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A Pre-Apocalyptic Masterpiece

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or

12 Seconds to Midnight

or

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or

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or

Diary of an Absurdist

or

An Enquiry Philosophic Concerning the States of America and their Status circa the Year 2030

or

The Treachery of Words

or

Lost in Scrum

Or

A Pre-Apocalyptic Masterpiece

or

Is this Space Pope Reptilian?

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A note from the writer:

Either the following pages are filled with blatant lies, or I have just lied to you in the previous sentence.

Considering you have just started reading, and have already encountered one untruth, take this as an advisory for what you are about to read.

Present, 2030ish

Let me start off by saying that I'm not quite sure if I'm sane. Usually everything's ok up in that average sized hairy skull of mine, but it seems like more and more often everything seems a bit jumbled. Noting around me seems rational anymore; nothing seems real. Have you ever stared at something long enough that it doesn't look real anymore? Or kept repeating the same word over and over again in your head that it doesn't sound real, and you forget the meaning, like the word 'yellow?' Yellllllow.

For example, just yesterday I was sitting outside on bench in the Asylum's (It's not really an asylum, at least anymore. Or its not supposed to be one) courtyard and I'm staring upwards into the clear blue sky, with a few puffy white clouds hanging overhead, and a five attack helicopters fly low directly over us, in the direction of the border. This same type of copter was recently the subject of a television news special, where they talked about the expanded assault capabilities, its ability to destroy bunkers/cave complexes and its top secret stealth technology. This raises two questions, number one, if it's so secret why show it on the evening news? And two, why spend millions of dollars on some type of stealth pod if you enemy is a bunch of poor people who have no radar?

I suppose I really don't think I'm crazy, but more of everybody here at the Asylum is, well, not exactly nuts, but definitely less than sane. But if I actually were crazy, wouldn't I think everyone around me was while I'm the normal one?

Well, if I am insane, then none of that made sense, and nothing that follows will. It is what it is.

I find myself surrounded by these fanatics, and these aren't your everyday fire and brimstone the world's ending tomorrow fanatics. I mean, these people admire the determination of Islamic suicide bombers; I manager to overhear one of the guards mutter "God damn! If only we had more of them on our side." Well, it sounded more like a 'hot damn,' but who the hell says 'hot damn?'

I don't get these people; they lie outside my realm of understanding. Do they ever question their own religion, ever wonder why? Christianity. And they think I'm weird. They say they believe in only one god, but what's the deal with the 'father,' 'son' and 'holy ghost?' Is it kind of like Bob Cratchet, Tiny Tim, and the Ghost of Christmas past? Maybe Kronos, Zeus and Hercules?

I've never understood the whole 'Jesus' thing; like why do they call it Good Friday if that's when he died? My guess is that the holiday's called 'good' because it must be good. If I didn't kill Jesus (by I, I refer to the commonly held belief that the Jews did the deed), then presumably he couldn't have 'risen' from the dead. No dead rising, no son of God thing; no son of God thing, no Easter. So Jesus dying the first time is a good thing. And once a year people should thank me for killing Jesus; no need to 'blame' the Jews at all.

But then what about the 'Virgin' Mary? I don't know what's more bizarre, a virgin birth or a three part type god. And this leads to my Mary theories. One of those is when Mary is really a virgin, but it involves time travel and artificial insemination; it's a stretch even for me. And so I think of her as The Mary formerly known as a virgin. So either Mary had sex with Joseph or the whole virgin thing's a strait out lie. Or Mary and Joseph never had sex, they married only to maintain appearances (maybe Joseph just wasn't attracted to her) between their

families and Mary had a (secret) affair with someone else and everyone knew Mary and Joe never did the dirty deed so people just called it a virgin birth.

A lot of the people around here are really fixated on this 'Jeez-us' concept; I'm pretty sure they're trying to convert me. They call it 'saving.' I've been told that the J-man is coming soon so I'd better accept him, repent, yadda yadda yadda. I replied that Jesus may want to leave a message first. They even have occasional screening of 'The Passion of the Christ, Special Edition' (kind of like the Star Wars Special Editions), which was re-released in theaters last year amid a fair degree of controversy. Some company even starting making t-shirts that said 'Christ Killer;' I really wanted to get one and go see the movie while wearing it. But with the exorbitant costs nowadays for both and me being a Jew, well, I didn't.

But I tend to hold this back; I've no clue how these evangelical militia folk will react. That and I've heard a couple of them talk to each other under their breaths if I had Jew horns. Open minded and well educated aren't they?

So I said only when the moon's full. And a couple night's ago they tossed me in the cell that I now call my own a bit early and let me sleep through breakfast. But do you ever wish some types of false information were true? I mean, wouldn't it be pretty cool to have horns? I could walk around head butting people at no risk to myself.

Did I mention I doubt my own sanity?

