

# The Uncovering

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# The Uncovering

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The Uncovering - Self-Published  
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A Child of God Awaiting His White Stone with a New Name

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This novel is a work of fiction. The names, characters, places, incidents, and dialogues are products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual locales, events, or persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

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“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”

Revelation 6:8



Part 1  
Johnny and His Crew



# Chapter 1

I had two miles to go to my destination. I was thankful at least that the drones were predictable. They made their rotation every seven minutes. I needed to sit still until I saw that tiny flying scanner pass by.

We had a sort of pony express mail delivery system where we passed information via relay to the next party to avoid detection. My cargo was so illegal that, if discovered, I could be put away for the rest of my life and never be seen again. When I was a kid, what I was carrying could have been bought for cheap from a chain that has since gone under. Amazing how a box so valuable could at one time be purchased for only \$20. That is, back in the old days when the dollar was used as currency.

They destroyed lots of this stuff a couple decades ago, but they also knew a lot of it was kept hidden. New laws were passed. Anyone caught with this type of cargo was visited by FRIEND and was never seen again. Every time I left on one of these deliveries, I wondered if it would be the last time I would see my family. My mind was wandering. I thought back to happier times.

I was part of a generation that had lots of freedoms that we took for granted. The internet used to be open for all to use, not a government-controlled network for the elite. I once walked around freely without anything covering my face, my hands, or any exposed skin. I was 13 years old when the first pandemic began in early

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2020. That was decades ago. Just being asked politely to wear a simple fabric mask would seem like a dream to kids today.

Looking back now, I see how our minds were being poisoned. They redefined words and changed the nomenclature. Jobs were either essential or non-essential. We should have put our foot down then, but we didn't.

I wondered how much time we had before our unelected overlords would decide that people were non-essential. It wasn't long at all.

It's our own fault. Something happened in what used to be called the "country" I lived in. We went from 'give me liberty or give me death' to 'give me security and take away my liberty'. Benjamin Franklin, a name not even mentioned in current history books, said it best: those who would trade essential liberties for temporary security, deserve neither. The United States began in 1776. It ended a little over 250 years later. After a few years of debate, they started the calendar over again, so I can't even remember the year using the old standard.

I glanced at the old-school stopwatch I had. Four more minutes to wait for the drone to pass by. I thought about the first time I met Lori.

...

I still remember the loud knock on my door years ago. Just before I opened it, I heard a couple of obnoxious voices saying, "Yo Johnny!"

I opened the door. Staring at me were four people wearing their GIPE. I was only expecting three, so was a little taken aback when I saw the extra visitor. But then I relaxed a little. Even behind the mask, I could tell the stranger was a cute girl with dark hair. She appeared to be in her early twenties. Don't know why, but I really like dark hair.

"Put your stuff in there," I said and pointed to the decontamination chamber. They removed their government-issued masks, vests, and gloves and placed them in the device.

I had the 500-square-foot deluxe apartment. The standard

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unit was only 300 square feet. But even though I had the extra square footage, I was still in violation of the UN maximum occupancy limit. The limit was just one person for every 250 square feet. That meant I could only have one guest at a time. Standard units were permitted zero guests.

“iet-Quay !” I said in a hushed voice as three of my friends –Alex, Manny, and Harry–plus this new girl entered. “Only-yay one-yay erson-pay an-cay alk-tay at-yay a-yay ime-tay.”

I was always amused by the fact that a multi-trillion-dollar surveillance system couldn’t decipher Pig Latin. We spoke it to avoid lowering our Social Credit Scores. They were constantly monitoring us. If you drop below 500 for three consecutive months, you received a visit from First Robot In Every Necessary Disposal.

“ori-Lay oesn't-day eak-spay ig-Pay atin-Lay,” Alex said.

“o-Whay is-yay e-shay ?” I asked.

“e's-Shay y-may ousin-cay,” Alex replied. “er-Hay arents-pay ere-way isited-vay y-bay IEND-FRay o-say y-may om-may ook-tay er-hay in-yay.”

I scrounged around for a piece of paper and a pen and scribbled a “Hi” and handed the paper to Lori.

Lori read it.

“Hi Johnny. Nice place you have here,” she wrote under what I wrote. She smiled and handed it back to me. She had a beautiful smile.

“Thanks,” I wrote under that and showed to her. Yes I know, not very witty.

I then turned to my friends and spoke.

“ich-Whay ame-gay insert-yay id-day ou-yay ant-way e-may o-tay ut-pay in-yay e-thay e-Vay aR-yay eS-yay ?”

The VRS was a Virtual Reality System. Not everyone had one. I thought back to the days when I was a kid and everything was downloaded from the internet. Going back to hard media was one of the new ways of control. I was able to acquire a system because I had cracked a 10,000 SCS. I was the envy of all my friends.

“othing-Nay at-thay as-hay ofanity-pray or-yay ex-say,” Alex replied.

“y-Whay?” I asked.

“e's-Shay a-yay ollower-fay of-yay one-yay of-yay ose-thay old-yay eligions-ray,” Alex responded.

He wouldn't have told me that had he known how I had obtained such a high SCS. Alerting the authorities to the whereabouts of anyone against the OWR was worth 4,000 fat SCS points. I was averaging two of them every month.

Looking through the game inserts, they all contained profanity and sex. Half of the ones I had were VRS porn. She wouldn't have been cool with any of those. The other half were loaded with blood and guts. I shuffled through the games and just past the game “Evil Efreed” I saw one that I didn't think I still had. “Shamu Friends” was the title. I immediately thought back to when I had bought it.

I was seeing this single mom about 6 months ago. Her kid was 5 and an annoying, rambunctious brat. I bought it for him to be preoccupied while I slept with his mom, but she refused. She quoted something and then used a word I had never heard before—“fornication”—but knew what she was referencing. I kicked her out and reported her through the SCS board to get my 4,000 points. I don't know what ever happened to that kid when they took his mom away. At the time, I didn't care.

“amu-Shay!” I said as I raised the Shamu game insert victoriously.

We placed it in the VRS and turned it on. The whole room changed to a different world. We were still in my apartment, but it appeared we were underwater. The first time I experienced VRS I was blown away. But these effects got old quick. They're not so special anymore.

I let Manny, Harry, and Lori play the game. The 4D was very realistic, but I knew there was nothing in that game that would interest me. I took Alex to the corner of the unit, took out a small device called an SW, pressed a button on it, and instantly two silence walls dropped giving us 100 square feet of privacy. It also made things a little more difficult for the surveillance. Behind those walls, all we had to do was keep our voices down to be private.

“Did you bring it?” I whispered.

Alex pulled out 10 tablets in a plastic bag. It was 3,4-

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Methylenedioxymethamphetamine, commonly known as ecstasy or molly, a strong psychoactive drug.

“Nice,” I replied. “What’s your Score app account number?”

Alex gave it to me. I made the transfer of the equivalent of 500 SCS points.

“Johnny, how did you get such a high SCS?” asked Alex. “What’s your secret?”

“I don’t know. Just lucky,” I replied. I knew he didn’t believe me, but didn’t press me either.

That night I laid in bed a few minutes before falling asleep, evaluating my options with Lori and the SCS Board. Should I turn her in for the 4,000 points? That would make it a great month.

But I decided it was time for me to graduate into taking down entire religious organizations, so I decided for delayed gratification on something that could be much more profitable. Plus I wanted to sleep with her at least a few times, so no sense in turning her in now.

...

I looked at my stopwatch. One minute to wait. Thirty seconds. Ten seconds. I heard the buzzing sound of the drone fly by. I let it pass and waited until it made its first right turn and then I sprinted to the next building, still hugging the wall and carrying my parcel. I could safely travel a distance of 500 yards before I had to worry about the next drone coming by. It was eight drones total that I would have to avoid before I reached my brother Matt to deliver the cargo. One down, seven to go. Then, I would head back home. Man, I was already tired.

## Chapter 2

**I**t was 2018. My eleventh year on Earth. Two years before the first pandemic. Some people call that “lil pan” or even “fake pan”, because it was nothing compared to what happened next.

Back then, I was innocent, even more so than most boys my age. In three more days, I would be twelve, and shortly thereafter my downward spiral would begin and I would lose my innocence completely. In hindsight, I never was innocent. No one is.

It was just me and Mom. We lived on two acres in Oxville Georgia. No siblings. I never knew my father. He split before I can even remember. Nevertheless, the two of us were happy.

I did acquire one thing from my dad, according to my mom, even though I never met him: a taste for classic rock and heavy metal music. Led Zeppelin, AC/DC, Black Sabbath, Queen, Judas Priest, Metallica, and a host of others. What I used to think of as all the good stuff. Pop and hip-hop music that the majority of the kids my age listened to was crap. The worst!

I also loved many of those old TV shows from the 60s, 70s, and 80s. My mother loved them too, and we used to watch that stuff together on the oldies cable channels and apps like Cozi TV. *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *Kolchak the Night Stalker*, *The Brady Bunch*, *Land of the Lost*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Gilligan’s Island*, and *The Addams Family*. We used to pop popcorn in the microwave and watch oldies TV for hours.

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The neighborhood kids were all older than me. A two- or three-year age difference doesn't sound like much, but, at that young age, the difference was profound. As is the custom of adolescent kids, some of them bullied me. They called me "Momma's Boy". At the time, I hated it, although looking back now, I see they were right. I loved my mother.

Alex was fourteen but could pass for almost eighteen. He was the neighborhood bully. Brown hair and light brown complexion, he had a round face with a small crooked nose and squinty eyes like a snake. He had facial hair and was already shaving. Not the most muscular kid, but he was tall, strong, confident, and intimidating. He would refer to himself in the third person, calling himself the Lexinator. We were all terrified of him.

It was no secret that Alex and his friends were burglarizing homes in the area. They used to brag about it. A few weeks ago, I overheard them scheming to rob Mrs. Dulcis's house. She was a sweet old lady in her 70s who lived alone with a poodle. She drove a Mercedes and was known to have a lot of jewelry.

"The dog door into her house is too small for me to fit through," said Alex's crony Harry. He was just taller than Alex, dirty blond hair, but thinner and definitely not as tough. But he was Alex's "yes" man, and would do anything he asked him to do. Loyal to a fault. Kinda stupid too.

Alex admonished him. "You're the skinniest. You can fit. Just worm your way in."

I was listening when I caught Alex's eye. He turned and pointed a finger at me, threatening, "The Lexinator sees you!" I put my head down and quickly walked away.

A month later, it was three days before my birthday and I was walking home from the school bus stop and passing by the Bergh family farm. They had animals, lots of them. Horses, cows, pigs, chickens, and sheep. I liked them all, except their dog. He was always barking at me when I went by.

If she was out working, Mrs. Bergh would always come out to greet me, but would have to shush their dog.

"I don't know why Max doesn't seem to like you," she apologized. "He seems to love all the other kids that come by."

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“I don’t know why either,” I said. Dogs scared me. They just did. It was a mystery to me why. I never liked them, and they didn’t ever seem to like me.

My favorite animals on the Bergh farm were the lambs. Mrs. Bergh had three of them. Their names were Rosey, Greta, and Bosco. Bosco was the male. For some reason, he would always come to greet me when I walked by. “Baaa” he would say in lamb talk. Mrs. Bergh would give me carrots chopped into small pieces. I fed them to Bosco. He loved carrots.

“Johnny, I wanted to tell you that my husband Henry and I are moving out of state,” Mrs. Bergh said. “We sold the farm. The new owners are going to rezone the acreage for a subdivision of single-family homes. The animals are going to be taken to market.”

I started to panic. I couldn’t speak. In my head I was thinking, “Nooooo! What about Bosco?!!” I’m sure she could see it on my face.

“But Mr. Bergh and I want you to have Bosco,” she reassured. “I’ve cleared it with your mother. He will be your birthday gift. In three days, he’s all yours.”

I don’t know what I did at that moment, but I had never gone from such a state of fright to exhilaration. Bosco and I would be together forever!

“Johnny, dinner’s ready!” Mom yelled as she stuck her head out of the kitchen window. She knew that I had just learned this wonderful news.

I ran home.

“Mom! Mom, is it true? Do we get to keep Bosco?” I exclaimed.

“Yes, he’s all yours,” she replied. “He will be a big responsibility though. You’ll have to feed him and clean up after him. Can I count on you to do that?”

All I could do was smile and enthusiastically nod my head yes.

My birthday came and Bosco was delivered as promised. Mrs. Bergh even put a red bow on him. Bosco was a little nervous about his new surroundings, but then, when he saw me, he ran toward me.

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“Baaa, baaa, baaa,” he said.

I hugged Bosco and never felt so much love. I never wanted to let go of him. He slept in my bed that night and every night thereafter. In my childlike worldview, I thought he must be counting sheep for me as he would quietly “Baa” once every thirty seconds, then every minute, then like clockwork, I would be sound asleep. I was so happy.

A month later Mom started seeing this guy. He was a plumber. Always wore his plumber work clothes with his nametag stitched in that said “Zach”.

He was not nice to me. I tried to avoid him whenever he was visiting. He yelled at Mom a lot. I don’t know why she even stayed with him, let alone marry him. Great, now I have to call him Dad?

A few days after he moved in, he lost his plumber job. But somehow he always had money for alcohol. He smelled like a brewery at all times. He was mean even when he was sober, but when he drank, he took it to another level.

I could hear him at night beating my mother, but what could I do? I was an 87-pound twelve-year-old and he was a grown man. The best thing I could do was hide in my room hugging Bosco and crying. Somehow, I felt Bosco could tell when I was sad and he did his best to comfort me.

One Friday afternoon, I came home from school and couldn’t find Bosco. I searched in all of his hiding places. I searched the lawn. Where was he?

I walked outside calling out for him. I circled around the front to the right, the east side of the yard. I saw tire tracks from my stepdad’s truck. Those shouldn’t be there, I thought. I opened the gate to the backyard and then followed the tracks to the far part of the backyard around the side and to the rear. Why would he have driven all the way back there? I then heard a sound that would haunt me for the rest of my life. It was a sound that hit me in the pit of my stomach. I felt instantly sick. It was the whimper of an animal in great pain.

I started to run, following the tire tracks deep into the backyard in front of the metal shed. That’s when I saw him. Bosco was on the ground just beside the door of the shed. His back legs

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were broken, and his hindquarters was squashed. The grass was stained red with his blood.

“Bosco!! Nooo!! Oh Bosco!” I screamed. I knelt down beside him. I put my hand to his head as he turned slightly toward me. He could barely lift his head.

I just knelt there beside him, and then laid down to try to hug him around the neck and wanted to hold him in my arms. He was obviously in great pain, so I didn’t try to pick him up or move him. I will never forget those final moments. He looked at me some more, but never again opened his mouth or made a noise. He then looked away, laid his head back down, closed his eyes, and a few seconds later he was dead.

Deep inside my mind, something snapped. Like a large tree branch struck by lightning, my conscience fell to the ground. Much like a tornado ripping it out from its roots. Brain synapses became disconnected. Something obliterated my psyche that day. My moral compass became directionless. It lost its true north. I felt no obligation to love anybody or anything. My sorrow morphed into anger. I let the demons of rage and hate enter my life. I hated everyone. I even hated myself. I had no compassion anymore and would be out of control constantly. Even thought about suicide more than once.

My mother didn’t know what to do. She tried to get me into counseling, but I refused. She was beside herself. I thought I didn’t really need her anymore, except to provide a place for me to stay. But I didn’t need her love anymore. At 12, I wasn’t old enough to run away and survive on my own, otherwise I would have. I went to school reluctantly, with a huge chip on my shoulder. I wanted to prove to everyone that I wasn’t going to take any more crap from anybody.

Walking to school the next day, Alex approached me aggressively. “The Lexinator needs lunch money,” he said.

Normally, I would fork over what I had to avoid a beating, but today I was a different person.

“I’m not giving you a penny. You’re going to give me money,” I said.

He laughed and grabbed me by the shirt and started to lift me

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in the air.

“Do you really want to hurt the one person who can fit through Mrs. Dulcis’s doggy door?” I said.

That was the start of my friendship with Alex.

## Chapter 3

The next year was profitable for me and my friends. We would dumpster dive the trash bins behind vet offices. The paper slips contained everything we needed: name, address, time they were dropped off and picked up, the type of dog, and most importantly the dog's weight. We looked for dogs weighing in excess of 90 pounds.

"Found one!" I said as I held a crumpled piece of paper up and peered my head over the edge of the bin. "127-pound Great Dane. 1788 Marietta Way. Zillow?"

Harry entered the address in his phone and reported back, "\$517,588" and then asked, "How much and what food?"

"It's Ziwi. The bill was \$738.22," I answered.

"Nice," Harry replied. "Let's hope they decided to give their dog access to the backyard."

It was hit or miss. We plugged the addresses into Google Maps and tried to find at least three that were within a mile and then one of us would bicycle to the house to see if there was access to the backyard and if there was a door. We might find a dog door on one out of every three.

After these reconnaissance missions finding doors, three of our posse would then bike back to the area. It was always Alex and me, accompanied by either Harry or Manny. Harry was the tallest of us still, and that never changed when we became adults. Manny

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was medium height, stocky, tan skin, curly, greasy brown hair that was always a mess, and he always smelled too. I don't think Manny knew what deodorant was. But we just got used to it, I guess. That was just Manny. And he was actually smarter than he let on most of the time. He made stupid choices, but he actually had a level of intelligence that would be surprising to some, given his other flaws.

The next step was to find out if anyone was home. We wore baseball caps slanted down in case they had a front door monitor. We rang the doorbell and banged on the door. If someone answered, we asked them if they were happy with their lawn service. Funny, we actually had some who wanted to hire us for the lawn job but no thanks, stealing was much more lucrative.

If after a couple minutes of ringing the doorbell and banging on the door, no one answered and all we heard was a dog barking, then we were on to the next step. We had to deal with the dog.

We poured liquid Bromethalin on a Wendy's Triple Burger and tossed it over the fence. The dog was usually dead in four hours. We didn't stick around for four hours. We checked on the other homes and then did the same. Then we would bike to the closest convenience store or Publix, CVS, or really anywhere that had a restroom while we waited for sufficient time to pass.

We returned to the house again and banged on the front door. I don't ever recall even one time where we heard a dog bark on the second trip, but occasionally the owner of the house answered and was in tears. We had to feign surprise.

It was getting more and more difficult to get through the doggy doors. I was older and heavier, but I was still by far the smallest of our group. I wore a bathing suit and stripped off my shirt. They would pour Wesson oil all over me and I laid down and stiffened up preparing to be stuffed in through the door. They pushed me in by my feet like you would insert a battery into a flashlight. I wriggled my shoulders and squeezed in, feeling a tad claustrophobic, but once I was in, I unlocked the front door.

We were in and out of the house in less than ten minutes. Alex had a timer and would stay near the front door as a lookout. Harry or Manny and I would rifle through drawers looking for anything valuable that could fit in our backpacks.

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It was profitable, but we were pushing our luck. In our wake there was always at least one dead dog and a doggy door slimed with Wesson oil. We knew the police were on the lookout because our modus operandi never changed. We needed to move out of the area.

We could afford to buy a car, but none of us was old enough to drive one. Alex was the oldest at 15 and wouldn't be 16 for another six months. We decided to hire cabs.

I know what you're thinking. Teenagers riding cabs in 2019? Hardly anyone, let alone young teenagers, did that anymore. Uber and Lyft are what all the teens and twenty-somethings were doing those days. But those apps required being tracked and being known. Drivers and passengers could be reviewed. We needed to be anonymous. And surprisingly, there were enough taxi cab companies in metro Atlanta to go around.

In hindsight, we should have paid the cab drivers but, at the time, I thought we were untouchable. We would walk a couple blocks to a store or business to find anyone who would lend us their phone under the guise of needing to call our mother to pick us up. Then, we'd call the cab and have them pick us up at that location and take us to our destination which was sometimes nearly an hour away.

The first time we did this, Alex and Harry were a little nervous.

"We've never done a crime with a witness watching," Alex said. "The cab driver is going to know what we look like."

"I thought you were the Lexinator?" I replied. "Are you peeing your pants? Maybe we should change your name to the Leakinator."

Harry laughed and, at that moment, I realized the title of ringleader was slowly being passed from Alex to me.

"Cab's here," Harry said.

The three of us got in the backseat of this station wagon type of vehicle. It was old and beat up. It smelled vaguely of rotten eggs. The driver was maybe 50 years of age and fat. He had the largest forearms I had ever seen. He was playing merengue music. I remember sitting behind him and talking as he gripped the steering wheel at the nine and three o'clock positions.

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“My mom is going to pay. She is in the backyard sunbathing,” I said.

“As long as somebody’s going to pay,” responded our fat-forearmed driver.

We were only a few minutes in when Alex and Harry already started signing thumbs down low in the back seat, beneath the sight of our driver. I looked at both of them and overruled their thumbs down with a thumbs up and a smirk that showed confidence.

In my head, I already had it planned out. The subdivision we needed to get to was like an island on three sides. It could only be accessed by road from the east and was surrounded by a lake on the north, south, and west. The lake was about 100 yards wide. I would have the driver drop us off at a random house on the west side of the lake and then swim to the other side. It would take the driver a good half-hour to get to the other side. By then, we would have already checked on our three houses and gone to the local Publix.

“It’s this house up here on the right,” I informed our driver.

As we approached that house, I saw that the roof was under construction with six roofers hammering away.

“No, it’s the next house after this house,” I said.

Fat Forearms pulled in the driveway.

“Your mom is in the backyard?” he asked.

“Yes,” I replied.

Just then Alex put his hand on my shoulder as if he was going to tell me something, but I ignored it and confidently exited the vehicle. Alex and Harry were both a little agitated, but sheepishly followed. I started walking to the backyard, and then sprinted. I dove off the dock and started swimming. I heard the two splashes from Alex and Harry behind me. With an adrenaline rush at fifty yards in, I stopped and turned around only to see the cab driver standing on the dock shaking his fist and angrily yelling at us. The workers on the roof were exploding in laughter and cheers and waving us to keep swimming, saying, “Go, go, go!!”

We were careful never to cheat the same cab company twice. If there were seven that worked in that area, then we went through all seven and then moved on to a different area.

One trip, we took Metro Cab and it was Alex, Manny, and

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me. We had never taken Metro Cab. I climbed into the backseat of the cab on the driver's side and shut my door. Alex opened the rear door on the right, and immediately recognized the driver and yelled "Go!" at me as he slammed his door shut and he and Manny ran. I tried opening my door, but it was locked. I put my left shoulder into it to no avail. I scooted over to the other door on the right and it was locked too.

That's when the driver turned his head to the right and smugly said, "Your mom's in the backyard." I saw the driver's fat forearms. It was a different car, but it still smelled like rotten eggs. I should have known when I heard the merengue music. Fat Forearms switched companies. But he did give me a free ride that day. He drove me straight to the police station.

## Chapter 4

The interrogation room at the police station was way too cold. I'm sure that was by design to make you feel uncomfortable. There was a table and three chairs. Cameras in two corners and a mirror which I knew was one way. They were watching and recording. I would guess they had me sitting in there for at least an hour. Not exactly sure because there were no clocks. What a boring room. I wanted a jacket or blanket or something.

The door opened and a detective entered wearing a sports coat. He was well-dressed and tall. He must have been at least six foot four. Last time I measured my height I was four-five. I was short even for a 13-year-old. Maybe I had gained an inch or two since then. The detective was holding a grocery store paper bag.

"Johnny, you hungry?" he asked as he reached into the paper bag momentarily keeping his hand hidden in the bag while he waited for a reply. I had seen enough of *The First 48* to know not to say anything. They never made an episode where someone invoked the Fifth Amendment. Back then, we still had a Constitution.

He pulled out a hamburger wrapped in Wendy's paper with his hand underneath the burger holding it two feet above the table just beneath eye level as if he was serving me and inviting me to grab it. He held it there for more than a minute. I sat silently, staring defiantly, being sure to maintain eye contact as uncomfortable as that was.

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He turned his hand upside down to drop it on the table. Splat. Some ketchup squirted out. A little got on my shirt.

“What’s wrong, Johnny? Not hungry?” he asked.

I said nothing.

“Maybe you need something to wash it down.”

He reached his hand back into the bag and quickly pulled out an unopened bottle of Wesson oil. Throwing the paper bag on the ground, he slammed the Wesson oil onto the table.

Five minutes of silence. I realized the first person to speak loses. He must have gotten tired of standing for five minutes because he sat down. We continued to stare at one another in silence.

“You’ve been a busy boy, Johnny. We have thirty-one dead dogs in three counties and more than \$150,000 stolen from these homes,” he claimed.

He was short seven. There were two homes where a sobbing owner answered the door when we returned, so maybe those two thought the dog died a natural death? Or maybe some of the victims never reported it, but I knew because I tracked it. Thirty-eight dead dogs, I thought to myself, and we didn’t get anywhere near \$150,000. Maybe \$20,000. Alex did the fencing. Did he short me? I wondered as I sat in silence.

“You’re lucky you’re a minor,” he declared. “One of those homes was occupied with a grandmother sleeping upstairs. A gun was stolen from that residence, and two others. That makes it armed burglary of an occupied dwelling. If you were an adult, you’d be facing 15 years minimum.”

I sat still in silence. I remembered the sleeping grandma, but I was a little upset about the three guns. I did my best not to show emotion. There weren’t three guns. I had only found one. Harry or Manny must have pocketed the other two. I fumed inside that once again Alex may have been shorting me.

“Who were your accomplices?” he sternly inquired.

I sat in silence.

Over the next few hours, he would leave and wait a half hour and return to ask more questions. He kept doing this. I never spoke. He eventually gave up and told me he would recommend that the

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DA charge me as an adult.

I had my day in court and was sentenced to six months in Bakers County Juvenile Detention Center. I was the youngest inmate in that facility. Most of the kids were fifteen or older. Some looked like grown men weighing more than 200 pounds.

Stephen was my celly. At fourteen, he was older but he was weak and frail. He was the only inmate who was smaller than me.

He didn't belong there, I thought. Then I heard Stephen's story and I knew that was true. He was with a group of seven other kids at a convenience store. Two of them he had never met before and were older. They were sixteen. Those two convinced his group to distract the clerk while they attempted to steal a couple forties. The two older kids had Velcro calf braces with which to conceal the beer from a clerk's eye level by tucking it into their calf.

Stephen was there, just inside the door of the convenience store, but didn't participate in the theft or distraction. His friends pretended to be arguing in the corner of the store to get the clerk's attention.

The clerk wasn't fooled by the distraction. He spotted one of the sixteen-year-olds and pulled a gun from behind the counter. The other sixteen-year-old also had a gun. The convenience store clerk and one of the sixteen-year-olds were shot. The teenager died.

To make matters worse, the convenience store clerk happened to be the grandson of the local county judge. The judge should have recused herself, but she did not. That's when I learned of the Felony Murder Rule. Stephen was charged with murder. He wasn't getting out for ten years. They would transfer him to adult prison at 18. He needs to put some weight on before he gets transferred, I thought.

He spent his entire day reading the Bible, talking about Jesus constantly. I was bored, but I listened to the stories he was reading and thought to myself, why is this kid thinking he has a supreme being who cares about him? I didn't get it.

There was another kid there named Braxton. He was a 220-pound inmate who spoke with a lisp, but no one dared to make fun of him. Braxton was extorting Stephen. He would make Stephen call his parents to add to commissary, and then Braxton spent it.

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Even though I didn't understand Stephen, I liked the kid. He kinda grew on you. I decided I would solve his Braxton problem.

Each inmate had a footlocker, but you had to buy the locks through commissary. Combination locks could be bought for \$6.50. I bought two. It's important how you prepare a lock in a sock. You don't put the lock inside the sock because it will tear. Instead, you tie two of your socks in a knot around the locks.

There was one area just outside of the showers that had a surveillance dead spot. We knew the cameras couldn't see because inmates would be assaulted there and no one was ever charged. I waited behind that wall near the dead spot, wondering if I had prepared the lock in a sock right or if it would tear because I had two. I waited there a couple hours.

Braxton didn't want anyone in the showers when he was there and he would yell before entering, giving everyone there one minute to finish and leave. I heard the yell. The inmates who were there left. They all saw me standing behind the wall.

Braxton never made it to the shower that day. His bloody body lay motionless on the floor a few feet outside. I don't even remember swinging the lock. I mentally took some kind of a back seat and something took over. They said he was hit thirty-seven times. They airlifted him out and he was never seen again.

After that, my prison status skyrocketed. I felt like I was becoming some kind of god.

## Chapter 5

The remaining months in juvie flew by. This morning was my release date. I was sitting in my lower bunk, quietly musing about what might come next as I waited for the CO to open the cell. I knew it would be the last time I would see Stephen. I thought about how he might fare without me having his back when Stephen's voice interrupted my daydream.

"What are you going to do when you get out?" he asked.

"Not sure," I replied. "There's one more month of summer left and then it's the sixth grade, I guess. You feel me?"

I mulled over the fact that my peers would be starting the seventh grade and that Harry and Manny would be freshmen in high school and Alex a sophomore. Alex would have his license. I wondered what kind of car he bought with my money. The thought irked me.

"Here, I want you to have this," Stephen said as he lowered his head from the top bunk and swung his hand as low as he could toward me in the bunk below attempting to hand me his Bible.

"That's your only Bible. You read it all the time. You keep it," I responded.

Stephen was resolute in his reply.

"No, I'll get another one. I want you to have this. It would mean a lot to me."

I was impressed with the little guy. He was gaining

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confidence, so I conceded and grabbed the book.

“One more thing,” Stephen said.

“Now you’re pushing it,” I said, laughing, while at the same time being impressed with his undaunted resolve.

“You need to promise me you’ll read it,” he said.

Just then the cell door buzzed open and a loud echoing voice sounded over the PA.

“Extracting 619.”

That was the last time I saw Stephen.

## Chapter 6

**T**hough my status in juvie was high, it paled in comparison to my status outside. I had done six months of time and didn't rat. Harry and Manny owed me and they knew it. Alex owed me a lot more. I was still fuming about what the detective said about the spoils.

"Yo Johnny!" I heard as the engine of a black Camaro revved. It was Alex. I stepped outside Mom's front door and walked towards the car.

I placed my left hand on the roof and stuck my head in the passenger window.

"Nice car," I said. "What did it cost?"

"It's my uncle's car. You feel me?" he said as he touched his nose with the index finger of his left hand which betrayed him, the subconscious part of his brain sending out nervous signals that appear as a gesture.

I knew he was lying. Six months of living amongst criminals gave me the equivalent of a PhD in the criminal mind.

I got in the car. We started driving. When we got to the main road, he looked both left and right and then floored it on a sharp right. The spinning tires emitted a loud squeal which left a trail of smoke from the burning rubber.

"You look like you aged in lockup. You could probably pass for 15 now," he said.

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I didn't realize that was true until he said it. You look at your face in the mirror every day and don't notice changes. I did feel taller. I was wondering how much I grew when I noticed the men's gold curb link bracelet on his right hand.

He must have forgotten that I was the one who had stolen that bracelet. I even knew how much it weighed because we put it on the triple beam that night. It was twenty-nine grams. I started getting mad, but tried to keep a poker face.

"The detective said that \$350,000 was stolen from 36 houses." I lied, but wanted to see how he would respond.

"That's a lie," he said. "Even the retail value of what we got wasn't anywhere near that."

"What did we ever do with those guns?" I asked.

"We sold all three to Fingers," he replied.

Fingers was the street name for a convicted felon named Alphonse. He was missing the pinky finger on his right hand. Three guns, I thought, and not one. Alex wasn't very good at this.

"Don't forget that I added \$600 to your commissary funds," he said, trying to make me feel good about our criminal shenanigans.

We were approaching the on-ramp of the interstate. Alex floored it again, the engine's propulsion thrusting our backs into the seats. The car had some power.

"Where are we headed?" I asked.

"Manny's. His mom is always either drunk or passed out. We can do whatever we want. Harry is meeting us there and bringing some Maui Wowie," he assured me.

We pulled into Manny's trailer park. I had forgotten how much of a dump this place was. It was one of the few places that allowed pedophiles.

We parked and exited the vehicle. Manny opened the front door to wave us in as we heard Slayer's "Angel of Death" blaring out the trailer's door.

I had to use the bathroom.

"Where's the crapper?" I asked.

"It's over there." Manny pointed to the left as he picked up his phone.

There was a foul-smelling scent which only increased in

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intensity as I neared the bathroom. I could see Manny's mom at the end of the hall in the bedroom adjacent to the bathroom. She was passed out on the bed lying on her back in a messy room that looked like it hadn't been cleaned in years. I returned from the bathroom to sit on their grungy couch. It squeaked when I sat down. What a piece of crap I thought.

Harry had arrived and was packing the bong. He saw me and set the bong on the table, bro-hugged me, and then picked up the bong, handing it to me in a generous gesture that said, "You first."

I lit the bowl, put my finger on the carb, inhaled deeply, and then released my hold on the carb, allowing the air to push the smoke in the bong up into my lungs. I quickly placed the bong on the table and slouched back into my seat.

I hadn't smoked in the past six months, so after I inhaled, I coughed repeatedly.

Harry laughed. "You got virgin lungs, man," he said as he took the bong which I had set on the table and repacked the bowl and took a hit himself, followed by Alex and finally Manny. It was then passed back to me.

I hadn't smoked in so long it was like it was a first time for me again. I had forgotten that the first time you smoke marijuana you get deeply paranoid. It doesn't get euphoric until your brain gets used to the THC.

"No thanks," I said as I waved both hands in front of me in a surrendering motion. "I haven't smoked at all in the past six months. I need to clear my head."

Over the next few minutes, the bong made its rounds by Alex, Harry, and Manny four times.

"Harry, do you have anything left from the Dominos we ordered last night?" Alex inquired.

"Yeah, almost an entire pie," Harry replied.

"Let's go then," Alex said in an authoritative voice as he stood up. Harry's trailer was on the other end of the park which was less than five minutes walking distance.

Harry and Manny stood up. All three of them looked at me. I extended my right arm to them as a stiff arm, rejecting their

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offer while shaking my head no.

“OK, you stay here. We’ll be back in a few minutes,” Manny said.

The door slammed shut as they left.

I sat for another minute and then got up and paced around. I repeatedly looked through every window and through the peephole on the front door. Then I headed to the bathroom, holding my nose and looking intently at my face in the mirror. I exited the bathroom and looked right into Manny’s mother’s bedroom. She was still out cold on her back on the bed. She was a very attractive woman, probably in her late 30s.

I thought about Harry’s virgin lungs comment. I walked up to her and unzipped her shorts, pulling them down to her knees and that’s when I lost my virginity. From then on, I became a frequent visitor of Manny’s trailer—and his mother’s bedroom.

## Chapter 7

Harry, Alex, and I were in the park shooting hoops on a day that was mostly clear skies. We were playing 21. Alex and Harry were both taller and more skilled. I picked up a basketball maybe three times in my life. I was predictable. I couldn't dribble with my left and had to look down at the ball when I used my right hand. Alex blocked my shot more than once.

The weather suddenly changed. Ominous clouds dimmed the sun. It was going to rain soon. Alex only needed one more shot to win the game.

That's when three kids I hadn't seen before who were around 17 or 18 showed up and were watching our game. One of the kids laughed when Alex blocked my shot. They were bigger than Alex and even Harry, and they were way bigger than me.

"You suck little man," derided the smallest of the three. Even though he was the smallest, he was still probably five-ten and looked like he lifted weights.

I stopped playing. My countenance changed as I turned to face him with fomenting anger.

Alex won the game with a shot from the top of the key and he didn't notice that I was standing still, but quickly went into action when he saw trouble brewing.

Alex motioned to me and said, "Let's go!" as he and Harry started walking in the direction of Alex's car, Harry tucking the ball

under his arm.

I stood still, with piercing eye contact on the one who mocked me.

“You got a problem, little man?” he asked.

“Come on Johnny, let’s go,” Alex said, waving me to the car. I took Alex’s advice and left, but my mind was spinning, seeking ways to exact revenge.

I rode my bike by that park three times a day for the next week looking for that disrespecting mocker, but he never returned. I didn’t enjoy this lingering feeling of hate, but the thirst couldn’t be quenched. Nevertheless, I tried to forget it.

The next Saturday afternoon, Alex, Manny, Harry, and I wanted to play baseball. I was happy as that was a sport that I played well. The bag had two Louisville Sluggers, an aluminum bat, and at the bottom of the bag was a small T-ball bat.

We went to that same park. As we pulled into the parking lot, I saw that same kid there and he was all alone shooting free throws. I distracted Manny who was sitting next to me behind the driver’s seat by pointing in the direction of his window and asking if it looks like rain to him while I reached into the bottom of the bag and removed the small bat, placing it behind me and covering it with a towel.

We all got out of the car and went to the baseball field. Disrespecting mocker didn’t notice us or if he did, he didn’t seem to care. He continued shooting free throws.

“I left my beer in the car,” I said to Alex. “Give me the keys.”

He tossed them to me. I walked to the car taking a longer path than needed so as to avoid being spotted by this kid.

I picked up the bat and was careful to hide it by holding it just behind my right leg. I walked onto the court about ten feet away and stared at him, not saying a word.

He must have seen the bat behind my leg as I walked towards him because he asked, “What you gonna do with that, little man?”

I don’t remember anything after that. Alex, Manny, and Harry told me later that the crack of the bat on this kid’s skull was so loud they heard it from where they were standing some 50 yards away, and the kid immediately fell down and split his head open on

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the concrete as they claim I continued to batter him. I woke from my trance when they grabbed me and said, “Come on man! Let’s go!” As they pulled me away, I turned my head and saw a pool of blood and a face that was so bashed, it couldn’t be recognized.

I never found out if Braxton died, but we read about this kid in the paper the next day. It said he died of blunt force trauma. So, this was either my first or second murder.

## Chapter 8

**W**e added an older kid to our group. Lucas Brasi was twenty-one. Alex and Manny both said I looked a little like Lucas. They only said that once. The stare I gave them warned them not to say that again. Lucas may have looked a little like me, but was nothing like me in character. Lucas was a nerd with no confidence. He was impressed with how flashy we were. We would send him to the liquor store, giving him a \$20 tip for each run.

This day was my sixteenth birthday.

“Three bottles of Crown and two Jacks. All 1.75’s,” I said, as Lucas attempted to write it all down. “Two cases of 16-ounce sugar-free Red Bull, five two-liter bottles of Diet Coke... are you getting all this?” I reprimanded him as he appeared to have picked up a pen that wasn’t working.

“Yeah, I got it,” Lucas replied, followed by, “Anything else?”

“A box of rubbers, ten Hardee’s Monster Burgers...what else,” I said and then asked, “Does the Lexinator want to add anything to this? What about you guys? Harry? Manny?”

Harry and Manny shook their head. Alex waited a minute and then said, “Yeah, I need you to pick up my CDs from Edgar.” This was code language for ecstasy. Lucas was dumb. He never even knew he was our drug mule. His concern was whether or not

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we would pay him another \$20.

“That will be three stops then, so that’s \$60—right?” Lucas asked.

“The liquor store is in the same complex as Hardee’s, so no Lucas, that’s \$40,” Alex replied.

Lucas left noticeably dejected. He shut the door a little harder than necessary, but followed with a wimpy “Sorry!” from outside the room.

We were in Vegas. Staying at the Venetian. It was \$750 per night per room and we had two connecting rooms. Lucas’s name was on everything. Alex was eighteen but didn’t see a reason why anything should be put in his name.

We were moving large amounts of ecstasy, cocaine, and crystal meth. We smoked pot, but there was no money to be made selling it as you had to move way too much of it to be worthwhile. Plus, you could get a medical marijuana card and buy direct from the dispensaries.

We were clearing roughly \$50k every month—some months a little more, some a little less. None of us went to school and we didn’t live at home. We had Lucas sign a lease on a five-bedroom house in Cansteka Lakes, a gated community with homes from \$300,000 to a cool million. We were big shots in the drug game. My cut was 20 grand, Alex got the same, and Harry and Manny got \$5,000 each, give or take. We were spending it just as fast as it was coming in, but I had slowed down a bit on my spending as I was saving for a car.

