

THE HUNTING PARTY

WHY UNCERTAINTY IS MAKING HUNTERS IMPORTANT AGAIN

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A PROMOTIONAL EXTRACT FROM *THE HUNTING PARTY*

The Hunter

The Hunting Party explores why some people notice patterns, risks and possibilities that others miss. This extract from Chapter 4, 'The Hunter', looks at why Sebastian Bach became an early symbol of the Hunter pattern—and why rapid recognition can become dangerous when it commits before the model is accurate enough.

CHAPTER 4 · 'THE HUNTER' · EXTRACTED FROM PP. 22, 26–27

I was sixteen when I saw Skid Row at Wembley Stadium, and I remember Sebastian Bach looking like somebody who had somehow escaped the rules everybody else was living under.

I already loved the band, but seeing him in front of that crowd did something different. I remember him climbing an absurd distance up the lighting rig and singing from it, and I remember him introducing *Get the Fuck Out* by referring to an instruction that the band shouldn't play it, then essentially telling whoever had issued the instruction to fuck off before playing it anyway. I still need to verify the exact historical details rather than trust a memory which has had thirty-five years to improve the staging, but the emotional memory is extremely clear.

I recognised something, although obviously I didn't know Sebastian Bach and he had no idea I existed. At sixteen I didn't have any particularly useful language for whatever it was I thought I was seeing either. I had grown up feeling heavily controlled, I was increasingly aware that there were only a couple of years left before I could escape the environment I was in, and suddenly I was standing in front of somebody who appeared to move through the world with almost no visible fear. Creative, physically expressive, confrontational when he wanted to be, completely uninterested in behaving as though authority became legitimate merely because somebody had issued an instruction.

For a long time, when I started trying to understand this pattern in myself and other people, I called it the Warrior. That worked up to a point because the people I was noticing did often seem unusually comfortable around conflict, or at least less destabilised by it than other people around them. They could become calmer when something went wrong, move quickly under pressure and behave quite differently when the environment became uncertain.

The problem was that Warrior made the conflict too important. Most of the people I was thinking about weren't spending their lives fighting. Quite often they were exploring, making, connecting, watching, improvising, noticing something nobody else had noticed and then becoming intensely interested once they found it. A warrior needs an enemy, or at least a battle, while the pattern I was trying to describe existed perfectly happily without either. Eventually the answer became annoyingly simple and I could lose the second word: the Hunter.

Putting the Hunter next to the Farmer made the model considerably less flattering and therefore considerably more useful. The Hunter isn't the exciting person while the Farmer stays home doing the boring work. Finding something and making it reliably valuable are different problems, and a functioning system needs both. I have started enough businesses to know that discovering something which works can be much easier than continuing to make it work after the person who discovered it has become bored and wandered off.

The man at the car wash felt like that almost immediately. So, looking backwards, did Sebastian Bach, although obviously without the conversation. At sixteen I didn't have Hunter, Hyperattention or any of the rest of this language available to me. I simply saw somebody moving through an environment in a way which made sense to a part of me I hadn't yet learned how to describe.

Human beings infer enormous amounts from one another very quickly. Speech, posture, timing, attention, humour, movement, confidence, the things someone responds to and the things they apparently fail to notice all contribute, so there doesn't need to be a mystical Hunter radar for some people to produce a stronger sense of recognition than others.

The problem is that recognition can be wrong, and Bach provides a fairly brutal example of that too. In 1989 somebody in an audience threw a bottle which hit him badly enough to draw blood. His response was extremely fast: he threw it back and went into the crowd after the person he believed responsible, and an innocent girl was injured. The threat was real and the response decisive, but the identification wasn't good enough.

That matters because the machinery which makes rapid inference useful around uncertainty can become dangerous when it commits before the model is accurate enough. Broad attention and fast pattern recognition are only advantages when what you think you have seen bears some relationship to reality.

FROM THE BOOK

From The Hunting Party by Chris Kempt

An extract from Chapter 4, 'The Hunter' — pp. 22, 26–27.

The Hunting Party: Why Uncertainty Is Making Hunters Important Again explores why some people see patterns, risks and possibilities that others miss, and why that kind of mind may matter more again as the world becomes less stable.

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