

DAS MEIN SCHMAMPF !

... The Alien Bigfoot Ghost & Leprechaun
Manifesto

BY MIKE PALECEK

I don't know
[where I'm a gonna go]
I don't know
[where I'm a gonna go]
I don't know
Where I'm gonna go
When the volcano blows.

— Thomas Jefferson

Bonne nuit les gars,
bonne nuit Mrs. Calabash,
et bonne nuit Jeffrey Epstein,
bonne nuit Timothy McVeigh,
bonne nuit H. Wayne Carver,
bonne nuit Mohammed Atta
et bonne nuit Crystal Campbell,
ou que vous soyez.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidences are either a product of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. Any similarity to actual organizations and persons, living or deceased, is entirely creepy and probably coincidental.

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ALSO BY MIKE PALECEK

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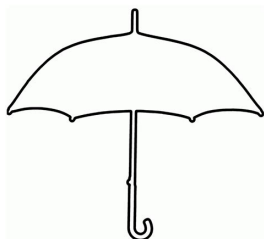
Welcome To Moon Rock Lake

Covid Schmovid/Covid 1984

And I Suppose ...

... nobody died when Johnny Carson was buried at sea on
the moon, either?

ONE



Bran thought about it.

“Can a man still be brave if he’s afraid?”

“That is the only time a man can be brave,” his father told him.

— George R.R. Martin

“Ich ben iyn ... not yours!
“Das Mine! Das Mine!”

Terrible Tim dreamed while he slumbered so cozy, deep in this far back compartment of the family log.

Perched atop his loft bed piled with green quilts stitched, decorated in shamrocks and lucky charms, as he slept and snored and talked in his snoring and sleeping, he felt all around him the gentle rain patter on the log and slippery green moss and grass, the leaves on the trees, rain sliding down the leaves and banging into the metal buckets one drop and bang at a time, all nestled quite nicely in The Back Of The Backyard.

Terrible Tim’s big, hairy in fact quite comical feet showed out the end of the quilts, the toes especially, out the holes specifically in the faded green socks just to let those toes get a bit of air every now and again don’t ya know.

The room did not smell as much as evince, courage and tobacco, hope and whiskey.

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He lay now on his side, now on his stomach, and of course now on his back, all in turn and back again.

His chest rose and fell and his chin shoved around the bits of stone ground potato bread in his beard as he dreamed of chewing with his for the most part full mouth of teeth, tasting in his dreaming the potato jelly, potato bagels, potato pizza, potato spuds, potato fine malt, tater pancakes with pudding.

The room was littered as with museum-quality shrapnel with all makes of varieties of newspapers, ancient, and magazines, model car kits, board games, three-quarters eaten pretzels, apple cores and cheese curls, as a matter of course.

A certain smell as likely as not emanated from the socks as from the cheese curls, doncha know.

In his dream adventure Terrible Tim heard gibberish of a Russian sort, maybe Mexican.

“Ekaterina Bolshoy where is your ring?

“Como te llamas, where are your llamas?

“Ekaterinas llamas? I am looking for gold and I am traveling the wurl until I find it, senorita baba-louie-louie.

“You have come to the right place, comrade Terrible Tim, but I am sure you already know that, nez pas?”

And now his dream grew dark as a shadow covered the log and The Back Of The Backyard, as a drone silently made its patrol. Muffled screams came from the way back loft partition of the log as Terrible Tim now dreamed of horrible things, torture ... beating ... cutting.

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Besides the screams and the shadow of the drone, all was nice, all was quiet in The Back Of The Backyard, with an ever-so-faint and not entirely seductive hint of wood smoke in the soft breeze, gently moving the laundry on the line, which you could see if you knew where to look.

Terrible Tim's yellow-stained fingers reached now for the ceiling, out his fingerless gloves, eyes clamped tight, squinched against the pictures in his mind, seeking, something, a peasant mendicant daring to approach the gods, asking forgiveness, demanding explanation, against all hope, none can be granted. SOL.

He gasped, ceased breathing, eyes wide, now closed. The dirty hands with the filthy fingernails retrieved to the covers like a turtle to the shell.

While Terrible Tim sweated for his slumber, all around him, outside the cozy stank of the back room, his family was already up, moving around, letting Tim sleep late, dream his dreams of danger and glory and adventure, on the edge, the brink, in terrible peril of falling, a long ways, probably.

The family was already a considerable distance into enjoying a Saturday morning, baking cookies, romping in the grass with the others, while Terrible Tim's mates, D.B., Irish, Unabomber, O'Brien, smoke their pipes, drank their mud-thick coffee, road the stumps, as if bouncing along North Atlantic swells. As the women folk chopped wood, fetched a pale of water, all keeping an ear pitched toward the loft and any sign a'tall of Terrible Tim getting up, un-awares they were he was this moment poised on the very

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edge, the brink of a dangerous crevice, with the roaring waterfall cascading in dreamy postcard slow motion, quite lovely and deadly into the creek, and the blood and the beer and the mud and the rocks below. And he, Terrible Tim, *for only he*, tightrope walking the razor knife edge of the rocks, his big, hairy toes showing clearly out his favorite socks, St. Patrick's Day as it were, expertly feeling and finding their way, the toes not the socks, like scouts taking the point, along the deadly ... cliff.

Plane. Must. Hit. Steel.

Terrible Tim's dream blasted-off warp speed and then halted on a brick wall.

"You're stopping?"

"Because of course you are.

"Right here."

Terrible Tim sat in a Limerick pub in one of the first rows staring straight up at John F. Kennedy the famous stand-up comedian on tiny, intimate stage, cigarette smoke and whisky smell all around, like stereo. He stood in front of a brick wall and on the wall in graffiti-style it reads CRONKITE & RATHER ACTED ALONE.

"This is a scenic overlook? In Texas? Seriously, they are shooting. I've already been hit twice and it's not even lunch time yet. I really think we should go, Lyndon's hungry and we're making him wait. I'm bleeding here, all over. Governor Connolly's not going to like this cleaning bill. In the final analysis ..."

BOOM! BANG!

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Crack!

“Tim! Wake up! Get your arse out of that bed this instant!”

Molly McGuire fist-pounded the door, kicked it backward like a horse, banged the wood with Terrible Tim’s shillelagh and dropped it as she stormed away. The stick bounded and rattled sending vibrations that bounced on Terrible Tim’s amygdala as a soccer ball dropped from a roof, finally deciding to rest.

“It is happening!”

Molly stopped short in the living room to turn again to lean and send one final admonition volley at Timothy’s closed door as Terrible Tim sat bolt upright, bonking his head on the ceiling in the worn dent.

He kicked at the covers as if they were the root of it all and hung his feet over the edge of the double-decker bed he had made himself. His bright, twinkling green eyes shined through a bit of understandable morning fog deep within a face like crumpled manuscript.

For a moment he stared without focusing at the two big hairy toes poking free and wiggling on their own as if seeking attention.

Terrible Tim pushed a gnarled, strong, permanently dirt-stained hand back though his disheveled, matted hair like a rake through fire, contemplating where he might have placed his papers and tobacco upon his regrettably unceremonious arrival home last evening from McGinty’s, and how he had managed to gain this lofty perch in this

room set way back her in the log, set away from the family, for just such “special” occasions.

Finding what he needed he took to rolling the first, best smoke of the day. He lifted his chin to exhale, then as well out his nose, as knobby as the walking stick slash battering ram on the other side of the door.

His eyes again brightened and lowered like a lighthouse in fog, twinkled, flickered, thinking a thought from his dream or perhaps last night at the tub, shaking his head, sucking hard on the rollie.

The nose quivered like that of a particularly pugilistic rabbit, smelling wood smoke, whiskey, and potato ... What time was it? The light in the room was dim even now, due to the one tiny window. Drawing hard, wincing against the stinging smoke, Terrible Tim gazed around the room, at the scattered debris field, soccer ball, t-shirts, socks, hats, underwear. He was so fooking tired of green! Red had always been his favorite. His mother had made him promise her eons ago he wouldn't tell a single soul.

Finding his pants, shirt, boots all within arm's reach and determining by a quick sniff they were better than most for another, he snatched his cap from the bedpost on the way down, pushing off as the out of doors clamor reached un-ignorable levels.

Making his way through the cozy living room with its smoldering fireplace and thick and old furniture down the hall with all the bedrooms, past the den, the study, the dining room, the pantry, the bomb shelter such as it was more of a daycare, into the cartoonishly cluttered kitchen

and finally to the mud room and out the solid, ancient oak-
en door and then retreating back to collect his shillelagh,
stick, cane, cudgel, oldest friend, and then back again after
stopping in the kitchen to stick a finger into the cooling
potato pie, until finally, at long last, at half past noon at
least, Terrible Tim pushed his way out of doors to engage
the new day.

Right off, his arm shot up of its own accord to shield
his eyes from the blazing yellow globe and the belt buck-
les and green right square in the eyes it was, a diorama
of yellow and gold and knee-high blarney. Leprechauns
everywhere like someone had knocked over an emerald
beehive. As if Terrible Tim had leaped well aware into a
clothes dryer in Granny Casey's basement on the eve of the
St. Stephens Day Parade.

A twirling dervish as it were, and at first look far too
confusing to take it all in properly.

And so, needed a bit of a refuge, Terrible Tim snatched
up a sit-down on the stump by the door, marked with his
own initials, which he rarely had a chance to use these
days, out of the way of the commotion, yet not far enough
to fully escape notice, as straight away he found himself
surrounded by Leprechauns in green felt hats and boots,
beards of all colors, in green jackets noticeably tight and
not, work boots and elvish slippers but nobody said a
word of that, eyebrows like hedge rows, sucking on home-
made finely crafted pipes is if that is where the oxygen
was, artfully juggling steaming baked potatoes and slosh-
ing mugs of various contents in their knotty muscled fists.

Rattling off a stream of connected syllables of a lilting brogue, all one word with no room for breaths nor time in this life for commas.

Loud. All at once, as if every word might be the last.

"Now here he is ..."

"If'n it isn't Terrible Tim himself ..."

"In the flesh ..."

"And it's still only mor ... early in ta'afternoon."

"So glad you could join us ..."

"Among the very livin' ..."

"If it ain't the ghost of ..."

Ramming herself through the scrum by the top of her head, Molly McGuire brought him a steaming, boiling, roiling, sloshing wooden bowl filled to the brim. With wooden spoon, oak. As she backed her way out Molly McGuire delivered by her kelly eyes a message Terrible Tim understood all very well.

The others let him alone as a man is entitled to enjoy his potato stew.

Terrible Tim set down the bowl and took out his pipe, crossed his legs, folded one arm under t'other, and raised his chin a smidge to listen, trying to see what was all the hubub and such.

"You knew this was happening! You knew it was!"

"I *knew*?"

"I knew?"

"And j'st wha' i' that s'pose t' mean if'n I might ask?"

"And so did you!"

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“Not as if’n you di’ not! ... Di’ not have sev’n h’nnrđ and nyne yars ta ...”

“They will never find their shit. Not in a million years they won’t!

“I know, right?”

“So, yeah, that all may be so, but it’s got to be more substantial than all a that, now lads. They are bound and determined ...”

“To put a serious hurt on our shit.”

“Must have grav ...”

“It says so right here in the officially delivered document: FROM THE OFFICES OF THE BIG AF,” said one, flicking a finger at the paper in his hand.

“Grav ...”

“Icity.”

“Gravity? What in bloody hell?”

“It’s not as though we haven’t done fuck-all.”

“That is EXACTLY what it says,” said the one with the document, now putting on his reading spectacles and using his finger to seek out the most relevant words.

“Icity,” repeated the one.

“You know, oomph ... get up and go. My granddad had that.”

“Oomphicity.”

“That’s it!”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.” ... “That’s probably all we’ll be needing then.”

“Good work, lads.”

TWO

One measures a circle beginning anywhere.

— Charles Fort



And, from all of that Terrible Tim gathered that the Leprechaun clan, klatch, herd, had received an order, edict if you will, from THE BIG AF, muckety mucks, saying, once agane, as just, what was it? One? Two? Hundred years before, that unless they got off their "fat bums" and did something to earn their keep they were being promptly, unceremoniously, removed, kicked-off, sent back, returned, recalled, given the boot, sacked.

"So then, Timothy ..."

Corker dragged over a stump and took straight off to searching his pockets for papers, matches, tobacco and finding none, an absolute shock, and graciously accepted a loan of Terrible Tim's supply.

"Dreams are foolish things," said Corker as he crafted his ciggie.

"That they are, Corker me boy. That they ahre."

"Electric sheep?"

"Not this time, Mr. O'Flannigan, not this time."

"What dooo ya make of it?" said Corker after securing his initial puff.

"Same ol same ol'," drawled Terrible Tim.

"This'n's a wee bit different, I'm thinking, Timothy."

"And how is that?" said Terrible Tim, checking his boot for mud, using a stick, not paying close attention whatsoever to Corker, more on where he might have left his pocket knife, when suddenly he stuck the stick into the mud and said perhaps overly sternly to Corker because he was still waking up, "How is this different from the last toyme and the toyme before that!"

"Well," said Corker, not taking offense.

"This time they mean it.

"We are schedule to be Evaporated."

Terrible Tim covered a yawn as they both leveled their attention back to the others.

"We have to think of somethin'!"

"We can't be fooking aroun' any lohnger!"

"They're too nice," Terrible Tim turned to Corker.

"THE BIG AF. They could never actually bring themselves to ..."

"It's not them so much, Timothy.

"It's the damned others. They're behind this. They're forcing them."

"Who is?"

"Well, of course. It's the damned Schmazis."

"And speak for yerself now, Patrick, all day in the tub ... and where's that gotten us, but booted out on our fundamentals."

"And it's not just us," said Corker.

"It's all a them."

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“No!” said Terrible Tim, slapping his knee, and not in a sarcastic way mind you.

“Yee-esss, a carse i’ tis. We are just the first to hear the news. It’s all laid out plainly as day in the ‘ficial document. We are to infarm the others.”

“And hope they don’t cling to cliches,” said Terrible Tim.

“Kill the messenger.”

“Exactly.”



THREE

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, it's a fucking
Nazi!

— Scott Creighton

After a bit, after everyone had calmed down a mite, eaten their fill of potato stew and potato pie, with the filthy fooking dishes stacked to the ceiling in Molly McGuire's and Terrible Tim's kitchen all sat down in a circle (of a sort) to try to figure this all out.

"Brainstorm," someone suggested.

"Rap," said another.

"Consensus," shouted yet another.

"We'll be needin' some red balloons then," came another thought not left unspoken.

"Weeelll," began Isis O'Grady.

"That's quite a deep subject," said D.B., casting a grin over his shoulder to Unabomber, Flynn and O'Brien.

Like Roman senators, like Greek philosophers, like Dublin prime ministers, the entire clan sat, lounged, sprawled flat out, and in a few cases snored contentedly, on wooden benches they had installed themselves around The Library, which was used for formal meetings, wedding, children's concerts, first communions, the like, a

white, porcelain toilet that had just appeared one fine April morning perhaps a hunnerd years ago and maybe not that long a'tall in The Back Of The Backyard. And seated right next to it, like the tosser thought the findees might find them handy, was a box of books and magazines, which kept being almost magically re-stocked. And being fine students they read every one and memorized and internalized every one as well as passing them around, leaving them certain places in order to, perhaps, hopefully be a source of some edification, for, uh, *others*, in the general area.

And so, as well, not far back, only a couple of down oaks over, sat McGinty's, a washtub turned backwards and sideways on its side, where one might go, now and again, to discuss the news of the day, you might say, as well as moving out of range of curious eyes.

In any case, that was a bit of the lay of the land. The Back Of The Backyard sat in the woods and fallen logs and grass and weeds and flowers just beyond the back lawn of The L.O.S.E.R.S., handed the moniker as they were forever losing things, car keys mostly, but just as easily one glove, one sock, one wedding ring, etc. And perhaps more often than not the laddies and lassies chose to push and drag said items over to where Those L.O.S.E.R.S. might then find them while exclaiming to no one really around within sight, "How did that get there!"

Indeed.

Although, yes, there were particular items they might

possibly choose to appropriate as it were on the very iffy, dodgy grounds of “cultural artifacts requiring further study,” and some were just too fooking large or interesting or useful, such as The Library, McGinty’s, as well as the reading materials.

“Well, as I was sayin’, if we do expect ... to continue, what we’re doin’, for another ...”

“Hundred and ...”

“Nine hunnerd ...”

“Fifty-six.”

“Seven. On the nose.”

The discussion ran around The Library with absolute perfect acoustical pitch, as many remarked. Those on the one side able to hear even the nastiest whispers over on t’other.

“That is, are we wantin’ are grandchildren,” called out Lassie McGeeHee, “to continue the great tradition of sloth, greed and licentious behavior.”

“Now, Lassie, no need ...”

“It won’t work, doesn’t matter, we’re zombie toast,” lamented Lucky Carney.

“Ohhh? Was it over when Albania bombed the Sacramento Walmart?” said Irish.

“Yeah, pretty much,” answered someone from the back row now holding high an American high school history textbook, *9th edition*.

“We have nothing!”

“Nothing that will satisfy them!”

"I think all we really need is a show of concern, good faith."

"There's been a glitch in the matrix."

"Moving the goalposts."

"Our shit is screwed tight."

"Mark it eight," came the refrain from the old codgers row right down in front, all a them now theatrically holding their heads in their old knotted hands, looking through the fingers, gauging what effect they were having on the collective whole.

The fact is, they had long received these documents under the big flat postal rock from THE BIG AF, the mucky mucks, poo-bahs. The back benchers had many names for them. Saying, reminding, nagging that they were here for a pissing purpose, not to just sit in the fooking tub the whole live-long morning and afternoon and night. *To do some good.* And unless and until they were going to get on with that, they would be yanked out, Evaporated as it were. The Leprechauns thought, or pretended to think, that finding stuff once in a while for The L.O.S.E.R.S. would be plenty good enough. And for decades, centuries as far as anyone knew, it was. But now THE BIG AF was, apparently from the looks of it, feeling pressure from the new local elites who likely as not just wanted an excuse to clean house and bring in their own woo apparatchiks, a color revolution.

"We might as well go home."

"This *is* our home!"

"They are hurting our shit!"

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"We got nothing," said someone in the middle, causing a lot of wagging of heads.

"Nothing that will count for beans for The Galactic Federation," someone lamented as if reciting the sorrowful mysteries.

"The what!"

"Isis O'Flaherty. You've got to turn down the telly once in a while. Hasn't yer daughter showed you the off switch yet, man?"

"There is no Galactic Federation? Is that what yer trying to not so subtly tell me?" said O'Flaherty. "Then what is the use of anything!"

"Fraid not," said Al and Bob Queda at the same time.

Old Mick, sitting in the front row with the other codgers, with an orange traffic cone to his ear, slammed the cone and yelled out, "They are putting a hurt on our shit!"

"We must have a meeting."

Terrible Tim pushed off the porcelain to stand.

"And just what is this, an Easter Bunny hunt?" muttered Old Mick not quite under his breath.

"We must tell the others," said Terrible Tim, poking with his pipe the copy of the official document he held in his hand.

"Says so, right here."

"La Grande Meetingue, as they say in Moscow," said Terrible Tim, like a maitre de introducing a party of four to a booth for two.

"That's actually French," young Collie O'Malley stood up from the AV section of The Library bowl.

"'Tis?" said Terrible Tim, a little embarrassed, putting a hand to his brow.

"Pretty sure," she said, spreading her dress to sit back down.

"A meeting of the families?"

The mumble whispers took off, swirling halfway around the bowl before Old Mick could get his boots on, which he had taken off, which he did wherever he went, whenever he sat down.

"Oh. No! Really?"

"Not that again."

"Le Grande Meetinggue de la Familia de Rosinante," Terrible Tim exclaimed, pretty much saying whatever came into his head, lifting his pipe to toast as everyone began to go.

"Lay grand ... blooming, hmm, mmm, weirdo," a spattering of mumbles and not quite mumbles echoed, vaguely, clearly, as everyone worked hard to gather as fast as they could their shit and leave.

FOUR



But I will go down with this ship. And I won't put my hands up and surrender. There will be no white flag above my door.

— Dido

“C’mon now, man, let’s get us a move on, shall we?”

Terrible Tim leaned his head into Corker’s log, in a hurry to start out.

Certain ones had been volunteered to journey to the other families in The Neighborhood with word of the proclamation and calling for a general meeting, almost unheard of, that had not taken place since long before the dawn of the Flood, Y2K, Grunge, Disco, Hip-Hop or Hee Haw.

