

Learn the Nature of Creation,  
Live Forever with Your Choice:

Death & Taxes  
or  
Life & Freedom



Conventional Reality and the CRATS who make it.

**See CRATS: CRATS!**

If The Bible is Literal Truth, The Creation Program was downloaded in six days.

*Could God have done that?*

The Loving Programmer has the ability to program particles and energies. Some of the energies He programmed were alive. The first living energies were angels. They helped Him do the immense work of compiling particle and energy programs into systems and beings.

His angels downloaded The Creation Program for Him, according to His Operating Instructions.

*“In the Beginning was the Word”*. The Creation Program is made of The Word’s ongoing echoes. Everything there is coming from His Program and His Downloads.

*Why did He go to all that trouble?*

We human programs have free will. The Creation Program had to be downloaded in such a way that we could never prove or disprove that *He* made it all. The entirety of The Big Movie was written and downloaded to give us human programs free will so each could choose to believe, obey, and have joy forever.

*Crats!* -- Magic all around. Wafer and wine *do* become His Body & Blood. Real camels zip right through the eyes of real needles! Faith is greater than intellect, freedom is better

than slavery, and His Church is infinitely greater than the State.  
Zion triumphant in this world and the next!

For us, there is no death, only taxes.

“You’ll laugh, you’ll cry, you’ll pull the shades and bar the door-you might even question your unbelief. CRATS! is unique; there is no sense comparing it to other books. The author himself could not write another like it. CRATS! combines the rollicking fun of Chesterton’s *Napoleon of Notting Hill*, the moral seriousness of Percy’s *The Thanatos Syndrome*, the comedic spirituality of Mr. Blue, the bitter satire of Waugh, all with the shocking shockingness of Flannery O’Connor (and the contemporariness of Bud McFarlane, Jr.). The story concerns a small group of heroes who band together to fight the powers of darkness, along the way scuba diving, selling bird gods, and learning how the Grand Canyon was made and how a camel can pass through the eye of a needle. Good guys sometimes die, good guys sometimes kill-pacifists beware! If you don’t like to think, if you like bland books that will lull you to sleep, for heaven’s sake, don’t buy CRATS!”

**“archiecodwin”**

(Minneapolis, MN United States)

“*Crats!* is more than just another attack on bubble-headed liberals. *Crats!* lets us see the self-serving beliefs of

those who make a living by enslaving their neighbors. It's like talking to my grandfather."

### Father & Husband

"I've read Ayn Rand and Billy Graham, and a little of what St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, almost a thousand years ago. It all comes together in *Crats! Crats!* is like a Unified Field Theory that actually unifies *all* the fields! It transcends science! The thought that government makes whatever reality that will provide the most tax-money for supporters is vastly revolutionary. Now, I understand what's happening. I'm not angry, anymore."

### Businessman

"The very idea that God programmed everything out of fractals because that was the simplest way to provide free will for every human being is dangerous because it can't be contradicted. There's no way to disprove these ideas. As a result, people may start to think that religion is more important Than Government. And, people should *not* have the word 'Baalocrat' in their vocabularies. Not 'field beast', either."

### Former Gov't employee

“The worst thing about this book: it’s easy to read. Even Public School students and graduates can get through it. The best thing about it is that no studio will ever be allowed to make a movie about it so few voters will ever understand what’s being done to them. Still, it’s not good to remind them that they’re just a bunch of stupid field beasts.”

Elected official



# ***CRATS!***

***FREE DOWNLOAD***

*Old Drum Publishing  
Portersville, PA*



## CRATS!

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To those who firmly stand, to those who firmly stood, let  
gratitude and thanks forever go.

## **An introduction to Someone Important:**

*Crats!* introduces God to us as The Loving Programmer. This new name helps us more easily understand the creation process. He began by writing programs for particles and energies. He used 3-D pixels and compiled countless sub-programs into The Creation Program. His “living energies”, the angels programmed on the First Day, helped Him as needed.

