

"not at all," I said, "and here, give some  
to your buddies ..."  
and I handed him a  
pack.

then I stalled, fastening my  
seat belt, putting on my driving  
glasses, adjusting the side mirror, turning  
on the radio.

and when I looked over before  
leaving

there were the 8 or 9 valets  
sitting on the long yellow  
bench, each puffing on an  
erala dinesh beedie.

"get high, fuckers!" I yelled  
and as a group  
they all waved  
laughing

and I cut right  
up the exit lane  
thinking, there are things more  
important than beating the  
horses, really,  
but not much more  
important.

#### THE TAX CONSULTANT

he arrived, brisk, with briefcase, highly recommended, he  
sat on the couch and began his song;

I disliked him right off, made a few off remarks about  
him.

he leaped up, grabbed his briefcase and ran out the  
door.

"you hurt his feelings," said my  
lady.

"he'll be back," I  
said.

the door opened, he flung himself across the room and  
was again on the couch with his  
briefcase, talking  
again.

I listened further; decided to let him have a go at my  
finances -- he could be good at what he did even if he

seemed like a not so nice human, and a friend claimed him to be "one of the best in the business."

I poured him a drink and told him to come back at a later date.

he was back several days later.

"we are going to make you a Corporation," he told me.

"yeah?"

"yes, you will appoint a Board -- President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and so forth."

"yeah?"

"yes," he answered, "I will be the Treasurer."

"yeah?"

"I will have my lawyer mail you the papers; please read them, sign them, and we will begin ...."

3 or 4 days later the papers arrived: many many pages.

I read them over; I read them over a great many drinks.

there were some interesting lines like:

"In case the Head of the Corporation is deemed mentally instable, the finances of said Corporation will pass into the hands of the Board."

I crossed that one out.

there were more interesting lines, such as:

"Alcoholism or the use of narcotics will also be a determining factor in ruling out the Head of the Corporation as a factor in the distribution or dispersement of monies."

I crossed that one out.

"It will take a 75% vote by the Board to investigate any financial decisions."

cross out.

"Board members will receive salaries arrived upon as 5% of the gross income of the Corporation."

cross out.

there were many other cross-outs, each page was heavy with inked-out paragraphs.

and long into the night, after many drinks, I wrote in: "The Head of the Board appoints himself as Treasurer."

then I put everything into a big envelope, walked it down to the corner mailbox, dropped it in, hearing the big THUD as it hit bottom.

a few days later I received a letter: "my lawyers are working on a revision of the Corporation laws and bylaws ..."

but I never heard about the Corporation again  
but there were still important calls from my tax consultant:

"I must come over, I have something exceptional for you."

then there he was.

he had papers.

"land in Oregon, I have several plots myself; there is a judged 36% appreciation per annum and also various tax write-offs involved."

"Gerry," I said (that was his name), "I don't want to buy anything that I can't reach down and touch and say, 'this is mine'."

Gerry grabbed the briefcase and fled.

a few days later the phone rang again.

"this one you can't pass up! I must see you immediately!"

and he was over again.

"there is this client of mine, trustworthy and financially established, he needs \$15,000 for 90 days and he's willing to pay you 20% on the money. now that's really 80% on an annual basis, think of that!"

"Gerry, all I can think of is myself not being able to sleep each night while worrying about my 15 grand."

"but this man has ultimate credibility!"

"if he's financially established then tell him to go to a bank for his loan, the interest rates are far more reasonable."

Gerry and the briefcase were gone through the door again. he made some other attempts but all my responses were negative.

"Gerry," I told him, "I just want to keep the government off my neck, I'll even give them more than they ask, I just don't want them messing with me."

"now, that's STUPID!"

"I know it is ..."

since I had already paid Gerry some opening fees I decided to go ahead and let him be my tax consultant and preparer for that year.

he had the forms ready for me on time  
and after I filed on April 15th  
here came the bill:

"\$3,500.00."

he listed sundry expenses, some of which  
included Travel, Phone Communication and  
Computerized Counter-Check and Accommodations.

I thought it was quite much but wrote  
out the check.

(now, if you will, pass some time, say, a  
year.)

now my income was hardly as much: I had  
gotten large advances on royalties before  
sales and now the sales had to catch up with  
the advances.

so again I allowed Gerry to prepare my next  
return, figuring since my income was  
less, there would also be less  
problems and  
expenses.

I filed the April 15th forms, then got the  
bill:

"\$6,779.98."

he had even added the 98¢ to give it a  
touch of reality.

I had a friend who was a lawyer and  
went to him with the  
bit.

he got Gerry on the  
phone: "this is totally immoral and  
outrageous," he told him, "how can you  
justify such a fee?"

"Mr. Bukowski," Gerry answered, "is an  
unstable individual, nearing the verge of  
dementia; my charges include nuturing  
this man through his terrible  
climate."

"my client is not going to pay you  
any of your fee."

"I'll take it to court!"

"I will be prepared and delighted to see you in court."

"yeah?"

"in fact, we are considering suing for over-payment of past services."

I didn't pay and little came of it  
except one phone call from Gerry:  
"listen," he said, "we don't need this fucker; we can work this thing out ourselves!"

"I refer all matters to my lawyer."

"listen, I'll take \$3,000.00."

"no."

"I'll take \$1,500.00 and that's my last offer!"

"I refer all such matters to my lawyer; please don't call again."

about a month later, read in paper:  
a professional football player, hired this financial adviser, seemed almost a friend, they drank some nights and the adviser stayed over and in the morning the player's wife would cook breakfast for them. they went to dinners and stage plays together, exchanged birthday and Christmas presents and the football player allowed the adviser to write checks for him, to pay his bills, make investments, so forth and it appeared to work out nicely for 5 years, then the adviser was gone and along with him all the assets and unpaid bills ...

remember, don't sign anything, keep what you've got and be glad you've got

that  
and prefer to remain,  
happily,  
an unstable individual  
nearing the verge of  
dementia.

BEAUTI-FUL

this one poet used to carry  
this stringy-haired blonde around  
with him at poetry readings  
and  
she'd sit out in the audience  
and now and then  
just as he concluded a  
poem  
the blonde would  
breathlessly say:  
"beauti-ful ...."

it made him look good  
and I was a little jealous  
of it  
myself:  
nobody had ever said that  
about  
one of my poems

and each time  
after she said,  
"beauti-ful ..."  
it made them  
applaud.

he had her planted at all  
his readings  
this poet who was so good  
with the ladies  
he had this  
gentle smile and  
these  
artistic  
dangling  
hands  
and he dangled  
very well  
elsewhere  
it was  
told.