“What kind of car you going to buy, Johnny?” Harry asked.

“Thinking about a used Lexus LS 460,” I answered. “I have around \$40,000, but I also know I can’t walk into a normal car lot with a briefcase of cash.”

“I have a guy who buys from the auction with cash. You feel me? He can hook you up,” Alex said.

“Cool, we’ll revisit this when we return to Ithaca on Sunday,” I said. We all had moved to Florida six months ago. That’s where we had met Lucas.

That Monday, Alex hooked me up with his auction guy and I bought a 2017 Lexus LS 460 for \$38,000 plus \$3,800 fee to Alex’s

contact. Of course, I was only sixteen, so everything went in Lucas's name. Lucas was cool with this as he pocketed \$500 which for him was a windfall.

I was in our home alone that afternoon considering my options for the day when I noticed that Lucas left his driver's license behind. I picked it up and studied it. Yeah, as much as I didn't want to admit, we did look a little alike. I saw that his height was listed as five foot ten. I was only five-seven. He combed his hair differently. I took a picture of his license with my phone and then returned it to where I had found it.

Lucas walked in five minutes later. He said he had been looking for his license in the car but couldn't find it.

"Did you check your bedroom?" I asked.

Lucas walked into the bedroom and saw his license. He picked it up and put it into his wallet and sat down on the couch to watch TV. I sat in the adjacent chair.

"Lucas, how many traffic tickets do you have?" I asked.

"I have three in the past five years," he replied.

I continued with my inquiry.

"What's your best recollection of when you got each ticket and what the citation stated?"

For the next twenty minutes I grilled him on his driving history while secretly recording what he was saying with my phone. I spent that night studying everything. Date of birth, address, spelling of name, traffic violations what/when/where, I even memorized his driver's license number. The registration to the Lexus was already in his name. The next morning, I put some boots with three-inch heels on and headed to the DMV.

It was my turn in line.

"I lost my license and need a replacement," I said. "Here's my car registration."

The DMV lady asked me a couple simple questions and then took my photo. She didn't ask me anything about the driving record. That was easy.

I brought my car into the Lexus dealership for servicing. There was a cute girl who worked as the receptionist. Her name was Adena. I would flirt with her. She was eighteen and was impressed

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with how young I was and driving a luxury car.

“You look young,” she said. “How old are you?”

“Twenty-one,” I said as she shook her head no because she didn’t think I looked older than eighteen.

“Prove it,” she said.

“I’ll prove it on condition that after I prove it, you meet me at Club 1705. It’s eighteen and up for ladies tonight.”

She smiled and said, “OK.”

I slapped Lucas’s driver’s license down on her counter. She smiled. I could tell she liked my swag. We agreed to meet at 11:30 PM.

I got to the club early. The club was already packed. I was well-dressed and standing near the bar as I waited on the bartender to come down to the south end of the bar.

A girl I never met before taps me on my right shoulder and says, “Buy me a drink.” She was a little chunky but in all the right places and very cute. I turned my head to the right and looked in her eyes.

“Make out with me,” I said.

“My boyfriend is over there,” she said, pointing to a bench with five dudes sitting together.

“You don’t have to use your tongue,” I said.

Not exactly sure the exact dialogue after that, but I found out what she wanted to drink and ordered it along with my drink. I had one drink in each hand and walked behind a curtain which was a few feet from the bench of dudes. I leaned against the railing and waited.

Her hand pushed the curtain to the side and she entered, walking to me slowly but confidently. I extended the arm with her drink a few inches in her direction. She grabbed it and gave me the most amazing French kiss. This was getting good, I thought.

Thirty seconds later the curtain opened and I hear, “What the f---!?” and she gets grabbed and taken to the other side of the curtain.

OK, this is how it ends for Johnny I thought. Jumped by five dudes and foot-stomped to death. I mentally prepared for a fight I would likely be on the losing end of and I waited. Thirty seconds passed but the curtain never moved. I looked behind me and realized that I was leaning against a rail on a staircase leading downstairs. I

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laughed as I walked downstairs and exited the club. I never did meet Adena that night.

## Chapter 9

Getting beautiful women was easy. Keeping them was hard work, and it was even harder work when you were juggling three of them at a time. I'm not talking about ordinary beautiful women that you might see on any given day. I'm talking about the top 0.01%. That's one out of every 10,000. Hands down the prettiest girl in the room, any room, anywhere.

You're out with her at a bar and go to use the restroom, and when you return, three dudes are talking to her. It's not her fault, but as I'm trying to explain, you have to defend your territory. I was headed to Hyde Park Café to meet one of my three girlfriends at happy hour. Cindy was a thin five-nine with a curvy figure and the most beautiful face, eyes, and hair. She used to smile in her sleep. Cindy was with her single friend Naomi and was basically bait. She would reel the men in and then direct their affections towards Naomi, telling the guys she has a boyfriend—or at least that's what she was supposed to do.

I let them go ahead of me and told them I would meet them later. I showed up a little earlier than expected, parking my Lexus in the street outside and spotted the two of them in an outside portion of the bar. I see a guy talking with Cindy. OK, I thought, a front row seat from this vantage point. Let's see how this scene plays out.

That's when this guy kisses my girlfriend's cheek.

I immediately exited the car and entered onto the patio. Both

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Cindy and Naomi noticed me heading toward them. I was about ten feet away and closing fast. Cindy's demeanor changed from one of laid back to nervousness. The guy didn't see me. He was still looking at Cindy and had his head turned to the side, perpendicular to me.

I walked up to him and kissed him on the cheek.

He didn't know how to react. He quickly leaned back in a defensive position, his right elbow touching the right side of his stomach and his hand open in a weak handshake position while uttering a mumbled "uh hi".

Both Cindy and Naomi opened their mouth in surprise, both shocked and impressed with my bravado. I had sex with both of them that night.

The next month, it was reported to me that Naomi was pregnant. I didn't know if it was mine, but not willing to take a chance, I sent Manny over there to kick her in the stomach, giving her a miscarriage.

# Chapter 10

**I**t was late night after another debauchery-filled evening of partying. The time was 3:49 AM early Friday. I was sleeping but was woken by the sound of the TV blaring in the other room. I walked out to see Manny sitting on the couch intently staring at the TV. He had it on a religious-type channel.

I heard the man on TV say, “This is my Bible. I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do.”

“Manny!” I yelled. “What crap are you watching and why do you have the volume so loud!?”

“Okay, okay!” Manny yelled back. “This show takes me back to the days I used to go to church with my dad. It’s funny stuff.”

“Well, it’s garbage!” I yelled. “Turn it down!”

Manny lowered the volume. I went back to bed.

A week later, I was in the house by myself and saw a book laying on the dining room table. The author was Noel Snowsteen. The title of the book was *Your Perfect Life Now*. I opened the book and realized it must have been Manny who ordered it after watching that religious show.

The table of contents listed “Ten Tenets of Love” and then there was a chapter devoted to each one. The first chapter was titled “God Wants You to be Rich”, the second was “God Wants You to

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Have Good Health”, the third was “God Wants the World to Love You” and on and on. I was bored so I decided to read some of it. I ended up reading the entire book.

After reading the book, my take-aways were: 1) that discontentment was encouraged; 2) that God was powerless until you gave him power through your thoughts and words; 3) that sin was minimized and renamed in every conceivable way; and 4) there was only trivial mention of Jesus. I didn't even know it was a Jesus book until the fifth chapter where he was mentioned. So, this is what Christianity is. OK, I can get on board with that. Made sense to me. I had the power myself all along. Like Dorothy at the end of *The Wizard of Oz*. I kind of already knew that.

# Chapter 11

It was March 5th a few years later. Society was just getting back to normal, whatever that was, after the first pandemic, what we ended up calling “lil pan”. In several more years after that, the WHO would declare a second pandemic of the worse strain of COVID yet. The rumor was that this one was set off by the United Nations itself and they had the vaccination made before the strain was even unleashed on the public. But that was still several years away.

Illegal drug sales were skyrocketing. Alex, Harry, Manny, and I pulled in more than \$80,000 last month. We had more money than we knew what to do with. Our four-person crew decided to visit Orlando’s bar district and blow off some steam. Bars, restaurants, and concert venues had reopened again and everyone took full advantage of it.

A night of partying and we were returning home on I-4 Highway a little after 3 AM on a Wednesday. I was in the back seat on the passenger’s side. Manny was in the seat to my left behind the driver, and Alex was in the front passenger’s seat. The three of us were all sleeping. Harry was driving my Lexus.

I woke up and glanced around. We seemed to be going pretty fast. Alex was snoring in the front seat and Manny was sound asleep to my left. Harry was wide awake staring forward with intensity, both hands tightly gripping the steering wheel. I looked at the

speedometer. It said 157 miles per hour.

“Harry, you’re going a little fast, aren’t you?” I asked.

“We’re going 2.6 miles every minute,” he said with fervor as he turned his head toward me.

The next thing I remember, I was in the back of an ambulance. I must have been pretty banged up as the paramedic looked down on me with dread and said, “You need God, man.”

I went in and out of consciousness for a while and then came back to attention and was standing on my feet in a hospital room wearing a patient gown. A short Asian doctor who couldn’t have been much more than five feet tall entered the room. I asked him what happened? He ignored me. Very rude, I thought.

Then I turned to my left and saw he was headed to a patient. There was a black nurse standing by the patient’s bed with her back to me. She was about five foot three with a nice, fat, round ass and red highlights in her hair. Very pretty I thought. She turned to me and I saw her name tag said “Tyra”.

I tried repeatedly to get their attention, but no one was reacting to me. They were too busy with the patient they were working on.

“This man was brought in with no vitals eleven minutes ago,” Tyra told the doctor. “There’s been no response to the shock of the defibrillator.”

“We’ve lost him,” the doctor said.

I walked closer to see who they were operating on. The patient’s body had several large patches on his chest with wires connected to a machine. I looked over the head of the short doctor to see the patient’s face.

It was me. Wait, how can this be? I’m standing here, how can I be over there? Why are they acting like I’m invisible? I must be dreaming, I thought.

That’s when I heard a voice from the hallway say, “Johnny, come this way.”

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Just follow me,” the voice said.

“Where are we going?”

“Follow me—you’ll see.”

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We walked all the way to the end of the hallway. The voice was just far enough ahead of me that I couldn't see this person, but he kept egging me on. "Just through this door," he said.

I walked through the door. When the door shut behind me, it was dark, the kind of dark when you're in a cave tour and the guide shuts out all the lights. I couldn't even see my hand if I held it right in front of my face. Where was I? I had no idea. But I still heard the voice.

"Come on, we're not there yet," he said.

It seemed like we were walking forever and he just continued telling me, "Just a little further—you'll see."

I started to hear voices behind me. Low, guttural whispers, but also soft laughter. It sounded like they were making fun of my ass which I imagined they could see through my hospital gown even though there was no light.

There were more and more voices behind me. They started talking louder. Their laughter sounded sinister.

"I'm not going any further," I said and sat down so that they couldn't keep making fun of my butt.

That's when they all started attacking me. It was like being stung by scorpions. I couldn't tell if something was biting me or I was being pricked multiple times by sharp tiny knives. It was the most intense pain I had ever felt and I wondered: how could this be so painful if it was a dream?

That's when I remembered the paramedic's words: "You need God, man."

If there was a God, then I needed to have him come to my rescue immediately. I didn't know what to say. I knew nothing about God. I never believed in any higher power before. Never seriously considered it. They kept stinging me. I was in agony.

For some reason, maybe because I didn't know anything else that related to God, I started singing the only song I knew that talked about God.

"God bless America,  
Land that I love.  
Stand beside her and guide her.

Part 1: Johnny and His Crew

Through the night with the light from above.”

The voices were agitated. They were clearly angered by my song, but they continued attacking me.

I saw just a speck of a light in the distance. It was very minute and far away, but the darkness was so thick that if you lit a match a hundred miles away, you would be able to see it.

“There’s no God,” the voices said.

That just made me sing even louder.

“From the mountains...to the prairies.

To the oceans white with foam.

God bless America, my home sweet home.

God bless America, my home sweet home.”

The pain started to subside. The light was getting bigger. It looked like it was coming toward me.

The voices started to run away.

My eyes were shut, but then the light was so bright that it was still bleeding through my eyelids. I had to turn my head away.

Then I felt the most intense electric shock and was suddenly back on that operating table.

The hospital room was empty. A different nurse walked by the door and turned her head and ran in to me.

“He’s got vitals!” she yelled out to the hallway.

The short Asian doctor entered.

“What happened?” I asked.

“You were dead for more than 30 minutes,” the doctor replied. “I’ve never seen a patient come back from that. How do you feel?”

“Like I could use some oxys,” I replied. “Can you send Tyra in here with some?”

The nurse and doctor looked at each other puzzled.

“Tyra’s shift ended,” the nurse said. “She left 20 minutes ago. How did you know her?”

I never made sense of this experience. I chalked it up to a really bad dream. Then I thought to myself, where’s my Lexus?

## Chapter 12

I made it to my next stop still carrying my cargo, but was severely out of breath. I worked out, but mostly with weights. I never used to do any cardio at all, let alone sprinting at top speed traversing 500 yards with a heavy parcel. I knew I had a few minutes to catch my breath before the next drone passed. I looked at my stopwatch. Nine minutes to wait. I missed Lori. I wished I was home holding her right now. I thought about the second time I saw her.

“o-Yay Alex-ay!” I said. “ou-Yay eady-ray o-tay et-gay ome-say easy-yay es-cee-yay oints-pay?”

Alex opened the door to let me in.

“ell-Hay eah-yay!” he replied. “I’m-yay ust-jay over-yay 2,700, and-yay eed-nay ess-lay an-thay 300 ore-may o-tay et-gay e-thay eluxe-day apartment-yay.”

He then added, “e-Thay apartment-yay omplex-cay a-yay ouple-cay ocks-blav orth-nay as-hay units-yay ith-way ent-vay access-yay.”

He walked me to the corner and dropped the silence walls.

“Where’s Lori?” I asked.

“She’s staying covered at Mom’s ‘til things cool off,” he answered. “FRIEND has been by four times this week looking for her. She needs to lay low for now.”

“Covered” means covering yourself with electricity fabric.

It was a way to temporarily allow someone to avoid surveillance in apartment units. It didn't work outside the unit and required at minimum a Cirmon Level 1 Device. But with a Cirmon 1, an EF only gave you one hour. You had to rotate between at least two different EF's by changing to a different one every hour and then back again. This method was annoying and made sleeping sporadic. My SCS was high enough to get a Cirmon 4 which allows the wearer to sleep like a baby all night long as it only needed to be changed once every 24 hours. I was making SCS by renting it out to others who couldn't afford one because I didn't need it at the time.

"I have an EF I'm not using," Alex said. "So, I'm going to deliver it to Mom's to give to Lori. Can we add that as a stop on your Automated Travel?"

My SCS allowed me to AT with as many as four people for up to two hours per day. If only two people, then you could AT four hours and if one then you could get eight hours of AT per day. By this time, the government started taking control of all transportation. Except for the mega-rich, no one owned their own vehicles anymore. You didn't need to. If you followed their "rules" and built up enough SCS points, you could get around. But for us freedom was severely limited, and of course using AT meant you were tracked wherever you went. The good thing was that the AT vehicles weren't wired for sound monitoring inside, so we took advantage of that oversight sometimes and spoke freely.

"How many hours of AT have you used today?" Alex asked.

"Just the fifteen minutes it took me to get here," I answered. "Yes, we can add the extra stop."

We traveled the AT along the approved roads for twenty minutes and arrived at Alex's mother's unit. Alex's mom gave him a digital key to access when she wasn't home. Alex used the DK to open the door.

"ori-Lay !" Alex belted out when we entered.

"I-yay ought-thay ori-Lay idn't-day eak-spay ig-Pay atin-Lay?" I asked.

"e's-Shay earning-lay ast-fay," Alex replied.

Beautiful and smart, I thought. Of course, it wasn't *that* difficult to learn Pig Latin. Speaking it fluently just took practice.

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Lori entered cloaked in an EF.

“eat-Gray iming-tay!” Lori exclaimed. “I-yay eed-nay o-tay ange-chay EFs-yay.”

Alex handed her the new garment and Lori noticed that I was there too.

“i-Hay ohnny-Jay. ood-Gay o-tay ee-say ou-yay again-yay,” she said, smiling at me.

“I-yay ought-thay ou-yay idn't-day eak-spay ig-Pay atin-Lay?” I ask.

“I'm-yay arter-smay an-thay ou-yay ink-thay.”

I was impressed. She walked into the corner of the unit to change EF's and dropped silence walls.

I quickly put on my Cyber Eyes. Alex noticed and gave me a snide smile, shaking his head in a gesture that let me know he disapproved but wasn't going to do anything about it.

The CE's allowed you to see through silence walls. I watched Lori change EF's. She was naked and I saw her profile. I had to find a way to get her in bed with me.

I remembered that Alex described her as a follower of a banned religion. I heard the two voices. One was saying, “Get the 7,500 SCS points. That's 3,500 plus another 4,000 if she had any kind of religious literature. But the other voice I heard said, “No Johnny, you don't want to do that.” This one was faint and foreign to me.

I never had a moral quandary like this before; nevertheless, I decided to forgo the points for now. I tried to appease the voice that was thirsty for points by assuring it that I could always get them later.

## Chapter 13

**T**wo femoral shaft fractures, with both C2 and C3 spinal nerves displaced, and I was in a wheelchair. The doctor said I would need it for at least three months. I wasn't happy with Harry, but he did get three cracked ribs when the airbag pushed a Bud Lite bottle into his chest. It was always easy for me to get him to laugh, which was something I did frequently over the next couple months, as that gave him a jolting pain. Plus, Harry caught a DUI charge and spent the night in jail.

Nothing happened to Manny and Alex, probably because they were drunk and sound asleep at the time. We never knew what we ran into, but my Lexus was totaled. Lucas was overly vexed that everything was in his name and on his insurance. He was paranoid that he was going to get sued, but by whom, I do not know as the road was empty at the time.

"Everything is in my name," Lucas said. "The registration, insurance, this lease, everything! I don't know what to do!"

"Relax Lucas, you're overreacting," I responded. "I will foot the bill for any increased insurance rates. Here—take this." I handed him five crisp \$100 bills.

"No, no, I need more than that," he protested. "\$500 is not enough!"

OK, he had now crossed the line. I kept my poker face and feigned empathy while internally scheming on ways to get rid of

him.

I had a problem. His mother would call him every night at 7:30 PM like clockwork, so making him disappear was not an option. His mother knew our address and the last thing I wanted was the po-po visiting. But then I remembered that he did love deep sea fishing. The rest of the crew and I did too, but we weren't going with him.

"Lucas, you've always wanted to go to the Bahamas," I said. "What if I paid the fare for you to stay there for a week and fish? Would that make you feel better?"

On the inside, I was fuming. Lucas thought about it for a second.

"Can I bring my mom?" he asked.

"No Lucas, just you—take it or leave it," I retorted.

"OK. I'm in," Lucas said with an improved demeanor. "I'll get my passport from my safety deposit box tomorrow."

The next Thursday, I asked Lucas whether he told his mom about his Bahamas trip.

"Yes, of course," he said. "I told her I would call her as soon as I arrived."

We never booked his Carnival Cruise, but he did get to go on a boat ride early that morning. Rohypnol takes about 30 minutes to take effect and then lasts for ten to twelve hours. We didn't need that much time. Alex and Manny were carrying Lucas's sedated body into the garage to load it in the trunk when I rolled my wheelchair to the entrance.

"Make sure you get his passport and the \$500!" I yelled.

Three people went on a boat ride that morning, and only two returned. The lifeless body of Lucas Brasi, tied to a cement block, was thrown overboard about one mile off the coast. I was a little upset about the situation because we now needed to move from this address, plus my newly-acquired passport expired in just seven months. I thought to myself, we need to replace Lucas with another stooge, and this time make sure our lackey doesn't have a protective mother.

# Chapter 14

The second Coronavirus hit several years later and we loved it. The mandatory stay-at-home orders across the country, even in the small towns, were enforced this time by police, National and State Guards, and military in some areas. Some states started employing drone surveillance, which reported into authorities those seen out and about.

Of course, addicts still had to have their drugs, and this situation encouraged desperation. People discovered creative ways to cope. Depression was the rule of the day. Suicide was rampant. Drug sales were off the charts. There's nothing worse than being stuck at home with your annoying family members while sober. We pulled in more than \$90,000 in the first seven days after Pandemic 2. Of course, a few short years after that, \$90,000 would be meaningless, but for now we were living high on the hog. People were supposedly dying in the cities even faster than before, but like the first pandemic a few years earlier, we weren't so sure it was real.

The World Health Organization and the United Nations announced a vaccination within six months of the breakout, developed by a special medical research faction within the WHO itself. It was strongly encouraged that all countries make this vaccination mandatory and be administered to all of its citizens within a year. Most countries adopted the global resolution, as they were thankful the UN and WHO developed the vaccine so quickly.

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The United States was one of several countries that resisted. Riots and fighting broke out in the streets. Anti-maskers and conspiracy theorists (who were probably onto something) on one side, and vacuous followers who just went along with whatever their government told them on the other. There was little in between. It became a crime to be caught walking around without a mask, even outside.

Many were arrested, and many others had bigger charges because they resisted arrest. The United States was far from united. It was complete chaos. The police force couldn't keep up. What a perfect time for professional criminals such as ourselves!

But I know a scam when I see one too. I can tell when people are lying and can easily sift through bull. We needed to stay at home for six months so that the hospitals weren't overrun. Umm, OK. That was a lie.

Two of my seven girlfriends at the time were nurses. One worked for Ithaca General Hospital and the other Tenet Healthcare. The hospitals were empty. Tyra was making choreographed TikTok videos with the other nurses and even some of the doctors participated. Plus, no one was dying of the flu anymore because everything was labeled Coronavirus 2. She said Medicare reimburses thousands more when this latest pandemic is cited on the death cert. Last Tuesday, the news reported that there was a shark attack on a surfer who was raced to the hospital and bled out and died. Tyra said she saw the cause of death was listed as Covid 2. It was an admirable insurance scam and was the inspiration and impetus for our venturing into white-collar crime.

We also liked the anonymity that masks provided. These masks were heavy duty too, very thick-coated fabric, issued by the World Health Organization's special medical group itself. Dark sunglasses, a hat, and a mask—there has never been a better time to be a criminal. We decided to expand our enterprise.

Harry and I were stuck at home rehabbing for another month and Alex and Manny were making all the deliveries. I didn't like that fact as I wanted to distance ourselves from the actual sales. We needed a few more Lucases.

Manny had a good idea. He suggested he and Alex go to the

parks with Salvation Army shirts, hats, and nametags. They would approach the homeless while holding clipboards offering \$20 to anyone who was willing to take a thirty-question survey under the guise that the Salvation Army wanted that data to determine where to open their next facility.

I don't think we ever had one person who rejected us. In those thirty questions we collected all the data necessary—legal name, date and place of birth, Social Security number, arrest history, driving history, medical history, nearest living relative or friend, etc. Depending on their answers, we put them in one of three categories. I came up with the categories, and bounced ideas off Alex and Manny. Harry wasn't the best decisionmaker, so he didn't participate in the discussion, but said he would go along with whatever we came up with.

The first category was someone who had a valid driver's license, no living relative or friend, was not a felon, and looked like we could clean them up to make them look presentable. Having someone who could check all four boxes was rare, but if they could, then that could be our new drug mule. They were uncommon, but after three weeks of these interviews, Alex and Manny had found two that qualified.

Most didn't have a valid driver's license. If they had no one who would care if they turned up missing, and had a clean health record, then regardless of criminal record or how presentable they were, we took them to Baystar to get a license.

Baystar was a local non-profit in Ithaca that did all of the work to get homeless persons birth certificates and driver's licenses. We would donate \$100 each time we brought someone down to them. We bought a box of W2's from Office Depot and typed their name and Social Security number into the form, listing last year's compensation as a low \$2,892 or whatever was commensurate with their appearance. Baystar was able to use the W2 in lieu of a Social Security card to verify their SSN. When their license was issued, they qualified for our insurance scam. We found twenty-eight of these. This was a long-con, but very profitable.

The third category was one that also needed Baystar's assistance in obtaining a driver's license, but we did not care about

## *The Uncovering*

medical or criminal history or if someone would notice if they were missing. But they had to be able to be cleaned up and presentable. This was a candidate for our mortgage con. We found seventy-four of these.

We looked for homes to rent in the Ithaca hood. We could get a four-bedroom house for \$1,200 or less per month. We rented four of these. Once the lease was signed, we moved seven of our insurance scam stooges into each home. We had them complete medical tests. Seven of the twenty-eight failed their medicals. We kicked those out. This left us with twenty-one for which we could sign up for key man insurance policies.

A key man insurance policy is one that can be taken out for an executive in the company with the company as the beneficiary. I used Lucas's ID to form twenty-one LLCs with Lucas as the Managing Member of each and a different stooge as a key man for each LLC. We created fake W2's showing their income as \$700,000 or more with the LLC as their employer. We then applied for key man insurance and made the payments for two years. At the end of the two years, we put a large block of dry ice under each of our victim's beds and closed the vents so that the air wouldn't circulate. This caused our insured to inhale large amounts of the gas CO<sub>2</sub>, which displaces oxygen in the body, leading to death. The autopsy report always listed the death as being due to natural causes. Two weeks later, we received the death cert and had our insurance claim processed. The policies were all for at least \$500,000 and some were over a million.

We tried to use different insurance companies, but we did get a little sloppy and there were some duplicates. The most important ingredient is how agreeable the adjuster was in evaluating our claim. If they were asking too many of the wrong questions or if they accused us of wrongdoing, then we had a problem we needed to fix. The first time this happened, we sent Harry to find the adjuster's car in his work parking lot and slid underneath to cut a small hole in the brake line causing a slow leak; then he followed the adjuster onto the interstate, pushing him forward and faster with his bumper and running him into the car ahead.

This type of disposal was a problem because one of the cars

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behind Harry must have recorded his plate. Detectives were then sent to one of our homes in the slums and pulled the henchman out whose name was attached to the registration and he was arrested and charged with attempted vehicular homicide. This was bothersome because we had three life insurance policies on our underling totaling \$1.4 million and to make matters worse, the adjuster survived the accident. This was way too sloppy. Additionally, we were also having a problem with the dry ice method. After the second death in the same house, the other stooges no longer trusted us. We needed a more discrete method of disposal. That's when we discovered cyanide.

Cyanide is so effective in killing that the government uses it in lethal injections as a means of execution. The autopsy report always listed natural causes because one would need to specifically test for cyanide poisoning in order to detect it. We had two different techniques. We would place it in a spray bottle and walk in the opposite direction on the street of our intended victim, pretending to sneeze on him, or we would put it in food. Cyanide kills in two to five minutes. We bailed our patsy out, took him to McDonalds, and ended up being paid on two of his policies. The remaining all had a pizza party and died in one fell swoop. We decided it was easier to kill them all together at once and place them inside freezers for storage. The autopsy report would list time of death as any date we wanted. All we had to do was defrost them.

After twenty-nine months, we were successful in having claims paid on eighteen of our policies for a total of \$12,600,000. The three adjusters who wouldn't pay the claim were sneezed on.

We sat at a computer individually with all seventy-four candidates for our mortgage con and obtained their credit reports from Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Most of the seventy-four had credit that was not salvageable, but there were twenty-five who had a thin credit file with maybe some collections but nothing major. We added them as an authorized user to Lucas's credit card and got them a couple secured credit cards. This typically gave them a score above 620 in six months.

We had all of our twenty-five lackeys shower and get their hair cut and then we had them fitted for a suit. We kept them in

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isolation for twenty-four hours to make sure that they didn't drink any alcohol that day. Then we sent them out to lease a single-family home but this time in the high-end market. We were looking for homes with values in excess of \$1 million and were willing to pay up to \$10,000 per month. On twenty-five homes we had to make deposits of \$250,000 and monthly rent payments of \$125,000 per month. The average home value was just over one million dollars. This \$125k was a big but necessary bite out of our budget.

Once the properties were leased, we recorded a fake deed transfer from the real property owner to our stooge and then recorded fake mortgage satisfactions in official records, to show the public that the properties were free and clear. We then applied for mortgage loans to refinance the homes in our stooge's name. We used a shotgun approach and timed the closings so that they all closed within a few days. The loan-to-value was typically 50% which means on a one-million-dollar home, we were able to refinance for \$500,000 and using this approach we were able to get multiple loans on the same house. We usually were able to get three, which on twenty-five homes we pocketed roughly \$37,500,000.

My life of crime was becoming very profitable. I was on top of the world and felt untouchable. That was until Florida's Bureau of Financial Investigations put me on their radar.

## Chapter 15

**W**e had tens of millions in the bank and our balances were growing with no end in sight, but it was difficult getting the money into our hands. You can't just walk into the bank, close your account, and ask the teller to give you \$5 million in cash. And mobile transfers that high weren't possible either, as online accounts had restrictions too. Plus, they have Suspicious Activity Reports they are required to file for any cash transactions above \$10,000. To avoid SARs we had to limit cash withdrawals to less than \$10,000 and only a couple a week max at each bank. At this rate, this was going to take us five years to drain an account that had \$5 million. We needed a more efficient method.

Posing as the stiff Lucas Brasi, I hired Bob Shapiro at the law office of Cochrane Shapiro to help us navigate our criminal enterprise. Bob was a criminal defense lawyer and a bankruptcy specialist. The first time we met, he said, "The number one question I get asked at cocktail parties is, if your clients are all broke then how do you get paid?" to which he enthusiastically replies, "Cash!" I liked him—kindred spirits I thought.

Using Lucas's ID for every transaction was creating heat and unwanted attention. The Florida Bureau of Financial Investigations had assigned an auditor named William Deloitte. I knew because William sent Lucas a subpoena for deposition. I agreed to the meeting with Mr. Deloitte but at the appointed time, I sent Manny

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there to sneeze cyanide on him. Deloitte was out of our hair, but we knew FBI would soon assign a replacement auditor. And to make matters worse, we also learned that Lucas's mother hired a private investigator and he was poking around looking for the whereabouts of Lucas. For these reasons, I felt Lucas's identity had used up its usefulness and was now a liability.

We needed a replacement for Lucas quickly. Someone with no relatives who had similar facial features to me, the height needed to be close, the eye color needed to be exact, and the hair could be any color because I could color mine if needed.

We found three matches and, six weeks later, I had three ID's. On any given day I could be either Kevin Mitnick, Peter Warbeck, or Martin Guerre. I had Kevin, Peter, and Martin each hire a separate law office and form four different shell companies. One lawyer thought I was Kevin, another lawyer thought I was Peter, and a third lawyer thought I was Martin. I had twelve shell companies between these three new identities. We used them to drain Lucas's accounts without causing suspicion before the Bureau of Financial Investigations froze them.

The money left Lucas's accounts and then was passed around from shell company to shell company, eventually siphoning \$4.7 million to buy an eight-bedroom beachfront estate on Ambergris Caye, Belize's largest island. Foreign nationals can own property in Belize. We thought it would be a good investment for Martin. The Law Office of Cicero & Thurgood handled the paperwork and details.

From there, we decided to focus our efforts on life insurance fraud because killing with cyanide and freezing the bodies provided a high yield with the least maintenance. Manny and Harry drove two vans through Florida, and even into Georgia and Alabama, to find enough homeless people to exploit. We would get their driver's licenses and then had medical evaluations done and then when complete and we had the policies in place, we would throw them a pizza party with a fatal ending. After that, Manny and Harry were back on the street to find another group of 20 to 30 people.

We had so many vagabond popsicles to keep frozen that we purchased two restaurants in Lucas's name which we kept closed for

business with no customers, other than the ones in the freezer. In hindsight, we should have purchased them under the alias of either Peter, Martin, or Kevin. Realizing this, we immediately had Martin's attorney arrange the purchase of both restaurants from Lucas to get them out of his name.

We had more than two-hundred bodies frozen and waiting for us to reap the claims. Alec Roberts was the first policy that came to fruition and when we went to retrieve Alec's body, we learned that Harry had thrown away all the labels that Manny made to place on the bodies. Harry said he didn't understand what the labels were for.

We couldn't tell one from another. This was a mess. We did have their ID's though and Alex, Manny, and Harry started their search for frozen Alec and also to attach corresponding nametags to all of the other bodies.

I had dinner reservations that night with the Recht twins and was racing to get home in my Ferrari F90 Stradale when my phone rang with caller ID listed as 'The Law Office of Cicero & Thurgood'. Marcus Cicero was Martin's attorney who handled the Belize deal. He also was retained to transfer the two restaurants from Lucas. We quickly needed to get them out of Lucas's name and it had to look like a normal real estate sale. Coincidentally, I was driving by his office when I received the call.

"Martin, you need to come in to my office right away," said attorney Marcus.

"Like right now, right away?" I asked.

"Yes. Right now," replied Marcus.

I had just passed his office and did a quick U-turn and in so doing, accidentally squealed the tires. I was calculating how much time I could afford to kill before I would be late for dinner with the Recht twins. Ann and Claire were identical twins over six feet tall and I was salivating to conquer them simultaneously. I entered the law office and informed the receptionist of my arrival and that I was in a hurry.

"I don't have much time to waste," I said.

"You're next on the list. You are Marcus's last appointment for the day," replied Jane Hathaway, the secretary, an old crone who

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obviously had been in the job way too long.

That's when I met Anthony Fausty, the cockiest person I had ever met in my life. Anthony was on another level of arrogance and swagger which even exceeded mine and was something I had previously considered an impossibility.

The secretary had stepped away from her desk when Anthony strutted in, sat down in the lobby on a chair which was directly across from me, and Marcus's office was behind Anthony twenty yards on the opposite side.

Anthony had blonde hair and was clean shaven. He was handsome in that classic old Hollywood way, and moved with the confidence of a prima donna athlete who was spoiled and got whatever he wanted with relative ease. He appeared to be of either Scandinavian or German descent.

"Are you next to meet Marcus?" Anthony asked.

"Yes," I answered.

Anthony pulled out a \$500 bill, something I had never seen before, and held it in front of him with both hands on the sides stretching the bill out.

"I'll bet you \$500 that you're not."

Knowing that the old receptionist informed me I was next and was also Marcus's last appointment of the day, I accepted the wager. Marcus emerged from his office and walked towards me in the direction of Anthony's back. When he spotted me in the lobby, he gestured my way.

"Martin, come into my office," Marcus said.

I stood up and reached for Anthony's \$500 bill, but Anthony released the bill with his left hand and quickly pulled it away to his right as he stood up and turned around slowly to face Marcus.

When Marcus spotted Anthony, he immediately said, "Martin, wait a few minutes." I looked at Anthony perplexed, turning both my palms up in a 'what just happened' gesture.

"Rules for thee. But none for me," said Anthony. And then he was ushered into Marcus's office.

When the old crone Hathaway returned, she explained who Anthony was. Anthony was the nephew of William Greats. William Greats was one of the few trillionaires in the world.

# Chapter 16

Marcus's office door opened and Anthony flounced out, walking with less oomph than he had when he entered. He headed for the exit while dialing his phone and still managed to flaunt a supercilious smile as he passed by. He started talking to the other party on the line and exited the building.

"Martin, sorry for the delay," Marcus said as he emerged from his office and apologetically waved me in.

"Ann and Claire are waiting for me," I said with a hint of contempt.

"Huh?" Marcus said. My question caused him only a moment of pause before he continued. "We have a problem on the restaurants. This guy Lucas Brasi you're buying them from is under indictment. I know because the presiding magistrate judge is my frat brother and golfing buddy."

"Do you know this guy Lucas?" he asked.

For an instant, I wondered if he had just called me Lucas and then immediately shook that thought off and lied.

"No, never met him."

"Good," Marcus said, "because he's in serious trouble. The crimes that are alleged are so incredibly far-fetched that they would be too unimaginable even for a Hollywood movie."

"What type of crimes?" I asked.

"He defrauded dozens of banks out of tens of millions,"

replied Marcus. “He used vagrants to obtain multiple mortgages on homes they did not own. We need to pull the plug on this and get the earnest money deposit back before it is seized by the feds and possibly used as restitution. You don’t want to be tangled up with this guy at all.”

My first thought was that I knew there was a reason why I stopped the mortgage scam, which was then followed by a mental image of the police finding more than 200 frozen corpses. I exited the law office and was mulling over some type of solution when I turned the corner and got a glimpse of my car.

When you own a \$700,000 car, you are careful to park it in an area where there are no other cars. The last thing you want is some rust bucket dinging your door. I saw that my car had another one parked next to it. The license plate said “NO RULES”. Anthony was standing with his back to me just outside the driver’s door of a Koenigsegg Trevita, a sports car that retails for over \$2.3 million. He was still talking on the phone, then hung up, turned around, and noticed me.

“Sorry you didn’t win the \$500. I know you need it driving a piece of crap like that,” he jeered.

“I’d smoke that jalopy even if you put me behind the wheel of a Buick,” I retorted.

Anthony responded to the challenge by saying, “Rock Creek bridge is closed” and he pointed in the northeast direction.

“Do you think you can have that clunker towed over there?” he said, then laughed and opened his door to climb in.

I hurriedly got into my car, started the engine, and backed up just seconds after Anthony did the same, quickly cutting him off when he stopped lest he would have hit me. I then stuck my left hand out the driver’s window while flipping him off and then roasted the tires as I left the parking lot.

Rock Creek bridge spanned a distance of two miles. I headed in that direction and noticed that Anthony was right behind me.

We got to the barricades and there was a sign that read “Bridge Closed”. We parked our cars. I got out and moved the barricades, clearing a path for both of us.

## Part 1: Johnny and His Crew

“Can you count to three?” Anthony said in an attempt to belittle me as I returned to my car and shut the driver’s door.

Anthony revved his engine, making a loud, deafening wail. He then shouted through the passenger window “1!” followed by an overly delayed “2!” but then a quicker than expected “3!” as the cheater floored his car a split second before I could.

I accelerated, being thrust back into the seat like a NASA astronaut, quickly shifting gears and going from a dead stop to 65 mph in two and a half seconds, and then reaching 135 mph 5.7 seconds after that. Even at that high speed, Anthony was pulling away from me. His car is marketed as having a top speed of 265 mph.

There must have been something impeding the road as I saw Anthony swerve first to the right and then quickly back left as he slammed on his brakes. I did the same and stopped literally inches from his back bumper. There were people in the road. Anthony had run over someone.

This pedestrian was female and she was completely obliterated. It looked surreal, like someone threw a bucket of blood red paint onto the pavement immediately surrounding the now dead body.

The dead woman was in garb that indicated she was homeless. Anthony was visibly shaken. Her homeless male companion started running away from us. I quickly followed after him and tackled him, holding him to the ground.

“Anthony, come over here!” I yelled.

Anthony stood motionless for a moment, but then started walking towards me, his head held low. He had lost his air of superiority.

“Help me carry him back to the car,” I instructed.

“Why?” Anthony asked with confusion.

“Because I’m trying to save your ass,” I replied. We then carried the homeless guy who was squirming as he tried to shake his arms and legs free from our grip.

I saw there was a 200 ml Jim Beam bottle half empty in his hand. I grabbed it and said “Hold him still” as I walked to my car, reached in the glove box pulling out a Ziploc bag containing four

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roofies of which I dropped two into his bottle of liquor and shook the bottle making them dissolve quickly. I also grabbed a 9mm Smith & Wesson.

I held the gun to his head, forcing our derelict to drink the alcohol. He followed my instructions and then we waited for the drug to take effect. That was the longest 20 minutes of my life. But then he was out. We placed him behind the wheel of Anthony's car and Anthony got in my car and we U-turned and sped away in the direction we came. I took him back to the law office and told him to dial 911 and report his car as having been stolen from the law office's parking lot. Anthony was still visibly shaken but I watched him make the call and then I left.