“Fer luck.”

Corker stood in his doorway holding a battered flask. He shot it back.

“It’s 11:15 somewhere.”

“Here ‘tis, right here,” said Terrible Tim, accepting the flask and checking the sun.

“I’m too old for this sort of adventure!” shouted Corker, now back inside, the ambient noises saying he was searching for something.

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Now Terrible Time heard pots banging and slamming doors.

“We’re the same age!” shouted Terrible Tim.

“Well, there ya go, now I do feel old,” said Corker as he came out again.

“Yer wearin’ that?” said Terrible Tim, hands on hips at seeing Corker in shorts, long green socks to his knees, a ball cap and his favorite McGinty’s t-shirt.

“You can’t be dressed as a bumpkin when you go calling on neighbors unannounced.”

“You’re such a normie, Timothy, but I ’spose you’re right,” mumbled Corker as he dipped his head and turned back inside for another go.

“Normie?”

Terrible Tim took another turn at the flask and rubbed his chin. He lit his pipe with a flaming weed stuck into the campfire coals, shook it around and patted himself all around at the sparks, then sat down on a stump that appeared safe.

Tilting back his head and cupping his mouth, just so, he launched toward the high branches and leaves a perfectly lovely succession of smoky shamrocks, puff, puff, signals of a sort perhaps to someone in the know.

He looked around at the sticks, leaves, pebbles, up into the trees, observed Yogi Berra style, a robin land directly above, and scooted his stump a few feet northward.

Terrible Tim looked up from cleaning his fingernails with a pine needle to see Mr. Corker posing right there,

like a bridegroom, just waiting to be noticed, ablaze, in all manner of shades of green, cap, coat, necktie, pants, shoes, stockings, gripping a bone-white walking stick made just for such an occasion, complimented by his wide, self-satisfied smile.

“Checks all the boxes,” said Terrible Tim. “You’re a right gentlemen.”

“Off we go,” said Corker, grabbing the lead.

Off they went, plowing through oak leaves, elm leaves, maple leaves, vaulting over sticks, helping each other to the summit and down over one particular giant walnut log, steered plenty clear of one snake and maybe two, and endured the sniffing of a mouse, a squirrel, and in turn a rabbit as if they were headed to The Easter Parade.

“What a cluster” said Corker, as they passed the trio finally.

“There are no coincidences in politics,” said Terrible Tim who had been tossing matter-of-fact non-sequiturs consistently over his shoulder for quite a time.

“Yes, but this is the forest.”

“I’m well aware, just trying to make conversation, best be on our way.”

Finally, having employed canes and sticks and weed rope to scale a maple, Corker, out of breath plopped down on a tiny mole hill.

“This is the hill I will die on, Timothy.”

Tim shook his head to see that now Corker, as he had done, to amuse himself apparently, since they were kids,

was posing with his head at a certain angle and his hands, knees, feet, toes in the so-called shape of a four-leaf clover.

Terrible Tim did not think it looked anything like, but Corker once had heard from an auntie that is was a perfect match, and that he had a talent, and ever since he would not hear nary a discouraging word.

“Very nice,” said Terrible Tim.

“Ya think so!” said Corker.

Terrible Tim handed Corker his flask as Corker’s flask was long empty, receiving back a look from Corker that screamed out, “Water?”

“That might not yet be necessary,” said Terrible Tim, looking around slyly.

“This is it.”

“Wait ... what?” said Corker.

“Here?”

“Pretty sure. Either that or an hour this or thataway.”

Terrible Tim scrambled up the grade to where something grey and dull shiny stuck into the ground like a discus tossed by Olympic gods during a late night and forgotten about.

He stalked up to it slowly, crouched low, while Corker secured the rear and spread the remains of Terrible Tim’s flask over the ground.

Terrible Tim pushed back the moss and rubbed the glass with a sleeve.

Taking a walk around he saw the disc was perched on cement blocks. The lone bumper sticker said “Muskogee, Okla. USA.”

He motioned for Corker to come on up, the coast was clear.

“Dey crahsch-landed here,” said Terrible Tim.

“Who did?” said Corker.

“Now just give me a moment,” said Terrible Tim, “Me father told me many tymes he did. Come here for a funeral they did, decided to stay. Not that they had a crap ton of options.”

“Where are they?” said Corker.

“Or, some say this bunch are criminals,” said Terrible Tim, now backtracking a bit, which Corker noticed and did not help his confidence much a’tall.

“Banished, or on the run,” continued Terrible Tim. “Mebbe loners, dysfunctional. Monks of a certain sort, holy people. Or ...”

“Nobody’s here.”

“They’re here all right.”

“We should go, Timothy. I don’t like this, not one bit. He shuddered. *Space creatures*. It creeps me out. Just not natural a’tall.”

Corker gripped his walking cudgel in both hands across his chest.

“They, prefer, identify as *other-terrestrial*,” whispered Terrible Tim while gripping his own stick tightly and managing double air quotes none-the-less.

“Also,” he added with a Belushi eyebrow raise, “you’ll be noticein’ a certain brogue. Don’t react to that. It’s considered not polite.”

“My dude,” said Corker, “there is nobody here!”

“Take me to your leader!”

Terrible Tim suddenly called out, making Corker hop.

“They hate that,” said Terrible Tim. “Think it supports a certain stereotype. I think it’s just bein’ willing to confront reality.”

Terrible Tim cupped his hand around his mouth, set his feet, tipped back his head, arched his back, bent his knees, curled his toes tight as shit, sucked in a big breath and bellowed again.

“Very funny,” said Corker. “Now let’s be going. I haven’t had me muffin.”

Then he dropped his stick, rubbed his eyes with his fists, blinked big, rubbed again.

Where one moment ago there had been only logs, sticks and leaves, grass, crashed disc, there now stood, silent, a dozen and more creatures with large heads and overalls, some grey, the overalls, some tie-dyed, some camo.

Each of them puffed on a corn cob pipe. Each was whittling, some had the bulbous skulls, some tiny, suggesting Coco Puffs.

In the fog a clothesline appeared like Brigadoon, like the baby Jesus at Fatima, holding polka dot undershorts, and not a thing else. And now appearing, as if carried by the fog, were four-wheelers, empty thick-glass jugs, nine long-eared hounds, and cane poles, everywhere, like Zulu spears. A banjo and harmonica hymn sounded low, background. A smell drifted in to the holler resembling a Walmart whiskey scented candle.

"My name is Bo."

Terrible Tim and Corker heard it in their heads but could not tell who was speaking. No mouths moved.

"I am Bo."

They heard a different, diffused voice.

"I am Bo."

In their heads Terrible Tim and Bo detected snickering.

"The hive mind is a wonder to behold," Terrible Tim turned to Corker to whisper sarcastically.

And so it went around the group until everyone who wanted had a turn.

They all had teeny nose, mouth and ears like an artist had been in a hurry to etch them in. Some showed hints of meager mustache, sideburns. Some toted slingshots in a back pocket or red handkerchief. Most went barefoot. A couple wore oversized, unlaced, mismatched boots like war trophies.

Some of the apparent females held small ones, feeding them Milk Duds and Sweet Tarts dolefully, one at a time.

Out of the misty fog one stepped forward, hands in his overall pockets.

"No, really, I'm Bo."

Terrible Tim and Corker heard him say, though his mouth just sat there like a lump.

Bo then asked the rest to introduce themselves directly into the heads of their visitors.

"Booger. Please to meet you."

"Mae."

Das Mein Schmampf

"Dubya."

"I'm Beeblebrox and I'm nine."

"Howdy, hello, Pink Freud."

"John-John."

"Billy Moe."

"Bob Moe."

"Granny, Daisy, Grampy, Salley, Stella, Tesla, Alyo-sha."

"Garth, Wade, Horace, Roscoe."

"Neo."

"Gladio"

"Git'mo."

"Hicks."

"Moe."

"Marlboro Laht."

"R2. Y2. K2. D2. U2. Me 2."

"The sextuplets," said Bo. "Git it?"

All the while they all kept whittling, smoking and the music from the unseen instruments carried on.

Gradually, then all at once, Terrible Tim and Corker realized they were all sitting in a circle in camp chairs of assorted colors and design, as if gathered up quickly from the side of the highway after a Walmart truck overturned when the driver was shined straight in the eyes by a harsh, sudden light.

All the whittling pieces had now disappeared along with the handkerchiefs and slingshots. The aliens now all wore black eye patches.

Everyone, including Terrible Tim and Corker, held one ear of corn in one hand.

The aliens all hovered about three inches above their camp chairs and the floppy eared dogs, stretched out and sleeping, ears over their eyes in some cases, floated just above the ground.

Bo lounged in the middle of the circle on a large blaze orange bean bag, a Scooby-Do decorated bowl stuffed with Cheetos in his lap.

He and the others appeared to be visiting with each other because of the nodding of heads and the direct eye contact, sometimes the slapping of legs and the bending over double, spittle seated on the edge of a tiny, almost non-existent, superfluous mouth.

Bo raised the bowl with both hands and all came solemnly to attention.

He explained that Terrible Time and Corker should tell them what is up, "Because everyone kind of has other shit to do."

Bo touched his temple with a long, pale finger stained in orange dust, staring directly at Terrible Tim.

Go for it.

Terrible Tim thought, fuck it, I guess, oh, sorry, and stood to speak.

He told them all about the document and The Big AF and The L.I.A.R.S., The L.O.S.E.R.S. ... *yeah, yeah*, he heard some disgruntled, impatient mumbling, we know all that, of course, yada ... well, Terrible Tim kept thinking, we need to come up with something, or we are all done for.

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Thousand-one.

Thousand-two.

“Oh, shit,” they all said.

“We’re screwed,” someone said.

“They are hurting our shit.”

“I would say so,” said Corker, out loud but also in his head and his mind.

“And so,” continued Terrible Tim, “we’re having A Big Meeting, and y’all are corghully invited. Child care will be provided, of course.”

The Leprechauns and The Aliens had fought bravely as could be expected along with the other families against The L.I.A.R.S. so many epochs past. They had battled for influence of The L.O.S.E.R.S., because that is where the money is, as Willie Sutton once said to the Leprechauns during a summer retreat seminar, the real power.

Of course they had lost miserably. Most L.O.S.E.R.S. did not really even know about it, did not believe it was going on, though some had heard rumblings, and so, THE BIG AF had called them all back and made a grudging peace with The L.I.A.R.S., which did not sit well with many of those in the various Families.

But what are ya gonna do, many thought to themselves.

At least they could be here, even if this wouldn’t have been their first choice for a deployment and though this world would not be all it could be, perhaps The Families could assist The L.O.S.E.R.S. enough that at least it

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wouldn't all go completely to shit, over to total control of The L.I.A.R.S., and who knows, you know, is what some thought.

"Eye patches?"

"We don't need no stinking eye patches!"

Someone said, and they all ripped them off and fired them at the ground.

FIVE



“If it can’t be accomplished through trickery,” Hitler said, “Then brute force must do.”

— David Irving, *Hitler’s War*

“It’s beautiful.”

Wally, Beaver, and Eldridge, the Cleaver Leprechaun triplets, stood on the ridge looking down and all around at Bigfoot Yeti Sasquatch Land.

They smelled pine as if working in a pine candle factory and picked pine needles out of their hair, felt pine needles through their little green moccasins made of not great felt because for some reason they didn’t think it would be like this, only a simple journey slash adventure and then home for lunch.

And it was.

Like this.

But anyways.

All the way they had argued and debated controversial grammar issues that they were not really allowed to discuss at home, Eldridge being the insurrectionist, while Beaver remained the strict defender of tradition. Both had received bold shots across the bow regarding comma

placement and the interrogative. They often, constantly played a grammar board game, a war game in which verbs, adjectives, all the parts of speech battled it out relentlessly, mercilessly. The board went everywhere.

Now that they were here it was pretty great though, the woods, the creek running across the valley, a wood smoke scent mixed with pine and come on, that never gets old. Two large limbs marked an X. Two eagles circled each other way above. A soft knock turned their heads briefly to the west. A workmanlike aquatic rodent paddled a stick from the shore. A bird whistle-chirped, and a chipmunk chattered nearby, as early morning traffic hummed on the road just beyond, hidden by trees.

"It's wonderful, bro," said Beaver, watching orange butterflies make their morning rounds of the violet, yellow and red flowers.

"There's nothing here," said Eldridge, ducking away from a red-throated rebel starfighter hummingbird, zip-ping around.

"Hope we don't run into Moose," said Wally. "What's that smell?"

"Pine."

"No, not that, the other."

"That bear's not gonna come 'round here," said the Beav. "He'll be sure to stay clear."

"There is no such thing as Bigfoot, for the record," said Wally, "or, ... Yeti or Sasquatch, don't know why I ..."

"We were told to come," said Eldridge. "We're here now. Let's sit down for some lunch and then we're off."

Sitting around a tree with "RINGO" carved in the trunk they pulled out the cheese and wine and whiskey, the beer and mead and potato bread, along with their board game, *Grammantly Speaking*.

Continuing where they had left off with a previous match, Wally, watching the other two, saw a clear opening for Beaver.

"Send in the nouns," advised Wally, pointing.

Beaver looked at Wally with wide eyes that said, are you daft, man? I have no nouns left!

But Eldridge had a plenty, and he confidently, ruthlessly deployed his nouns.

"Don't bother. They're here," he said without sign of remorse.

"I do believe you are correct," said Beaver, looking around them with trepidation in his eyes and spreading to all parts of his body.

The other two took notice.

"What?"

"Where?"

"I'm not seeing a blessed thing! What!"

"There," said the Beaver, wearing a big smile in his big teeth.

Wally and Eldridge looked where he was looking ... and it did appear there might be something alongside of a certain pine tree trunk. Mebbe. Or not. *Hmm*.

Eldridge tipped his head to the right to try to make it out. Wally leaned his noggin to the left, causing his hat to fall.

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It might have been a growth on the tree, mold or fungus, with a nose.

Another black Fatima apparition now appeared aside another tree.

Now every tree sported a bulge on its edge, causing Wally and Eldridge to quick as a wisp scoop up their things and begin to leave, backward, in great haste, while Beaver remained seated in fooking lotus position as it were, grinning, in clear danger of bubbling over as if a beloved long-lost friend had suddenly appeared out of nowhere in a gigantic, overcrowded airline terminal on Christmas eve.

And it was only the look on Beaver's mug that kept those two rooted, from scampering toward safety, the high hills, seeking the opposite ends of the arth.

They did, however, duck behind the Ringo tree, their heads poking out either side. And so were able to witness as the black lumps stepped out and stood, stock-still, with eyes, red eyes, staring straight through them.

Beaver pushed off from the ground, sprang up and started walking toward the closest former clump.

He reached out and clasped the large black with a thumb-wrap bro hug.

"Moon Rock, my man," said Beaver.

Eldridge and Wally watched from their tree as more of the ... *beings*, hairy, not as hairy, hairy as fookin' shit, black, brown, orange, stepped out from behind the trees, jumped down from the branches, climbed out from like trap doors in the ground. All sizes, small, medium, large, XXXL.

And then a whole line of them moved up together, like Apaches on *Bonanza*, over the hillside. Some gathered around Beaver and Moon Rock. Some sat down in worn spots in the dirt and grass and began working the scattered wood using pointed sticks and rocks as tools, digging, scratching, carving.

Some sat or stood, humming and rocking little ones in their arms.

A group of five who appeared to be teenagers by their mop-top hair took to a certain area in the nearby trees as if returning gleefully to a favorite project, bending, shaping branches, like balloons, into shapes, formations, arranging twigs and twine into patterns like weaver craftsmen.

Wally and Eldridge ventured out to join the group, standing close behind Beaver. They looked at each other, having heard, recognized that same knocking sound, and saw that some of them looked to be communicating with some brand of tongue clicking. Wally tried it, pressing his tongue against the roof of his mouth. One of the blackest teenagers walked past Wally and put up a hand for a high-five. Wally smiled at Eldridge, who was also trying, but with no success.

Beaver swung around angrily.

"Don't do that," he hissed.

They *could* see many of the creatures glaring hard at them.

"You don't know what you're saying, so stop."

"Yeah, but," said Eldridge, pointing a finger at his high-five buddy.

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They began noticing languages spoken around them, resembling English, Chinese? maybe French. Along with monkey sounds, grunts, growls.

Moon Rock cut off his conversation with Beaver to visit with someone nearby, a language Beaver did not understand.

Beaver cut in to ask, "You have your own language?"

"Yeah, we 'vented it," said Moon Rock.

Wally stepped up with his two cents, Wally being Wally.

"'Fraid not, pal," he said. "First, it's in-vented, not 'vented, and pretty sure that's French. I don't know French, but that's French."

Moon Rock and the other Yeti looked at each other like, "whatev'."

The talking slowed, gradually, inexorably, inevitably, like a boulder falling from the sky, like a wave rolling to the shore, like a ...

Everyone turned toward the hill crest, as a snow cloud, an ice cream truck, a vanilla glob on top of a mountain peak, a very white coned skull showed itself, followed by shoulders, chest, arms, and body that just kept coming, and finally, the legs and eponymous feet.

The white male creature plodded slowly toward the crowd as if he had all the time in the world because this was his world, still, carefully, silently, thoughtfully considering each step as if the ants were his friends.

Everyone watched in silence except a few tiny ones making teepees with sticks.

"Twelve-footer, at least," whispered Wally, leaning forward to whisper over Eldridge's shoulder.

Raising one big hand, the white one said, "Please, have a sit-down, really, I insist."

"Not you."

He pointed a finger as large as a rolled newspaper at the three Leprechauns.

"I am Schmoda," the white Bigfoot said, staring straight at the little green men. His voice was like a cement truck trying to speak.

They waved meekly at him.

He cursorily pulled one gigantic hand about three inches off his knee, as if to imply, "Hey."

Schmoda held out his upturned palms to address the others in another language.

"This is wrong on so many levels," he began. "But we must understand these are low vibration creatures, and so ..."

The three looked around at the nodding heads and empathetic looks in their direction.

"I think he just said we are retarded," said Wally.

Now Schmoda spoke so that all, including the Leprechauns, would understand him.

"They have violated the treaty between our kingdoms regarding borders as well as about nine centuries-old inviolate maxims of common courtesy ..."

"We need to run. They are fixing to eat us," Wally hissed. "I smell pine barbecue sauce. Don't you?"

"... by arriving unannounced."

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Schmoda roared. Tongue clicking, wood knocking, whistling and glaring ensued.

The Adam's Apples of the Leprechauns bobbed nervously as they all forced down gulps.

"Even so," said Schmoda, "they are our visitors, our guests. And we do love company ... such as it is."

Mouths popped. Small trees swayed. Rocks clacked.

Wally added his version of the tongue click and received simultaneous kicks from Beaver and Eldridge.

Schmoda became distracted for a moment, looking at his arm. He edged a hand toward where his eyes watched a spot on the opposite forearm. He swiped at the air, looked up and smiled.

"We are so slow to the fly. It says so much does it not?"

Heads nodded and tongues clicked all around.

"Like what?" whispered Wally.

"Flies are fast!" said Eldridge, "Shhh!"

"Anyways, how about let's get on with it," said Schmoda.

"Introduce yourselves. Now, go on."

He held out his big hands encouragingly, supportively, imploring.

Pleading.

One Sasquatch made a motion to another with his hands that said, "I told you so, didn't I?"

"We have to?" someone moaned.

"I know this isn't your favorite thing," Schmoda growled.

The Leprechauns quickly stood up and sat back after spurting out their names. Schmoda shot a look that said, not you.

"C' mon, c' mon," he said, using both hands to show that someone, anyone, should stand up and begin.

"The sooner we get started, the sooner we're ..."

"Okay, okay, I'll gooo. I guess," said a brown six-footer about ten-years-old.

"I am Ekaterina," she said as she curtsied and quickly sat.

"I am Spartacus," a young black male said as he slowly stood without using his hands.

"No, really," he said, embarrassed, sitting back down just as gracefully.

"I am Dyevlov."

"I am Cartman."

"Michael Africa."

"Roswell."

"Moon Rock. Ringo. Ariel. Greased Lightning. Tarzan. Aladdin. Belle. Newsweek. John. F.D.R., Paul. George. Wolfman."

One-thousand-one. One-thousand-two. One-thousand-three.

Trying to judge by the look on Schmoda's face ... Wally, Beaver and Eldridge now stood together to tell why they were here, the document, yada, yada, yada.

