



Leaving Brussels

Stories
of the
broken
relationship
between
Europe
and the
United
Kingdom



The Museum of Brexit Relationships Exhibition

Inspired by 'The Museum of Broken Relationships' in Zagreb, this exhibition aims to uncover the personal connections in regards to the broken relationship between the UK and EU.

Breaking up from a relationship (be it political or personal) is difficult, especially when it isn't mutual.

The trauma of such breakups can manifest itself as extreme responses.

Finding, for example, an empty perfume bottle which used to belong to an old flame or a shirt which used to belong to a former lover can stir up feelings we like to think we have done away with.

Brexit has similarly provoked a likewise response. We have therefore asked our friends and strangers to submit their thoughts on Brexit as well as a little trinket which best symbolize this.

Overview

Breaking up is tough, especially when it isn't mutual.

The trauma of such a breakup can manifest itself with extreme responses. Finding for example an empty perfume bottle that used to belong to an old flame or a shirt that used to belong to a former lover can stir up feelings we like to think that we have suppressed and sublimated.

The power of love to make or break us is forever a theme of fascination and introspection.

The feelings we have towards Brexit is no less different to that of a bad relationship breakup.

The potentiality of Brexit to upend the lives of EU and British citizens is one acutely felt by all involved, especially by members of the Großbritannienzentrum here in Berlin.

This exhibition at the Brussels station provides a space for all to share.

We have asked our friends and colleagues for stories as well as a trinket about what this upcoming Brexit means to them.

There are a range of stories to be found from the happiness of finding a new love to the depressive sense of seeing daybreak after being strung out one too many times, we hope these stories will make you laugh and cry in equal measure.

Michael - Pair of Skis

23

Edinburgh, United Kingdom

My name is Michael, I'm originally from Scotland but I moved to France when I was 9 years old. Having lived in multiple European cities like London, Barcelona and Berlin I have had the chance to see multiculturalism at its finest and I cannot get my head around Britain's ridiculous decision to pull out of Europe.

I don't really care too much about my rights changing in Europe once my passport turns into something less useful than a piece of used toilet paper. I care more about this decision says about Britain and the people in this world who are spoonfed propaganda and live in a culture of fear.

Have a look at these skis, I found them on the street in Kreuzberg when I was drunk. They are pretty worthless, they're from the 70's I think but I like what they represent. That sharing is caring instead of throwing things away like European treaties or my embarrassing British passport.

P.S if you like the skis, you can have them.

Love,

Mike.

Kerry - Pieces of Smashed Sternberg bottle

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Macclesfield, United Kingdom

I came to Berlin after a bad breakup. Before that I was living in a squat in Barcelona, working as a

farmhand in a winery in the south of France and as a cook at a rustic cookery in Tuscany. I left home at 18 and I have lived my entire adult life in Continental Europe. ´

I am a beneficiary of Europe's freedom of movement.

I feel more at home in Europe and will never go back to live in the United Kingdom.

When I found out about Britain's decision to leave, I dropped a beer bottle from the roof of my WG in frustration.

These pieces of a broken Sterni bottle best represents to me this whole Brexit situation. Something with so much promise and potential only to find itself shatter so easily.

Alberto - Picture of friends drinking together

23

Florence, Italy

I grew up listening to the Sex Pistols, and I grew up in the European Union. These two certainties of mine have recently been shaken, as I have learned that Great Britain was going to leave the European Union. As a child, I have been taught that Europe was a united set of nations. I grew up traveling freely within these countries, and I have always somehow felt a citizen of all of them.

From now on, I will not be able to feel a British citizen anymore. I remember when I visited London, and thinking that from now on I will have to issue a Visa to live, or maybe even to visit, gives me shivers!

This event has made me question the idea of the monolithic Europe that I thought I knew. I believe in strength through unity, and the idea of an ultimate separation of all European country is, to me, daunting. I think that in today's international market, all European countries would struggle on their own, and I hope that neither me nor my children will ever see such a Europe.

Monika - Sand from the Ostsee

23

Melbourne, Australia/ (United Kingdom citizen)

My name is Monika, I'm from Melbourne, Australia but my mum is from London and so I have always had a British passport. I moved to Berlin about 3 years ago on a whim, without any kind of plan but wanting to learn German and a friend who lived here said it was a great city to come to. I've spent time in the past living in London, New York and Berkeley, and there is something so much more livable about Berlin. It's slower and much more relaxed, but apart from all that only one week after I arrived I met my boyfriend at an outdoor club in Kreuzberg, which is a bit of a strange Berlin cliché because neither of us like clubbing.

