

From:

Simon Sheppard & M. Christian, eds.

Rough Stuff: Tales of Gay Men, Sex, and Power

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The Endurance Game:

Part of a Memo Found Behind a Pentagon Shredder

By Richard Cleaver

You want edge play? Here it is, pushing the boundaries of "consensuality." Richard Cleaver's story can be read as a brilliant fable or as the truly twisted product of a sadistic mind. Either way, or both, it turned us on and knocked us out.

Eyes Only

To: Secretary of the Navy

From: Commandant of Marines

Re: Discovery of potentially dangerous secret society

Problem Statement

It has come to our attention that a secret network or organization potentially disruptive to morale and discipline in the United States Marine Corps has been operating clandestinely for a period of 18 months in the vicinity of several bases in the United States and abroad. What follows is a summary of the group's activities insofar as our investigations to date have revealed them. As it is a clandestine organization, our report must of necessity be fragmentary. We have uncovered two original documents, reprinted in full below; the remaining evidence is hearsay. Many details are lacking and much of what we suspect is unconfirmed; nevertheless, it is the opinion of this office that an aggressive campaign to neutralize this group is warranted.

Name and Organization

The group in question goes by several different names. Among these are the Pain Pigs, Bulldogs With Balls, the Crunch Club, and the Endurance Game. This variety of nomenclature notwithstanding, there is no doubt that we are dealing with a single network. We refer to it hereinafter as "the Club" or "the Game." The majority of players are enlisted personnel of the USMC, although it is rumored that policemen, firemen, and other uniformed civilians have recently joined. No officers nor members of other armed services are allowed.

The Game is reportedly conducted by two civilians known only by pseudonyms, evidently nicknames given them by the first marines involved. One, described as short, husky, and talkative, is known as Napoleon. The other is tall and relatively less talkative; he is known as Tall Guy, or more often simply as TG. We have been unable to discover the true identities of these two men, or even their places of residence; they have turned up in the vicinity of nine Marine installations in the continental United States and at Yokosuka and Iwakuni in Japan. They use personal ads and the Internet to make contact with willing marines and to arrange meetings of the Club.

Discovery of Documents and Resulting Investigation

The existence of this group was discovered by chance. An unfinished letter, or a partial draft of one (with neither salutation nor signature), was found in a wastepaper basket in enlisted quarters at Quantico, along with a typeset, photocopied leaflet titled "The Rules of the Game." These documents led us to open an investigation of the movements and associations of the marine most likely to have written the letter, a lance corporal from the Midwest who is a star boxer for the Corps. (So far he denies all knowledge of the letter or its contents. Questioning continues.) In the course of the investigation, we were able to obtain affidavits from two individuals: the former girlfriend of one of the partici-

pants and a marine who was approached to participate in the Game but declined, and subsequently cooperated with Naval Intelligence. Excerpts from their affidavits are given later in this memorandum. The letter fragment reads as follows:

You guys will probably never get this letter since I don't have any address for you. But I had to write it anyway, because you changed my life. I got the rules of the Game [Note: presumably the document found together with the letter] from a buddy you know as Rusty—the redheaded bodybuilder whose left ankle you broke and dislocated in North Carolina about six months ago. He told me that he never realized before that putting himself totally in a stronger man's hands would give him the most intense hard-on he ever experienced, better than any sex he'd ever had with a girl. It was so hot he said that he was going back for more, and next time I saw him he showed me how all the toes on his left foot were broken and described how you broke them one by one, starting with his little toe, and how each time you made him beg for you to break the next one, and how he finally came like never in his life when you busted his big toe. I knew then, from what he told me and from reading the rules, that I had to try. I joined the Marines in the first place because I like to push myself to extremes, and this seemed more like the real thing than anything in boot camp or later training exercises.

I would never have let another guy touch me if Rusty hadn't told me about you. But when he did I realized how much I wanted to let go and let another man control me, if he was strong enough to. And I figured any man hard enough to break

another guy's ankle deserves my respect. I guess you busted Rusty's good, from what he told me about the pain he went through from it and what the medics told him.

