

Chapter Twenty-seven

Sunday is church day for many people. Even Richard Johnson was attending church with the Saxton's. Not to convert Christians to Muslim or to be converted; he was there to go fishing afterwards with the priest; Fr. Jude, a Nigerian on loan from Africa. Lilly attended church about once a month but this Sunday she and Mary were going shopping for clothes for her trip back east. Lilly kept insisting that her guide outfit would be effective to testify in. Yet, Mary insisted that she had new clothes for the two extra days Senator Byron Shepard's office had set up for her to sightsee.

Kevin had been to church three or four times since Grandpa Trask died. This Sunday he was in the best church that there is—the great outdoors. The private and sacred land that Bull Elk was showing Kevin was hallowed ground. Two miles before the trailhead there was a gate across the red cinder road. This heavy six-inch pipe took both of Bull and Kevin strength to swing open. Bull immediately started to point out the infestation of white fir that had taken over the native trees. This was a forest where Douglas fir from the north merged with Ponderosa Pines growing from the south. There were some old growth Cedar trees concealed in the cool damp shadow of Mt. Jefferson. Some of those trees were over ten feet in diameter and older than the United States.

About one mile past the gate a green damp moss covered the road, Officer Bull stopped and then shut off the patrol car and said, "We'll walk from here."

When Kevin opened the door he heard the sound of a rushing river down in the canyon on his side of the patrol car. The forest was so thick with ferns, moss, and underbrush that he could not see the river below. "So this must be the Slot Canyon that you have been telling me about?" Kevin asked as Bull Elk came around the car.

"It is, and you don't want to go too far into the woods here. The canyon wall is over sixty feet high in places where the canyon narrows to less than ten feet."

"That must be an incredible hike down in there." Kevin said.

"No living man has ever been through Minne-Wakan slot canyon. Milk Creek cut this out of the earth millions of years ago. In some places the walls are so close that the tips of an eagle's wing can touch both sides when it soars to look over the spirits below."

"What does Minne-Wakan mean?" Kevin asked.

"It means Holy Water," Bull replied. "Some tribe members will tell you Minne-Wakan means whiskey. My father was an alcoholic so I prefer the meaning Holy Water."

"I get it." Kevin replied.

“So this is why you want to stop the white fir? To save these old trees.” Kevin asked.

“If we can stop the infestation here we will learn more how to manage our forest. We have not been able to burn out the weak trees and underbrush for over thirty years. If a burn got out of control and burned off of the Rez, it would be the Red Man’s fault.”

“I get it Bull.” Kevin said as he looked up the overgrown road. “After working with the Saxton’s, I see how some environmental dimwits and the politicians have screwed up forest management.”

“It’s Sunday, enough talk about politics. Let’s hike up to the Mt Jefferson trail head.” Bull opened up the trunk and got out a walking stick. About one mile up the steep incline the trees got shorter, the green vegetation nonexistent and the timberline was straight ahead.

Kevin could tell that Bull was struggling with every step. “Is that the climbers sign-in up ahead?” Kevin pointed at a cedar box no bigger than a doghouse.

“Yeah, there is a climbing register book inside. You just sign-in with the date and time; your name and the permit number.” Bull reached into his shirt pocket that his badge was pinned to and pulled out a climbing permit. “This permit is good for a year.”

“Thanks, I have a girlfriend that wants to start climbing with me. But this mountain would be way too difficult for her.” Kevin took the permit and put it in his pocket.

“Lilly climbed Mt. Jefferson several times with Billy.” Bull paused made a fist over his heart and then moved his clenched fist in the direction of the summit. He opened his clenched fist when his arm got fully extended—it was an action to send love to Billy’s spirit.

Kevin did not say a word. Lilly was not the climbing person he was thinking about—it was Tina.

It took almost forty minutes to make it back to the patrol car. Bull was lightheaded and braced himself on the hood. “Could you get me an orange juice from the small cooler on the back seat?”

Kevin grabbed the small white cooler that had the red first aid medical cross on the lid; DIABETIC was stenciled on the front. Kevin pulled one of the small orange juice bottles out and handed it to Bull. “Here you go!

Bull drank the entire eight ounce bottle. Color immediately came back to his pale face. “I need to sit down for a moment for the sugar to work its way through my blood.” Kevin helped him back to the passenger seat of the patrol car.