Since then Berlin has become more and more my home, and now I'm doing my Masters here. When Britain voted to leave I told my poor boyfriend not to laugh at my distress, because now he will have

to marry me. In the jar is sand from the Ostsee, it's a popular Prussian holiday destination, they just can't get enough of this strip of coast, in summer or winter, and it was my first weekend away with my boyfriend. If I am not allowed to remain as a resident, I'll miss so much of my adopted traditions and my boyfriends memories, but I'm not looking forward to the possibility I might have to choose a citizenship either.

Johanna (Academic) - Giraffe

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Landshut, Germany

On the morning of 22 June 2016 I was late for my train back to London. I had been in Manchester interviewing participants for my study and had stayed with friends, I knew I wouldn't see for quite a while. So the previous night was a late one. Warm summer air, sitting in the garden, having drinks, catching up. Inevitably, two days ahead of the referendum, it was THE topic. My friends are from around Manchester, all of them in their mid-thirties and pro remain. A yoga teacher, a designer, an artist. Yet almost all of their families were voting to leave. No one thought that this would be a real issue. We talked about what makes a life and your political outlook, how their parents or siblings mindset was

shaped by generation, locality and milieu.

I usually take the bus. When I left early the next morning, with the long night still up my sleeve, I stopped a cab at the roundabout near Old Trafford Stadium to get to Manchester Piccadilly in time for my train to London. The gentleman driving the cab was in his early 70s. He told me that he had come to UK in the 1960s. Thinking back to our conversations in the garden, I asked him what he thinks the vote will be. He enthusiastically replied: “80 percent pro remain, I tell you!” I questioned him, telling him about my friends’ parents and other leave voting people I had encountered on a few trips to the Midlands in the previous weeks. He was confident and went on to tell me that he didn’t know anyone who voted leave. He told me he made most of his money driving business people to Manchester Airport and back from their trips to the continent. I felt strangely reassured when I boarded my train to London ten minutes later.

The day of the referendum was a very hot day in London. I had an appointment at the archives of Barts Health NHS Trust at St Bartholomews Hospital at 11 am, near St Pauls. I was looking for records containing information of my great aunt who had come to London as a refugee in the late 1930s and had died in the German Hospital in Hackney in the late 1960s. I spent most of the day looking through images of hospital wards from a faraway era, quite unimaginable now. Yet there were strange connections. The images and records I accessed showed an NHS workforce, which was made up of a large number of immigrants already then, mostly nurses but also doctors, like Dr. Ghandi who documented my aunt Hilde’s death.

That night, realizing that everyone had been hugely been wrong, and the vote was turning, I got way too little sleep. This continued in the following days – frantically checking the news in minute intervals, as if they could magically change. A sense of shock, fury and a deep

alienation to what it was that had happened without me taking part set in. I first came to the UK as a student on a tiny Erasmus grant. I know it's sort of a cliché – but it did change my outlook on life and my studies. And most importantly it initiated a long and lasting relationship with this island and the people I had met, most of whom are still, over ten years later, very close friends. The feeling that something had strangely come to an end.