At first I thought I just wanted to show myself how far I could go and show you guys how tough a real marine could be. I knew I was tougher than Rusty. But you showed me more than I showed you. You taught me that facing pain, especially when you know it's coming and how excruciating it's going to be, then enduring it and breaking through to the other side, where pain becomes your friend, and not your enemy, is what makes a man totally a man. I guess I never knew what that meant until you hurt me so bad, or even that it was what I was looking for. Anyway, whatever I was looking for I found it, and I just want to thank you sincerely for giving it to me. The whole scene was so hot: two prime muscled marine bodies stark naked and straining against the ropes; the two of you in black leather so that sexy leather aroma was mixed with the smell of our sweat; the two witnesses in fatigue pants and T-shirts that showed off their arm and shoulder muscles as they stood behind you on crutches with their left feet in casts and their toes showing; silence except for the sounds of our soles being beaten and our groans and curses and screams. You saw my hard-on and you watched me come when I heard my own bones snap. While I was laid up in sick bay that first week, I beat off five or six times a day, and each time I replayed it all in my mind. I hope you found me worthy enough to play the Game again soon, so I can push myself even harder and go even farther into and through the pain than last time. I

got off crutches today, and they told me I might only need to be in a walking cast for two or three more weeks. When it comes off I

[At this point the letter, handwritten on both sides of one sheet of common typing paper, breaks off.]

The contents of the leaflet are as follows:

The Rules of the Game

Challenge: It's time to quit talking and prove who can take the most pain. We will conduct the following challenge match to determine the answer. Victory will not be easy. We will continue until one challenger gives up, using the following words: "I respectfully request you to stop torturing my foot, Sirs, because this marine is too weak to take any more pain." These words, repeated exactly, and no other, will end the torture. The remaining challenger must then beg for more pain, using the following words: "Hurt me some more, Sir, I haven't had enough pain yet." Passing out from the pain will end the torture and result in a forfeit.

Setup and Procedure: We will torture only one of your feet, and no other part of the body. Each challenger must name which foot he wishes us to torture and must give a reason for his choice. You and another challenger will be tied naked to horizontal benches set end-to-end with the soles of your feet facing the work area in the middle. If you crunch your abs you will be able to sit up just enough to see the other's agony. When one of us is flogging your foot, you will count each stroke loudly and distinctly so that the other challenger may hear—we will inflict an exactly equal number of strokes at each turn, alternating challengers. If you miscount or fail to count off, we shall start again, in which case the other challenger will have to take an equal number of

extra strokes, so as to keep the total number strictly equal, guaranteeing that the one who breaks down like a baby has had no more pain inflicted on him than the real man. The two of us will change places at regular intervals, so each challenger has been tortured by each of us equally. This is to prevent any suspicion that one or the other of us was "harder on" his victim.

Preparation: We will begin by stripping you naked and preparing your foot as follows. First, your second toe and your fourth toe will be tied up and back tightly with rawhide thongs fastened behind the ankle and a short stick inserted and twisted until the toes are held in a painful position. Then a stiff wire brush will be used to sensitize the skin of your foot, including your sole, your instep, and all the soft skin between your toes.

Stage 1: Flogging with your toes still bound. From time to time, as your toes become numb, we will tighten the tourniquets simultaneously. We will beat the entire sole of your foot, laying down the strokes crosswise from heel to toe, each just above and slightly overlapping the previous one. We will use the following tools in order: a wide black leather belt; a riding crop; a wooden dowel about as thick as a pencil; bamboo ditto; thin bamboo; a rattan rug beater; a weighted leather paddle; a wooden paddle with large holes; and a rubber hose.

Stage 2: Clamps. After removing the tourniquets, we will bend your middle toe under your sole and secure it in this position with a C-clamp. This will be slowly tightened, forcing the toe against itself and straining the joints. Eventually we will remove the C-clamp from your middle toe and apply one clamp each to your throbbing second and fourth toes. We will attach a strong spring-loaded hand clamp (the kind that looks like those exercisers you squeeze) to your big toe and use it to twist and bend your big toe to a variety of painfully unnatural angles. If you haven't broken

yet, there may be additional flogging with the clamps in place.

Going further: A lightbulb that has been burning since the start of the challenge may be applied to various parts of your foot for measured, and increasing, periods of time. A soldering iron may be applied to your toenails or to the skin between your toes. Hot wax may be dripped on your foot, then removed by flogging. Wooden vises may be attached to your toes, instep, or ankle and tightened slowly, crushing the part in question. From time to time these vises may be used as levers to twist and wrench your joints.

