

Label with Care

by Lola Lariscy

Dan Bruner stood in front of the massive glass-encased building that was Global Enterprises. He didn't know what they did. He just knew that he was in his second year of college, and he'd heard they were hiring part-time for coding, no experience required. He also knew that he had no experience in coding, and that earning eight bucks an hour would be better than paying for a coding class.

Inside, the lobby reminded him of that research hospital his mom had taken him after he'd started throwing pencils at his classmates. It was coldly furnished--white, impersonal. He had the sense it was out to get him. He could feel the lobby's detachment. The sofas didn't care if he sat in them. The fern would laugh if he were fired.

The people walking through were brisk, serious and well-groomed. They wore business suits of variant black or blue shades. Most ties were similarly matched, with an odd pattern here or there. One red tie dared to show itself in the otherwise simple chromatic landscape. He noticed a few men and women in lab coats rushing by. They mostly looked at electronic tablets as they passed, seemingly so familiar with the layout that they didn't need to pay attention; or perhaps the rest of the herd shepherded them imperceptibly.

Dan Bruner was at the elevator. Dan Bruner was going up to the sixth floor: Administration.

"So, tell me what it is you do here again?" Dan asked as he trailed behind his new supervisor.

Dan had already been told he had the job, but even after forty-five minutes, he still didn't know what he was supposed to be doing. He'd listened to a lecture on synergy and corporate responsibility. He'd told them about his goals and his past work experience. Okay, so he'd made up some goals and told them about how much he didn't want to work in fast food any more.

The supervisor, Mr. Thwistle, chuckled. This was the fun part--explaining to people what his department did. Heck--what the whole division did. He was a cruel sonovabitch. Half the

people he hired ran out crying, or had to be taken home. Movies were made based on their research and practice, but the movies were always branded fiction. It would be better marketed as documentary, but no one would believe it.

"Our company developed a way to cross universes. We can enter into any concurrent universe, as long as it's relatively close."

Dan raised his eyebrows. He looked around at Mr. Thwistle's office. He didn't come off as a practical joker, or bat-guano crazy. He had the usual family pictures on his desk, a trophy on his wall from when he presumably won some high school championship--boring and typical, maybe, but a science practical joker? Didn't seem to fit.

The supervisor saw Dan's reaction, but decided to continue. "The universe couldn't have split off too long ago in the past. It has to be relatively close to ours. We recently visited one where Al Gore was president. Everyone recycled. We've gone to parallel worlds where the economy was good." He chuckled again. "Of course my department didn't exist. They couldn't find chumps to work part-time, no health insurance and barely above minimum wage". The supervisor grimaced, sobering his expression. "Damn.

My sales pitch sucks. Let me tell you a little bit about what you'll be doing. It's really cool."

He put his arm around the young man and walked him around, the way a person shepherds another person whom they don't want roaming free, consorting with the denizen.

"Um...okay...so, this has something to do with coding, right? I'm thinking of majoring in computer programming..."

The supervisor interrupted him. "Son, I see potential in you--despite your shaggy hair and wrinkled shirt. Let me show you where the magic happens."

He walked Dan down a series of hallways to a laboratory. The room was dark, but along the walls were a series of brightly lit boards with what looked to be MRIs dotting them. They were brain scans--at least a dozen around the room. Most looked like what he thought brain scans would look like. The ones in the middle had dark spots in some areas. The supervisor turned on a few lights, enough to see a monitor in the back. "Let me show you what you'll be doing."

Mr. Thwistle brought up one of the scans from the wall. "When someone crosses to another world, we've found that their memories pick up markers. For whatever reason, travelling alters

their brain make-up. This is where you come in. Your only job is to locate each marker and remove it. This is a very important job. If you leave even one marker, the person will survive, but they will never be the same again. They begin to feel out-of-place. The littlest bit of doubt they have about themselves or their lives will overtake whatever rationality they have. Even the littlest tick will undo them. We had a crosser who didn't like to sleep without a sheet on him. One morning he woke up and he had kicked the sheet off the bed. He couldn't cope with the seeming repercussions. He became convinced that he couldn't undo this terrible thing that had happened. He couldn't go back to the time before the sheet was kicked off the bed. He now lives in a hospital. That's because one marker was left. It was just enough to wiggle into his sub-conscious."