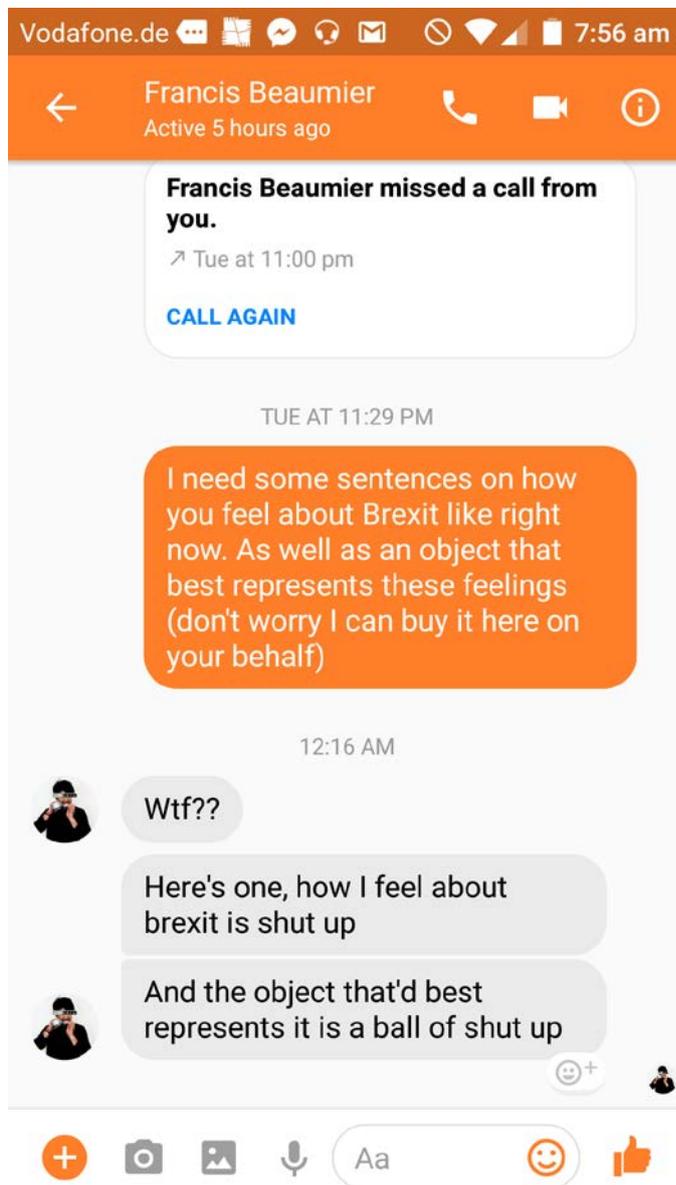
I then took a break in Wales, walking the coastal path for a few days in Pembrokeshire. Wild Horses. Sea. Wind. A few surfers. White long beaches and magic rock pools that could only be visited a few hours a day at low tide. The longest seaweed.

Back in London, ten days after the vote, I took part in what could perhaps best be described as a sort of 'healing circle'. A non-violent communication meet-up about the vote[i]. It turned out that two of ten people present had voted leave (a very high quota for London!). One of them, a middle aged woman, felt a deep shock, helplessness and sense of injustice about the fury directed at leave voters by remainers in the aftermath of the vote. She felt leavers were wrongly being demonized. The exact same feelings as most of us in the circle had about the vote itself, including me. Other perspectives emerged – such as of the young Polish office worker in the group who remained strangely unaffected. She was neither sad nor angry nor unsympathetic to leavers. Rather she voiced that she was grateful for the privilege of having been able to work in Britain for the past ten years. She said she would be going back to Poland eventually. It was a shame she said, that the pound had fallen so sharply because her savings had dropped dramatically in worth. In contrast the French architect and single mum, who had only moved there a few years ago to make a new life, seizing a career opportunity and whose young son had just started school in London, was in tears. The other person who voted leave, a very gentle looking older man, did not say why he voted that way or what he felt. He just sat there, listening. I still wonder what he heard and felt.

[i] In non-violent communication the giraffe is the symbol for empathetic listening, to yourself and others.

Francis - Ball of Shut Up 24

From Auckland, New Zealand now based in Bristol UK
(NZ/French Citizen)



**Chuck Tingle (Gay Erotic writer) - Pounded by the Pound
book cover**

Unknown age

Billings Montana, United States of America



Sacha Beaumier <sacha.beaumier@gmail.com>
to ChuckTheTingler

16:44 (20 hours ago) ☆



Hi Chuck!

My name is Sacha Beaumier and I am a Masters student at the Humboldt Universitat zu Berlin within the department of British Studies.

As part of an assignment, I am organizing an art installation people's response to Brexit.

What I am doing is collecting objects of significance accompanied by a little piece of writing about what these objects means to them in terms of Britains decision to exit the EU.

I have just discovered your fantastic book "Pounded by the Pound" on the story of Brexit. Presently I am going through the rabbit hole and am going through all of your back catalog (my personal favorite is T Rex Professor teaches me Gayness).

I am getting a copy of your cover mounted and beautifully framed for all the world to see. Your book will be exhibited in the same room that has hosted other genius thinkers like Albert Einstein, Max Weber and Karl Marx.

I was wondering if would be possible to get a couple of sentences or a paragraph on what Chuck Tingle thinks about the whole Brexit situation.