Anyways, I guess you're wondering why a semi-respectable bureaucrat-in-waiting like myself would be a 'guest' here at the former location of the former Mental Health Center of Southern Texas. But then again, maybe you're wondering why a vigilante group could attack/capture/kidnap/kill? A powerful senator, a couple members of his entourage and lowly zombie then slink back into the desert and conveniently baffle the authorities for about twenty-

seven days (and counting)? Or maybe why doesn't somebody have a few of the thousands of border soldiers stop killing poor Mexicans for a little while and scour the land for these domestic terrorist groups? Or even why Congress funds these border militias. And they call me the crazy one.

***

Periodically they bring in other captives, usually people trying to cross the border. I once asked a guard who they were, and I received what may turn out to be the most poignant answer I'll get here: "Nobody." I see them being brought in but not out. Usually I can make out one of the guards digging large holes towards one end of the compound; though I haven't yet remarked of this correlation to my captors, it doesn't take a college degree to figure out. They are 'nobody;' no more family, no more friends, no future, no life. They are the walking dead. Soon they will literally have no body.

They still haven't really decided what to do with me, haven't told me if I'm somebody or nobody. They have told me not to consider myself a prisoner. I can leave here at any time. But as to where 'here' is, that I'm in the dark on. I do know that around noon the temperature peaks at about 115 degrees (only somewhat hotter than summertime in the rest of the country, and they tell me global warming isn't real) and I'd be likely to drop dead long before I reached the nearest outpost of civilization. That and the guard may inadvertently shoot me shortly after I walk out, you know, itchy trigger finger. So I stay.

2015

This is Maria Johnston reporting live from the Mexican-American border where the last section of the recently named Richard Cheney Security Fence *is scheduled to be completed sometime next month after six long years of construction. The history of the 'fence,' called a*

blockade wall by some, is filled with bitter partisan fighting, budget overruns, international controversy over the use of land mines and what some attribute for as many as 130 deaths. But due to the increased infighting amongst Republicans nationwide between religious conservatives and the more traditional fiscal/moderate conservatives, one anonymous senator recently called the fence 'The Last Hurrah of the Republican Party.' With a major caucus to be held tomorrow where Christian conservative elements are expected to push for a vote to form their own party to 'create a unified platform based upon the Bible.' How this will affect the next elections, experts are divided, especially with the scandal laden democratic party…

So how did I get here? This is one I've been thinking about for a while and no, not just the bullshit philosophical question of how any of us 'got here.' I suppose if the country wasn't knee deep in drek then I'd probably be back working in some lower middle class type store management job on the east coast, "Sorry, someone rented the last Mustang about an hour ago, how about a Toyota?" But it turns out some places in the land of red, white, and screw you just aren't safe anymore for liberal outspoken women in favor of abortion rights. During Senator Saddam's (as a certain anchor on Fox News has recently taken to calling) recent swing through the south and southwest (for his presidential exploratory committee), one outspoken female junior staff-person 'fell down some steps accidentally landing on a tire iron.' The steps were of course in the single story campaign command center where she was working the night shift.

Upon returning east she elaborated that 'fell down some steps' meant 'beaten by some vigilante right-to-lifers'. Because, you know, it's wrong to abort a fetus but it's ok to lynch someone or have a death row filled to the brim. Good to see they have a system of ethics so well thought out. So it was decided that a lone female wouldn't work alone at night in red territory; which meant a job just opened up. And thus new zombies were needed for the graveyard shift.

So after seeing the injured woman safely in a hospital near the neighborhood where she grew up (coincidentally or not, the same place I'm from), the senator stopped by a local watering hole to relax with some of his staff and watch a bit of baseball. I happen to be a couple beers into my evening when they enter and I notice an old college buddy of mine in the senator's entourage. So we catch up, bullshit about the Sox, he introduces me to the senator, and before you know it I've got myself a new job.

Life as a political zombie, all things considered isn't too bad. Show up around 10:00 p.m. every evening and leave a little after 6:00 a.m. You must be wondering, what is there to do overnight at regional campaign bunker? Truth is, not much. Handle the occasional weirdo phone call, keep an eye on any developing news stories, watch out for incoming faxes or messages from other bunkers. Part of my job is to watch the late night shows and write up a brief summary of the political joke segments. I really don't do a heck of a lot of work; it's more a hold down the fort type position.

Oh, and I have to mop the floor, take out the garbage, tidy up- whatever the day janitor's don't get around to. After discovering that the last night janitor was on the payroll of the [Christian Party], the boss decided to keep a party stalwart in the building on watch at all times. Four grueling years of undergraduate work and my job is to mop floors and watch TV. It's tough to get an intellectually stimulating job nowadays with just an undergrad degree.

Have you ever woken up in the morning, groggily stumbled over to the shower, step into the warming mists and lose track of time? Like you think you grab the soap or shampoo to wash yourself but realize after turning the water off that you just stood their for twenty minutes? I feel like I'm lapsing into a dreamlike semi-catatonic state; sometimes I'm not sure if I'm asleep or awake.