Kevin was now the one turning pale, from fear, not hypoglycemia. “Are you going to be okay?”

“Yeah... I should be.” Bull replied and then asked, “Could you get me a bag of those sugar cookies out of the medical cooler? Can you drive us back to the gate?” The narrow overgrown road was too narrow to find a place to turn around. Kevin backed the patrol car all the way back to the yellow gate.

Bull’s sugar level had stabilized but he was still too weak to help move the big yellow pipe back across the road; he stood to the side.

Kevin squatted under the six-inch cross piece and used his shoulder to lift and move the gate back into place; he noticed claw marks or something in the yellow paint. “What are these?” Kevin pointed at all the scratches and rubbing.

Bull looked and then ran his hand over the dark markings; he cupped his hand over his nose and smelled. “That is testosterone. A Buck or Bull Elk probably used the gate to shed his antlers.”

“What?” Kevin asked then rubbed at what looked to be brown crayon marking on the yellow painted pipe. Kevin mimicked Bull and sniffed at the scent. “That stinks!”

“Smells more like deer rubbing,” Bull replied. “You do know that Elk and Deer shed their antlers every year?”

Kevin lowered his hands from his face and replied. “No, I didn’t know that?”

“Do you know what a shed hunter is?” Bull asked

“No.” Kevin replied.

Bull smiled and then started looking down at the soft dirt. “Look here.” Bull pointed at some deer tracks. Those are Deer hoof prints; if you followed them you might find half-a-shed.”

“Half a shed?” Kevin was completely lost.

“Often the Bull or Buck will shed one side of their rack and then they go into frenzy and try to rub or knock off the other side.” When you’re hunting shed’s you look for big limbs, rock outcroppings or even this gate where they’ll knock off the other half.”

“Wow, I learned a lot this past week. First about nubbing and now about rubbing...”

Bull laughed. “It’s called shedding.”

They spent the next hour slowly meandering around on forest roads looking for a helicopter landing zone. Biddle Pass was a small clearing on top of a bluff where two forest roads tee-boned each other. One road headed due east toward Warm Springs and Hwy 26. The other red cinder road headed due south toward a small town of summer cabins called Camp Sherman. At Camp Sherman the road turned to pavement; eight miles south on the Metolius River River Road you could play a round of golf at the world famous Black Butte Ranch.

Bull was done with hiking for the day when he stopped the patrol car in the middle of

the clearing. “This would be a good place to drop and load logs.”

“Is it okay if I look around?” Kevin asked with his hand already on the door handle.

“Go right ahead,” Bull replied. “I should rub down my sore diabetic feet and make sure that I didn’t get a blister.

Kevin did not reply; he’d already showed his ignorance about shedding, rubbing and nubbing. He knew very little about diabetics and the problem that they have with poor circulation and nerve feeling in their lower extremities. However, Kevin did know about helicopters, aircraft and trailers, the clearing would be a good place to drop logs. Both roads were wide enough for dual axle, dual wheeled log trucks and trailers.

There were seven or eight tall dead snags. They would need to be cut down, to make it safe for a helicopter to refuel. Biddle Pass Bluff had a three hundred and sixty degree view and looked to be an ideal landing and drop zone. To the northwest, Mt. Jefferson displayed all its glory and sent out a challenge. “I’ll be back to conquer you.” Kevin spoke, all alone in the clearing and then he raised his fist to the snow-capped mountain.

Bull did not hear the shout-out challenge; but a loud squawk was. The loud squawk rang out again from one of the old snags. Kevin turned, the sun blasted into his eyes; he squinted and it took awhile. Finally, he saw the Bald Eagle perched on the broken top of an ancient Sequoia tree. *Another sign*, Kevin thought. Now, the long horn blast from the patrol car horn penetrated the air.

Kevin sprinted to the Tee where the two roads met and turned east. About fifty more yards of jogging around a bend and the patrol car was in sight. Officer Bull was standing leaning against the door and waved; Kevin slowed to a brisk walk.

“I thought you might have got lost,” Bull said as Kevin approached the patrol car.

“No I was looking at an Eagle... Back up there in an old Sequoia. It flew off when you honked the horn,” Kevin replied in between breaths.