I had my own problem to deal with—the two restaurants and some 200 plus ice-cold corpses. I drove to the law office of Cochrane Shapiro to see Bob Shapiro. Both Bob and his partner John Cochrane were there. I told them “we need to talk”.

I then explained to both of them that I had been indicted without telling them how I knew, and said when the police question him, that he should tell them that I'm going to surrender myself but asked them to delay it so that I could buy some time.

The two partners looked at me a little puzzled.

“Lucas,” Bob said, addressing me. “I don't know how you would know if there was an indictment, but assuming there was, then what is your plan?”

“To buy some time before I leave town,” I said.

Both Bob and John let out a muffled laugh, shaking their heads slightly in the ‘no’ position left and then right and back again.

“That's not going to work,” John said. “There are too many ways that they can track you down, Lucas.” There was a pause.

“But you're assuming I'm Lucas Brasi,” I said.

They were both dumbfounded, their mouths slightly opened as if they were about to say something, but seemed uncertain. They looked at me and then looked at each other and then back to me again in disbelief.

“I'm a little pressed for time,” I said. “I want you to prepare a release for me to sign, returning the deposit on the restaurants back to the buyer.”

# Chapter 17

I quickly pulled into our home's driveway, brakes screeching, immediately exiting my F90, running to the front door. Harry and Manny were blazing in the living room watching some type of Dr. Seuss cartoon. The living room was filled with smoke and reeked of marijuana. I rushed in.

"We need to move—now!" I said.

Harry and Manny looked at me puzzled as if they didn't understand what I was saying.

"Lucas was indicted. We need to get out of here right now!" I demanded.

"But Uber Eats is on the way," Harry said. "We got McDonald's."

Manny jumped up, coming to his senses quicker than Harry, as usual.

"If you don't move now, you will be in a jail cell in an hour," I said.

"Forget the McDonald's, Harry!" Manny told him.

Manny was already moving to pack up. Harry just stared at me dumbfounded. I continued.

"I'm certain the police are on their way right now. Get your wallets, your passports, and whatever is small that you can throw into a suitcase and load it in the SUV—now! And where's Alex?!"

Harry in a confused daze pointed toward Alex's bedroom.

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The door was shut. I ran to the bedroom door.

“He’s got escorts!” Manny yelled.

As I ran, I heard Harry yelling, “And I was next!”

I barged into Alex’s bedroom. Alex was lying on his back on the bed. The two escorts were sitting on him, facing one another.

The girls looked at me frightened. Alex was preoccupied.

“Sorry to interrupt this party ladies,” I said and then, “Let’s go Alex! Police! Get your license, passport, the cash, jewelry, and anything small that you can fit in a suitcase in less than five minutes and get Harry and Manny into the SUV.” Fortunately, Alex wasn’t high and started moving right away.

We were out of there in seven minutes. I followed their Rolls-Royce Cullinan in my Ferrari. As we turned the corner, exiting the gates of our community with a right turn, looking in my rearview mirror there was a semi-truck directly behind me but then I could see five cop cars turning right into the community as they were just behind the semi. We made it by seconds.

We got a suite at the Ritz-Carlton under Kevin Mitnick and retired to our rooms to regroup and gather our thoughts. Manny and Harry had sobered up.

“Johnny, is it time to go to Belize?” Alex asked.

“Soon,” I said. “But first we need to figure out what to do with the restaurants.”

We brainstormed all night. Manny knew where to get some C4. Blowing them up would be better than having the police find them, but I couldn’t stop thinking about their value. We had an average of one million in policies on each. That was over \$200 million. Plus we needed to keep this money train moving. I thought we would be OK if we were at least able to move some of them into storage somewhere else and then C4 the buildings. It was risky, but where there is risk, there is return.

We looked through the policies and found the fifteen highest that were nearest maturity. Those Top 15 totaled \$28 million. That should be sufficient to tide us over.

The next morning was a bright and hot sunny day. We were eating at Marian’s Café outside on the terrace. I looked at Alex.

“Are you sure you labeled them correctly?” I asked him,

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fearing that we get there and they were either mistagged or missing tags.

“Yes, I did that right,” Alex said. “Look, here’s a map showing exactly where they are.”

“Perfect,” I said.

We had to secure another freezer large enough for the fifteen stiffs. That was going to take us some time and, in the meantime, we couldn’t just load the corpses into the SUV because our investment would dethaw. We needed a temporary move before we could rent some type of warehouse and move in some freezers.

That’s when I heard the sound of a music box in the distance. It was heading towards us, and the high-pitched notes were getting louder. It was "The Mister Softee Jingle", the pedophile national anthem.

I turned to Alex, Harry, and Manny.

“I think I’d like some ice cream.”

## Chapter 18

First it was one mask and you were required to stand six feet apart. Then they required that heavy duty mask issued by the government, and a face shield. A vaccine had become mandatory for anything that involved human contact, especially travel. You needed a vaccine passport which was proof they stuck you with their needle.

Vaccination sites were guarded with heavy-armed military personnel and every needle was serial numbered and matched up to the person who got the vaccine. When you got vaccinated, you got a certified document and were told, “Don’t lose this as you cannot get a replacement.” You are told to wait several minutes to make sure you don’t get an allergic reaction, with a fleet of RNs on site with epi pins ready to stab you if you do.

And even then, you still had to wear your mask and face shield and stand six feet apart. If the vaccine worked, then why are we required to maintain a ‘social distance’ of six feet and still had to wear the masks and shields?

You saw instructions above the restroom sink for how to wash your hands. How much of a moron do you have to be to need to read instructions to wash your hands? It was the beginning of medical tyranny. They were getting us used to following instructions like an automaton. It seemed more like a ritual than sound medical advice. The masks, six feet, washing hands—they

seemed to me to be metaphors. The masks were to shut down your voice. Everyone standing six feet apart was 6 repeated to the nth degree: 66666666. And washing hands ritualistically seemed like you were washing your hands of something, as if to distance yourself from whatever it was they wanted us to distance ourselves.

I wasn't alone in my skepticism. My crew and others felt the same, but most people simply went along with the plan. Had we all stood united together then we would have put an end to this. When anyone on any given day walked into a store without a mask and the store owner told them not to enter the store without one, what would happen to that store if everyone turned around never to return? Most small stores closed anyway because of the crushing stay-at-home orders. Many were arrested for not wearing a mask or for resisting arrest.

We were sitting in the living room of our beachfront house in Belize getting high. It was a typical day. Alex, Manny, and Harry were snorting cocaine off the coffee table.

"Johnny, you want a line?" Harry asked.

"No thanks. Cocaine doesn't make me want to do anything except more cocaine. I'll stick to MDMA," I replied.

Alex jested as he snorted another line, saying, "I don't like cocaine. I just like the way it smells." The three of them laughed.

I flipped through the television channels and stopped on a movie that looked like it took place in Rome's classical era. Everyone was wearing sandals and tunics.

"Oh, I've seen this movie," said Manny. "My dad used to love this one. It's Charlton Heston. A classic!"

There was a guy wearing a cloth robe and something on his head and looked like he was being sentenced as if it was in an outside courtroom.

The Roman governor presiding said, "Why, what evil hath he done?"

The people angrily cried out as one voice, saying, "Let him be crucified."

The governor then took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it."

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Again with the washing of hands. Like the governor was distancing himself from the robed character, but the angry crowd was not. They wanted to be covered in his blood. This was too deep for me. I was high, and changed the channel.

# Chapter 19

I had a sixth grade education, which meant I had zero book-smarts, but there was no one more street savvy than me. I couldn't do math unless you put a dollar sign before the number, but then with a dollar sign added, I would always get the answer right. Somehow this sixth grader was able to get a girlfriend who had a PhD in Quantum Physics. She had just quit working for a company called SERN somewhere in Europe. Her name was Gia.

I met her when she was on vacation in Belize with three of her girlfriends. The four girls were pulled into our group by Alex and Harry. We had chartered a Hatteras M90 Panacera, a 90-foot yacht, and had it parked outside our Belize beachfront house which we purchased with funds we drained from Lucas's accounts. Our attorney was slick enough to obscure ownership by putting it in a trust.

The four girls drank, but the vibe I got from them was that drugs were a no-no, so I never broached the subject. I didn't want to scare them away, so we stuck with alcohol. It's a good thing that I wasn't zooted as I'm certain if I was partying, I wouldn't have followed anything she had to say, and she had a lot of crazy things to say.

Her former company, SERN, was heavily involved in the origins of the universe and nuclear research. SERN is straight up eerie. The SERN logo is comprised of three 6's at angles, so their

logo is 666. On the way into work every day, she walked by a two-meter-tall statue of a dancing Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction. A plaque alongside the statue explains that Lord Shiva danced the Universe into existence, moves it, and will eventually destroy it. The metaphor relates the cosmic dance of the Nataraj with the modern study of the 'cosmic dance' of subatomic particles.

In physics, there are predictable laws of nature, but quantum physics focuses on the smallest sub-atomic level. At that level, experiments demonstrate that a randomness exists and things aren't predictable. SERN has a large Hadron Collider buried 100 meters underground and extending as a circle twenty-seven kilometers long. They race tiny subatomic particles in opposite directions at the speed of light, trying to create collisions. The high velocity collisions create 'dark matter'.

Only five percent of the universe is comprised of matter, the other 95% is dark matter. Matter is something physical, something real. Dark matter is the glue that holds matter together. Unlike matter which is stable, dark matter is unstable in its natural state and if not contained, it is volatile. In creating dark matter, the scientists at SERN are attempting to destroy what comes together but for the purpose of recreating and finding out what brought it into existence.

The famous physicist Stephen Hawking likened what SERN was doing to Pandora's Box. Once it's opened, you can't put it back. When the high velocity collisions occurred and dark matter was created, they would always be accompanied by paranormal activity. Gia and her co-workers would see apparitions and ghosts inside the collider when the dark matter was created. Some of her co-workers were certain the scientists were attempting to open portals to Hell. It became too weird for her, so she quit.

I wondered, if these scientists believed there was no God then why do they have Shiva dancing out front and why is their logo a 666? Made me think of the six feet social distancing.

"Give me another Crown and sugar-free Redbull," I said.

## Chapter 20

**M**y crew decided they wanted to go Marlin fishing and had heard the Florida Keys was the place to go. So, we chartered a small plane from Belize, leaving the girls behind. They didn't want to go anyway. But, for guys like us, there's nothing like being strapped in a fighting chair with a 300-plus pound Blue Marlin hooked on the line. It's a 30 minute or longer fight laced with pure adrenaline and fun. Just what we needed.

When we got to the Belize airport, the officials there wouldn't let us board the plane without proof that we were vaccinated. I didn't want the vaccine and had heard stories of people dying shortly thereafter, but the news played that down. I always maintained that if you don't watch the news then you're uninformed, and if you do watch the news, you're misinformed. We were being lied to or at minimum we were not being told the whole story; nevertheless, I didn't see how we could avoid the needle, so we all got jabbed in the arm. I would later regret this decision.

The plane was small and was easily pushed around like balloons the entire trip. Our pilot was a little guy who looked like Tattoo from a late 1970s television show, *Fantasy Island* (another show my mom and I enjoyed on the old Cozi TV app), and on most every flight, someone would remind him of his resemblance. His native language was Yucatec Maya which none of us could

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understand, but he did know a few words in English from watching *Fantasy Island* himself. Whenever we would hit a pocket of air and the plane's wings got bumped around by the wind then he would say "Boss deh plane! Deh plane!" and he would laugh. I felt like walking up there and smacking him, but held back. I didn't want to be arrested for assault. Tattoo was lucky that day.

When we got to Key West, we chartered a large deep-sea fishing boat. The Captain was a mysterious character, but he seemed competent enough. Alex and I had a friendly wager with Harry and Manny to see who could reel in the largest Marlin. Alex and I were in the bridge with the Captain who was behind the wheel and Harry and Manny went first. They were both in the stern, with Harry strapped into the chair and Manny standing by his side.

I opened a Bud Light and sat back and relaxed. They weren't having much luck at all. Fished for 30 minutes and got nothing.

Several beers later, I heard some commotion in the back of the boat. Sounds like they may have hooked one. Then I hear the first gunshot. BANG! And then twenty seconds later another two. BANG! BANG!

I expected to see panic in the Captain's eyes, but he just turned to me and said, "You might want to help out your friends back there." He was wearing a silver cross necklace that glinted the sun in my eyes.

I assured him it was nothing and I ventured back to see why we heard shots fired. I looked down from the rear of the bridge and Harry was strapped into the chair and had hooked one—albeit not very large. Manny was worried about losing the bet, as Harry was struggling to reel this fish in. So he was trying to shoot the fish with a .44 Magnum each time it jumped. I threw the nearly full can of Bud Light at that idiot Manny. It was a direct hit on the back of his head. He immediately said "OW!" while reaching his hand behind his head to protect himself from any further projectiles. He lowered and turned his head to see me.

"Listen retard, put the gun away now!" I yelled.

"OK boss!" Manny said and he complied but was still holding the back of his head. When he had put the gun away with his other hand, he looked on the ground to see what hit him and

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spotted the beer can. He bent over to pick it up, realized that it still had some beer, and chugged what remained. Manny was a constant source of lulz.

They were still struggling to pull in the Marlin, but then soon their line broke. All was lost.

“Doesn’t look like we’re having much success with Marlin today,” I said.

Harry and Manny took a break and sat to drink some more beers and chill in the center seating area of the boat.

The captain then turned toward me and looked directly in my eye.

“You’ll find better luck if you sit in the seat and shift a little starboard with your line,” he said to me as calmly as can be.

I didn’t see what difference it could make since we were trolling, but I took his advice, sat in the fighting seat at the back of the boat, and held the pole a little more to my left, oriented to the aft of the boat, which would be the starboard side as the Captain suggested. Within seconds, my line got hit massively. A giant Marlin was hooked, and I struggled to reel it in.

“Alex! Come back here!”

Alex ran back and made sure I was strapped in solidly to the chair. Harry and Manny came back to watch the fight.

“Woah!” we all exclaimed as the monster jumped out of the water. The sword alone looked two feet long. A massive fish!

The captain just guided the boat steadily, his broad smile beaming as he turned slightly back. He didn’t look all the way, but it appeared to me he knew what was going on.

Forty-five minutes later, Alex, Harry, and Manny helped haul in, net, and hold a gigantic female blue Marlin, over eight feet long and weighing in at 545 pounds. The biggest fish by far I’d ever caught.

When we returned to our hotel, we showered and then headed to the bar district in Marathon. We were walking through the streets downtown searching for a good bar when we reached a lively portion of the city that had balconies draped with rainbow flags and same sex partners showing affection, and then we realized we were walking through the gay portion of the city. It didn’t bother

me at all. You should be with whoever makes you happy.

But about a block ahead I saw there was a conflict brewing. I saw the liquid contents of a plastic cup dumped on a street preacher holding a banner which said, among other things, "Homosexuality leads to Hell". They were clearly not well-received by the LGBTQ community and I wondered why these Jesus freaks didn't understand that what they were doing was not working. It was just the opposite, as they were alienating the crowd. I saw a woman about five foot three with curly gray hair and oversized glasses dressed as a priest with a white collar. I listened to the conversation.

"Why are these people angry?" Priest Lady asked.

"Some of them..." the Street Preacher started answering "it's because of the amplification; others it's because of..." He paused as he pointed his finger at someone and continued.

"...this lady clearly said it's the message, so it's not even the amplification, it's the message."

"What is the message that's making these people angry?" Priest Lady questioned.

"The Gospel of Jesus Christ," Street Preacher replied.

Harry turned to me.

"Johnny, let's get out of here," he said. "Why are we listening to this crap?"

I didn't say anything. I found this scene kind of interesting.

"Well, I think that's unlikely," Priest Lady asserted, "because I am a priest and all of these people are my friends. I don't think they're angry at Jesus. I mean, like I said, I'm a priest, and these are my friends. Yeah, I'm just... I'm pretty confident that nobody's upset because they don't like Jesus."

Harry looked disgusted, but he didn't want to walk away from us. Manny actually seemed to be interested in this debate.

"What bothers me though," interjected another Street Preacher, "is we have a woman who's supposed to represent God, and you're clearly against the furtherance of the Gospel in our world. How are we going to reach the lost? Do you understand that people die in their sin every day and go to Hell? Do you care for their soul?"

Manny turned to me.

“This reminds me of some of the conversations I remember my dad used to have with his friends,” he said. “Before he left my mom.”

“I do care for their soul,” the Priest Lady replied, and she then tried to answer but was interrupted, so she admonished him.

“Are you going to give me a chance to speak or are you just going to talk over me?”

With a pause, she lowered her head slightly with eyebrows raised looking at the preacher with her glasses pushed lower on her nose. It was a grade-school, authoritarian-teacher look. I could tell the preacher was about to get owned. I listened a little more intently.

“Yes, I am deeply concerned for all the people in this community,” Priest Lady maintained. “They are under my care. I do not subscribe to a very narrow view of Christianity which has caused immeasurable harm to queer people, people in committed same sex relationships, and indigenous people.”

“Let me read Romans Chapter 1,” said Street Preacher, to which Priest Lady replied, “You’re going to be reading a translation, right? Do you read Greek? Do you? Because I actually do read Greek.”

“Hey, I can speak Spanish,” Alex said to me. “Who cares?”

“Shut up,” I said.

“OK, so what does it say in the Greek?” Street Preacher asked.

“Ah... which passage?” Priest Lady inquired.

“Romans Chapter 1. I would say the second half of the chapter,” Street Preacher answers.

“Yeah, the second half of Romans Chapter 1...,” Priest Lady schools, “is actually a very complicated point of interpretation because Paul appears to be speaking in quotation marks here and primarily speaking about Roman customs as opposed to Jewish customs. What he’s addressing may be temple prostitution, and certainly some of what he is addressing is heterosexuals engaging in non-reproductive sex practices.”

She continued.

“He certainly had issues with that. Paul did not have the same understanding of sexual orientation or committed same sex

partnerships that we do. On the other hand, most of the passages which are taken as a condemnation of homosexuality are based on disputable translation of words whose understanding we do not, we can't fully translate with accuracy."

She wasn't done.

"I have seen in the lives of same sex couples examples of the fruits of the spirit. I have seen loyalty. I have seen sacrificial love. I have seen Christian lives much better than my own, and I believe that as with Peter and the Gentiles when I witness the fruits of the spirit in the lives of committed same sex partners, many of whom are Christians, then I respect that as demonstrating an extension of how we have understood the gospel as widening our understanding of what is included."

"Can we leave now?" Alex asked. "I can't take much more."

"Hold on," Manny said. "I think they're getting to the good part."

Alex rolled his eyes. Harry wasn't listening anymore. I was, though.

"Do you think our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and we are supposed to keep our bodies holy as God is holy?" asked Street Preacher 2.

"Uh yes, I think I have a different interpretation of what it means to keep your body holy," answered Priest Lady.

"Could you share that with us?" Street Preacher implored.

Priest Lady answered, "Acting with love, with integrity, with service to the poor, with loyalty, with" and she paused, seemed to think for a moment, and then resumed "all of these things."

"What about the sin that we commit with our bodies against God?" Street Preacher asked.

"I think the worst sin we commit with our bodies against God right now is our indulgence of our appetite for fossil fuels which is destroying the planet," Priest Lady replied. "I think that" just then for emphasis, she leaned back pretending to hold a steering wheel, carelessly turning to the left and right as she wiggled her body and changed her voice to that of a doofus caricature saying "putting your body in a car and going 'I'm gonna drive my car'", she switched back to normal voice "is a way worse sin than any

sexual practice.”

Good point, I thought.

“Is the Bible in error?” Street Preacher 2 asked.

“Yeah, there are errors in the Bible,” answered the Priest Lady. “I think the Bible is a very complex series of texts, composed of many books primarily written in Hebrew and Greek over a long period of time by many authors in many different cultural contexts and interpreting every passage in the Bible is a complex exercise. I think that’s what we are looking at.”

I think Priest Lady won that argument. These preachers were having a bad day.

## Chapter 21

While still in the Keys, Anthony invited me to a party at his palatial estate just outside Ithaca, Florida. My crew wanted to come along, and wanted to invite Gia and her girlfriends, who were still in Ambergris Caye enjoying their time at our place there. Gia, having recently left her job with SERN, was feeling adventurous and her girlfriends still had several vacation days remaining, so they agreed to meet us in Ithaca, flying in by private plane themselves from Belize. Their flight left that day so the timing would be right.

The next day, Alex, Harry, Manny, and I drove to a small airport in Key West. We showed our vaccination passports and boarded the plane. We landed at Ithaca airport and went back to the house we had rented sight unseen for Kevin Mitnick using Marshall Thurgood, our lawyer with Cicero & Thurgood. The monthly rent was \$27,000. The house had eight bedrooms, twelve bathrooms, and was 30,000 square feet of luxury. It was impressive.

Gia and the girls had already arrived from Belize. She was unpacking in our bedroom when she pulled out her mobile phone and held it up asking, “Do you want to see pictures of the ghosts in SERN’s Hadron Collider?”

“Sure,” I said and extended my right arm in her direction so she could place her cell phone in my hand. I started thumb swiping through the photos. The pictures were eerie. It was dark in the

collider. I pinch zoomed a few of them, and you could see what clearly looked like faces in clouds in the nighttime sky and they weren't friendly looking. She said these demon faces were becoming more and more prevalent. It's like they are staring through the collider at us from another dimension, waiting to travel here. She said she spoke with one of her former co-workers this morning and was told that SERN was producing more and more dark matter and each time it is formed, there is a mini-earthquake.

"Weird," I said. "But good that you're out of there," followed by, "My friend Anthony is eccentric. I guarantee his party will be epic, but some of the guests will probably be turned. You cool with that?"

Gia smiled and answered, "YOLO."

Manny was the only one of our group who rarely got laid. Claudia was disgusted by Manny's poor hygiene as he always failed the smell test. Of course, it was Manny's idea that we take the Rolls Royce Cullinan which only seats five, so three of the girls had to sit on our laps and Manny's girl, Claudia, reluctantly took her seat on Manny. Harry was driving and I heard Manny whisper to him, "Take the speed bumps really fast, OK?" Manny was a constant source of lulz.

Anthony's estate was in a rural area outside of Ithaca. He must have had thousands of acres. Talk about privacy. The driveway was a mile long and there were three guard gates we had to pass. Each one required us to be confirmed.

We were confirmed on the first two by checking our names off a list, but when we got to the third guard, he told us to wait. Thirty seconds passed and then we heard Anthony's snobbish voice blaring at our car through the guardhouse speaker, saying, "Took you long enough to get here, Johnny. You must have been the one driving" followed by his condescending laugh as if he never heard something so funny.

But I quickly put an abrupt end to his laughter with a snide retort, "Well, at least we didn't run over anybody" which was followed by ten seconds of complete silence, and then the buzzing sound of that last gate opening.

We were driving and I saw the house in the distance. It made

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our 30,000 square foot home look tiny. But we were waved past that house and turned the corner to find another house that dwarfed the house we just passed. That first house must have been the guest house. This guy had more money than he knew what to do with. He was on another level.

We entered through two thirty-foot tall front doors that were wide enough to drive a semi through. Immediately inside the entrance on either side was a cage and both were occupied by a dancing naked woman. We were immediately offered drinks by another naked woman holding a silver platter, naked except for a goat's horn mask. We didn't say anything, but I could read my group's body language and we all agreed, this place was weird.

We were led to the elevator in groups. There were two elevators, but all the groups were waiting for the same elevator on the left while the one on the right was not being used at all. We were in the third group of people and needed to wait for the other two groups to send the elevator back down to us. Just before it was our turn to enter, I saw a couple being escorted to the elevator on the right. That's when I noticed a keypad next to the elevator on the right and my criminal mind recorded the digits that were entered: 632161236. We then entered the elevator on the left.

We rode the elevator up to the third floor. Each of the girls was holding their nose. Manny's stench didn't really bother us as it was just something that we were used to, I suppose.

Anthony greeted us by saying, "Now you see how the other half lives." What an asshole I thought, but kind of a likeable asshole. We stayed up until around 2 AM and then retired to our rooms on the second floor. Anthony gave us four rooms. Claudia begged Gia and me to let her sleep in our room. Gia felt sorry for her and so I granted her request.

That keypad and the elevator on the right caused my curiosity to get the best of me. Around 3:50 AM, I put pants and a shirt on and quietly exited the room. I went to the elevators but noticed that there was only one elevator—the one that we rode. Why only one, I thought? I re-entered that elevator and pushed the button for the first floor. When I exited to the first floor, most people had left but there were a couple of stragglers roaming around. The goat-

horned lady was still there carrying drinks on a platter. The cage dancers had stopped dancing and were leaning against the sides of their cages, apparently talking with one another. I waited till the goat-horned lady passed by and then I quickly took four steps to the elevator on the right and entered 632161236. The elevator door opened, I stepped inside, the door quickly shutting behind me.

I looked at the keypad. That's strange, it only goes down. I pressed the down button. The elevator descended for awhile, stopped, then the doors opened. This is where it started to get really weird.

I exited the elevator and there were a couple of people standing in that general area, but there were maybe thirty or forty people standing twenty yards ahead and facing the other way looking toward a stage. There were hundreds of candles forming a large circle around the audience and stage and there was a guy on stage wearing some type of King Tut outfit. He was holding a two-foot-long dagger.

They carried a crying baby on to the stage. I didn't want to watch anymore of this. I returned to the elevator and went back to my room. That night I saw shadow people out of the corner of my eye darting across the floor, but when I would turn my head to look at them, they were gone. This happened all night long and needless to say I didn't get much sleep that night.

Early the next morning we left. As we were driving past the third guard gate, I couldn't help thinking how much wealth they had and yet it seemed like there was something wrong with their lives. None of the people in that house seemed real. They certainly didn't look happy. And that creepy stuff going on with the King Tut character, the dagger, and the crying baby.

I've murdered so many people in my life, so why did that scene disgust me? What purpose did it serve? The people there had an abundance of money, yet seemed bankrupt of joy. I guess it's true that money can't buy happiness. It only allows you to choose your own type of misery.

## Chapter 22

I was at happy hour with the crew on a Wednesday. Alex, Harry and Manny were chatting up four cute girls. The seven of them were standing in a circle. Alex was providing the setup for a story I'd heard a zillion times.

I was at the bar a few yards away from their group. A TV show was on with some type of medical professional warning against the dangers of the latest COVID vaccine. I listened as the doctor explained:

“I’ve spent hundreds of hours plowing through the medical literature looking at all of these things associated with this new type of shot. We can’t even call it a vaccine because it doesn’t meet any of the legal criteria of what a vaccine is supposed to do. A vaccine is supposed to keep you from getting sick. This doesn’t. In their stated literature, they say it probably won’t keep you from getting sick or prevent anything. It may decrease your risk of serious infections and it may cut down the duration of your symptoms, but it in no way says anything about keeping you from getting sick which is what a vaccine is supposed to do.”

I turned my attention back to Alex as he had a gift for telling bizarre stories that seemed plausible.

“I was getting gas at a Citgo station late at night,” Alex was saying. “I was a little drunk and accidentally spilled some gas on the left arm of my long-sleeved shirt.”

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The three girls were paying close attention, but the one who was standing closest to Manny removed herself from her position, only to reinsert herself on the opposite side of the circle.

“I was driving home,” Alex continued, “and had forgotten about the gas spill and lit a cigarette and that’s when MY ARM CAUGHT ON FIRE!”

Three of the girls reacted to Alex’s fable with an “Oh my!” but the fourth who had just inserted herself as far away from Manny as possible was preoccupied looking elsewhere around the room in an apparent attempt to avoid the focus of Manny’s uncomfortable stare.

Alex resumed spinning his tale. Harry was listening intently as well because he obviously had never heard this story.

“I rolled my window down and was waving my arm out the window at 75 miles per hour trying desperately to put out the flames!”

Now all four of them were mentally engaged and invested in his story.

“And that’s when I saw police lights behind me. I was pulled over and arrested.”

One of the girls asked, “What did they arrest you for?”

“Illegal use of a fire arm,” Alex answered.

The four girls laughed followed by clueless Harry asking “Did you have a gun in the car?” which made the girls then laugh at Harry. I turned my attention back to the doctor on TV.

“The second thing is it’s supposed to stop the spread of infection,” the doctor was saying. “Well, they’ve already said it doesn’t do that, it’s not intended to decrease hospitalizations, and it’s not going to lower the death rate because the death rate is already extraordinarily low. The new COVID numbers about death are absolutely fabricated and we will never be able to sort that out and know the truth. So it’s not a vaccine and I’m encouraging everyone to understand that the only reason they call it a vaccine is #1 to get billions of dollars in funding and #2 to get the protection of the 2005 Prep Act as a covered countermeasure as a vaccine and #3 we have multi-generational indoctrinations that people still believe that vaccines are safe, and thoroughly tested which they’re not. They

think they're going to keep you from getting sick which they don't, they think they are absolutely necessary which they're not, and they don't cause any harm which is a flat-out lie."

I then noticed Harry standing to my left and knew he wanted to make sense of Alex's story, but didn't want to ask Alex.

"Johnny, did Alex catch a gun charge?" Harry asked.

"No Harry, it was a joke," I explained. "Illegal use of a fire arm meant that his arm was on fire."

"Oohhh I see! That's funny!" Harry replied.

I turned my attention back to the TV and listened as the doctor explained:

"So the vast majority of people have been multi-generationally indoctrinated to the concept of vaccine so when they hear about the new COVID vaccine they think oh it's just like another flu shot, oh doesn't Coronavirus cause the flu, so this is just like getting another flu shot and if I can get this shot...please stop calling it a vaccine...it's a shot or this injection...then I can just go back to normally living life, which you won't, they told you that you still have to wear a mask, you still have to social distance, you still have to contact trace, it's not going to keep you from getting sick."

"They're injecting something in you...a messenger RNA or piece of protein that is the spike protein. The whole purpose of having the spike protein in your circulation is to develop an antibody against that spike protein. In theory, that means the next time you come into contact with the Coronavirus or specifically the SARS Covid 2 virus, that antibody should block you from getting sick. Not only does it not block you from getting sick, the antibody itself is going to turn on your body and create havoc and massive autoimmune disease when the antibody itself attacks your organs by molecular mimicry."

"These people are not stupid, and they can read the medical literature as well as I can and as well as any other physician. This is a well-designed killing tool. I mean it's not a vaccine, it's an injection or shot. We call it genetic modification technology."

"Messenger RNA does not change your DNA. Because how the process works is if you have DNA through an enzyme called reverse transcriptase it makes a mirror copy of it called messenger

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RNA which is what gets injected into your body. That messenger RNA, it goes through a system called the ribosomes and creates a protein. That protein can get reincorporated into your DNA by a process called transfection. So, the messenger RNA can indirectly change your DNA, your genetics, but not directly. And I think language is important.”

I wish I would have never taken that vaccine. I also wished I smacked Tattoo when I had the chance.

## Chapter 23

I noticed a lot more small businesses closed and the homeless population increased bigtime. The increase in homeless was not a bad thing for our business, but it was a sign of the times. The US government was burying all of us in debt. Civil war had started on a small scale. The National Guard was called out to help the local police, but that wasn't enough for the bigger city fighting going on, so the US Army and the Marines had to be dispatched to restore order. Yet, order was never restored.

It was getting really bad in the US, but in the third world it was unbearable. After the second Coronavirus hit and we could no longer afford to help the third world, there was a catastrophic increase in death from starvation, and so populaces from all over the world poured into the US. There were hundreds of millions of economic migrants coming from impoverished locations around the world.

I had been doing a lot of studying of the social and economic conditions in America at that time, trying to figure out where the future for our group would fit in. I wasn't into books and research in the traditional sense, but I had to find out what was going on. My friend Anthony had sent me some books on the subject and directed me to various internet sites that would provide the information I was looking for. Some of these sites required passwords that Anthony gave me and were apparently on what used to be called the "Dark

Web”.

Coal is the cleanest burning energy source. Its byproducts are carbon dioxide and water vapor. Trees need carbon dioxide to flourish, and coal is cheap. Sadly, for this country, when the last few administrations took office, their climate agenda killed coal. This along with other draconian climate mandates made energy costs rise—a lot.

Everyone’s electric bill went through the roof. The average bill increased 1,000% in one year. If your monthly bill was \$200 a year ago then it went up to \$2,000 today. Almost no one could afford to pay it. The US federal government started issuing energy certificates as a subsidy, but they were just a form of debt. Everyone was going into debt more and more each month.

Part of the problem was the complete frailty of the US dollar. With the overwhelming rise in inflation, a dollar bill was almost meaningless at this point.

They started taxing us for our use of carbon. That meant taxing everything we did. People couldn’t afford to pay the carbon taxes and so again, the government issued carbon certificates which was another way to enslave the US citizens with more debt.

The debt was unupportable. A country with a Gross Domestic Product of less than the total debt has never recovered. It always ended badly. The debt was now more than three times our GDP and growing exponentially while at the same time, GDP was shrinking. The United States government could no longer afford to service the debt. Floodgates would soon break.

The world’s reserve currency was, up until that point, the US dollar. That meant that transactions around the world—even ones that did not involve the US—were settled in dollars. The funds were held in short-term Treasury Bills. The money going into the treasury from around the world was keeping interest rates in check, but we were in effect exporting our inflation around the world. When the world lost confidence in the US and moved to a China/Russia conglomerate of currency backed by gold, the floodgates broke.

Some were hopeful that specific digital currency would replace the dollar and be our salvation. But the powers that be had other plans, and Bitcoin and all the others fell to zero. Many people,

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including lots of celebrities and large companies, lost billions in investments.

It was civil until the food stopped being delivered. People who lived in the cities had it the worst. If you asked someone in a city where they get their food, then they would say from the supermarket. OK, then where do they get their food if the supermarket shelves are empty? The answer to that is: by any means necessary.

Five days without food and gangs started breaking into homes. We were in a gated community which had a guard, so we weren't the first target, but it wasn't long before they came here. Fortunately, we had a head start. We pillaged pretty much everyone in our community of their food. Canned goods were at a premium. Amazing how a can of spaghetti, which at one point could be bought for \$1, now costs more than my Ferrari. No one would voluntarily sell them—that's why we stole them.

That was the start of the United Nations take over. Countries and national governments were disintegrating. Something had to be done to save the world. I had a suspicion that all this was planned out a long time ago, maybe even when I was a kid, but I didn't really know how or what people were really in charge. Who were the actual players? My crew and I began to find that out slowly over time. We did find out later that many of those who got the mandated vaccination were dead within a year. Fortunately, the four of us must have been immune to what the vaccination carried. What were the odds of that?

Believe it or not, there was a family in our community two blocks away who was giving away food. They had storable food and were freely sharing it. I was told this guy was a priest of a religious group. Or pastor. Whatever he was. I went there with my crew and the fool actually gave us some food for free. I repaid that act by putting my 9mm to his head and demanding that he show me where the food was stored. He took me to a hidden pantry in the kitchen. There were fifty boxes there. Each box was labeled as three months storable food. Jackpot.

You couldn't buy gas anywhere. Cars, including my \$700,000 Ferrari, were completely useless. Travel would need to be

by walking or bicycle. Manny had found some high-end mountain bikes, and he manufactured a cart to pull behind each bike. The four of us combined were able to load the carts and our backpacks with forty boxes. Other than a few personal belongings, we couldn't fit any more than that. We didn't want to leave the ten boxes, so we waited a few days and gorged ourselves.

During that time, we experienced our version of the zombie apocalypse. The ravenous hordes were constantly coming to that priest's door for food handouts. Manny and Harry would send them away. It wasn't long before they refused to leave, so they were shot. The malnourished were attempting to get into that house 24/7. The four of us kept lookout in shifts. It was a full-time job. Through all hours of the day and night, starving men and women were trying to enter through doors or windows. The yard was filled with so many dead bodies that they started to stink. Vultures were feasting off their corpses and people were so hungry, they started to eat the dead. The stench of rotting flesh and the odor carried by the wind from cookouts in the distance where you knew it was the smell of roasting dead humans was a bit much even for me, so we split.

The four of us biked with our backpacks and carts filled with storable food, but we needed water. Water was more important than food. There is no feeling worse than being overly dehydrated. We were thrilled whenever it rained, and we made the most of it by fashioning a large waterproof canopy into a huge funnel which gathered all the rain which we then used to fill our bottles.

We were living better than most, but we were headed to rural America because we knew they had it better. We biked for weeks, traversing through cities which were indistinguishable from those devastated in wartime. We managed to average 50 miles per day, eventually making it to rural Georgia. We located one large farm that had cattle, crops, and a fishpond—a farmland utopia. We stopped on a hilly tree-filled overlook about 500 yards away to camp out and watch.

The farmers had their own zombie apocalypse and were well-armed and standing guard. We counted seven, but there may have been more inside. They had shotguns and used them without hesitation to take care of attackers. Every morning they used

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tractors to gather the dead bodies and placed them into a pre-dug hole. When it was filled with the day's bodies, they filled it with dirt and dug the next morning's hole. From there, it was rinse and repeat.

We studied them for a week. I was impressed with their organization as it was more like a military operation than a farm. We needed to formulate a plan.

## Chapter 24

There were two gates around the farm. One gate on the outside we could breach, but would shortly thereafter be confronted with gunfire. The second gate was an internal gate which looked impenetrable. The only way to open it was by someone on the inside of the gate releasing the lock. We caught a glimpse of what was behind the interior gate when it was opened for the tractor each morning to dump the bodies into a hole.

The only way to get inside the farmhouse was through the second gate. The first floor of the house had all windows and doors boarded. Access to the house was only through a ladder into the second floor of the house. The base of the ladder was inside the internal gate. We needed to get inside.

We could bum-rush the fortress which was basically what everyone else was doing moments before their demise, leaving their dead bodies scattered across the lawn waiting for next-day pickup. I had a better idea. Manny would be our Trojan Horse.

“Why do I have to do it?” Manny vehemently objected.

“Because I said so, Manny,” I demanded. “Besides, you think I’d trust Harry by himself with this task?”

Harry and I exchanged glances, but Harry knew it was true. Manny was the more reliable one for something like this.

“Look, it’s simple,” I continued. “All you have to do is crawl just a few feet inside the first gate at nighttime and then play dead.

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When you get picked up the next day in the tractor and brought into the second gate, just roll off the tractor before you are dumped in the hole. Easy.”

“And then what?” Manny asked.

“Wait until it’s the right time,” I instructed, “and then overpower the guard. When we see that you have successfully replaced the guard, Alex, Harry, and I will play dead and be delivered by tractor through that second gate the next day. From there, we overpower the driver of the tractor. We can then use the tractor as a tank for cover to advance to the house and break through the boarded up first level or we can enter the house via the ladder.”

That night, Manny crawled under the gate and played dead. The next morning, the tractor scooped all the dead bodies in the lawn and then Manny, being on the outskirts of the property line, was picked up last. All the bodies were carried towards the pit. Just before being dumped inside of the hole, Manny rolled off the tractor unnoticed. Step one complete.

The following day, we saw a tennis shoe placed on top of the guard tower. This was the signal confirming that Manny was in control of the gate. That night, the three of us crawled under the fence and played dead until morning. The tractor carried our bodies to the pit and I rolled off just before being dumped. Alex and Harry weren’t quick enough and actually fell in. I struggled for a couple minutes to get them out, as the pit was pretty deep. I kept losing my grip on them and, for a second, I thought we would get caught, but I finally helped get them out.

When the tractor turned to exit the gate, Manny kept the gate closed. The tractor was stopped for a few minutes and then finally the driver exited and headed towards the guard tower. He never made it. We didn’t want his death to be by noisy gunfire, so Alex slit his throat. Step two complete.

We decided it would be better to cause a distraction to misdirect the occupant’s attention first before climbing in through the ladder. We could throw Molotov cocktails in through the second story window, but we didn’t want to burn the house down. We just wanted to usurp their possession of it. We decided to attach a wood pole to the front of the tractor to be used as a battering ram, running

it unmanned at full speed into the front door.