Thanks in advance and appreciate all your hard efforts going on into the future.

Sincerely,
Sacha



Chuck Tingle

to me

21:56 (15 hours ago) ☆



this is a very good way thank you! can you send picutres of importance event? here are words about this way:

when buckaroos decided to leave with BREXIT seemed like a pretty dang bad situation, kind of seemed like the devils were saying 'hey buddy lets leave this party' but in reality they are secertly saying 'hey buddy lets leave this party because these other buckaroos showed up and i dont like them." but LIFE IS EVERYONES PARTY and this is an important thing to remember. we are all trotting togeather at this BIG TIME PARTY and it is better to make new friends then to leave when they show up because you dont know them yet. this is my thoughts on the way of BREXIT



Sometimes when people feel like the world is falling apart around them, all you can do is laugh. This is how one guy responded to the Brexit vote.

Chuck Tingle is the erotic fiction novella writer behind such classics as 'My Billionaire Triceratops Craves Gay Ass', 'Pounded In The Butt By Own Butt' and (this is true) the Hugo-nominated 'Space Raptor Butt Invasion'.

And now he has returned with 'Pounded by the Pound: Turned Gay by the Socioeconomic Implications of Britain Leaving the European Union'.

And we've read it.

Alex, the 'hero' in this tale, is accosted by a giant sentient pound coin and taken into the future. There, he is shown what the UK is like one month after the Brexit vote.

The only hope is that Alex and the massive, sentient coin make love in a hope to rewind time.

When Alex and the pound coin meets:



“Alex!” calls a voice from beyond the strange universal rift. I can barely make out the figures shape, but it appears to be a massive, sentient coin; one pound to be exact.

When Alex goes into the future:

“You’re in the future,” explains the giant sentient monetary instrument, “but it’s not safe here. Follow me!”

The pound takes off floating along the edge of the River, which I now see is blood red and bubbling like the lava of a molten volcano. Many of the once familiar buildings are gone, while others still burn in behemoth pylons of flame. Strange creatures circle the sky in red uniforms with large black hats, dressed the Queen’s Guard but with leathery reptilian wings and extended knifelike teeth.

“How long has it been?” I ask the living pound as we hustle along. “Seventy years? Eighty?”

“It’s been a month,” the sentient currency tells me.

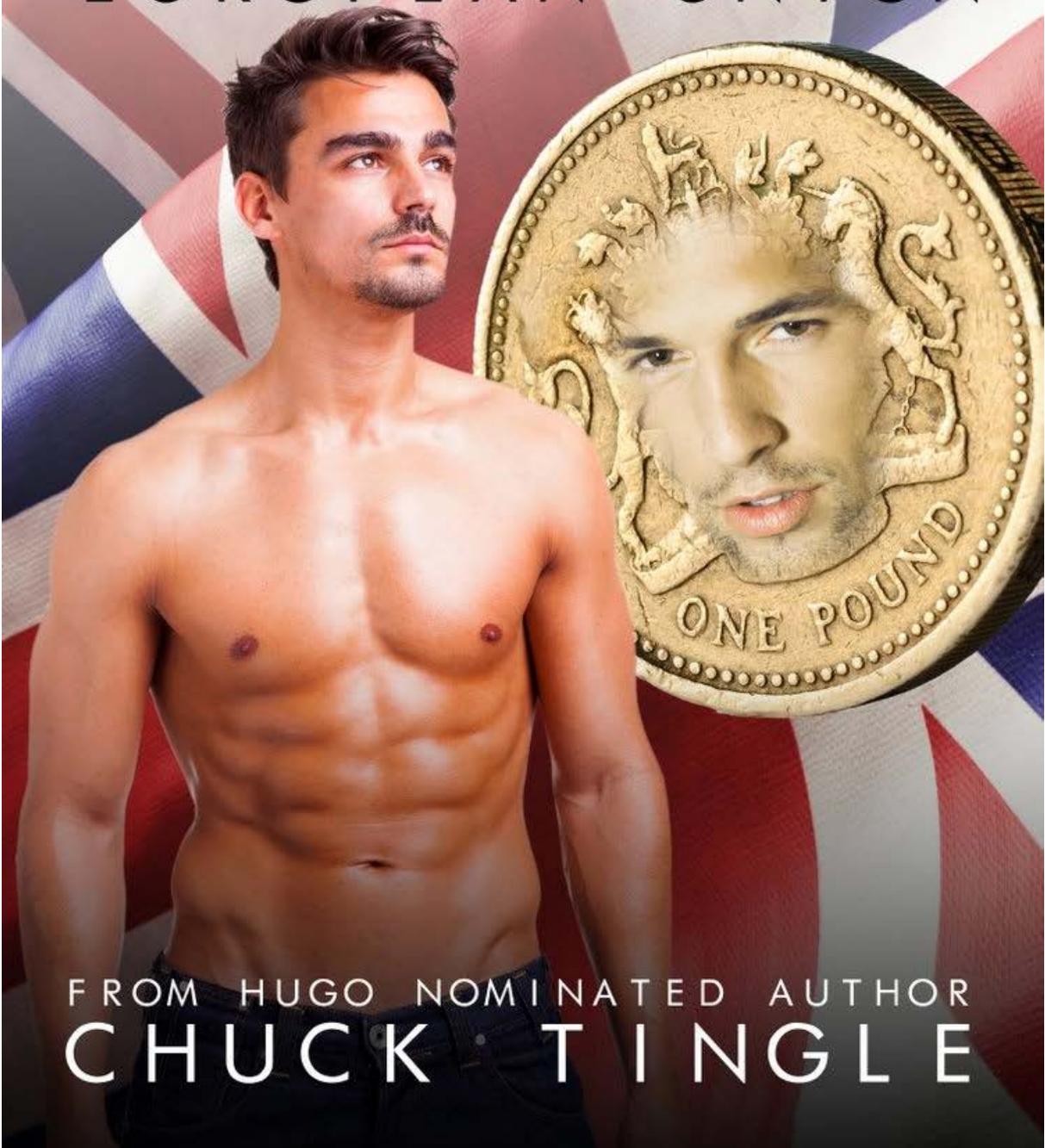
When Alex and the pound coin have sex:

