

## 47. THE CODY BRAINERD

Lucky girls like myself needed to follow the action. I ended up in Vegas. I couldn't see myself getting into the sex trade again. But I would make something happen here. There were probably more than enough jobs to go around.

My ID said that I was eighteen. That was good enough for me. This was my town, and I was going to paint it red.

I checked my wallet. I had three hundred dollars to my name. That would probably last me about an hour. I needed a plan, and I needed to make it work.. I was ready for success.

There were loads of students here on there break. So I blended in with the crowd. I didn't want to waste my money. So I needed a plan. A little con action would come in handy.

I was sitting in the lobby of the Hilton. There were a group of girls near me. Sorority sisters on break. And there were all laughing. I pretended that I was one of them. When one of them told a joke, I reacted like all the others. That way I didn't seem as if I was alone.

At that point, I caught the eye of an unsuspecting guy. He saw me among all the other girls. They made him feel intimidated. He was such a nerd. But I made him think that he might have a chance. So he was in heaven.

As he came over to me, the other girls got up to leave. This couldn't have been better. I started to walk their way when he caught up with me.

"Are you afraid that you're going to miss your friends?"

"I think that they're going shopping near the Mirage. I don't even want to bother."

"Are you sure?"

"Are you buying?"

He seemed all flustered.

"I'm Ed."

I had him hooked. For the next couple of days, we were going to be an item. I just had to make sure that he didn't pull any fast moves on me. I'd become an expert at the bait and switch. I needed to seal the deal.

We were up in his room. I was smart to pick some kid who was alone. I didn't want to mess with his roommates.

"Let's go out to dinner," he said.

"I don't have that much money on me. Let me go back to my room."

"My treat."

"I really need to change." I had my back pack with me. I pretended that I had more clothes in the room.

"You look great as you are."

I took the complement in stride.

Here was the clincher. "I've been traveling all day. I really need a shower."

"You can take a shower here."

"Do you have enough towels?"

"I can find one for you."

All that I had to do was allow him to see me half-naked , and he would be mine for the rest of the trip. I peeled off my jeans and my t shirt. Then I slid across the room. Tammy would

have been proud. I closed the door to the bathroom, but left it slightly ajar. Not enough for him to see inside, but enough to pique his imagination.

I never let him kiss me. Now and then I'd give him a hug. But that was all. I did let him hold my hand. I never spent a cent after that.

I needed to keep my wits about me. I didn't intend to steal from my mark. I just wanted him to pay my way. So I made sure that he drank a lot more than me. He was all into impressing me. So he spent a lot of money on dinner. Then he tipped the door guy at some exclusive club so that we could get in. Ed was dressed pretty well. And I had found the best dress in my bag.

I was having a great time. I didn't feel any pressure. He would groove his body next to me. I'd move in close and stare him in the eyes. Then I'd back off. I could feel his heart pumping.

When we got up to the room, I didn't want to give him any ideas.

"I should get back to my girls."

"Are you sure that you can't stay?"

That was my cue. I let him stroke my back. He was totally turned on.

I told him, "I'm sort of dating some guy back home."

"That's cool."

"I can leave if you want."

Even though I claimed that I was taken, he didn't want to give up that easily. A live girl was always better than a fantasy.

That first night, I waited until he passed out. Then I got into the other bed. I needed to keep the game going as long as possible. I could keep teasing him, but that was that.

When we woke up, I took another shower. I was driving him crazy. This time I came out in just a towel.

"Close your eyes."

I had to dig in my bag for another outfit. Maybe he could take me shopping. I didn't want to think that I was being cruel. He loved hanging out with me. He was having a great time. I wanted to believe that it was real. I couldn't. Part of Tammy had rubbed off on me. It wasn't as if I was rolling in dough. And this could last only a few more days.

"There's some kind of Star Trek convention here. Are you into Star Trek?"

He seemed excited. I was up for anything for a laugh.

"Sure!"

He called down to the lobby. They told him that there were a couple of stars from the different versions of the show.

"This is really cool. I got us some tickets."

He had breakfast ordered up to the room.

"Where do you get all this money?"

"My Dad is treating me. He's pretty proud of how I'm doing at UCLA."

"Fantastic. What are you studying?"

"Computer programming. I'm really interested in games. My Dad has some connections in the industry."

"Wow!"