“Yeah, we’ll not want to take down any Redwoods. Plus the Great Spirit Bird needs a high perch,” Bull replied and then went on, “FYI Kevin, they call those giant evergreen trees, Redwoods in Oregon. California takes claim to the name Sequoia.”

“I didn’t know that,” Kevin replied, and then he went on. “FYI Bull, did you know that some Bald Eagles will fly to the top of a mountain and pluck out all its feathers and re-grow its beak and talons so to renew its life again.” Kevin stated the information boldly.

“What...” Bull exclaimed and then laughed. “You believed that myth about how the Bald Eagle grows new talons and plucks out his own feathers.”

“Yeah,” I watched a Powerpoint in one of my humanities college classes.”

“Well, you better go back and do some research. That story is white-man folklore. More crap colleges are pumping into the empty gray matter of young adults,” Bull quipped in a disgusted tone

Kevin sat quiet, somewhat embarrassed and disgraced. All last week he made stupid statements about the Spotted Owl and all the logging misinformation he had been indoctrinated to; now to find out the rebirth of a Bald Eagle was false.

Bull mediated during the long silence, then finally said, “Kevin let me ask; did any of your college professors ever give a class on all the folklore or parables in the Bible?”

“Yes one did in a theology and world religions course that I took.” Kevin answered with not much confidence in his reply

“Did they ever do a Powerpoint on the Gospels written by four different men many years after the crucifixion? Did they show you how impossible it would be for these four men to keep their stories straight after all those years—if it were not fact?”

Kevin thought long and hard; he was tired of being so naïve. “Bull, I don’t exactly know what you mean? My degree is in humanities, I learned to respect all the different religions and cultures in the world. But now you’re making me think that maybe I was misinformed on some subjects.”

“Maybe Kevin,” Bull replied and then looked over at a stand of the young Redwoods. “It is better to learn from the tree of life than from the tree of knowledge,” Bull professed somewhat to himself.

Kevin listened and thought about Bull’s words. This time Kevin chose his words carefully. “That’s an interesting quote; is it a Native American belief?”

Bull held back a laugh and with a straight face said, “No, it’s from Augustine of Hippo teachings.”

There was another long uncomfortable silence. *Augustine of Hippo. I think we studied about him in Western Philosophy. That class was during the playoffs. I missed a lot of that course, but we did win the NCAA title that year...*

In the distance, a loud squawk filtered out from the forest. Bull opened the door and got in the patrol car. Kevin followed Bull’s action; when he sat down in the passenger seat, he smelled the peyote balm and noticed that Bull Elk was now wearing moccasins. On the drive home, it rather felt like Sunday school many years ago, when Grandpa Trask would quiz Kevin on what he had learned.

Monday morning felt like a different school and Kevin was in Log Truck driving class 101. The teacher was Ms. Lilly Saxton; part time Tomboy and now logging spokesperson for Oregon. Inside the loud diesel, smelling cab Kevin gave up on yelling about his Sunday outing with Bull Elk. Lilly yelled at Kevin when to downshift, and taught him when to use the exhaust brake verses the Jake brake. Kevin caught on running the self-loader fairly quick. It had the same hydraulic control levers as the

movable crane at Trask Inc. Moving twenty-foot pieces of steel from the yard to inside the trailer plant was like moving the twenty-foot logs. Both were equally dangerous—drop a load incorrectly and someone could be crushed to death.

Kevin loaded two medium sized loads and got them hauled to the mill with Lilly yelling instruction to and from the mill from the jump seat. During lunch, Mary picked up Lilly and they took off for the Portland International Airport. Richard Johnson was training two minority work crew labors how to nub and buck trees. The Mt Hood corridor-clearing contract was ahead of schedule and Kevin completed two solo trips to the mill before quitting time Monday.

The redeye into Ronald Reagan International landed at 8:52am Tuesday morning. Mary's stewardess years of experience had Lilly on a shuttle and walking around the National Mall before noon. The first thing Lilly did was to put both hands on the white and gray marble block at the base of the Washington Monument. Over her right shoulder was the reflecting pond with the Lincoln Monument in the background. Over her right shoulder was the US Capitol with old glory flying in the fall air. At her back was the White House. There was just too much to see in two days. Lilly pulled out the marked up map from her backpack and headed for the Smithsonian museums. The jet lag combined with eight full hours of sightseeing finally took its toll. Lilly made a call home from her hotel room; her second call to the car phone voice mail; she was too tired to leave a message.