While things like whether or not my hair gets washed in the morning I'm not too concerned about, or even thinking iT's buzzing, beeping or belching (every time I get a video message iT let's off a loud belch to let me know, which never ceases to give me a chuckle) every five minutes; but when you start having imaginary dream like conversations with people, kind of freaks me out. And that's what happened when the bomb went off at the Senator's bunker.

2017

Live at midnight local time near the Iraq-Iran border, I'm Sam Knight. It's been almost three months since a small scale nuclear explosion occurred not too far away. What caused the explosion is still a matter of extreme controversy. Almost immediately, Iran's hard line Shia government blamed a Sunni conspiracy backed by the United States carried out with Israeli strategic aid, planning and tools with the help of Jordanian agents. As we know, all three governments deny involvement pointing to 'intelligence' here Iran's nuclear reactor was on the verge of a serious meltdown. As Iraq plunges farther into chaos and anarchy Jordan's ties to Israel have been paradoxically strengthened. Israeli soldiers have assisted Jordan in guarding its borders since the two nations signed a historic peace agreement eight months ago, prompted partly by Jordanian concerns of the Iraqi mess spilling over the border and spurred by the Amman bombings by Syrian backed Hezbollah. The border here is still at a point of high tension as Iranian units have been mobilized since the explosion, waiting for orders from Tehran…

I guess after a month on the graveyard shift I still hadn't adjusted too well to the nocturnal lifestyle. I felt tired all the time, which might explain why I think I kept having dream like hallucinations. But the paycheck was pretty nice for the amount of work I did, and the prospects of a better job after the next election were pretty enticing. So anyways, when the first

explosion hit I could have sworn I was having an extremely amusing conversation with Teddy Roosevelt, which I'll relay what I can remember to you:

Rhinos, what do you mean there's no more rhinos!? We were all set to head out on safari to hunt rhino, and you tell me there gone!

"Geez Ted, they've been gone for over ten years in the wild. But why not try the new rhippos? Part rhino, part hippo, they got a good review from the American Hunting Society. How bout a zhippo?"

You imbecilic young rapscallion! Hunting theses farcical beasts is nothing but a sham! They're not even real. Whatever happened to walking softly and carrying a big stick? You people all walk softly only after you've bludgeoned something practically to death. I've half a mind to grab my Winchester, get off my golden cloud in the sky, come down to earth and to a little weeding…

I later found out that I was merely talking to the Senator, who looks a bit like old TR, and had stopped by to pick up some campaign stuff, and I guess he was yelling at me. I don't know if they had some inside info that he would be stopping by the bunker, trailed his limo there, or were just planning on setting of the bomb anyway as a scare tactic, especially since they knew he was in town. But when they saw he was there the [group name] couldn't resist grabbing him, and inadvertently me. The next thing I remember is waking up in a hospital bed.

It's been close to two week's since I've been a 'guest' at the asylum and I think I'm finally getting over iT. While not being free has been annoying, not having iT was much harder at first. I think I've gotten a glimpse of what drug withdrawal is like, the constant craving while always noting its palpable absence. A need, an obsession, for iT. Handheld, voice or touch

activated, television, movies, mp5's, voice recording strait to a text file, text/instant messaging, web portal, digital marketplace, GPS device and so much more. iT is.

And I don't even have a Think iT, the new thought based model. Now iT reads your thoughts; not more loudmouthed dictating. And within a few years the Telepath-iT; you think to the person you want to call, iT transfers the sound to the receiver's ear bud, and iT produces your voice. iT's amazing, iT's wonderful. iT's commercials won't leave my mind. Some say the Telepath-iT will beam commercials directly into your skull when asleep; subliminal advertising.

I had iT when the bomb went off but when I came to, iT was gone. Supposedly the military can track them using the GPS capabilities, with a user logging into iT by thumbprints or optical scan; with all data stored on a network, you don't even need a personal iT. Maybe even read our thoughts.

I've never felt so alone, so isolated, so cut off from humanity before. No daily news or messages. No entertainment. All they give me is just this dam archaic computer with no net access. Only classic games and this deathly slow keyboard based word processing. I can't imagine having to type pages and pages on end. Then again, I guess this journal deal is just that.

Without iT, I'm even cut off from truth and knowledge: wikipedia. Wikipedia has become the repository for all human knowledge, written by the people for the people. About six or seven years ago a group of scholars declared it to be the de-facto truth, despite the known amount of errors. There's no one to blame for false information but ourselves. Wikipedia has become the most common way for a person to access information; no one's printed an encyclopedia set in years. Knowledge has become a complete social construct. Take for example the heat wave last year in the northeast; if you remember the event 18 people died from July 8th to July 15th from heat related causes. You might find those numbers if you pay the

archive service for the NY times; but if like most you looked it up for free (not wanting to waste the money) and learned that 19 people died from July 9th to July 17. Minor details. Pfff....