Where do we fit into The Creation Program? We think of it as The Big Movie. Each of us is an actor in The Big Movie. We live among the props and stage sets. Each of us may freely choose to believe in, and obey, Him.

God’s angels, His loyal, living energies, continue to assist Him with The Creation Program. Disloyal living energies chose to disobey Him. They try to keep us from Him by corrupting our human programs. These corrupting viruses were called “demons” by our ancestors in the Iron Age.

In every generation, corrupting viruses encourage human programs to build, and live in, structures of lies. Viruses produce each age’s accursed Conventional Reality. The corrupting viruses promote beliefs and behaviors that undermine faith, freedom, and families. We, like the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, and Aztecs

are like all peoples in every place and time. We live among pyramids of lies.

Each beloved human program was written and downloaded with the opportunity to freely choose to believe in, and obey, The Loving Programmer, despite the viruses. That choice is our reason for life. The entire complexity of Creation exists so that some of us will choose eternal joy.

*How did He do it?*

The Loving Programmer has the ability to program particles and energies. Some of the energies He programmed were alive. The first living energies were angels. They helped Him do the immense work of compiling particle and energy programs into systems and beings. His angels downloaded The Creation Program for Him, according to His Operating Instructions. *“In the Beginning was the Word”*. The Creation Program is made of The Word’s ongoing echoes. Everything there comes from His Program and His Downloads.

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We human programs have free will. The Creation Program had to be written and downloaded in such a way that we human programs could never prove or disprove that *He* made it all. The

Creation Program was written and downloaded to give us human programs free will.

*Crats!* shows us that there's magic all around. Bread and wine *do* become His Body & Blood. Real camels go through the eyes of real needles. The Big Wave made mountains and plains. Faith is greater than intellect, freedom is better than slavery, and His Church is infinitely greater than anything built on the lies of corrupting viruses. Zion triumphant in this world and the next!

For those who choose to believe, there is no death. But, there are taxes.

Foreword:

*“Forward, four word forewords!”*

Freddie

**I'm Al. This is how my eyes began to open, and I began to see. Carl tells Darlene and me about Bird-God. I agree to help.**

Carl began by showing me a map. "This chart shows the locations of all the shipwrecks in Lake Erie. That X, twenty miles offshore, is where the Lucky Left went down in 1860. She was carrying ten thousand copper ingots to a smelter in Buffalo."

"Bird-Gods. That's what this is all about, isn't it, Carl?" Darlene interrupted.

"Sure. These ingots are two feet long, about eight inches thick. Just the right size to make Bird-Gods."

"We're getting too old for this."

"No, we're not. We'll just get a second mortgage on the house, build a salvage raft, pull up the ingots, and turn them into Bird-Gods. Then, we sell them."

"This house is our security. We have a low mortgage with low interest and if we lose this, we might not ever get another one. I don't want to work *forever*." Darlene replied.

"With Bird-God, you won't have to keep working. We'll make all the money we need to retire, and soon. We'll sell thousands of them. Imagine those ingots, green, corroded, and ancient-looking. We solder a beak on them, punch in a couple of eye sockets, and

we'll have something primitive-looking we can sell to antique stores.”

“Carl, even if you could get the ingots out of the Lake, let alone find them, couldn't you just take them to a scrapyard and sell them? You'd make as much.” I asked.

“If I sell them as ingots, people would know where they came from. Some big company could go dredge up the wreck, and we'd be left with nothing.”

“I wish some big company would!” Darlene replied. It would save us both a lot of trouble.”

“It would save Al a lot of trouble, too.” Carl said, looking at me. “I can't do it by myself. It's too cold and too dangerous to work alone, over twenty miles from land in deep water. Darlene can't swim well enough to help. A new God is waiting to be born, and we've got a chance to make some money.”

“How much can we make?” I asked.

“We'll be able to wholesale them for at least a hundred each. At bigger antique stores, we'll get even more. There were over ten thousand ingots on the Lucky Left when it went down. That's easy to multiply.”

I agreed. “It sure is. Inflation may be bad, but a million's still a million. That's a million more than we have now.”

