@arachnidgames.com

Hey Scott,

Thanks for lunch and helping to reconstruct my life. Don't understand your warning not to read that document you gave me. Did skim over it—way over my head. Didn't really understand what he was trying to say. Seemed like mumbo-jumbo, actually. Big fuss over zero? Lot of shit we don't understand and still go through the motions of thinking we do.

Met Dwight Luddin. Didn't remember him . . . he certainly remembered me. Difficult moment. Glad you're looking out for him. Heading to Vermont and River Run. Probably pointless, but maybe not, always pays to look under every rock, never know what you may crawl out.

Jeremy Luddin, alias Travis Quinn

OK

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: carter@sutcliffpi.com

Carter,

I got your email. I understand your reluctance to talk over the phone. No doubt the wheels of justice are in motion. I agree we have to move quickly. I'll follow the procedure to set up an encrypted line. Later today.

Need to move forward

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: vskelly@scuddercox.com

Victoria, I got a report from Carter Sutcliff. You and he need to talk. Then we need to figure out the legal issues. I'm on the road for the next couple of days. When I finish up, I'll take the next flight back to Houston.

Travis

Going for it

bigcahuna@frioloco.com

To: justine@fortuity.com

One more thing to do. I'll send text messages.

4:45 PM

Arrived river run, met local lady who knew family, heading to house my mother used to live in

7:22 PM

Met lady living in house, no useful info, disappointed

7:48 PM

Heading up to check out scenic overlook before dark . . . coming home