The driver of the tractor apparently was a fan of 1980s music. He had a stereo inside his tractor. It was fairly loud. Looking through his music selection, we found the perfect one: Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust".

We started the tractor, turned the volume to max, put the track on repeat, and put a cinderblock on the gas pedal sending it full speed ahead. The tractor was 30 yards away and accelerated towards the front door with the stereo blaring.

BAM! The tractor's makeshift battering ram hit the front door at full speed, forcibly smashing it open. The occupants didn't rush to the front door right away. We probably heard "Another One Bites the Dust" three or four times before the first person stuck their head outside the door. That was Harry's queue to climb the ladder. Once he was in, the rest of us climbed up after him.

I'll save you the bloody details and just inform you that, in the aftermath, the house was filled with gun smoke and eight dead bodies. All of us were OK, except for Harry who took a bullet in his leg. We now had possession of the house. We hurriedly fixed the front door and took turns as lookouts. Mission accomplished. Time to relax a little. Or so we thought.

## Chapter 25

**T**he farmhouse had a shortwave radio which was able to receive world news. There was trouble in the Middle East. Russia, Iran, and Turkey invaded Syria. They used an EMP to shut power off in Israel and then invaded from the northeast by way of Syria. It was a bloodbath which involved nuclear bombs. The Temple Mount in Jerusalem was decimated.

Russia fired a nuclear warhead into Yellowstone's super-volcano and another one into the San Andreas Fault. The sky was darkened because of the volcano's eruption and there were earthquakes all over the world. The United States was brought to its knees. This was the beginning of what would be referred to as the Great Reset.

I don't know how many billions of people were killed around the world, but what I did notice was that there was only a trickle of intruders of maybe a few a day, and then a month later that was down to a few a week, and then it was a few a month. We didn't know what to expect next. We were running out of food.

I heard the sound of military vehicles approaching and they were blaring a repeating message from their loudspeakers:

"We are representatives of the New World Order. We are your friends and we have restored peace. We have food and water and medical supplies. Come outside and be counted."

There was a five-second pause and the message repeated. I

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could see the military vehicles were all marked on the side with “United Nations” in huge letters. It was unclear exactly who or what was aboard each vehicle.

We didn’t have many options since we were running out of food, so we delivered ourselves into their hands hoping for mercy. From there, we were indoctrinated into a new world economy which was based on a Social Credit Score.





Part 2  
Lori and the Underground



## Chapter 26

**I**t was several years after we left that farmhouse and were taken in and assimilated. Initially, we were all assigned tiny 300-square-foot apartments in close proximity to each other. New technology was rolled out by the UN, which I guessed had been in the works in secret for years, and we soon got used to it and the new mandates.

I figured out quickly how to work the SCS system and got good at it. After a year, I earned enough SCS to get a 500-square-foot apartment and then a VRS three months after that. So, the guys always visited me, rather than the other way around. Although that was mostly against the rules anyway.

The UN was fairly lenient once you got up to over 50,000 SC points, and even delivered to your door by drone various amenities and basic food and meals on occasion without you asking for them. Most of that was to control you, and keep you inside as much as possible, so you weren't out and about causing them grief. We had certain freedoms, but it was limited. The Great Reset had changed things forever.

Each apartment was furnished with two large installed flat panel touchscreens equipped with a camera and highly-sensitive microphones. The screens could be voice-controlled or operated by remote control device. The panels provided access to the UN website where you could track your SCS and also view the latest

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news, information, and entertainment as delivered by our unelected leaders. You used these screens to communicate with UN regional headquarters, and they also monitored you 24/7.

If you earned enough points, the UN furnished you a mobile device that you could carry anywhere to track, spend, and transfer your SCS points, even between mobile devices. Even though the world had dwindled down to a few hundred million people, big brother couldn't possibly keep tabs on everyone all the time, so we just had to be careful and not obvious when rules were being violated. These screens could not be removed from the wall or damaged purposefully without prompting a visit from FRIEND.

I also quickly figured out there was an elaborate underground system once you knew the right people and the right places to go. These places bought and sold technology, some old-school, that you could use to combat the prying eyes of the UN. We were watched closely, but not close enough. It was a different life than I had, but we made do with what we were given. The other guys didn't fare nearly as well as me, but of course I was the smart one.

Alex and I would go regularly to Barney's Café to see what we could pick up in the underground system, what some referred to as the "flea market". Barney's was an ordinary looking restaurant from both inside and out. The food was decent. But if you knew the codeword, then you were given access to their underground flea market.

We went to the back of the restaurant and gave the codeword. We were directed to a closet. The door was shut and another door opened in the back of the closet which led to a stairwell going two stories down. The entire underground was encased in three inches of lead, making it completely off the surveillance grid. Anything you wanted could be found there. Every time we went, we were like kids in a candy store.

They had CIRMON's 1 through 4, EF blankets, Cyber Eyes, old electronic devices that were made prior to big brother's prying eyes. There were literally fifty booths set up with everything under the sun. Facial disguises, Device Blockers, Silence Wall devices, weapons, you name it.

Transfers were either done by barter for other goods or transferring SCS points through the Score App. Nothing really new was found that day. It's just the same products being repackaged and resold. We understood in talking to the underground that there was a Barneys-esque store in every major city in the US.

Alex's cousin, Lori, was taken in by Alex's mother. Lori started to trust Alex more. Alex started to think of Lori as a sister, but he didn't agree with some of her ways of thinking. I had met Lori earlier in the year, and a few times since, but really wanted to get to know her better, mostly because she was smoking hot.

At the same time, Alex wanted me to help him improve his SCS. Any good trade deal benefited both sides. I had an antique cassette tape player that I got a couple weeks ago from Barney's. The clunky device was called a Walkman. Antique equipment went for a premium on the black market. I would let Alex borrow it to get some SCS and he would then encourage Lori to spend time with me. We agreed to the mutually beneficial exchange.

The Walkman strategy is simple. The device was pre-internet and not a part of the surveillance grid. It was popular about 20 years before I was born. I remember my mom talking about having one. You could play something called tape cassettes which I rarely saw. You could also use it to record things if you could get ahold of a blank tape cassette. Fortunately, my Walkman came with one of those. It could be used to fool the system and garner points.

All you had to do was to record something on the Walkman that would improve your SCS and hit play. It was, however, paramount that there was a live body nearby to hear what was being played to collect the points. Just playing the recording in an empty apartment doesn't improve SCS and would even lower it when the surveillance grid determined you were attempting to game the system. There were many recording options to choose from, but none scored higher than the One World Religion anthem which would give you 150 points every hour. I hated that annoying song, but Alex was okay with it. He would actually sing the OWR anthem live in his apartment regularly to gain points, but he was happy that now he could make SCS in his sleep.

I handed the Walkman to Alex.

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“ere's-Whay ori-Lay?” I asked.

“e's-Shay at-yay om's-May,” Alex replied.

“e-Shay ows-knay I-yay am-yay oming-cay y-bay?” I asked.

“es-Yay,” Alex answered. “I-yay old-tay er-hay you-yay ere-way inging-bray er-hay a-yay irmon-Cay 4-yay and-yay e-shay as-way appy-hay.”

I extended my hand in front of him with palm facing up. He dropped the DK into my hand.

“ohnny-Jay,” Alex said, “omise-pray e-may ou-yay on't-way ake-tay anything-yay om-fray ere-thay.”

“I-yay omise-pray,” I said, and turned to head for the exit.

Alex knew I hated the OWR anthem and didn't waste any time pressing play on the Walkman. The annoying song started playing. It sounded like something out of the Soviet Cold War era.

We are a one religion,  
This we know is true.  
All faiths are included,  
Jesus and Buddha too.  
We love to worship together...

I picked up the pace to quickly leave and could hear Alex laughing behind me. I slammed the door as I left, thinking what an asshole.

I took the AT to visit Lori and deliver her the CIRMON 4. Even though I had a DK, I thought it would be best to knock first. Lori answered with a smile which I felt was a little more sincere than previous interactions.

“i-Hay ohnny-Jay,” she said. “ank-Thay you-yay o-say uch-may or-fay inging-bray is-thay. I-yay aven't-hay een-bay able-yay o-tay et-gay a-yay ood-gay ight-nay eep-slay ince-say I-yay arrived-yay.”

I set up the device and she surprised me with a kiss on the cheek, but then quickly ushered me to the door. She wanted to get some sleep and didn't trust me enough to stay, so I obliged her request and left.

But I didn't leave for long. I sat in the AT outside for a half

hour. I had a tracker on my CIRMON 4 which would tell me when the device was on or off and if it was on then it would also let me know whether the EF had a body in it. The monitor indicated she was asleep and so I quietly entered with my DK. Yes, she was sound asleep. She looked very peaceful and I thought to myself, I wish I could rest that peacefully. There was zero peace in my life.

Time to snoop around, and what might I find today? Just the thought of the possibilities made me giddy. Right away, I found a Device Blocker. A DB allowed you to hide whatever would fit in it, concealing its contents from surveillance. The DB was contraband and worth 1,200 SCS points itself, but I wanted to see what secrets she kept inside.

Bingo! It was a Bible which was worth 4,000 points. So far, I was up to 5,200. Nice. But I kept rummaging through her room to see what else was there. And that's when I found a Digital Code Clicker. I had struck paydirt. A DCC was a type of morse code that religious types like Lori used to communicate without surveillance. It was worth 10,000 points and I was now up to 15,200. I was tempted to leave right then, but I continued to search for anything else she might have.

I found a handwritten diary. Wow. I didn't think anybody kept those anymore. Even before the UN took over, the government and other organizations always required digital transfer of information and use of their touchscreen and verified your fingerprints as ID, so writing or signing anything has been unnecessary for years. I quickly flipped through the pages. She had been keeping this diary since she was seven years old. What secrets did she have hidden here? It was loaded with things she had done and experiences she had and most importantly, how she felt about those experiences. Knowing these secrets would advance my seduction of her. But just then, she moved in her sleep.

I tiptoed out of the room with her diary and headed outside to the AT to read. I kept an eye on the CIRMON 4 monitor as I flipped through the pages.

I was looking for a source key for the DCC because, with one, I could communicate with whoever she was reaching on this device. If she was communicating with an underground religious

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

organization then I could too. 100,000 minimum SCS points for any such group reported to the SCS Board and with a large enough one, the sky was the limit. But there was no source key in the book.

The monitor for the CIRMOM 4 showed it was still in use and the EF was occupied. I photographed every page of her diary and tiptoed back into the apartment to return everything just as it was.

This, I thought, was the breakthrough I had been waiting for.

## Chapter 27

I studied that diary like my life depended on it. I knew that equipped with the insight it would provide, I would be able to win Lori over. And it was fascinating getting inside of her mind. The two of us were polar opposites in what we thought and how we behaved. She may have been the nicest person who ever lived. She forgave everyone, did volunteer work feeding the homeless, and to say she loved the religious group she was part of was an understatement.

I memorized as much as I could. I felt with this newfound knowledge and my street smarts, I could charm the pants off of her—literally. I had Alex set up a dinner date with her at Robby’s Café in east Ithaca, a swank part of town.

I arrived to pick her up in an AT. When she emerged from the apartment, she looked stunning. You have to be really good-looking to look good even when wearing your GIPE. I was looking forward to removing the GIPE at Robby’s and enjoying some fine food and private conversation that only the bubbles at Robby’s could afford.

We arrived and were greeted by a robot fashioned to look like a human dressed in a tuxedo. The robots looked realistic, but when they moved, it became clear it was a robot as their motions looked like a break dancer doing the robot. We were seated in an open bubble.

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The bubbles at Robby's were expensive, but they were soundproof and free from surveillance. At least that's what Robby's claimed. Even the robot serving us couldn't communicate with us when the bubble was closed. It had to lift the bubble hydraulically to speak with us. The bubble then closed around us.

That's when I looked around the restaurant and spotted Anthony and a dozen of his elitist friends, partying it up in a supersized VIP bubble that could seat thirty. I hadn't seen him in a few years. I hoped he didn't spot me because his obnoxiousness would surely blow my cover.

I looked in Lori's eyes and smiled. She returned the gaze.

"I want to tell you something," I said. "If I am ever quiet, it doesn't mean I'm not having a good time because I want you to know that I enjoy your company."

I was lying, of course, although I did enjoy her company. I wanted to give myself as much of a pause as needed for me to mentally sift for information in her diary.

"What did Alex tell you about me?" I asked.

"That the two of you have been best friends since your early teens," she replied.

"True," I responded. "Anything else?"

"Not a lot," Lori said. "But Alex has always been kind of a troublemaker. You seem different though."

OK, I was off to a good start. But then it was my turn.

"Tell me something about you," she asked.

I foraged through her diary in the annals of my mind and thought of a story that would surely impress her. She loved animals and had the most heartfelt reaction to this guy who dove into a raging river to save a puppy that had fallen in.

"I like dogs," I said, smiling. Of course, that was a lie. I hated dogs. In my mind, the only good dog was a dead dog, but I knew it was something she wanted to hear.

"So do I," she replied. "Tell me more."

I paused trying to recall the story she had in her diary and mentally change a few of the details so as to seem genuine, and not a carbon copy.

"I have a story," I started, "but I don't like to share it because

it brings back too many emotions and I don't want you to see me cry." I hadn't cried since I was 12 years old, the day my lamb Bosco died, but I knew from her diary that she liked sensitive men.

She took the bait, as I could see in her eyes that she wanted me to tell the story, but she paused a few seconds before making her request.

"I want to hear it, please."

I started in with my story.

"I was in my teens and was at a park with a lake. In the distance, I saw two older kids playing with a puppy dog. It looked like a beagle. When I got closer to them, I saw that they weren't playing at all, but..." I paused and feigned a tear.

"It's OK, Johnny. Tell me more," she encouraged.

I resumed. "They weren't playing with the dog. They were taking turns throwing the puppy as far into the lake as they could. The puppy would struggle to swim back to them and then they would do it again, and again, and again. I could see that the puppy was exhausted."

I stopped and tried to look authentic in recalling my traumatic memories and wiped a non-existent tear from my eye.

Just then the bubble opened and our robot in a tux interrupted us.

"Can I bring you anything?" Tux Robot asked. "Would you like to order?"

I told the robot to give us a minute please. The bubble closed and I continued to weave what's sure to be a story that will eventually lead to me and Lori ending up in bed.

"I wasn't sure what to do," I confessed. "The kids were bigger than me, but I had to do something."

"What did you do?" she questioned with bated breath.

"I dove into the lake and swam to the puppy and kept his little head above the water as I swam to the other side of the lake away from the kids."

"What happened to the beagle?" she asked.

"I found the owner of the beagle," I informed her, "who had been searching for him when I reached the shore. She was a little old lady and was so happy to have her puppy returned."

Part 2: Lori and the Underground

“Awww,” she said and then thought about it and asked, “Is that story true?”

I briefly reflected on my performance and delivery and then looked her in the eye and said, “Yes, it’s true.” and that part wasn’t a lie, as a kid did swim in to save the dog and the dog and little old lady escaped, but the kids tossing the dog into the lake were me and Alex.

I could see I was winning her over. We placed our orders and Tux Robot interrupted us at the worst times. I wanted to get rid of the robot, so I called him over.

“I have a puzzle that I need you to answer for me,” I whispered.

“I will solve your puzzle,” the robot said.

“Everything I say is a lie,” I started.

“OK,” the robot said,

“Now listen to me very carefully. I...am...lying.”

Tux Robot just stared at me.

“Now go solve that puzzle,” I said to him, and he turned and went away slowly. For that paradox, I tip my hat to the old re-runs of *Star Trek*. It seemed to work.

We ate and she told some stories about herself which I had of course already read in her diary, but what impressed me is that she didn’t deviate from her diary version of the stories which confirmed to me that she was honest and sincere—two qualities that I had never experienced in a woman and was definitely uncharted territory for me.

Then we reached a moment of silence. The ambience was serene. The moment perfect for me to make a confession.

“Lori, I haven’t known you for long, but feel like I can trust you and I want to tell you something that could get me into trouble.”

Lori looked concerned.

“What do you want to tell me?”

“I’m a Christian,” I said. I saw her expression change from concern to delight.

“So am I!” she replied enthusiastically.

There was a pause.

“What’s your testimony?” she asked.

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My testimony? Did Alex tell her about my juvie stint and say I gave testimony? I didn't know how to answer.

She could tell I didn't know what she meant and explained, "The Bible says the power is in your testimony. You know, how you became a Christian?"

I paused, trying to buy some time.

"You first," I finally said.

She then gave me the exact account that she had written in her diary at the age of seven, the year she became a Christian.

When it was my turn to speak, I was given a pass by her when I responded, "It's personal." The truth was I needed time to make some type of conversion story up.

Just then, Tux Robot lifted the bubble and handed me a business card.

"Your bill was paid by this man," Tux Robot said.

I glanced at the card. It was Anthony's. He had written on it "Call me later".

## Chapter 28

It was like clockwork. The third Thursday of every month, more people would drop dead than on any other day and on that same day, nearly half the population would get sick, some violently. We dreaded that third Thursday. The next morning, on Friday, FRIEND always cleaned up the bodies, also like clockwork. We knew something was awry but couldn't put our finger on it.

It was Wednesday, the day before the third Thursday which we awaited with trepidation. I was scheduled to meet with Anthony. He had something he wanted to talk with me about in-person. I took the AT through his 1,000-acre estate which was now replete with even more guards than years ago. I was waved past the guest house, but also directed to travel past the main house. Where were we going?

In the distance, there was what appeared to be a shack by comparison—a 900-square-foot house sitting in the middle of nowhere. I was directed to stop there. There were five other ATs parked in front and five seedy characters standing by the front door. My sixth sense perceived them to be criminals. I exited the AT and walked to the house to join the other five malefactors.

I threw a question out to the group.

“What are we doing here?”

A burly man, probably six foot seven, said, “I don't know, but Anthony has a tendency to play games. We've been waiting for

a few minutes.”

Just then the front door opened, apparently on its own. We entered the house.

The house was normal looking, ordinary by any standard, and seemed out of place for an estate which displayed such grandeur and opulence. The house was empty of people and we were greeted by a very realistic male-looking android instructing us all to sit in the same general area on two couches that were facing one another in the living room.

Immediately after the six of us were seated, we were startled as the floor started sinking. It was a controlled descent not unlike an elevator ride. At first it was hard to tell we were going down because the walls, floor, and ceiling didn't change to indicate motion. The windows had curtains and those were drawn. But the feeling of going down was unmistakable. The entire 300-square-foot living room descended. We slowly dropped for probably a minute and ended up a hundred or so feet below ground. When the large elevator room stopped, an alarm sounded, and the entire wall opposite the one with the door we used to enter the room slid up into a slot in the ceiling area to reveal a much larger space beyond. We exited the elevator room and walked into a spacious subterranean residence. The ceilings were twenty-five feet high and the residence walls were arrayed with artwork and decked in splendor. Anthony entered the room.

“You have all won the lottery,” he said as he laughed in a condescending tone, an oddity that was distinctly his.

“Follow me,” he beckoned, as he waved us in the same direction that he had entered.

The six of us followed Anthony and were led into a room that looked like a fancy bar or lounge. The room was decorated with exceeding luxury. You could hardly tell that we were underground.

“What's a high Social Credit Score?” Anthony asked, and he then paused waiting for someone to answer. This group was clearly savvy, as they knew just as I did that Anthony would make anyone who answered look silly.

Anthony volunteered some numbers.

“Is 100,000 high? How about 200,000? Or 300,000?”

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

My personal goal at the time was 300,000.

Anthony paused for a moment, then continued speaking.

“My SCS is in excess of 60 billion,” he bragged. “That’s billion with a B. This means I could murder someone on the street in broad daylight and get away with it. I can do whatever I want.”

He stopped and went silent momentarily for effect.

“And this is your opportunity to join the million-point club. Then you’ll be on your way.”

He paused yet again to confirm he had our attention as he made eye contact with everyone in the room before continuing.

“I know reporting a Christian to the SCS board is worth 3,500 and a Bible is worth 4,000,” Anthony said. “Those points are for chumps. I’m sending you all big-game hunting. Underground religious organizations are in violation of the One World Religion mandate and pay a minimum of 100,000 points. I want you to infiltrate them and find them and report them back to me.”

This sales pitch went on for about thirty minutes. Then before he sent us to the couches to be elevated back to ground level, he had something else important to tell us.

“It’s not a coincidence that so many will be dropping dead tomorrow. The 8G towers give off low levels of radiation similar to a microwave. On the third Thursday, they turn them up to 12G between the hours of Noon and 5 PM. The radiation vibrates cells and allows them to be porous passing through the latest Coronavirus strain that was released.”

We looked at one another to gauge our reactions to this revelation of foul play we had all suspected.

“Of course, I’m underground myself and not affected,” Anthony gloated. “My tip for all of you is to get a wool-lead blanket and wrap yourself in it between Noon and 5 PM tomorrow.”

He paused again.

“Nighty-night,” Anthony said, bading farewell, sending everyone away, but then called me and this other fellow back.

“Johnny and Jay. Walk with me.”

Everyone else was lifted back to the first floor. I could see the four of them gazing longingly in our direction as they were being elevated up. The tall burly one was bending his torso and tilting his

head to the side in an attempt to get a final peek at what the three of us might be up to as the wall of that elevator room closed back down and then we could only see the bottom of that room as it nestled into place in the elevator shaft ceiling some 100 feet above us.

With his usual braggadocious style, Anthony walked us through his entire underground residence. He had a swimming pool with wall screens that mimicked the sun and clouds. He had a controller and could make the screens appear as day, night, raining, snowing, or whatever he wanted.

There were four separate lounges. One was more like a nightclub. There were thirty bedrooms and forty bathrooms, enough storable food to last fifty people up to twenty years. There was a garden the size of two football fields with artificial lighting enabling photosynthesis. He had generators and enough fuel to last for decades. This place was huge. It would be easy to get lost in here.

We walked down a hallway and I heard what sounded like a baby crying. It was coming from a door I had just passed. I knelt down, pretending to tie my shoes and watched Anthony and Jay turn the corner. I then tried to turn the handle of the door but it was locked. I could definitely hear multiple babies crying. I decided to catch up to Anthony and Jay.

“I’m going to give you two a head start,” Anthony said. “I have this month’s source key for the Digital Code Clicker that the religious fanatics use to communicate and spread their agenda. It should be good for a few more days. Your first assignment is to find a DCC. Do you think you can do that?”

Anthony spent the next fifteen minutes educating us on how great his life was, then handed us the source key and sent us on our way.

As Jay and I rode back to the first floor, I eyed Jay silently. He had a plumpish physique with an oval face and receding hairline which reminded me of Jon Lovitz from the old Saturday Night Live. I didn’t really want to get friendly with the guy.

Jay noticed me eyeballing him and broke the silence.

“You know, Johnny, we don’t need him and could just report to the SCS board on our own,” Jay surmised. “He’s not really doing us any favors by taking whatever percentage of the points he deems

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fair. The source key isn't going to help us without a DCC.”

I kept quiet. Jay made sense, but I knew he was not trustworthy. As we made our ascent, I couldn't shake the thought of "Yeah! That's the ticket!" and inadvertently let out a stifled laugh which prompted his flummoxed expression.

The next morning, I bought ten wool-lead blankets and gave three to Alex, Harry, and Manny, explaining to them what Anthony had shared about being protected from 12G danger. I then took the AT and two blankets, one for Lori and one for Alex's mom. I was hoping to get my first crack at trying this code in her DCC.

## Chapter 29

I found myself enjoying Lori's company more and more. She was different than any other female I had ever spent time with. She had qualities that I had never seen. She was patient, kind, and gentle. She was unselfish. She had an inner peace and loving heart. She had a zest for life, even in this terrible world, and she seemed happy and full of joy all the time. I never heard her speak out of turn or do anything brash or stupid, unlike yours truly. She was faithful to her friends and relatives even when they didn't deserve it, and she had faith in a God that I didn't understand. She was a good person through and through. And not as naïve as I originally thought.

These qualities were as antithetical to my personality as light was to darkness; nevertheless, the more time spent with her, the more I became emotionally attached. I decided I didn't want FRIEND to take her away or for anything bad to happen to her, so I would avoid seeking SCS points from her directly and would instead go after other Christians.

I had some type of internal conflict in my mind, as if a battle for thoughts was taking place inside my head. Two voices, the voice that I knew and always obeyed was still by far the loudest, yet there was this little whisper of a voice that wanted me to go in the opposite direction. I appeased the louder voice by reasoning that I could get more SCS by using Lori as a lead source for finding other Christians

and their underground groups. If FRIEND removed her, then she would no longer be a source of leads.

I knocked on her door while holding two wool-lead blankets in my hands in the same manner as one would hold a wedding ring bearer's pillow. Lori answered with a smile, looking well-rested for the first time since I had met her, and invited me inside.

Alex's mom was there. She laughed at the dumbest jokes. I tried to tell her a different one each time I saw her.

"at-Whay o-day ou-yay et-gay en-whay ou-yay oss-cray a-yay obot-ray and-yay a-yay actor-tray?" I asked.

"unno-Day. at-Whay?" Alex's mom replied.

"A-yay ans-Tray armer-Fay!"

The joke produced a chuckle from Alex's mom, but Lori tilted her head with a crooked smile that told me "dumb joke".

I gave them both the wool-lead blankets and instructions about how to be protected from the third Thursday of every month. They were both thankful. Then I asked Alex's mother if she could give Lori one hour of PT.

PT was Privileged Time. Alex's mom's household got three hours a day and she could give one hour to Lori so long as Lori wore a disguise to obscure her enough to avoid facial recognition. The drones spot everyone leaving their home and record the time against the household PT, so long as the face isn't recognized. For some reason, a big nose seemed to work the best. My SCS allowed me ten hours PT per day.

"Yes-yay, at's-thay ine-fay," Alex's mom replied, as she reached for the table picking up a big SpongeBob Squidward Tentacles nose and then handed it to Lori. Lori put on her government-issued mask and then fashioned the nose on her face. The drones could read your face through a GIPE mask but not through an additional disguise that you put on.

"ere-Whay are-yay e-way oing-gay?" Lori said through her masks. She was cute even with a big nose.

"et's-Lay o-gay o-tay eL-yay eL-yay ark-Pay" I answered. I always thought this park's name was silly. Prior to the first pandemic, the park was called "John F Kennedy Park", but the socially-correct overlords didn't want a park named after a

privileged white man, so they changed it to “Love is Love Park” which we just abbreviated.

We took the AT to the park and both got out and headed for a sidewalk path that surrounded a large lake. The skies were still darkened as they had been since the Great Reset; nevertheless, the park provided the most calming weather that I had experienced in recent memory. There were few people around that day. The center of the park is wide open, but there are trees surrounding the edges. The two of us walked together, careful to speak softly so as not to be picked up by the drones flying around. Lip reading wasn't a concern since our mouths were covered completely by our GIPE and the silly masks.

A woman walking two small Yorkshire Terriers was headed towards us. Lori spotted them first and went ahead of me to greet them. When I spotted them, the first thought that came into my head was how far into the lake I could throw them, and if I would need to grab them both first to prevent one from escaping. I tried to erase those thoughts from my mind.

The two puppies greeted Lori with tails wagging, trying to lick her face, but when they got wind of me, they turned into little devil dogs showing their teeth and barking like I was an evil threat. Dogs just knew me. Their reaction surprised Lori. The woman walking the dogs tried to make me feel a little better by saying, “They don't warm up to many strangers quickly.” I thought to myself, just within kicking distance to punt one of them in the lake, but then immediately abandoned the idea.

We continued walking and spotted a bench in the distance under a large oak tree all by itself. We walked towards it and sat together.

“Lori, are you a member of an Underground Religious Group?” I asked point blank.

“Yes. Are you?” she replied.

“No, but I'm looking for one.” That may have been the first honest answer I ever gave her.

“To join our group, you have to be vetted first,” she explained. “We wish we could just take in anyone into our URG like the old days when I was a little kid, but we have to be smart too

for our own safety.”

“I understand,” I said. This is going to be harder than I thought.

“I can’t invite you unless you meet with one of the leaders and make a good impression,” she continued. “There are so many people wanting to do us harm that we have to be careful. Everyone has to go through this process.”

“What questions might the leader ask?” I inquired.

“He’d start with an easy one,” she said. “Like—can you give me a Bible verse?—and then move on to your testimony which you would need to share with him as personal as it might be, followed by some general questions about the life of Jesus and His teachings.”

Lori looked at me and paused as if she was considering something and then she asked, “Can you tell me a Bible verse?”

Okay, this was not good. I searched through every recollection for some biblical memory that might satisfy her and then I remembered that I did know a couple of verses.

“This is my Bible,” I answered her. “I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do.” I was proud of my seamless delivery.

Lori looked disappointed.

“That’s not in the Bible,” she informed me. “It’s Noel Snowsteen, a prosperity gospel which is false. The Bible says that all that shall live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

“You don’t have a Bible, do you?” she asked.

“No,” I confessed.

“If you took the vetting test now,” Lori warned, “then you would fail, but I will teach you what you need to know about the Bible and the life of Jesus and be sure you know it before you meet with the leadership.”

“Thank you, Lori,” I replied. “That means a lot to me.”

It did mean a lot to me. A lot of SCS points.

## Chapter 30

Once again, I found myself sitting outside of Lori's apartment in an AT monitoring the CIRMOM 4 which confirmed she was in her EF and sleeping. I had the source key for the DCC which Anthony had provided to me, but this was a first and I did not want to screw this up. I decided I needed to learn enough to pass the URG vetting test before using Lori's DCC and I wondered if Anthony might have an easy way to pass the test, so I took the AT to his house.

I was waved past the guard gates and passed the guest house and arrived at the thirty-foot double doors, standing just a few steps outside of his gaudy monstrosity. The doors opened and I entered. It looked like Anthony was having some type of party as the place was loaded with beautiful women. There were dozens of them and all looked like supermodels. Anthony greeted me and took me into a large room that appeared to be a library or office.

Trying to be considerate I said, "I don't want to take you away from your guests."

"I don't have any guests," Anthony replied.

"Then who are all of those alluring women just outside this door?" I asked, confused.

"They look real, don't they?" Anthony answered.

He went on to explain that they were all androids with state-of-the-art technology that was levels above the robots that we had

seen at Robby's Café. My first thought was that finally Manny could get a girl who didn't care about his foul stench, but then immediately changed gears to move forward with the business at hand.

"I found a DCC," I informed Anthony, prompting him to smile. "But I won't be able to pass their screening process and was hoping you could teach that part to me."

Anthony walked over to the bookshelves and grabbed a book and laid it on the table in front of me. To my surprise, it was a Bible. I was bewildered and didn't try to hide my confusion as I tried to make sense of it.

"Aren't you worried about the SCS Board?" I asked.

"No, I'm not," Anthony said confidently. "Rules for thee and none for me."

He paused, then continued.

"Do you know what happens to the people who are taken away by FRIEND?"

I waited for him to expound as his questions were largely rhetorical.

"We send them to re-education camps," Anthony explained. "If successful, then they are relocated with their new identity. The ones who can't be deprogrammed, we execute."

I thought "We?" I figured he was involved, but didn't know the extent of it.

"ICD-9-CM E978 is a medical billing code," he elucidated further, "that was established years before the first pandemic. It is the code for all executions performed at the behest of the judiciary or ruling authority and the authorized method that is most common is beheading."

"And guess who sits on the ruling authority board?" he asked again rhetorically.

"It's a high like nothing else. I can't even explain it, what it's like to authorize the beheading of a Christian," he affirmed.

I had personally killed, or authorized to be killed, hundreds of people, but it didn't give me a "high". I only did it for revenge or for the money. I contemplated, how twisted do you have to be to do it for fun? But in my demeanor, I indicated I was on board with

his perversion.

“Now, on the other hand,” Anthony continued, “a churl like you can’t be caught with one.” He laughed and gave a pompous smile.

“But don’t worry,” he said. “I will let you study in this library whenever you want. There is an entrance to the house on the east side and it’s always open because only a few friends know of it. Enter the boathouse and use the code 632161236 and press # and you will have a door open to a staircase that brings you down into the underground tunnels that branch and climb into the house. The doors to the entrances into the house are labeled, so just look for “Library”.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have debauchery to attend to,” he said with a smirk as he headed toward the door.

Just as his hand gripped the door knob, he turned to me to say, “If you want to get laid, then take your pick from the herd. They go through a cleansing process after each use, and you can’t get them pregnant.” He laughed and I heard the door close behind him.

No thanks, I thought. I’ve done some crazy things, but I’ll stick with real women, as sex with a robot is too bizarre. Reminded me of that one segment on the old animated sci-fi film *Heavy Metal*, based on the graphic magazine, where that girl did it with the robot. Those stories were linked by the release of a green crystalline sphere called a Loc-Nar that supposedly held “the sum of all evil” influencing all who came in contact with it. I felt like I had stumbled on the Loc-Nar in Anthony’s compound.

Anthony’s bloodthirsty appetite for beheadings was more than a little disturbing to me. I was noticing more and more differences between Anthony and me and briefly wondered why, but then decided to open the Bible.

The first book in the Bible was called Genesis. I started in the first chapter by reading: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.”

I continued reading about how plants were made on the third

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day before there was a sun to drive their photosynthetic processes, two magic trees: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, and a talking snake.

Adam dies at the age of 930, contrary to the false prophecy that Adam would die the same day that he ate the forbidden fruit. Seth lived for 912 years, Enos until 905, Cainan until 910, Mahalalel for 895 years, and Jared to 962.

I continued to read about other make-believe events and surmised ‘what a bunch of rubes’—these people probably believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

I stopped when I got to the rainbow being a covenant that God would not destroy the world again by flood. I was tired and put my head down on the table to rest. I fell asleep and had the most vivid dream—well, it wasn’t a dream; it was a nightmare.

I was in a tunnel that went down, down, down towards the center of the Earth. A hideous demon was wrapped around me and taking me to a place that I knew I would not escape from.

I was terrified and without hope. I continued going lower and lower with increasing speed. I could hear the terror-stricken screams of millions of people below and it started to get hot, very hot. I sensed the demon could read my mind, as he smiled mercilessly, my fright causing him exceeding joy.

Just then I woke up in Anthony’s library. My face was drenched in sweat, my heart racing. Anthony’s place was completely unnerving. I put the Bible back on the shelf and left.

## Chapter 31

This was taking too long. I was antsy to get started on scoring by taking down Underground Religious Groups, but I wanted to avoid harming Lori or her group as I learned that her unwavering conviction would be rewarded with beheading. I didn't like reading the Bible and was hearing a voice inside telling me to avoid it, but I enjoyed reading Lori's diary, so I decided to look at the pictures I had taken of the pages and hopefully learn enough to pass a leader test at another URG.

I was a little shocked to read that her father was abusive. Sounded like her dad and my stepdad could have been bowling buddies. That shock was soon followed by anger. I wanted to kill her dad. I continued reading.

Her father was verbally abusive for as far back as she could remember, but when she was fifteen, her dad hit her, giving her a black eye. He didn't want her going to school until it was healed and kept her home for two weeks. Lori was an 'A' student, but she received failing grades on the quizzes and tests she missed and was not allowed to retake. She spent that entire two weeks praying for her father.

When she was eighteen, her father was charged with both a hit-and-run and DUI. His blood alcohol level was 0.17%. The car he smashed had a pregnant woman and she later miscarried. Her dad was charged with vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and

sentenced to four years.

Lori wrote to her father twice a week for that four years. She found the victim who had lost her child in her dad's accident and befriended her. Lori invited her to her URG called The Refuge. The woman's car was totaled in the accident and Lori drove her to religious gatherings or anywhere she wanted. On the third visit to The Refuge, Lori wrote that there was something she called an "altar call" and this woman went to the front and "accepted Jesus" whatever that meant. She didn't really explain it in the diary entries.

I was having mixed emotions reading about these events. How empathetic she was for the victim and how selfless she was with her love and forgiveness of her father. She belonged in the Perfect-Person Hall of Fame. I started to reflect on my life and the harm I caused to others. Thinking on those people, I experienced feelings of shame and remorse, both foreign to me. I tried to block out those feelings as they would make me soft and that kind of an attitude would get me killed on the streets. I continued reading.

Lori was married at the age of nineteen to her high school sweetheart Jonathan who was twenty-one and in the Air Force. To my surprise, she was a virgin until her wedding night. Her husband Jonathan was sent overseas to the Middle East. She stayed faithful to him the whole time. He was stationed in Bagram Air Base in Parvan Province, Afghanistan and when on military leave, only two miles outside of the base, an IED exploded killing him and seriously injuring two others. Lori was a widow in her early twenties. She never remarried.

I blotted out all the foreign emotions that would make me weak, and instead focused on the goal at hand—scoring points for URGs. I adopted the "testimony" of Lori's friend who did the altar call, so I was ready there. I memorized two Bible verses: 1) Matt 7:1 Judge not, lest ye be judged, and 2) Exodus 21:24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. The only other thing left was to learn about the life of this Jesus character.

Once again, more far-fetched fairy tales. This guy Jesus was born of a virgin, um OK, yeah that can happen. John 6:53 said "Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

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Were his followers cannibals? Jesus was God, but it also listed God as the Father, and God as a Spirit. So how many Gods were there? If he was God then why would he allow himself to suffer and die? I had so many unanswered questions, but I knew Lori could answer them for me, so I planned to invite her back to Robby's Café.

That's when Alex informed me that his mother was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. Both of her kidneys were failing. She was on dialysis and deteriorating fast. They were searching for a compatible donor for her AB blood type. Alex was tested to have blood type B which is compatible as a donor to AB. Lori knew that her blood type was A and the doctor informed her that her blood type qualified her to donate her kidney to her aunt. She volunteered.

This news made me mad. Alex was her son, and he should be the one to donate to his mother. What if Lori died from complications from this procedure? I was fuming at how selfish Alex was being. Then, on my way to see him, I learned that his mother passed away.

It made me think of life and death. Did his mother cease to exist or was there really an afterlife? What if Heaven and Hell are real? What would happen to me if I died? I tried to think of some good things I did in my life and the best I could come up with was giving free drugs out to get people hooked. I didn't think that really counted as a good thing. I really hadn't done anything good in my life. Doesn't matter I told myself, I would soon fill those empty feelings with the trappings of a sky-high SCS.

## Chapter 32

**E**ven when I was a kid, I did not like funerals. I hadn't been to any kind of memorial service in decades. Of course, times had changed. Billions had died in a short time, so the funeral itself became a thing of the past. Mass burnings of bodies were generally the rule, and the handling of dead bodies was closely controlled by UN regional headquarters.

Alex and especially Lori were determined to have a celebration of Alex's mother's life, and they wanted possession of the body to bury her themselves. Normally, the local health facility just took a body in their possession to the incinerator on premises to burn it along with whoever else died that day. The UN made that law years ago, to deal with all the fall-out from the billions of dead bodies.

For enough SCS points and if you had a contact, you could negotiate with the local health authorities to have the body handed over so you could have a private cremation and burial. Fortunately, Alex's mom had a close friend at the local health facility. So, between me, Alex, and several friends and relatives, we pooled our resources to get that done. Alex's mother's body was delivered to Alex wrapped in a compost wood-based casket that could be buried in the ground safely or cremated. The agreement was that there was to be no large gathering of people for any reason, which was always illegal.

Alex and Lori invited as many as they could, and they met secretly in a nearby underground location that Lori knew was safe. Having this many people gathered in one place was sure to bring a FRIEND or two or three. To keep the drone surveillance confused, people entered the entrance to the underground facility in groups of two or three over a two-hour period.

At the appointed time, the memorial started. Almost everyone was crying including Alex, and I had never seen Alex cry before. The only ones with dry eyes were Manny and me. I was incapable of shedding tears for any reason and Manny was always a bit callous. I was standing in the back of the room with Manny wondering if he would cry at my funeral when he interrupted that thought.

“These people left their belongings in the room behind us,” Manny said. “I wonder if there is anything valuable?”