The next morning, while Darlene was at work, Carl drove her just-paid-for car to a Chevy dealer and sold it. With the money, we

spent the day buying an old tow truck, aqua-lungs, air tanks, stove, wet suit, and a lot of what I thought was junk. I helped Carl load and unload the supplies. We went over the plans he'd drawn for using the tow truck to power the salvage raft we were going to build.

Late that night, we drove the truck out to a ramshackle farm on 28 acres of nearly barren land they'd inherited. There were a few big pines. We cut the tallest and straightest four, and trimmed them into logs, each over fifty feet long. We dragged them with the tow truck, one at a time, over eight miles of blacktop road to a State Park on the Lake Erie shore.

“How can we keep people from stealing these logs?” I asked. “If somebody takes them, we won't have any pontoons left for our raft.”

Carl was prepared. After we rolled the logs into the water and chained them to a huge willow on the shore, Carl nailed signs on them:

DO NOT MOVE THESE TREES  
UNTIL THE BEAVERS HAVE  
EATEN ALL THE BARK.

Ranger Rick Richards  
Beaver Awareness  
US Dept. of Large Rodents

“There are no beavers in Lake Erie, Carl,” I said.

“Who would argue with Ranger Rick?”

As we headed back toward Erie, the sky lightened in the East.

“When will we be ready to go?” I asked. “I’ve got to schedule some vacation time.”

“I’ll get the lumber for the raft decking today. Tomorrow, I’ll get the propeller ready. Thursday, we can begin building the raft. We should be able to leave on Sunday, Monday at the latest. Can you work your vacation around that? Start taking time off on Thursday.”

I wasn’t irritated by his automatic attempt to fit my job, my livelihood, into his plan as though my career was nothing but a useless distraction. To him, that’s what most Government jobs were. Especially my job. But, since I worked in Health in Human Services New Parole Officer Trainee Program, I could get away anytime.

“I can always get time off. I’ll make arrangements for a couple of weeks off, starting tomorrow. There’s a new program that allows Parolee Officer Trainees to take up to two weeks off any time they feel it to be Personally Necessary. Project Uplift Days, they’re called.”

I enjoyed watching Carl roll his eyes skyward. He always did when he heard of the endless benefits I was always discovering.

We drove downtown to buy lumber for the raft from the wrecking crew that was tearing down the fifteen-year-old Erie Post Office. Erie didn’t really need a new Post Office. If you didn’t

live in Erie, you probably didn't hear about why our perfectly good Post Office had to be replaced for hundreds of millions of dollars. Working at the Federal Building, I'd heard it all.

**The D'YuYus take over the Erie Post Office, hold it hostage. Erie-stamps soon cost three-for-a dime. It hits the fan. PEDCOM responds. Morty Mealy-mouth, from Disarm All Taxpayers, is criticized. Baggie breakthrough! D'YuYus get what they want. Ketchem Squeezum shot down!**

A small tribe of Bulgarian Gypsies, 'untouchables' to even other Gypsies, had moved into the basement of the old Erie Post Office. They refused to leave. No one knew any more about how to get them out than why they'd gotten in. The D'YuYus had, over the centuries, built up immunity to any form of social pressure. They ignored personal pleas from the Postmaster, eviction notices from the Sheriff, nasty letters from US Marshals, and tear gas. Even Social Workers couldn't talk them out. They'd tried, from a safe distance, with bullhorns.

No one could get too close to them. They were too disgusting. D'YuYus fought with an awful weapon. Anyone who got too close was driven back. The Post Office was inoperable, all the trucks were inside, and law enforcement refused to do anything about it.

The family leader, YeYe D'YuYu, brightened with a flash of genius that technologically dragged his clan all the way to the Middle Ages, stripped inner tubes off the Postal trucks, and made a crude catapult. Their giant slingshot dropped all kinds of rotting

waste and garbage all over downtown Erie. Complaints soon reached Washington.

“We need a new Post Office so we can keep going to work!” Postal authorities claimed, as people began to mention the unmentionable, that postal workers shouldn’t get paid if they couldn’t pick up and deliver the mail.