"He's an alum there."

“That’s classy.” I wanted to milk this as long as I could. But I didn’t want to take advantage of things. Ed would hate me if he found out who I really was.

Whenever he asked me about school, I’d change the subject. I thought about telling him that I went to Nebraska University. But I didn’t want to lie.

Ed looked at his watch, “It’s time for the convention. We better get down there.”

I finished my breakfast, and I brushed my teeth.

He held my hand in the elevator. I could feel his excitement building.

“I want to see this.”

In the lobby, they were all talking about government contracts, and some kind of super genius. That only made Ed more in awe.

When we walked up to the auditorium, they were already filing inside. We were luck to find a place to sit.

“I guess we were up in the room too long,” I admitted.

Then I heard the presenter say, “Part motivational speaker, part faith healer, part prophet for the new millennium, Mr. Cody Brainerd

At the exact same moment, we both turned to each other and said, “I think that we’re in the wrong room. But I’d like to hear this.” Then we both smiled.

Cody made a silly joke about being a faith healer, “If all these reports about working miracles were true, then I’d would have already made enough on my biotech patents to retire.”

Everyone laughed politely

From that point on, Cody did what he could to rally the crowd. He was a total go-getter.

“There was a time in my life when I was left for dead. Look at me now. You wouldn’t know it at all. What carried me through that low point was the fact that I had a vision for my life. I concentrated so hard on that vision, that I was able to come out of my coma. It was a miracle!” The one theme that ran through Cody’s address was, “Chart a course for your life!”

“There are some of you at the back of the hall who think, ‘I’ll never amount to much!’ Quit being down on yourself. You have the power! Yes, you do!

Ed was ecstatic, “The man’s fantastic. He did all this work in computers. He has all these government contracts. He’s a super-genius. The most innovative man in the world.”

I couldn’t tell him that I was Cody’s teacher. He probably wouldn’t believe me.

“The man can see through walls. Really. That’s the foundation of his way of thinking. He says that the brain puts the walls up that make it impossible for us truly to be able to learn. The only way that we can take down these walls is with deep insight. And Cody Brainerd teaches us how to acquire deep insight.”

“Telepathy for computer geeks.”

Ed smiled. “I never thought that I’d get a chance to hear him. I was blown away.”

“I was too.”

Cody had been able to boil down our lessons into succinct platitudes. I guessed that there was a marketing solution for every problem in our lives. It took Cody Brainerd to convince me of that once and for all. I was hardly disappointed. The man was walking around. He was full of life. How could I complain?

I wasn’t sure how to start. Lee Tate’s mind control had metastasized into this freak of nature. He really was a superman. But in almost a reverse direction. I could see it. It almost

made no sense trying to explain it to someone else.

“I feel honored that we even made it in there. I mean Star Trek is my dream. But this was like going to heaven.”

What kind of plans did Lee Tate have in mind for his boy wonder? I really had no fear of running into Lee. I hardly looked the same. I was a lot thinner. And I wanted to believe a little taller. I had also cut my hair and dyed it blonde. I might as well have been another person.

“I’m pretty sure that Cody Brainerd is going to get into politics. He had some experience already before the accident. He’s supposed to make a run for the Senate.”

“You’re kidding.”

“I’ve heard a lot of talk.”

The world was becoming an asylum.

Ed wanted to convince me of Cody’s talents: “He was able to analyze electronic circuits using the same principles that he applied to the human memory. Burst of energy that were with electrical fields could be mapped in three-dimension space. Cody then discovered new ways to propagate these bursts of energy.

“Sounds like the Frankenstein monster coming to life.”

“You don’t know the half of it. The man has the most impressive memory. I’ve seen him engaged in these mental challenges, and he always comes out on top. It’s almost like playing ten chess games at once.”

I still felt that I could take him on. I knew what he was all about. And he only knew one facet of my world. I just needed to find an equal playing field..

When we got back to the room that night, I ended crawling into bed with Ed. I still wouldn’t let him kiss me. And I wouldn’t let him touch me in any intimate way. We just snuggled next to each other and fell asleep. It wasn’t as if I had softened in my attitude towards him, I was just closing the deal.

The next morning, Ed wouldn’t stop talking about Cody Brainerd. I had had enough Cody to last a lifetime. I wanted to interrupt him.

“Do you gamble?”