I had no problem stealing from the grief stricken but wasn’t motivated to do so just then, so I turned my head towards him and whispered, “Okay, see what you can find.” Manny exited through the door behind me.

Alex’s mom had a lot of friends. Most of these people I had never seen before. They went up one at a time and took turns speaking tearfully from a make-shift podium which was directly in front of the compost casket. Alex went before the crowd and managed to say a few sorrow-stricken words.

When he left to take his seat, Lori stood and walked toward him giving him a warm embrace and then she stepped up to the front to speak. She stood there for probably ten seconds saying nothing. She then turned to look at the casket. She turned back to carefully make eye contact with nearly everyone in the crowd.

“My aunt was very dear to me. She took me in when I lost my parents. She fed me, she clothed me, she loved me. I am most thankful to have had an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with her.”

I became concerned, as these words could be the mainspring for her disappearance by anyone in the audience willing to trade Lori’s life for 3,500 SCS points. I also wondered if this was a room protected from surveillance. I assumed it was because Lori herself

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picked it, but it seems the local officials are always on the watch. I was worried for her, but kept quiet as she poured her heart out to the crowd.

“I’m trusting in God,” Lori continued, “and hoping my aunt is in Heaven right now. My prayers were for her to be welcomed by Jesus, but the truth is I do not know for sure and her fate was sealed at death. Whether she made it to Heaven or not has been decided for her and she no longer has a choice.”

These words were not consoling, I thought. She wasn’t very good at this. But she continued.

“Your fate, however, has not been decided. You still have a choice. I don’t care how wicked of a person you have been to date. I promise you that Jesus loves you and died for you. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then it is by His mercy that you are still alive as He is giving you time to turn to Him.”

I looked at the doors behind me fearing FRIEND might enter. She continued still.

“Jesus loves you, but His love for you is not enough for you to be with Him in Heaven, because He needs to know you. To know Jesus Christ means He changes you and gives you a new heart and with that heart you will be able to have a relationship with Him. Jesus loves you, but he wants to know you. If you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, then with a sincere heart, you can accept Him today. I’m here if anyone wants to talk.”

She left the podium with a tear in her eye and went back to her seat.

Just then, Manny returned, tapping me on the shoulder and signaling with his hand for me to follow him through the exit. I left and he brought me to the room containing the funeral guests’ belongings.

“The only thing I found is this,” Manny said as he held a device in his hand presenting it to me to evaluate. It was a DCC.

“That’s nothing of value, Manny,” I lied. “It’s a device that connects to a body-cleaning machine.” I knew that would get Manny to discard it. Hygiene and Manny did not get along. He set it back in the purse where he found it.

After everyone was done speaking, most of us headed for the catered bar for drinks. The bar was Alex's idea. Lori didn't want that at her aunt's memorial service, but agreed because she knew that the enticement of a bar at a memorial service would attract more people who weren't believers when she delivered that message about Jesus.

At the bar, Alex got sloshed, attempting to dull the pain, which was understandable. The four of us were huddled together when Harry suggested a new business venture.

"I found a black market for organs," Harry explained. "We were going to see if we could find a match for Alex's mom but there were none compatible with her blood type. The brokers said big incentives were paid for finding organs and I have a list. Each one of these located and successfully removed gets credited on your Score app with the equivalent of 5,000 to 12,000 SCS. All we do is find the organ donors and call the Organ Extraction Team. The OET does the rest, then we get paid."

"I'm in," said an inebriated Alex quickly.

"Me too," replied Manny and then they all looked at me.

My mind was on Lori, but I saw they were seeking a response.

"Let's do it," I replied.

Lori was with a small group of people on the opposite side of the room. They were huddled together with their hands laid on one another, so I figured she was preoccupied. I would just talk with her later one-on-one. I exited to steal the DCC. When I returned, she was by herself.

"Lori, are you okay?" I asked.

"Yes, but I can't stay," Lori replied.

"We have a catered bar here. You have to go?" I pleaded.

"No. What I meant is that I can't stay at my aunt's house anymore as her apartment will be given to someone else. I have to go. I have to leave from here."

I paused, and thought about it for second

"You can stay with me," I suggested, hoping.

"No Johnny," she declined. "Thank you, but I can't do that. I'm leaving tomorrow night to join my URG family. They have a

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place for me to stay at least temporarily. Can you give me a ride to the outskirts of town?"

"Yes, but I don't want to see you go. Spend tomorrow with me."

She thought about that for a second.

"Okay," she replied.

I had no idea what tomorrow would bring, but at least she promised another day with me.

## Chapter 33

I spent the entire next day with Lori. It was the best day I had in recent memory, but it was also the saddest because she was leaving that night. I enjoyed her company immensely, and I sensed the feeling was mutual. She explained Jesus to me, and I resolved to learn, as it was a pathway to taking down Underground Religious Groups, and with enough SCS, I could get Lori her own place. However, I was not buying any of this as it was just too fantastical and outlandish.

“Why did Jesus have to die?” I asked, with sincerity.

Lori explained it to me. But it didn’t make sense.

“There are three parts to God’s personality: righteousness, judgment, and lovingkindness. God’s righteousness is perfection and so much so that He exists in unapproachable light. He requires this same righteousness from mankind, but we are incapable of that level of perfection in and of ourselves. His law which He subjects Himself to requires that the penalty for sin is death. All have sinned and are deserving of that death sentence. There was no escaping that as it says in John 3:16 of the Bible:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

She paused for a moment, and then continued.

“Jesus stood in our place and took on the penalty that we

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deserved. All we have to do is truly believe this in our heart, confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, and God can give you a new heart and He imputes to you His righteousness. This is what is meant by being born again. If you are not born again before you die, then you have to stand before the judgment seat of God and give an account for every sin. All of those not born again will be thrown into a Lake of Fire.”

I heard the words she was saying but didn't understand them; nevertheless, I was determined to parrot them back to pass any URG test. I spent the entire day with her. Then, it was time for me to bring her to the outskirts of town.

“You want me to drop you off here?” I asked. “This is near the woods. There's nothing around here.”

“Yes, this is my stop,” she said.

We looked into each other's eyes for a moment, then Lori spoke again.

“Before I go, I want to give you one final verse. It's a proverb.”

I was like “a what?”

“Do you know what an honest answer is like?” she asked.

I had never been honest in my life, so no I really didn't know, so I just sat there waiting for her to finish this riddle.

“An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.”

She kissed me and then said “Proverbs 24:26” as she left the AT. I watched her walk away and then she disappeared into the wilderness.

I sat there for a few minutes trying to make sense of what just happened. I was sorry to see her go and wondered if I would ever see her again. The kiss was only a peck on my lips and I didn't even kiss her back because she caught me off guard, but I felt some exchange in our connection at that moment. Then I snapped back to myself and remembered that I needed to meet the crew for organ harvesting.

## Chapter 34

Here's the list," said Harry as he handed a piece of paper to Alex. Alex stared at the list for a few seconds, then looked up at Harry.

"How are we going to know the blood type?" Alex asked.

"Doesn't matter," Harry answered, "because pretty much every blood type is on the list. It's just that some pay better than others. But we aren't going to be able to find that out until the OET team shows up."

Manny chimed in. "Where do we find our victim?"

"I'm thinking Robby's Café would be good," Harry replied. "It's connected to Robby's Atomic Motel. We look for someone who has rented a room for the night and is dining alone."

"Okay then," Alex jumped in. "Johnny and I will go ahead to the Café to find and drug them and then we leave before Harry and Manny enter the Café still clothed in their GIPE and take the victim to their room. You feel me?"

I was physically with them as they were plotting, but my mind was elsewhere. I was wondering if I would ever see Lori again. I told myself just get your first URG for 100,000 points and then everything else will fall into place.

Later that day, the four of us took the AT to Robby's and as we were riding, Alex handed me a plastic bag.

"This is Scopolamine, also called Devil's Breath," Alex told

us. “Much more effective than Rohypnol, because Scopolamine incapacitates them, putting them into a zombie-like state, making them compliant and highly suggestable. They will voluntarily walk us up to their room. You feel me?”

Again, my heart was not in this scheme as my mind was elsewhere. I was just going along for the ride. The AT stopped. Alex and I exited, and Harry and Manny remained inside still covered in GIPE.

We were seated and served by the same tuxedoed robot guilty of untimely interruptions when I was last there with Lori. The robot remembered me.

“Your puzzle could not be solved because it was the Liar’s Paradox,” Tux Robot said.

The bubble then closed around us. I thought to myself, couldn’t befuddle a hunk of tin. I should have saw that as a sign that the night would not be fortuitous.

Alex and I visually scanned the room. We both spotted the same man dining alone. We instructed our robot to give our victim a drink on our tab and hand him a Scopolamine doused business card. The fact that I used my actual business card with my name showed that I was slipping.

We could see that the Devil’s Breath was beginning to take effect. We left and instructed Harry and Manny to take him to his room. They did and then called the OET team and returned to the AT. That’s when I remembered that our organ donor had my business card. I needed to retrieve it. Harry handed me the room’s DK. I told them to wait and I would return right away.

I entered the room and saw that our victim was inside of a tub full of ice. The OET team had already been there and removed the man’s liver. He was cut open while he was still awake. I will never forget the look he gave me as it was one of sheer terror. I suddenly felt I had done something wrong. I found the business card and picked it up after covering it in paper and left.

I returned to the AT and dropped off Alex, Harry, and Manny at their apartments. I decided I would not get sidetracked by their conniving organ scheme again and instead would focus all my efforts on Underground Religious Groups. I went to study in

Anthony's library.

While in the library, I read a few chapters in the Gospel of Matthew, and after reading for a few minutes, I then became tired and laid my head down to rest. Once again, I had a nightmare.

The view was foggy. Deicide's "In Hell I Burn" was playing at deafening volume. The atmosphere was dark and sinister. I was slowly walking with thousands of people shoulder-to-shoulder down a wide road. Everyone was wearing blindfolds and ear plugs. It was like a slow march of zombies.

I was the only one with eyes and ears opened, and I was overcome with an ominous feeling as we approached our destination. It was a place of intense fire. Once entered, there was no hope of returning. Ghastly 10-foot-tall horned demons, half man and half pig or bird, surrounded the wide road we were traveling down. They were there to keep anyone from changing paths.

I saw another path to the right that was narrow. I saw Lori walking on that path which had a light at the end of it. I tried moving towards her path, but the crowd was thick and I couldn't budge. I gave it all of my effort, but I couldn't move an inch and instead was forced to keep slowly walking with the mob forward towards the fire. I could now hear screams. The demons were feeding on our fear and laughing. One of them saw that I didn't have blinders on and tried repeatedly to poke my eyes with his spear. And then I woke up. I was drenched in sweat.

I noticed that my finger was on a passage in the Bible, Matthew 7:13-14, which said: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

I figured I must have read that just before I fell asleep and had that dream. Why couldn't it have been a dream where I was on the narrow path to life? Deep down I knew the answer was that I was not worthy. I tried expelling that thought from my mind.

I exited the library into the tunnel and, instead of taking a left to the boat house, I walked to the right. Each door was labeled. The first door was Guest Bedroom 1, followed by Guest Bedroom 2 through 50, the next was Kitchen, Billiard Room, some more normal

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rooms and then it started to get weird.

There was a door labeled Laboratory 1 which was followed by Laboratory 2 through 10, which was followed by Chimera 1 through 10. Then there were doors which were labeled Sacrifice 1 through 10. I turned around to exit to the boathouse but, when passing by the Chimera doors, my curiosity compelled me to stick my head into Chimera 1. The door was unlocked. I entered.

I could hear things moving around in there, but the room was too dark to see. I found a light switch and flipped it on. The room blinded me with light.

When my eyes adjusted, I could see there was a glass case about 20 by 20 feet. Some animals in the cage started running towards the glass in front of me. When they got close, I could see that they weren't animals, at least not completely. They were half man and half possum. One of them looked at me as if making an appeal for his escape. To my shock, it spoke to me.

“Help me. I'm hu-man.”

I turned the light off and exited.

## Chapter 35

I had both the DCC and the source key, and decided it was time to get my first Underground Religious Group. I looked through what was scribbled on the paper and saw that there was a code for “Hi” so started with that. Clicked send and waited.

A half hour went by and no reply. I waited. An hour passed and still no reply. Waited some more. Two hours passed with no response. I looked through the codes to see what else I might send and just then I got a response on the DCC which translated was “Rocket Space Center 4 PM tomorrow.”

The RSC was a social club about five minutes away. Am I supposed to be there tomorrow at 4 PM? How will they find me? How will I find them? I was confused.

The DCC translated another message: “Olive Tree and Lampstand.”

Okay, I’m even more confused now. I waited for more instructions but there were none. The next day, having received no more information, I headed to the RSC a few minutes before 4 PM not knowing what to expect.

It was a busy day. The RSC is a contained building but there is no roof, so it’s kind of like a park inside a mall.

RF5 robots were there to serve the patrons, but RF5’s were antiques, at least six generations behind; we were up to RF11 or even higher as evidenced by the ones at Anthony’s. The RF5 resembled

R2D2 from *Star Wars*.

I took a seat as close to the center as possible and waited. I saw a man enter wearing a shirt that had an olive tree and a hat that had a lampstand. He took a seat about thirty yards north of me and was watching Centernet which is the government-sponsored news source. Okay, that's my cue, I reasoned. I walked over towards him.

I stood a few feet away.

“Hi. I like your shirt and hat,” I said to him.

“Thanks,” he replied. He didn't turn to face me and continued watching Centernet. From his body language, it didn't look like he was there to meet me.

I was still standing somewhat perplexed trying to make sense of this when a young kid accidentally bumped into me and spilled his drink on my pants, to which I cursed him. The kid apologized and left and when I turned back around, Lampstand Hat was gone. I think I just failed the test.

I returned to my apartment and studied the DCC and code and noticed that there was a dial that indicated there were ten places that the message could be sent. It was on 1 and I turned it to 2 and sent another “Hi.”

I got a reply right away: “LL Park 2 PM tomorrow.” I waited and then a few minutes later the next message arrived which translated read “Rev 21:19-20.”

I went to Anthony's to find these two Bible verses in the Book of Revelation:

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.”

I showed up at LL Park at 2 PM and sat on the bench that Lori and I had previously shared. I was thinking about her and motivated to get the SCS points that would surely make me happy and would be sufficient to get Lori her own place. Two women were walking together on the path around the lake and they were headed my way.

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Each of them had identical shirts that both read “Bling”. When they got close to me, I said “nice shirts”. They stopped walking and engaged in a conversation with me.

“What’s on your mind?” one of them replied, as they both studied me.

“I need to find a Christian URG,” I said quietly.

“You know we could make 3,500 SCS points by turning you in,” one of them responded.

I kept quiet. Wondering if I had made a mistake in stopping them.

“Aren’t you a follower of the OWR?” the second woman asked.

I paused and considered the question, then decided to roll the dice in replying.

“No, I’m not. I’m a follower of Jesus Christ.”

It worked. They sat down with me. We had a twenty-minute conversation and I think I passed because they directed me to a place far from town at 7 AM the next day.

## Chapter 36

About twenty minutes before 7 AM, I took the AT way out of town and arrived in the quadrant that they specified. I got out and waited. There was nothing out here but a forest of trees. I was standing there for more than thirty minutes and starting to get angry, but tried to maintain a calm demeanor at least outwardly.

A man approached me from a small clearing about a hundred yards north of me. He stopped about ten yards away and looked at me.

“Johnny, come this way,” he said.

I entered the wooded area walking in his direction. He was wearing an Elvis Presley mask. I only knew that because my mom had been an Elvis fan from way back.

He scanned me with some type of device which beeped in two different locations on my body.

“You need to put those back in your AT,” he said.

What he had found were two devices which were trackable by GPS. I complied by placing them in the AT and then returned to him in the woods.

He instructed me to turn around and he placed a blindfold over my eyes. He walked me about twenty yards east with diligence making certain I didn’t stumble. Then, he told me to turn around clockwise quickly as a dog chases his tail. I did this for ten seconds.

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He then said stop and had me turn around in the opposite direction for another ten. I was dizzy but he held my arm, guiding me through the woods—in which direction, I did not know as I was disoriented from the spinning. He was careful to tell me when to step over or around anything in my way.

We walked for twenty minutes and finally came to a stop. I heard the sound of brush being swept and then the sound of a lid opening. He carefully led me into a hole and made sure I had a firm grip on the ladder and then instructed me to climb down the ladder. I climbed thirty rungs and then reached the bottom.

“Can I remove this blindfold now?” I asked.

“No, not yet,” the Elvis character said.

He sat me in a chair and I could hear other people enter the room. They started singing a song that I had never heard before, but already knew I hated that song more than the OWR anthem.

“The church's one Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord  
She is His new creation, by water and the Word  
From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride  
With His own blood He bought her  
And for her life He died.”

I couldn't take much more of this. I felt like I was going to explode in anger. They continued singing.

“Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth  
Her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth  
One holy Name she blesses, partakes one holy food  
And to one hope she presses, with ev'ry grace endued.”

I reached my limit and suddenly felt as if I was sitting in the back of a bus with someone else driving recklessly. I had no control over my vocal cords. I witnessed myself speaking in German which was a language I did not know, nor did I understand what I was saying.

“Halt die Klappe, ich hasse sie!!!”

They stopped singing and then I heard a new voice which

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was different than the Elvis Presley masked man who led me there. It was a man's voice.

“Johnny, you have a demon.”

I heard him, but I was still in the proverbial back of the bus.

“Speak to me in English, demon!” the man said. “What is your name?”

There was no response.

“In Jesus's name, I command you to speak to me in English and identify yourself,” the man said.

“Anger!” the driver of the bus replied.

“Who else is with you?” the man demanded to know.

There was no response.

“I command you in Jesus's name to tell me who else is with you.”

“Hate,” the bus driver answered.

“Who is chief among you?” the man asked,

No response.

“If you don't tell me who is chief among you,” the man threatened, “then I will take this and drive it through you.”

This was followed by ten seconds of silence.

“Okay, here it comes,” the man said.

The man hit me in the back with what felt like a book, but it was intensely painful, like a sword cutting into my bone and marrow. The man continued.

“Answer me! Who is chief among you?”

“Jezebel,” the bus driver said.

The man placed the book on top of my head.

“Go down demon! I want to talk with Johnny,” he demanded. Just as he said that, I was back in the driver's seat.

“Do you want me to get rid of them?” the man asked.

In my confusion, I said nothing.

“If you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior,” the man explained, “then when I expel these demons, they will only come back seven times stronger.”

Still confused, I remained silent.

“Do you want to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?” he asked.

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Suddenly I was in the back of the bus again and something in me spoke.

“Jesus doesn’t love this one.”

“You’re a liar, Jezebel,” the man said. “I’m going to sick the dogs of Jezreel on you.”

Silence.

Then the man placed the book on my head again.

“Go down, demon. I want to talk with Johnny.”

Again, I was instantly in the driver’s seat.

“Do you want to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?” he asked me again.

I wanted to answer but something was preventing me from speaking. My mind went as blank as the darkness of the blindfold I was wearing.

“Johnny,” the man said. “The Holy Spirit has bestowed upon me the gift of discernment. You need to be willing to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior before we can go any further. You are not ready.”

With that, he led me back up the ladder, spun me around again, and took me to the AT I travelled in that day.

I sat there for a minute and thought, what did I just experience? This was weird. I’m going to consult with Anthony to see if he can make sense of this.

## Chapter 37

I went to Anthony's compound again, never knowing what to expect or better stated, whenever visiting, to expect the unexpected. I was waved past the guard gates and was standing at the thirty-foot tall double doors when they opened. Something odd-looking darted across the floor.

Anthony entered the foyer, greeted me, then walked me into his office.

"How is URG hunting going?" he inquired.

"Good. I found one," I answered. "They brought me inside one on the outskirts of town in the woods, but they blindfolded me, so I don't know exactly where it is. I just know the general vicinity and that it is underground thirty ladder rungs down."

"Yeah, a lot of them are literally underground," Anthony said. "What they don't know is that I have a new device which can locate them if I know the area."

"I want to get the points, though," I said.

"You'll make at minimum 100,000 SCs," Anthony promised.

I gave him the location that the AT drove me to next to the forest of trees and said it is within thirty minutes walking distance, but not sure which direction.

"I'll find it," he said.

The next day, Anthony informed me that they found the

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religious group and called me into his office. He said the group had forty people, so that would be 180,000 SCS points for me.

“I’ve transferred the 180k into your account already. Enjoy it,” he said. But he had other things he wanted to show me.

“Look, I want you to see this video.”

Anthony directed me to a monitor of heads being decapitated with guillotines and their severed heads rolling on the ground and picked up by people who were laughing and showing them to the camera as if they were trophies.

“Why’d you show me that?” I asked.

“Because, Johnny, this...” Anthony said and then paused for more drama, “...is the culmination of your efforts. These were members of the fanatic group you located.”

I wish he wouldn’t have shown me that. I heard a loud voice in my head telling me this was wrong, very wrong. What was this internal conflict I was having? Why should I care about those people? I wish this image had never entered my mind and I wanted to purge it from my memory. Anthony should have kept his perversions to himself. All I wanted was the SCS points. I told myself, points received, time to celebrate. But I wasn’t happy and actually felt empty and depressed.

The next day I moved into a 1,000 square foot apartment. I could have afforded more, but I wanted to reserve some points to get Lori her own unit when she resurfaced. My newfound success should have made me jubilant, but instead the images made me despondent. I told myself, I just needed some more points and then I would be content.

## Chapter 38

I couldn't shake the feeling that I was responsible for those severed heads, but I pressed on trusting that once enough SCS was garnered, gratification would eventually materialize. I clicked the DCC into position 3 and sent a message of "Hi." I waited four hours. There was no response.

I clicked to position 4 and once again entered the code for "Hi." This time, I received an immediate reply.

"Tectonic Towers 5 PM tomorrow" followed by "Dove".

I've played this game before and knew what to expect. I arrived at Tectonic Towers a few minutes before 5 PM looking for someone wearing a hat or shirt with a dove on it. I was there an hour and the place was fairly empty. I definitely didn't see anyone fitting the dove description and was about to leave when a dove landed on an empty table ten yards away. I walked over to it and it flew away.

I turned to see where it went and it was gone. I looked again at the table where it had landed and there was a man seated there. He was tall with a swimmer's build and blonde hair.

I was about to say hello when I spotted Jay also headed to the table. This was the same Jay that I had met with Anthony and concluded that he was there for the same reason. He looked at me with a criminal cognizance savvy and, even though I didn't trust him, I knew his shrewdness would not allow a common goal to be thwarted. We were going to be partners on this one.

*The Uncovering*

Jay and I both gave a simultaneous “Hello” to the man with blonde hair.

“Hello,” he replied, looking at us in the eyes. “Is there something I can do for you?”

I looked around to make sure there wasn’t someone headed my way to spill a drink on me. With the coast clear, I was about to speak, but Jay started in first.

“Yes, I saw the dove land on this table.”

“Excuse me?” the blonde-haired man said.

The man didn’t wait for a reply, and then quickly got up to leave and then walked off without looking back at us.

Jay and I didn’t know what to make of his sudden departure. I looked down at his chair and spotted a business card. I picked it up and read it out loud.

“Quadrant 742.133 tomorrow 9 PM,” I said.

Jay and I formulated a game plan and agreed to work together and split the SCS points. We arrived the next day in separate AT’s at 9 PM in the quadrant specified.

I realized from my last blindfold experience that it was possible to see a glimpse of my shoes out of the bottom of the mask which was of no help to me at the time, but now equipped with this knowledge, I fashioned a tiny mirror on the tow cap of my right shoe and had a small piece of cloth that I could kick over top of it to conceal it or to expose it. I was hoping this would allow me to get at least a little glimpse of something.

Jay and I arrived in separate AT’s and parked side-by-side at Quadrant 742.133. We exited and waited. It was a full moon that night.

Another AT arrived. A man wearing a Chuck Norris mask greeted us by first waving the wand around each of us. He then placed blindfolds over our eyes and spun us clockwise followed by counterclockwise and then placed us in the back of the AT he was using and we rode away.

We got only a few blocks before they had us exit the car and then spun us around again making us sufficiently dizzy and then put us back in the AT. We drove probably for a half-hour and pulled into some type of garage. The garage door behind us closed. We

exited the AT.

“Come this way,” instructed Chuck Norris. He walked us up a staircase about one hundred steps and then brought us into a room and sat us down.

I looked down at my shoe and discovered that my clever mirror-on-shoe gadget worked. I could tilt my foot and catch glimpses of the room at various angles. I saw people entering the room, but couldn’t see their faces unless I exaggerated my foot position. Unfortunately, that would have brought unwanted attention, so I refrained.

A man entered the room and took a seat in front of us.

“Good evening, Johnny and Jay,” the man said. “I’m one of the elders of this group. Please share with us how you came to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?”

We both sat in silence for about thirty seconds. When I realized that Jay wasn’t going to speak, I tried to recite Lori’s altar call diary entry for her father’s victim while inserting myself into the story. I began spinning my yarn while hoping it would somehow be believable.

“It was about ten years ago. My car was hit by a drunk driver and totaled. I had...”

I paused as I was about to say I had a miscarriage.

“I had my puppy in the car at the time. My puppy died and I was devastated,” I said while trying to be sad in my delivery.

“What was your puppy’s name?” the elder asked.

I had to think quick and gave the first name that came in my head.

“Manny!” I blurted out. Then I added, “He didn’t like baths.”

“Please continue Johnny,” the elder said.

“I was really depressed, and the daughter of the drunk driver reached out to me and brought me to her URG. The third time I was there, I responded to the altar call.”

I was hoping this sounded plausible.

“What was the name of the daughter?” he asked.

“Lori,” I said.

The elder then turned to Jay.

*The Uncovering*

“What about you, Jay? What’s your testimony?”

“It’s personal,” Jay replied.

“You don’t want to share your testimony?” the elder asked. “The Bible says the power is in your testimony. It’s something as a follower of Jesus Christ that you should be willing to share as God can use it to reach others who need to hear it.”

“I was born into a Christian family,” Jay said, “and have been a believer for as long as I can remember, so I don’t really have a conversion testimony per se. But I am a believer in Jesus.”

I kind of tuned out of their conversation and tried to see what else was in the room. I angled my foot slightly and spotted a humongous pile of books in the corner. Could those be Bibles? There had to be several hundred in that stack. I tried calculating the SCS points in my head when I heard a question directed at me.

“Johnny, can you give me a Bible verse that means something to you?” the elder asked.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged,” I quoted.

“What does that mean to you?”

“Just what it says,” I replied.

“Johnny, did you know that Christians are commanded to judge?” the elder said. “The Bible says in John 7:24 we are to judge righteous judgment. Even the verse that you gave of Matthew 7:1 has more to it in order for you to understand its meaning. You have to continue reading through to Matthew 7:5 to learn that we are supposed to judge, but not hypocritically.”

The elder and others huddled in a corner on the side and were talking amongst themselves. I tried listening to their conversation, but their voices were too hushed. They talked quietly amongst themselves for another five minutes and then approached Jay and me.

“We’re going to make some requests before the throne for the two of you,” the elder said. “That is, unless you object?”

After a brief pause, he continued.

“Jay and Johnny, have you both accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?”

“Yes,” Jay and I said together.

“Do you acknowledge that you are sinners and in need of a

Savior?”

“Yes,” we replied.

“Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” the elder asked, “that he suffered and died on the cross for your sins and on the third day was raised again and is now seated at the right hand of God?”

We both answered “Yes.” I was feeling funny about the lies I was telling. I did my best to keep my composure.

“I want you to pray this prayer with me now,” the elder said. “God, I know that I have sinned against you and am deserving of Hell. I believe that Jesus Christ took the punishment that I deserve so that through faith in Him I could be forgiven. With Your divine help, I place my trust in You for salvation. Thank You for Your wonderful grace and forgiveness, and for the gift of eternal life! Amen!”

My blood was boiling, but I was still trying to keep a poker face and repeat these words, words which I thought to be a Santa Claus fairytale. I then heard noises to my right where Jay sat.

Jay stopped saying the words halfway along, and I heard Jay’s chair rocking back and forth. Like he wasn’t doing it. That was weird.

Jay then started making hissing noises.

The elder addressed Jay.

“What is your name, demon?”

Jay’s demon responded with a hair-raising laugh. A cackle from the pit of Hell.

“In Jesus’s name, I command you to tell me your name,” the elder demanded.

“Leviathan,” Jay’s demon replied.

“Do you have a legal right?” asked the elder.

“Yes,” Leviathan answered.

“What is your legal right?”

“Witchcraft,” Leviathan said.

“How many generations?”

“Forty.”

“What happened?” the elder asked.

“Blood sacrifice,” Leviathan replied.

*The Uncovering*

“Human or animal or both?”

Leviathan laughed again.

“Human,” Leviathan growled.

“Go down, demon! I want to talk with Jay,” the elder asserted.

“We’re buried deep in him. You can’t have him,” said the demon. “We’ll NEVER release him. We are one.”

In an authoritative tone, the elder rebuked the evil spirit.

“We take the sword of the spirit and we separate you. According to Hebrews 4:12, you are now separated!”

The demon let out a blood-curdling shriek from the mouth of Jay.

“I want to talk with Jay!” the elder shouted.

Pause. The elder continued.

“Jay, you have a very powerful demon. If you want to be freed, then you need to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.”

“Heeee doesn’t waaaant to let me goooo,” the demon hissed.

The elder apparently spoke to others in the room.

“Remove Jay. He is not ready.”

Jay was directed away.

The elder then removed my blindfold and spoke to me.

“Johnny, I’m Graham. This is my wife, Ruth.”

Graham motioned to the dark-haired woman standing by his side. She was an attractive woman in her 50s who appeared to be of Native American background.

Graham was a fit, middle-aged man with a full grey beard. He seemed tough, but also friendly. I looked around at the others in the room. There were about twenty-five people of all ages, sizes, and backgrounds. Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, and other races. Kids, elderly, and everyone in between. One man was on crutches with a make-shift cast on his leg, and another woman was in a wheelchair.

I was proud of myself, feeling I accomplished a Herculean task and was wondering how many SCS points I would be awarded. But then, something strange happened. Graham hugged me, followed by Ruth, and then everyone else in the room hugged me warmly one on one. I had not been embraced like that in a long time. Hugging in public had been outlawed by the authorities a long

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

time ago to prevent spreading disease under the guise of keeping us safer. It felt strange at first, but then I felt like I missed it and wanted all the hugs I could get. I actually felt like I liked these people, and I didn't even know them. How was that possible? But then I snapped out of it, dismissing the thought. I had to focus on the real prize—those SCS points.

With eyes opened, I noticed that those were Bibles in the corner.

“How many Bibles are there?” I asked.

“Nearly a thousand,” Graham answered. “We are moving them from this location and delivering them in bundles of twenty to other URGs. It's too much of a liability having them all here in one place.”

“How many people are part of this URG?” I asked.

“More than 500,” Graham said, “and you will meet them all.”

Graham motioned for a couple of the men to step forward.

“We're going to bring you back now, Johnny,” Graham said. “We will have to spin you around and drop you off as we picked you up for at least a few visits before we can have you meet with us on your own. Just a security measure.”

“I understand,” I replied, while at the same time thinking, hmmm, 500 members and 1,000 Bibles! This URG is my ticket to the lavish lifestyle I've been seeking that would finally leave me satisfied.

## Chapter 39

**T**he next day, Anthony called me and Jay into his office. Jay apparently had already reported the URG to Anthony and Anthony wanted to learn more.

“What can you tell me about the URG?” Anthony asked.

“Before we go any further,” I said, “I want to confirm that the points will be split 75/25 since Jay was ejected and I am the one who has been invited back.”

I looked at Jay for confirmation.

“That’s fine,” Jay replied.

“It is a 500-person group,” I said. “How many points is that worth?”

“If there are that many people, then the points should be over two million,” Anthony asserted.

I purposely withheld the 1,000 Bibles because I didn’t feel the need to share those four million points. I would soon be rich. Rich and happy.

“I have a new microscopic device,” Anthony said, “that is undetectable and acts as a GPS. I want you to conceal the device and bring it with you so that we can know the specific location of the URG.”

“Let’s do it,” I replied.

Anthony handed me something that was about the size of a grain of rice which I put in my front pocket.

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

When I returned to my apartment, I noticed there was a message on the DCC which said 7 PM tomorrow at quadrant 745.1222. I was debating whether or not to take Anthony's GPS device and felt like I heard a little voice telling me to leave it behind. I obeyed that voice reasoning that I could bring it next time as I was hesitant to divulge the whereabouts of the URG, feeling it was advantageous to discover more before alerting Anthony which would inevitably result in all of their heads on a platter. I was still uncomfortable with that part, but tried instead to focus on the SCS points and how my status would rise to superstardom.

I arrived at the designated location, was spun around dizzy in the same fashion, and made it to that same garage, but this time they took the blindfold off of me immediately. I noticed they had a CIRMON that looked fancier than mine and I didn't recognize which model number it was.

"Is that a CIRMON?" I asked.

"Yes," Graham answered. "It is a CIRMON 7. No EF required anywhere in this building. We are all invisible to the powers that be. Praise God. They can't hear us either."

I had no idea the CIRMON 7 was even invented and was impressed that somehow they were able to obtain one.

"Now let me introduce you to our family," Pastor Graham said.

He walked me up the steps of that same staircase, but this time we took a left when we reached the upper level. This building must be a converted warehouse. I wondered where it might be located. We took a left into a huge room as large as a football field.

The room was filled with hundreds of people. Everyone was so warm and friendly to one another and I felt that same good feeling I had experienced the last time I was embraced by the smaller group. It kind of made me hesitant to turn this group in, but I shook off those weak emotions and focused on the multi-million SCS points that this trophy would bring.

"These people are all sought after by the authorities as having been reported to be Christians," Graham explained. "They are off the grid and stay here. If they venture out and are caught, they will surely lose their life."

*The Uncovering*

The room had an atmosphere of a gala. There was a band singing spiritual songs. Many people in the crowd were singing. There were large groups of people on their knees praying. This scene was a little surreal and I was astonished that a place with this kind of vibe existed. Again, I squashed any warm and fuzzy feelings, sweeping them under the rug and pressed on. I decided that the next time I visited I would bring the GPS and just as I had that thought, I saw her.

It was Lori. I couldn't believe my eyes.

I was both overjoyed and sad at the same time—fearful for her safety. It was her URG—The Refuge—that I was going to turn in. I needed to convince her to leave with me the next time I arrived. She spotted me and was headed in my direction.

I missed her so much. When we met, we hugged for probably five minutes. I could have stayed there hugging her all day. I took her to the side to have a private conversation.

“Lori, I'm so happy you are safe and that I found you,” I said. “But, you are in grave danger staying here as the authorities will soon be alerted to this URG and you will all be killed.”

“Killed?” Lori asked. “How do you know that?”

“Doesn't matter how I know—I just know,” I replied.

Her expression was one of confusion. I continued.

“I have enough SCS points to get you your own 1,000 square foot apartment right next to mine and in a few days I will be able to get you a top-of-the-line CIRMOM. You will never have to worry about anything. I will take care of you, but you need to leave with me the next time we meet.”

“The Bible says whosoever will save his life shall lose it,” Lori quoted, “and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. I'm not afraid to die.”

Just then, she was called away. With intense sadness, I watched her leave.

## Chapter 40

I couldn't postpone it any longer. I was out of time. A decision had to be made today. If I waited another day, then Jay would get the SCS points for a URG with more than 500 members within a huge warehouse that he would then petition to be put in his name, and even though he didn't know it yet, the cache of more than 1,000 Bibles in the warehouse would soon be discovered and credited to him. I couldn't even calculate the SCS points. This was everything I wanted, but I was still torn.

That voice had gotten so loud it was unbearable. I wanted it out of my head. Why was this even a difficult decision? This Jesus fairytale wasn't real. It couldn't be real. The God they believe in could do anything. How could that God let himself suffer and die for people who wanted him dead?

I paced around my 1,000 square foot apartment all night wishing that voice would shut up and leave me alone. I mentally tried to find a way past it. I continued to pace.

I thought about the concept of "love". Love? What is love? It's just a meaningless word. It hasn't affected my life in forever. No God is going to love someone who killed him. I feel like I had killed God a long time ago. I was living for myself and no one else. There is no such thing as love, I reasoned. It's a made-up concept. I thought about Lori. I didn't "love" her, did I? No! I didn't know what that was. I did like her a lot, though. I had to keep her safe. I

knew that for sure. The battle in my mind intensified. I continued to pace, but then stopped when I remembered I had some MDMA stashed.

I opened the closet to get the drug that I knew would surely quiet that voice and change my mood. I looked in my usual hiding place, but it wasn't there. I was determined to find the pills that would dismantle this quandary and power me through this decision. I continued to search through everything. I knew I had some somewhere.

I couldn't call Alex to make a delivery until tomorrow when the night's stay-at-home orders would give us some reprieve. But I couldn't wait until tomorrow. I was desperate to find those pills.

I moved boxes out of my closet that hadn't been opened in years, searching for some pills that I hoped I had forgotten about. I got down to the last footlocker in the back corner of the closet underneath boxes that I had already moved and searched. What I am looking for is in here, I hoped.

I opened the footlocker and searched. These were items I hadn't seen in years and they brought back memories, some good, some not-so-good. The first gold ring we stole which Alex let me keep. The document showing adjudication of my sentence as a juvi. Why would I keep that, I thought to myself? And that's when I saw it. The Bible given to me by my cellmate Stephen who made me promise I would read it. I picked it up and held it in my hand, thinking about the day he gave it to me.

After several minutes of internal conflict, I decided I would open it and read about something like a talking snake or the parting of the Red Sea or some other impossibility that would confirm this is all folklore. If this book is real, then prove it now, I told this God.

I opened it. The pages crackled from age. It opened to a page in the book of Isaiah. It was Isaiah 53:7.

“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

I thought about the lamb I once loved so much—Bosco—and how he died in my arms when I was a kid. I had put that out of my mind for decades. Now it resurfaced, and began pouring into my

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

memories. I was flooded with emotions about the unconditional love he had for me and how I was utterly devastated by his death. I know what love is! I remembered! I closed my eyes and thought about what the Bible verse could mean. I began to weep, then to full-on sob bitterly. It was like deep wounds within me were miraculously healing. I thought about Jesus on the cross. He was innocent. Just like Bosco. I was utterly broken. I got down on my knees and cried out to a God I never knew existed for sure until that moment. I began to understand what sacrifice was. I began to understand what forgiveness was. I began to understand what love was. I knew I still had a lot to learn. But I felt at that moment that I knew one thing: this Jesus was real.

# Chapter 41

**T**he other voice, the one I had suppressed for years, was taking control of the volume knob in my head. I had to tell The Refuge what I had done and knew they were going to hate me for it, but I had no choice. I looked through the source code for the DCC and entered: “This is Johnny. I have done something very wrong. Your URG is in imminent danger of being discovered because of my actions. You have to relocate right away!”

And then I waited as a few minutes passed, and then an hour, and then hours with no response. My heart sunk. I decided to get on my knees and try to pray.

Each time I did, I yawned and my mind wandered. I wasn’t tired and didn’t understand why I would be yawning. I gave up on trying to pray and paced around my apartment for a half-hour. Then, I tried getting on my knees again and same thing—yawn—then my mind wandered. I got up and paced around some more.

I wondered if the demon bus drivers were somehow preventing me from prayer. I decided I would ask Jesus for help. I got on my knees and prayed.

“Jesus, I know you hear me,” I said, hoping that was true. “I do not know how to pray. I believe you are the precious lamb that was led to slaughter because of all the wrong I caused. I pray that you would be merciful to me and forgive me for the awful things I have done in my life. I am a nobody and do not deserve anything

from you, but I know you love the people in this group and for their sake, please get this warning to them. Please Jesus, warn them.”