Be advised that we are not the least bit reluctant to break bones or tear ligaments or dislocate joints. Do not enter the Endurance Game if you are not prepared to end up on crutches. If you lose, but are good-looking enough, we may give you the consolation prize of having a cock shoved up your butt. But only if your butt is worth it. *Talk is cheap. Put up or shut up.*

Affidavit 1

[This affidavit was given by the former girlfriend of one of the marines who participated in the Game. She came forward voluntarily and seems to have been unaware that the matter was under investigation. Apparently, she became suspicious when her boyfriend appeared with all five toes on his left foot broken—only two weeks after getting off crutches for a severely fractured and dislocated ankle—and ordered her to suck his broken toes.

There is strong reason to believe the informant was motivated to come forward by jealousy and anger. It will be noted, however, that even the most unlikely points are corroborated by independent evidence.

The informant herself claimed to be motivated by patriotic sentiments and her conversion to a strict form of fundamentalist Christianity. She insisted that the latter motivation preface any and all use of her information and that she be recognized as "bearing

witness against the Satanic scourge of homosexuality that is sapping the energies and moral fiber of America's defenders and placing the country in danger both from foreign enemies and the wrath of a just God who will not allow his commandments to be flouted." The affidavit is quite long and, with the exception of the direct quotation above, we will excerpt only the most relevant of the marine's boasts to her. The affidavit in its entirety is available upon request.]

Fucking right I went back for more. I had to. It's a rush, it's better than sex. Nothing makes me feel like so much like a man as letting somebody do his worst to me and taking it like only a man can take it, just suck up the pain. Marines eat pain! [...]

I cried when they broke my ankle, I admit it, but that was just a reflex because I didn't expect it. It doesn't count. Still, I had to go back and let them do it to me again and show them I wouldn't cry this time. Being on crutches is nothing, broken bones are nothing, pain is what makes it real, what makes you alive, or not pain by itself but seeing the pain coming and taking it anyway. It was even better the second time. I knew how bad I was going to be hurting afterward, and I knew I was going to be on crutches for a while, and they knew I knew, those sadistic fag bastards, but I came back for more anyway. You can face anything when you don't know what's coming, or rather when you don't realize what it's going to be like. I thought it would be like hazing in high school, when you moved up from junior varsity to varsity on the football or wrestling team. But this was a lot worse. They put me on crutches with a busted ankle, but I took it and came back for more. So I knew I earned their respect. I don't care if you don't respect me—a man's respect

is all that counts in the Corps. [...]

This time I knew what was coming and I asked for it like a man and went them one better. Like when they finally broke my big toe. You may think because my toes are kind of long they'd break easy. But even though my three smaller toes broke easy, my second toe and big toe were hard work for them.

I've broken toes a couple of times, so I knew what to expect, sort of. It's not the same when you know it's coming, though; it makes it like slow motion, and the pain just gets sharper and sharper and you can't take your eyes off your foot when they're pushing that toe up and backward and it's so unnatural looking that you just know it's going to snap and it does.

Anyway, when they came to my second toe, it was that Napoleon guy doing me then. He shoved it up and back like the others, and since it's my longest toe it looks real breakable, but it didn't break. He kept pushing and twisting, and he had to really put his weight behind it, and even though he's kind of a fat guy, it still wasn't enough. So he took a C-clamp and bent my toe down under my foot and squeezed my toe in the clamp and started to tighten it down real slow. I could feel the joints start to give way, and then for some reason he decided just to leave the clamp on my second toe and go on to my big toe. He got this spring-loaded deal and attached it to my big toe at right angles, and first he just left it there and it was fierce, the spring, I mean. It hurt like fuck just hanging there while he went back to my second toe and tightened that C-clamp some more.

I was sure my toe was about to break then, the pain was outrageous, and it kind of traveled up and down my leg when he jiggled the clamp a little; he was trying

to get me to break down and give without having to break my toe, I guess. There were tears in my eyes from the pain, I don't mind telling you, because I know you broods all like a man that cries. But I didn't make a sound even though I just about ground my teeth away to keep from screaming. I really wanted a bullet to bite.

