



# **Guts: Combat, Hell-raising, Cancer, Business Start-ups, and Undying Love: One American Guy's Reckless, Lucky Life**

*Robert Nylan*

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“This is a memoir: a package of boasts, false modesty, flawed memories, dropped names, outright errors, and embarrassing disclosures that I think are pretty neat—but may appall you, if you’re squeamish or have an orderly turn of mind.”—Robert Nylan

The thing is, Robert Nylan should have died several times in 1968. He was a goner in 2006, and 2007 as well, and yet he survived through a combination of dumb luck and sheer perseverance. Of course, as you read these words, he’s already bit the dust. But let’s not dwell on that.

A self-confessed reckless jerk, Nylan spent the last four years of his life grappling with Big Diseases (cancer, diabetes), an astonishing twelve broken bones, and ten surgeries. His lifetime total is twenty-four fractures, most of which resulted from a flagrant refusal to act his age—or anyone’s age, for that matter. And yet **Guts** is not a mere chronicle of injuries but a sharp and wry meditation on American Manhood.

Growing up in suburbia in the ’50s and ’60s, with a father who had worked on the atom bomb, Nylan was an immature kid who was always eager for attention. In college he became a slovenly, hard-partying fraternity brother who barely graduated. Then came the realization that he was going to have to go to Vietnam. A dramatic tour of duty came to an abrupt end with multiple wounds, leading him to grow up fast. It was then that he started the real risky business: business itself. Some ventures succeeded and some failed. He exercised feverishly and often displayed a complete lack of common sense. And then he got sick, inevitably, with colon cancer.

Hilarious, moving, and riveting, this is the life of a tough guy as seen through the scope of a national obsession with toughness. Whether he was facing Viet Cong as a platoon leader in Vietnam or doing battle with venture capitalists at home, Nylan never backed down from a good fight—and he had the many scars to prove it. In **Guts**, Robert Nylan writes with humor and precision about the travails—and glory—of manhood.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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#### **Sergio Hawkinson:**

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