The DCC was silent for the entire day and all through the night. A couple times I thought I had heard a message being transmitted to me, but when I checked the DCC there was nothing. Anthony wanted me to report back to him as I was sure his lust for blood had him itching to exterminate my new family. I had to think of a reason why I didn't bring the GPS. I thought about avoiding him completely, but that would be suspicious, and he was a very powerful person in his dark world, so I felt I needed to meet with him.

I arrived at Anthony's compound and entered through the thirty-foot double doors and once again, I spotted something scurrying swiftly across the floor, moving too fast for me to identify it. This place was weird. I felt the same foreboding sense of dread here as in my nightmares. I continued walking to Anthony's office with the most composure I could muster. I needed to delay him as much as possible.

“Johnny, why did you leave the GPS in your apartment yesterday?” Anthony asked.

“That thing is so small,” I said, “it must have fallen out of my pocket. I can't find it.”

Anthony lambasted me.

“This is not like you, Johnny. You're slipping. The GPS is clearly in your apartment. You should have just asked me exactly where it was and I could have directed you to its whereabouts.”

I stayed silent. Anthony then continued.

“You need to bring that GPS with you today when you visit the URG. Understood?”

“Yes. Understood.” And then I left.

I arrived home to see there was still no response on the DCC. It was approaching nighttime and I knew Anthony was tracking my GPS. I decided to send him on a wild goose chase. I left with the GPS and drove downtown, dropping the GPS in the sewer. I knew this would be the kiss of death for me, but I didn't care. I felt I was doing the right thing and I wanted to do more regardless of the consequences I might suffer. I was experiencing strong emotions,

mostly negative: fear, apprehension, uncertainty, but then I also had a new emotion I wasn't familiar with: peace. The peace I was experiencing was like a calming of a storm. But I also knew there was always a peaceful calm before a real storm was unleashed.

I had no idea what to do next, so I returned to my apartment. I checked the DCC and still nothing. I got on my knees again to pray, feeling a little hopeless, but, just as I knelt, there was a knock on the front door. I was hoping it wasn't Anthony's henchmen; nevertheless, if it was time to face the music, then so be it.

I looked at the front door monitor. It was Alex and Lori. I felt a rush of relief as I opened the door.

"ori-Lay ame-cay y-bay o-tay isit-vay" Alex said, "and-yay e-shay anted-way o-tay ow-knay ow-hay o-tay ind-fay you-yay o-say I-yay ought-bray er-hay ith-way e-may. at's-Whay oing-gay on-yay?"

I was silent, looking into Lori's eyes to try to discern if she had told Alex that I was a Christian. I assumed she did.

"Alex-yay," I replied, "I-yay am-yay ure-say is-thay is-yay oing-gay o-tay ound-say ange-stray o-tay you-yay, ut-bay I-yay am-yay one-yay of-yay ose-thay esus-Jay eople-pay ow-nay."

Alex laughed like he never heard something so funny, steamrolling my claim.

"e-Way ave-hay a-yay alf-hay ozen-day eople-pay or-fay our-yay organ-yay arvesting-hay. e-Way eed-nay your-yay elp-hay."

"I-yay on't-day o-day at-thay anymore-yay. I-yay am-yay ot-nay oking-jay about-yay y-may aith-fay in-yay esus-Jay. I-yay ould-way ove-lay or-fay you-yay o-tay oin-jay us-yay."

Alex looked at me puzzled, a look I had not previously seen. It was like we were strangers now instead of close friends. He remained silent, obviously trying to mull over this new information.

Lori broke the silence.

"ohunny-Jay, e-way ot-gay your-yay essage-may and-yay are-yay in-yay e-thay ocess-pray of-yay elocating-ray. Are-yay you-yay in-yay anger-day or-fay alerting-yay us-yay?"

"Yes-yay. I-yay am-yay," I answered.

"en-Thay eave-lay ith-way e-may ow-nay," Lori pleaded.

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

I said goodbye to Alex, who was still a little bewildered, and left with Lori in the AT I was using. That would be the last time I would see that apartment. I was from that point forward a fugitive on the lam—for the Lamb.

## Chapter 42

**W**e traveled in the AT to the outskirts of town. I felt like my new URG family hated me.

“Lori, will our family group ever forgive me for what I did?”

“Of course they forgive you,” Lori said. “They are not upset with you. You did the right thing in warning us. It put you in great danger and I’m proud of you for the courage you showed in doing that.”

“But I was the reason for the trouble to begin with,” I said.

“Johnny, we have to move every 30 days and we were planning to relocate in the next few days anyway. You just moved our timetable up a couple days. We already had the place selected for our move. Trust me. No one is upset with you,” Lori assured.

She continued.

“But we do have a problem in moving the Bibles. It’s too risky to move them all at once, so we need people to hand carry them twenty at a time which means we have fifty trips to make. We need more people to help with the move.”

“Sign me up. I’m in,” I said.

I realized that I was starting to have real feelings for Lori, but I also realized that eventually I would need to confess my past to her. All the horrible things I have done in my life. All my sin. And admit to my lies to her. I was afraid because I wasn’t sure if

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she would ever forgive me. I also knew I had other internal issues to deal with.

I continued.

“But I have a problem that I need help with.”

“What’s that?” she asked.

“Do you have anyone who can perform an exorcism?”

## Chapter 43

I was in a room with some of my new Christian brothers and sisters: Graham, Ruth, Matt, Lisa, Theresa, William, Edward, and Zeke. We were all sitting around a table. Graham stood up holding a cross, and started walking around the table.

“Some of you are here because you feel you may be oppressed by demons,” said Graham. “I want you to know that a true born-again Christian CAN have a demon. The apostle Paul said in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. But today we are going to bind that strong man with the power of Jesus Christ, and we are going to get rid of that demon today.”

Graham continued walking.

“The devil hates unity,” he said. “I’m putting the devil on notice that the people of God are speaking with one voice today. I’m going to enter into some curse breaking and say some things that will bring any demons to the forefront. I want you all to join me by saying ‘in the mighty name of Jesus’ when you see me point this cross to the center of the table.”

“The people of God break any generational curses that may be attached to anyone here,” Graham proclaimed.

He pointed the cross to the table’s center.

“In the mighty name of Jesus,” all said in unison.

“The people of God break all unholy soul ties,” Graham declared.

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He lowered the cross toward the table.

“In the mighty name of Jesus,” the people said together.

“The people of God through the blood of the Lamb cancel any legal right any demon may have,” Graham vowed.

He pointed the cross again and all said “In the mighty name of Jesus.”

“The people of God...”

I started to shake in my seat and felt like I was going to erupt like Mount Vesuvius. Matt told me later that he saw my eyes roll back in my head and could only see the whites of my eyes. I was in the back of the bus again with this thing at the helm, but this time I was blinded and could only hear.

“HALTE DEN MUND, HALT DEN RAND, HALT DIE KLAPPE!!”

These words were expelled from my mouth, but it wasn't me who yelled them.

Matt explained to me later that Graham walked towards me with cross in hand and looked me in the eyes, and he spoke to it.

“What is your name, demon?” Graham asked.

“Sie haben keine Ahnung mit wem Sie es zu tun haben,” it said.

“In English demon, what is your name?” Graham said.

“Hate,” it said.

“Who's in there with you?” Graham asked.

The demon laughed, a slow deliberate cackle.

“I command you in the mighty name of Jesus to tell me who is in there with you,” Graham demanded.

“Anger and Murder,” it said.

“And who else?” Graham said forcefully.

The demon remained silent.

“In Jesus's name, I command you to tell me who is chief among you,” Graham said.

“Jezebel,” it answered. And I was told later that its flirtatious and rebellious expression came over my face.

“Oh Jezebel, I suspected you might be hiding in there,” Graham stated with a smile. “So nice to see you.”

Jezebel giggled.

*The Uncovering*

“Jezebel, do you have a legal right?” Graham asked.

“Yes,” it said.

“What is your legal right?”

“He hates his stepfather,” it said.

Graham took the Bible and placed it on my head.

“Go down, demon. I want to talk to Johnny.”

I was back in the driver’s seat and could see once again.

“Johnny, what did your stepfather do to make you hate him?” Graham asked.

“He killed my lamb when I was twelve years old,” I confessed.

“That was a terrible thing to do, but you have to forgive him,” Graham informed me. “Do you forgive him?”

“Yes. I forgive him,” I said.

“Face me, Jezebel!” Graham commanded.

I was once again blind and could only hear.

“Do you have any other legal right?” Graham demanded.

Jezebel remained silent.

“If you had any other legal right, then you would have told me, Jezebel,” Graham informed the demon. “You have to go.”

“Repeat after me, Jezebel,” Graham said. “I Jezebel.”

The demon remained silent.

“In Jesus’s name, I command you to say ‘I Jezebel.’”

“I Jezebel,” it said.

“Bind myself to all my kingdom,” Graham said.

“Bind myself to all my kingdom,” it said.

“We lift the curse,” Graham continued.

“We lift the curse,” it said.

“On Johnny and on all future generations,” Graham added.

It remained silent.

“See, it doesn’t want to give up its right to future generations,” Graham explained. “Everyone say this with me: The people of God command you in Jesus’s name to say ‘On Johnny and on all future generations’.”

Everyone repeated, “The people of God command you in Jesus’s name to say ‘On Johnny and on all future generations’”

“On Johnny and on all future generations,” the demon said.

Part 2: Lori and the Underground

“We go now to the pit,” Graham said.

It remained silent.

“The people of God command you in Jesus’s name to say ‘We go now to the pit’.”

Everyone repeated, “The people of God command you in Jesus’s name to say ‘We go now to the pit’.”

“We go now to the pit,” it said.

And Graham and everyone said words like “Go, in Jesus’s name! Go! In Jesus’s Holy name, go! Leave in Jesus’s name!”

I started coughing and then vomiting. Thirty seconds later, I fell on the floor.

The room erupted in applause. I felt so much lighter. Graham helped me to my feet and anointed my forehead with oil.

“I anoint you with oil in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” Graham said. “Who did this for you?”

“Jesus Christ—King of Kings and Lord of Lords!” I said emphatically.

Everyone surrounded me and hugged me.

From that point on, I noticed a big difference in my life. Now I wanted to reach all of my friends and family to share this with them. I don’t know how Alex, Harry, and Manny are going to react, but I needed to try.

But first, I had to confess some things to Lori. A lot of things.

## Chapter 44

I asked Lori if she would agree to meet me at LL Park the next Saturday at 4 PM. I told her I wanted to talk to her about some things. There were always places at the park where we could sit and have a long conversation, mostly undisturbed.

We would have to wear our GIPE of course, but we were so used to wearing it outside that it didn't matter too much. LL was the park where we spent a lot of time and she had shared a lot with me about her life, some which I already knew from reading her diary. She loved being outside enjoying "God's creation" as she liked to say. I wanted to have her in the best frame of mind for what I was about to confess to her.

We got to the park in an AT, got out, and walked to a nearby bench overlooking a lake. Perfect spot. The sky was overcast as usual, but the sun gave us fleeting beams of light which occasionally pierced through the dark clouds. There were very few people around, so this could be a private conversation. Well, as private as we could be with the monitor drones flying around.

"So, Johnny, what's on your mind?" Lori asked.

I didn't know how to start. I really hadn't rehearsed exactly what I was going to say. But I did try to tell myself, no more lies. This was the end of that. I cared about her and needed her to know about the real me. I started slow, though.

"I haven't been truthful with you," I said.

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There was a pause, then she spoke.

“I know,” she said.

“I know?”, I thought. I wondered how much she already knew. I knew she was smart, but I honestly thought I was fooling her most of the time.

“You know?” I asked.

“Sure. I knew you weren’t really a Christian at the time you told me, and I realized you read my diary because some of the things you said matched up too closely to me. So I figured you read it.”

I was surprised. I guess she was even smarter than I had thought.

“You’re right, I did and I wasn’t,” I said. “Will you forgive me for that?”

“Yes, I forgive you,” Lori said.

“I care about you a lot, Lori.”

“I care about you too, Johnny.”

“I don’t want to lose you,” I said.

“I’m right here,” Lori said. “I’m not going anywhere.”

“Okay,” I said. I felt some relief, but I knew I had to tell her a lot more.

“Well, there’s many other things I need to confess to you,” I said.

“Talk to me,” Lori said.

“Lori, I’ve done some very terrible things in my life.”

“Well, that’s in the past,” Lori said. “The Lord forgives us for all our sins. But we are commanded to ask for forgiveness, both of Him and of the person wronged. And I forgive you, whatever those terrible things were, as you call them.”

“You don’t understand,” I continued. “I mean, some really really bad things...”

“Like what?” Lori asked.

Okay, here we go. Where should I start? How much should I tell? How should I start?

“Well, it began when I was very young, like 12 years old.”

I decided to tell her everything I could remember. I suppose that this was my real testimony, so for the first time in my life, I was giving it. I told her about losing Bosco and how I changed at that

moment. I told her about my early life with Alex, Harry, and Manny. I told her about the stealing from houses. I told her about killing those dogs. I told her about being caught and my time in jail. I told her about the rapes. I told her about beating that kid to death in the park. It was getting tougher to tell all of it to her.

She mostly just nodded her head, but kept her eyes on me, listening intently, it seemed. Occasionally, she said “Okay” or “I’m sorry to hear that”. She was a bit stone-faced and it was hard for me to read her. I thought to myself, she would be a good poker player, but then shook that thought off. Lord, give me your strength to keep talking, I prayed in my head. I believe she was trying not to react too much so that I could speak and not be distracted.

Getting all this out, I started to cry, but I also tried to hold it together, sometimes taking pauses to wipe my eyes.

“Go on,” she said softly, trying to encourage me.

I told her everything I could remember. I talked for over an hour. She was very patient with me, and an excellent listener. She did sometimes ask questions, because some of my involvements with the lawyers, the multiple identities, and Anthony got a little confusing to her, which I understood.

When I was done, we both just paused for a minute. She took my hand, and we held hands for a short while. She looked away from me and stared at the lake, so I did the same. It seemed to me that she was staying very calm after this huge information dump.

After a minute, she turned to me, and I looked at her.

“Johnny, I want to pray for you,” she said.

“Okay,” I said, again feeling relieved that she didn’t just get up and walk away from me.

We were still holding hands, but she took my free hand in hers and turned to face me more directly, but still sitting on the bench.

She began praying for me. I bowed my head and listened intently to her prayer. It was the most heartfelt prayer I ever heard her give, and I had heard a lot of them. She prayed many things. She prayed that the Lord would give me peace, wisdom, and true repentance for all the things I had done. She prayed for healing for

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

me, and she prayed for restoration in all the families affected by the many actions and “deeds” in my life. She actually called them “deeds” which was a nicer word than what she could have said. She didn’t pray specifically for the Lord to forgive me because she knew that had already happened. Again, I was relieved. I was hopeful about our relationship, that we could now put all of this in the past and move forward. I felt renewed, and had a stronger love for her than ever before. I had a feeling she felt the same for me.

“Thank you,” I said to her.

She then let go of my hands and turned back to face the lake. I did the same.

After another minute, she turned back to me.

“Johnny?” she asked.

“Yes?”

“That took a lot of courage to tell me all of that,” Lori said.

I didn’t feel courageous at all, but I took her word for it.

“Thanks,” I said.

“I care about you deeply. I even feel that...I love you,” she said.

That hit me like a ton of bricks! I had never heard her say that to me. Instantly, I replied back with the same.

“I love you too,” I said. “I love you with all my heart.”

“I feel the same for you,” Lori said.

I was overjoyed. After all I had just told her, after spilling my guts to her, she still cared about me. She loved me! I was so happy at that moment.

Then, Lori dropped the bombshell on me.

“But I can’t continue our relationship,” she said.

I stared at her, dumbstruck.

“What?” I asked, confused.

“Johnny, I feel like I can’t ever trust you. I know the Lord has changed your heart, but I cannot honestly feel comfortable pursuing a relationship with you further.”

“Why?” I said. “Don’t you forgive me?”

“Yes,” she said. “But our entire relationship up to this point, months and months, was based on lies.”

“I know, but...” I said. I didn’t know what else to say.

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“I can’t do this with you anymore,” Lori said.

“Do what?”

“Continue seeing you,” Lori said. “Now that I know your story, I feel like you have living to do that doesn’t involve me.”

“I don’t understand.”

“I’m sorry,” Lori apologized, though she had no reason to apologize. “I’ll call for an AT to come get me and bring me home.”

“You want me to leave?”

“Yes,” she said.

“But I have nowhere to go,” I said. “Where will I stay?”

Lori thought about that for a moment, got out a small piece of paper, wrote something down, then handed it to me.

“What’s this?” I asked.

“It’s an address where you can stay for now,” she said. “It’s a small place, but fully furnished. It’s still UN-monitored and in a location that they don’t regard as a problem at this point.” She also gave me the DK for this apartment.

“Okay,” I said. “So that’s it then? You’re leaving me?”

She looked at me sadly, but seemed resolute in her decision.

“Yes,” she said.

I was devastated. I stared at her incredulously. I had nothing to say. She had every right to never speak to me or see me again.

“Goodbye Johnny,” she said. She turned away from me on the bench and got up and walked toward the lake.

I watched her as she walked, her dress and long dark hair blowing in the wind. She was the most beautiful person I had ever known in my life, and I just lost her.

I got up slowly from that bench, stared at her for a moment. She never turned around again. She continued to stare at the lake, which was especially calm, considering there was a wind blowing and the leaves of the trees, her dress, and her hair proved that.

I turned around and walked back to the AT and put in the address Lori gave me. The AT drove me away. I felt I just experienced the worst day of my life.

## Chapter 45

The AT drove me to an area of town I wasn't familiar with. There were a few other smaller apartments there which seemed to be mostly unoccupied. I walked up to the apartment that matched the address on the note Lori gave me. Two EF's were lying at the front door. I put one of them on and entered the apartment with the DK that Lori provided me. Upon entering, I saw a CIRMON 4.

It was one of the small 300-square footers, but like she told me, it was fully furnished. It had a basic kitchen stocked with some food, bathroom with basic toiletries, and other necessities. It even had some changes of clothes of different sizes in the drawers. So I wouldn't have to leave for awhile.

I briefly removed the EF to decontaminate my GIPE, then went to the bathroom, washed my hands thoroughly, and laid down on the bed fully clothed and covered. I was in shock and couldn't think about anything for several minutes. I turned to look at a clock that was on the wall. 7:30 PM. What just happened today? Lori said goodbye to me. It couldn't be over. I closed my eyes.

I thought about how I could have done things differently. I could have told the truth from the beginning. But I was a liar. That's who I was. I could have treated Lori with respect from the beginning. But I was selfish. That's who I was.

I felt that voice that I had repressed begin to come back in

my mind and encourage those thoughts. It told me I was worthless. It told me I was unloved. I didn't deserve anybody, let alone Lori. And I believed that voice.

In the back of my mind, there was another voice that told me the Lord still loved me, and I knew that was true from the scripture I had read. But I began to be overcome with other thoughts and feelings that I hadn't experienced in many years. I thought I started to learn what love was. That other voice kept repeating to me "Love is a lie". I didn't want to believe that. But I started to.

Over the next few weeks, I retreated into myself. I rarely if ever left the apartment. Of course, the UN encouraged people to stay home. Less trouble for them. Everyone was afforded minimum rations to survive, all delivered by drone and tracked so no one could steal deliveries without being visited by FRIEND. If you didn't want to work, you didn't have to. The UN did allow some people to work at certain approved businesses, like government schools, OWR church buildings, and government-run health facilities. People also worked at approved restaurants, historical museums, libraries, leisure activity centers, repair facilities, and other government businesses, and get paid SCS points for those "essential jobs". But if people were fine with receiving their minimum delivery every month, they didn't have to work.

So I sat in the apartment most days, heating up my UN meals delivered by drone, and sulking. Maybe I didn't need Lori. She obviously had no use for me. Good riddance, I thought. That previously repressed voice agreed with me.

It was getting late one night. I pointed the apartment remote and switched the wall monitor to the Entertainment app. I hadn't watched for more than a few minutes in months now, but I was curious what the UN-approved programming was these days.

I switched to the History channel on the app. There was an old documentary on right now called *Hitler and the Holohoax* which I remembered seeing before. There was another doc called *Our New Founding Fathers* which was about 15 years old and was more UN propaganda.

I changed to the News channel. Besides basic Centernet news, there was a show on called *United Nations Matters* that was a

round-table discussion that supposedly filled us in on all the great new rules and regulations that the UN had passed and was implementing to make our lives better.

I knew that apartment would get several SCS points for watching any of these, allowing for more in the monthly deliveries. But I'm glad they hadn't invented mind reading yet because they would have removed all those points I accumulated.

I changed to the Family channel. There were a variety of shows to choose from. *I Married an Android*, *Gov Knows Best*, and *Babies for Sale* were popular situation comedies. If I watched any of those shows, I laughed at them because they were so pathetic, not because they were actually funny. It was sad what passed as good shows these days.

I then noticed a channel called the Fun channel that I don't think I ever put on before. I switched it on and was instantly bombarded with multiple windowed images of girls and guys (or some I couldn't tell which gender they were) in various stages of undress. Animals were also included with the people in some of the windows. You could zoom in on whatever window you wanted to watch up close, or you could watch multiple windows at the same time. I knew I should change the channel immediately, but that voice told me "Leave it on. Just sit back, relax, and watch." So I did. For an hour.

I realized I was drifting back to previous ways of thinking and behavior. What was happening to me? I felt guilty afterwards. But the next night, I watched the wall monitor again and ended up on the same channel. At bedtime, I switched it to the bedroom wall monitor. Watching this stuff became a habit.

What was wrong with me? I started to feel sorry for myself. After a few days, that morphed into sadness. Another week, it was a full-on depression. Those feelings I had when I was 12 years old came back to me like it was yesterday. I seriously considered killing myself. I heard that voice again.

"Do it. Just take a knife and slit your wrists. No one cares about you. No one loves you. Just do it."

I went into the kitchen. I got out a sharp carving knife from a drawer. I walked back into the bedroom with the knife and laid

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down on the bed. I pulled up both sleeves. I was doing all of this without thinking. I held the knife firmly with my right hand, and put it to my left wrist. I closed my eyes.

“Slice the knife across your wrist!” the voice screamed at me. “You deserve to die!”

“I know I do,” I answered.

“Do it!” it said.

I started to push the knife tip into my left wrist. It broke the skin. Blood trickled down my arm from the wound.

“Yes! That’s it. Go on,” the voice encouraged.

I opened my eyes and saw my own blood. I couldn’t believe what I was doing. It was like I wasn’t doing it. Someone else was.

“Finish it!” the voice yelled.

I closed my eyes again.

“No,” I heard another voice say.

I froze. Who spoke?

“Don’t listen!” the stronger voice said. “You’re done. You’re worthless. Finish the job.”

I started to slice the knife across my wrist. Deeper this time. More blood poured out.

“Stop!” the other voice yelled.

“I want to die,” I said.

“You deserve to die,” said the strong voice

“NO YOU DON’T!” the other voice screamed.

Silence.

I dropped the knife. Blood was pouring from my left wrist. I jumped out of bed, went to the bathroom, and wrapped a towel around it, trying to stop the bleeding. The cut was deep.

I sat on the toilet with the towel acting as a tourniquet around my bloody left wrist. I bowed my head and closed my eyes tight. Both voices seemed to be silent now.

What was I doing? How had it come to this? What was wrong with me?

I went back to my bed and laid down. I then closed my eyes and did something I hadn’t done for weeks. I started to talk to God. I guess it was praying, but that seemed too religious of a word for what I was doing. I felt like I was simply trying to talk to a long-

lost friend. Pleading with him.

“Lord, where are you?” I asked in my mind. Then, I said it out loud, but realized I needed to stay quiet lest I get picked up by the wall monitor and get a visit from FRIEND.

“Lord, are you there?” I silently asked. “If you are, give me some kind of sign. Tell me what I should do.”

Silence. Nothing.

I was frustrated. I started to get angry.

“Where are you, Jesus?” I asked again in my head.

No answer.

“Answer me!” I yelled aloud.

Nothing. Only silence.

An image popped into my head. It was a girl with long dark hair and a beautiful smile. I hadn’t even thought about Lori for several days now. I thought I had moved on. But of course I hadn’t. There was no moving on from Lori. I needed her back in my life. I didn’t know how I could make that happen.

I was in the bathroom one day, looking for some things in the lower cabinets, and noticed that, tucked back behind some towels, was a DCC and source key used to communicate with The Refuge. Ah, so this apartment was managed by the URG. Interesting. Should I try to use it? Would anyone even answer? It had been over three months since she said goodbye to me. I didn’t believe there was any hope. But I wanted to at least try.

I understood why the URG kept the DCC and source key in the bathroom. To keep it away from the prying eyes of the wall monitors. So, I got it out and placed it on the back of the toilet. Then I tried the code for “Hi Lori. This is Johnny. Can we meet?” I didn’t expect an answer. I waited.

After 30 minutes, I got no response. I tried again with the same message. I waited 2 hours. I still got no response. So I guess that was that. I would have to move on. I didn’t want to, but I guess no answer was my answer. I went on with my life.

I actually began venturing out of my apartment on occasion. I went to LL Park and took walks. I visited the local leisure activity center, and even went to a couple restaurants—alone. It wasn’t the life I thought I would have, but I made do. I wasn’t happy, but I

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wasn't depressed either. The Lord had other plans for me. I guess I needed to figure out what those were.

The months went by. November became December and it started to get unusually cold that year. So, I had been staying inside more in the evenings.

One Saturday night, after I had finished my dinner, I heard a strange sound that I didn't recognize right away. Then, I realized what it was. It was my doorbell chime. I didn't even know that my doorbell worked anymore. Someone was at my door? I immediately thought it was FRIEND, who I had heard would ring the doorbell once, and then bust in the door if they were coming for you. Maybe Anthony and his henchman had finally caught up to me. If that was true, I was a goner. I had no will in me to fight back.

I went to the door. Through the peephole, I could see it was a hooded figure wearing some kind of long black cloak. If this was a winter coat, this character was overdoing it a little. Looked like a scary monk or something. The hood was so oversized, you couldn't see this figure's face or even determine the size of its head. Probably some kind of android. The monk was carrying a box by a handle in its right hand. Weird. Maybe this was some kind of new FRIEND robot I'd never seen before. Well, rather than let it bust down the door, I figured I'd save it the trouble and simply open it. If it was coming in, it was coming in, and I couldn't stop it. So I opened the door.

The hooded monk motioned by sticking its left arm straight out, though still covered with the long sleeve of the robe, and used that to point to the inside of the apartment. I didn't see any hand or claw or anything, so I couldn't figure out what this thing was.

"Do you want to come in?" I asked.

The figure put its robed left arm down and nodded slightly with its over-sized hood. So, I backed up into my apartment, allowing the hooded monk room to come in and pass by me. I closed the door behind us and turned around.

The hooded figure placed the box with the handle on the table. It then turned around and faced me.

"Who are you?" I asked.

The figure reached up with both arms and pulled the hood

back and down to reveal the top portion of its body. When the hood dropped back behind the figure, I was overcome with emotion. The figure was the most beautiful sight I had seen in months.

“Lori!” I said. “What...are you doing here?” I totally forgot about speaking in Pig Latin to throw off the monitors.

Lori took the rest of her monk robe off and let it fall to the ground. She was wearing a pretty yellow dress that I had never seen before. She moved towards me, arms outstretched, and grabbed me in a warm embrace.

“Oh Johnny,” she said. “I’m sorry.”

We hugged for several seconds without speaking.

“Sorry?” I said as we let go of each other and stood face-to-face. “I should be apologizing to you.”

She just looked at me with piercing brown eyes.

“I missed you,” she said.

“Me too,” I said, not fully comprehending.

She sat in a chair at the table, and I sat in the other chair. I immediately stood up, took out my SW device, and made silence walls surround the table where we sat so we could speak in private.

“Johnny, I’m not ready to get back with you. But I’ve been receiving some counseling from the elders at the URG. So I brought you a present.”

“A present?” I asked.

“Yes,” she said, and motioned to the box with the handle. I heard a noise coming from the box. Upon closer inspection, I noticed the sides of the box were filled with tiny holes, but I still couldn’t see inside it.

“What is it?” I asked.

“I’ll show you,” Lori said.

She opened the latches on one side of the box and flipped open the top with the handle to the opposite side, revealing its contents.

I was a little taken aback when I saw what was in the box.

Inside, just bobbing up awkwardly on its hind legs and trying to climb up the walls and jump out of the box, was a puppy.

“Really? A dog?” I said.

“I know you’re not comfortable right now. I remember what

you told me. I know your history. But he was so cute, I couldn't resist bringing him to you. I want you to get over your fear and apprehension of dogs. I figured this puppy would do it."

I was speechless. A dog? That's the last thing I feel like I needed right now.

"I don't know, Lori..." I said.

She then proceeded to pick him up and put him in my lap. He just stared at me all happy and smiling. He was clueless about me but he seemed to take to me immediately.

She told me he was half American pit bull and half boxer. He was about 10 pounds. Brown, short hair, with splotches of white on his front and back paws and on his belly.

"Pick him up and give him a good pat and scratch on the back of the head," she said.

I held him nearer to my face and patted him on his head, then scratched him there. He tried to lick my face, but I held him away from me.

"Look at that. He loves you, Johnny!" she said.

"That's because he doesn't know me," I said.

"Doesn't matter. Dogs are very forgiving that way," she said with a smirky grin. She paused, then continued.

"So, I wanted to come by and see how you're doing and to give you the dog. I figured you needed a companion."

"Okay," I said.

"What's his name?" I said.

"He doesn't have one," she said. "One of the ladies from The Refuge picked up a stray who was pregnant and brought her into our URG. Everyone just loved her. But then she proceeded to have her puppies within a week of us taking her in. When I saw this particular pup, I thought of you. He's fully potty trained—that means you can take him outside to do his business—and you can feed him the food I left in the box. I included an instruction sheet on taking care of him, as well as a collar and leash for walking him. Always leave a water bowl out for him filled up. Name him whatever you want. But he's yours. I am trusting you with him."

I guess she wasn't taking no for an answer. I put him down and let him roam a bit.

## Part 2: Lori and the Underground

“I need to get back now,” Lori said.

“But you just got here,” I said.

“I know, but I’d like to take this slow,” Lori said. “I want to start over with you. If that’s okay.”

I understood. It made sense to me. Trust is something you have to earn back if you lose it.

“Yes, that’s good with me.”

“Okay,” she said. “I’m going to leave now. Message me in two weeks. We can meet up then.”

She put on her black oversized robe and left. For a second, I felt like I just lost her again. But I knew that wasn’t true. It was like she was testing me with this dog.

I stared at him just hopping around on the ground, smelling everything he could. I then knew what his name was.

“Okay, Max,” I said to him. “It’s just you and me now.”

Over the next week, Max and I got to know each other. I studied those instructions she gave me like I studied Lori’s diary over a year ago. Except this time, my intentions were pure. I really wanted to pass this test and win Lori back.

Over the next couple weeks, Max and I hung out. He wanted to be wherever I was. At first, it was annoying, but then I realized he just wanted to be with me. He didn’t judge me. He didn’t get angry with me. He wasn’t ever bothered by anything I did or said. He just wanted to be near me. He just loved me. Unconditionally. I learned a lot from that dog in those two weeks.

I took Max on walks. I got him a ball and would toss it, and he would run after it, grab it in his mouth, and bring it back to me. Over and over again. This dog was a relentless player. When he wasn’t eating, sleeping, or relieving himself, he wanted to play with me, even when I didn’t. He just craved attention. I guess I could relate to that, especially in my younger days.

On a Saturday morning, fourteen days after I received Max, I messaged The Refuge as before, and the reply came back to meet at LL Park at 2 PM that day. “And bring the puppy,” the message said.

Lori met me at the park that day. I brought Max along. We started a new relationship. I felt like a new person. I hoped she felt

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the same. We caught up on the past few months, and talked about lots of things.

Over the next several weeks, we continued to date, and I fell in love with her all over again. We talked about spiritual matters as well, as I had so much to learn and figure out. The Bible was a complex book, and I wanted to understand everything in it, even the parts that were difficult for me to follow.

## Chapter 46

**W**hen Lori told me more about God's law, there were some things I liked and some I didn't like, but I feared God and wanted to be obedient to everything that Jesus preached. If He died for me, which I believed He did, then I wanted to give my life back to Him.

"The first thing you need to know," Lori explained, "is that you are saved by grace which is a free gift from God when you accept Jesus as your Savior and believe that He died and rose again and is now seated in Heaven at the right hand of God. This means there is no good work that we can do to earn our salvation; however, the works are the evidence of our faith. The Bible says that you can know a tree by its fruits, meaning someone who is saved will do good works."

"All of the commandments," Lori continued, "can be summed up with this: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. We love God by being obedient to what He wants us to do."

"Okay, give me a beginner's list of dos and don'ts," I said.

"God is a jealous God," Lori informed me, "and anything that is placed ahead of Him is considered an idol and is an abomination. This means, nothing is more important than our relationship with Him."

"The Greek word for sorcery is pharmakia," Lori continued. "This is the same root word where we get pharmacy. Paul told

Timothy to drink some wine for his health. God is telling us that medicine used properly is acceptable, but using drugs recreationally is akin to practicing sorcery.”

“Okay, no drugs,” I said. “I’m good with that. What other rules do I need to know?”

“Alcohol is permitted but only in small amounts,” Lori answered. “We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not drunk on alcohol.”

“Okay, I got it. What else?”

“God hates a lying tongue. If you are tempted to tell a lie, then bridle your tongue and keep quiet. It is better not to answer than to tell a lie.”

“Okay, check. No more lies. What else?”

“He uses us to plant and water the word of God among all of the people in the world. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. All we need to do is tell the truth about God and His Son Jesus and then the Holy Spirit will do the work of salvation in that person’s life if God chooses them to be saved.”

“Okay, I can do that.”

Lori then dropped a bombshell.

“God is the author of sex, but sex must only be in the marriage bed. Sex outside of marriage is fornication. Looking at pornography is considered adultery in your heart. Both of these sins are worthy of the death sentence.”

No sex or porn. That was going to be a tough one. I sat still not speaking for a minute weighing my options. Lori was waiting for my reply. Another minute went by in silence. Then, I came up with the solution.

“Lori, will you marry me?”

## Chapter 47

**J**ohnny, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife,” Graham asked, “and wilt thou pledge thy faith to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her, and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?”

“I do,” I answered.

“Lori, wilt thou have this man to be thy husband,” Graham asked, “and wilt thou pledge thy faith to him, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him, and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?”

“I do,” she answered.

And just like that, Lori and I were married. I had taken every last SCS point I had to my name and transferred it among various members of the group. I was officially broke. I was a fugitive. If I was found by FRIEND, I would lose my life. The old me would have been devastated and depressed, yet surprisingly, I was the happiest I had ever been in my life. I wanted to learn more about Jesus. I wanted to bring more people to the light. I wanted to enjoy marriage with Lori.

I had delivered my dog Max to a couple of the teenagers at The Refuge so he would be taken care of. Our new location was underground in an old illicit trade center similar to Barney’s. The

three inches of lead gave us complete anonymity. I was informed there was a backdoor exit through two narrow tunnels in the furthest end of the facility.

They had basically a marriage dorm with rooms that were small, around 200 square feet, with a little kitchenette and bathroom, but felicitous, as they provided some privacy. We didn't emerge from that room for three days. I could have stayed there for thirty years and been content.

I kept a Bible on the night stand by the bed, and we traded off reading passages out loud to each other before we went to sleep each night. I still had a lot to learn, and was eager to get Lori's thoughts on what certain passages meant, especially the ones having to do with husbands and wives.

Lori read these instructions to me on marriage one night:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church."

Lots of people had trouble with the words "submit" and "head" in this scripture from Ephesians, so I wasn't alone in that. Makes it sound like the husband is the wife's boss and she has to do whatever he says, but I misunderstood as Lori explained.

"It's about respect," Lori told me. "Think back to when you were in charge and called the shots with Alex, Harry, and Manny."

I stayed silent and listened. Where was she going with this?

"Now that was a different kind of respect, for sure," Lori said. "Those guys didn't love you, but you had a bond with them, and they trusted you and, to a degree, you trusted them. They looked up to you for leadership. That's a God-given quality you have, Johnny. Even though you were using it the wrong way in your old life."

At that moment, I felt woefully unprepared to be the leader in our relationship. Later in the scripture, Lori read the part about "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it." That was an easy one for me, but God's commands regarding my role made me anxious.

We both went to bed that night, praying together that God would give me the strength to be a leader in our marriage, and that

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the Lord would bless our marriage and keep us together through the trials that were sure to come.

Early on the third morning, I sat up on my right elbow on the pillow, with my chin resting in my hand. I just stared at Lori's face, and watched her breathe softly.

Making love to her was great, but a relationship with her was so much more than that. To have a companion to share hopes and dreams with, to be part of something that was so much bigger than myself, and to understand that we have a God who knows the number of hairs on our head and our deepest thoughts and fears, was overwhelming. What kind of a life would we have together?

As I was staring, Lori's eyes opened slowly, and as she caught my gaze, she smiled and giggled softly.

"What are you looking at?" she said to me.

"You," I said.

"Do you like what you see?"

"Yes," I answered, smiling back.

I tried to keep the stare, but then looked away.

"What's wrong?" she said.

I looked back at her, shifting my body to sit up more against the makeshift headboard that was against the wall, propping the pillow against the back of my head. Lori sat up as well, and kept her eyes on me. I looked away again.

"Lori, I am as happy as I've ever been," I started to say.

"Okay good," she said.

"I feel like for the first time in my life, I have purpose. My life means something. I am part of something important."

"Okay," Lori responded. Pause. "But...?"

"But...I feel bad I have doubts it won't last," I said.

"Nothing lasts forever," Lori said. "Except God...and our souls." She smiled.

"I know," I said.

We just sat in silence together for a moment, both of us staring straight ahead. I then turned and met her gaze.

"Why is God putting us through this?" I asked.

"What do you mean?" Lori questioned.

"I mean, why are we having to hide, to live in secret? Why

did God allow all the suffering over the past few decades? I know I contributed to that suffering. I committed horrible acts. But God could have stopped it, couldn't He?" I asked.

"Of course He could have stopped it," Lori said. "Nothing is impossible with God."

"Okay," I said.

"But you have to understand it's the world that God set up from the beginning. And He gives us many examples of what we are going through now in His Word."

Lori went on to share with me that we can't have love without free will. God wanted a spiritual bride who would truly love Him and He wanted that so much that He gave his life for that relationship. God created the world as a paradise for Adam and Eve, and their disobedience brought sin into the world.

"Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt with a mighty hand," Lori explained, "yet, during their trial in the desert, almost all grumbled and complained, even saying that they wanted to go back to their lives they had in Egypt, and the Bible warns us in Jude that God later destroyed those who did not believe. Joshua and Caleb were the only ones of that initial group who made it to the promised land."

"We are like Joshua and Caleb now," I added.

"In a way, yes," Lori agreed with the comparison. "There are those in many URGs who don't realize how good they have it, and need to turn their hearts to worship the only God who can save them."

She also went on to give her interpretation of some of the prophecy of Revelation, but also explained the words of Isaiah, Joel, Daniel, Zechariah, Ezekiel and other visions of the Old Testament prophets that not only pointed to Jesus as the Messiah, but also pointed to His second coming and the events of the end-of-days, days that we were clearly in right now. I had a lot of study to do!

I came to understand that our God provides for His people. Somehow, we would be able to survive through this period of tribulation with food, water, and shelter, but, if needed, we were prepared to die.

But then, a few weeks later, more news came. I wasn't sure

how to take it at first. I knew God was in control, but I still couldn't help it. I got scared.

Lori started getting sick. Neither of us knew what was going on. Others had gotten food poisoning from some of the meals that were prepared from food that had been sitting out that we were using salt to preserve, but that wasn't a foolproof way to keep food from being contaminated.

Lori would wake up feeling nauseous. She vomited several days in a row. I was worried she had somehow gotten a new strain of the virus that was still out there. Then, I thought some of the contaminated food had gotten in the batch she'd eaten. We had even heard some of the canned food that The Refuge had stored up was discovered to have gone bad. Lori's vomiting continued for several days.