Napoleon went back to my big toe then, and without any buildup or warning pulled it hard sideways so that it was at a right angle to my second toe, and then he gave it a twist, with that spring loader for a handle, and I felt my big toe pop out of joint. I swear I could hear the ligaments tear, but I still managed not to even whimper. Instead, I spat on the floor and started baiting Napoleon for not being able to break my toes.

"Break the suckers, man, I'm asking you to," I said. "I can take the pain. Go ahead, make me happy. Those toes are fucked anyway, you just dislocated my big toe, and I think you tore a bunch of ligaments in my second toe, and the rest of my toes are already busted. I ain't going to be able to walk on these feet after what you done to them. I may as well go back to the barracks with all my toes broke so that I can get some sick leave. Break my toes, asshole, break my damn toes. Go ahead, do it. Not man enough to do it? Faggot too weak to break my bones? Go on, snap my toe bones, man, let me hear them crack. Do it. I dare you. Do it. Break my bones; put me on crutches. I want it. I want the fucking pain, man. Go on, man, give me some *real pain*, wipe me out, see if you can make me scream!"

He didn't say anything, just went back to my second toe. But he didn't turn the screw to break it. Instead he grabbed the C-clamp as if it were a door handle and rotated it hard, and there was this sick

crunching sound, and then it was as if my toe was getting screwed off and this tidal wave of pain surged through my foot and up my leg and I was shaking it hurt so bad, but I ground my teeth together and nearly dislocated my own jaw. But I didn't scream, at least not out loud, just sort of inside my mouth. Napoleon was still holding my foot in his hand, and I opened my eyes, which I had shut to fight the pain, and I could see from the look on his face he was getting turned on watching me bucking and writhing from the pain and all my sexy muscles and my tattooed pecs flexing and shit from the pain. I bet I was real hot to look at, just like I am now on these crutches. That's when I knew I won, because he was weak enough to show he was getting off on looking at my buffed marine body and not man enough to hide that he's nothing but a faggot.

Just when the waves of pain coming from my second toe finally started to let up a bit, Napoleon yanked the clamp off. Talk about pain! I nearly pulled my shoulders out of their sockets then, trying to fight back the agony. You can still see the rope burns across my chest and abs, where I lifted my whole body off the bench. He grabbed the vise on my big toe and bent it viciously inward and down, and I could feel the dislocated bones rubbing together, and then he pushed my big toe up and back and held it there just at the breaking point.

Then he grinned. I couldn't stand the sight of that fucking homo grinning at me thinking he won when anybody who looked at him could see he was a sadistic fairy pervert not fit to touch a real man's big toe, much less any other part of me. Made me sick. So I threw up in his face.

When I did that he twisted my big toe and broke

it right then and there. It cracked, loud, and even a guy as tough as me couldn't help myself because the pain was unreal. I bellowed and swore and spat at him again just so he wouldn't think my screams were weakness, because marines eat pain!

Affidavit 2

[This affidavit was given freely by an acquaintance of one of the club members, who had attempted to recruit him. The informant spoke freely once he was approached; repeated assurances were given that he would not be subject to any disciplinary action since he had in fact declined the invitation. Apparently he declined because of his buddy's remark that the loser in the contest would be subject to forcible anal penetration by one or both of the civilians involved, a penalty the club member seemed to think wholly warranted (we can only assume that he was not a loser, although he nowhere stated this). He referred to those who suffered this penalty as "proven pussies," or simply as "prover," and our informant has the impression that this phrase is a term widely used by members of The Club. This penalty was unacceptable to our informant, who apparently considered it at least possible that he would be unable to bear the pain described by his buddy. We only paraphrase those descriptions here. The tortures themselves seem to have followed the order prescribed in the Rules cited above. The affidavit in its entirety is available upon request.]