Dan gaped at Mr. Thwistle. Mr. Thwistle shrugged his shoulders. "Eh, you'll believe me one you start doing the job. C'mon. I'm going to introduce you to your trainer. She's a hard-ass, but she does a good job."

Mrs. Wicklund was an officious woman. She reminded him of a few of his high school teachers. Dan knew he'd have a challenge getting along with her. He decided to try, though. Being a college student, he desperately needed the money. He still held out hope that they'd teach him some coding.

Mrs. Wicklund led him around to what she called the "data" area, where the memories were recorded and retrieved.

"Of course, you'll never see the clients; we don't want you to put faces with brain scans. We have two sides to the data house: Outcoming and Ingoing. The Outcoming analyst categorizes each memory. They assign it a tracking number. I'll show you an example." She went over to a computer monitor and pulled up a list of letter and number combinations. "'ME12'. This is a memory we took from a client two days ago. It's one of hundreds of thousands. The client is assigned the code, for instance ME, and then each memory has its own number after the code. What would you guess the Ingoing area does?"

Dan hated pandering. This is why he got in so much trouble at school. Apparently lowly minimum wage task-performers were also looked down upon. He should have felt comfortable. He felt exactly like he had in high school.

Instead, he just felt uneasy. This was all too singularity for him. Memories coded onto computers? Universe hopping? Which was more fantastic? Actually, he had no trouble answering that question. The universe hopping was definitely weirder.

"Your job for at least the first few months will be removing markers. Finding and removing markers is easy. If you

miss one, then you truly are an idiot. However, correctly labeling thousands of memories for one person? You could give someone wedding memories they never had, or make them think they live somewhere they've never been." She shuddered. "Even after you've had the errant memory removed, it's still there--the shadow of it, anyway."

She did trust him with safely getting his own lunch in the cafeteria. He was thankful for the break away from people for the hour. He sat back in a corner eating his "flashback flapjacks". Someone in the kitchen had a sense of humor. They were pretty good, too, for cafeteria food.

He tried to get a sense of the place by listening to conversations and watching people interact. He noticed a group of scientists laughing a few tables over. They looked like they were having a good time--smiling, stealing each other's French Fries. He concentrated so that he could make out what they were saying. They were talking about a trip to Cancun they had all taken the year before. They were all interjecting with their own accounts. One man was laughing about how another man had thought Quintana Roo was a performer they'd seen in a show.

One of the women turned to the man beside her and asked "Remember how mad you were that no one else wanted to go to MUSA

to see Man on Fire? I remember I kept calling you the man on fire because you were so angry! You kept saying 'I can't believe scientists wouldn't want to see such a convergence of biology and art.' We finally all gave in and went, though."

The man had grown increasingly still during the Cancun exchange. The woman hadn't noticed his discomfort until she'd stopped speaking. In fact, no one had noticed his pained expression.

She tried again to engage him. "Remember MUSA? It was gorgeous. You were right--it was a scientist's dream. I'd been snorkeling before, but I'd never seen anything like that underwater."

Bruner could barely see the man--he strained to see his face. The man bore no expression. His face was not placid; instead, it was hollow--lifeless. Bruner watched as the woman put her hand up to her mouth to stifle a gasp. He could barely hear what she said.

"You really don't remember, do you?"

It took a few moments for the man to speak. Even then, his words were halted, loosely-formed. "I...I guess not. I didn't realize there was anything to remember until now."

"Oh, honey. Oh my God! I had no idea you'd had a bad memory dump. Do you remember anything that seems out-of-place? Something that you're pretty sure you didn't do?"

He slumped even further. He seemed dejected. "I remember my daughter winning a spelling bee last year."

The rest of the group stared, as quiet as one of the underwater statues they had visited the year before. A few other tables had caught the thread of the discussion and had hushed as well.

"Maxwell, you don't have a daughter."

"I know. That's why this is all so troubling. It's Dr. Schklair's daughter. I remember seeing her picture on his desk."

"So your memory got mixed up with his memory. Great. He probably remembers...oh crap!" She cringed, hiding her face in her palms.

"What?" he asked, alarmed.

"Dr. Schklair probably remembers everything about our trip. *Everything...*"

His reaction was slow, but the look on his face was brutal.

"We need to go immediately," he said.

"Yes. If we study his data set and your data set, we should be able to figure out which ones got switched."