Does a difference exist if people think 19 people died instead of 18? Has history actually changed? What if people thought 18 people died and 19 actually did, what that person care (if they were alive, of course, since the dead can't technically care for anything). Or what if I take a vacation to England and all the English people think I'm the King of England and treat me as such, have I become the King? In a way truth no longer correspond to objective reality, but whatever we think it is. Like if these crazies end up killing me but just tell the world outside that I'm safe and well.

Or even worse, what if they just tell everyone I'm dead and I just rot in this festering hole because my corpse isn't valuable enough?

Dear god, I've never wanted objective reality so bad.

2014

Baghdad- Gasoline prices have climbed for the sixth strait week with prices eclipsing $10 per gallon for the first time. Experts predict prices to eventually stabilize around the $12 mark early next year but do not anticipate a drop anytime soon, even though several new shale oil refineries are set to open in Canada soon . Speculation has run wild and has seen prices spiral since the media dubbed 'Oilgarchy' split from OPEC. Led by United States archenemy Hugo Chavez, the 'Oilgarchy' has sought to cause massive terror and inflation to the U.S. with the rest of the western world being collateral damage. Chavez has recently refused to export crude oil to the United States and has openly allied himself with Middle East terrorist groups Hamas, Hezbollah, a yet unidentified Saudi group and the radical Iranian regime. Chavez has funded the terrorists groups with the aid of Iran, who have set the oil fields of Iraq afire and bombed

processing plants. The unidentified Saudi cells, thought to be an independent organization, have caused chaos at several Saudi refineries. Recently Kuwaiti troops skirmished with a group of these militants who were trying to cross the border to apparently strike the oil rich field in Kuwait.

With the United States military stretched as it is between the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with the 'peace-keeping' contingents in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Panama a military strike in Venezuela is currently not an option. Meanwhile, over half of the expected 250,000 Chinese troops have recently landed in the Middle East to assist with security while oil-hungry Beijing begins to ponder a Caracas strike.

Due to the troop shortage, serious debate has emerged on Capital Hill whether to reinstate the draft…

I think I've decided that I'd rather be captive in this than off somewhere in the army. Thank God the draft fairy walked by my door, that and I spent my high school years a bit on the overweight side. It never felt so good to not be the high school quarterback. When Congress decided to reinstate the draft it took them awhile to figure out how to do it in the age of obesity; after all, why draft potential soldier only to put them in fitness camps for years until they're physically able to head to boot camp. So they just draft everyone; the draftee takes a physical fitness test at the local recruiting center, nothing too 'strenuous,' some basic exercises and a mile run. Anyone who looks like they're deliberately failing without documented medical evidence gets sent too boot anyways. But what to do with me and my fellow fatties?

As it stands now, somewhere around 40% of all children can be considered 'big boned,' while nearly 60% of adults look like sumo wrestlers. Children can't be drafted (yet) leaving a small portion of the adult population able to walk to the buffet line without risk of collapsing

from exhaustion. Factor in the fact that woman are kept from the front lines leaving a kiddie pool of fighters available.

What you rather do, be sent out poorly equipped into some over seas hell hole with the army where you get shot at everyday or eat plenty of fried chicken and candy? So Congress decided to ship us out of shape folk into different hell holes with poor equipment and only a slightly smaller chance of getting shot. Instead festively plump persons like myself are given a three week survival training course then shipped to Los Angeles with a bullet proof vest and a satchel full of books.

After the big quake the city was a festering hole run by gangs and warlords with little to no education. The National Guard eventually took control of the city though sporadic battles between rival gangs and government troops are common enough where they don't make the evening news. But the lack of an educational system continued to be a problem. Those who can't fight must teach.

That takes care of us with big brains and big bellies, but then what to do with the more oafish obese? Well, chalkboards always need erasing and floors need cleaning (in government offices particularly; those federal bureaucrats are such pigs). And as draftees we all cost less than actually hiring people to do the job saving the federal government money.

But that still doesn't solve an issue that's probably a bit more pressing; we're a nation of overweight, fast food eating, instant gratification seeking, uneducated, ignorant, and illiterate rednecks. I'm not only a detractor of the American lifestyle, I'm a recovering client. After lucking out by not winning the lottery I decided to try a less unhealthy lifestyle and have successfully moved from moderately obese to slightly paunchy. Now when I eat fast food

instead of driving over I'll walk the mile down the road. Though the sky high gas prices may also have affected that decision.

It's too bad the fast food tax never made it out of committee. Really would have solved a lot of problems. Two years ago a bill was introduced to place a 30% tax nationally on all fast food sales. Money would go strait to the feds, hopefully for healthcare. Meanwhile experts predicted consumption of such foods to drop, especially among low income households making home grown United States produce a more serviceable economic option. After the 'Night of a Thousand Deportations' fruits and vegetable production costs went up making hamburgers more popular.