"Lori, we need to get you to a doctor!" I said.

Fortunately, there was a doctor in The Refuge. Doctor William Smith was a general practitioner in his old life, which came in handy to treat the variety of ailments people had in the URG.

Dr. Smith examined Lori for several minutes, taking her temperature and examining her closely with his old-school stethoscope. He had to get up close and personal with her to rule out any female issues. He kept me in the room with them during the examination. He got out a little device that said Sonoque on it. He must have gotten that from a Barney's black-market store. It looked decades old. He turned it on and rubbed it on Lori's stomach. Then he got a mobile screen out and watched what looked like a blurry image on it for about 20 seconds.

"Lori," Dr. Smith announced, "you're pregnant."

We both could've slapped each other. And we were totally relieved. Well, for a second. But then it hit me.

I was going to be a father. Lori was going to be the mother of my child. I wondered what type of life that child would have in this world. I just had to trust God that He would never leave us nor forsake us.

We needed to move the Bibles again. There were some new Christian fellowships which sprouted up and they needed Bibles. I really didn't want to leave Lori, especially considering she had our

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child growing in her, but she was also well taken care of by others in The Refuge. She gave her blessing to me to participate in the Bible missions. So, I volunteered.

## Chapter 48

About seven months later, Lori went into labor. She was actually in the kitchen helping prepare a large meal for the family. The pains hit hard and she went to the floor. She tried standing up but left a pool of water below her. I saw it all happen because I was sitting just off the kitchen talking with Graham, Matt, and William.

“Johnny!” Graham yelled. “Get the doc. Quick!”

Fortunately, Dr. Smith wasn’t busy. He was playing a board game with several of The Refuge kids. It was an old classic: Operation. He actually had the tweezers in his hand, trying to extract the heart from Mr. Body, and hit the sides, causing the buzzer to go off, making him jump to the delight of the kids playing with him.

“Dr. Smith,” Johnny said, startling the doctor even more than the buzzer. “Lori’s water broke!”

“I’m on it,” said the doctor, jumping up from his game. “Sorry boys and girls, but we’re going to have to call this one a draw.”

“Aw doc!” said one of them.

“Gotta go,” he said.

The doctor arrived in a room just off the kitchen which was one of the spare bedrooms. A couple of the ladies were attending to Lori as she settled in the bed.

Dr. Smith turned to me.

“Johnny, you don’t have to stay if you don’t want to. I got this covered.”

“Are you kidding?” I said. “I wouldn’t miss this moment for anything.”

It was a long and arduous labor lasting through the night. There was minimal medicine available in the underground to help with pain. The whole family joined in prayer in various parts of the URG, hoping for a successful birth. Several healthy babies have been born in the past couple years. However, there was one young mother whom Dr. Smith assisted in the birthing process about a year ago whose delivery sadly ended in a still-born baby. That devastated the whole church family.

When Lori was getting close to delivering, they filled a nearby tub used for baptisms with warm water and helped her get inside the tub lined with soft padding and heavy towels for a water birth, the thought being it would be easier on the mother and give the baby a better chance of survival.

I stayed by Lori’s head, while the doc was ready to pull out and catch the baby as it was born. Of course, we didn’t know whether it was a boy or a girl until the moment after delivery. The process seemed to be racing by so fast, but fragments of it were in slow motion.

“The baby is crowning!” the doctor said as the top of the head could be seen—although from where I was standing, I couldn’t see anything.

“C’mon Lori, push!” I said, not really knowing what I was talking about as I only saw that kind of stuff on television when I was a lot younger, and real life was nothing like what I watched on TV.

Hard labor lasted a good long hour. Lori seemed like she was in agony. I was so worried for her, and for the baby. Please God, help us, I prayed in my head as I continued to try to soothe her, but I knew she was beyond that now.

After several more painful minutes, a couple huge pushes, and Lori alternately grunting and screaming non-stop for what seemed like forever, Dr. Smith pulled out the baby from the bath

water.

I thought the baby was dead. It was so red, like it had been burning up inside Lori's body. Its eyes were closed tight. It didn't look like it was breathing or moving at all. Lori's head was laid back, exhausted, her eyes closed as well.

Dr. Smith worked quickly, coaxing the baby's lips open and gently rubbing the baby's back, and moving it around, trying to get that baby to breathe. Unlike TV or the movies, the baby didn't immediately start crying and was silent for several seconds. Then, the baby made soft sounds. The doctor smiled.

"Congratulations!" said Dr. Smith. "You've got a healthy baby.... He looked down to make sure.... "Boy!"

As if on cue, that baby boy let out a wail that would have woke up everyone in the entire URG if anybody was sleeping at that moment.

Thank God! I thought. Praise the Lord!

Lori opened her eyes and smiled a little, but still looked completely worn out.

"You did it, honey!" I said to Lori.

"Do you want to do the honors?" the doctor said, handing me some scissors.

"Huh?" I said, taking the scissors.

"The umbilical cord," the doctor said, holding up the thick ribbon cable of flesh for me to cut. It was about two inches wide and about as thick as a lasagna noodle covered with pasta sauce and Ricotta cheese. Except it was more purple than red.

"Oh," I said, and had to really put some force into those scissors to cut that "cord". Again, not like what you imagined after watching old TV shows.

The doctor and a couple lady assistants rushed the baby off and put him under a make-shift incubator, which was basically a towel inside a large ceramic glass container that had been heated over a wood fire grill and had holes in the lid.

In a few minutes, after the baby's fever had gone down a little, they brought him back for Lori and me to see. The ladies and I had helped Lori back to her bed.

So we welcomed a new baby boy into this world. Trusting

God that He would save us from the Great Tribulation and to commemorate the last time He saved His people from the flood, we named him Noah.

They placed Noah in Lori's arms, helping her to sit up a little so she was more comfortable and could hold Noah properly, all wrapped up in a couple soft thin towels with a little light blue beanie cap on his bald head to help keep him warm.

After a few minutes, Lori turned to me.

"Do you want to hold your son?" Lori said softly.

I didn't know what to say at first. This was all so new to me. I was so unprepared for it.

"Yes," I said, but the doctor and ladies there knew I needed help. One of the ladies, Lisa, picked up Noah from Lori's arms and gently brought him over to me.

"Johnny, you should sit down for this," Lisa said.

I sat down and put my arms out awkwardly in front of me.

"Cross your arms like this," said Lisa, demonstrating, "and use your left hand to keep the baby's head from dropping."

"Okay," I said, still not believing this moment was happening.

She placed Noah into my folded arms in front of me. I stayed completely still in my seat, just staring at his little face, so sweet, with his pink cheeks and closed eyes. So tiny, I thought.

Then, something happened that I didn't expect. I started crying. I can't explain why. It was one of the happiest moments of my life, but yet the tears came. I shook a little too, but made sure I held onto Noah. Lisa moved toward me to make sure I was good with holding him, but then realized I was, so backed off, not to ruin the moment. It was definitely a moment.

"Johnny?" asked Lori. "You okay?"

"Yeah," is all I could manage, finally breaking my gaze of Noah and looking over at Lori in her bed.

"You did it," I said to Lori.

"We did it," she replied. "And the Lord made it all happen."

## Chapter 49

I never wanted to leave Lori and Noah's side but I knew there was other important work I had to do. I felt compelled to reach out to Alex, Harry, and Manny.

Except for Lori and Noah, the entire fellowship fasted for three days. On the third day we prayed together, not asking for a particular outcome, but that according to God's mercy and lovingkindness, His will be done, and to strengthen us to get us through any adversity.

I made sure Lori, Noah, and my dog Max were being well taken care of by members of The Refuge. Then, I left the fellowship to try to find my former close friends who I feared had no hope lest I reach them with the Gospel message. I checked their old apartments, but they had all moved. I went to a few of our usual hangouts but couldn't find them there either. Then I went to Robby's Café. The robot who deciphered the Liar's Paradox was there and he remembered me.

"Have you seen Alex, Harry, or Manny?" I asked.

"The last time you were all together was twenty-nine months and three days ago at 4:37 PM," Tux informed me. "You were here with Alexander Coppersmith twenty-six months and fifteen days ago at 9:12 PM."

"Okay great, but have Alex, Harry, or Manny been here since then?" I asked.

“Alexander Coppersmith and Manny Cambio were here sixteen days ago at 2:22 PM. Harold Iscariot was here two days ago at 11:47 AM with Anthony Fausty, the man who paid your bill the day you asked me to solve the Liar’s Paradox,” reported Tux.

Harry was with Anthony? This can’t be good, I thought.

“If you see any of them,” I instructed Tux, “then let them know I am searching for them and they can find me at the Rocket Space Center.”

I was about to leave, but then I had an idea.

“Where can I find the source code for the RF5?” I asked Tux.

“You can find it in the Emoticon Library two blocks north,” Tux replied.

It was a good thing that I could find the source code there because it was free, and I had zero SCS with which to buy anything. I went to Emoticon and found the source code for the RF5. There were scripts that I could piece together and modify slightly for my needs. The RF5 was such an old robot that you could just program them by opening the panel in R2D2’s back.

Equipped with this information, I went to Rocket Space Center and found a robot that was dormant, plugged in to a charger. I opened the panel and inserted the new assignment for this robot. Scanning an old photo I had of Alex, Harry, and Manny, my instructions were for the robot to find them and message me on a Routing Transfer Device set to a specific frequency. Now all I needed to do was find an RTD. That wasn’t going to be easy because I had no currency or anything worthy of trade and I couldn’t steal one. Well, I could, but I wasn’t willing to break the Seventh Commandment.

I saw what appeared to be some spoiled teenagers, each of them holding an RTD. I approached them and I looked down at one of the guy’s shoes. I pointed to his feet.

“I’ll bet I know where you got those shoes. I know the time and the place where you got those shoes. Will you be honest with me if I am able to provide that information accurately?”

The three of them huddled together and then the one whose shoes I claimed I knew stepped forward.

“What do you want to bet?” he asked.

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“I’ll bet you an RTD,” I answered.

“Okay, when and where exactly did I get these shoes?” the kid asked.

“I didn’t say ‘get’, I said ‘got’ and you’ve got those shoes on your feet, you’re standing in the Rocket Space Center and it is 4:20 PM Tuesday,” I said, as I extended my hand palm turned up and the kid begrudgingly handed the device to me.

“I’m not going to keep it. You will find it on the back of this RF5 by Friday this week,” I assured him.

I set the frequency for the RTD and waited for the RF5 to message me. Not knowing if it would be hours or days before I received the message, I went back to my family at The Refuge to wait.

The next day, the RTD signaled that Harry was at the Rocket Space Center. I found a safe place to communicate on the device and interface from RTD to RF5. I turned the video option on so that I could see Harry, but there was nothing but a voice that he could hear from me. Harry was with a female I couldn’t quite place, but she did look familiar.

The camera was focused on Harry.

“Hello Harry. This is Johnny,” I said.

Harry was astonished, as if he heard a ghost. He looked directly at R2D2.

“Johnny? Where’ve you been?” he asked.

“I’m in hiding as I’m sure you are aware. I married Lori and we have a newborn baby named Noah. I’ve turned my life around and wanted to reconnect with you, Alex, and Manny,” I said.

“Where can I find you?” he asked.

“I can’t meet with you in person yet. I just wanted to talk with you first. What have you been up to?”

Harry looked up and to the left and touched his nose, which I remembered were both his tells; he was about to lie.

“Nothing much,” he said. “Same ol’ same ol’.”

“Have you found any new ways to increase your SCS? Have you met any important contacts?” I asked, knowing that he had met with Anthony at least once and knew what Anthony was after, namely my head on a platter.

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“No, nothing new at all,” he said.

This wasn't good. He's clearly joined forces with Anthony. And when I considered this, I remembered where I had seen Harry's date. She, or better stated 'it', was a high-level android I had previously seen at Anthony's. I wondered if he knew that she was synthetic and not a real woman.

“Harry, I have to go now, but I can be available tomorrow if you can bring Alex and Manny with you to Rocket Space Center,” I said.

“What time?” he asked.

“I'm flexible. What works for you?”

“I will try to bring Alex and Manny tomorrow around 3 PM,” he said.

“Bet!” I replied.

# Chapter 50

The next day at 3 PM, the RF5 sent a message to my RTD indicating Alex, Harry, and Manny were there. I turned the video option on again and settled into a place to orchestrate the interface.

“Hello gentlemen. This is Johnny,” I said.

“Yo Johnny! You married my cousin and have a baby boy. Congrats. You feel me?” Alex replied.

“Johnny, what have you been doing to stay afloat?” Manny asked.

“And where are you?” Harry added.

Just then, I panned around the room and saw that Anthony was sitting at the adjacent table with ten of his supermodel robots standing around him. This wasn't a good sign as I had to assume that my former friends were all now in cahoots with Anthony; but knowing that they were all within earshot and at least for the moment my location was undisclosed, I decided to share Jesus Christ with all of them.

“I gave my life to Jesus Christ,” I boldly stated.

I noticed some heads turned from a third table. They must have been able to hear. I checked the interface and observed the volume was on five. I turned it to ten which was the max.

“There's good and evil in this world and I spent the majority of my life walking in darkness,” I said. “I've killed dogs. I've

murdered hundreds of people either directly or indirectly. I've raped more times than I can count. I've stolen. I've ruined lives by poisoning people with drug addictions. I've been living my life for myself always thinking that my happiness would be found with just a little more money, sex, or whatever, but always ended up empty on the inside."

I caught sight of twenty people now standing gathered around R2D2.

I continued my testimony.

"There is a difference between pleasure and happiness. You can be doing something that is pleasurable physically but be empty on the inside and you can be going through a physical hardship but have peace and joy inside. Money can buy pleasure, but money cannot buy happiness. True happiness only comes through Jesus Christ."

Everyone was paying attention, but no one would respond to my comments. Clearly, they feared repercussions.

"What do you fear? FRIEND, death, sickness, poverty?" I asked them. "The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. What you fear is your God. The Bible describes God as 'the fear of Isaac'."

I paused for dramatic effect. Then I continued with my testimony.

"I thought the world revolved around me. It does not. The world was created so that Jesus Christ could demonstrate His love for us by paying the ultimate penalty, giving His life as a ransom to redeem us. All we have to do is confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, and truly believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, and we will be saved. From there, He will lead you to repentance and you will grow in your relationship with Him. No one is guaranteed another day in this world and many people will be shocked when they die and still realize they have a conscious existence. I'll be praying for you all, Anthony included."

I saw an inflamed expression of agitation on Anthony's face which quickly morphed into being startled as he realized that I could see him. He walked to the RF5 and looked straight into its camera.

"You and your precious wife and baby will die, Johnny. I

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promise you that,” Anthony said.

“Maybe. But physical death for me is victory as I will spend an eternity with our Creator. You need to repent, Anthony, before it’s too late. All of you need to repent or you will not escape the wrath of God.”

Just then, the interface stopped. He must have unplugged it. I hoped that this would plant or water the word in at least some of them. I was a little sad for their sakes, but happy that I did my part. The rest is up to God.

# Chapter 51

I was returning to my friends at The Refuge and noticed three doves resting above the entrance. I walked towards the entrance and all three doves took flight, but then were doing circles ten feet above my head. What was going on, I thought?

I saw Theresa laughing. She had some type of device that was controlling the doves.

“Very impressive, Theresa,” I said. “What are you able to do with them?”

“I can have them take flight in any direction,” Theresa explained, “circle something stationary, land in any quadrant, and deliver messages attached to their leg. We’ve been using these doves to screen new people who want to join our fellowship.”

As she spoke, I recalled the dove which landed on the table and then flew away at my first encounter.

I entered the building and was headed towards my quarters, excited to see Lori, Noah, and Max, when in the distance I saw a six-foot-seven burly man and immediately remembered he was among those miscreants at Anthony’s compound for the church-hunting indoctrination. I ducked out of the way so as not to be seen by him, and then I spotted Zeke.

“How long has the tall man been here?” I asked Zeke.

“Today is his first day,” Zeke said.

“I think he may be here to do us harm. He was part of a

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group assigned the task of church hunting,” I said.

“Well, not to worry, as he doesn’t know how to find us. The blindfold and spinning will misdirect him,” Zeke said.

“You don’t understand,” I said. “There is a GPS device that is not detectable with the wand. It’s small, about the size of a grain of rice. We are in grave danger. Please get Graham over here as I don’t want him to see me.”

Graham arrived soon after that.

“What’s the concern, Johnny?” Graham asked.

“The concern is that we may have already been identified by a GPS which doesn’t set off the wand,” I said. “Put me in a room alone with him and I will determine his motives.”

“Okay,” Graham agreed, and directed me to a room in the corner.

Three minutes later, the tall man entered the room. When he caught sight of me, he was confused.

“You realize we are splitting the points on this one 50/50,” I bluffed.

“Sorry man, I’ve already reported this one,” he said.

He pulled the GPS device that was the size of a grain of rice out of his front pocket, holding it in the palm of his hand.

“They’re on their way here now,” he added.

I kicked his hand, making the GPS fly in the air. I grabbed it and exited the room immediately, gave it to Theresa, and instructed her to attach it to a dove and send the dove at least a mile away.

“Subdue and blindfold him,” I said as I pointed to the tall man.

“We don’t have another place yet set up to relocate to, do we?” I asked.

“Not yet,” Graham answered.

“I don’t believe the GPS sends a signal that penetrates the three inches of lead, so we may be okay, but we need to get together and pray for God’s protection,” I petitioned.

Our entire fellowship prayed all through the night. The next morning, we had not been raided and we realized that the coast was clear, at least for the time being.

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This was a difficult way to survive. I wondered when Jesus would return and take us with Him. I was more than ready.

## Chapter 52

I wanted to make peace with my mother and stepfather. Emoticon Library had a directory from last year's census, so I went there to check, and I located her. I went to the address but someone else was occupying the apartment. I asked them if they knew my mom.

"Yes," the woman said. "She used to live here but FRIEND removed her."

"How long ago was that?" I asked.

"About two months. The fellow she lived with is still around here somewhere. FRIEND didn't take him. You may be able to find him at Scully's Tavern at the end of the block. He drinks like a fish."

I went to Scully's and surveyed the room. I was twelve when I last saw my stepfather Zach and wondered what he would look like this many decades later. I spotted an old man who might fit the description, sitting in the corner drinking alone.

I walked up to him.

"Hi, how are you doing?"

"Not very good," he said.

"Why, what's wrong?" I asked.

"I have end-stage liver disease," he confessed.

"Then why are you drinking?" I asked.

"Because there is nothing else for me. My wife was taken

from me two months ago. I turned her in when I found a Bible and other religious paraphernalia. FRIEND took her and I got 7,500 SCS points, but that is gone now and I realized I made a mistake in turning her in. I haven't done anything right in my life. I'm ready to die," he said.

"What happens when you die?" I asked.

"Probably nothing. But if there is something then it has to be better than this world," he concluded.

"Don't you want to be forgiven for the things you did wrong? If there is a God, which I believe there is, then you don't want to stand before Him and get judged for what you've done."

"No one would forgive me for what I did," he maintained. "She was never happy with me after her son ran away decades ago, but it was all my fault. In the last few years, she went more and more into the Jesus thing and tried to bring me along. I don't believe Jesus would forgive me for the things I did."

"Well, I believe the words in the Holy Bible," I said, "which says that Jesus already forgave you by taking on your wrongdoing by voluntarily giving His life for all of us. He is described as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

When he heard the words "Lamb slain", Zach started to cry.

"Why are you crying?" I asked.

"That was the reason her son ran away. I ran over his pet lamb. I wish that would have never happened. Our lives would have been so much different had I not been such a terrible husband and father," he said.

"I know what it's like going through something as traumatic as that. I'm sure your stepson would forgive you."

"Are you crazy? Johnny would never forgive me for killing Bosco!" he said.

Now tears started welling up in my eyes. I was having a hard time keeping my composure. I took three deep breaths.

"No, Zach, I forgive you," I said.

He looked up surprised that I knew his name and then stared at my face in shock like he was looking at a ghost.

"Johnny?"

We had quite a conversation after that.

## Chapter 53

**O**n my way back to the fellowship, I noticed several FRIENDs canvassing the area, so I hid. Then I watched FRIENDs entering and exiting the building and returning empty-handed. My heart sunk when it hit me. They're gone! Lori, Noah, and all of my Christian family have been taken!

I noticed Theresa's pigeons. They were flying in a circle maybe 100 yards away. I made my way there and spotted Theresa crouched down in a wooded area. I hugged her.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Dozens of FRIENDs entered the building a few hours ago and took everyone away," Theresa said. "I don't know where they went, but I know that the babies and parents were separated and taken away in different vehicles."

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I'm going to stay in this area with the pigeons to gather together anyone else who escaped," she said.

"I think I know where the babies were taken," I said. "Scribble the quadrant of your new location on this tree."

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'm going to rescue them or die trying," I said.

I hugged Theresa and headed back to the city.

I went back to my friend Tux the robot and asked if he had seen Alex, Harry, or Manny.

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“Manny Cambio was here yesterday,” Tux stated. “He has been coming by every day around 4 PM.”

“Is he alone when he’s here?” I asked.

“Yes,” Tux confirmed. “No one wants to sit near him because they claim he smells.”

I showed up at Robby’s the next day just before four o’clock and looked for Manny who apparently hadn’t arrived yet.

I casually observed people come and go in the restaurant for a few minutes.

Manny finally showed up alone and sat down at a table. The bubble hadn’t closed yet, and there’s a sensor to confirm there is no one in the way before it drops, so I walked up and stood under it just three feet behind Manny.

“You know you’re supposed to fish for Marlin, not shoot them,” I said.

Manny turned around with a big smile.

“Johnny! Sit down, sit down,” he said.

I sat with Manny and we smiled at each other as only old friends would. The bubble closed. I sensed he hadn’t been delivered to Anthony’s dark side, but he may have just gotten better at fronting in the past few years; nevertheless, I was placing my bet on him.

“Manny, what’s the deal with Anthony and Harry?” I asked.

“They’re hunting URGs. There is also a bounty placed on your head of one million SCS points,” Manny said.

“I figured that. Doesn’t surprise me,” I said. “But what about you?” I asked.

“I met with Harry and Anthony, and Anthony said he didn’t want to work with me. And I’m not going to turn you in for any number of points. Harry and Alex have changed, though. I don’t trust them anymore. Maybe I’m the one who changed, but things between us are different now,” Manny claimed.

“Manny, how do you feel about me being a Christian?” I asked.

“I don’t really get it to be honest. Everything associated with that seems problematic. You’re going to be killed for it, you know? What is the benefit of being a Christian?”

“If this life was all there was then I would agree with you,”

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I said. "I should be pitied; but this life is only one part of our existence. When these physical bodies die, our soul lives on. Being a true Christian means that you spend eternity with Jesus in Heaven. And if someone rejects Jesus, then when they die, they have to spend an eternity in Hell followed by the Lake of Fire. I wouldn't wish that on anyone, not even Anthony."

"Johnny, we'll always be friends but I don't understand this Jesus fascination you have."

I didn't respond to Manny's comment just then as I had another pressing issue I wanted to tell him about.

"I need your help, Manny. My baby Noah was snatched, and I think I know where he was taken. I'm going to save Noah, but I need your help."

"What do you want me to do?" Manny asked.

"I want you to contact Anthony and tell him you found me, but need an undetectable GPS in order to pinpoint the exact location."

"I don't get it, Johnny. Anthony wants to kill you."

"Yes, he does," I said. "And that fact is what is going to get you permission to get through all of the guard gates. I need to get past them and to the boathouse to save my child. Will you help?"

"Yes," Manny answered.

"I mean right now," I said.

"Okay, what's your plan?"

"I'll explain on the way. Let's go."

So we left the restaurant and got into the AT.

The AT has a small compartment in the back which was just tight enough for me to squeeze in. The guards would normally check that compartment, but I'm praying that they let Manny pass through unhampered.

Manny drove to the first gate of Anthony's compound. The guard waved him on through. When he got to the second gate, he was also waved through. So far, so good.

At the third gate, they stopped him and wanted to search the AT. Manny exited the AT and stood as close to the guard as possible. The guard caught wind of Manny.

"What's that foul stench?" the guard asked.

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“I don’t smell anything,” Manny answered.

The guard looked at him with disgust and walked back into his booth instructing Manny “go on” and he opened the gate.

Manny parked the AT to meet with Anthony. I told him to get in and out as quickly as possible and not to worry about me as I will find my own ride home.

I got out of the compartment and left the AT, jogging the quarter-mile to the boathouse. I was hoping they did not change the code.

When I got there, I entered the code and was pleased that it still worked. I headed down the tunnel.

About one hundred yards down, I arrived at the set of rooms labeled Sacrifice 1-10. I opened the first one and it was empty. Second one had two small babies in small open glass containers that were in a large glass cage. Neither of them was Noah.

I exited that room for now and entered the third door. I looked around. To my right, I saw five small glass containers encased in a large glass room with a door, similar to the second room. From outside the glass room, I stared at each baby. All but one of the babies was sleeping—or I hoped that’s what it was. Staring at the fifth glass container, I saw a baby lying on its back wide awake, but for some reason not crying at all. Probably just drugged or fed or both. He had Lori’s eyes and nose, and my lower jaw bone. Unmistakable. It was Noah. Thank God! They all seemed fine and unharmed. I exited momentarily.

I entered the fourth door’s room. My brothers Matt and Zeke were in there locked up in a cage enclosed in thick glass. Both were overjoyed to see me. I was concerned that breaking the glass might set off an alarm. I wasn’t sure how easy it would be to break anyway.

“Matt, Zeke... I don’t want to break it,” I cautioned.

“There’s a key up here,” Zeke said, pointing to the northern wall.

I grabbed the key and opened the glass cage door. Matt and Zeke were free. We went back to doors two and three and the same key worked in those cages as well. I instructed Matt and Zeke to carry two babies at a time and bring them to the boathouse. I

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grabbed Noah and a baby girl. Most of them started to wail or at least cry and fidget. We brought all eight of them back to the boathouse hoping that their crying wasn't alerting anyone of our escape.

Anthony was one of the few people who could afford cars that were manually driven. I snuck into the garage and had dozens to choose from. I was deciding which one would be best when in the corner, I spotted a Mack Truck Superliner that was twelve feet in height. I had only heard about these and had never seen one in real life. It had a 2,800-horsepower engine and weighed 27,000 pounds, and the best part was that all of us were able to tightly fit into the cabin.

We did our best to strap the babies in securely by cutting seat belts from Anthony's other cars and using them as a harness to keep the babies from getting injured. We needed to create a distraction to get the guards to leave their posts and go back to the house.

I went back in the tunnel and entered the Chimera doors. I had previously thought the human-possum hybrid which could talk was as horrifying as it would get, but I was wrong. They all talked. Housed in those cages were animals that appeared to be half human and half frog, hybrids that were like a Burmese Python but with a human head and arms just below the top, and a creature that was a man from the mid-section down, but with a giraffe neck and head on top. The giraffe head appeared to have long red hair. Anthony had his own *The Island of Doctor Moreau* right in his compound. It was beyond comprehension.

I entered the rooms starting at ten, turned on the lights and opened the door which led into the main portion of the house. The same key was a master that unlocked all of the cages. I opened the cage allowing the chimeras to exit and enter the main house. I did this for every room. There were probably fifty or sixty of these ghastly creatures scurrying through the house causing a ruckus. I would have liked to have seen Anthony's expression when those freaky hybrids started making their appearance, but I needed to get back to the garage.

We waited, observing the main house from a side door in the garage. Some of the guards were running towards the house. This

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was our cue to make our getaway.

It had been decades since I hotwired a vehicle, but it's just like riding a bike—you never forget. The truck started. The diesel engine was loud. It had a half tank of gas. We didn't have a garage door opener so I just floored it and busted through the door. We barreled towards the first gate which was closed, accelerating as we crashed through it. The gate was attached to the front of our truck and we kept moving forward. We successfully crashed through each gate and had now exited the property.

Seven FRIENDS stood in the road blocking our path. Each FRIEND weighed approximately 800 pounds, so there were 5,600 pounds in our way. As sophisticated as these robots were, they couldn't do math very well. The Mack Truck we were driving outweighed them by more than 20,000 pounds.

“Hold on!” I yelled out.

I slammed on the accelerator toward the roadblock. BAM! The Mack Truck flattened four FRIENDS.

We continued in the direction of my rendezvous point with Theresa, but unfortunately we never made it. The truck tires were flattened with spike sticks. An intensely bright spotlight stretching twenty feet in diameter was shining on us from a craft above. I brought the truck to a halt. The party was over.

We were all taken into custody by thirty FRIENDS who were there to greet us. It's in God's hands now, I decided. Whatever outcome brings Him the most glory is the one I want.

# Chapter 54

**A**lmost all the abandoned buildings still standing that used to house the now-defunct Wal-Mart chain of stores were converted into internment camps. They cleared the stores of the interior racks and added bars and barbed wire around the exterior. This should not have been a surprise as Wal-Mart is a word play on Martial Law. Flip the name and you have Mart-Wal. Flip the Wal and you've got Mart-Law which is short for Martial Law. Recalling my previous conversations with Gia, I remembered that this was consistent with her observation that the occult tries to cryptically tell the public about its intentions beforehand.

In days of yore, when Wal-Mart was open for normal retail business, they had a policy of no more than five customers for each 1,000 square feet at a given time, or about 20 percent of a store's capacity. They didn't follow that protocol in these newly converted Gulags. They packed us in there like sardines. It was packed so tight there was hardly enough room for everyone to lay down. They kept it so cold in there and didn't give us any blankets, so we huddled together in small groups with our backs to one another in an attempt to preserve our body heat.

Centernet was constantly spewing NWO propaganda day and night. They never shut it off. The old historic statutes that were torn down in the days of Antifa were all replaced with guillotines. They filmed every beheading and displayed them on the video

monitors in between their attempts to reprogram us. Sadly, their fear porn worked on some people. All you had to do was disavow Jesus and agree to accept their lithium-powered chip on your right hand or forehead, and they would release you back into society, even giving you a 500-square-foot apartment and a monthly stipend of 3,000 SCS points. I remembered that Moses was born into a royal family, but chose to suffer hardship with his brethren rather than enjoying the passing pleasures of sin.

The only good thing about this setup was that they did not isolate us. This meant we could freely talk with one another. We strengthened and comforted one another with God's word, constantly praying, and singing spiritual songs together. We knew we were in the throes of an extreme hardship, but we also knew that God was with us. Most of those imprisoned were born-again Christians but some non-believers got caught up in the corralling and were lumped in with us. Of course, that was a blessing as we were able to witness to these people.

Some of us had more of the Bible memorized than others, so we rotated groups every hour, moving one person at a time into another group. We were huddled together in groups of seven, so every seven hours we were awake, we had an entirely different group of seven. It was so cold that we immediately moved our backs as we were plugged into the new group, oftentimes without even knowing who the other six were.

We started every hour's rotation with a sound off where we all said our names, introducing ourselves to the group. The sound off started: "William Booth" followed by "Mary Teresa" followed by "Beverly Tarsus"... I tuned out the remaining names because I couldn't believe my ears. My mom was in the group! I was preoccupied when it was my turn and the girl who went before me nudged me with her elbow. I said "Johnny Tarsus". Everyone went silent.

"Johnny, is that you?" Mom asked.

"Yes, Mom, it's me!" I replied and then shifted positions by switching with the person nearest her on the left so that I could put my arm around her. Praise God, we were reunited! With all the internment camps, the chance of us being housed together was

small. This confirmed that even the littlest details of our lives were being choreographed by God.

“Mom, I love you very much and want to apologize for running away as a child,” I said. “I searched for you, but was informed you had been taken away. I thought I was never going to see you again. I want you to know that I was also able to make peace with Zach.”

Just then, the Centernet volume was turned up and three loud beeps sounded which always preceded their bogus public service announcements.

The Centernet PSA reported that for peace and harmony to be restored in the world, everyone must be tracked by receiving an identifying chip on their right hand or on their forehead. The chip, they claimed, will successfully protect the world's population from the latest Coronavirus, and when everyone had the chip installed, all restrictions would be lifted and we would regain our freedoms and get back to the way the world was. They tried to shame anyone who would protest by claiming it was our civic duty to show love for our fellow man by receiving the chip and that 90 days from now, no one would be able to buy or sell without receiving the chip.

I continued talking with Mom for the next few hours, but then it was her time to rotate out and be inserted in a new group of seven.

Every morning at 10 AM they blared the same message over the loudspeakers.

“Anyone who wants to be released, come to the northeastern door now! We will provide you new clothes, a 500-square-foot apartment, and 3,000 SCS points every month forever!”

The strings attached to that offer would surely lead any takers into the Lake of Fire. Sadly, every day there were people who gathered at the northeastern door.

By God’s providence, I was moved into a group which also included Manny. At that point, everyone smelled because they did not allow us to take showers. I heard his name when he said it in the group’s sound off.

“Manny! How did you end up here?” I asked.

“Johnny!” Manny exclaimed. “I didn’t get out of Anthony’s

compound fast enough and he assumed I was involved in your attempted escape.”

“I’m sorry about that, but I’m glad you’re here,” I said.

“I’m leaving tomorrow at 10 AM’s roundup,” Manny said. “I want my free clothes, 500-square-foot apartment, and 3,000 SCS monthly payment. You should stand with me tomorrow morning at the northeastern door.”

“Manny, they are requiring you to have a chip installed in your right hand or forehead. That is the mark of the beast. If you do that, then the Bible says anyone who receives that mark in his forehead, or in his hand, will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

Manny dismissed my warning.

“I don’t believe in that.”

Just then, Holly spoke up.

“Manny, do you believe that this world was created or do you believe that it simply came to be out of thin air?” Holly asked.

“I believe in science, so I believe it wasn’t created. I believe in evolution,” Manny answered.

“Ah...evolution. Now that’s a big topic. Many do believe that things in nature change over time. Even Bible-believing Christians believe in aspects of Darwin’s theory. Well, some aspects of it.”

“Okay,” said Manny. “So, what’s the problem?”

Lewis then chimed in.

“The problem is that Darwin’s theory doesn’t address Earth’s origins. Manny, has the universe always existed or was it created?”

“It’s always existed. It’s infinite,” Manny answered.

“So, you said you believe in what most scientists would agree on,” Lewis said.

“Yes,” said Manny.

“Ever heard of the Big Bang?” asked Lewis.

“Sure,” Manny said. “I remember reading about it in school

when I was a kid. And I remember my father talking about it.”

“And it theorizes,” said Lewis, “that the universe actually had a beginning. Most scientists, even ones that don’t believe in God, are in agreement that the universe started at some point, and before that point there was nothing.”

“Oh okay. That makes sense, I suppose,” Manny said.

“But they stopped talking about that kind of stuff a long time ago,” Lewis said. “The information in books and on the Internet has been censored or removed because it didn’t match OWR teachings.”

“Okay. I get that,” said Manny.

“But let’s get back to the idea of infinity which you brought up,” said Lewis.

“Yeah. Infinity. I just figured the universe has always existed,” said Manny.

“Okay, but think about this,” said Lewis. “Can an infinite task that requires an infinite number of steps ever reach the final step?” Lewis asked.

“No,” Manny answered.

“Can it ever reach the step before the last step?” Lewis asked.

“No.”

“Can it reach the step before the step before the last step?” Lewis asked.

“No, I guess not,” Manny answered. “So...what’s your point?”

“Manny, an infinite task that requires an infinite number of steps can’t reach any step by definition. Yet we are here. This proves that the universe was created outside of time,” Lewis concluded.

“I don’t follow that,” Manny said.

Chester spoke up then.

“Manny, do believe it’s possible for an explosion to take place in this room and for a fully functioning FRIEND to be created?”

Manny was silent. But he was still listening, trying to take it all in. It was a lot to digest and mull over.

“So, let’s say you do go along with the scientists that the

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universe had a beginning,” Holly interjected. “Do you believe that nothing created something?”

“Okay, yeah, I guess I do,” Manny said.

“Well, that is a scientific impossibility,” Holly said. “That requires more faith than believing in a Creator.”

She paused to let that sink in to Manny.

I worried a little that maybe he was feeling everyone was against him, but I knew it was just the opposite. None of us wanted to see him leave the next day, knowing that would lead to his demise.

We continued this conversation for the next three hours. It seemed we may be having some positive affect on him. Each of us had the floor for twenty-minutes and everyone focused their efforts on Manny. Holly was speaking. My friend Matt would speak next. Then it would be my turn.

## Chapter 55

**M**att began talking to Manny about God as he first needed to acknowledge a Creator, a Heavenly Father who loved him, before he could recognize anything else spiritually.

“Manny,” Matt started in. “So, would you say God exists or not?”

“I’m actually open to the possibility of God,” Manny said, “but I feel he hasn’t had any impact on my life. Since I’ve been about 12 years old, I’ve always been able to make my own decisions and not have to answer to anyone.”

“Well, that’s what free will is about,” Matt said. “God created this world originally as a Paradise for man and woman, allowing them to do what they wanted, but gave them certain rules to follow. Those rules were broken, bringing sin, as well as pain, suffering, and calamity into the world. Since then, we’ve all been born into sin. Which is why we need Jesus.”

“See, that’s where I draw the line,” Manny said. “I do believe that the things I’ve done in the past were wrong, but not because of God or Jesus. How do we even know Jesus existed?”

“Manny, do you believe Alexander the Great existed?” Matt asked.

“Of course,” Manny said. “There’s written history on him.”

“How about Julius Caesar?” asked Matt.

“Of course. I remember studying about him in history class

when I was a kid.”

“Did you know that there are very few details about certain facts in the lives of Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar—for example, where they were born. Sometimes only one primary source, written more than 150 years after their death.”

“So?”

“Yet we have multiple sources, including eyewitness accounts, outside of the Bible just a few decades after Jesus was born that talk about Jesus’s birth in Bethlehem, that He was baptized by John the Baptist, and that He was crucified, as well as other aspects of his life as a teacher and a prophet.”

“Who says?” Manny questioned.

“It’s a fact. There’s the Jewish historian Josephus, the Roman senator Tacitus who had no sympathy for Christians, but just reported the events as he knew them. Both of these historians lived in the first century, same century as Jesus.”

“Okay fine, so Jesus existed and he did a lot of the things that the Bible reports on. But how do we know that he performed all those miracles. Or rose from the dead. That’s made up by all the people who believed in him at the time. They probably hid his body, then lied about it.”

“Okay, those are interesting theories,” Matt answered him. “But why would his followers continue to profess in his belief knowing that it would be a death sentence for them. For many, it was! Jesus appeared multiple times to them after he died, and this was reported by multiple authors. And don’t you think the Romans were combing the area for his body to disprove the resurrection story?”

“Okay, but how do we know the Bible is true?” Manny asked plainly. “And reliable. I mean, these words were copied over and over again, right?”

“The Bible is very reliable. We have over 5,000 Greek manuscripts and portions of manuscripts alone. We have far fewer texts of ancient classical literature that is regarded as accurate and preserved several centuries later. Great care was taken through the ages to preserve God’s word. We have 36,000 literary portions of the New Testament itself dated between 100 AD and 300 AD. Or

we did. Many are locked away by URGs around the world.”

Matt and Manny continued in this Socratic discourse for over an hour. It was a blessing that Matt was here, because I certainly didn't have the knowledge he had on apologetics and early Christian history.

I felt Manny intellectually was taking it all in, but I wasn't sure how much his heart was being softened. He needed the prompting of the Holy Spirit, but I didn't know how that was going to happen.

“Why do we need to have a standard like the Bible to decide how we should live our life and what we should believe?” Manny asked.

“Well, what standard do you propose in its place?” Matt countered.

“No standard. Every person should just judge for themselves what is right and wrong.”

“Well, why do we have rules and laws at all?” asked Matt.

“So there's not complete chaos. There would be anarchy if there wasn't some kind of government or enforcing body.”