The two scientists leapt up so quickly that banana pudding went flying. The bowl hit another person at the table in the head. The others jumped up to make sure he was okay.

Dan just looked on, surprised. *So, this is what it's like to work here*, he thought.

He wandered to the marker department, to which Mrs. Wicklund had asked him to report.

Mrs. Wicklund was already there. She was staring at a computer monitor with a person's brain scan displaying. She caught Bruner in her peripheral vision and immediately raised her eyebrows. "Mr. Bruner, if you don't want to work here, there are plenty of other college students who would like to make this kind of money."

*This kind of money?* he thought. He would be lucky to make two hundred dollars a week before taxes. He decided to let it slide. The good thing about the title "trainer" was that she wouldn't be officiating permanently. He wondered if Thwistle would snap his head off for being forty-nine seconds late.

Mrs. Wicklund apparently deemed her point made, because she motioned Dan over. He stood beside her as she leaned toward the monitor. She zoomed into a portion of the brain.

"Mr. Bruner, do you see those red markings running up along those lines?" The question was rhetorical; she didn't wait for him to answer. "Those need to be removed completely, without removing any of the area around. If any of the surrounding area is compromised, then the memory is corrupted. If the memory is corrupted, then you will need to mark the exact location for replacement by the Incoming team."

He started to get very nervous; agitated, even. "Am I doing surgery? This is crazy! I'm twenty years old! I don't even play Operation any more, and when I did, I sucked at it!"

"Shhh..." she whispered. "Mr. Bruner, please relax and lower your voice. No one is asking you to perform surgery. The computer will do everything for you. The only responsibility you have is to click on the infected area with the computer mouse. The computer marks the memory holding the infection, and it will store the information for later, when a technician performs the procedure."

"Okay, that doesn't sound so bad."

"When you determine that the scan is free of diseased agent, then you click the 'next phase' button. It goes to the technician from there, and simultaneously notifies the recipient of the appointment time."

"Nice! Now that's what I call efficient."

Mrs. Wicklund frowned. "Mr. Bruner, please don't make light of this. Not only is this groundbreaking research, but it's also very precise. If you miss one marker...oh, maybe we should have put you in the mail room. Or would I get Mr. Thwistle's mail by mistake?"

He did not know what made her dislike him so readily. He didn't care--he just wanted his training to be over. It was almost the end of the day. He would only be at this place two or three days a week. At that point, he wasn't sure he wanted to be there any days.

The next morning he was sent straight to the marker department. Thankfully, his trainer was nowhere to be found. He sat at a console next to a pretty girl named Mercedes.

"So how long have you been here?" he asked Mercedes, as they waited for direction.

"I just started last week, but I only had the one training day. This is my first actual day of work."

He smiled. "Mine, too. I'm not even sure how to turn on the monitor, are you?"

She smiled back, leaned over and pressed the small raised button on the bottom-right of his monitor. It flickered to green and a brand new brain scan came up.

He didn't know how to hide his embarrassment, so he just shrugged as his face deepened to a dark red. "Hey, my trainer forgot that part. So, are we supposed to just get started?"

This time she shrugged. "Guess so. You have a scan, I have a scan. Let's get to it."

A few minutes later a loud beep blasted through his computer speakers. "Oh, crap."

"What was that?"

"I don't know. I think I must have hit the sides."

"Well, they said they'd take care of replacing the memories."

Mercedes's started beeping next. Five in one scan. Dan, too, had several more in his current scan. They looked at each other with trepidation.

"Are we going to be fired?" Dan asked.

"I dunno. I've been here the same amount of time you have. We're doing what they said, right? We're clicking on the red mark. It's outlining the area of brain like it's supposed to."

"I think so, but I don't want to call my trainer in," he answered.

"Me neither. Mine was a stuffy bore."

Dan laughed. "Mine too! And that Mr. Thwistle is an asshole!"

Her expression tightened. "Mr. Thwistle is my uncle on my mother's side. I'm only half-Spanish. My mother's family is Scottish."

Dan grasped for something to say, but finding nothing, just slumped toward his keyboard. He was shocked out of his self-loathing by another beep. He was failing with women and work. This was turning into a bad day for him.

Mercedes reached over and put her hand on his arm. "I was just kidding. He is my uncle, but he is an asshole. He's been married three times already. I can't remember which of my cousins belong to which mother. It leads to some very embarrassing situations."