A congressional aide knocked on Lilly's hotel door early Wednesday morning and they walked the four blocks over to the Hart Senate office building. Lilly was thankful that she decided to give her fifteen minute presentation in her kaki guide shorts and fishing vest. The procedural process was exact and to the minute. All speakers had ten minutes to present their side and then there was a five minute question and answer period. Two environmental lawyers spoke first and both were all for the protection of the Spotted Owl. A longhaired college professor in Birkenstocks with a flip chart and some handouts testified that clear-cutting the forest was causing global warming. Then Willamette Logging Industries presented their side and had charts that showed how many jobs would be lost in the Pacific Northwest by permanently keeping the forest closed. The fact that Willamette Industries was already looking to move out of Oregon went to deaf ears. Trees and birds were a higher priority than family livelihood...

Lilly was up next! It was intimidating be called up to the large black table with one lone microphone in the center. The senators were elevated on a semicircle platform that had a three-foot high ornate wall made from solid wood in front of them. They each had their own microphone, their own gold embossed nameplates and a crystal pitcher of filtered ice water. Behind each senator were the beaming aide's; willing to do most anything, if it meant someday, that they might earn a front row seat.

Lilly approached the black table and reached into the front pocket of her Khaki shorts for her scribed testimony. The lined notebook papers were not there! She

unbuttoned the buttons on her rear flap pockets and felt for the folded pieces of three holed notebook paper. She started checking all the different sized pockets on her fishing vest. Lilly's long legs started to shake—she was feeling faint.

“Ms. Lilly Saxton, why don't you just tell us a little about yourself? Just speak your mind; like the night you did at my fundraiser.” Senator Byron Sherpard leaned forward and spoke into his microphone. “Remember, when you said that I didn't know bullshit about the forest.”

The reporters, photographers and other speakers behind Lilly laughed; some even cheered. The congressmen up front each perched in their high backed, throne looking chairs, just sat there, stone faced. A few smiles momentary flashed from the working staff behind the semicircle of élite lawmakers.

Lilly turned and smiled at the supporters behind her; she turned back and ad-libbed, “Okay, I'm a fishing guide in Oregon. I take my clients out on the Sandy, Clackamas, Zigzag, Deschutes and Metolius rivers to fly fish. I have climbed Mount Hood many times; it is the highest peak in Oregon. I also coordinate a support team for hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail. So, I guess you could call me an environmentalist because the outdoors is how I make a living.”

Lilly stayed on subject and went on to explain how important it was not only to protect the Spotted Owl, but that deer, elk and steelhead needed to be properly managed also. She concluded her dissertation with these words, “I'm also the daughter of a logger that had been out of work for over a year. If the environments and large lumber companies don't work together; twenty years from now we will have more people putting out fires in the forest than managing a renewable natural resource.

During the question and answer period it was obvious that the environmentalist sided congress was not going to give an inch. The lumber lobbyist had already spent millions in court cost; their next move was to up and leave. Some states in the south were welcoming lumber companies after most of their textile and tobacco moved overseas. Lilly got a few notes handed to her from three different political aides. Two congressmen wanted to book her fly-fishing guide service and one senior senator wanted to know if she would like to go out for dinner.

Three hours behind Washington DC time and back on the west coast Condi was about to face off with a bunch of high-ranking officials herself. She had reluctantly agreed to meet at the Aflex insurance main office in downtown Los Angeles. She would be the solo acting Trask Inc. manager and had the authority to sign off on the Schultz claim. A lone microphone was in front of her ready to record her words. Similar to Lilly she always spoke her mind. The same insurance representatives that were at the last meeting were there along with the CEO, CFO, and two senior vice presidents of Aflex insurance. Unlike the last meeting, there was an Aflex attorneys present. There was a *click* and then the corporate lawyer said, “Would you please

state your full legal name for the record.”

Condi leaned forward and spoke into the microphone, “Condoleezza Angelina Johnson.”

“Wow that is a mouthful of a name. I bet you run out of spaces when you fill out forms.” The Aflex CEO said from the opposite side of the table; everyone laughed on his side of the table.

“Condoleezza stands for sweetness. Angelina is after my mother.” Condi replied with a hard stoic glare at the Aflex CEO. “You can call me Condi.”