“Not really. Not anymore.”

He had a story to tell. I wanted to find out why he wasn’t enjoying one of the finer appeals of Vegas.

“I came here a couple of years ago. I had just taken this course in probability. I had devised this whole system. I could win at blackjack. I could beat the odds at poker. I could make a killing at the roulette table. I came here with two thousand dollars. The money that I had saved over the summer. And I lost it all. I felt mortified. How had I been so stupid? I felt cheated.

“What happened?” I asked.

“You’ve heard all those stories of people with systems. And some people can win at blackjack. But the dealer has his own system. And unless you’re perfect, there is no way that you’re going to beat him. I wasn’t perfect. I’m just not a pressure type of guy.”

It would be too simple setting up a scheme to take money from Ed. He had just set himself up. And it would be even easier with an accomplice. I just couldn’t do it. If Tammy was around, I might be tempted. But even then, I’d have to beg off.

We caught another session by one of Cody's assistants. They had their method down to a science. It no longer depended on a freak of nature like Cody. There had to be a lot more to Lee's experiments. It was scary.

I was living in the lap of luxury. If he tossed me a few crumbs, I'd take them. I should have been preparing myself for the inevitable. More partying and more drinking had its charm. If Ed was going to keep buying me expensive meals, I was going to keep eating them. I needed to store up for the rough days ahead.

That night he became dead drunk. There was no limit at all. I could only observe. I was surprised that he wasn't running around naked by the end of the night.

I was in a bind. I wanted to keep on Cody's trail. But Ed was in the way. And if I got rid of Ed, I'd be cutting off the gravy train. It wasn't as if Ed and I could settle. So what was I going to do. We had had our whirlwind courtship. Now I was ready for a divorce. I just wanted something to show for it.

I was sitting in the hotel lobby. I had a copy of the room key in my pocket. And my bag was upstairs, Cody's handlers were still in the hotel. I could see them hanging around the lobby. For all the vigor that Cody had shown on stage, I wondered if it was real. Were they just feeding him drugs that would wind him up for his public performances? And when he came down, would he be a basket case?

I hadn't come to Las Vegas on a detective mission. I wanted Cody Brainerd and his crew to remain the farthest thing from my experience as possible. But we were virtually face to face. This was much more intense than my first encounter with Cody after he woke up. For the short while that he was on stage, he appeared much larger than life. I felt that it was impossible to confront the character that he had created for himself. His audience was mesmerized. These were high-tech wizards. People like Ed. I simply had to observe Ed's enthusiasm to understand the phenomenon. It was one thing to become enamored with the actors from a television show. *Star Trek* had created that kind of devotion. But it was all fake. Cody's persona existed somewhere between the fictional marvel of television and the muscular reality of American politics. He may not have understood the idolatry that he had engendered, but Lee Tate did. The mad doctor felt that he was closer than ever to his ultimate desire.

It was one thing for tech nuts like Ed to get turned on by this guy. But his message was starting to resonate with the population at large. I was surprised that I had completely missed what was happening. I guess this wasn't the kind of thing that played too well in the massage parlors.

What could I really do to change things? I couldn't very well pull a pin from my bag and pop the giant balloon. I could sense that the organization was starting to reach out throughout the country. Cody's business ventures facilitated his marketing strategy. He was now selling himself. And he had a tons of backers. These were people who were willing to throw their own money behind the man. It was their investment for the future.

It was still early in the day. Ed was a lot more wasted from last night than I was. So he was still sleeping it off. I needed to use my time alone to resolve once and for all what I wanted to happen between us. He was a sweet kid but hardly my type. I wasn't desperate to have a traveling companion. And he viewed Cody's celebrity in such a different way than I did. Donna had been much more receptive to new ideas, and she had freaked out when I explained what was

going on. Ed was more clearly on the fast track than she was. There was none of Donna's interest in sociology. There was nothing very critical in his nature. I had picked him out because he seemed like the perfect mark for a confidence game. And Cody was the ultimate con artist.

It did feel good to have someone to hang out with. He looked up to me in a strange way. Here I was believing my own game. For all the time that I had spent protecting myself, I was willing to give it up just to have someone believe me. But I knew that I was going to get burned again.

I could try to sneak upstairs and get my backpack. But what good would that do? I still didn't know what I was going to do next. Ed had one more night in town. I probably should use it to advance my cause.