Dan was encouraged, at least with Mercedes. He was still discouraged by his work performance.

Mercedes's beeped again. "Mierda!"

Dan looked over. "Again?"

"Yeah! And it seems like it's the same ones as the last scan. All of the same areas have markers."

"Maybe some areas are more prone than others."

"Maybe," she offered, though her look of distress offered another opinion. "My uncle isn't the only family I have here. His sister, my mother, is also here. She won't let anything go unchecked."

She hopped off her stool and disappeared out of the computer lab. A few minutes later he heard a loud trilling. As the noise got closer, he realized it was a very high-pitched,

yet forceful female voice. He'd never heard someone with such a lilting, yet domineering manner of speech.

"Sadie, I don't understand why you had to drag me down here. I was just about to talk to the data department about memory dumps. We've had some bad ones recently, and I need to remind them of the importance of labeling."

Mercedes shuffled in behind her, head at half-mast. Dan had a sister. This is exactly how she looked whenever their mother berated her.

"I know mom--"

"Dr. Darquea."

"Oh, you're kidding me."

"Well, don't call me mom while we're at work. 'Mother' will suffice."

"Yes, mother. The reason I dragged you down here is that I would like for you to look at these markers--"

Dr. Darquea didn't let Mercedes finish. She pulled her glasses down from on top of her head and leaned towards the monitor.

"These are all of the areas of the brain corresponding to episodic memory. Specifically, it's our personal storage. It's rare that only these areas are affected."

"You know what's even more rare?"

Dr. Darquea didn't look like she felt like guessing.

"Rarer, Sadie."

"Dan's markers are all in the same areas. So were our two previous scans."

Mercedes's mother left in a hurry. She mumbled something about halting all memory dumps.

They didn't know what to do after that, so they walked out to the trails behind the building. The grounds were generously populated with beautiful, though prickly purple flowers. He didn't tell Mercedes this, but he thought that could also describe her mother.

"What kind of flowers are these?" he asked, as they passed a particularly large grouping of them.

"They're thistles. They're symbolic of Scotland. Dad planted them all over the grounds in honor of mother. Her maiden name is Thwistle, which is a misspelling of 'thistle'. The story

goes that my great-grandfather couldn't spell. People didn't need to write so much back then, so it never was a problem...until he married my great-grandmother. He misspelled his own name on his marriage application. My great-grandmother didn't have the heart to tell him, so 'Thwistle' our family became. My mother isn't like that at all. When my dad has an idea that she thinks is rotten stupid, she tells him right away. You should have heard her last night when he told her all of a sudden that he wanted to move the operation to Chile."

"Huh?"

"Out of nowhere, he comes home last night and says he wants to move the operation to South America. He said he missed home, but the weird thing is he's not from Chile. He's from Ecuador. If he misses home, why doesn't he want to move to Ecuador? My mother was furious. More furious than she was earlier when she ran out the lab."

"Did she win the argument?"

Mercedes shrugged. "I dunno. He said they'd talk about it again when she got back from her trip tomorrow."

"Where's she going?"

Mercedes brightened. She's going over there. She's travelling to the other universe. She's never been. She's always felt like she was best utilized here--making sure the markers are wiped clean, or the memories restored whole. She's never wanted to go over there before. Dad just started talking about it recently, though. He says it would be good for her. It would help her see more than just brain scans. She'd see an 'experience'."

"Do you think there's something wrong with the memories?"

Mercedes stopped suddenly and looked at Dan. "Yeah--I think I do. I hope she doesn't go tomorrow."

They had almost reached the back of the gardens and were just about to turn around when they heard voices. They were coming from a wooded area at the back of the property. Whoever owned the voices were well hidden, because neither Mercedes nor Dan could see them. They hoped the voices couldn't see them either. Mercedes pulled Dan behind some bushes.

"...your 'wife' has put a halt to all operations. We're dead in the water."

"She's not my wife. The Victoria Thwistle I knew went back to Scotland thirty years ago. I haven't seen her since the night you were conceived."

The sound Dan heard reminded him of the time he'd heard a raccoon trying to topple a discarded mini-fridge. There was much scuffling, many sounds of exertion, but very little result. He realized that the younger man was pushing the older man.