“Why build a new one?” asked a young Congressman. “People can’t tell if there’s a Post Office in Erie or not.”

It was amazing but true. Since the D’YuYus had taken over the Post Office, mail in Erie was being delivered two and three times a day by an informal arrangement of garbage men, milkmen, and paperboys. None of them had a monopoly like the Postal Union, so the price of locally printed Eriestamps had plummeted to three for a dime.

Senior Congressmen were deeply concerned about other towns or businesses hiring splinter clans of the D’YuYu Tribe to come and live in *their* Post Offices, so more people could buy three stamps for a dime. Mail order and dot-com firms were negotiating with the Bulgarian Government to bail large numbers of Gypsies out of Bulgarian jails to shut down Post Offices all over America. Their executives correctly calculated that they’d be able to cut costs for all their items with a competitive postal system. Politicians were worried.

“We can’t allow this. If everybody had these lousy Gypsies in their Post Offices, why, there wouldn’t *be* any more Post Office.

There wouldn't be any more Post Office Administrators. Then, my brother-in-law would be out of a job. You think I want him hanging around my house? You want your brothers-in-law hanging around your house?" Senator Mendle Meddle rhetorically asked fellow members of the Postal Appropriations Committee.

"Not one of us has a brother-in-law that anybody in his right mind would hire for a third of the money we pay them!" agreed Senator Pocketed, from nearby Tickton. "My relatives need a Government Postal System, your relatives need a Government Postal System, Erie needs a Government Postal System. I say, give 'em a new Post Office."

Bureaucratic officials were equally worried. The Public Employee Defense Committee (PEDCOM) met in a penthouse boardroom beyond the Beltway, atop a luxury hotel.

"Those dirty, ingrate, taxpaying pigs!" shouted Ketchem Squeezum, head of Postal Union. "Why, we give those damned taxpaying swine the best years of our lives, just to make sure they get their bills and tax forms on time, and those money-grubbing serfs would throw us out on the street at the drop of a hat, just to get cheaper stamps!"

"They are pigs. Dirty, grubby, little taxpaying porkers. Why they're the ones who get to have the jobs to make the money. Now, they think that they should get to keep it. What awful selfishness! Why, what would we do if everyone did that?" asked

the up-and-coming Miriam Babeter, from Health In Human Services.

“Get jobs.” the stenographer thought to herself in the lengthy silence that always followed one of Miriam’s practiced litanies at the Daily Crisis Meeting. “Work for a living.”

“Who do they think they are? Civil Servants? Why, they’ve no right to save a dollar if it means that even one of us would lose a penny!” recited Slith Venum, of HUD, from the Federal Catechism. “Why, if the accursed peons spread these foul Gypsies to other Post Offices, they might even think of attacking us, at HUD, or any of us, at any bureau, just to reduce their taxes. Why, they might even want us to use the money to actually build houses, rather than pay us to employ tens of thousands of Important Scholars and Congressional Relatives to study tens of thousands of vital housing problems.” he finished, his voice rising in astonishment as he realized just how seductive his thought might be to lowly taxpayers.

“We all agree. We can’t allow the mindless field beasts to use the desperate actions of these crazed Gypsies to keep from giving *any* of us money.” announced craggy old Sherm Souldout, from EPA. “If the Field Beasts won’t *give* us their money, we’d have to *take* it. We have no other way to survive. We all lack the intelligence, imagination, and initiative to make money on our own, or we would. And, we can’t totally enslave the filthy Field Beasts because we still haven’t gotten all their guns away.” he

finished, with a sharp look at the Disarm All Taxpayers representative.

“We’re trying.’ whined little Morty Mealy-mouth, DATREP. “But, it’s hard. So many, *many* of them still believe in that awful 2nd Amendment. You’d think they’d be happy with free speech, but the smarter ones want guns to protect it. Some of them even think that the government is their enemy. It’s not our fault they aren’t disarmed. We know how important it is to get their guns away if we’re going to get Our Fair Share. We’re trying, and so are all of our FedTube flunkies, and...”

