

## One Hit Wonder

Robert Braile

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(Full disclosure, my best friend from High School with whom I have reconnected after almost 50 years.)

I've just finished reading **One Hit Wonder**, your engaging and eloquent memoir. After reading the first few chapters, I decided to read the remainder of the memoir a chapter a day, a way that reflected your structure for the memoir, where each chapter at once read like an independent memoir itself while contributing to the collective of the memoir. I read the chapters in the late afternoons, by the fire, looking forward to doing so all day.

As I wrote in my November 16 note, after having read the first few chapters, you're a very fine storyteller, gifted in crafting tales of your life and times. Each chapter was vividly reminiscent, recalling people, places, and experiences over the decades that have come to shape who you are. The characters you etched were colorful in person and evocative in message, each offering a way for you to express an underlying view of life through them, a lesson learned, a moral told. I was especially taken by your artful weave of family history into the narratives of these people, places, and experiences, your Irish New York history so similar to my Italian and Greek New York history, cultures you and I as young men were of and from, without ever having been to the countries of those cultures. We just breathed in those cultures from our parents and grandparents, the rituals and traditions, the perspectives and expectations.

I was also especially taken by your **buoyancy**, for lack of a better term. I've been trying to come up with a better term for what I'm trying to describe, but I keep returning to buoyancy. Your stories speak of good times and bad times in your life, offered with courageous honesty. Yet throughout your telling of these stories, you never allow the bad times to eclipse the good times, never descend into the bad times as if such times were the only times. Rather, you acknowledge the bad times as an inevitable part of life, in which we all have bad times as well as good times, the bad times to be expected and dealt with, rather than unexpected and defeated by. In other words, you remain buoyant, neither above water in the good times nor below water in the bad times, but instead suspended in water, partly above and partly below at once, emotionally, intellectually, psychologically, and experientially, much like you and I literally were while swimming in the Atlantic on that warm and sunny day in the late spring of our senior year, when we engaged in the senior tradition of cutting class to head down Smith's Point for the day; being the good boys we were, we were back to school in time for track practice.

It's a very impressive quality in writing and in life, such buoyancy. Well done, Kehoesan.