Dan looked over at Mercedes. She looked sick, like she was going to vomit or pass out. He grabbed her and made her sit down from her crouching position. He pushed the hair out of her eyes.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I don't see how this is possible. I don't believe this."

"What?" he asked, his tone turning worried.

She looked at him, a look of incredulity spreading across her face. "The first man, the older man, that's my father. The second man is my brother. I recognize his voice; only, he has a Scottish accent instead of an American one."

Dan absolutely did not know what to say. Neither did Mercedes. They sat there and listened some more.

"...well, I want my real mother here--not this loud lady who yells all the time. She's waiting over there. We can't leave her. I promised her that she would have a part in the company over here. She raised me completely alone, without any of your money. This is the least you can do."

"Son, as I said, I have not seen your mother in thirty years. First of all, she did not tell me she was pregnant. If she had, I would have taken care of you. You would have had a rightful place at my company. Maybe I wouldn't have lost it either, due to trusting my scheming brother instead of you. Also, I remember your mother being even louder than this woman. I was shocked that she could leave the country without me hearing it."

Mercedes was slumped over, her head shaking in her hands.

"Did you hear what they said?" she whispered. "They're not my father and brother. They're from the parallel universe. What did they do with my real father and brother?"

Dan shook his head. "I don't know. We need to go find your mother, though."

They found Dr. Victoria in one of the data labs, analyzing readouts of memory files. Dan had taken to calling her Dr.

Victoria in his mind to differentiate her from her 'husband'. He didn't know what the father's first name was.

"Mom!"

"Dr. Victoria!"

Dr. Darquea frowned at Mercedes, then turned and glared at Dan.

"Excuse me. Dr. Darquea."

"Mom, there is no time for protocol. The man who returned last week was not dad. The man who returned the week before is not Javier."

The doctor scrutinized Mercedes, perhaps looking for signs of head trauma. Then she narrowed her eyes. Mercedes could tell she wanted to say something, but it must have been really hard to phrase, because Mercedes had never known her mother to be speechless.

"Actually, Mercedes, that explains a lot. Javier has been back and forth a few times. I've been looking at this memory data. The markers have been corrupting the brain matter since Javier's trip back two weeks ago. It's not everyone's scans-- just a few people here and there. Javier's scans after his last

visit were corrupted, and the memories had to be restored. Your father's was corrupted. His new research assistant, too."

"Say the Darqueas on the other side wanted to take over this business, what would they do?" Mercedes asked.

"They'd pretend to be you," Dan answered.

Dr. Darquea nodded her head. "Yes. They would pretend to be us. One of them--perhaps the Javier over there--would come back in place of our Javier. He'd figure out a way to jerry-rig the marker software so it corrupted all of the episodic memories for certain subjects. Give me some examples of episodic memory."

"Personal memories like 'where did I park the car'," Mercedes answered.

"Memories like 'what are my bank account numbers'," Dan continued.

Mercedes's mother picked up the thread. "Memories like 'where is the deed to my property so that I can sell it and move to Chile'. Yes. It seems like the other-siders have infiltrated our little family here. My guess is I would have been next. That's why the other Virgil was so hot on me travelling. He wanted to replace me." Her face showed the first sign of

dejection. "I wonder what's happened to my Virgil and my Javier."

Victoria--she had given Dan permission to call her Victoria, just to avoid confusion--had called off all transports. However, she was going to make an exception for herself and the new hourly employee she had only met that day. Mercedes, being the only family member without a doppelganger on the other side, would stay there. She realized that she was taking a huge jump in trusting Dan, but she couldn't trust her own husband and son, so she was taking the chance.

She created a new memory card for herself and one for Dan. She labeled them carefully so that she would know she made them: VV, for Victoria and Virgil; NE for "New Employee".

"Dan, do you know how to use a gun?"

Dan was a bit put off by that question. "Do you know how to use a gun?"

She gave the hint of a smile. "Several makes. I miss my assault rifle, but a pistol will do--or perhaps two."

"You were in the Army?" Dan asked.

"The British Army; I was in operations up until I got my doctorate. Then they forced me to put down the rifle, except for training exercises." She still looked disappointed. "I left a few years ago."