Sherm Souldout Interrupted rudely. “Give those damned Gypsies anything they want, before FedTube is forced to cover it! If we’re accused of Minority Insensitivity, we’ll lose urban Congressional seats. If we have Media announce that the Gypsies are no better than White people, we can shoot them down like dogs. Do something! Do anything! Just get them out of that Post Office!”

A dozen expensive haircuts looked at each other. When all knew it was safe, each nodded in agreement.

Sal Balberg, IRSREP, cleared his throat. “It’s not only saving a tax structure that’s important. It’s equally imperative to preserve our controls over Congress. If those accursed field beasts start cutting down on bureaus, that reduces the number of jobs we can trade to Congressmen for the unlimited budgets we’ve enjoyed since Franklin D. That could *really* hurt.”

“Does anyone know what the Gypsies actually want?” asked Miriam, hoping in a vague way that it could be something that she could do.

“No one knows,” answered Ketchem Squeezum, from Postal Union. He spoke with authority. As head of the concerned Union, he was less than a dozen management layers away from actual mail handlers, so he had the best information. “No one has been able to get close enough to ask them. No one will volunteer to go through that hail of garbage and waste, except maybe a few military types. And, we all know what happens to their budgets every time *they* do something we can’t. (Regretful nods all around.) Civil Service Regs prohibit us from forcing any of our people to go, and, of course, none of us would think of doing such a thing.”

The thought of what might happen to their designer clothes made them shudder at the thought of braving that unholy fire.

“We have to talk to them. Somehow. Otherwise, we can’t give them whatever it is that they want.” said Uriah Leech, of GSA. “How do we get through to them? What can we do? What *can* we do?”

Two dozen eyes dropped to stare at the expensive briefing notebooks their staffs always prepared for emergency meetings. “Damn that Leech!” they thought to themselves. “How dare he ask such a hard question!”

“Why not just call them up on the telephone and ask them?” blurted the stenographer into the lengthening silence.

“What! Just like that? Just call them up and ask them?” replied an astonished Miriam Babeter, from Health In Human Services, whose salary plus bonus plus consulting fees was easily fifty times the stenographer’s wages. “Why, we’d have to have a meeting, and decide, wouldn’t we?”

“You’re already *at* a meeting.” the stenographer said, but she said it to herself. She’d been recording Daily Crisis Meetings long enough to know that governmental problems solved quickly reflected little glory on few people.

A top-level conference was put on the Scheduling Agenda. It was to convene as quickly as possible in order to decide the really important issues: Who would get to call the Gypsies if such a call was to be made? How would their status level be affected? Would non-callers be helped or hurt in career progression? Would the name of the Important Caller be released to Media?

A week raced by while preparatory meetings took place. Some lasted as long as two, even three hours. Many were scheduled late at night, so that passersby, especially tourists, would believe that hard-working civil servants were burning the midnight oil on their behalf.

In less than a month, The Public Employee Defense Committee met again. Each PEDCOM delegate was armed with two briefing notebooks. One concerned the issue of actually

telephoning the Gypsies. The other briefing book held dozens of staff opinion papers concerning who should actually make the call to one of the D'YuYus and how the status of each non-caller's agency might be affected.

"We burned the midnight oil on this one!" said Miriam in the important pre-meeting chit-chat. Her 64 member Executive Advisory Council was, at that moment, jetting to Honolulu to recover from the long, late sessions they'd spent poring over the Status-Attainment Level that might or might not accrue to the department whose representative was chosen to actually pick up the telephone and call the D'YuYus.

"We burned it, too!" echoed Slith Venum, whose 31 member HUD Executive Advisory Council was already disembarking in Milan to spend the better part of a month recovering from their arduous participation on the difficult Status Attainment Level problem.

"We hardly slept at all!" said Ketchem Squeezum, whose 92 member Postal Union Advisory Council dwarfed the others. "I really put them through their paces. See!" He gestured toward not two, but three, expensive briefing notebooks, each covered in silken, unhatched lizard skin.