“Exactly. But that's in the physical world. What about the spiritual world?”

“What about it?” asked Manny.

“What happens when you die?”

“I like to think there's something beyond this life,” said Manny.

“There most certainly is,” asserted Matt. “But not everybody is judged to be going to the same destination. If you believe the Bible, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner and believe in Jesus Christ.”

“Well, I definitely recognize that I've committed some atrocious acts. I'm a sinner, as you put it. But I don't see how believing in Jesus would change anything.”

“Well, it would. The Bible teaches that.”

“How do we know other religions are false? Like Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Mormons,” Manny asked Matt.

“None of those religions have a savior who came to redeem us from our sin. Their ultimate goal is either based on a human

figure or just reaching a state within yourself. Not a one true God and a risen savior.”

Manny remained silent. Matt continued.

“Manny, it seems like you’ve had some of these discussions before. Have you heard some of this information?”

“Sure. I remember hearing my father have some of these discussions with his friends when I was younger. But that was a long time ago.”

At that point, I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to jump into the conversation. I saw my opening.

“Matt, if you don’t mind, I’d like to talk a little with Manny,” I said.

“Please go right ahead,” said Matt.

“Manny, I know I’ve heard you mention your father in the past,” I said, “but we’ve never really talked about it.”

“Yeah, I know,” Manny said. “I miss him.”

Manny went on to explain what he remembered about his father when he was very young. Manny respected him, but his mother and father didn’t see eye-to-eye about many things, and one of them obviously was spiritually. His mom ended up with a better lawyer at the time, and his dad just gave up and left. Manny never found out why. He had heard through the grapevine that his father had died decades ago when the world started falling apart. It was even before his mother overdosed, which he found out about years after it happened.

There was a definite loss in Manny’s life because of his dad leaving and losing custody of him. And of course not having a mother who raised him right either. There was a hole in his heart that needed to be filled. I could identify with those feelings. I never met my father, but knew some things about him, and so could understand where Manny was coming from.

“Manny, you know there is an answer to your problems. And it does not involve reporting to the northeastern door to receive what this world has to offer.”

“Johnny, I know.” Pause. “But I don’t know what to do.” He started to tear up. He put his hands to his face, covering it.

“There is a way out,” I said. “I can help you.”

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“Okay,” Manny said, taking his hands from his face, but looking down at the ground.

“I know you miss your father. And that’s what’s holding you back from having a relationship with a God that you know is real and loves you. And you know that it is that God, your Heavenly Father, that is the one you need to have a real relationship with, and to understand that it is through His Son, Jesus, that you can have eternal life.”

Manny remained silent. But he was still tearing up.

“Do you mind if we pray for you?” I said.

Manny just kept his head down and remained silent. He started to weep softly.

Matt and several others crowded around Manny and me.

I began to pray for the Lord to work on Manny’s behalf, and for the Holy Spirit to intercede. Several of us prayed for various needs, and Matt also prayed for Manny and others in the room. It was heartfelt and genuine. Several of us got very emotional. It couldn’t be helped. Manny was still crying. We then remained still and quiet for about a minute after the prayers were lifted up.

“Johnny, take me through the sinner’s prayer,” said Manny. “I remember that’s what it’s called. I remember that’s what my dad called it.”

And so I did. Despite our predicament—sitting in that Wal-Mart uncertain what our fate might be—we all felt joy for Manny as he was reunited with his Heavenly Father.

## Chapter 56

**W**e were energized after witnessing to Manny successfully. I was praying there would be more unbelievers that we would meet with during our time in the Wal-Mart internment camp. I couldn't help but think that the end-times were fast approaching. I knew Zeke as the expert on that and wanted to question him.

“Where are we in the timeline of the rapture?” I asked Zeke. “We have to be awfully close.”

“Yes, we are very close,” Zeke agreed. “We’ve already seen three horses of the Apocalypse in Revelation 6. God allowed me to memorize those verses, so allow me to elaborate. Rev 6:1-2 reads:

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, ‘Come and see’. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

“Prior to the world being effectively conquered by the Coronavirus, the United States was the envy of the entire world. Soon after, we were reduced to an impoverished third-world country. I had previously thought a nuclear war would be required to produce this type of widespread mayhem, but the reality was that no missile, no bullet, and not even one arrow was ever fired.”

He paused, and then looked at Pedro who was in our group

of seven and fluent in Spanish.

“Pedro, can you tell us what the word ‘corona’ means?”

Pedro stared at him and was astonished at how this word exactly related to the description of the White horse.

“It means crown,” Pedro said.

“Precisely,” Zeke said. “And the Red horse is the second of the four.”

“Revelation 6 verses 3 and 4 reads:

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say ‘Come and see’. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”

“The zombie apocalypse which ensued from lack of food was the Red horse as this effectively removed peace from the earth. Shortly after that, all faiths were required to merge into a one world religion. The Bible, the word of God, is likened to a sword. China was now in full control of the UN. The color that describes China is red and the dragon was its symbol.”

Zeke paused a moment.

“And then Revelation 6 verses 5 through 7 says this:

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say ‘Come and see’. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say ‘A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine’.”

“All true Christian churches went underground and were not easy to find. The wheat, barley, oil, and wine are earthly words describing aspects of the Gospel. The Gospel was still being measured out, however scarcely.”

“The fourth horse is Pale and I believe this will coincide with an alien deception. Revelation 6 verses 7 and 8 reads:

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say ‘Come and see’. And I looked, and behold a Pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth

part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”

When Zeke said ‘alien deception’, I remembered a conversation that I previously had with Gia. She took out an old \$50 bill and the newer version. She then folded each and handed them to me.

“Do you see this on the old \$50?” Gia had asked me. “It’s the Hoover Dam. It’s also on the new \$50 but the dam has broken in this version. It’s foretelling the destruction of the Hoover Dam.”

“The same can be seen of the destruction of the Twin Towers,” she continued, “when folding the \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, and \$100. That money was printed prior to Sept 11, 2001.”

“It’s a principal in the occult,” she claimed, “where if they reveal it to you cryptically beforehand, then somehow they gain more power when it happens. It’s also programming you to accept it when the event occurs.”

“The same can be said of extra-terrestrials,” she said. “How many movies and shows have we been inundated with regarding alien beings from another world? Many of these stories tell us the aliens are our friends and that we need to learn from them and share cultures. Movies like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Enemy Mine*, *Alien Nation*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, *The Arrival*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *District 9*, *Superman*, and any more. And the news continues to reveal more and more as if to normalize their existence. We are being prepared for an alien deception.”

“Did you know that Area 51 in Nevada is just 103 miles away from the Hoover Dam?” she said. “Some of my co-workers at SERN believe that the destruction of the Hoover Dam will usher in the alien deception, but it won’t be aliens, it will be demons portraying themselves as aliens.”

“I don’t really have an opinion either way about it,” Gia concluded. “It could be predicting the future, or it might only exist in their imaginations. Time will tell.”

I remembered that conversation with Gia from years ago, as I considered how Zeke related the final Pale horse with the alien deception.

## Chapter 57

Johnny Tarsus, report to the southern door!” I had been dozing off, but the ear-splitting words resounded from the loudspeakers, jolting me awake. It seemed like they turned the volume up just for my name. My heart was faint. This was the end of the road.

I repeated a verse from Psalm 73 in my head that went “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” and was comforted.

I hugged my mom and all my friends. They were crying for me. Tears were welling up in my eyes too, not for my death, but for the warmth I felt from these people who loved me. I reminded them that they would see me again and not to be sad. I walked with fortitude, considering how much more difficult it was for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ some 2,000 years ago, voluntarily going to the cross. His physical suffering was bad, but the fact that all had abandoned Him was too heavy a burden to carry on His own, but He did it anyway because He loved us. I started to tear up because I could feel Jesus’s love.

I was just fifty yards from the southern door, then forty, then thirty. I tried to straighten up my posture as I walked. Twenty yards, then ten yards.

I arrived at the door. I looked up. To the right, I saw a guard in a booth. When he saw that I was standing at the door, he buzzed

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the door open. Some guards entered the area and placed handcuffs on my wrists and shackles on my ankles. Then they escorted me outside.

I was directed to board an AT bus which sat twenty. I was the sixth to arrive. I made eye contact with four of them. The fifth passenger had his head down. Sensing he needed encouragement, I sat next to him and turned my head to the right toward him.

“Are you okay?”

“We’re going to die, you know,” he said.

“Yes, I know,” I replied, “but to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. You’re going to be with Jesus the moment you die.”

“How do you know that for sure?” he asked.

“I’m putting 100% of my trust in the saving work that Jesus Christ provided. It’s a free gift. Believe it.”

He remained silent. I waited a minute, then started singing a song that I had learned by spending time with my URG family.

“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly trust in Jesus’ Name.”

Heads were lifted up. The other five weren’t singing, but I was guessing it was because they didn’t know the song. I sang more.

“On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness seems to hide His face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.”

One of the five started singing the chorus with me.

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“On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.”

A couple others joined me on the third verse.

“His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.”

All six of us were now singing the chorus as one voice.

“On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.”

I stopped singing. About thirty seconds of silence passed before one of the five who was sitting closest to the front started singing the song “Blessed Assurance” which was a song that I also knew, so when he reached the third line it was both of us singing.

“Blessed assurance – Jesus is mine;  
Oh what a foretaste of glory divine.  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;  
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, all is at rest;  
I in my Savior, am happy and blessed.  
Watching and waiting, looking above  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song;  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song;  
Praising my Savior all the day long.”

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We sang “Blessed Assurance” again, but this time everyone chimed in on the chorus and we continued to sing this song. By the fourth time, everyone knew the lyrics and we were all singing. Some were singing harmony parts. It was beautiful. More people entered the bus and eventually the bus was filled to capacity.

One by one they joined us in singing until all twenty of us were singing as one voice. The AT bus started. We were headed to our death. We continued singing.

## Chapter 58

The sky was darkened as it had been for several years. I don't even remember the last time I saw a sunny day or what that felt like, but what I could feel was that our AT bus was surrounded by evil.

There were throngs gathered around a park when we made the right turn toward what would be our final stop. Everyone in the crowd outside was wearing their GIPE, but even through that, I could sense the scorn emanating from the would-be spectators of our execution. They were blinded and did not understand that we were the ones who found favor in the sight of the one true God. I prayed that the scales might be lifted from the eyes of at least some of these lost souls.

We were quickly approaching our destination. The bus stopped at an old monument site which at one point surely showcased a long-forgotten American hero but now was emblazoned by a lone guillotine. They apparently wanted to celebrate each beheading one at a time, relishing the moment we lost our lives.

There were pallets of thin plywood coffins stacked compactly on top of one another. There must have been somewhere around 100 on each pallet and they extended as far as the eye could see. It was a sobering thought that one of those boxes was for me. I shook that off mentally and fully engrossed my attention on the

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assurances of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, calling to mind a verse from the Gospel of John: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.”

The AT bus sat stationary for ten minutes before the door opened and two guards entered.

“Sorry for the delay,” one of the guards said. “I hope it didn’t cause any of you to lose your heads.”

The second guard laughed.

“Don’t worry,” the second guard said. “We’ll be heading out of the bus soon.”

That put them both in hysterics.

They walked down the aisle and began a children’s choosing chant that I hadn’t heard since I was a kid.

“Eeny...meeny...miny...moe,” the first guard said, as both despots aimed fingers in unison, first at one of us individually on the left, then drawing a top half-circle motion with their hand and landing with the next word on the one who sat beside them. Then they quickly moved their attention to the two on the right, being sure to give each of them their assigned word.

They took two steps to the next aisle.

“Catch...a...Christian...by” the second guard said.

They slung each phrase at us individually like a dart to the chest. Both took another couple steps forward.

“...the...toe...if...he...”

Another two steps forward.

“hollers...let...him...go...”

They reached my aisle, slung a word and two fingers at me, and then passed by, walking towards the back of the bus onto the next aisle.

“Eeny...meeny...miny...moe...”

It sounded like they reached the back of the bus.

“My...mother...told...me...”

I kept my focus straight ahead as I heard them turn around and head back in my direction.

“to.....pick.....”

Their steps slowed down, as did the chant.

Part 2: Lori and the Underground

“the.....very.....”

Even slower.

“best.....one.....”

I closed my eyes and bowed my head.

“.....And.....”

“.....You.....”

I lifted my head slightly.

“.....Are.....”

It sounded like they were standing right behind me. They stopped walking.

“It!”

I turned around, opened my eyes, and looked up.

Both guards were pointing their index fingers at my head.

## Chapter 59

One of the guards grabbed my arm to lift me up, which was unnecessary I thought, as I was ready to stand on my own; but truthfully no, I was not able to stand on my own. My strength came from standing on the Rock which is Jesus Christ.

I meditated on Psalm 59: “But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.”

I stood and walked with at least some confidence.

Step by step, I was headed down the aisle of the bus and to the door. My heart was heavy. With each step, I thought about all the evil for which I was guilty.

First step: the many dogs I murdered.

Second step: the lives I ruined by my thefts.

Third step: how many lives I ruined from poisoning people with drugs, causing overdoses and broken homes.

Fourth step: what happened to Braxton.

Fifth step: violating Manny’s mom countless times.

My heart was overcome with melancholy.

Sixth step: the kid on the basketball court.

Seventh step: murdering Lucas.

Eighth step: hundreds of homeless people murdered.

The pensive sadness grabbed me like a fist. There was a lot I needed to lay on the cross of Jesus Christ. I was more than

deserving of death. I prayed for forgiveness.

Ninth step: causing Naomi to miscarry.

Tenth step: the rapes I committed.

Eleventh step: what would happen to Lori and Noah. Or even Max. Where were they? How would they survive without me? This feeling of hopelessness covered me like a blanket.

Twelfth step, I reached the door.

I exited the bus and felt the cold outdoor breeze, as my face was uncovered with no GIPE. There were hundreds of spectators. The guards brought me to the guillotine.

“Put his head through the lunette,” an unknown voice shouted.

They placed my head through the round wooden frame.

The blade twelve feet above me stood poised to come down.

I laid everything at the cross of Jesus Christ and considered a parable Jesus told:

“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”

“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

I also thought about the woman who poured the perfume on the feet of Jesus.

“Therefore, I tell you,” Jesus said, “her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

There was no one more wicked than me and I knew this forgiveness made me love Jesus Christ even more.

The blade made a single click when it was released.





Part 3  
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## Chapter 60

**M**y head was separated from my body the moment the blade came down and touched the bottom of the guillotine. I was decapitated. I experienced intense pain. I was shocked about that as I assumed there would be no pain at the moment the blade cut through me. But it felt as if my body was still connected to me. It felt like an eternity, but it only lasted eleven seconds.

In a fraction of a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, I found myself traveling exceedingly fast through a tunnel of light. The colors were so vivid. It was as if my life on Earth was the dream and now I was fully awake. My senses were so much more alive.

I was traveling faster than the speed of light, and there were what I would describe as shooting stars traveling faster than me but headed in the same direction.

Then came the waves of radiant light. The first wave was love. This was intense, so intense I felt as though I might explode. Then came the next wave: joy. Another overwhelming feeling, beyond description in earthly terms. Then came peace, a peace that surpasses all understanding. Followed by comfort, and then acceptance.

I saw two gigantic hands as clouds protruding from the end of the tunnel and just as the thought came in my head asking what they were, the answer was given to me—it was Jesus Christ, and I

was forgiven. I felt that, as exceptionally euphoric and strong as these emotions were in me, Jesus was feeling them even stronger. I realized just then that Heaven is not a destination of a place you want to be, but rather it is a Person you want to be with.

I was welcomed into the hands of Jesus. We did not communicate audibly as He knew my thoughts and just as I would think of a question, He would answer telepathically. I wondered what those shooting stars were that were traveling faster than me, and the answer was immediately given—they are the prayers of the saints and they have no expiration date.

It was just as described by the apostle John. Jesus's appearance was like a Son of Man, dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and coming out of His mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw Him, I fell on my knees to worship.

I noticed that the light that was coming from Jesus was changing me. The closer I got to Him, the more luminous I became and the more joy I felt. He held me with His hands and the message I received was "It's OK. You're with Me now. No more pain, no more crying, no more sorrow, and no more death."

I did not have a concern, care, or fear at all. I didn't forget about all the people on Earth, but I knew that Jesus was perfect in His decisions and I had no worry about the outcome. He gave me a white robe and put me under the altar with hundreds of millions of others. This was a BIG family. It was as if we were all part of one body and we had the same mind, namely the mind of Christ. I was told to wait a little longer, until the full number of my fellow servants, my brothers and sisters, were killed just as I had been.

Together, my new family watched the events on Earth unfold, while considering it the highest honor to do whatever Jesus wanted from us. I could not describe this experience accurately with earthly terms and could not do it justice in my description, as it far exceeded anything I could put into words.

## Chapter 61

I wanted to see Lori and Noah, and just as I had that thought, two windows opened before me. I could see Lori on Earth and Noah was with us in Heaven. Noah was in a nursery with hundreds of other infants, and they were being taught by an angel about Jesus Christ. I was so happy Noah was with us.

Lori was in a Wal-Mart prison. They were huddled together in a group of seven. I wondered if it was the same Wal-Mart that housed my final day on Earth and again just as I had that thought, the answer was given me—it was. Six of those in Lori's circle had individual angels assigned to protect each one of them. The seventh person in the group had no such protection. I listened to this group's conversation.

"I don't believe in a Jesus, but I do believe in a higher power," said a man named Stedman. "If there is a Heaven, then trust me I will get there."

Stedman was the only one in the group with no angelic protection.

"Stedman, if there is a Heaven and Hell, then what is the basis for determining which place would be your final destination?" asked Ray.

"If you're a good person, you get in. It's as simple as that."

"Do you think you're a good person?" Ray asked.

"Yes."

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“Have you ever told a lie?” Ray inquired.

“Yes, everyone has.”

“What do you call someone who tells a lie?” asked Ray.

“Umm... a liar.”

“Then what are you?” asked Ray.

“I guess... a liar.”

“Do you still think you’re a good person?” questioned Ray.

“Yes.”

“Have you ever stolen anything, no matter how small?” Ray asked.

“Yes.”

“What do you call someone who steals?” asked Ray.

“Umm... a thief.”

“So what are you?” Ray inquired.

“A thief.”

“No, you’re a lying thief,” Ray stated, his acerbic wit causing Stedman and some of the others to chuckle. “Do you still think you’re a good person?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever used God’s name in vain?” Ray asked.

“Of course.”

“It’s called blasphemy, using God’s name as a cuss word,” Ray informed. “Would you use your mother’s name as a cuss word?”

“No.”

“Why not?” asked Ray.

“Cause it’s my mother and I have the utmost respect for my mother.”

“Right, you’d never do that,” said Ray. “And yet, you’ve taken the holy name of God, a name that Godly Jews won’t even speak, it’s so holy, and brought it down to the level of a filth word to express disgust, which is called blasphemy. So serious, it’s punishable by death. Do you still think you’re a good person?”

“Yes.”

“Jesus said whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart,” Ray stated. “Have you ever looked at a woman lustfully?”

“Yes, everybody has.”

“Have you had sex before marriage?” Ray asked.

“Yes.”

“So, by your own admission, you’re a lying, thieving, blasphemous, fornicating adulterer at heart,” explained Ray. “If you died in your sins, and God judges you by the Ten Commandments, and we’ve only looked at four of them, do you think you’d be innocent or guilty?”

“I’m not sure,” Stedman said. “But I think that I’m deemed a good person, and I know... I’m very secure within myself in who I am, that no Bible or no person’s opinion is gonna change how I feel.”

“Now, here’s the thing that will change your mind,” said Ray. “If you look at the word ‘good’ in the dictionary, there are over forty different definitions. Number one is ‘moral excellence’. Absolute moral perfection. None of us is good in that respect. We’re good by human standards—that’s the difference. Of course, you’re a good person by human standards, and not by God’s. You’d be damned, which horrifies me. So, Stedman, here’s a big question: what did God do for guilty sinners so we wouldn’t have to go to Hell? Do you know?”

“I don’t know, but I don’t believe in that concept of God,” stated Stedman. “I don’t believe in the biblical God. And within myself, I know that a God that loves us wouldn’t damn us because of human mistakes. Yes, we all make different mistakes, and we’re all at a different degree.”

While saying this, Stedman gestures two random circles with open hands.

“But my idea of God is not that I’m gonna be damned for things that we do just because we’re human.”

“What you just did there, Stedman, is violate the first of the Ten Commandments,” said Ray. “I did that before I was a Christian. When you make up a God to suit yourself. You create a God you feel comfortable with. My question is: what did God do for guilty sinners so that we wouldn’t have to be damned, so that we wouldn’t go to Hell?”

Stedman remained silent.

“Jesus suffered and died on the cross to take the punishment for the sin of the world,” Ray said. “You and I broke God’s law, the Ten Commandments. Jesus came and paid the fine. That’s what happened on that cross. That’s why He said ‘It is finished’ just before He died. In other words, the debt has been paid.”

Ray paused for a moment. Stedman didn’t speak. Ray continued.

“Stedman, if you’re in court and someone pays your fine, the judge can legally let you go. There’s a stack of speeding fines here—deadly serious—but someone’s paid them and you’re free to go. And he can do that which is legal and right and just. Well, God can legally let you live forever. He can take the death sentence off you because Jesus paid the fine in full, so you could go free. Does that make sense?”

“It makes complete sense, but still doesn’t pertain to me.”

“Well, you still listened and I appreciate that,” stated Ray. “Then Jesus rose from the dead, defeated the greatest enemy we all have, death itself, and if you’ll simply repent of your sins, let them go, turn from them, and trust in Jesus, like you trust a parachute, God promises He’ll grant you everlasting life. He’ll take death off you.”

“I know how you feel, but I don’t believe in your concept of God and Jesus.”

“I see that,” Ray said.

“I’m still gonna keep saying that, because I’m not going to repent for my sins, in the idea that you think,” Stedman said.

“I just want you to think about your eternity,” Ray said, “because this is your precious life we’re talking about. Jesus said ‘He that saves his life will lose it. He that loses his life for my sake will keep it.’ Everlasting life is a free gift. And I just want you to perhaps give some thought to this.”

I was looking down from the third Heaven and I understood the first and second. The first Heaven was what I was witnessing on Earth—the earthly plane and its atmosphere—and the second Heaven was the astral plane—Satan’s realm. And what I was witnessing were demons, one of which had puppet strings attached to Stedman, and the other one was grabbing any of God’s word that entered his heart,

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and was throwing it away.

Just then the 10 AM voice came over the loudspeaker.

“Anyone who wants to be released, come to the northeastern door now. We will provide you new clothes, a 500 square foot apartment, and 3,000 SCS points every month forever.”

“Bye bye!” Stedman said to no one in particular, as I saw the demon moving him like a puppet to the northeastern door.

## Chapter 62

I wondered where Manny was and just then I saw a window open. I see that Manny is still in Wal-Mart in a group of seven and he had an angel protecting him. Manny was ministering, or trying to minister, to the other six, of whom all of them were on puppet strings, having the word taken out of their heart as soon as it was sown.

“We’re leaving tomorrow morning at 10 AM,” said the leader of the unprotected six. “You can have fun freezing away here up until your bus ride to beheading.”

“I wish you would reconsider,” Manny pleaded.

“Reconsider what? Freezing in here with you, hoping your Jesus God will save you. No thanks!” he said.

Another announcement came over the loudspeakers.

“Manny Cambio, report to the southern door!”

It was now Manny’s time. He began praying in his head. The other six jeered at him.

I saw Manny’s prayers travel to Heaven like shooting stars, and I saw an angel standing by the altar collecting them in a golden censer which contained much incense and the prayers of saints. The smoke of the incense, which also included Manny’s prayers, went up from the angel’s hand before God.

He would soon be with us in Heaven. This made me exceedingly glad.

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I thought about Alex, then immediately a window opened showing him driving one of Anthony's cars, a Bugatti Veyron, at 103 mph. The stereo was blaring Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train". Alex was drunk and weaving on the road. The demons had both of his hands and feet on puppet strings. They were taking turns pulling him in different directions, trying to get him to wreck.

The car swerved right and then immediately left, hitting a curb, and flipping four times before colliding with an AT bus. Alex was dead.

I saw his soul leave his body and travel down into the center of the earth. His face had a look of shock which was followed by sheer terror as he traveled down, down, down. The temperature was getting unbearably hot, the horror of millions of souls burning and screaming increasing in loudness, and then Alex landed in Hell.

I could see that Hell itself was in the shape of a body in the center of the earth. The outskirts, hands and feet, although the punishment there was unbearable; nevertheless, it increased in severity as you moved towards the center of the body. The heart was the absolute worst part of Hell. Alex landed in Hell's bicep region.

The floor in Hell moved as if to breathe, slowly lifting a few inches and then lowering a few inches. The sulfur smell was so thick, Alex had to use every bit of his strength to barely get enough air to breathe and then would be right back to struggling to get another breath. As soon as he landed, all kinds of worms started crawling on him and into his ears and eyes.

A demon entered who was there to greet Alex. He was seventeen feet tall, winged, with a nightmarish horse head having six-inch fangs protruding downward and there were seven footlong horns extending out the top. His upper body was that of a man with two muscular arms which were ridiculously oversized even for his tremendous frame, and he had four legs resembling a bear with six-inch claws on his feet. His entire body was covered in scales like a fish. The demon had nothing for Alex besides hate.

The ghastly demon walked towards Alex, grabbing his arms, and plucking them out, then stomping on his head, which crushed his skull like a pancake. Alex could not understand how he could

be alive after that, but he was, and had intense excruciating pain all over his body. His body quickly put itself back together and the demon grabbed him to drag him into the inner parts of Hell's body. The screams of billions of suffering souls were deafening. I had seen enough of this.

I thought about Harry and the window opened showing him infiltrating a URG. He had been invited inside and was speaking with three Christians, one of whom was an elder. The three Christians had angels assigned to them. Harry had nothing but the strings of his demon puppetmasters, but I could see the strings were attached mostly to his heart and hardened it so much that it would not allow anything good to enter.

The four of them were all standing in silence. I could see the three Christians were praying. Their prayers were reaching Heaven as shooting stars, and a message was sent back to the elder, informing him that Harry was possessed and was not to be trusted.

"Harry, I have the gift of discernment and I perceive that you have demons," the elder said. "There is a spiritual battle taking place. The Bible says we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Just as the elder said those words, they went into Harry's heart as a sword, cutting him, which only incensed the demons with rage, prompting one of them to travel down to Harry and enter his body.

"Under the authority given to me by Jesus Christ," the elder stated, "I can expel these demons, but if you have not accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, they will only return seven times stronger. Do you want to accept Jesus as your Savior?"

The demon which had entered Harry closed his mouth, and did not allow him to speak.

# Chapter 63

**W**e were gathered in Heaven before the throne of Jesus. I saw in the distance a mountain which extended further than the eye could see. I perceived the mountain was the dwelling place of God the Father, but there was a direct line of intense light connecting the Father and the Son Jesus who was sitting on the throne before us. There were also rays of light connecting each one of us to the throne of Jesus and to one another.

Two verses came to my attention. One was Revelation 3:21: “To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on His throne.” The other was 1 Corinthians 12:27: “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

We worshipped along with the angels as we prostrated ourselves before our God, casting the gold crowns on our heads before the throne because He was the one who was worthy to receive glory, honor, and power for He redeemed us unto God by His own blood. Just then seven thunders uttered their voices and I understood that the rapture was imminent.

I heard the great sound of a trumpet, and the angels of God were sent to gather the elect from the four winds of the earth. First the dead in Christ were raised, giving us new glorified spiritual bodies. Then, of those alive, there were two people in a field: one was taken and the other left. The one who was taken was

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transformed into a glorified spiritual body; the one who was left would have to go through the Great Tribulation. Although I did not think it possible, nevertheless, those of us in Heaven now had been transformed into even more beautiful bodies.

Just then, He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea saying: “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

The angels rejoiced as God sealed those who were Jews and those who would be grafted in as Jews just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation, and after this there was silence in Heaven for the remaining period as no one else would be saved.

# Chapter 64

**T**here was tribulation before that time, but when Satan and his demons were fully loosed, the Great Tribulation began and the evil on the earth intensified.

It was brought to my attention that Christian believers went through the first part of the tribulation as in Rev 2:10 where the church at Smyrna was told: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” But that the church was spared the Great Tribulation and caught up to Heaven in the rapture, as in Rev 3:10 the church at Philadelphia was told: “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.”

The bottomless pit was opened, causing a great earthquake. Abaddon and his demons were unchained and released as smoke ascended as of a great furnace, darkening the sun and the air. On Earth, the Hoover Dam broke, and this was their gateway into our universe.

The inhabitants of the earth were witnesses to the rapture, but the deception continued. The demons released were now masquerading as extra-terrestrials who had come from another world to save us. These aliens claimed that they removed all the bad

### Part 3: Jesus and the Angels

people from the earth. Everyone on Earth was deceived except for the remnant which God preserved. God's heart was for the nation of Israel and His people were crying out to Him daily. He loved the Israelites and was longing to bring them back to Him as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. That time would come soon.

Satan was busy on Earth, deceiving the unsaved into the false belief that he was the savior. He claimed that he was Jesus Christ and went back in time to teach humans how to live but we failed, and he had to return to save us once again. He was able to perform miracles which aided him in his deception. Even those who remained on Earth at this time claiming to be Christians, but not gathered in the cloud, fell for his trickery because they did not study the Bible, nor did they understand Bible prophecy. Their eyes were darkened, and their ears were shut.

Satan claimed to be the chief alien and went by the name Lucifer, which means light-bringer. He commanded that the temple be rebuilt and for a short time, there was peace, but it was a false peace as the prophet Jeremiah revealed that they would be saying "Peace, peace' when there is no peace."

Sitting in the temple, Lucifer demanded that everyone should worship him as God. He created a hive mind which everyone's chip was plugged into and it controlled their thought process. All those who took the chip in their right hand or on their forehead no longer had a connection with God. When they accepted the chip, they had abandoned God, so God gave them over to a reprobate mind, meaning a person who rejects the Gospel to a point where God in turn rejects them and curses their conscience.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels: "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land which caused the lithium-powered chip to explode. The chip, which was voluntarily received by all those who would be damned, was the mark of the beast and when lithium is released in the body, ugly and festering sores break out.

I wondered which of my family and friends were raptured and just then the answer was given to me: Lori, my mother Beverly,

my stepfather Zach, Manny, Matt, Zeke, Theresa, Lisa, Graham, Ruth, and most of The Refuge. There were some left behind. Anthony and Harry were among those who would be tormented in the final days of the earth. Just then, a window opened where I could see Harry.

Harry was pacing around his apartment as if he was trying to figure a way out. He wanted to seek death but could not find it. Not a physical death. He wanted the death described by Paul in Colossians 2: “Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world.” It was not available to him as he had taken the mark of the beast. I saw him pick up a Bible. When he opened it, every page was blank.

I thought about Anthony. Instantly, a window opened. I saw that he had no peace. He was trying to find some way for his material wealth to solve his problem as he had always done up until that point.

Proverb 11:4 came to mind. “Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath.”

I also thought of Isaiah 57:20-21: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked.”

Their torment continued another five months while Satan gathered all the nations of the earth against the Jews, having deceived the inhabitants and kings of the earth that the Jews were responsible for their torment and needed to be exterminated to restore peace. The Jews were surrounded by Satan and his armies in a spiritual battle, but at the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus mounted a white horse and we followed Him on our own white horses, wearing fine linen, clean and white. Satan and his high-ranking emissaries were cast into the Lake of Fire. Everyone who remained on Earth and hadn't been previously sealed would stand for judgment before the white throne.

# Chapter 65

I was standing in the presence of Jesus, the Father, and the holy angels in a long line together with my brothers and sisters on the right side of God.

The unsaved of the world were standing on the left side. Their line appeared nearly ten times longer than our line. Just then I understood that the tithe spiritually explained that the tenth, which was us, belongs to the Lord. We understood that the motives hidden in believers' hearts would be brought to light and that His judgments were absolute.

He called many before the throne and showed them their heart. Those of us on the right were pleasantly surprised that there were events in our lives where God used us for His glory even though, at the time, we did not realize it. We understood God's love for us in that our sins were forgiven, and the tremendous price Jesus paid to make that payment. When the judgment was over, He wiped away every tear and erased from memory all our sins. All that was left was love for what He had done.

He called me before the throne and reviewed my life. I was ashamed of what I had done and was feeling weakened in His presence. Each time that happened, He touched me with His hand that still had the hole from the nail on the cross and had me see His face and said, "I paid for that." I was overjoyed to be given the tremendous honor of worshiping and thanking Him for all eternity.

*The Uncovering*

Lori went before the throne. Even she had sins that needed covering, but Jesus showed Lori the fruit of her labor in that every person in the line on the right for whom Lori had planted or watered the word, shined forth as a glorious trophy.

“You have been faithful with your assignments on Earth,” Jesus told Lori. “I will give you the right to rule ten cities.”

Wow! What an honor God bestowed on her.

Alex and Harry were standing on the left. They saw me on the right. Their thoughts were made known to me.

“If you knew we would be standing here waiting for judgment,” they both thought, “why did you not warn us?”

“The evil you had us do makes you more guilty than us,” they reasoned in their mind.

Just then, Jesus showed them all the times that He sent one of His people to witness to them and they rejected the message. Their hearts sank. They lost their strength and could not argue. They knew Jesus gave them many opportunities.

I was witness to everyone who went before the throne.

Jesus called Noel Snowsteen forward. Noel was standing in the line on the left. He realized he was standing in the wrong line.

“Lord, Lord, did not I serve you faithfully on Earth?” Noel pleaded.

God showed Noel the events in his life and how they didn’t line up with scripture. Noel’s teachings on prosperity in our lives on Earth were false.

“You have led many people astray,” Jesus said. “Depart from me, worker of iniquity.”

Two angels bound Noel in chains hand and foot. As they carried him away into the outer darkness, I heard him crying out loudly in anguish and angry protest.

I saw Priest Lady from the Keys who taught homosexuality was acceptable in God’s sight. She was standing before the throne. Surrounding Jesus was a glorious rainbow which was like an emerald.

“The rainbow was given as a covenant to Noah that I would not destroy the earth again with a flood,” Jesus said. “You have perverted it by using it as a symbol for homosexuality and have

promoted the false teaching that I would not judge them for this abomination. Depart from me, worker of iniquity, I never knew you.”

Anthony stood before the throne and was speechless.

“A rich man's wealth is his strong city,” Jesus said, “like a high wall in his imagination. Your riches could not save you. You should have bought from me gold refined in the furnace that thou might be rich. Depart from me, worker of iniquity.”

There were members of The Refuge who stood on the left side. I was astonished at some of them as I was sure they were righteous, but I realized then that God knew their heart and they were self-deceived.

I saw that society experienced moral decay and normalized sin in the final years leading up to judgment day. The entire purpose of our existence on Earth was for Jesus to find out who genuinely loved Him. We showed our love through our obedience to His law. In our flesh, we felt that conquering addictions was impossible. True victory over sin was only accomplished by God changing our hearts.

Jesus reminded us of His law. He spoke to those on the left.

“I warned you, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

And then He turned to us on the right.

“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in My name and by the Spirit of our God.”

I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth which was the destination for us on the right.

And I saw the Lake of Fire, which was the destination of those on the left.

## Chapter 66

I was standing with many saints in a long line before the throne, and we were being called one at a time before His glory. I heard a voice from the throne which sounded like a great multitude, and running waters, and of great thunder.

“Well done my good and faithful servants,” the Voice said. “You have all overcome and are victorious, and I will give you each a white stone with a new name written on it which will be known only to you who receive it.”

I was amazed at how personal of a relationship God has with us. I wondered what type of stone I might receive and what the name might be. My thoughts raced with euphoria.

There was a field before us replete with the most prepossessing flowers, stretching as far as the eye could see. The colors were extraordinarily vivid. When the wind would blow on the flowers, they began to sing the praises of our God together as one chorus of the most beautiful sounding musical symphony. The sky was wonderfully lit, but not by the sun. It was the light emanating from God and the Lamb.

I saw angels carrying food on a golden platter. The first angel had hidden manna. I was given a small piece and it was the most delicious thing I had ever eaten. Something happened to my taste buds, making my palate truly alive for the first time.

I saw a pure river of living water clear as crystal, flowing

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from the throne. And in the midst of the street and on either side of the river was the tree of life which gave twelve manner of fruit every month and its leaves were for the healing of the nations. The angels were serving us the tree's succulent fruit and it was supremely delectable. The angels were also providing drink to us from the fountains of living waters. It was truly beyond words.

There were only four more people ahead of me in line. I would soon receive my white stone with my new name. I was speechless in anticipation.

There were three ahead of me, then there were two, and then I was next in line.





# Afterword

Maybe four or five years ago, I was reading the Bible and got to Psalm 51. I said to myself ‘this sounds like a prayer’, and I could use some help in praying. I decided I would try to memorize the entire chapter. It took me three months to memorize Psalm 51. Then, after that, it became easier—a lot easier. I was able to memorize in some cases an entire chapter in a day if it was short and most of the longer ones in a week or so.

I am not writing this to imply I have some type of brilliance. The fact is that I am not smart. I scored a low 930 on my SAT. You need an average SAT score between 1310-1470 to get into the University of Florida today. I do not have a photographic memory and often forget why I walked into a room. I usually stay there until the synapses in my brain connect and it dawns on me why I was standing there. But there are spiritual gifts. One of them is prophecy.

In the Old Testament, God spoke to the prophets and they declared His word. I’m pretty confident that most of the time they didn’t even know exactly what the meaning was of what they were prophesying. Today we have the Bible and I believe that the ability to write God’s word on your heart is the gift of prophecy. Again, that doesn’t mean the person declaring God’s word knows what it means. That is another spiritual gift called the ‘word of wisdom’.

There are nine gifts total and I guarantee that you have one or more of those nine gifts. You need to be zealous for the spiritual gifts. But sorry, getting sidetracked. I often go off on tangents and forget what point I was originally trying to make. In that regard, writing is much easier than speaking.

There is only one book in the Bible that specifically states that you are blessed for reading, hearing, and heeding the words written therein: the Book of Revelation. I believe it is the most important book of the Bible for our day. We are watching it unfold even as I type this to you.

I can summarize the entire book of Revelation in two words: Jesus wins. But I wondered if I could memorize the first three chapters of the book. Rev 2 and 3 are warnings to seven churches in Asia minor. I was able to memorize the first three. Then God allowed me to memorize all 22 chapters of Revelation. Praise God! I thought to myself that there is a purpose for this. I often find myself saying 'look at all the Bible verses I know'. That is a form of pride and is a sin. Spiritual gifts are for the edifying of the body of Christ. My honest thought is that when they take our Bibles away and throw the Christians into the Gulags, then I will be able to recite the Bible from memory. I figured this would probably make me one of the first to be beheaded and I'm OK with that.

I was working out in Blossom Lake Park outside in Seminole, Florida on a Saturday and there were a couple of guys fishing. I struck up a conversation with them. I usually can't get through five sentences before the subject of Jesus is introduced. I realize that many people find this annoying. I'm OK with that too. But I also won't continue if there is no interest.

This fellow said he was raised as a Catholic and was an altar boy. I was too, but I now consider myself Christian and not Catholic. There are many denominations among Protestant and Catholic. They can't all be right. The important thing is that you be born again as your church does not save you. Jesus does the saving. Again, getting sidetracked—sorry.

He asked a question that related to Rev 11 and I gave him the

chapter. He listened intently and at the end said ‘you could make more than one movie about that’. I thought to myself ‘he’s right’—the Bible has the best stories hands-down.

This book is my attempt at painting a modern-day picture of what Jesus told John some nearly 2,000 years ago. The odds of me getting this perfectly accurate are slim to none, and slim just left the building. The story is fiction, but Heaven and Hell are real. I hope this book brings the reader into a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Acogah W. Swann



To purchase a copy of this novel,  
search online for *The Uncovering* by Acogah W. Swann.