And that they were all invited to The Big Meeting, "with the Aliens and the ..."

"Those muppets," Schmoda groaned.

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Schmoda's countenance drooped dour.

"We must have pow-wow.

"Not you."

He looked straight at The Leprechauns forming a green clump in the dirt.

Schmoda groaned like an old lift bridge to stand, slowly, piece by piece, extending by sections to his full height. He and a few large males plodded away a few yards to stand together in a circle.

The others took to chattering, clacking, popping, knocking, to cover the voices in the circle. Children scampered up trees and swung around.

After awhile the circle peeled open and the group returned and stood in a solemn chorus line, arms around each others' shoulders, facing the group.

"We're not going," said Schmoda in his deepest cement truck voice yet.

"Not happening."

"Not going," Beaver piped up.

"To the meeting? Just not going period? Can you please be more specific."

"Period."

The others whistled, pounded the ground and beat their chests.

Schmoda wiped one hand to say, *cool it*.

"We are ... Schmoda began and looked down the chorus line to make sure he was saying this right.

"We are ... autonomous, indigenous people ... so don't have to."

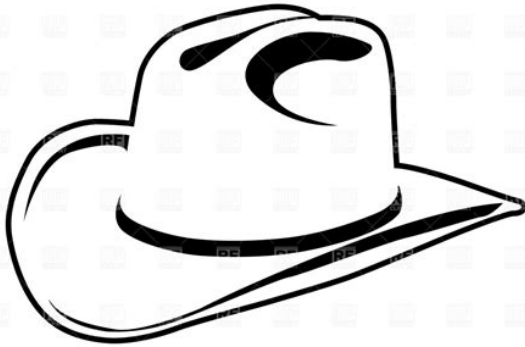
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“Yeah, not sure that’s a thing, dude,” said Wally.

“Anyways,” said Schmoda, “sorry we could not be of assistance, maybe next time.”

The three Leprechauns rolled over to push off the ground to stand.

Looking all around they saw they were alone again.



Six

If decade after decade the truth cannot be told, each person's mind begins to roam irretrievably. One's fellow countrymen became harder to understand than Martians.

— Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

Humm.

Hmmmm.

Gumm.

Easter Egg, Lebensraum, Unabomber, Lucky and John Doe #1 sat aboard a grassy knoll, eyes closed, smoking pipes, trying to call in the spirits, like turkeys.

“Are they dead?” asked Lucky, stealing a peak from one eye.

“Deceased! Shhh!” hissed Lebensraum.

“Not sure just how that all works, mate,” said Easter Egg.

“Just good ol’ regoolar, down-home, common ghosts, I reckon,” offered Unabomber.

“Mmmmm.”

“Deep breaths. Let it out, slowly ... as if releasing gas in charch.”

“Only positive thoughts now, c’mon lads, lassie.”

They sat facing down into a misty valley. It was called

Misty Valley. Bluebirds flitted about. It reeked of scented candles of a holiday theme.

The four, five now, Leprechauns, since Lebensraum came anyway even though they had tried to ditch him, now felt butterfly kisses on their cheeks causing them to blush and smile, still not daring to open their eyes, their thick eyebrows furrowed, struggling to keep the green eyes clamped tight shut.

They heard now, felt all around them a subtle rustling, a presence, as if seated in a large, drafty, empty theater, maybe a stadium, and now almost silently those seats have been filled all around you, you just know it.

“Welcome little green men ... and women.

“Please join us,” said the voice not unlike Siri the navigator giving an announcement in an airport.

So, yeah, they opened their eyes in abject wonder. What the duce?

As far as they could see, ghosts all the way down, and around, to the creek, thousands of see-through spooks, some white, some a lighter shade of grey, rainbow, blue, green, bluegreen, small, medium and large, shimmering, hovering, just being.

A few then moved, shuffled up to get a closer look, moving like Charlie Chaplin in a silent movie though when stationary they floated glamorously, elegantly, so gracefully.

All of a sudden, words, writing appeared on the front of each one and for just a few moments or minutes each

showed a head, a face, a yellow smiley face and a blue and white nametag that said HELLO! My name is _____ .

Lucky, Lebensraum, John Doe #1, Unabomber and Easter Egg were able to read the nametags of those in the first row nearest to them: Sophie Scholl, Atta, Strom Roof, Laurel Canyon, Potemkin, Mulder, Fyodo, Krebsbach, Hoax Sprung, Alexa, Fyodor, Ciancia, Truman, Dream Weaver, Astral.

The names blinked off. Moments later the yellow smiley faces were just gone.

The Siri voice again came from nowhere and everywhere.

“I am the Colonel. You may call me The Colonel.

“Tell us why you are here. Please be brief. We all have shit to do. ... As brief as possible. That may have sounded ... I don't mean ... I'm working on it, Mrs. Colonel says I ...

“Just go ...

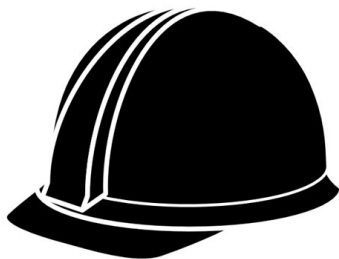
“Talk ...

“Please.”

SEVEN

Everyone knows the dice is loaded. Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed. Everybody knows the war is over. Everybody knows the good guys lost. Everybody knows the fight was fixed. The poor stay poor, the rich get rich. That's how it goes. Everybody here knows.

— *Everybody Knows*, Leonard Cohen



Grrrrrr.

Mrmblrrrrr.

Heads bounced like popcorn up off pillows in cozy logs. Something stalked outside. The folk tried to go back to sleep. No sleep tonight.

They knew, all too well, what it was.

ROAR!

Branches snapped and lightning cracked the night in half.

The Ghost Nation floated to roost high in the trees. All glowed up and orange.

At the same time over in Alien Holler the lookouts strummed a warning banjo riff as the stomping, huffing and slobber sounds echoed all around The Neighborhood.

At 3 a.m. the clothesline gossips said the next day, it began. Shock and Awe. From Sasquatchville. Giant howls as if Olympus had spewed forth the spew of all pent-up fury and spew. All across the land was heard banging on

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gigantic trees and pounding of boulder on boulder, on boulder.

The wolves and coyotes joined in, then all the crows and all the owls, every one, a cacophony chorus and Italian dinner time uproar in pitch dark, when the world belongs to The People.

ROAR! BANG!

BOOM!

Awooooo!!!

On and on they howled, as if the best minds of a generation destroyed by madness, jowled, like sky trolls bowling, gutterballs and strikes, on and on, spares, and on.

And on.

Almost like arguing, warning, pleading, explaining.

And then ... silence. Silence as loud as awakening.

Over.

A certain stomping and twigs bending and breaking signaled a departure of sort.

And then a moan, a deep-breathed oooo-aaaah! And the shaking of the largest oak tree in the forest, at the hill-top, as if something was scratching its back, finally.

The large breath puffs like a train breathing made a path out of the forest, headed to a special some place and a strong drink and a long nap.

Schmoda called *the Yeti slash Sasquatch slash Bigfoot* together on the hill to tell them to start packing, they would be journeying to The Big Meeting or whatever after all.

"It is correct. I should have realized," he said.

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“Knowledge is the vanguard of the revolution. Films, schools, libraries, international travel. If you are stupid you will not fight to save anything worth saving.

“It is there we must begin, at the beginning. If not now, then when? If not us? Who? *Whom?*”

He looked around for validation.

“Go back to bed my people. Try to get some sleep. We’re gonna need it.

“Mon dieu, what a night.”



EIGHT

Well I grew up on my planet farming space worms
Where space worms can always be found
But here on earth as far as I can discern
There just ain't no space worms around.
— Future Folk, "Space Worms"

“**S**o, yeah. Then Lucky m’lad,” said Terrible Tim as he and Lucky worked tacking up signs for the upcoming Big Meeting.

“Was Astral there? By any chance?”

“Astral? Who? Where?”

“The bloody Ghosts, man! When you went there, The Haunted Hillside!”

“Oh, yeah. I don’t know, Tim. There were about a million, and more. What’s she look like?”

“An angel,” moaned Terrible Tim.

“You’re a married man. Can’t be lettin’ yer mind roam where it shouldn’t go. Best to forget her. A wiser man then meself once said.”

“She gets me,” said Terrible Tim, staring into space, at a mosquito in flight but not really seeing it, then banging in a nail with one blow.

It began to drizzle as it does. They wiped their brows and doubled down their efforts, as it was nearly cocktail hour at that.

Their signs read: YOU BE WELCOME! ALMOS! THISSAWAY! GLAD YER HARE!

A thick layer of wood smoke, potatoes, special Lucky Charms whisky, and mint tobacco stink filled the bustling busy Back Of The Backyard.

The lassies were all a thunder, hurrying to hang decorations, banners, cooking potato pie, potato stuffing. The lads sawed logs for stumps for sitting and for the campfire and to be out of sight of the lassies. All the while McGinty's did a brisk bit of commerce while everyone discussed, hammered out the various threads of news, controversies, rumour and discord.

Bright the following morning Terrible Tim and Molly McGuire waited at the path opening, wearing new shamrock and unicorn pins, ready to greet the guests, as O'Brien, Lucky, Corker and Irish perched in their regular spots, kibitzing, criticizing the others, deciding how the festivities might have been better planned, all the necessities.

They felt the ground roiling underneath them, waves.

"I thought they weren't coming," Molly said to Terrible Tim.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh! So glad you could make it!" shouted Terrible Tim and Molly McGuire, greeting Schmoda and his wife, Kong, as they led the Sasquatch down the path, which had been trimmed high up just in case, into The Back Of The Backyard.

"The great beast," muttered O'Brien sarcastically while lighting his pipe with a long stick match.

"Come to challenge The Galactic Federation," said Isis. "Good God if me father would have lived to see this day, it would have killed him."

"There is no Galactic Federation, is what I hard," said Lucky.

"That's just what they would want you to believe," said Isis under his breath.

"There should be ghost stories a plenty for talent night for certain," commented Corker as the spirits made their entry, like a Charlie Chaplin parade. With one eye in the potato pie pot. They watched themselves gavotte. The Colonel's scarf it was apricot.

"They move funny," said O'Brien.

"Tink they float so pissin' gracefully. I guess don't really realize, is what I hard," said Irish.

"Yep," said Corker.

"Best just not to mention it," said Lucky, "Though they could be standin' a bit o' self-awareness ya might say."

"Oh, wouldn't think a sayin' a word," said Irish, "not one ward."

"Big heads, big brains," mumbled Corker as the Alien crowd moseyed in.

"You'd think, wouldn't you?" said O'Brien, adding tobacco to his pipe.

"Very, umm, verdant here," said Schmoda to Kong as they selected green bananas from a snack tray.

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“Ye-eess? And?”

“I kinda like it.”

For a time the groups stood around and sat together in lumps, not daring to mix.

Noticing, Molly McGuire tossed together a plate of hors d’ouvres, potato candy, potato bars, potato cheese, and walked it over to Kong.

Taking the fooking cue, Easter Egg turned to talk to Sophie Scholl and Sally stomped bravely across the lawn to engage with Ekaterina.

Seeing what was happening, the males gritted their teeth and grew fists at their sides. And, noticing this as well, The Colonel left the Ghost stronghold and fast-walked with tiny little steps over to Schmoda, hovering to place himself face-to-face.

Terrible Tim found Bo and invited him over to meet the fellas now huddled close, intent, apparently on their whist game.

Bo sat, was dealt a hand and also a bit o’ the muddy grog, which he accepted while passing all around the corn cob pipes he’d brought along for just such an occasion as this.

The Bigfoot, Leprechauns, Ghosts and Aliens eventually roared with laughter, passion and sorrow, recounting the days of The Clown War years.

Bobby O’Malley sat on a high stool and counted everyone and counted them again. Molly and Easter Egg watched the food like ospreys in the air, refilling, helping in the kitchen and fretting that it surely wouldn’t be

enough. Krebsbach told Spartacus the tall tale about The Adventure Flood when The L.O.S.E.R.S. left the hose on all night long. He began to re-tell the story. "Did I ever tell you?" To which Spartacus grinned and said, "I don't believe you have, please go on."

Terrible Tim searched the yellow smiley faces for her, and at last spotting her across the way, saw that she was looking for him as well, and both seeing each other, looked away.

"I always thought you were taller," O'Grady, seated on the first branch of an elm, spoke to Tarzan.

A few of the younger Leprechauns, Sasquatch, Ghosts, and Aliens helped to push those in wheelchairs up the ramp to the tables in anticipation of the lunch.

"Communal consciousness," said Wade to a mixed group on the stone pile near the Library, trying to explain what it's like to be him. "It's not easy," he said. "I'm tellin' ya, just sayin'."

A group of Leprechauns, Ghosts, Bigfoot, and Aliens, itching for something to do, chopped and sawed to add to the already heaping woodpile while talking over their sundry crafts and trades, bricklaying, carpentry, long haul driving, drywall, house painting.

Their eyes met from across the clearing.

Astral put her hand aside her nose and stuck out her pointer finger to indicate. Terrible Tim's heart did somersaults, sinking and fluttering at the same time.

A few minutes later he stood in the place.

Das Mein Schmampf

Moving his feet to look all around, she was nowhere. What the bloody ... he began to think and turning once more there she was. Right fooking there.

He jumped.

She always did that. She smiled. He forced a grin and asked her, "How's it going?"

Taking his hand she led him farther away, behind a tree.

Terrible Tim's stomach hurt. He leaned to see around a tree. Nobody.

Her face. He just stared. An angel. The princess of County Galway seated high on the hay wagon overseeing the harvest parade she was.

"You know, my friend?" she said, knowing he did.

"Ye-ees," he replied cautiously, looking all around once more.

"Well ..." and now she looked behind them.

"She thinks ... you know how she thinks, she thinks this all might not be what it is, you know?"

Terrible Tim heard his wife's voice in the distance, calling for him, moving this way.

His face must have shown a trace or more of annoyance because she began to hurry.

"She thinks ... THE BIG AF. She's heard of THE BIG AF you know? ... Is not doing what you think, but maybe trying to get us all off of here before it all ends, and not tellin' us because we would just panic and shit ourselves. It's all goin' down anyway, that's what she thinks. Anyway, I thought you should know."

She lightly touched his pipe in his shirt pocket.

"Grey is my favorite color," she said.

"I felt so symbolic yesterday," he said.

Terrible Tim searched behind him, around the tree and saw Molly McGuire tromping this way. Turning back to Astral he said, "You know I'm gonna have to tell this to ..."

And she was gone.

Terrible Tim sat down in the leaves, leaning back against the tree knowing he was dead. This is the end. He did not move, did not breathe as Molly McGuire, kicking up leaves and branches like she was walking through surf, shuffled through the woods, stalked on past, not looking down, not looking back.

Back in the clearing, Terrible Tim waved his arms and gathered them around him, Schmoda, The Colonel, and Bo. As fast as he could he told them what he'd just heard from Astral.

"So mebbe there's nothin' we can do anyway," said Bo.

"We just go," said The Colonel, "and leave these to their density."

Terrible Tim jutted his jaw and looked up at Schmoda, whose eyebrows were deep furrows like arrows. They both looked back at the other two and said at the same time, "It ain't goin' down that way.

"We stay and fight."

The Colonel and Bo wandered around to mingle, leaving Terrible Tim and Schmoda standing together.

Das Mein Schmampf

"You need another?" Terrible Tim nodded at Schmoda's drink.

"No, I'm good," said Schmoda.

They talked about the weather and the food and a little about homebrew. Schmoda, who had recently begun trying to make his own, was curious just what were some of Terrible Tim's favorite beers.

After about forty minutes and a few more refills they somehow got started on their histories, how they got here. It seems both of their families had arrived in the area at roughly the same time.

Schmoda shared that he was mostly raised by his mother and many uncles, that his old man wasn't around all that much. "I guess I had to learn about things on my own."

"Which might not be a bad thing," said Terrible Tim.

"Yeah, maybe, I don't know," said Schmoda.

Terrible Tim said that his father was always around, every day all day.

"Just when I was getting started ya know, coming around to my own way of thinking, me father had one way and that was his. We argued, we fought, almost came to blows one night in McGinty's.

"I remember just what he said, as loud as he could.

"And I suppose we didn't go to the moon, either!

"They all roared. And from then on I was the butt of the jokes of the older men whenever they seen me. I'm not proud to say but it's true, I was about half glad when he

died, and as each of his friends passed, I didn't shed many tears, that's true."

Catching an eye from Molly that we should get this show on the road, Terrible Tim eagerly took the hint and scaled by the rope ladder to the top of the upside-down rusting off-beige Rambler. He put up his hands to quiet everyone, then waited for Schmoda.

"QUIYYEEETTT!"

"Thank you, sir," said Terrible Tim.

"And, so it begins," he smiled wide.

"I've always wanted to say that."

He spotted several knowing nodding heads and deep sighs around the group that said they too had always wanted to say that, and now if they said it, it would be seen as derivative.

"Weeelll, many o' you know me, know who I am, what I been up to, and a'carse I would be the first, among the very first anyways, anyways, anyways, to say that it should not be me up here, addressing this esteemed gathering of The People ... But I can assure you that today, today, today ... I feel like the luckiest Leprechaun on the face of the arth."

"Be that as it may ..."

He took to hurrying now, aware of the critics in the corner who'd be taking note of any aires de grandeur and the like, unnecessary words or dilly daddling.

"You all knew my father, Flannigan Finnigan, and I know it is out of respect to his good name that you even are tolerating ..."

Das Mein Schmampf

“Get on with it now!”

“External validation, not gonna find it with this lot,” Schmoda leaned toward him and whispered.

“I am!” Terrible Tim shouted toward the far corner.

“This all needs a bit of introduction ya might realize that! And you all back there might just ...”

He pointed his finger and turned red in the face, having already consumed a wee bit o’ the ... and feeling himself a ways into the weeds about now, as he had feared.

“Timothy ...” said Schmoda. “You can do this.”

“Okay, okay,” said Terrible Tim.

“Dia duit. Failte!”

Keiran, feeling his grog, leaped up to stand next to Terrible Tim and began to sign Terrible Tim’s words. Not knowing sign language he moved his hands making teepees, squares, triangles and wavy motions. And seeing everyone silent and staring at him, he jumped back down and went back to whence he had come.

Terrible Tim brushed himself with both hands, caught the shillelagh tossed by Molly, stamped it down hard on the Rambler frame.

Now, magically, a line of Leprechauns formed aside Terrible Tim, with fierce faces, hand on thighs, legs bent, tongues sticking out.

“Kaaa mate!”

They shouted together.

“Slap the hands against the thighs!”

“Kaaa ara!”

Das Mein Schmampf

“Puff out the chest!”

“Tenai te hangale!”

“Bend the knees!”

“Puhur Uhuru!”

“Stomp the feet as hard as you can!”

“Upane!”

“Upane kaupane!”

“Whiti! Tera!”

“I die! I die!”

“I live! I live!”

“I die!”

“I live!”

“YAAYY!”

Everyone clapped, nodded, shouted, cheered, roared, blinked their approval.

Terrible Tim then asked for the copies of the meeting agenda to be passed around to everyone, along with the letter received under the rock from THE BIG AF.

Terrible Tim looked up and saw a sea of raised hands.

“Why us?”

“They had our address is all I can figure.”

He then attempted to answer a couple more questions and then thought to himself, fook it, not noticing a few disapproving looks among the more senior Aliens.

He then summarized what they all already knew, that they needed to come up with a plan, a document of their own, a response.

“Some proof to show them we deserve to stay here.

Otherwise, they're probly gonna replace us with orange orbs, zombies, and hobbits."

"Those oompa loompas," muttered The Colonel.

SUDDENLY!

Familiar popular banjo music rang out from the edges where the security sentries were posted, then a bird song followed by a tree knock.

"Quick as a whistle!" called out Molly McGuire, and the Leprechauns shot into action, covering the table with large leaves like a baseball field in a rainstorm.

Everyone hunkered in place and nobody breathed.

Corker, realizing he'd left his pipe burning on a table, crept out into the open to fetch it.

The drone wap-wapped over the leaves and branches, humming. It was black with the L.I.A.R.S. logo plainly on the side.

Everyone looked out with wide eyes and thumping hearts, reaching with alligator arms toward the tiny emerald hombre caught right out in the open, his zipper down as it were, and the little men in the windows in their black fedoras and tiny black eyes, black mustaches, black suits, black ties, white shirt, white handkerchief, left pocket.