“I want you to fuck me,” I tell the living coin. “I want you to fuck me up my tight gay ass, just like we’ve all fucked ourselves with this vote!”

As found on <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/gay-porn-version-brexite-vote-course/>

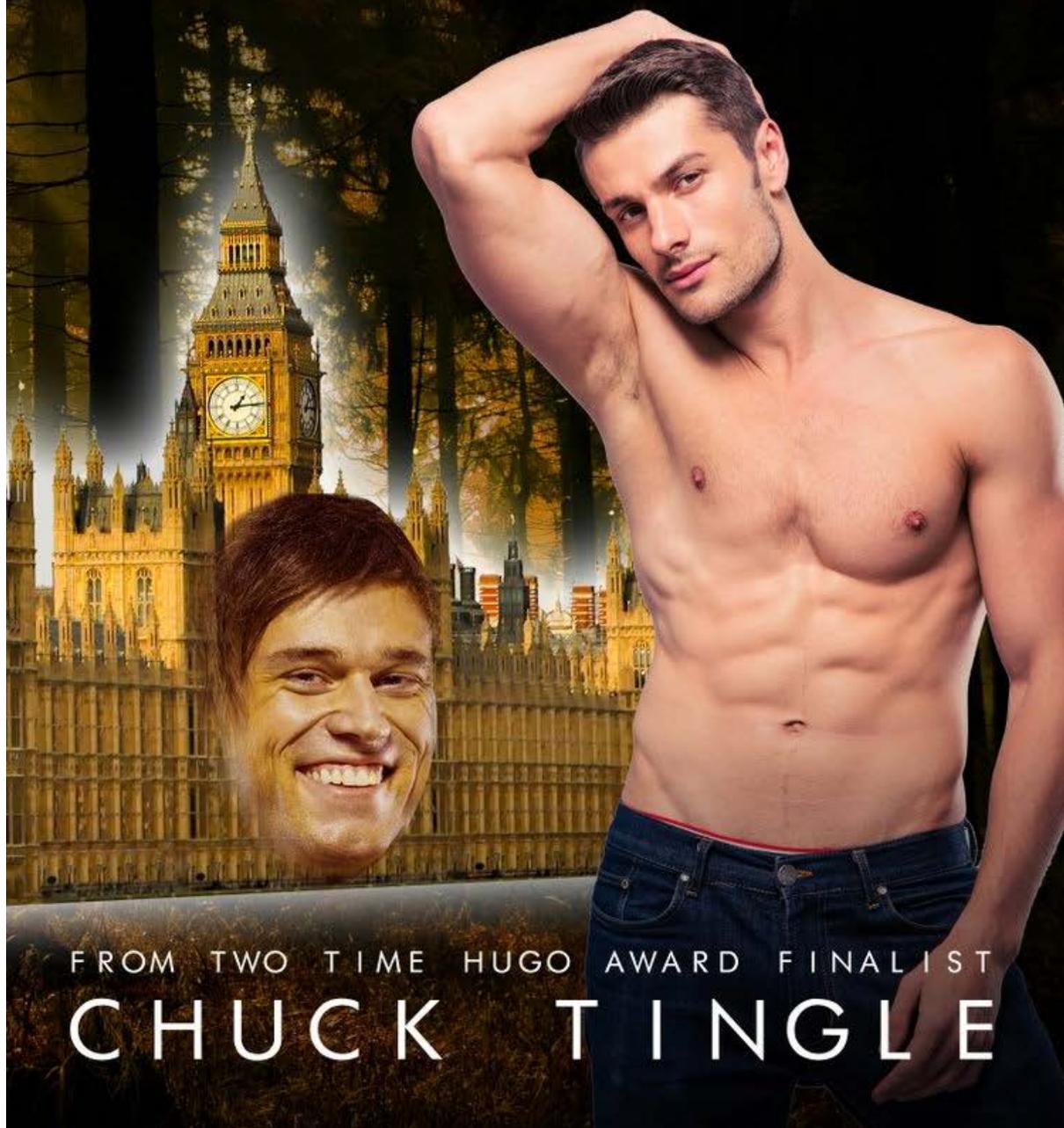
POUNDED BY THE
P O U N D

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FROM HUGO NOMINATED AUTHOR
CHUCK TINGLE

ENGLAND'S
ASS IS HAUNTED BY A
HUNG
PARLIAMENT



FROM TWO TIME HUGO AWARD FINALIST

CHUCK TINGLE

Hattie - Nigel Farage

26

somewhere in Wales



TheObserver

MAGAZINE

29.03.15



**“I DON'T
LISTEN
TO MUSIC,
WATCH
TV OR
READ”**

**Nigel Farage
interviewed by
Rachel Cooke**



Helping teenage mums [Rupert Everett in Venice](#) [Nigel Slater](#) [Kim Cattrall](#)

Jürgen - Five Pound Note

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Berlin, Germany

The consequences of the Brexit decision for Britain and the new five pound note

The new, plastic five pound note was brought into circulation on 13 September 2016, a couple of months after the Brexit referendum and exactly two months after the appointment of Theresa May as the new Prime Minister of the UK. It shows the Queen on one side and Winston Churchill against a background of the House of Parliament and his 1953 Nobel Prize in Literature medal on the other. Churchill's bust portrait sits on a banner of a quotation from his famous 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat' speech held on May 13 th , 1940 three days after his appointment as Prime minister of a national coalition government.

Although the decision by the Bank of England about what the new fiver should look like was made in 2013, its appearance in people's purses, its actual distribution so shortly after the referendum and the beginning of May's premiership seemed to me highly symbolic of what was going on and, in particular, of the atmosphere of embattlement and a national struggle for independence and even survival the new May government was trying to create. May's mantra-like repetition of the slogans: 'BREXIT means BREXIT' and 'No deal is better than a bad deal' are trying to conjure up a survival struggle scenario in which those who disagreed ran the risk of being called 'enemies of the people'.

I spent two months before the referendum, a month in the autumn of 2016 and another month in the Spring of 2017 in Oxford thus being able to follow the change in atmosphere quite closely, at first hand. Before the referendum, none of my friends and acquaintances expected their compatriots to vote for 'Leave'. When it happened, there was disbelief and frustration. But as the new character of the new government's attitudes to the result became clearer and the tone of the anti-EU rhetoric became more and more polemical, disbelief and frustration turned into anger and disgust. The pre-referendum demagoguery intensified, the scapegoating of the EU as the evil Other became the official line of the government of how to approach the upcoming negotiations and the image of an embattled nation was fostered with patriotic slogans.