Getting your soles beat hurts like a sumbitch, all right, just like I thought it would from seeing that scene in *Midnight Express*. Your feet are really sensitive, even when you think they're pretty tough like from going barefoot a lot or doing karate or whatever. And then Napoleon and TG make them more sensitive by scrubbing them with a wire brush first,

and then they blow on them to see if they're ready. They don't start the challenge until you cry out from the pain of them just blowing on your foot. That tells you how bad it hurts. But it's sexy pain, the way your soles get all sorta electrified by the brush, almost like how your dick feels when it's first getting hard and the slightest touch just turns you on more. Then they start in with the flogging, and that's like no pain you ever felt, but it's a turn-on kind of pain, warmlike. I could see the other guy's soles after they'd been beating them for a while, and they were bright cherry-red. Then as the pain gets worse you start to get hard, see, and that makes you want them to keep beating your feet even though it hurts so bad you don't think you'll be able to walk after. The pain just keeps building, but your dick is getting stiffer and stiffer all the time, so you don't want it ever to stop. That's when you make mistakes, because they're making you count off each stroke out loud, and if you're late or lose count, you got to start over from "one." And you're getting so turned on by the way the pain just builds and turns into pleasure that you're distracted, like, and forget to count. Then they nail you. [...]

The rubber hose is amazing, although that thin bamboo hurts like hell too, and it makes a weird humming sound in the air where the rubber hose just makes a dull thud. That hose, it's got this double-whammy thing happening. First, there's the pain from the blow itself, real bad pain, sickening pain, and then a few seconds later there's like a pain echo. That hurts even worse, real deep in your foot, like almost as if your bones were exploding from the inside, and that pain goes straight to your

balls, man, and it's literally blinding, just like in cartoons and shit, when the guy gets hit and sees stars. It's like a drug, man, the pain is so intense, but it's like it's connected directly to your cock. No, I didn't think I was into pain either until I tried this—I just did it to see if I could take it. I didn't realize it would be such a turn-on. Shit, it's better than the best fuck you ever had. And you're totally naked, man, so your dick is like waving in the breeze and that gets you even harder, and they can see you're turned on and that gets you harder too. Even my damn nipples were hard! Pain is a real rush when guys like those two know what they're doing. I'm telling you, man, you gotta try it. Trust me, it'll drive you wild. I'm hard just talking about it. Look, you can see my boner through my cammies. It's all I can do to keep from whacking off again right here and now. [...]

The worst pain, or maybe it's not the worst but it's the least expected so it feels worse, happens when they take the clamps off. You think it's going to ease up the pain and let you catch your breath or whatever, but what really happens is the blood comes rushing back into your toe or your ankle or whatever and that sends a whole new kind of pain through you and it's like the way the blood rushes into your prick when you get hard, if it's too much too fast it hurts but feels good at the same time, you know what I mean? Only this is even more intense. [...]

Another amazing thing, they had this big vise that they put on the sides of my instep, and when they started tightening it my foot just kind of folded in on itself lengthwise and it looked like all the bones was about to shatter and it hurt bad. But the

fear, when you know what's coming and you want to stop it but there's nothing you can do but watch your bones give way, that's fear, man, but it's really amazing at the same time. Blew my mind. I couldn't believe my foot wasn't completely fractured, but then they loosened the vise, real slow, and it's like I said before, the pain of the blood rushing back into it was wicked, but the feeling was so sexual it was almost as good as coming. Almost better, because you could do it again right away. They did too. I was sure they'd break my foot this time, but they didn't, or the third time either, which hurt worst of all. When they were doing it to the other guy, because they do the same thing to both of you, he was kind of moaning and gasping and it may have been the pain, which is wicked, but it sounded to me like he was having some wild sex and he was just about two seconds away from shooting the whole time. [...]

Only bones I got broke were my toes, but they broke all those, one by one, slowly. That was a trip, because they made me sound off on each broken toe and then ask for the next one. And if I wasn't respectful enough, they'd twist and wrench the toe they just busted until I nearly passed out. It was like getting a bayonet through each toe, man, it hurt that bad, but it was also like getting my balls licked too. [...]

The sexiest pain occurred when they ripped up my ankle ligaments, I guess because it took a while and the pain kept building and building. The pain was so awesome, I was sweating like a pig the whole time they were twisting my foot, and squealing like one too, or like a girl getting her cherry popped. Which I kind of was, I guess. Anyway,

