

Cyberjunkies 1.1: Primer

By Sheila York

Chapter 1.2: Golden Lady

I met Brad Yayger on the Thursday before his Easter Sunday epiphany. We both participated in a seniors walk through Golden Gate Park. He spent most of the first half of the walk with a married mother of two who was looking for work in the legal profession. I got the impression that he found her attractive. She is a bit overweight, which seems to be Brad's thing. When we circled up, Brad said he lives in SOMA and does some kind of education work. I imagined him prepping people for the GED exam, but he was working at a much higher level.

I had told the group about how I tutor students in Japanese language, both written and oral. I mentioned my name, Gunila Gold, and my neighborhood to the south of St. Francis Woods. It turned out that Brad has a smattering of Japanese under his belt from a business trip back in the late '80s. He knows how to say, "I am sorry, but my Japanese is terrible. Do you speak English?" He told the story of saying that over the phone in Japanese to cold callers when he worked alone in an office in Chiba Shi [Chiba City].

I got to spend some quality time with Brad on the second half of the walk as we rounded Blue Heron Lake. He was big on the water fowl, pointing out a variety of species. I remember mallards, ring neck ducks, coots and northern shovelers. He pointed to a snapping turtle and told a grim story of how they grab a duck by the leg to drown it before eating. Crocs do the same thing with large game in Africa. It has been said that nature is red in tooth and claw.

When I pointed out that Brad knew the ducks personally by name, he said, "Hey, Tony! Hey, Vito!" It was as if they were characters in "The Sopranos." [There were ducks featured in that series.] I suspect we all thought that was a quick, but cute come-back. We took our time as the rest of the group pressed onward. The following week, I over-estimated our walking time by how long we spent with the water fowl and other wildlife that day. Brad was in no hurry to get past the lake.

He and the walk leader escorted me to the bus stop outside the DeYoung Museum and waited the few minutes before my big gray taxi [a MUNI public transit bus] arrived. I must admit that he charmed me with his encyclopedic knowledge and his past interest in Japanese. It would not be until the following Thursday that he recruited me to work on his Cyberjunkies Project.

He gave me far more credit than I deserve with his "patented Gunila Gold recruitment technique." All I did was ask him to stay with me as I waited outside the science museum for my date. I read through the first chapter of his Cyberjunkies book in his presence, asking him a few questions and complimenting his word choice. I have since learned of his use of this technique in doing "read-ins" for the Project. It has resulted in a fabulous recruitment rate. [But not as fabulous as B.C.I. technology.]

The chapter delighted me. Having him there to answer questions also helped. His name dropping may be intimidating to people without a college education, but he encountered all of the artists long after graduating himself. (I love the way Neex joked about David Mamet being made famous by his mention in "Cyberjunkies 1.0.")

I told Brad he could count on me to assist the clients and staff of his non-profit with their writing, but I dropped out of the Project when I realized that Brad's anti-racist attitude was problematic for me. I accused him of racism when he sang an anti-Klan song on a subsequent walk.

I suspect he would correct me in calling it his organization. Many have contributed a great deal to it. Some more and some less than myself. Brad had suggested that I work with a social media maven. I had no idea what that meant. It is an individual who can represent me on social media. She would learn as much about me as possible in order to respond to queries the way I would. When she was unsure, she would pass the questions on to me for my input. It sounds great, but I'm a bit old fashioned. Brad feared I'd be so stressed that I'd have a nervous breakdown.

He donated the framework to the non-profit. They were able to get a handsome advance on the novel with more to come after publication, and that is just the first of a trilogy. He has shared opening chapters of the Darla Pitt spin-off series. Those books will not belong to the non-profit, but their publication may increase interest in the trilogy. Brad also expects generous donations from philanthropists, but he does not want them to dictate policy.

I was a bit concerned when I got wind of his work with "The Vagina Show," but it promises to be a huge boost to virality. The recordings were made with a high tech voice masking machine employing the latest in microwave brain-computer interface (B.C.I.) technology. All of the participants speak through Brad, so it sounds as if Brad is pretending to be them. It is far more real than people imagine.

Some of the episodes are difficult to listen to, but the transcripts clear things up. They also gloss over the moments of ecstasy, which makes them more PG.