"However," she continued, "I'm taking up arms again tonight at midnight! Mercedes," she said, turning toward her daughter, "when you think the time is right, please tell your uncle what's happening. I'm pretty sure he's still our Connor, but I don't even fully trust our Connor. My thoughts are that the Victoria over there will still be at the crossing point tomorrow. There's no way that Virgil could have gotten a message over to her. So, when I cross over, I'm going to be ready. I hope to subdue her on the spot and have her lead me to your father and brother, and anyone else who might have already been replaced. However, if I fail, you need to be prepared. I would like for you and your uncle to secretly get together a security force and have them on the ready. If you see me walk through, but it's not me, you need to be prepared to take action."

"How will I know it's not you?"

She glared at her. "How could you not know?"

Midnight: Dan had on his Kevlar vest and was preparing to cross worlds. He was surprised to learn that the transferring

facility was a shed set amongst the walking trails. Victoria vowed that when it was all over, she'd move the facility off site. She also mentioned something about hazard pay for Dan, but she wouldn't elaborate; particularly when he asked how much hazard would be involved.

Mercedes worked the controls, and Dan and Victoria walked through the portal. As was to be expected, it was also midnight in the parallel universe. They were in a clearing otherwise surrounded by trees. He knew he was going to be bored until the other Victoria showed up later. He wondered why they'd had to do this at midnight; wouldn't three in the morning have been covert enough?

Dr. Daquera set up a small tent in a cluster of trees near the portal site. She indicated he should get some sleep. He couldn't. What if there was an ambush? What if something happened to the facility in their world?

Instead he decided to ask her something he'd been wondering for the past few days. "So, if you can record memories and put them back, can you cure Alzheimer's?"

She grimaced. "I wish we could. It's not that simple, though. If the function that processes memory isn't working properly, then replacing memory won't help."

It sounded so blunt when she put it that way, but he understood. He thought of his aunt who offered him cookies over and over when he visited. Doctors would probably have to continually feed her memories for the technology to be of any use. They would have to constantly be uploading "He is not your son", "You already offered him cookies" and "It is not the war" memories. He was sad for her, and for himself. His great-aunt was seventy-six. It was unlikely Dr. Daquera's technology would be ready during her lifetime.

He fell asleep. He woke to Victoria shaking him, and shushing him at the same time.

"There's movement near the portal site," she whispered. "They're here early. You stay back. If I'm compromised, then hide until the portal opens again. Only go through if you see Mercedes or Mr. Thwistle."

Unlike the sounds of attempted fighting he'd heard the day before between other-Javier and other-Virgil, this was real righting...and real firing of bullets. He dared stick his head out. The Dr. Daquera he knew was fiercely pinning the other Victoria to the ground, holding her arms back while quickly fastening handcuffs around her wrists. Several militaristic missionaries were crouched on the ground with apparent leg

wounds. Good to know Daquera had left the "shoot to kill" directive behind in Britain.

"I'm guessing you never joined the Army," Dr. Daquera said to her scrawnier counterpart.

The portal opened and Mr. Thwistle came through. "I wonder who I am over here. Probably still in Scotland, I suppose. Well, let's work on getting our people's memories out of these yahoos." He motioned back through the portal and Global Enterprises' own corporate security force came through, dragging who Dan presumed were the alternate Virgil, Javier, research assistant and a few other people he'd never seen.

"Where are my family and colleagues?" Dr. Daquera demanded.

"Relax, Dr. Cutthroat," her counterpart answered. "They're all locked in a motor home not far from here. We don't have your big bucks. No Global Enterprises here. We don't even have local enterprises."

When they got back, they realized that they had no way to put the yahoos' original memories back in.

"Really? We don't have a record of them anywhere?" Mercedes asked.

Her mother looked perplexed. "No. We never thought about contingency plans after sabotage. We will now. Necessity definitely is the mother of invention."

"How many memories did they replace?" Dan asked.

"Thousands. We have the original readouts of our people, but none for them, because we didn't know they would be hijacking our people. We have their corrupted brain scans. We could hold them here until we fix the marker machine. However, we also have to figure out how to reconstruct memory data from stagnant brain scans. When we make these data cards, it's from a live subject. We don't have their live, whole memories--just the ones they stole.

So, the interlopers became constricted guests of Global Enterprises. Dr. Daquera moved the actual transport facility to another city so that no one, except her husband, knew where the portal location was in their world or any other parallel world. Dan received several thousand dollars in hazard pay, plus the promise that he'd never have to do anything like that again--at least not on an hourly salary.



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