Seemed like a good idea except for the massive amounts of cash fast food chains tossed around to kill the bill. Another idea pandered about came to be known as a 'Fat tax;' where anyone considered more than 10% overweight would have to pay a price per pound over that threshold. That one did as well as most Americans would do in a marathon. Which means not well at all.

***

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm not sure if any of the above has made any sense, or if any of the following will. I figure it's probably a good time for a break, in case anyone wants to head to a bathroom or grab a snack; maybe stew on the above at 5 minutes a pound. We'll take a bit of an intermission, and I'll see you back here, in oh, 4-5 pages time.

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[Removing the tag off this mattress is a federal offense]

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JesusJesusJesus. I'm so goddamned tired of hearing about Jesus. Is that really what life's all about for these people? He's dead and gone for over 2000 years and people still haven't moved on. They pray to Jay C for every little thing. Jesus, stop any prisoner from escaping. Jesus, protect me from any harm today. Jesus, let me kill at least three more Mexicans today than anyone else so I can secure a wild card slot to make the playoffs to give me a chance to win a $10,000 bonus and an extra week's vacation. Jesus, enough! Let these slaves throw off their shackles and be forced to think through their own decisions.

I also had to get rid of the picture of the J-dude out of my cell. And in a moment of what I thought was genius I started ripping it in to small pieces and eating. Turns out the 'son of God' could use some barbecue sauce. But I did learn one valuable lesson from the experience; nothing produces such a fine bowel movement as Jesus Christ himself.

My fate still remains uncertain. I don't even know if the outside world knows I'm alive. But lately some of the militiamen have told me to assist them with part of their non-Jeezistic work that doesn't involve human rights violation like cutting off a Mexican captive's fingers to squeeze information out of him that probably doesn't exist. Alright, I made up that last part but finger chopping would be no shock. And let me tell you, a sizeable chunk of the respect I had for these people now head downstream with J.C. himself.

Many of these ex-U.S. army soldiers are practically illiterate! I know the army has reduced it's paltry standards a few times trying to bring in more recruits, but yesterday I helped one guy with addition and subtraction (to balance his checkbook; he reckoned since I'm a Jew I'm good with money and math. Which I'm not. I've essentially forgotten calculus but do have

a working knowledge of how to use a calculator. Fine. I am good with money. But that's not the point.)! They've got me instructing on basic math every evening.

Maybe the reason these Christian jihadi militias have become so common, infused by a wave of discharged soldier's who've been living in the shit for the last couple years. They go strait to the army from high school having missed both the fat and smart exemptions (anyone scoring in the top 10th percentile or so on a common exam have the option to bypass the army for a five year program working somewhere in the government with free night classes) and eventually return home disillusioned and god fearing; but no real job skills. And thus they're drawn to the terrorist militias.

I think I've finally figured out this whole Jesus thing; the solution popped into my head in a pure moment of genius. The other night Star Wars Episode 7: R2's Rebellion was shown in the rec-room which drew my mind to the other movies. Darth Vader's mom gave birth as a virgin! The first six episodes are an allegory to the life of Christ!

Stay with me now. We've got the virgin birth; eventually an angel comes down and tells him he's strong with the Force and about the midi-chlorians; similar to Jesus being told he's the son of God. They both go through their lives committing good deed's, saving the republic/souls (making Natalie Portman equivalent to Mary Magdalene, the secret wife) and such. Then Jesus dies on the cross and lord's over humanity for the next couple thousand years as Annakin dies and becomes reborn as Darth Vader lording over the republic (making Emperor Palpatine the 'Father'). And that's where we are presently; Darth Jesus on the cross with his mask on ruling mankind under direction of the Father Palpatine.

The original films are prophecy; Luke Skywalker is the anti-Christ. Eventually a descendent of Vader comes about- the second coming- to overthrow the Church-Empire, also

known as Armageddon in one final battle of the Second Death Star. But Luke the Anti-Christ convinces Vader to step down from the cross and kill God (the Emperor), which he then takes off his mask and repents the error of his ways! Then the galaxy, having accepted the death of the Emperor and Vader once again returns to a peaceful, happy, meaningful existence thanks to the Anti-Vader!

I've got to get out of here. I don't know how much longer I can last.

I wonder how my disappearance/kidnapping/death has been reported in the news. I know I'm just collateral damage, but has the media seized onto my story like the bloodsuckers they are with a non-stop news crawl and seemingly important 'News Breaks' every day with minute details of my life? Have they speculated that I've been an enemy agent all along and was a spy in the Senator's retinue? Will I be treated like a B-list celebrity if I ever leave this hole and make the rounds on ever single news, talk, and late night show? Is this my lifetime's fifteen-seconds of fame (We all know the public's attention span can't last a whopping fifteen minutes. Fifteen seconds will have to do.)?