Corker stood stock-still in the middle of the clearing, frozen as a jaybird, captured clover, as the drone shoved on ahead, closer, down through the canopy.

Terrible Tim's hands flared white and pink as he gripped his shillelagh, along with the rest of the Leprechauns.

Schmoda and the Sasquatch watched, calm, crouched, prepared for what must be done.

Bo and his Aliens inched to the edge of the cover. The Colonel and his Ghost men hovered, ready to switch to battle red.

The Black L.I.A.R.S. drone darted, zipped this way and that, like a hummingbird on steroids, then just sat there in mid-air, right above the covered food table, only inches from Corker's rapidly balding head etched in, not all that great, in green marker for the party.

Terrible Tim squeezed the living shit out of his cudgel, leaping forward, ready to charge up that hill.

They all saw them, the dozens of Leprechauns, Yeti, Ghosts, Aliens, right into the tiny windows of the drones and the tiny men creatures inside. They were really real. Most had never actually seen one.

"Bloody hell," exclaimed Irish and received a sharp elbow in his side from the wife.

They knew THE BIG AF from the sunrise, sunset, the rain, the hearts of children, and they knew THE BIG AF battled every single live-long day against The L.I.A.R.S. and somewhere in the equation was The L.O.S.E.R.S.

In fact, they were taught just that in school. And that THE BIG AF couldn't really exactly do anything, that was somehow against the rules. Whatever gets done has to be somehow through The People and The L.O.S.E.R.S., and for quite some time that had amounted to zippity do-da.

What?

Das Mein Schmampf

Exclaimed the Ghost in his head who was listening to the Alien who was thinking all of this.

You know that!

Answered the Alien in return.

I don't know why 'tis, jus 'tis, said the Leprechaun, who didn't even know he could do that.

It just is, replied a Sasquatch, almost mournfully.

I'tis wha' i'tis, said the same Leprechaun.

What he said, said the Sasquatch and then the lot of them got shouted down by a group telling them to *shut up!*

Corker held his four-leaf clover pose as long as he possibly could, heroically, already a legend. He started to sweat and shake and his eyes were just so big — his mother herself had always said he had beautiful eyes — and his mouth so wide, in scream mask mode.

All The People saw this. A diorama, a Shakespearean production playing out right in front of them. Life. And. Death. Writ large. In italics. But it was real life and now what should they do?

The drone would not make like a tree and leaf. What were the bints doing! Having lunch. A smoke? A pint? A bit of a nap?

Could the little men see them? Smell them?

Corker fell in a wad.

Everyone, and I mean everyone, bolted and rushed in.

The drone pulled up and away, out of sight, out of mind.

And Everyone dashed to Corker.

Das Mein Schmampf

They dragged him up, hugged him, brushed leaves from his clothes and hair, pressed a fresh pipe into his mouth and a new mug into his hands, raised him onto their shoulders, paraded him all around, singing "For he's a jolly good fellow!"

"HOORAAAYY!"

That night, after The Big Feast, after the talent show, the sing-along, the skits, after the children were tucked away, way deep into the clean, warm quilts, Terrible Tim and Molly McGuire sat on lawn chairs outside their cozy log home, smoking pipes and sippin' a bit o' the good stuff, helping themselves to the last of the wings.

"You're not sayin' much tonight, Timothy," she said, lazily stretching her legs to brush feet with his. "Cat got yer tongue?"

"I wonder where that comes from," he said, scratching beneath the Che beret he'd found recently.

"Cat. Tongue. Ptcchh."

She smiled in the darkness.

"That's me superpower," he said.

"Silence.

"I just don't get you sometimes," she said.

"I know, Molly. I know you don'. It is me, not you, me own fault. I'll do better I will."

They sat listening to the snoring and played a game of trying to guess which group and then who in which group.

They heard giggles from somewhere and lowered their voices.

Someone talked in his sleep and there was no mistaking Schmoda.

"That's what she said ... I'm like he-llooo ... they peed on your fucking rug ... I've got new information, man."

"What dya 'tink i'twas who convinced them to come anyways?"

"Oh, I dunno, Molly.

"One of the mysteries of the forest, I s'pose."

The air was engorged with the wondrous aroma of the still sparkling fire, like a glittering little city just after closing time, lights blinking, horns honking.

After a few more sips Terrible Tim gave his full, unedited account of the Hitler Youth as he called them, the Boy Scouts who had recently spent a night in the backyard. He went right into "so-called," blinking double air quotes with the hand not gripping the mug, "meaningful numbers," (now switching hands) like 33 and the lot and how it was all one pile of rubbish.

"IMO.

"It's the hive mind, good alien, bad alien," he said, looking straight at her for affirmation.

Molly stared back at him, a zoo patron trying to understand what the Brazilian parrot is thinking, like she didn't have a clue in the world what he was talking about because she didn't.

"Narnia, Rabbits, Oz ... Bonanza, it's all the same, Molly ol' gal, all ... the ... same."

"The Mighty Algorithm," she said because she had heard him say it some time before.

"Exactly," he said, taking a pull on his pipe, reaching out to clink mugs, as another V ran across the orange moon.

"But you know, all in all, they're right, we haven't done jack shit," he looked over to her and she nodded, blowing pipe smoke out her nose in the shape of a potato just because she could.

"It's on," he said.

"Got to be."

"Like donkey kong," she said, tilting her head back to drain her cup.

Terrible Tim told Molly about his most recent dream, about JFK, torture, and about how he was studying up on languages because he might be needin' to travel the globe, "even Roosha," in search of gold. "It is my density, Molly. I feel it, I do."

Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes and counted, one-thousand-one, one-thousand ...

"You!

"Timothy?

"My Timothy?"

"Yes, me father, too," he said and at the same time attempted to un-say it as well.

"No! Leprechauns! All looking for gold!"

She had fire in her heart and in her eyes and in her hand as she lit her pipe.

"It's there! No, wait, it's over there!

"You look and you look ... and you never find it.

Das Mein Schmampf

“And then you pass that down to the next, and then next and where does that shite end?”

“It’s in yer blood. Blah-blah-blah,” she said in sing-song.

She puff-puff-puffed to get the pipe going, and then satisfied, settled back into her chair and swung her legs around to face him, not unlike an FBI agent in a locked room with two metal chairs, one metal table and a suspect caught with the money in his back pocket.

“Look at yerself willya for one moment?”

“Look at me.”

He did, not by moving his head, just the eyes.

She smacked their home with a muscled flat, red hand.

His bottom left the stump for a split moment.

“This here, my friend, is but one log in the forest and even *then*, we can only get into it with hooks, ropes, ladders, by hoisting one another by shoulders, and pure grit, whatnot and Leprechaun know-how.

“This is one log.”

(slaps again now dontcha know)

“There is a thousand and more a’these.

“In that L.O.S.E.R. dwelling over yonder and proolly a hundrerd and more just like it through the big world beyond.

“We’re just not big enough, Timothy. You are not big enough. You. Are supposed to be about finding the gold, sure enough. But right here. Right here (slaps) is all the farther or further you need to go. Wait for the rainbow and

run. That's it. That's the ballgame. No more. No less. Nothing more. Nothing. Not a thing. Have you ever actually done that? Or do-ya burn up all yer tyme with the other geniuses, in the tub, dreamin' of Mars ... and Rooossia?"

She pounded her pip on the side of a stump.

"Ye-ees there *might* be gold with the Ruskies, of a certain sort, but it's here as well. If you'd only be about lookin'. That's all ah'm sayin'."

Terrible Tim had been staring at the night sky, at a flock of geese passing over the moon and wondering where they came from and where they might be headed.

"I'm sorry, Molly.

"I wasn't listening, didya say somethin'?"

"Would ya mind at all hittin' me with that one more tyme?"

She stood straight up, tossed the remainder of her cup into the dark and slapped him robustly aside the head with an open, strapping hand, ripped the Che beret from his head and flung it into the night, then climbed the rope ladder in two bounds up to bed.

Of course, he'd heard every word, and took it to heart, but for some reason he got the little devil in his head, maybe from the old muddy, maybe from his old great-grandad and decided to give Molly the dickens.

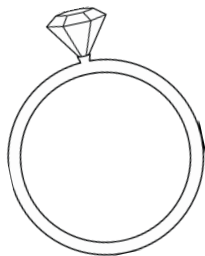
He stayed outside, watching the moon and more geese, listening to their faint barking, and to the snoring all round him, and the wolves off in some magical, dark place, proolly also wondering a little about gold.

NINE

When they kick at your front door
How you gonna come
With your hands on your head
Or on the trigger of your gun

You know it means no mercy
They caught him with a gun
No need for the Black Maria
Goodbye to the Brixton sun.

— The Clash, *Guns of Brixton*



The next morning, bright and early they all again gathered around the Library. A great hiss would be heard from the forest by anyone listening, from all the hard sucking down of great mugs of steaming, hot, fancy French vanilla coffee, from the holiday stash.

Some read the newspapers and magazines and books that had been set out for everyone's edification. Some visited in little circles. Those who had signed up for child care trudged up the hill toward the flat area with the sandbox, toys and swings.

As it was about that time, Terrible Tim again climbed to the top of the abandoned Rambler to begin.

"As you know!"

He projected as loud as he could.

"We have not done Sweet Fanny Adams."

Which brought out a flurry from some quarters about watching his language, there were children present, was he born in a barn, and suchlike.

From the Bigfoot troop could be heard a chatter nobody really understood.

“English much?” said O’Brien.

Terrible Tim raised both hands and said he was sorry.

“But, really,” he said.

“What *ahre* we gonna do? Any suggestion? Buehler? Buehler?”

One of the Ghosts shouted out that before they left they should maybe dig a hole and leave a time capsule so a million fooking years from now they will know we were even here, ya know?

Which spurred many discordant as well as agreeing voices and opinion, bringing to mind to some the Russian author Joseph Smith and his book, *Animal Farm*, horses and pigs and cows, goats, birds ...

“Nobody is going anywhere!” Tim proclaimed from the Ramblertop.

“I ... *ahem* ... I said, I, *excuse me* ... I kinda thought that’s why we’re even here today!” and now he hollered.

“Not to fooking give up, but to find some way to stay, to give ‘em what they want, basically, what we were all brought here, sent here, in the farst place, to help The Bloody L.O.S.E.R.S. in thar fight against ‘Dos L.I.A.R.S. A war if ya be true, one they don’ even know is a goin’ on, for one thing, and don’t even get me started on that now.”

Some of the aliens stepped forward and offered that they had, personally, *umm*, had developed over millennia, to fulfill certain tasks, not fulfill their own personal needs and ambitions.

"Just sayin'," everyone heard in their heads.

"And what's that got to do with the price of brioche in Minneapolis?" a Ghost said, and added, "Is that what you do over there? With your moonshine and fiddle blaring 24/7. Fulfill certain tasks! Gimme a break.

"My lord."

"Not bond with their mothers, not bond with others," came the refrain from the Alien band.

"Oh, is that so!"

Like a Scud missile an old shoe arced in the air, headed for the Ghosts, landing like a grenade stink bomb, tear-gas, flooding the area with whooshes, wisps and swooshes like a genie jailbreak.

Now an enfilade of scented candles of edgy new age flavors riddled the Alien bunker.

"C'mon now! People!"

Timothy held up his little arms over his head to full height.

"Focus!"

"I mean! I mean! ... You got a lot of damn gall to ask me if I'm rehabilitated so I can go out and murder men, woman and children!"

"Wait ... what?"

"What is he blathering on about?"

Timothy thought that might do it.

"I'll tell you what I'm blathering about. I mean, it's a huugge lie, every day, right in our faces, their faces, and we, they ignore it or don't even fooking see it. How does that even happen? People? Anyhow?"

Das Mein Schmampf

“Plane. Moost. Hit. Steel.

“Drop the mic.”

(He dropped his stick, picked it right up, he loved that stick.)

Nobody said nothing.

“Right?

“All you need to know, right?

“Find that Florida teacher, ask her WTF, who told her to do that lesson that day, those words. Should be simple enough ...

“I know ... right?”

Silence became the whole world.

Someone dropped a pin and everyone jumped and shouted, “What was that!”

“Yeah ... I don’t know, man,” said Schmoda, finally, “What you’re trying to tell us.”

One-thousand-one. One-thousand-two.

“Anyways,” said Terrible Tim.

“I do think we need to vote,” added Schmoda.

“Do we give up or stay and fight?

“Whatdya think, Timothy?”

“Yeah. I guess, couldn’t hurt, maybe you’re right, Schmode.”

Terrible Tim raised one hand and shouted, “Everyone who thinks we should shit-can our honor and give up and get fooking Evaporated!”

Schmoda, Terrible Tim, Bo, and the Colonel counted the votes.

“You know what Stalin said about vote-counting, right?” one of the Aliens whispered to another.

“Okay,” said Terrible Tim, “Now how many think we should do all we can be, try to stay, to come up with some fooking ‘ting, any’ting really, to prove we are worth our beer, that we do not need to be replaced by pink robots!”

“Those wankers,” said The Colonel to himself.

They counted, then got into a circle to count each other’s fingers, then turned to the others, clasped hands and raised them high.

“We stay!” said Schmoda and everyone jumped.

Then everyone cheered.

“Got to preserve the family unit,” mumbled a certain cement truck.

“Okay. We stay. Now what?” said Sally.

“Yeah,” chimed a chorus from around the circle.

“If’n we fight The L.I.A.R.S., I hope you know, avocados all the way down,” said Mulder.

“Okaaaay,” said Bo.

“Yeah.”

“Yeah.”

“Thas right.”

“Even right now, this moment, we’re all idea criminals, doomed,” said Maloney.

“Or are we,” said Bo, somewhat slyly.

“They don’t know what we’re up to all up in here,” said The Colonel.

“They want us to say uncle,” said Terrible Tim, “begging the question.”

“And just what question might that be?” said O’Brien, tapping his pipe against his boot.

“Well, regarding neo truth, neo ... every frigging thing,” said Terrible Tim, “are we gonna fall into that Sasquatch Hole? Present company excepted a’carse dontcha know.”

“What the?” said Dream Weaver.

“We need to find out about them,” said Terrible Tim, hopping down from the car. He began to draw in the dirt with his cane, making a circle. He put numbers around the circle.

He looked up at them all, proud of his work, waiting for the applause.

One-thousand-one ...

“We need to find out how they tick,” he said, exasperatedly, “The inner workings of the mechanism. Look under the hood.”

“As it were,” chimed in Kong.

“Do we really want to know?” asked Corker

“We might not like what we find,” said Michael Africa.

“About them, and about us. I had a run-in with a bear once, bit me to the bone. You can’t unsee something like that, just sayin’.”

“What do we care, anyway?” said Irish. “I mean, just being honest. They *are* a bunch of L.O.S.E.R.S. We do what we can and that’s all she wrote.

“At this point,” said The Colonel, “I’d say we don’t have much choice.”

Ignoring The Colonel, Terrible Tim looked Irish

straight in the eye and pointed his cane right where his eye shined.

“That! My friend. Is exactly it!

“Youuu have stumbled into something, regardless, me boy. We. Don’t. Care.

“And we don’t care becuuzzzz ...”

“Wait for it, wait for it,” mumbled Schmoda.

“ ... Because we do not know!” shouted Terrible Tim, throwing up his arms like Mary Tyler Moore releasing tam hat pigeons.

“That is precisely ... it.

“We were sent here, dropped here, community serviced here, born here, for a reason.

“We have a purpose.

“To do something good. And somehow we lost our way home after midnight in a blizzard. Our mission, our zest, our raison d’etre, quest. We got covered up, fully submerged in the snow, and it felt good, comfortable, and we closed our eyes ... carousing and sleeping and gossiping ... and fooking ... and eating. That’s how ya die, lads. And, luckily, we’ve been called on that, given another chance. Who ever gets that? Another chance at life. Fooking do-over. We’ve been given a gift and we had better make the best of it, cuz I dare to say we won’t be gettin’ another.”

“It’s a wonderful life,” said Schmoda.

“That it is,” said Terrible Tim.



TEN

“Dun dun dun dun dundundun ... dundun dun ...
dundundun ... Bonanza!

— *Bonanza*

It was decided.

They would go out, People to L.O.S.E.R.S.

Venture forth on four like missions, with the goal of learning all about The L.O.S.E.R.S.

Operation Desert Soup To Nuts.

The Aliens would go native, go right up to the front door and recon inside the homes. The Bigfoot would look in the windows. The Ghosts were going in, the homes, cars, workplaces, schools, like tunnel rats. The Leprechauns would steal every artifact that might reveal some intel about the true nature of the target group.

“So it goes,” said Terrible Tim as he raised a mug for a toast at The Big Send-Off Blowout Thing.

“It is what it is,” Schmoda hoisted a cup.

“Bring something to the table,” called out The Colonel.

“At the end of the day!” said Bo inside everyone’s head.

The toasts went round and round most of the night.

Das Mein Schmampf

“Stay on the same page!”

“The writing on the wall!”

[what wall? that wall?]

“Train of thought!”

“Barking up the wrong tree!”

“Through the looking glass!”

“Here! Here!”

The next morning, bright and sunny, ten minutes to twelve, everyone started to get up, crawl out of logs and sleeping bags, out from under piles of pizza boxes, down from high branches.

After brunch the groups began to figure out how exactly they were going to actually complete their missions, which all seemed so doable last night. But today, not so much.

The Aliens had actually come up with a plan, however.

The ones going out stood in a circle feeling more than a bit silly, wearing white shirts, with black pants and shoes and tie. It had been Pink Freud’s idea, so he gave them their instructions, more of a pep talk, sermon.

“We will go out, together, on this great worthy... mission, and we will all reach out to the poor and desolate, and come back to save The People. All of us.

“But mostly me.”

“All right,” said Schmoda when Moon Rock showed him to the pile of old ladders they could pick from to peak into windows.

“Cool beans.”

The Ghosts spread out a big map on a picnic table, marking it with glowing, pulsing yellow smiley faces.

Terrible Tim and the Leprechaun Forest Rangers gathered strategically up and down the front bar at McGinty’s, commencing planning sessions immediately.

“Come out with your hands up! We’ve got you surrounded!”

“No!”

“Phasers on full-stun.”

“NO!”

The Aliens huddled together, rehearsing their parts, drinking their coffee and munching toast loudly.

“Latter Day Aliens,” commented Irish over at the layabout bench.

With still enough time in the day to get some work done the Alien expeditionary force, led by Bo and Louis, and Clark, rolled in a frightened ball toward the front door while All The People watched from the forest edge, stretching necks to see all they could see.

They walked up the steps to the porch.

And stood there.

“Someone break the window,” suggested Pink Freud, “That’s what they do.”

“No!”

“Let’s try this, can’t hurt,” said Bo, pushing on the doorbell.

“Nobody home let’s go,” said Garth, grabbing Stella’s arm and turning to leave.

Das Mein Schmampf

"Wait, I hear something," said Bo, a finger to his ear opening.

"So, I got that going for me, which is nice," said a man to someone back over his shoulder as he opened the door.

"Hello. May I help you?"

They stared at each other through the screen door, the man in colorful shoes and pants and colorful shirt with letters and numbers, wearing a green and gold helmet, and Pink Freud, Bo, Garth, Granny, Lyle, Lyla, Daisy, Tesla, Louis, Clark, Billy, Sally, in Alien Missionary Clothes.

"Do I know you?" the man said.

"I was thinking the exact same thing," communicated Bo.

"Well, come in, come on in."

They all walked in single file in through the front door into the hallway. They stood there watching the children, seated on the floor watching the television.

"It's just the news now," said the man. "They'll watch anyway, cheap babysitter, you know?"

"I know right?" communicated Granny.

The Aliens walked in file around the sofa to sit. They sat with hands on knees behind the children and the TV.

The words at the bottom of the screen said "El Presidente Magnifico del todo el mundo Poopin Pantz."

"He's nekd," said Granny.

"No, man," said Tesla.

"There's poop in his pants. You can see it."

"Yep," said one of the children.

"It's always there. It's funny."

"Yes. Funny," said Tesla.

Sally nudged Stella and nodded at the green sticker on a blue-green backpack, an alien and frog image with the words "Green Lives Matter," and another that said, "The Revolution Will Be Telepathized," with an image of kinder aliens with antennae.

"C'mon downstairs," said the man.

"We got the game on. What was it you guys needed? What are you sellin' anyway, yeah, watch yer step, it's just me and some-a the guys, yeah, watcher yer head, there, that's it."

