



Source: Joel Brinkley, 'Saudis refuse to withhold Hamas aid', *New York Times* in *The Age* online, 24/02/06.

Tags: [death](#), [crime](#), [surveillance](#), [violence](#)

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### Final thoughts of a home invader

It's not so bad once the blade swings past the threshold of inevitability. It's like you just relax into it. Things slow down, the way your life does when you know its outcomes.

Just like when that car crossed the road and came hurtling towards me, a few years ago. It all went into a kind of smooth, flowing slow motion. I had time to pause and reflect. I observed with interest that it was a Mercedes and it was black. That all probably took a millisecond, but it felt eternal and it felt very comfortable. And when it was over, the Mercedes driver was dead and my head looked like it belonged in a laboratory jar, not on top of my shoulders.

Which is where I wish it were now. On my shoulders, I mean.

It was easy to stay relaxed this time. That's the good thing about being ambushed, I suppose. My whole demise really took place behind my back. Oh, I turned around just in time to see it, the fellow's arm moving in a level arc. But in the time it took me to comprehend that, it completed most of its journey. The realisation cleaved my cognisance as a fleeting metallic glint cleaved the side of my neck. I'm happy to report there's no physical pain. It's like having any limb severed cleanly. Coming apart hasn't hurt a bit. It's the height of irony—I've had paper cuts and grazes hurt more.

Psychologically, well that's a different matter entirely. What hurts most is the confusion. Any kind of rebirth in life is painful. But no life situation demands more work in the way of self-redefinition than this. Especially in such limited time. After all, now I'm apart, what do I call me? Do I call my head the head? And do I still call the body I'm watching lurching around, about to topple all over me, do I still call it me when it's about to fall on top of me? What's me now?

Landing was like bumping my head very hard on something. Well you think about it. The human head weighs about as much as a brick—about four kilos, right? So take a four kilo weight and drop it from about six feet—that's how tall I was, six feet—on to your head. How would that feel? It'd hurt, I'll give you the tip. What an end, spending your last few seconds of consciousness thinking 'Ouch, I bumped my head.' Plus, remember, there's all that other thinkwork to be done, life before your eyes and all that. All, mind you, with only a half-pint of blood's worth of oxygen to work with.

I landed on my cranium, giving me a view up to where I'd just been. I watched as I took a kind of lumbering step forward and one of my arms flailed around a bit. My other hand was still hanging on to the back of the dining chair, trying to steady myself. Looking at the mess on the

ceiling and the curtains, I can confirm I have a strong heart, always supportive of my efforts in the spheres of both athletic and romantic endeavour. Not to mention, of course, in that part of our lives where the two overlap. I've had some all-nighters in my time, let me tell you. I've always come back with impressive speed after sex. Not to mention after it's all over, kaput, once and for all. Mind you, I suspect this particular situation may take a little more getting over than most.

Looking around now, it's a lovely home. I was just wondering if they'd move out when all this is over when flump, I came crashing down. I hit myself square in the eye with one elbow and ended up with my nose buried in my own armpit. I can smell the fear.

I'm glad of one thing here. It certainly puts an end to all that philosophical ponderance of the mind-body split. Well, as someone—one of the few, mind—who's actually experienced it, I think I'm entitled to an opinion here. I tend to fall on the side of those who say it all happens between the ears. Never mind all that Buddhist nonsense. Think it's cerebral self-delusion that the head rules the roost? Let's go the videotape, shall we? Looking now at that little dark dome on the ceiling, I suspect there will be videotape of all tonight's action. I should be happy I've found such a terrific way of keeping my face hidden, even with the problematic side-effects.

But where was I? This is all getting very confusing. What happens when I cut loose? Well, just watch that great piddling, squirting bag of meat topple like an imploding skyscraper, only less discriminately. Jesus, you'd think they'd have warned us about the sword collection.

Oh dear, self centred as ever. I haven't said a word about Eric. Whatever it is, sounds like his fate has come as much less of a surprise to him than mine has to me. Frankly, I'm glad I'm not in a position to bear witness to whatever's giving rise to all those porcine squeals and gurgles. Suffice to say they're enough to leave me grateful for the comparative simplicity of my predicament, most particularly for the element of surprise. Under different circumstances, I might say, those noises would've been more than enough to make me sick to my stomach—another kind of trouble I'm glad I've been saved.

The lights, they're growing dim...It comes as a disappointment that I can think of nothing more profound or original than that in a moment like this. Maybe Aunt Judy was right when I told her I hated housework and that was why my house was so messy. 'Darling,' she wheezed, working hard to push air past the tumour that eventually killed her, 'in the mundane lies the sacred'. Gee, thanks Aunt Judy.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Jeremy Bass.*