Other members saw how they'd been outdone and didn't mention the efforts their own staffs had put forth. Both Slith and Miriam wished that they'd kept quiet. When Ketchem announced that the 92 members of his Executive Advisory Council had

chartered an Italian liner to take an around-the-world rest cruise, the others were even more thankful that they'd kept quiet.

“Looks like I win the chit-chat and the meeting!” announced Ketchem, and he strutted to the mammoth Chairchair, near the WHITE TELEPHONE! No one disagreed, not even craggy old Sherm, the EPA wonder man.

It was Sherm, himself, legend had it, who had invented Acid Rain, the first hugely profitable Environmental Scare. Working with tax-crazed Canadian Bureaucrats desperate to get more revenue by selling surplus hydroelectric power to the U. S., Sherm concocted a bizarre scheme to make millions of Low-Brain-Rank Field Beasts believe that American rain was somehow “acidic”, and that expensive scrubbers and what-not had to be put on American generating plants.

Platoons of Media Flunkies obediently reported: “The destruction of America is imminent!” Huge, mysteriously well-financed groups magically appeared. Each parroted the “possible dangers” of the imaginary “Acid Rain”. MT news releases helped Sherm become the most powerful man in Washington, able to raise billions of dollars for “environmentally correct” bureaucrat-approved Congressional campaigns from fear-struck businessmen afraid for the jobs of their employees.

Despite Sherm's legendary status, and the vast throng of Media Flunkies he held in thrall, it was Ketchem Squeezum, Ph. D. who swaggered to the huge Chairchair. When he was seated,

PEDCOM began to review additional D'YuYu problems. In the preceding week, more executives from mail order companies had been seen meeting with high-ranking Bulgarian Emigration Officials.

YeYe was ignoring businessmen. They merely wanted to cut postage costs by bringing in Gypsies to close more Post Offices. YeYe knew what he wanted, and knew that he could only get it from the Government.

“Those people who sit behind desks in Post Offices,” YeYe told the dozens of his relatives clustered around the ancestral copper stewpot one night, “they’re the ones who should have their pictures on the wanted posters. Not us. If we close down this Post Office, this town gets stuck with hundreds of ex-administrators lying around houses all day. Drinking, taking drugs, interviewed by Media Flunkies, and making the government seem ‘uncaring’. It’ll look bad. Government’ll give us what we want. How else can they keep unnecessary Administrators off the street?”

“Smart old YeYe.” the other Gypsies thought to themselves in the pidgin Bulgarian that passed for a language. “He be right alla time.”

Minutes after Ketchem had assumed his leadership position and elevated the pneumatic lifts of Chairchair so that it towered above the others, in easy reach of the WHITE TELEPHONE!, a

message reached the Public Employees Defense Committee. The Erie situation was growing rapidly more serious!

Thirsty from having their water shut-off by a clever Erie businessman tired of the growing stench around the city, YeYe had figured out that the Erie water table could only be a few feet below the basement floor. He ordered his younger brother, Ya, still not old enough for his second syllable, to go to the basement and dig a well. “You do good job, maybe you get second syllable,” YeYe promised.

Ya took the women to the basement, where he directed them in breaking up the concrete floor. It was a surprisingly simple operation since the building’s concrete supplier and the Federal First Floor Inspector had married cousins of the same Congressman. As a result of that happy coincidence, the specified nine inches of heavily re-barred concrete was three-fourths of an inch thick, reinforced with a scattering of paper clips, and was as fragile as eggshell.

The women soon hit a large, terra-cotta pipe. They didn’t have enough knowledge of the workings of a city to know what the pipe was. “What’s that, YeYe?” Ya asked.

“Big pipe. Fulla poop. Lots and lotsa ammo. *Now*, we get some action.”

YeYe found cartons of baggies in one of the employee recreation areas, where they were kept in the inlaid mahogany cabinets between the Post Office Executive Swimming Pool and

the Personnel Manager's try-out sauna. He had his mother break a small hole in the pipe. With a sterling dipper from the Executive Assistants' punchbowl, she obediently ladled sewage into the baggies.