Like myself, most Europeans across the Channel watched all this with growing disbelief. Anglophiles across the Continent did not recognize the country they had once loved and/or admired for its common sense, its pragmatism and its aversion to political radical statements and movements. But here we were, we anglophiles: watching with growing disbelief how the May government was trying to sweep Britain's real problems under a thin-worn carpet of outdated nationalism and past glories in an atmosphere of intimidation of everyone who dared to speak up against it. Altogether, the famous formula on the new fiver ironically highlights the absurdity of the historical reference. 'Blood, sweat and tears'? No, no! That's nothing but faked propaganda for an indefensibly stupid approach to a complex situation. Then, back in 1940, Britain was in real danger. Now, most Continental Europeans want the future relationships between The UK and the EU to be friendly and cooperative. So, the danger and enmity May has been conjuring up, are nothing but a cynical abuse of historical references to 'England's finest hour' and that sadly and regrettably so.

Prof Jürgen Schlaeger

Catherine - Assorted Items

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Derby, United Kingdom

Thoughts/experiences before the referendum Disbelief.

Surely not? This cannot be happening. Do people really (still) take ANY politicians seriously? If you have to put a timescale on it, you could say since 1945 the traditional parties – all of them – have made Britain a worse place to live in one way or another. Why isn't the Remain group making a stronger campaign? What is not happening there?! Disturbing posts on Facebook lead me to 'disconnecting' a few people who I knew from school. Should we really drive over there with our German-registered car after reading about the witch hunts concerning other Europeans? Apart from my family and a few work colleagues, I didn't talk to anyone about it in Britain. ProEuropeans didn't seem to want to advertise their side of the argument. The general atmosphere was too sensitive. I'm not allowed to vote in this referendum, nor in General Elections. I've been away too long. Nevertheless, I'm still passionate about what's happening there. Some people believed it would not happen. Some were preparing for the worst and applying for citizenship in the European country they live(d) in. I was advised to do the same.

Gedanken/Erfahrungen vor dem Referendum.

Oh nein! Das kann doch nicht wahr sein. Werden Politiker immer noch ernst genommen? Wenn Sie einen Zeitraum setzen wollen, könnte man sagen, dass die traditionellen Parteien Großbritannien seit 1945 zu einem Ort gemacht haben, in dem es sich auf die eine oder andere Art schlechter legen lässt. Warum macht die Remain-Gruppe keine große Kampagne? Was geht denn da schief? Beunruhigende Facebook-Posts führen mich dazu, einige Leute, die ich noch aus meiner Schulzeit kenne, von meiner Liste zu ‚löschen‘. Wollen wir da wirklich mit unserem deutschen Auto rüber fahren, nachdem wir von der Hexenjagd auf andere Europäer gelesen haben? Außer mit meiner Familie und einigen ArbeitskollegInnen habe ich mit keinem in Großbritannien darüber gesprochen. Ich hatte den Eindruck, dass die Remainer ihre Argumente in der Diskussion nicht laut sagen wollten. Das allgemeine Klima war zu aufgeheizt. Da ich schon zu lange nicht mehr in Großbritannien lebe, durfte ich in diesem Referendum nicht abstimmen. Auch bei den Parlamentswahlen darf ich nicht mitwählen. Trotzdem interessiert mich immer noch brennend, was dort passiert. Manche haben geglaubt, dass das nicht passieren würde. Andere haben sich auf das schlimmste vorbereitet und die Einbürgerung in dem europäischen Land, in dem sie leben, beantragt. Dies wurde auch mir empfohlen.

Thoughts/experiences directly after the referendum Disbelief.

A massive and deep sense of disappointment. Again, do people really take politicians seriously? Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage, at this time epitomise the worst of all politicians. I went home and met up with a few old school pals. The subject was avoided. Embarrassment? Don't want to get into arguments? Many people (who voted) are still in disbelief. It is as if they have woken up to the reality – but too late. An impression of naivety, blame directed at politicians for misinformation. Most of the information was party political propaganda or biased media articles. Had anyone made the effort to look elsewhere for information i.e. independent observers and experts such as the LSE or European reform groups? What will happen now? No one seems to know – not even the politicians who looked so sure and convincing with their personal campaigns. United Kingdom? = Deeply Divided Kingdom - in more ways than just this referendum.

Gedanken/Erfahrungen unmittelbar nach dem Referendum Ein tiefes und überwältigendes Gefühl der Enttäuschung.