“Okay Condi, or maybe I’ll just call you Ms. Sweetness,” replied the CEO with a forced smile. This time there was no laughter; everyone could feel the temperature rising. “The reason we asked you to come into our head office today is from what we have learned is that you are the main person at Trask Trailers that keeps the records and files on most insurance claims. Is that correct?”

“Yes, that has been part of my job description for the last six years or so.”

“Well then Condi, is there any place in your job description that states that you are to be looking back at insurance claims that have already been closed?”

“Well sir, I don’t have an answer for that. But, I can tell you that I have been compiling your claims going back at least twenty five years and I found no pattern that Aflex Insurance discriminates against race, religion, or gender.”

“We are proud of our record, here at Aflex!” The CEO interrupted Condi and breathed a sigh of relief. He turned and winked at the other partners.

“Sir, your discrimination record is very clear. Aflex doesn’t care who they screw over!” Condi took a deep breath and then pushed a stapled together spreadsheet to each individual sitting on the other side of the table. “You can see from my statistical analysis that Aflex on an average pays out three times as much in legal fees than they do for claims.”

Now, dead silence settled over the expansive deal making conference room. The paper bomb that Condi had just pushed across the table, puckered assholes and exposed criminal actions. Condi closed her briefcase, stood up tall from the table and the heavy door closed hard when she exited. The arrogant and pompous filled conference room immediately exploded into finger pointing, denials and fear.

Behind those closed door was one of those events that some would call Karma; others would say payback is hell. Finally, an insurance meeting where the affluent and powerful dealmakers would have their feet held to the fire. Four of the six Aflex executives were forced to resign immediately. If Condi’s spreadsheet made it to the press, five years behind bars for corruption would be a light sentence. Highlighted in yellow were two different insurance victims; they lost their insurance claims after years of legal battles—they had both committed suicide.

Worse than a meeting where your feet are held to a fire for corruption, would be a meeting with Mr. Hung Meng for disobedience. Kang Chan was late for the meeting with Hung Meng. Meeting at a Korean restaurant in Chinatown seemed odd; a meeting to make a video late at night seemed even stranger. Kang Chan froze when two men with black cloth bags over their heads came out through the swinging kitchen stainless steel doors. A third man snuck up from behind and put a stun-gun against Kang's neck; he dropped to the floor. A garrote was wrapped around Kang's left wrist and then used to pull him into the kitchen. The red record button on the brand new 8mm video camera was pushed **on**.

Kang was physically strong from all the sports that he played, but the three Saudi Arabian men overpowered him. He kept yanking his hand back and off the two-foot thick kitchen chopping block. They hit him again with eighty thousand volts from the stun gun and he blacked out. The heavy executioner's sword had no curve; it was designed that way, so to make a clean cut. It sounded just like an axe chopping off a tree limb just before the blade was stopped by the maple chopping block. A garrote that is designed to cut off air in a windpipe—now acted like a tourniquet. It did a good job; only a small amount of blood flowed from Kang's wrist onto the wood chopping block.

The fingers on Kang's severed left hand twitched violently. Kang awoke! He screamed and fought so hard they had to jolt him with the stun-gun for the third time. A second garrote was placed around Kang's neck for total submission. It was like controlling a small child; every time Kang gained consciousness, they tightened the Garrote and he would pass out. The gas fired kitchen grill was used to cauterize the wound. The record button on the 8mm camcorder was pushed again; the red record light went off. The short video hopefully would get the message across to Tim. If not, it was worthy of being entered in the Sundance film festival for dark movies.

It was unlike Tina to be any place at eight in the morning. It was payday and she was going to confront Tim about the eight thousand dollars of commissions that he had held back. The glass door to Baylor anti-virus and on-site maintenance office was unlocked. Immediately, Tina noticed a heavy pungent meat smell. Next, she noticed Tim's new 8mm camcorder sitting on the front reception desk on top a blood soaked towel. There was a note! The note read: **Never again use the letters and number Y2K when selling your virus protection service.**

"Tina, this is a first, you're here before me." Tim sarcastically bellowed as the glass swinging door closed behind him.

Tina turned around and then stepped to the side. "Do you know what this is all about?"

Tim walked over next to Tina. No, but why is my brand new 8mm camcorder sitting on a dirty rag."