they took this big vise and attached it just below my ankle bones and then started squeezing that soft tender place right there, like a pressure point, a little bit back toward the Achilles tendon. The pressure from the clamp just grew and grew, and every so often they tightened it down another turn and there was a new wave of pain. It hurt like fuck, but by then I had just sort of given myself up to them, and it was like that terrible pain was a hug, even though it didn't stop hurting. It just kept getting more intense as they kept turning the screw, but each turn felt better, like a hug does when it gets tighter, and by now I was unbelievably turned on, and then they started to use the vise handles like levers, you know, and started to twist and bend my ankle in all kinds of extreme positions. So combined with the pain from the squeezing there was this feeling like my ankle ligaments were slowly stretching and getting ready to tear, and I was so turned on and kind of flying from the pain that it was like I could feel the fibers begin to pull apart and each one gave off a little spark of pain like fireworks, and the pain kept getting worse and making my dick stick up harder than ever and it was fucking dripping all over my abs and I was afraid I would come and ruin everything and then all of a sudden I could feel the ligaments give way and there was this pulling and ripping sensation and my ankle got all loose. It felt so good almost like a cramp letting up and then I felt my foot go out of joint and I could hear my ankle dislocate and I was on the brink and then the guy, it was Napoleon, I think, gave a kind of twist to the handles and my ankle popped back in joint and that's when I came

and at the same moment I could hear the other marine's ankle break, it made a loud crack and he screamed and choked out the words of submission and I looked up overhead where the two phrases are posted in case you forget them and read the one where I begged for more and I knew then that I won so that made me come even more and Jesus, man, I'd never felt so *powerful*.

The other guy? He cried like a baby, man. I don't think it was just the pain of his broken ankle, either. When they untied his arms he grabbed that leg in both hands like he was in total agony, and I bet he was too, but then he took both legs and just lifted them and said in this low, kind of choked voice, "Go ahead, fuck me. Bust my asshole like you busted my ankle. I lost my manhood. I may as well lose my cherry too." And TG and Napoleon just took him, and he kept whimpering and part of it must have been the agony of it, because they were not at all careful about his broken ankle, but also part of it was knowing he was a proven pussy now and not a real man at all. If he were a real man, he'd have taken it. So he just kept going, "Yes, yes," like some damn cheerleader on her first time. When Napoleon was reaming the guy's ass, he reached up and grabbed his broken ankle, which was resting on his shoulder, and it was totally swollen and starting to turn purple, and he squeezed it with one hand and with the other hand he grabbed the guy's all-blown-up, twice-normal-size foot, and Napoleon like crunched up the guy's broken toes, and all the time he was fucking the guy, real rough, and then when he was about to come, he like forced that broken ankle sideways and made the marine come too.

That Napoleon, he's a man. I don't care if he is a fag; anybody who can take a straight marine like that and hurt him and make him beg to be fucked and hurt some more and then make the straight guy come in the bargain, now that's a man.

You gotta try it, buddy. I promise you, the Game will make you a man among men just like Napoleon and TG. What else did we join up for?

Remarks

We should note that both of the affidavits describe the challenge aspects of the Club, while the letter suggests that there are meetings of veterans of the Game (whether of winners only, or losers as well, is not clear) to share their "war stories." Although these bragging sessions may seem inadequate to permit description of this network as a "club," we have evidence indicating that veterans identify themselves to one another when transferred to a new duty station, perhaps employing secret signals or insignia for this purpose, and may occasionally plan "tournaments" or "playoffs" among winners. One NIS investigator heard rumors that a "World Series" was to take place at some future date, in the form of a double-elimination tournament. (See recommendations, below.)

Recommendations

There are those in this office who believe the fact that this group includes nonmilitary personnel and seems to be run by civilians justifies sharing our files with the FBI. The majority in this office opposes going outside DOD on this matter. The risk of leakage to the press and damage to the image of the Corps is considerable. It would provide considerable ammunition to antimilitary members of Congress and radical groups agitating for a so-called "peace dividend." As you know, it is already our policy to keep under wraps the existence on or near Marine

bases of other unpalatable groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan.

A small minority believes that, given recent congressional limitations on our traditional endurance-building exercises, now characterized as "brutal," we should turn a blind eye to these activities, which appear to serve a similar purpose and are to all appearances wholly voluntary and outside the chain of command.

There is something approaching consensus that if a "World Series" is planned we should attempt to infiltrate it, using suitably handsome and well-built volunteers from Naval Intelligence; or if it is not planned, to conduct it ourselves as a means of either destroying the Club or bringing it under some degree of control by the chain of command.

The final decision is of course up to you, Mr. Secretary. My personal view of

[Editors' note: The text breaks off at the bottom of a page here, and it appears that the remainder of the memorandum is irretrievably lost.]