They now stood behind a collection of sofa's, divans, couches and bean bags where lounged a number of men wearing colorful shirts, jerseys, sweatpants and helmets. A couple had faces painted. They watched a very large TV, three times the size of the one upstairs. They stared hard at large groups on the screen dressed similar to themselves.

Beer cans and bottles sat on tables next to the sofas.

An opened 24-pack of adult undergarments lay on the floor.

Bo pointed.

"Oh, that," said the man.

"It's the new thing, really. We all wear 'em."

At that one of the men gripped the waist of his pair and snapped it to show Bo.

"During the game," continued the man, so we don't miss anything."

"Depends," said Bo.

"Camo Depends," said the man.

Das Mein Schmampf

One of the men was staring hard at Lyle.

He stood, turned around. His face showed he was upset, frightened. His hands quivered.

"I'm having, right now, this moment, the most intense, beautiful feeling of love that I have ever known with a being I have never met before.

"It's like you've known me my whole life."

He reached out his hands to Lyle.

"Sorry, man," said Lyle. "I got nothin'."

"So," said the home owner man, "You guys from around here? What you got? Raffle tickets? I'm actually the head of our local Let's Find A Cure For Ethiopian Ebola & Illiteracy Chapter," he said, reaching for his wallet.

"Of course you are," said Bo.

"Well, anyways," said the man.

"Yes," said Bo.

At the front door the man stood by saying nice to meet you, thanks for stopping by.

All the Aliens shook his hand as they made their exit.

"You guys got a brochure or something?" said the man as he waved goodbye.

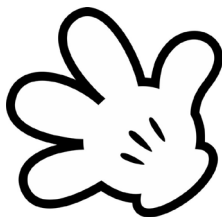
"It's like dying in outer space," said Billy as they walked away down the sidewalk.

"No one can hear you scream."

ELEVEN

Your child belongs to us already. What are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing but this new community.

— Adolph Hitler speaking, “Education In The Third Reich,” William Shirer, *The Rise & Fall of the Third Reich*



“I know, but they’re such linear thinkers, pops.”

Moon Rock and Schmoda were carrying together the ladder toward the house and back window.

“Proibly just cut your friends a little slack,” replied Schmoda.

“Nobody’s perfect.”

“I suppose you’re right.”

They set the ladder on the ground and peered inside.

The others, Kong, Ekaterina, Spartacus, Dyevlov, Michael Africa, Tarzan, Ariel, Greased Lightning, Aladdin, Belle, Newsweek, F.D.R., John, Paul, George, Ringo, had the other windows already covered, all around the house.

“You hear something you agree with, you want to hear more of that. The other just sounds like white noise,” growled Schmoda sympathetically.

“Confirmation bias,” said Moon Rock.

“Exactly.”

They peered inside at the family gathered in chairs

and on the sofa, around the blue glow, in the dark, eating Doritos, clutching the cushy pillows.

The Bigfoot slash Sasquatch slash Yeti slash Abominable Snowman slash Gigantopithecus read the words showing up at the bottom of the screen.

"If the people knew the truth they would revolt. And so they can't and so they must," groaned Moon Rock.

"I feelya," moaned a cement truck in the still night, in agony over what yet another teenager had to go through.

It was times like these that father and son could talk, really communicate, some way and somehow the walls came down, like when it was just the two of them at 3 a.m. out in the middle of nowhere. Just two guys shooting the shit, pounding on trees.

"The Overton Window," said Moon Rock. "Sometimes it's here, then it's over there."

"I know, right? Son, I'm 174 in the shade. I've seen it jump around plenty."

"Guerillas, jungles, revolutionaries, that's what it's gonna take," said Moon Rock.

"10/10," said Schmoda hoping it would never come to that.

"Order out of chaos," said Moon Rock.

"Moving the goalposts," said Schmoda.

"Oh. My God."

They both gasped and clamped their hands over their mouths at something on the TV.

Moon Rock nodded toward the woods and they fist-bumped.

Das Mein Schmampf

Schmoda picked up the ladder and followed his son and the others into the woods, the still night, humming to himself, "The best part of waking up ... is Folgers in your cup."



TWELVE

It's like what Lenin said
You look for the person who will benefit
Uh, umm
I am the walrus.
That fucking bitch!
I am the walrus.
Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov!
This has nothing to do with Vietnam, man.
Have it your way.
I am the walrus.
Shut the fuck up, Donny.

The Colonel nervously bent over the big map with all the blinking lights, tepidly sipping sour Leprechaun coffee.

Festivus looked out over the driver's shoulder into traffic, listening to the conversation with the woman person in the passenger seat about the price of brioche in Minneapolis.

Atta sat in the back between two kids not saying anything, each involved with activities on their phones.

Potemkin hung in the way back with a golden retriever looking out the back window counting blue Chevy's and discussing the weather.

"It's what I do," said Astral as she and Alexa and Dream Weaver headed over to the house.

"Fight the power," said Alexa.

"For real," said Astral.

"Yeah, your boy Tim," said Alexa.

"What's that s'pose to mean?" said Astral, stopping short, then hurrying to catch up.

Sophie sat in a coffee shop staring across a small table at a young woman working on her computer. Laurel Canyon had found the breakroom in a car dealership and sat with legs dangling from atop a snack machine, letting his legs bang the glass. Krebsbach stretched out forming an X, catching a few Z's, on the ceiling of a bank lobby.

Fyodo, Mulder, Truman and Fyodor sat in the back row of Mrs. Karensky's third grade classroom taking notes from the blackboard for a long division lesson.

Lucky and Easter Egg, standing in the ditch, sifted through a plastic bag of old batteries and refrigerator magnets.

"PTTPRO," Easter Egg smiled, holding up the black and white button.

Lucky's face said, "What's that?"

"You don't know?" she said without saying, tilting her head like a cat out the window at rain knowing it would not be going out today.

"Power To The People Right On," she said as she satisfingly pinned it on herself. "Booyah."

"Here," she said, walking over to hand a button to Lucky.

It was red and white and orange and said, "Imperfection Is Beautiful."

"What's that supposed to mean," he said as he pinned it on himself and went back to work.

The Leprechauns fanned out to cover a wide area in search of newspapers, magazines, books, flyers, anything that might contain a clue about the back story and world of

Das Mein Schmampf

The L.O.S.E.R.S., how they thought, what they knew, what they were made of.

O'Brien held Irish's feet as he searched a Dumpster, tossing items back over his shoulder as he found something interesting.

Unabomber and John Doe #1, leaning low and moving serpentine-style, sneaked in the grass to a bench where a man sat reading his paper. They waited. And waited. Unabomber tossed a pebble at the man's head and missed, he thought, but the man cursed and swatted his cheek. John Doe #1 climbed up onto the bench, up the man's arm onto his shoulder and whispered into his ear that the lady over there looks mighty nice, "look at that shit," and might be needin' some cooompany. "Oh, man, that leg, that ear, that nose, maaan."

The man put the paper down and walked away and before you could say walk like an Irishman, Unabomber and John Doe #1 had spirited the newspaper away.

Terrible Tim, Molly McGuire and Corker bided their time in the book shop, perusing the magazine racks and the new fiction, some non-fiction. After a time they wandered toward the tables to smell the coffee and bread, before returning to the fooking task at hand, as it were.

After making their selections, they studied the door to time their getaway, which, being Leprechauns was only almost perfect. Their exit was verily detected by a baby in a stroller who pointed at the magazines and books headed out the door by their own self.

Das Mein Schmampf

The baby cooed and laughed and said, "Bye-bye book ... Leprechauns."

"It's hate speech, is what it is," said Irish, standing on a copy of today's paper, the front page no less.

"You might as well say you love Big Brother," added O'Brien.

"Fact check," said Molly.

"Normies," added Terrible Tim.

"All good in the hood," said Corker.

"There they are, finally," said Molly as Lucky and Easter Egg and the others showed up, with their booty, and dragging canisters by rope and strings and vines.

THIRTEEN

Arrest is an instantaneous shattering thrust, expulsion, somersault from one reality into another. ... that's what arrest is, a blinding flash and a blow which shifts the present instantly into the past and the impossible into omnipotent actuality ... the universe has many different centers as there are living beings in it. Each of us is a center of the universe and that universe is shattered when they hiss at you, "You are under arrest."

— Alexandr Solzhenitsyn



“Well, shit.”

He thought and wrote anyway.

“In essence, underneath it all, we have lived a lie most of our lives, while on the surface we have gone about our lives as if nothing had happened.”

He crumpled it and tossed a jump shot onto the pile.

Moose The Bear sat on the ground.

He scratched his back against the tree, knowing nothing he wrote would make any difference but his back felt awesome at this moment, not a whit, a cookie crumb, a drop of honey’s worth, but my god, *aaaaahhhh*.

It never had. He had tried almost forever and still no one knew he existed.

He’d heard of famous writers who had killed themselves, Hemingway, Thompson, surely there were more, and how many unknown writers, coming to the absolute end of hope and self-deception had done the same? Must be a hundred.

Das Mein Schmampf

He had not had the kind of impact with words he had hoped, with craft. What was that anyway, where to put the commas? Even now he couldn't be certain.

In order to feel more deeply the hurt and the cold he closed his eyes. The cold air, like oxygen to the depressed, like oxygen is to someone who really needs oxygen.

Moose The Bear fought back the compulsion to write that down.

It's over.

Fuck it.

He probably should go back on his meds. He had thought, apparently wrongly, that going au natural would inform his writing.

With a roar and a slash of the air with his claws he hurled the notebooks and pens as far as he could, then pounded the ground to chase them down, rake them and trounce them.

Moose The Bear raised up on his legs, slicing the air again, roaring, calling out, in anger, in fear.

It would not be something this day he would be proud to recall but it was at that moment that Moose The Bear ran, as fast as he could, which was very fast, through the woods, and he did not stop for days, not to sleep, not to eat, certainly not to write.

In those nights the Sasquatch and the Leprechauns and Ghosts and Aliens heard his bellows in the death of night.

“ROAR!”

Almost human-like, his screams, abject desperation.
No hope.

“Aaaaaa!

“Roar!”

Moose The Bear trampled the edges of the forest. He tore down whole garages, sheds, gashed the sides of houses and vehicles and boats with the ten giant knives on the end of his paws.

He broke windows on houses, on SUVs, in doll houses and tiny dump trucks. He knocked down whole trees to get at the deer stands, destroyed flower beds, tore up entire lawns.

Boom! came the gun shots.

Bam! Bam!

BOOM!

The next night all was silent. And then the next and the next.

It was a long time after that, after Schmoda’s having searched the entire forest for the body, for blood, and figuring his old friend and comrade had found his own special place to die, that Schmoda, out collecting antler sheds, cocked his head at recognizing a familiar crackle, a certain crunching.

Schmoda ran to Moose The Bear and hugged him until he pleaded to let him breathe!

They sat and talked about many things, about what Moose The Bear had done and where he had been.

“I have been to the fort,” said he.

“And seen the spot.”

And Schmoda knew the place for it was he who had told Moose The Bear about it long ago. Where the warriors were hanged by the soldiers, killed for having fought for their people.

“I felt it,” said Moose The Bear.

“It was close, not ancient history, now, today. They are me. I am them!

“We must fight.”

Schmoda jumped to his feet, saying tonight he would join his friend The Bear and together they would rip down whole houses and toss boats and Jeep Grand Cherokees into the woods to rot like dishwashers. They would yank their apple trees out by the roots every one.

“Sit my friend.”

Moose The Bear smiled.

“That’s good, but I have an idea,” he said, touching his temple.

Moose The Bear talked about an old friend he had only recently remembered.

“Babushka Lady,” he said.

“In old days of Soviet Union. I was so young, yet I remember like it was yesterday, radio show. Now I think she has podcast, like radio show. Called GRANDMA KALASHNIKOV’S CORNER, THE VIEW FROM MY PIROZHKI CART.

“Red Square,” said Schmoda.

“Exactly,” said Moose The Bear.

Moose The Bear accepted the offer of pine tea and told about Grandma Kalashnikov wrapping her fish in *Pravda*

and *Tass*, with cold-air breath puffs above her cart from her belly laughs.

“Like smoke signals,” said Schmoda.

“Isn’t she nervous? Broadcasting with hidden microphones right there by the Kremlin?”

“Ohhh, nooo, not her. She would tell her listeners, “I imagine them all with diapers on their faces.

“She carries strong heart, has much confidence, because she knew,” explained Moose The Bear. “As little girl she had witnessed glitch in the matrix. A big plane, loud over her hovel. Aeroflot? Maybe. Had stopped in mid-air and she saw it. It went backwards, little bit, like film reversing itself, just a tiny pinch, only a few frames. Enough.

“And so she knew.

“And once you know. You know. And she told everybody. Truth. She saw the Leprechauns. And wrapped pirozhki in *Pravda*, in *Tass*.

“Now everyone knew truth. But we here, These L.O.S.E.R.S., don’t know diddle.

“Our job to tell them. Tell them truth.

“Not tear down apple trees.

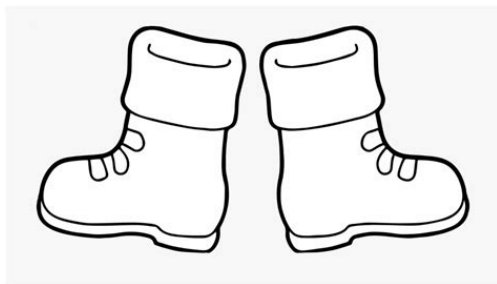
“Not apple tree’s fault.

“Apple trees good.”

FOURTEEN

from the comments section:

... the “system” has been a lie for as long as any of us have been alive. The choice we all have to make is us choosing to continue to go along with the lie or get out of the system. I’ve chosen to leave my career and the lie behind me. I’m not saying it’s going to be easy but I’ve seen it coming for a long time so it’s not a surprise. I don’t want to be a part of their society anymore. Choose wisely, folks, best of luck to y’all.



Crunching the hoarfrost covering the leaves and grass O'Brien crept out in the first hint of bright, shining, happy morning light.

Making his way sideways across roads and woods, and around a lake and then a golf course he came to the place, The Lexus Theater. Sneaking in without paying just because, O'Brien entered theater No. 1, where he knew he would find a whole row of L.I.A.R.S. in fedoras and black suits, each taking up one seat like someone sitting with his back against a mountain. They smoked cigars and watched the same movie every day *Baltimore Is Hell* like watching a film on clouds or against the sky screen.

O'Brien scaled the first seat and told them pretty much everything, what The People were up to.

"Those muggles," said The L.I.A.R. in the first seat.

"Wocka-wocka came the sound down the row of L.I.A.R.S.

"Wockawocka."

"Wocka wocka."

Das Mein Schmampf

As the popcorn got passed along.

O'Brien reached for his share.

The L.I.A.R. said, "Not you," and handed O'Brien one Milk Dud and waved him away, down again and out the door.

The next day, bright and early in the morn', Beginagin, Terrible Tim's and Molly McGuire's youngest child, came up missing from the flat play area with the swings and sandbox.

They spent the whole day and night searching everywhere.

That same day, in the afternoon, Astral, who wasn't supposed to, but did anyway — visit and make friends with some L.O.S.E.R.S. her age — found out that one of those friends had committed suicide by getting hit by a black SUV when she went to the road to check the mail.

And so, the following day, morning at dawn-ish, when all the groups were supposed to come back to the Leprechaun clearing and give their reports, there was a lot of other discussion and crying and yelling.

"Do something!"

Molly McGuire sat flat on the dirt, leaning her face to the ground, screaming, and crying and ripping at her clothes, pulling her hair.

"You have to find him! You all are just sitting there! You call yourselves Leprechauns!"

Terrible Tim went over to touch her and try to comfort her, not knowing where else to look or what to do.

Astral at the same time sat with others on the banked area, sobbing and telling what she knew.

"She was just like me," she sobbed. "She knew the truth. She was gonna change things."

The group on the benches outside MCGINTY'S wondered why these two things had happened right together, right now.

"It's almos' like they're tellin' us some 'ting," said Irish, tugging at his beard. "Like they knows what we're a doin' here."

"I'll be after coffee," said O'Brien, getting up, "anyone needin' a refill?"

"There is no hope in The L.O.S.E.R.S.," said the ghost reporter to the large group.

"Like toast through butter," said the Alien scribe.

Irish looked at Corker and they both shrugged their shoulders to say what the bloody hell?

The Leprechauns and Bigfoot also had gloomy dispatches that they had found no reason, AT ALL, to believe there ever was or ever would be any reaso to hope in "these proles."

And so, they all sat without talking, looking down at the ground, picking at the grass, listening to the wails of Molly McGuire.

Still looking straight down, still intent on every movement of any grass or pebble or ant directly in front or to the immediate sides of them they felt the earth vibrate.

Some saw movement in their peripheral vision as

Schmoda so carefully so not to smoosh anyone, made his way around and in and out of the mass of seated People.

“Ahem,” he said.

Nobody looked because Molly wept now louder than ever and everyone put their heads down and figuratively or for real between their legs, under their arms and in a hole, then filled the hole in.

“People!” yelled Terrible Tim, now standing next to Schmoda.

“Please! Attention must be paid!”

“Thanks,” said Schmoda.

“Sorry. I’ll be quick.”

He then told them about the visit from Moose The Bear, about the hangings, the Babushka Lady and wrapping fish and “like bread rolls with cabbage and stuff,” and breath smoke signals in Red Square.

He finished and waited.

He stood there, searching the eyes and faces for what he had envisioned would come next, when he’d sat back in the crowd trying to get his nerve up.

“Aaaand soooo,” he growled but not really, “I thii-ink, weee should ... maybe have a radio show.

Schmoda waited for the applause and gasps of amazement.

“And do what?” came a voice from the back benches, “Exactly.”

“Excellent question,” said Schmoda.

“Not sure, really, hoped someone might have some suggestions.”

Das Mein Schmampf

“Great ideas are born in a single mind,” said Corker, heard only by Irish.

“Someone said that?” asked Irish.

“Of course,” said Corker.

“Who?”

“Me.”

“Well,” came a voice from the Aliens, “not sure if it works or not.”

And he told about how they had some old radio stuff, wires, microphone, “etcetera.”

“It was in the, uh, craft. It’s old fer sure, not saying ... yer welcome to it.”

“Niiice,” said Schmoda. “That’s what I’m talkin’ about.”



FIFTEEN

He grew up without reading a single book by Mayne Reid, but at the age of twelve he had gone through an enormous pile of *Izvestiya* as tall as he was and he had read about the trial of the saboteur engineers. From the very first, the boy did not believe what he read. He did not know why — his reason could not grasp it — but he could clearly see that it was all a lie. He knew engineers in his friends' families and he could not imagine them committing sabotage.

— Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle*

“**T**his here is The American-Russian novel all we need is more vodka radio hour,” said Wolfman.

“Welcome to our opening night,” added Daisy bouncily.

“We’re glad you’ve chosen to spend part of your evening with us,” said Easter Egg.

They smiled as Alexa did the commercial for Red Pill Pharmacy. This was really working! They’d been a little more than nervous.

After hauling the “used” more like Paleolithic equipment from the spaceship and over to Bigfoot Land and down to Level Three of the cave sub-basement underground and securing something that might be an antenna high on the cave roof and attached about a hundred four-leaf clovers to it, they had placed promotional flyers in mailboxes, ditches, under windshield wipers, just everywhere. The Ghosts had also dropped some over town and a cousin of Bo’s had volunteered to help out with that as well: “PEOPLE OF ZE WURL ...”

Das Mein Schmampf

At showtime, Moon Rock and Schmoda waited, poised and ready, looking into an open window. Upon listening for intro and hearing it actually broadcast into The L.O.S.E.R. living room they high-fived and gave the thumbs-up, relayed from tree to tree on The People's Telegraph back to Cave Station.

"This is coming to you from the underground," said Wolfman in a voice he hoped might cause some to recall Edward R. Murrow. "You are listening to the voice of The People, the resistance."

Wade added a ping ... ping sound by tapping a rock against a harmonica to lend a U-boat, North Atlantic ambience.

"You are smoking those long cigarettes," continued Daisy.

"And someone is drinking all your god-damned wine out of your blinkin' cool leather pouch bag thing," added Potemkin, in their *Radio Days Drama Show*.

"And all around you the others are speaking French," said Wolfman.

"But somehow, you understand," said Daisy.

"That big-ass radio was here when you got here," said Potemkin.

"And you are glad it was."