Cody's people were up to something. I saw them circle the lobby together. Then they all hopped into a limo.

For all that I knew about Cody, it was all part of my past. Now his entourage was massive. It was going to be hard to get to see him. And I had really no reason to want to be that close to him. I just wanted to make sense of his movement. I needed to figure out if I could do something to stop him. How could I go against innovation? Cody's pep talk was all mumbo jumbo. And his presentation was smoke and mirrors. But the man had distinguished himself with his technological discoveries. Even if he was making use of the work of others, it was significant enough to create a band of committed followers. It would be difficult to argue against the science.

Cody had made sure that all his work advanced a very rigid social agenda. He did nothing to threaten the collective psyche with regards to our spiritual beliefs. This marriage of science and superstition was masterful. Technology allowed him to mount his sound and light show. They gave his audience the tangible rewards to sustain their belief. These were the loaves and fishes multiplying before their very eyes. At the same time, he spoke like a preacher. He pushed traditional values. He emphasized moral authority. And he offered religious enlightenment.

Other weaker guiding lights had failed to illuminate a path to salvation. They stumbled on the presentation of their own vision. Cody had attained an eloquence that was unequaled. How had he powered up his delivery so that he could call on his treasure trove of knowledge? It was similar to Ed's explanation of trying to beat the house at gambling. This was more complicated than just being able to know which cards were going to be played next. The player needed to respond in record time. He was going against dealers who did this for a living. It was second nature to them. You couldn't acquire that skill over night no matter how informed you were. Evidently, Lee had learned a method to make those synapses fire all at once. I continued to suspect drugs. I suppose that I couldn't take the credit for the monster that Lee had created. And I had no idea on how to pull the plug.

It was getting closer to the time when Ed was going to wake up. I had almost missed my opportunity to sneak away. Could I buy some more time by working with him one more day? My routine was becoming a real bore. But I couldn't just tap my trust fund. I had to use my wiles to take me to the next level. I just felt that Ed had outlived his usefulness. He had hooked me up with the Cody express. But he didn't know how the engines worked.

I could play a waiting game. We could get some breakfast. Ed might accidentally blurt

out the solution to the problem. Here I was in Vegas with a wiz who had no idea how to trick the house. And I wanted to share all my secrets with him.

“You’re up?”

“The room was feeling a little claustrophobic.”

“I think that I’ve got the worst hangover. Do you know any remedies?”

“I hear that tomato juice and fish oil is great.”

“Sounds nasty.”

If I didn’t have enough problems, I was going to have to nurse a sick puppy as well.

“Whatever you do, don’t start drinking in the morning. That will only make you really sick.”

“Isn’t there any vodka in the room?”

He wasn’t ready to follow my advice. I should have reacted a lot quicker. I wasn’t taking a liking to him. I just felt extra-burdened by what was occurring.

“Chloe, do you really like me.”

“You’re a great guy!”

“But you just seem so distant.”

“I’ve got a lot to think about.”

“Like your friends. Where did they go anyway?”

“I got a text yesterday evening. They went back home this morning. I thought that I’d hang out here a little longer. So I changed my flight. You don’t remember me telling you that last night.”

Even if I had have said something, he would have forgot it in the craziness. He really did keep the drinks coming all night long.

I needed to figure out my end game. Ed was going to start expecting a little more affection. And I had none to give. It was one thing to give him a fan dance. But he was up for the real thing. Especially in Vegas when fun seemed so close at hand, Ed wanted some physical satisfaction. He came here with loads of money. He didn’t want to leave without getting his bell rung.

Despite my best efforts, he had fallen for me hard. I was the cyber-angel on the far side of his tech world. He wanted all the circuits to go off at once! He didn’t see this as a Vegas fling. He wanted to take me back to LA to meet his folks. If only they knew!

He was in the shower for a long time. It was a great opportunity to jet on out of there. But I loved soaking up the luxury of a nice room. I was meant for the finer things in life. Once Ed left, I would be back where I started. Worse, I would now be encumbered by my vision of Cody.

I needed to pull back. Cody was no longer my responsibility. Why should I worry if other fools were going to get taken in by him? If it wasn’t Cody, it would be someone else. But Cody was doing it much better than anyone else. He didn’t sound like a buffoon. He had the crowd eating out of his hand. And this was just the beginning.