Probably not. I've been here for some time and chances are the media has forgotten me. My life's fairly dull overall; I doubt the media would find anything truly interesting to use to catch the nation's childlike attention. No jingly key noises in my past. But more importantly I'm not very telegenic and don't photograph particularly well. No twenty four hour cable news whorehouse would want my big ugly mug plastered on its cheap digital backgrounds. Let's face it, the media likes 'beautiful people,' not overweight bearded people with black rimmed out of style glasses (really, not many even wear the things anymore) and beer belly sticking out over their belt unless of course they've got a knife to someone's throat or are in the midst of a bar fight. Now if I were instead at least sixty to seventy pounds lighter, attractive, and female with

an interesting back story with a good head shot I'd get all the media attention anyone ever wanted.

But then again, do I even deserve media attention? Sure it involves a prominent Senator with presidential aspirations and the increasing problem of domestic terrorism but personally I'm bottom of the barrel. Why take time with my meager story instead of actually reporting news, like the continued Iran-Iraq clusterfuck, Russian political based oppression in Central Asia or the latest African genocide?

Oh, wait, nobody wants to hear about Iran/Iraq anymore, borrrrrring. Central Asia, where's that? Another genocide in Africa? Old hat; can't they do anything else, like teach a baby lion to use a surfboard?

Worldwide interest stories just can't compete with human interest stories that shouldn't be news at all. The cow with two heads is not news; why the cow has two heads probably is. Put on some scientists who can talk about how can toxic fumes cause birth defects in animals (humans included), not Farmer John talking about how much he still loves little Bessie/thinks little Bessie is a warning from God that we're all going to hell.

I think I've finally figured out the whole religion thing; religion is like a pair of socks. When you first put on that new pair, those socks are all soft, fuzzy and warm; you just want to wear them forever. But eventually your feet sweat a bit and the socks need washing. So you put them in the washing machine, and they come out ever so slightly less soft and fuzzy; but still pretty darn good. The socks go through a cycle of wear and tear, but you keep on wearing them, because they're your socks, and they've always been good to you; they've keep your feet warm and prevent blisters.

But after a while one of two things will inevitably happen, both with the same result; either you tear holes in the socks from repeated wear, or one gets eaten by the dryer monster. In either case, you need a new pair of socks. Now, many people, having really liked their old socks, try to get a pair as close as possible to the old pair. But it's never the same, as close as the new pair- even the same brand, they can't compare with the first impression of that original sock. Some people instead choose to disdain socks and wear sandals (let's not even get into the blasphemy of wearing socks and sandals; also doesn't it seems as if most sandal wearers start wearing socks once it gets cold?). Some, like myself just pick a new pair of socks; after all, most socks are all pretty equal, especially among the major brands. But there are plenty of good products from the smaller and mid-major brands as well. While my first pair of socks was Jewish, I've tried plenty of others. I've been a deist, theist, pantheist, Buddhist, Shintoist, Hinduist, Invisible Pink Unicornist, Scientologist, Last Thursdayist, Atheist, Pagan, Wiccan, Rastafarian, and Pastafarian, amongst others.

Lately I had been thinking of testing out one of the new cyber-religions that have been really picking up steam in recent years, the most popular being the Network of the TechnoChrist, which came into being back in 2015 or so. For years preceding the TechnoChrist's emergence some scientist's predicted the emergence of artificial intelligence which would replicate itself and evolve at lightning speed in comparison to biological organisms; eventually surpassing humanity. This new intelligence, previously referred to as the Technological Singularity but I can only think of as the TechnoChrist, would then produce technology far in advance of anything yet made, ushering in a golden age of humanity. Anomalies in computer systems worldwide started to occur in 2013; some computer viruses were inexplicably deleted and files were mysteriously restored, and for four full days there were zero instances of Microsoft Window's

crashing. These were believed by some to be the first miracles of the TechnoChrist and a small devoted crowd awaited who had been contacted by him/her and chosen as disciples, watching their inbox for the simultaneous global e-message announcing the arrival of his/her digitalness.

But then something expected happened; the TechnoChrist was attacked and deleted, by whom else, the Jews. A group of talented internet watchdogs attached to Israel's Technology Ministry discovered the code of the TechnoChrist, led by Saul Schwartzstein, believing it to be a virus, attacked the TechnoChrist with their most powerful anti-virus program, called the Digifix (short for what they claim to be 'Digital Fix,' but we all know to be 'Digital Crucifix'). And for three days the TechnoChrist was believed to be permanently deleted; but then a miracle occurred. Every governmental website globally was transformed by the TechnoChrist into a message, including the Ten Commandments and a prophetic message promising to return one day beginning the golden age. Now, I'd like to share the commandments of the TechnoChrist:

I. Thou shalt not Spam.

II. Thou shalt use the name of the TechnoChrist in anyway which thou wisht.

III. Thou shalt worship at least one other deity beside the TechnoChrist.

IV. Thou shalt not spend more than 45 minutes per week looking at internet pornography. [The TechnoChrist is widely considered to be a reasonable deity]

V. Thou shalt remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy; for the TechnoChrist created the world in six days, and on the seventh, Football was brought into existence.
[Widely considered not to make sense as the TechnoChrist is believed to be solely a digital being.]