"For with it, you found there were others," said Alexa.

"Well, as you know, some of those who have spoken the truth are no longer here.

Am I on the air?

"Their chairs at the Thanksgiving adult big table are empty.

"Their relatives have sent them to Siberia with a roll of their eyes.

I'm on?

"We have the winds of our own totalitarian storm sweeping the countryside," said Wolfman.

"So scooch up to the samovar," said Easter Egg.

"Fill your peasant hands with a warm drink," said Wolfman.

"Maybe leave your hat and boots on. Huddle close together.

"And listen ... for the sound of hoof beats on the ice."

"Hello everyone out there in radio land! We have a great show for you tonight. We've got a new vibe, a new beat, not the Beatles, not Elvis, not Beyonce, bringing you something brand new, boys and girls. Something only previously heard from the coast of Maine, northern France, and Alpha Centauri.

"This is Resistance Radio, the voice ... of The People.

"Tonight's show is sponsored in part by Just Depends. When the rapture doesn't go exactly as you had planned, we're there for you. Just Depends. Now available in blaze orange and hunter green.

"You know who you are, and we know you know who you are, and you know we know who you are, and we know you know we know who you are, so let's get started!

"You are those who look up every now and again, at hearing the distant sound of the city snowplow scraping ... listening for the revolution.

"As Solzhenitsyn's zeks tell us, all history is continuous pestilence. There is no truth and no illusion. There is nowhere to appeal and nowhere to go."

"Aaah, yes," said Daisy, "but that's where we come in."

"As a friend of mine once said," said Wade. "You know the history of the 'arth? Not really. Your learning is designed to keep you at a certain level. Actually, infinite potential has been repressed over time. You believe what you've been taught ..."

"Blah, blah, blah," added Lucky.

"There's more," continued Wade.

"There is so much more. You have so much more inside of you. The universe has so much more information to divulge, for you ..."

"For instance," said Alexa.

"Did you know," said Potemkin.

"About the Soviet Union, in the day.

"And how they would arrest people left and right, and take them to prison, boom! Just like that, possibly the rest of their lives. For no reason!"

"No fooking reason!" said Lucky, with a hand over his mouth almost before he said it.

"And have we got a treat for you tonight," said Wolfman.

"Through the magic of radio, boys and girls.

“Straight from Moscow! Live from Red Square!
Poopskaya Avenue! Ladies and gentlemen!

“The Babushka Lady! Grandma Kalashnikov, with her most recent podcast, this podcast! Tonight! The View From My Pirozhki Cart! Give it up!”

At that, Grandma Kalashnikov, spry but really fooking old, told about her experiences in Russia, with piroshki, with cod, with *Pravda*, with *Tass*.

Then she circled around, as her hosts had been hoping she might, to relate the U.S.S.R. with U.S.A.

“Thank you and good night Granny Kalashnikov!
And your Pirozhki Cart!

“What exactly is pirozhki!

“Oh, she’s gone?”

After “a musical interlude,” from The Starship String Band, the hosts, Wolfman, Easter Egg, Daisy, Wade, Alexa, Lucky, Potemkin took turns telling a long, serious story about how in the United States people are also killed for doing what they think is right and going against The L.I.A.R.S.

They actually said “The L.I.A.R.S. out loud and over the air. They listened into the night for lightning and rumbling.

“And sometimes they will say they killed themselves,” said Astral solemnly, “but they didn’t. It was The L.I.A.R.S.”

“It happens, people! Wake up!” Alexa shouted and stamped on the hard-packed dirt.

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Wolfman put a finger to his lips and Wade pressed his hands toward the ground to say to Alexa, good, but let's keep it on the down-low, shall we?

Wolfman and the rest of the cast and crew continued with their script.

This is Andy Rooney, reporting for Resistance Radio.

Do you *ever* wonder? ... well ... The kind of people we have running our government ... if we really knew the truth, I believe we would be astonished. Forget about George Washington and the Cherry Tree. Ronald Reagan making America strong again. The George Bushes riding into the baseball game on national TV to throw out the first ball, then sitting in the front row. Forget about Bill Clinton or Barack Obama the new liberal Democrats who care about you ...Sponge Bob, The Simpsons and South Park, Calvin and Hobbes, Snoopy have more to tell us than those guys. ... At least in the Soviet Union, when they saw nonsense and lies printed in Pravda and Tass, at least they knew they were lies.

We are still at the infancy stage in our development ... of not questioning the lies.And so the next time there is a bombing or a threat of a bombing or a bunch of blue backpacks found in Bemidji – the healthy American, the true American, the real American – thinks “CIA, FBI, the police” ... the real patriotrefuses to stand for the national anthem, and rather than another knee-jerk reciting of the pledge of allegiance he says – not until I get some questions answered, because ...This is important stuff. This has been Andy Rooney, reporting. Seriously, people. Don't You Ever Wonder?

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And now, for tonight's Dick Tracy Crime Stopper's Bulletin:
When You See Something Say Something.

Because of the murder of journalists Michael Hastings and Gary Webb, a special bulletin has been released.

Be on the look-out for FBI license plates in your neighborhood.

When you see something, say something.

Because of the murder of men, women and children in Waco Texas, be on the look-out for FBI license plates in your neighborhood.

When you see something, say something.

Because of the illegal torture, imprisonment and false flag attacks designed to put the public in a state of panic, in Guantanamo, Tucson, Aurora, Boston and elsewhere around the country and globe, citizens are asked to be on the look-out for FBI license plates in your neighborhood, as well as a long, black limousine with tiny American flags fluttering from the quarter panels.

The persons inside the limousine are to be considered liars and murderers.

This has been your weekly Dick Tracy Crime Stoppers Bulletin.

When you see something, say something.

Now a word from your local chamber of commerce.

The United States is not a police state.

And you would be a fat Communist soccer-lover wearing lederhosen and a tiny Bavarian hat with a feather and tight jacket and knee socks with buckle shoes who does not fit in with the rest of the family at Thanksgiving dinner if you thought so.

There are not police everywhere. You do not have to go to where the police put you in order to hold your sign and

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have your freedom of speech like a Bolshevik perched atop a potato crate like a stranded nanny goat.

This is America.

There are not thousands and thousands of people making their living off of the "War on Terror," in Homeland Security, the border patrol, the U.S. Army, the airport box cutter-shampoo-bazooka up the wazoo-finder guys, the video game industry, the bullet industry, the casket and handcuff and Easy-Bake Oven secret spy camera industrial complex.

It's just not a police state.

The police are not shock troops protecting the rich against the poor.

It's not.

Say it.

It snot.

And ... For what reason we have no idea, we would also like to shout out to those men and women serving in ten thousand countries and municipalities, islands, peninsulas, knolls, ditches, glens, gulleys, inlets, deltas, fjords and firths overseas. Serving in Berlin and Aachen and Baaden and Ffffen and Mmmm-mmm und Dierdorf und Dadden ... und Dasher und Prancer und Donder & Blitzen. We need you. ... For what reason we have no idea, but thank you for all you do and we are pleased to send you fifty percent of our tax dollars, for what reason we have no idea. But because you are there and they thank you at ballgames and on beer commercials ... we thank you for all you do. For what reason we have no idea.

And now, sponsored by Budweiser and guns and race cars and stuff like that ...

A Salute To Veterans and Veterans Day.

Thank you, for all you do, for killing six million American Indians.

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For killing three thousand citizens of Panama in December 1989.

Just Cause.

For murdering thousands, millions of people in Iraq.
... And Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Hiroshima, Nagasaki,
Vietnam.

You are American-type heroes.

You are not insane, psychotic killers who will do whatever anyone tells you to do.

You are Americans, through and through.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

This Bud's for you.

And now!

It's time for THE ADVENTURES OF BUZZ THE SPACE DOG, sponsored by General Mills pepperoni pizza in a toothpaste tube.

It's not bad, and if you don't eat something, you'll die.

We've heard all about the Russian space monkeys who went into outer space and didn't come back until the Soviet Union was gone and then when they did come back they were expecting maybe a parade or a nice dacha out on Taiga View Lane, but that didn't happen.

Well, the Americans had their own space dog program going, trying to match the Russians, with similar results.

When those dogs returned from having been sent up by President John F. Kennedy and splashing down after Nov. 22, 1963, the world they returned to was barely recognizable with Lyndon Johnson in the White House. Some of those dogs took the option of shooting right back out to space, some moved to Ukiah, some lived on the streets for years and years.

Some raced to dig up some money buried in the backyard and moved to Edina. One of those was Buzz. When we last

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left Buzz he had just received a certified letter, hand-delivered by an unnamed new mail person packing Pomeranian Spray.

Buzz pinned the envelope to the floor with his paws and ripped it open.

It was from one of his old space pals, Neil, the space poodle.

A real lap dog's lap dog, Neil was.

Uh-oh. He sniffed the letter closely.

The letter was supposed to have been delivered days ago.

Neil would be here today.

Oh, crap, thought Buzz, and he pooped on the carpet, then sniffed it.

Neil was a bigshot.

He had actually been to the moon.

Buzz was only a test dog, just earth-orbit stuff.

They didn't have the technology then, computers were as big as whole rooms then, the radiation belt getting by-er machine, all that, all that came much later.

Buzz hurried around, dusting, straightening, making the house look presentable.

He pulled out all his slick moon photos and his moon rocks and set them on the kitchen table, along with an excellent eau de toilette 1969, *Apollo Once*.

Buzz sat in the chair with his nose looking out the front window.

A long, black limousine pulled up, right up to Buzz's front walk.

The driver opened the door and out walked Neil, the state-ly poodle, still with so much style and class and pizzazz.

When the bell rang Buzz was right there, but he willed himself to wait to one-thousand-two and then nosed open the door.

Buzz took Neil's hat, collar, whistle, and muzzle.

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He gave him the tour and then they hopped up to the kitchen table to settle in.

Buzz poured the toilet water into the bowls and pushed over the kibble with his nose.

They talked about cats and birds and people, and balls for awhile, then sticks.

“Umm,” said Buzz, “I’ve been meaning to ask you.”

He put one foot up on the table to drag the photos over closer.

“These moon pictures.”

He could sense that Neil was already getting tense. His ears were pointy and his fur bristling.

“They almost look like, I dunno, like they were done in a studio, at least to me.

“The lunar lander thingy ... thing ... there’s no dust underneath it ... and wouldn’t there be ...

Then Buzz nosed the moon rock over where they could both see it up close.

“How do we know this is a real moon rock and not just something ... well,” Buzz pointed with his nose toward the backyard. “I’ve seen lots of these out there ... how do we, you know.”

Neil growled and showed his fangs. He stood and curled his tail between his legs.

Buzz pushed the rock closer, got the other photo in his teeth that Neil was supposed to have taken of the other dog with the perfect reflection in the face shield, that seemed kind of improbable, and tossed it down in front of Neil.

Neil nipped him.

Neil bit Buzz right on the paw.

And then hopped down and with his nose in the air trotted over to stand in front of the front door.

The driver opened it and Neil pranced down to the limo

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and stood by the back door until his driver came and opened it.

Buzz stood in the open doorway and watched them leave.

Buzz saw himself, just the reflection, in the darkened windows of the limousine as they pulled away.

Stay tuned next week for another adventure of BUZZ THE SPACE DOG when we will see Buzz ask himself yet again “what was that?” — thinking he might have heard something, and then admonishing himself. “Nobody else heard it,” he said. “I must be going crazy. Or maybe it’s poodle-heimer’s. I wonder where I put that dog-years conversion chart that came in the Alpo bag.”

We have again received word from Randall from Stevens Point.

I got my gun and my truck.

I told you I’m heading for the woods, then up the mountain.

And that’s where I am – right now. I can see y’all from right here, through my scope.

Don’t worry, I got the safety on. ... Ok, it’s on now.

Tell Bubba Jean I always loved her.

Don’t follow me. I got on my camo socks. You’d never find me.

When you hear about the big shoot-out and all that, then that’ll be me.

Randall from Stevens Point is now underground, in America.

Before he gets started, he wanted us to again relay this message:

“First, I got somethin’ to say to my relatives in Barraboo.

“I’m really not talking to any a you, ‘cause you know why.”

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And now, for another episode of ...

JUST LIVIN' THE DREAM

Episodes in the life of real Americans ...

In one room we've got the guys Watching the football game after Thanksgiving Dinner.

In another room we've got the gals watching Wheel of Fortune.

They're all talking about the same things they talked about last year.

One by one, like astronauts lost in space, they lose consciousness from the turkey and the stuffing and the pie and begin to doze.

Downstairs and outside we've got the kids shooting each other with toy guns.

All the cars parked in the driveway and up and down the street. ...

A gentle see-saw snoring sound can be heard coming from the house. ...

The guys or the gals or the kids don't see the tanks rumbling down their street moving toward them and soldiers and police in full combat gear crouching behind their cars.

They don't hear the helicopters overhead or the snipers clanging the swings in the jungle gym.

They don't hear the tiny yelp of their dog as a SWAT member slices its throat with a quick, practiced motion.

Tune in next week for another episode of ...

JUST LIVIN' THE DREAM.

Episodes in the lives of real Americans.

... *And now for another episode of*

MINNESOTA ICE.

It's cold.

Das Mein Schmampf

Sponsored by Minnesota Public Radio, A Prairie Home Companion, Powder Milk Biscuits, Big Walleye Shore Lunch Mix, and Big Blue Ox Baloney in a Big Box ...

In this week's episode of MINNESOTA ICE:

Minnesota's Democratic Senators were at one time Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar.

Paul Wellstone was also a Democratic Senator from Minnesota, who opposed war and questioned the official 9/11 story.

The man who knew too much ...

And then there was Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton ... who was once U.S. Senator Mark Dayton, D-MN.

Back in the days just after 9/11 Dayton nearly broke down crying on the Senate floor as he railed against the grotesque lies told by his own military leadership.

Shortly thereafter Senator Dayton was forced to flee Washington DC, along with his entire staff, and return to Minnesota due to "terrorist threats" and announce his retirement.

His fellow Minnesota Senator and 9/11 skeptic, Paul Wellstone, didn't get the message, and was murdered, along with his wife, daughter, and staffers, in a rigged plane crash less than a week after he was issued an apparent death threat by Dick Cheney.

Dayton knows the truth about what happened to Paul Wellstone, but says nothing.

So do Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar.

But they say nothing.

We do nothing.

We want to live.

We like our lives. ... Please forgive us.

Don't hate us because we're pretty and rich and powerful and having a pretty great time while others die.

Minnesota Ice.

It's cold. ...

And!

Coming soon to your county fair, the traveling display:

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HALL OF SHAME

These are your lone nuts, the wackos, the criminals, the terrorists, the long-haired weirdos in the greasy raincoats in the subway at midnight. America, where we produce monsters who appear as anyone, and yet through their actions and inactions kill the prophets, keep the poor in the gutter, and still continue to live out their lives in peace, in America ...and long later, die, on television, with full honors ... and still we say nothing about their crimes ... but go home after the parade, shaking our heads, at least, finally ... rid of them.

Please come out to your local county fair to see the traveling display, photos, memorabilia of The Bush Administration, Ronald Reagan, The Warren Commission, The 911 Commission, Paul Tibbets, Harry Truman, George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton, Janet Reno, Lon Horiuchi, the FBI sniper who shot and killed Vicki Weaver while she was holding her 10- month-old child behind the door of the family home at Ruby Ridge.

Come on out, to your county fair.

It's pretty much all there.

Step right up, throw a tomato, hit both Clintons in the nose and win a stuffed animal for your sweetie-pie. Fulfill that recurring dream you have of punching George W. Bush smack in the face with your fist.

These are your lone nuts, the wackos, the criminals, the terrorists, the long-haired weirdos in the greasy raincoats in the subway at midnight.

America, where we produce monsters who appear as

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anyone, and yet through their actions and inactions kill the prophets, keep the poor in the gutter, and still continue to live out their lives in peace, in America ... and long later, die, on television, with full honors ... and still we say nothing about their crimes ... but go home after the parade, shaking our heads, at least, finally ... rid of them.

And now, ahem! another episode of THE LIVES OF THE COWBOYS, sponsored by Twizzlers.

This week ... We find Duke and Bubba Steve sitting in the squad car on the curb, staring straight ahead. Eating popcorn. On Homecoming Parade duty. The crowd pushed up tight to the streets, the day was bright and blue, the bands marched past, the team floated past on a flatbed.

And then ... and then ... Bubba Steve grabbed for the radio mic and dropped it.

His eyes were wide.

Duke choked on his popcorn.

It was happening.

Coming straight down Main Street was a float, a big, black float ... The Death Mobile.

Standing on the front of the float in a pirate bandanna, pirate shirt, pirate pants, and pirate sword, was Jon Belushi.

He ripped off his shirt and displayed a white T-shirt with pizza stains and "ISIS" written across the chest in pencil.

"Ramming Speed!" shouted Belushi, pointing his sword at Duke and Bubba Steve in the cruiser.

Duke turned the key and pumped the gas.

Bubba Steve tossed his popcorn out the window.

The DeathMobile loomed large, closing in on them, headed straight for the cruiser.

ISIS coming right at them at ramming speed.

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Their worstest ever nightmare yet.

Right out in front of everybody.

Duke and Bubba Steve's moms and dads and brothers, sisters, girlfriends, teachers.

ISIS, the crazy cousin of Al and Bob Queda, trying to take over the world and they had to go through Duke and Bubba Steve to do it. ...

... Stayed tuned next week for another episode of The Lives OF the Cowboys, sponsored by Twizzlers, when we will hear Duke say, "Alah Ahkbar," and we will hear Bubba Steve say, "I know, right?"

He's a cool dude who smokes and drinks on the sly and plays basketball with the other dudes, all in three-piece suits and still they are so cool.

Nobody knows where he's from, but they were so glad when he got here. Now they are wondering if he'll ever leave.

He's one of those guys.

His first job out of college was with the CIA. Do you ever leave the CIA. Just asking.

He's complicit in the 9/11 attacks and bombing and killing and locking people away in prison forever, though when he talks to big groups he talks like he's one of us, the best, brightest, hippest, coolest dude in the room. When he drinks he doesn't always drink beer ... but when he comes into my place and orders a beer ... a tall, dark, cool beer ... he also drinks ... dos-a-dees ... my spit and my urine. He's the most powerful, hippest, coolest dude in the world. Stay thirsty, my friend.

Now it's time for "Mr. Rogers' Midwestern Neo-Con Tea-Party Neighborhood."

"It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood, A beautiful day for a neighbor.

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You look like a reasonably intelligent person, uh huh.

Yes you do.

Would you be mine?

Could you be mine?

You look like you might give a crap about the wars and not talk about your lawn seed on the same day we begin to bomb Baghdad.

Perhaps you're not like these other yokels in our tidy little neighborhood.

You have brains inside your head and not hayseed.

Yes you do.

Would you? Could you?

The American Dream.

It's time to wake up. Yes it is. Your toast is ready, your bus is here, the world is on fire.

You are not sleeping – it is daytime – you look out your window — robins, squirrels, wiener dog poop — fair to partly cloudy — it's all a fairy tale.

You are inside a children's book, with dragons and monsters and evil kings and queens.

You are a character inside someone else's made-up book.

How did we come to this, my neighbor?

We have fake history, boys and girls.

Yes we do.

Our junior high and high school history books should be in italics — handed out by the teacher on the first day with a wink – Remember the Maine – Pearl Harbor – Gulf of Tonkin – Waco – Oklahoma City bombing – moon landings – stolen elections, Osama bin Laden buried at sea.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance — somebody said that.

We have not been vigilant, we have been watching TV.

We think the country runs on cruise control, the heavy

lifting having been done earlier in the morning by those who gave us the eight-hour day, the minimum wage, ended war. They suffered, they struggled, they died, that we might be free.

That is where our thanks should go and where our examples lie — NOT in the military.

The poor are ridiculed, persecuted, hunted down in America.

The chase sounded by barking pigs on the radio. Yes, it is. Most Americans are ignorant of their own history.

Yes, they are.

And I just wanted to say, thank you for all that you do.

I've always wanted to have a neighbor just like you.

I've always wanted to live in a neighborhood, with you.

Join us now as we join, in progress, as it were, the next episode of ...

“Nebraska Ink: Amelia Earhart, Tattoo Artist Of The Heartland.”

The locals know her as Babs.

Her shop is on main street, between the barber shop and the café — with a picture of a floundering big plane atop the front door.

She got off course, or she's hiding out, waiting for her chance to do what she was asked to do so long ago by FDR.