I thought about my eventual showdown with Cody. What was I going to do? It wasn’t as if I could embarrass him into giving up his ambitions. I knew what he was really about. But he had still been able to accomplish great feats. I couldn’t take that away from him. But he wasn’t a real human being. He was acting like a robot. What could it possibly mean for him to hear that

from me? It wasn't as if I was going to blow his circuits. And did the public at large care what were his origins. They believed that his recovery from a coma was a true miracle. And he had fought back to regain his personal dignity. He was a admirable role model.

I was hardly the perfect opponent for him. Barely old enough to vote, I was still a baby. I had dropped out of high school. I had worked in a massage parlor. I had been involved in a host of confidence schemes. Was the world so completely out of touch, that the only people who could denounce the phonies were certifiably insane?

I had hard facts to back up my case. But I needed more. I needed to track down his whole organization. I needed to figure out how Lee Tate was still able to manipulate him. And I needed some way to get others not to accept this crap.

Cody offered comfort to the hopeless. He was better than a lottery ticket. He promised winners every day.

"Chart a course for you life!"

"Really, Cody. I've got my sharpie and my giant sketch pad ready. What do I do next?"

In my mind, I saw my time line going around in a circle.

"You have to break the cycle!"

All that I needed to do was to remove the Cody from the equation. But everyone was becoming Cody. He lived inside their brains. They were all becoming one.

I was heading back into science fiction territory. Maybe, I could use Ed's expertise.

All through brunch, he was dragging himself around. It was starting to seem like the perfect time to jettison him. I had miscalculated again.

"Are you going to be like this all day?" I just sounded bitchy to him.

"I was really fucked up last night. I wouldn't blame you if you hated me."

I was starting to feel like a married couple. Oh no, another nightmare. Was this how it got started? We were muddling through together. Instead of being angry with him, I was starting to identify with him. Ed had none of the appeal of Donna, but he seemed to be getting a lot closer to me. I was worse than desperate.

"Ed, do you have any ideas."

"I think that Cody has already left town. There's some more Star Trek stuff."

"I saw his team in the lobby. He's still around. Maybe they're meeting with the mayor or the governor."

"I wouldn't joke about things like that."

"I'm not."

Cody had created a serious buzz by being a tonic salesman. But he had a long way to go before he could recruit serious political types to the cause. He still seemed too much like a con artist. He'd have to energize his followers before he could move to the next level. So there was still time left. But this would be a lot more difficult than David's battle with Goliath. I was up against a thousand Goliath's. And I only had the strength of little me.

Ed was babbling on about something.

"I don't think that I can do Star Trek today. Cody really overwhelmed me. Perhaps, we could go to the top of the Stratosphere."

"That would be fun. But I think the heights would make me sick. Maybe some less lofty aspirations."



“I hear it’s kind of fun at Circus Circus.”

“I need to take it easy for a little while. After that I’ll have a plan.”

The honeymoon was coming to a quick end. I really needed to get a hold of that divorce lawyer.

“So we’re not going to party out of bounds tonight.”

“I’ve done enough drinking for the rest of my life.”

I had one of Tammy’s comebacks ready for him. I really had changed places with her. I just hoped that wouldn’t give Ed the feeling of superiority. After all, I still hadn’t been forthcoming. All that drinking, and he hadn’t even gotten a peck on the cheek.

“You do like me, Chloe, don’t you? I don’t seem different.”

He was starting to doubt himself. I didn’t want to have to mother him. I wanted to change the subject. I just felt that we were at a crossroads.

“We’re having fun. Don’t rock the boat.”

“It’s just that I thought that we had something.”

“We do. I just don’t like to rush things.”

He was putting on the sad puppy face. He needed some cheering up. I had really painted myself in a corner. I should have jumped ship when I had the chance.

“Do you want to help me trail some of Cody’s people?”

“I thought that you said that they left the hotel.”

“We could wait around the lobby. Cody might come down.”

“It’s pretty late. I bet that he’s already left town.”

This hardly seemed like the ideal vacation for him. But I let him hold my hand. He needed to snap out of his funk.

“Did you really think that you were going to fall in love in Vegas?”

“I don’t know what I felt. This just isn’t what I had planned.”

“So you’re disappointed?”

“Not at all. I had the chance to see Cody Brainerd. I’ve been inspired.”