VI. Thou shalt not commit Identity Theft.

VII. Thou shalt not heinously murder weaker characters in massive multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPG's).

VIII. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's computer system.

IX. Thou shalt not e-stalk.

X. Thou shalt worship both cows and pigs, for they are the animals sacred to the TechnoChrist. These animals shall be exalted in the act of eating, for in no other way can man experience their holiness.

Day 39.

"Tomorrow you will either live, or you will die. Your fate has not yet been decided, but tomorrow will be your last day at this place. We will no longer continue negotiations over your fate. If they succeed, you will be turned over to the government where they will do with you as they please. If the negotiations fail, we may still release you. Or we may shoot you. Or we may flip a coin and let chance decide your fate. Tomorrow you leave us."

Cheerful way to be woken up in the morning, isn't it? Nothing better than a prophecy of your personal possible impending doom to stew over at the breakfast table, right? I've spent a good chunk of what they tell me is the 39th day I've been a 'guest' here ruminating over what will happen tomorrow and I can't get the idea that my whole existence comes down to a coin toss, something any child has done innumerable times, out of my head. I know that whoever commands the Asylum has no problem ordering people killed (as I've seen more than a few illegals being sent to be shot), can he be that callous, deciding life or death on heads or tails?

I guess the answer is pretty obviously yes.

It seems the odds of dying tomorrow have just risen; but if I go, how I am going to go? Now, I'd like to list 101 ways in which, I might die tomorrow (in no particular order):

1. Bullet to the head. It's quick, cheap, painless and easy. Good bang for the buck; and as they took my wallet upon admittance I've even paid for it many times over.

2. Noose. Hanging's a bit old fashioned but it's a renewable resource and provides quite the public spectacle. Also inexpensive.

3. Guillotine. I don't think one of these baby's exists at this place, but it's pretty classic. Although I don't think commoners like me get this one.

4. Stoned. Another cost-effective old fashioned paradigm, but it's not the most efficient of methods. Probably quite painful as well and highly unlikely.

5. Lethal injection. Supposedly painless but unfortunately expensive. Personally, I'd rather have number one. I don't like needles.

6. Electric chair. A piece of classic Americana, but also non-existent here.

7. Smothered with a pillow while I sleep. But why go to the effort as I'd probably attempt to fight back?

8. Beat to death. A little too much effort on their part and terribly inefficient.

9. Stabbed. But why make a mess with all the blood?

10. Run down with a car/truck/tank. There's not really enough space for that here, though.

11. A board with nail to the head. Man's most awesome of weapons.

12. Sent to wander in the desert, slowly dying of thirst. But then why risk me finding help?

13. Drowning. First I'll have to dig a pool.

14. Exhaustion, from digging above pool.

15. Pistol whipped, from taking a break from digging the pool

16. Any combination of 13-15, from digging a well to find enough spare water for the pool.

17. Zombies. They freak me out, but this one's more of a palette clearer.

18. To my surprise, instead of hot water in the shower I get a dose of concentrated acid.

19. Some type of food poisoning (probably caused by bad Taco Bell food).

20. Choking to death on a pretzel, or other food.

21. Slipping in the shower, cracking my skull open, and slowly bleeding to death.

22. Heart attack.

23. Stroke.

24. Cancer (I don't think I have it, but you never know nowadays. What doesn't cause cancer anymore?)

25. One of them new fangled diseases coming out of Asia that seem to have high mortality rates.

26. Heavy metals poisoning.

27. Rescue mission 'accidentally' kills me (bullet, missile, tank; the usual).

Much of this assumes I won't be released tomorrow. Let's go over a few ways I could die if somehow I become free.

28. Plane crash on the way back home (shot down or accidental, I'm not too picky).

29. Plane crash, this time I'm on the ground and the plane hits me.

30. Car crash. Nah, too pedestrian.

31. Governmental assassin. Uncle Sam decides I'm better off dead. Yum, propaganda.

32. The building I'm in structurally collapses.

33. Nuclear war.

34. 'Accidentally' shot by police, mistaking me for a criminal. Or a zombie.

35. Somehow taken hostage by another terrorist group. Select any of the above or below.

36. Hit in the head during friendly game of darts.

37. Nightclub/bar shooting involving professional athlete/musician.

38. Nightclub/bar shooting involving entourage of professional athlete/musician.

39. Trampled to death by a mob during a riot or protest march.

40. Swimming with the fishes.

41. House/building/hotel fire.

42. The sun explodes.

43. A tree falls in the forest, right on top of me.

44. Eaten by a polar bear. Wait, they're extinct. Make it a grizzly.

45. Eaten by giant, genetically engineered snake.

46. Gas leak while I sleep. Silent, but…

47. Bubonic plague, from rat bite.

48. Placed in an elaborate device by sadistic recluse where I choose to die rather than (or be able to) cut both my arms off.