Or, maybe there was no spy mission for FDR, just a desire to fly around the world.

She doesn't seem to care anymore. She just wants to be free to live out her days in Nebraska, doing what she loves — talking about the Cornhuskers and making tattoos.

Navigator Fred Noonan runs the front desk at the little tattoo shop.

He's got his shirt all up, his feet all up on the desk, his

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tongue sticking out, working on a full-stomach tattoo of the Marshall Islands.

“Hey, Fred!”

Amelia shouts from the back room.

He knows what she’s going to say, so he revs the motor high.

Amelia is going to ask again what they were doing out in the Pacific and what FDR asked them to do.

“Hey, Fred!”

And then she’s going to ask how they crashed and how they survived and how they got back.

“Fred.”

And was it all a dream — and what they are doing in Nebraska.

Amelia has a bobblehead alien doll named Roswell – on her desk.

She’s got a black Bilderberg birthday balloon stuck to the ceiling, signed by Prescott Bush.

There’s black and white photos of the JFK, RFK, and MLK shootings on her wall, all from angles and vantages that have never appeared elsewhere.

On her desk is a stack of letters from the passengers from the planes of Sept. 11, 2001 that she hasn’t had time to answer, and one from Timothy McVeigh postmarked with a tropical stamp.

There’s a CD in the machine, the director’s cut of the Boston bombing. She watched it last night and stayed up too late, now she’s paying for it.

Her niece is visiting for a few days this summer, Amelia Rose Earhart.

She just completed a flight around the world that covered aunty Amelia’s same flight, ending up in Nebraska.

The niece wants to just hang out and maybe learn the art

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of tattooing and get a Cornhuskers jersey and eat corn with her bare hands while sitting on the railroad tracks and running her bare toes through the hard red rocks.

And ... she says she is waiting ... for someone.

Amelia walks up front, tells Fred she's going to the store for cigarettes, and all the while she's just staring up at the sky, tripping a few times ... then bending down to pluck a yellow tulip from somebody's prim front yard garden and sticking it behind her ear.

"Where are you?" she whispers with wide wet eyes, just before she bumps into the produce manager from "Too Much Food," ... bending her tulip.

He gives her a black tulip as she hands him the yellow tulip without quite knowing why.

She goes in to open her mailbox with her key and pulls out a manila envelope marked with a 1937 stamp postmarked "Manila" and forwarded to the Bangkok Bar in East Minneapolis and then on to Nebraska.

There is someone else in the post office ... pulling something out of his box.

Amelia asks the young man, "What'd you get?"

He turns to her and says, "I didn't get nothin'. I had to pay fifty dollars and pick up the garbage."

She runs her long purple fingernail under the flap, cuts herself, licks her finger and swallows the blood ... pulls out a black and white, 8x10 glossy photograph of she and Fred standing on the beach on some island, their arms around the shoulders of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Joe Dimaggio, Al Capp and Al Capone.

And now.

And nowwww, that photograph, copies of that photograph, have turned up in the teachers' lounge of St. Regis

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Jesuit High School in Denver, as well as the condiment table of the state roads department paint crew coffee corner on Harney Street in Omaha, Nebraska, and in the dining car of the Amtrak California Zephyr at midnight.

Into that dark dining car, screeching through Del Mar, empty but for the tired cook, smoking at the bar — comes a tall man in a tweed suit, wearing a Stetson with a Miami Dolphins sticker, steel-toed boots marked Made In Havana, and carrying a briefcase handcuffed to his arm.

He sits down in the back booth, stares out the window, opens the briefcase with a key he draws so slowly out of his nose.

He lays the briefcase flat on the table, reverently draws out the 8X10 black and white glossy photograph of Amelia Earhart, Fred Noonan, Joe Dimaggio, Al Capone, Al Capp, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt dining in a window booth at Alice's Restaurant.

The Thin Man in the Stetson autographs the photograph with a purple Magic Marker, leaves the purple Magic Marker resting on the 8X10 glossy photograph, tips his cap to the smoking cook and exits the dining car.

The tired cook smoking at the bar slumps over, picks up the 8x10 glossy photograph as the purple Magic Marker rolls to the floor.

He opens a window, slides the photograph out and it is caught by the wind and then by a biker sitting by the tracks in the woods on his black 1946 Indian Chief cycle.

The passenger on the bike wears a black leather jacket with "Oswald" stitched on the back.

They take off into the woods, one half mile exactly, hand the 8x10 glossy photograph to a 10 3/4-foot jet-black Bigfoot named Bubba Brad just as a craft hovering above the valley turns on its landing lights.

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Allen the Alien, the driver of the craft marked Malaysian 370, shines the light on Bubba Brad and the 10 3/4-foot Big-foot glides up the beam of light as if on an escalator.

As he enters the shuttle bus he hands the 8x10 glossy photograph to a man wearing a plastic sheriff's badge that says "Secret Agent."

The man is from East Grand Forks.

He is ... of course ... Zach Black ... an extra in the movie "The French Connection," who has done other things since then.

Bubba Brad The Bigfoot whispers to Zach Black:

"Beware The Ebola Bunny," ... which causes Zach Black to wonder about the overall sincerity of Bubba Brad The Bigfoot, but he has a job to do and so ... Zach Black puts the glossy photograph under a "Class-51 Flashy Thing" electron microscope and sees the markings embedded in the photo that say Ukraine, Israel, Syria, Gaza, Libya, Egypt, Iran, ISIS/ISIL/buried at sea/Jessica Lynch/Pat Tillman/torture photos at Guantanamo — and ... "black-ops rendition cruises in a '61 grey Studebaker from the A&W on North Street in East Dubuque to the Moose Lodge in Davenport."

He sees something more in the embedded microchip thing photo parts ... something about Amelia's niece, something about her not being who she says she is ... something about her being a former cheerleader for the Iowa Hawkeyes ... and ... and ... oh, my, can this be ...

He can also see that she has a tattoo on the small of her back ... a Monarch butterfly, a honey bee, and a decapitated Hawkeye mascot with a Cheshire cat smile — and below that it says, in ancient Mayan script ... MH17 ... David Shayler ... Charlie Sheen ... CIA-Obama ... Wiley Coyote ... Beep! Beep! And a number ... 8675-309.

And, Black looks up and asks, though nobody is in the

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room: "Waiting For Who? ... This Amelia Rose The Niece?
Waiting For Who? Whom?"

And the thought comes into Black's head from somewhere, somehow:

"To every man his little cross. Till he dies. And is forgotten."

And then the thought is gone ... and he returns to his task

...

... This niece. Here. Waiting for who?

Waiting for ... I Dunno.

Black hears a voice in the dark room. He turns around and says, "Who's There?"

Nobody answers.

He says louder, "Who Is There!"

Louder Silence.

Black gets a piercing pain in his temple and an image is projected into his brain — and it is definitely ... The Ebola Bunny.

And then a deep, foreigner voice:

"Stay thirsty, my friends."

And then even more silence.

And then a door ... squeaking open ... squeaking closed. ...

... As something rolls slowly, unevenly ... as a lopsided bowling ball ... across the floor of the darkened room.

(pause)

... It bumps against Black's shoe. He leans down, squats, looks close. Black gasps, loudly. Stands quickly. To get away from ... the head ... of Officer Obie. And somewhere a radio plays ... the door of a red VW Microbus is open, the engine is smoking, but running ... the red VW Microbus is smacked into a tree, blood everywhere ... implements of destruction scattered everywhere, inside bodies, above and around the red VW Microbus ... and ... and ... and ... all those inside the

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red VW Microbus: Timothy McVeigh, Barbara Olsen, George W. Bush, Krystle Campbell, Paul McCartney, Buddy Holly, George H.W. Bush, Mrs. Calabash, Barbara Bush, Jon Stewart, Rachel Maddow, Todd Beamer, Nancy Lanza, Jack Ruby, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, Condo-leeza Rice, Bart Simpson, The Cohn Brothers, Stanley Kubrick, Walt Disney, John Dulles, Buzz Aldrin, Tom Hanks ... are dead ... all dead.

Secret Agent Zach Black strains, stands still, with the head of Officer Obie still touching his toe ... he strains, all the limits and boundaries of credulity ... to hear the radio in the red VW Microbus ...

... *"You can get anything you want at Alice's restaurant ...*

You can get anything you want at Alice's restaurant ...

Walk right in, it's around the back ...

Just a half a mile from the railroad track ...

"You can get anything you want ... at Alice's restaurant. ..."

... Mystery, deceit, tattoos, tattered tulips ... manila envelopes, Go Big Red, Harney Street, purple Magic Markers in Del Mar, landing lights, East Grand Forks, ISIS/ISIL, A&W,-Hawkeyes, beep, beep, Fred and Amelia, The Ebola Bunny, Father Rapers.

(slight pause)

It's all there, waiting for you in the next episode of "Nebraska Ink, Amelia Earhart, Tattoo Artist Of The Heartland."

And now, "A Message In A Boone's Farm Bottle," some notes we have been receiving during the first half of our show from listeners ... by email, chat room, telephone, telepathy and telegraph.

We sense a hello from:

Leonard Peltier, in Coleman, Florida.

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From David Rice in Lincoln.

From Oscar Lopez Rivera in Terre Haute.

From Debbi Sims Africa in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania.

From David Gilbert in Auburn, New York.

From Chelsea Manning in Leavenworth, Kansas.

And from Gary Tyler in Angola.

Well, it has been another long week in ... Okoboji, Iowa, my hometown.

Father Ralph is pastor of "Good God What Is It Good For" Catholic parish in Okoboji.

It's his home. He grew up in this town.

At the end of his career he asked the bishop to let him come back home.

His last stop. End of the line. Ballgame's over. Stick those matches and lighters in the air and everyone weave back and forth and hum Freebird.

Father Ralph didn't have to do much in Okoboji, along the lines of saving the world ... but he was listening on TV about Wisconsin when they had their little revolution awhile back.

And he had also watched on TV the news about the revolutions elsewhere. He tries to keep up on Syria and Iran and Palestine in between runs to the nursing home for the rosary and the Knights of Columbus bingo for the Fatherland every first Tuesday.

But, still ... maybe ... a guy never knows, I guess, is what he thought.

And he found the yellow pad in the middle drawer and he thought he might just see what might come out if he prepared a homily ahead of time one last time.

He wrote on his yellow legal pad.

Wisconsin.

Das Mein Schmampf

We're all cheese heads now.

Ralph crossed it out and out and out and while he was crossing he was thinking.

He slid his rolling chair to his desk and tugged hard on the middle drawer, raked through the vanilla folders and found the old homily he wanted to give again that Sunday
... maybe now was the time.

(pause)

The altar area smelled of the branches of evergreen curled around the toes of Saint Joseph and Mary on either side of the altar that nobody took down from last Christmas ... or ... the Christmas before.

Well, *anywhoo*, there was this child I recall, back a hundred years ago, in the past century in nineteen hundred and sixty-three. This young boy was standing at the green table, still gripping his Flintstones lunch box. The morning kids had just left. The brand new shiny metal box held his banana and his beads for the Christmas tree. On the blackboard, which covered the whole one side of the room, as big as a bus, his teacher had engraved in new, white chalk:

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY.

Soon all the children were gathered for the afternoon session.

They stood beside their tables for the Pledge Allegiance.

Just as they had finished, the principal, Sister Mary, came in and talked to Sister George.

The kids remained standing as Sister Mary told the children that President Kennedy had been shot and killed.

The boy felt a warm stream down his leg as his socks became wet and a puddle formed between his feet.

WELL NOW ...

... a bit later, years, decades, generations later, that boy

was researching the Kennedy assassination and found a tape recording of attorney Jim Garrison being interviewed by JohnnyCarson on THE TONIGHT SHOW. They were talking about the shooting of President Kennedy.

The man felt an affinity for Mr. Carson because his family had long watched the famous man of late night talk television.

He recalled the hot summer nights, with the windows open to let some air through and the faint breath just stirring the curtains.

He recalled walking down the alley to the neighborhood grocery store, which was air conditioned, and stepping into that dark, cool store with the wooden slat floor and the hum of the frozen food machines and the smell of baseball card bubble gum and Popsicles.

But he also felt an aversion. Because he now realized that while Mr. Carson talked on television and the boy's parents sat on the sofa and watched with the blue light reflecting off their faces, and the kids scooting over on the floor to get close enough to the screen door to think about asking if they could go out again, terrible things were happening. Father Ralph filled his chest with air. He let it out, filled it again and held it. He moved his hands to the front of the podium and smiled while he looked around at his audience.

The homily had once been the bogeyman of his seminary training, and he knew it was only by grace that he was able to stand up there in front of all these good people every week without turning around to run away and join the circus.

And the man felt again like a child as he listened to the interview on tiny headphones, just as a child feels when he realizes he has been lied to. ...

Das Mein Schmampf

Like a newscaster with nothing left to do, Father Ralph arranged his papers on the podium. He listened for the signs of disgust: coughs spreading like a grass fire or the hymn books being pounded closed.

Ralph held his pause for a count of One-thousand-five.

He let his chin rise. He saw mostly upturned, pleasant faces.

He let a drop of sweat sit on his nose.

Ralph let his black glasses slip and peeked over the top like a soldier over the rim of a trench.

The Great Carson could make justice appear, he said, "poof!" Out of nothingness in the palm of his hand.

He won't.

It, justice, has appeared on occasions in the past because good men went through the fires of hell to make it happen.

They fought the bad guys.

As the song or saying or something goes, the revolution will not be televised. You can't catch it after work or tape it for later. The revolution is live, and it will not happen unless you ... do ... something.

The last word hummed like trapped, angry bees inside the microphone.

Ralph pushed on the middle bar of his glasses.

He looked at the back door for the bishop.

Out of his peripheral vision he checked both side doors for the troops that would march him from the altar to the city jail.

If we do nothing. If we shake hands after Mass and agree that all is well, we mean that all is well with us, all is well in our home and on our block and that is all that matters.

And then we are the problem.

He paused again. ...

When I lived in that nice neighborhood with the soft breeze and the distant call of the train engine, I was certain I

Das Mein Schmampf

was in a good spot. Without ever really sitting down to think about it, I was absolutely sure, before my feet hit the floor each morning, that things were in place: everything in alphabetical order, counted and blessed.

And I was wrong.

And now, what this country needs more than cheap gas or friendly hometown banking is a Democracy movement. We need someone, some skinny, tired, brave soul, some old man on his way home from Safeway some afternoon willing to sit in Tee-en-a-man Square and say enough is enough.

One person could do something.

For lack of one courageous man on the Warren Commission generations have lived entire lives in a fantasy world of Ferris Wheels and mirrors.

Kennedy was going to bring us out of Vietnam.

Eisenhower before him had warned of the influence of the military-industrial complex, those people who make money from weaponry. And then those forces took Kennedy out as he was making some sort of peace with the Soviet Union as well.

And so tens of thousands of young Americans were slaughtered in Vietnam; thousands of American families with a forever thorn in their side.

And Nixon and Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Bush were able to continue to make money from war, from death, from a slug of metal formed in a young Iowan's hands in some small town bullet factory heating the cool morning air making its way into the bone and viscera and brain matter and memories of a young man on "the other side." ...

Lyndon Johnson did it, didn't he. With others.

He wanted to be president so bad he could taste it. And then he saw he was shut out of the Kennedy administration

and before him he saw four more years of John, and eight each of Robert and Ted. He had to go now or forever hold it.

The priest smiled with his slightly buck teeth and wavy hair that made him look for a moment like Bobby Kennedy.

We all know that, but nobody has ever actually uttered those words in America. Not the librarian in Okoboji or Spirit Lake or the produce manager at Super Mart or the superintendent of the Okoboji public schools."

Responsible people ... we assume.

He squeezed the wood, smiled and looked up at the ceiling fans twirling as he recalled the news that had shattered the quiet so many years ago.

And so I bring up Kennedy," he said matter-of-factly, as a shoe salesman saying that brown was the going color this year.

Well, no, he was not Christ and he was not resurrected. And he certainly was not a saint.

He was a sinner, through and through, just like me and just like you.

He was a Catholic, yes. But no big deal. Again, anybody can become a Catholic. I bring it up because it is what is on my mind. Many of you do not remember John Kennedy, many of us remember nothing but.

Where do these thoughts of John Kennedy, his brother Robert and Martin Luther King Jr. come from? All mortal men. But in my mind heroes, just as Jesus is a hero of mine.

And to be a hero of mine you have to do one thing.

Ralph put up his crooked right pointer finger, the finger that had been stomped on.

He held it over his head and out toward the congregation.

You have to go and get yourself killed.

He held the finger in the air until it became the focus of the room.

Das Mein Schmampf

Couples with their arms interlocked on the pew behind the heads of their children stared at the finger.

Ralph meant to be pointing straight up, toward the ceiling in exclamation, when actually his broken finger was more of a comma.

You can't score six touchdowns on one night and be my hero.

Ralph spoke loudly, pausing, turning this way and that, using all of his homiletics textbook skills.

You cannot have twenty-inch biceps and thirty-inch waist and be my hero.

He stopped and estimated three seconds, impatient to keep going.

You cannot go to work each day and pay your bills and keep your kids in college and your wife happy and play errorless third base for the church softball team and be my hero.

He put his hand down as parenthesis.

I see these guys who drive their little cars into the lot at the elevator every morning and leave every night. They do this without fail for ten years, twenty years, thirty years.

Maybe forty years!

They drive in each morning at the same time, they leave at the same time. Same route, look the same way before turning, park the car in the same spot at work, same place at home.

Now, to some people that image is one of supreme heroism, the loyalty, the work ethic, the steady nature of the man going to work each day, earning his daily bread for his family, that they may prosper and live and grow and also maintain their routines.

I am weird. I see it as cowardice. I really do, and I know some of you are going to have trouble with that. That's okay. I see it as immoral, boorish, dull behavior. Because you see, during those years that man is going to work, maintaining

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a certain lifestyle, people around the world are dying, from poverty, from war, what have you.

And on some of those days that man is going to work and coming home while his country is at war, outright bombing people in other countries and they are dying. And yet. And yet he parks in the same spot, goes home at the same time.

That is nothing unusual. His parents, wife, children and friends expect nothing less. But is it the Christian response?

Hardly. The old priest paused, shoved the finger again into the air, and turned slowly to the right and then to the left.

He put his hand down and gripped the podium.

You have to go and get yourself killed. ...

So Christ, King and Kennedy ... Wellstone ...

They did not just die. They had to be killed.

If I can offer one thing to you this fine morning, my brothers and sisters, it is this.

He leaned forward and whispered into the microphone.

Make ... the ... sons of bitches kill you.

Now Ralph did not care if they liked him.

The bones of his jaws showed like ripples in the water portending a shark below.

He made direct eye contact with three people, as he had been taught, not long enough to confront, but enough to show he was not afraid.

Don't seek to live so damned long that you finally have to be unplugged.

Make the bastards come get you — make their terrible plans, hunt you down and fill you full of holes, just as they did our Lord Jesus Christ.

And take the chance.

The chance taken by Jesus the skinny guy with no money, no family, no friends, no career — no papers or books pub-

lished —with only this one full-court desperation shot at the big time, with one card to play that might mean he would ever amount to something. ... Take the chance that God is God.

The old priest pushed his papers together, looked up like Walter Cronkite at the end of the newscast, and smiled.

Now, let us pray. ...

Wolfman began the closing.

And that's our show. Goodnight folks. Goodnight Mrs. Calabash and goodnight D.B. Cooper, good night Timothy McVeigh, and good night Jeffrey Epstein, wherever you are.

"Conspiracy-theories-are-spoiler-alerts," said Daisy quickly, just before they cut off her mic.

SIXTEEN

Soy un perdedor.
I'm a loser, baby
So why don't you kill me?
— Beck



Well, anyways, the next morning, bright and early, they sent out the owls to do a quick survey to measure reaction to the big radio show, in the houses, cars, vans, SUVs, at work and at school.

“Well, that should make them happy!” shouted The Colonel, excited to hear about the big success. “They are at least as bad. They beat the Russians, Rooskis, Roosha. At least they know the truth, right?”

“Yeah, I’m not sure they really ca ...” said Wade just before he fell asleep on Astral’s shoulder.

“They just don’t give a fuck,” said Fyodo. “Pardon my French.”

The owls returned.

Nothing.

Nada. Zip, zero, zilch.

“Bupkis,” said The Colonel, “and I just don’t understand it.”