“That’s a plus.”

“Yes, it is. And I also met you.”

He was getting sentimental. This was the moment when I was supposed to kiss him. Only I wasn’t the sorority girl from Nebraska. And this wasn’t a romantic comedy.”

“Ed, I’m not the girl that you think that I am.” That was a real understatement.

“Do you eat babies? What could be wrong with you?”

“Life isn’t always what you see before your eyes. You’ve got to know that.”

“I’m a programmer. That’s lesson number one.”

Always the geek.

“Another time, another place, and we could make this work. It’s just that now things are out of hand.”

I was pretending to myself that I was engaged in this battle to the death with Cody Brainerd. But he had no idea who I was. Ed was being nice to me. It wasn’t any more complex than that. I just didn’t see him as part of my grand mission. He could never get on board. So I was tossing him away while I still had the chance.

“I don’t want to lose you.”

I felt as if I was in the middle of a break up. I had never really loved anyone. And Ed was some guy who I wanted to take to the cleaners. He hadn't gotten to me. I wasn't crying real tears. I wanted to do more. I couldn't.

Ed wasn't the dramatic type. He could have taken all this to heart. We both sat there and stared at the crowd.

"I think that it's happy hour."

He looked at his watch. "I am happy that it's happy hour."

This was happening faster than I knew. Before I could catch my breath, I'd be upstairs naked in his bed. This was not going to happen. I wasn't saving myself. I had been through the worse shit on the street. But I wasn't going to feed this kid's dreams. I was not going to sleep with him. There was no heart of gold here. I wasn't going to show him any charity. This was all about having some good clean fun.

When I woke up the next morning in Ed's bed, I had did a double take. I was still wearing my panties and bra. I felt terrible, but I had nothing to feel bad about. It had just been one crazy night.

Ed was up before me. He was getting ready to leave. He had his plane to catch.

"Take your time. They're sending some breakfast up her."

"I don't know if I could eat."

I needed to force myself. This was free food, and I wasn't sure when I'd have a chance like this again. I wasn't made to keep playing this kind of game. Once Ed left, I'd have to put away my con artistry for a while. I had bigger fish to fry.

"Good luck with the search for Cody!"

"I thought that you were the one who wanted to meet him."

"I still do. Someday, I will. I just have to get back home. I want you to come visit."

"I promise."

He look quite distinguished when he was all dressed up. I wished that I was the girl who could board the plane with him hand in hand.

Before he caught his cab, I gave him a big hug.

"I'll miss you," I told him.

"I'll miss you too."

Then I gave him a kiss on the cheek. He waved back at me as he got in his cab.

"Don't forget to keep in touch."

I wasn't sure if he heard me.

I had my backpack with me. I went back to the lobby to get my bearings. We had already checked out, but I still had the room key with me. It wasn't much good, but I'd keep it as a souvenir.

I waited a couple of hours in there. I didn't seen any of Cody's people. This was getting out of hand. I knew the truth. And now it meant something. I didn't know what to do. I didn't have much money left. I had no idea how I could get anything done,

It was so strange. Ed must have spend thousands of dollars. He talked about losing his summer savings. But he splurged this time. If only I could have managed to have gotten a little bit out of him. I had a few opportunities. I saw his wallet there with money inside. He was so blitzed that he wouldn't have known what I had taken. He was long gone.

I had been fortunate with Ed. This was Vegas. The house detectives were used to people working the lobby. I had already made my play in this hotel. I didn't want anything attracting attention to myself.

I had no idea where I was going to be tomorrow. Maybe I'd work another hotel. Or I could get a job here. Or I could just hit the road. I needed to solve the Cody Brainerd mystery.

I did notice some chips from the night before. Ed hadn't wanted to gamble. But he had fronted me some money. My winnings were pretty meager. But it was something. I looked at a clock. Happy hour!

It was the middle of the day. I was sitting in a bar that was completely cut off from the world. I was bathed in rose-colored light. It might as well have been midnight. I was drowning my sorrows in a Cosmopolitan. No one was going to wake me up from my dream. Vegas had been good to me.

I could sit here forever. There was no Lee Tate to threaten. No Bill and June to harass me. I had made a small place in my heart for Ed Diamond. But he had gone the way of all the other characters. I had had the time of my life in Vegas. Happy hour!