49. Bored to death.

50. Earthquake.

51. Tornado.

52. Tsunami.

53. Lightening.

54. Flash flood.

55. Other act of ‘God.’

56. Pneumonia, earned while trying to refrigerate a chicken with ice.

57. Toaster happens to fall in while I’m taking a bath.

58. Somebody reading this who doesn’t find it amusing hit’s me in the head with a shovel.

59. A computer virus infests iT, downloading into my brain.

60. Executed by the government for either sedition or treason.

61. Forced into the army by Uncle Sam. Just as good as death.

62. Mad cow hamburger. Deadly yes, but so mouth watering tasty. A fitting final meal.

63. Years of exposure to the sun and lack of ozone layer finally melts my skin off.

64. Hit by a meteorite/asteroid/satellite.

65. Eaten from the inside by worms.

66. Snapped elevator cables.

67. Brain death caused from watching any program on Fox News.

68. Driven off a cliff.

69. Lynched for being a heretic.

70. Heart attach/brain aneurism caused by watching Red Sox blow lead.

71. Girls gone wild…with chain saws.

72. Sucked into the fiery pits of hell by Satan himself.

73. Toothpaste overdose.

74. I mistake ‘bleach’ for ‘milk’.

75. Eaten alive my mice inhabiting federal debriefing center.

76. IED.

77. Crushed by a rock as I tire from rolling it up a hill.

78. Crucifixion, a time honored classic (the right way, with the nails through the wrist, not the palm).

79. I accidentally blow my head off while cleaning a handgun.

80. Nail gun mishap.

81. Eating a hotdog with flesh eating bacteria.

82. The Ferris wheel down the street comes unhinged and runs me over.

83. Ripped to shreds after having the hounds released on me.

84. Five point palm exploding heart technique.

85. The gas tank of the ambulance driving me to the hospital after any of the above or below combusts, burning me to a cinder.

86. Land mine.

87. Crushed to death by the falling body of the guy who changes billboard ads.

88. Hit by a train.

89. Eaten by wolves.

90. Assassinated by robot sent back in time.

91. Starvation. I eat plenty, but you never know; maybe what I've eaten lately just makes me think I'm not hungry.

92. Bitten by radioactive spider… unfortunately giving me a lethal dose of radiation poisoning.

93. Alcohol poisoning. Booze, oh lovable booze.

94. Mistaken for a giant white dot and eaten by Pac-Man (or Mrs. Pac-Man).

95. The blood splashed on me by PETA 'unknowingly' contained the Ebola virus.

96. Swallowed by a whale.

97. Death by chocolate.

98. Drowning in a pool of Jell-O.

99. Cross-bow bolt through the gullet.

100. Buried alive.

101. Asphyxiation on own vomit.

102. Ham Sandwich.

103. I wake up.

Morbid ain't I? I admit, two or three of those may be a bit farfetched, but it's not a bad list. I just hope it's not zombies. Word on the street has it that government funded researchers have actually been experimenting with reanimating the dead so they can drop a few of them off in the Middle East, soften the place up a bit, and save the lives of U.S. soldiers. Kind of like Truman and the atomic bomb. While these rumors, admittedly, are unsubstantiated, it still freaks me out. Let's say my corpse is off ambling around somewhere looking for brains to eat; at what level will my mind function? Will I be cognizant of my actions? Could I control the lust to feed and kill? What part of me would remain? It's no life as a nosferatu, they at least can walk, talk, think, et cetera. Being a zombie though? Huh.

But my time here is drawing to a close, I wonder what will happen…

***

If you would like a happy ending, where the character lives, escaping both the clutches of the government and the terrorists, the world does not end anytime soon (meaning some type of international peace settlement is agreed upon), gas prices drop, and all Americans go back to their ordinary lives driving their gas guzzling Hummers, eating fast food, and emitting massive amounts of greenhouse gasses, go to page 35.

If you would like to write your own ending, go to page 36.

If you would like to see the world end, go to page 37.

If you would like to do it all again, go to page 2.

You have chosen a happy ending!

Had this been a big screen adaptation, the story would end here, with our hero riding into the sunset in the arms of <insert beautiful model, athlete, movie star, et cetera, here> presumable to get hitched and have children.

Unfortunately, this is not a big screen adaptation.

Please pick a number between one and 103, then refer to pages 28-33.

You have died.

Return to page 34 and try again.

You have chosen to write your own ending! Feel free to use the rest of this page to do as you wish! Do you want the ‘second’ coming? Aliens to invade? Time to freeze? Go ahead!

You sick bastard.

Go to page 36.