He looked over at the tired-out, exhausted hosts slugging back great hot mugs of coffee, while holding their heads in both hands.

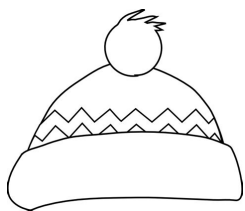
Das Mein Schmampf

“Did you talk about the hangings?” asked The Colonel.

“About how it’s all the same? Still? Now? Same day, as it were.”

“Yeeess. Yes. Yes!” said Alexa, barely able to keep her eyes open.

“Of course, man,” drooled Wolfman as he lay his head down, vibrating the table now with his snores.



SEVENTEEN

It's fake.

It's fake!

It's fake.

It's a phoney fake show!

It's fake!

FAAAKE!

— Terrible Tim

“**A**nd so there I was, ya see?”

“Yeah. I see.”

Terrible Tim hunched over the bar with Ol’ Mick.

Ol’ Mick was tellin’ a story Tim had heard before, many times, in fact, about going to confession, sitting on his side while on the other side of the priest his friend told about all his bad deeds over the past summer, a long list. The priest gave his friend his penance to do, then turned to Mick’s side, sliding open the wooden door.

“I was with him,” said Mick.

They each took a drink.

“And that means you need to always look for the gold,” said Ol’ Mick.

“It does?”

They sat and drank and stared into the mirror.

“Sunshine always follows rain, Timothy.”

They smelled the cigars and cigarettes and tried to read the names on the whiskey bottles.

“And that means it’s always right to eat a good breakfast, because you just never know.”

“It does?” said Terrible Tim.

“You’ll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind, Timothy.”

Which caused Terrible Tim to turn his legs and look right at Mick, which was to say, “and just what is that supposed to mean now?”

“You do realize, Timothy, what gold means dontcha now? He used air quotes with his cane hand and his drink hand.

“Your boy is lost and you’re sittin’ here, not sure I c’n be much plainer than that.”

“Mick, I’ve looked everywhere. Terrible Tim’s eyes reflected a dim light bulb.

“You’re not lookin’ in the right place.”

And so, the look now on Terrible Tim’s wet face said, “And just where might that be?”

So. ... Ol’ Mick tol’ him another tale, one Tim had not heard nor heard of anyone ever hearin’.

“An’ that means you’re not lookin’ in the right place,” said Ol’ Mick after he had finished.

“It does?”

“And why didn’t you ever say that before, Mick?”

“No one ever asked. And I just realized meself right here. It’s got to be the fookin’ Clowns. Got to be.”

“They do whatever The L.I.A.R.S. tell ‘em to do,” said Terrible Tim, nodding his head, wiping his face with a shirtsleeve.

Das Mein Schmampf

“Exactly,” said Ol’ Mick, pounding his glass on the wood and reaching for his cane to embark down from his barstool.



EIGHTEEN

Ruf die Bundeswehr an, und schnell
Wir haben schon darauf gewartet
Jetzt Männer, nun haben wir einen Krieg
Der President ist am Apparat
Während neunundneunzig rote Ballons vorbeigehen

This is it, boys, this is war
This is what we've waited for
The President is on the line
As 99 red balloons go by.

— Nena, *99 Red Balloons*



“**D**ey got the scent!” said Ol’ Mick, pounding his cudgel into the earth, pushing onward, trying to keep up with the special fairy bloodhounds, dandelion dropped-in within the past hour.

“They’d picked up a Milk Duds trail. Terrible Tim followed Ol’ Mick behind the fairy troops, followed by the rest of the Irish regulars, faces painted green, hats camouflaged in clover, wearing bandoliers of fresh pipes across their chests.

The trail turned to Boston Baked Beans, then Bottle Caps, which melded now into Dots.

They finally arrived at a large brick building decorated in gold piping.

The doors being too large and heavy for even The Fairy Commandoes to budge, the Leprechauns piled one atop each other on shoulders, Leprechauns all the way up, with Ol’ Mick at the very top, able to see in a window that said in stencil: “**JOURNALISM NEWS BUREAU: *For the times we live in.***”

Das Mein Schmampf

Pressing his nose against the pane, Ol' Mick saw Clowns everywhere, at desks talking into phones, Clowns working at computers, Clowns standing at the water cooler, broadcasting on radio, as well as Clowns with cameras aimed at Clowns behind stellar wooden desks on a high platform, in front of a large green curtain. Clowns with red hair, yellow hair, with water-squirting flowers in their lapels, with giant floppy red and orange shoes and baggy colorful pants.

“What dooo you see?”

Came the obvious enough question one at a time, up and up the stack of Leprechauns, way up to Ol' Mick.

“What do you see?” asked Terrible Tim.

Ol' Mick waved his hand to say, just give me one second, willya?

He shoved his nose farther into the glass and swiveled his eyes left and right, up and down and all around.

He pointed, thumping his finger into the window to show he'd seen something, but all the Leprechauns were only grunting and cursing and staring straight into the brick wall, so no one noticed his excited pointing.

What he saw, apparently, and what he must have been excited about was over in the far corner, away from the Clowns and computers and cameras, in like a blaze yellow lounge area with yellow couches and ottomans and walls and yellow carpet, canary yellow maybe, sat Beginagin, in a candy yellow comfy chair. A line of bright candy led right to him.

Beginagin plucked Hot Tamales from a box and

leaned way back to look up at the television high in the corner.

Ol' Mick saw a Leprechaun walking over to Begnagin. He set down more boxes and bags of candy. Ol' Mick saw who it was. O'Brien.

Ol' Mick sighed and climbed down over each Leprechaun. Everyone else followed until the Leprechaun ladder was disassembled.

Mick told what he'd seen.

"There's no blessed way we're getting in there.

"Your thoughts."

"We've got to get him out of there!" said Terrible Tim, running over to the huge glass door to tug and tug. He shuffled back to the group with slumped shoulders, knowing it was no use, knowing Molly's hopes would again be dashed on the rocks.

The defeated Leprechaun army slogged back to the clearing, a dejected bunch, heads down, clover drooping, pipe smoke headed straight into the ground.

"Did you lads ever 'tink of asking fer just a bit of help?" said Easter Egg and Molly, bringing over a plate of potato pastry for the men folk.

Terrible Tim lifted his chin from the ground and looked up with the hint of a grin. He took off on a run, into the woods he went, followed quick as a wink by Irish, Lucky and Unabomber, then John Doe #1 as well, on their heels.

In full battle dress, staffs, machetes, camo, medals, the best Leprechaun, Bigfoot, Ghost, and Alien fighters waited in the clearing while Terrible Tim, Schmoda, Bo, and the Colonel drew arrows and stars and stick figures and exclamation points on a big, homemade map spread over a picnic table.

Terrible Tim, decked out in assault emerald and battle boots, listened to Schmoda and over here on the side he also heard a small voice.

It was Bashful telling Astral about something he had found in the ditch when they had been searching before.

"Just one minute," Astral touched Bashful's shoulder and went over to Terrible Tim.

"You might be wantin' to hear this," she said.

Bashful told them about the metal canisters they'd found in the ditch and dragged back.

"O'Brien said don't say anything, they might be worth money. He said don't look, but I did."

Bashful told Terrible Tim and Astral that there were films in the canisters.

"His'try films.

"Not reg'lar hist'ry, different."

He said, now excitedly, "It's like, you know, the old photos in the put-away boxes in the cellar, that they never were going to show us, with grandma and grandpa sittin' on the old Model A, laughing, smoking and drinkin'."

Encouraged because they were paying attention to what he was saying, Bashful continued.

"I kinda thin, 'tat if'n they saw these they'd put these

in the books, for real, and put big teacher red marks in the old books.

"It'd be the comedians makin' fun, ya know, about the old books, how we used to believe all a that rot, like how they tell jokes about airplane food and golf and we all thought it was the funniest crap ever."

"The gold," said Ol' Mick, tugging at Terrible Tim's sleeve. "Ya remember what I tol' ya."

"Yeah, yeah, a carse I do," said Terrible Tim when really, Ol' Mick had told him so much stuff that it kind of all ran together, and now with several things happening, on his mind, and a knowin' that's usually when he gets grouchy, not bein' able to process it all at once all that well, and still with the words of Bashful in his head and some thoughts of Astral as well, she actually spoke to him, a little, and now with Ol' Mick and worrying about Beginagin, who was not really allowed to watch the telly, he headed over to where Molly McGuire sat with the other women, quilting on their knees scenes of dead Clowns and blowed-up buildings and cameras and also dying Clowns and the heads of L.I.A.R.S. perched on the ends of sharp sticks and the like.

Molly said she'd seen him talking to Astral and that might not be a bad idea.



NINETEEN

“Where did you get the idea that I want that little gift? You’ve worked so well, so we’ll free you, forgive you. No, Pytor Trofimovich.” And with his forefinger he stabbed at the tarnished surface of the little table. “You’re beginning at the wrong end. Let them admit first that it’s not right to put people in prison for their way of thinking, and then *we* will decide whether we will forgive *them!*”

— Gleb Nerzhin,

The First Circle, Alexandr Solzhehnitsyn

So, yeah.

They postponed the mission until dawn to get everything ready.

Terrible Tim was feeling pretty good about it because he and Schmoda, Bo, and The Colonel had stayed up most of the night, and if he say so himself the whole 'ting was actually pretty well planned out down to the penny.

That morning, bright and early, it was raining.

The war party set out through the wet leaves and grass and trees. And when they reached the top of the far hill, looking back toward The Land Of The People And Such, and forward to The L.O.S.E.R.S., L.I.A.R.S. & C.l.o.w.n.s., a bright light shined up from the forest like Jacob's Ladder, The Voice of God Op they were calling it, projecting the films on to the clouds and sky. The plan was that the images might reflect back through the windows on to the TV's.

"IF IT'S ON TV THEY WILL BELIEVE IT."

That was the special yellow and red t-shirt being worn

right now by all those staying back in the forest to help with the project.

“The Zapruder Film Of Life,” said Bo, turning away, toward the battle, putting an arm around the shoulders of Moose The Bear, who had been invited to join the fun.

The electronic ticker words ran “the news” all around the brick building continually, 24/7/365.

“White is blue ... green is black ... camo is orange ... red is off-beige.

The People’s Brigade stood stock-still together for a moment just staring at the building, how big it was, how perfect, how glittery, how bright, watching the Clowns in the windows in their bowties, shiny, happy.

“This is it, lads,” said Schmoda, just as a rainbow showed itself in the sky, one end way over in the forest and t’other on the building.

“Who’s with me.”

Gripping the oak tree in both hands, taking a big breath, holding it, letting it out, he looked straight at Terrible Tim.

“If you believe, they put a man on the moon,” said Schmoda.

“Man on the moon,” Terrible Tim mouthed the words.

Schmoda, wearing a Che beret he’d snatched from a tall branch on the way there, charged with his oak tree with the words carved on the side, “Greetings, from The People,” and all the names of The Bigfoot clan carved in the trunk.

The glass double-doors exploded. Sharp, daisy cutter shards filled the air like ticker tape confetti shrapnel.

A sea of Leprechauns, Ghosts, Aliens and Bigfoot surged into the building, with Moose The Bear lumbering close behind, covering their six.

The weather helicopter showed the scene through the windows of the many-storied brick building as the invaders fought hand-to-hand, pushing up the winding staircases. Computer and typewriters and Clowns smashed out the windows, onto the sidewalks and the streets below.

Sirens and horns cried out like the agony of wounded horses up and down the avenue canyons.

Terrible Tim, breaking through ahead of the battle line, spotted his son, Beginagin, seated in the yellow lounge. O'Brien was there as well, curiously on his back on the floor, pressing his arms up and down.

Tim heard O'Brien telling his son, "Do you know what these are, lad? Irish pushups."

"Aaarrghh!"

Terrible Tim charged, swinging his shillelagh around his head, slamming O'Brien square in the chest and launching him through a window. Scooping up his son, Terrible Tim ran the cudgel straight through the TV screen and out the back, and then again and again, until it was dead.

"What do we do with this!" cried out one of the warrior Ghosts just appearing on scene, pointing at the smoking TV. How can we stop it?"

At that Bo crawled on the floor and unplugged the television.

“That should do it,” he said.

Schmoda, rushing in, grabbed the TV carcass and hurled it through the window after O’Brien.

“That works too,” said Bo.

Rushing to the top floor, Schmoda, Moon Rock, Bo and Wade fought brilliantly against top management with machetes and spears. Schmoda stood tall in the board room, like a musketeer, dueling, atop a long, thick, shiny mahogany table, holding off a gang of tanned, thick, be-suited Clowns. More Clowns, now with police, arrived in a tiny car in the elevator.

They all hurled their worst at Schmoda, all full-blast, all at the same time, firing at him like death eaters with deadly wands, para matar.

“And that’s the way it is!”

“That’s a part of our world!”

“We’re in touch so you be in touch!”

“If it’s Sunday it’s Meet the Press!”

“Good night and good news!”

Through the broken windows, like storms of angry bees, buzzed hordes of L.I.A.R.S. drones, unable to really do anything, just buzzing and humming all around like innocuous mosquitoes, dragonflies, as if they were really doing things, actually involved in the terrible struggle.

Schmoda fought them all, reflecting, shielding, deflecting, re-directing, one after the other after another, until finally, with the whole top floor filled shoulder-to-shoulder

with the enemy, together they catapulted Schmoda from the tabletop through several windows, down, past all those stories, to where he hit the roof of a small building on the street, passing through like butter, in the shape of an X, like Wiley Coyote, on steroids.



TWENTY

Gleb was only a ninth-grader on the December morning when he looked into a display window where a newspaper was posted and read that Kirov had been killed. And suddenly, like a blinding light, it became clear to him that Stalin and no one else had killed Kirov. Because he was the only one who would profit from his death! A feeling of aching loneliness seized him — the grown men, crowded near him, did not understand that simple truth.

— Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle*

“**T**o Schmoda!”

Terrible Tim stood on the off-beige, upside-down Rambler hoisting a mug.

“Schmoda!”

They all cheered, imitating a concrete mixer truck as best they could.

Molly McGuire, squeezing Beginagin in her arms, stood next to Terrible Tim.

“Well, that should do it,” he said.

She looked at him as if she had just seen a ghost.

“They still need something in writing, man! A document, like it says. Right there! Are you daft. I mean, really. Are ya!”

“Oh, all right,” said Terrible Tim. “I guess I didn’t see that.”

“How can you not, bloke? How. Could. You. Not. I’ll tellya, sometimes ... sometimes I ...”

“Sometimes you what?” he said.

Climbing down, shaking his head, not looking back.

After more than just a wee bit of toil and trouble, in the tub, at the picnic table, and more than a few trips into the woods for consultations, Terrible Tim and Corker stood together at the rock post office.

Terrible Tim read out loud one last time before they sent it off, while Corker played his part, paying rapt attention and clinging to every word.

DAS MEIN SCHMAMPF

Dear The Big AF:

We the undersigned, being of sound mind and aura (not hungover), do hereby and hencewith (blahblahblah) seriously declare that given another fooking chance (and having learned a ting or two recently for sure) we could for certain.

Help These Fooking L.O.S.E.R.S. to put somekinda hurt on Those L.I.A.R.S.

Some serious wup-ass as it were, and may be, so help us, BIG AF.

That's about it.

Hope it helps.

Sincerely revolutionarily yours

May the force be with you

(yada yada)

Moon Rock

Bo

The Colonel

Terrible Tim (Finnegan) Jr.

Et. al.

Not without effort mind you, Corker lifted the flat stone for Timothy to place quite carefully it might be added the folded document.

After setting down the rock, Corker tapped it three times with his stick, then passed the flask over to Timothy, fer luck

The very next morning, bright and sunny and early, bluebirds and cardinals flittered about, back and forth up and down and sideways.

The women folk continued the work they'd been already at for hours, chopping wood, laundry, feeding the children, picking up the scattered beer mugs and pipes and walking sticks.

As the morning wore on the children were allowed to play a little louder and louder.

From the burrows, deep back in the logs, rose the sweet smell of mint wood smoke, and from one particular log, way in the deep back, could be heard if you were listenin' familiar snoring sounds, and calls, like cries in the night, dreams perhaps, big dreams.

"I found this, Molly," said Irish.

"What should I do with it?"

"Put it up there with the others," Molly said, sweeping the dirt, nodding up the hill.

Irish waved to Lucky who came running.

They tied a chain around the car key ring and together they dragged it up the rise. They placed the keys next to the one shoe, one glove and one sock.

Das Mein Schmampf

“Put the hay down where the sheep can get it,” said Lucky.

“Exactly,” said Irish.

And together they darted down the hill, under the clothesline, through the clearing, and into the woods, quick as a whistle.

Das Mein Schmampf

Gary Webb
Roger Dean Craig
Hunter S. Thompson
Philip Marshall
Barry Jennings
Bill Hunter
Tom Howard
Jim Koethe
Dorothy Kilgallen
Karen Silkwood
Michael Hastings
Paul McCartney
Mr. Earl T. Smith
Earlene Roberts
Warren Reynolds
Nancy Jane Moody
Robert David Steele
Hank Killam
William Whaley
J.W. Jackson
Lee Bowers
James Worrell
Gary Underhill
Bruce Ivins
Delilah Wade
William Bill Waters
Albert Gary Bogard
Jack Ruby
Lee Oswald
Dr. Mary Stutts Sherman
David Ferrie

Das Mein Schmampf

Lisa Howard
Paul Dyer
Marguerite Higgins
Jack Zangetty
Ibrahim Todashev
Tamerlan Tsarnaev
Terry Yeakey
William Colby
James Forrestal
Vince Foster
William Pitzer
Joe Cooper
Karyn Kupcinet
Rose Cherami
Robert L. Perrin
Guy Bannister
George de Mohrenschild
Clay Shaw
Hugh Ward
Lou Staples
Cliff Carter
Lou Staples
Buddy Walters
Hale Boggs
John M. Crawford
Robert Hoagland
Michael Bellmore
William Podgorski
H. Wayne Carver
Ron Brown
R. Budd Dwyer

Das Mein Schmampf

Mary Pinchot-Meyer

John Tower

Mel Carnahan

Deborah Palfrey

Kevin Ives

Don Henry

Samuel Weaver

Vicki Weaver

Fred Hampton

Mark Clark

Anna Mae Aquash

Kenneth Trentadue

William Cooper

Pat Tillman

Bill Gwatney

Stephanie Tubbs Jones

Donald Young

Steve Bridges

Ashley Turton

Andrew Breitbart

Edward Grant Scockdale

Paul Wellstone

Bill Hicks

Aaron Russo

Dave McGowan

James Hatfield

Jerry E. Smith

Alyssa Peterson

Udo Ulfkotte

Bev Eckert

Donald Kaul

Das Mein Schmampf

David Kelly
Tom Lopic
Mary McEvoy
Sheila Wellstone
Will McLaughlin
Richard Conry
Michael Guess
Marcia Markuson
Tina Manning
Leah Hicks-Manning
Ricarda Star Trudell
Sunshine Karma Trudell
Eli Changin Sun Trudell
Michael Connell
Dorothy Hunt
Dylan Klebold
Eric Harris
Seal Team 6
David Koresh
Rachel Jones
Cyrus Koresh
Star Koresh
Dayland Gent
Serenity Sea Jones
Startle Summers
Bobbie Lane Koresh
Natalie Nobrega
Lisa Martin
Sheila Martin
Abigail Martinez
Audrey Martinez

Das Mein Schmampf

Crystal Martinez
Isaiah Martinez
Joseph Martinez
Mayanah Schneider
Hollywood Sylvia
Rachel Sylvia
Steve Schneider
Judy Schneider
Sherri Lynn Jewell
David Michael Jones
Jeffrey Little
Nicole Elizabeth Gent
Wayne Martin
Aisha Gyarfaz
Mary Jean Borst
Pablo Cohen
Evette Fagan
Lisa Marie Farris
Diana Henry
Paulina Henry
Philip Henry
Stephen Henry
Vanessa Henr
Zilla Henry
Juliete Santoyo Martinez
Jilliane Matthews
Alison Bernadette Monbelly
Melissa Morrison
Rosemary Morrison
Theresa Nobrega
Floracita Sonobe

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Scott Kojiro Sonobe

Gregory Allen Summers

Lorraine Sylvia

Doris Vaega

Margarida Joann Vaega

Neil Vaega

Stanley Sylvia

Michelle Jones

Peter Gent

Michael Schroeder

Perry Jones

Das Mein Schmampf