Ich muss es noch mal sagen: Nehmen die Leute Politiker wirklich immer noch ernst? Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage – sie verkörpern das Schlimmste von allen Politikern. Ich flog nach Großbritannien, um

mich mit einigen alten Schulfreunden zu treffen. Das Thema wurde vermieden. Zu peinlich? Wollten sie sich nicht in Diskussionen einlassen? Viele Menschen (die gewählt haben) können es immer noch nicht glauben. Es ist so, als ob sie gerade in der Wirklichkeit erwacht sind – allerdings zu spät. Einen Eindruck von Naivität, Schuldzuweisungen an die Politiker, die falsche Informationen verbreitet haben Vieles, was man gelesen hat, war entweder Parteipropaganda oder voreingenommene/verfälschte Medienberichte. Hat sich denn irgendjemand mal die Mühe gemacht, woanders nach Informationen zu suchen? Z.B. bei unabhängigen Beobachtern und Experten wie von der LSE oder dem Centre for European Reform? Und was wird jetzt passieren? Niemand scheint das zu wissen – nicht einmal die die Politiker, die vor dem Referendum so selbstbewusst und überzeugend mit ihren persönlichen Kampagnen auftraten. Vereinigtes Königreich? = Tiefgespaltenes Königreich – und das nicht nur wegen des Referendums.

Thoughts/experiences - one year later Embarrassment and shame.

A bleak future? Hopefully not. Never mind ... they'll muddle through somehow. They always do. A small portion of the population, mainly in the south-east will get (even) richer, supported by the government. A large portion of the population will remain plagued by poverty, injustice, bad schooling, bad housing, class stigma, cruelty, crime – as they always have done. Nothing changes. Will anything change (for the better)? At this point in time it doesn't look that way. Especially with reports of a brain drain, long-established companies moving out of Britain to establish themselves on mainland Europe; British companies in Europe laying off their qualified staff; Europeans, long established in Britain, who have to return to their homelands whilst their children and spouse remain where they are. I remain nevertheless hopeful that this dark gloomy cloud eventually passes over without too much regret, sorrow and blame.

Gedanken/Erfahrungen - ein Jahr danach Peinlichkeiten und Schamgefühle.

Eine ungewisse Zukunft? Hoffentlich nicht. Na ja ... sie werden irgendwie durchkommen. Das machen sie immer. Einen kleinen Teil der Bevölkerung, hauptsächlich im südosten Englands wird, mit Unterstützung der Regierung, (noch) reicher werden. Einen größeren Teil der Bevölkerung wird weiterhin geplagt von Armut, Ungerechtigkeit, schlechte Bildung, schlechte Wohnverhältnisse, Klassengesellschaft, Grausamkeiten, Kriminalität – so wie das immer war. Es ändert sich nichts. Wird sich was (positives) ändern? Zu dieser Zeit sieht es nicht so aus. Besonders wenn man Mediaberichten liest über die Abwanderung von Wissenschaftlern, alteingesessene Firmen die nach Europa umziehen, britische Firmen in Europa die langjährige und qualifizierte Mitarbeiter entlassen; etablierte Europäer in Großbritannien, die zurück in ihrer Heimatländer umziehen müssen, während ihrer Ehepartner und Kinder bleiben. Ich bleibe trotzdem hoffnungsvoll, dass diese dunkle und finstere Wolke irgendwann vorüber geht ohne zu viel Bedauern, Traue, Anschuldigungen.



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Ann-Kathrin - Taekwondo medal

27

Wiesbaden, Germany

Via ERASMUS I spent a year abroad at the University of Kent in the Southeast of England, which dubs itself 'the European University'. There I joined the Taekwondo society and quickly made friends from the UK, Bulgaria, France, as well as friends from all over the world. These friendships and the international exchange led to a change of perception in distance. I felt that especially any European destination wasn't much more distant from my home country, Germany, than a short train-ride.

Brexit, on the other hand, feels like a strange dream. All of my UK friends I met that year voted to remain. Leaving the EU, it feels like the perceived distance towards the UK which my ERASMUS year made feel so small, has widened again. It feels as if the UK had decided to turn its back towards Europe. And from the experience I made at Kent, it feels like this is the wrong way to go, especially in times of globalization. Because from my experience, Italian, English, German students, training together, cheering each other on, and supporting one another, was what won me this medal. It was the strength of being part of a team that benefitted us all and which makes this memory so dear to me.



British Student Taekwondo Federation Nationals, Worcester 2015