"I think that is blood on the rag!" Tina replied. "I know what blood on a rag smells

like.”

Tim snatched the recorder from the table and went directly back into the computer lab. Possibly, it was put in plain sight for Tina to find and playback one of his Rally-Girl sex tapes. Worse, would be the tape when he drugged Tina and violated her up at Shasta Lake.

Tina followed Tim into the lab with the piece of paper. “Like, what is this about? Never use Y2K when selling virus protection. Like, I thought you said to scare customers. Like you told me to tell customers that something big is going to happen at the turn of the century!”

Kevin snatched the paper from Tina’s grip and read the warning to himself. “I forgot to tell you. Mr. Hung Meng wants us to stop saying anything about Y2K.”

“Tim, like why didn’t you tell me that?” Tina screamed. “Like, why haven’t you paid me my eight thousand dollar commission check yet?”

“Tina I’m still building the business. It will be another few weeks before I can cut you a check.” Tim lied as he walked over to heavy metal cabinet that he kept his sex tapes, 8mm camcorder and bank deposit bag locked up in. “Tina did you break into this cabinet?”

“No! Like how would I do that?” Tina angrily answered in a distrustful tone. “The front door was unlocked. Like, maybe someone broke in.”

There was the sound of someone opening the glass door and then bouncing off the hallway walls. Kang Chan’s silhouette appeared in the lab doorway. There was bloody gauze wrapped around his wrist. “Mr. Hung Meng wants to make you watch the tape in the camcorder.” Kang Chan staggered back down the short dark hallway and out of the building—the heroin injection was working.

Tim’s hands were shaking as he hooked up the camcorder to one of the computer monitors. Tina quickly sneaked behind Tim’s back and took the bank deposit bag from the metal cabinet; she slipped it between the waistband of her short skirt and bare skin.

Tim hit play and Tina watched from over his shoulder. The tape started and the sound of the snapping stun-gun was the first scene followed by Kang Chan being pulled and pushed into the kitchen by two hooded men. Tim knew all about Kang’s obsession with garrotes and noticed the one around his left wrist was being used to hold Kang’s arm down. There was the snapping of the stun-gun again and the blur from the swinging sword. The thud sound did it for Tina, she looked away and dry heaved.

Tim continued to watch as the camera zoomed in on the severed hand. Someone flipped the hand over on the big thick maple chopping block; it looked like a turtle on it back fighting for life. Tina rushed down the hall the best she could in four-inch high heels, the cash bag slipped from between the skirt and her bare skin; she picked it

up and grabbed her purse.

Tim rewound the tape and watched how the second garrote around Kang's neck was tightened just enough to cause Kang to black out. Maybe, Kang was right about using a garrote over using Rohypnol—maybe it was a better tool to subdue a child with? Nevertheless, an adult would remember what happened. Rohypnol worked on Susan, she only remembered going to Mexico, and she never remembered the abortion.

The reception desk phone rang three times, on the fourth ring Tim went out to the reception desk and picked up the phone. "Did you watch the video?" Mr. Hung Meng asked with a firm demanding tone.

"Yes I did." Tim answered in equally firm voice.

"Are you going to follow my instructions and not mentioned Y2K ever again?"

"Yes sir. I will never mention Y2K again." Tim answered with assurance.

"Good, I will have an assignment for you in the near future. Will you be able to follow my instructions exactly?" Hung Meng asked.

"Yes sir. I always follow directions." Tim lied. The main reason he never made it to the NBA was that he never followed any coaches' directions—ever.

Mr. Hung Meng knew all about Tim Baylor's pride. "I just want you to understand that you have to follow my directions exactly. Can you promise me that you will do that?"

"Yes sir, I can do that." Tim lied again.

"I recruited three knew comrades and on their first assignment they didn't follow my directions. It was Kang Chan's right hand with the scar that they were to cut off."

"The men in the video didn't speak English. It was probably a simple mistake." Tim responded in defense.

"Don't ever try to defend people that don't follow me! You already did not follow my instruction about Y2K. Now I'm going to have to clean up the mess that you made," Hung Men warned.

"I can clean up my own mess!" Tim responded and was just about to slam the phone down when he heard a high-pitched bloodcurdling scream, followed by the *swoosh* of a heavy steel blade passing through air. The thud sound followed by dead silence, put Tim on notice—Mr. Hung Meng was in control.