YeYe's twanging tubes soon filled the Erie sky with fusillades of shining baggies, each glinting ominously in its glittering flight to the nearer suburbs.

YeYe's brilliant tactical breakthrough forced the Public Employee Defense Committee to faster action. In less than three days of intense haggling, it was formally voted at the next meeting that old Sherm Souldout should be the one to actually speak with YeYe. Sherm was close enough to retirement that any Status Attainment Level he might reach wouldn't seriously impair anyone else's chances for advancement.

"What is it, exactly, that you want?" Sherm asked YeYe after he finally made Ya understand whom he wanted to talk to.

Sherm sat, open-mouthed, while the answer came.

"I'll have to call the White House," he said, finally. "Call you right back."

"What'd he want? What'd he want?" the high-level bureaucrats plaintively chorused. Only the stenographer noticed that not one of them had enough sense to have Sherm turn on the speakerphone.

Savoring his moment of victory, and in the process, temporarily unseating Ketchem Squeezum as Meeting Winner, it was cagy old Sherm who picked up the WHITE TELEPHONE! and called the President.

“They won’t leave the Post Office, Mr. President, until they get a Boeing 797, ‘shiny, lika da President’s’ were his exact words.”

“I know that won’t be difficult,” Sherm continued after Presidential assent, “but they want a crew to fly it, free fuel for life from any military base in the world, and complete immunity from prosecution.

“Yes, that’s easy, too, since, as you say, it’s only Field Beast money, but you haven’t heard it all. They want free immigration privileges for their relatives and their final demand, and they won’t give an inch on this, is.. . .” Sherm paused and glanced around the room, knowing that he would see his associates hanging on his every word, and he gloried in having them all gawking at him, open-mouthed, as he said, “They want the right, Mr. President, to take off and land the 797 on any Interstate Highway in the country.”

While the President considered that demand, Public Employee Defense Committee Members burst into outraged shouting.

“Why didn’t *we* think of that? That’s what I’d like to know!” shouted Slith Venum, from HUD. “When I think of all the studies

of proposals that I've had to fly all over the country to inspect, why, just think how much easier it would have made my job, being able to land anywhere, without having to go to those airports where nobody can tell if you're important!"

"Just think! Think of how impressive any of us would have looked, taking off and landing those big jets wherever we pleased, whenever we wanted. Why think of all the traffic we couldn't disrupt! My Baal, think of all the people who would have been forced to pay attention to us!" cried an anguished Ketchum Squeezum. "Why didn't any of our Bright Young Men think of that?"

"What about our Bright Young Women?" screeched Miriam Babeter, from Health In Human Services, with her famed lightning-fast, jerk-knee outrage.

"All right then," said Ketchem, swiveling the huge, gold-studded, ostrich-skin chair around to stare directly at her, focusing his anger at forever-lost prestige directly at Miriam. "If you can, why don't you tell us, right now, why *you, personally*, didn't think of it. If it's a good idea, why didn't *you* have it? Aren't you a '*bright young woman*'? Aren't you *smart enough*?"

A hushed silence filled the room. Trained to blindly believe in intellectual equality, the others sat stunned before they shrieked and bellowed in horror at the heretical notion of "aren't you smart enough?" They all knew what disastrous consequences it would

have on what worth each of them would have if their intellectual abilities were truly compared to the dimmest of Field Beasts.

“Enough! *Enough!*” shouted Sherm, as he put the President on hold. “We can’t start bickering with each other. Of course Miriam can’t think of good ideas all by herself. None of us can. After all, *we* are administrators.”

“That’s right,” sniffed Ms. Babeter. “We simply have more important things to do. I *could* have thought of it. I could have thought of *lots* and *lots* of things. But, I’m simply far too busy. Besides, I think we would all agree that it is far more important to stop other people from thinking rather than to do any actual thinking, ourselves.”

“Right-on!” agreed Uriah Leech, of GSA, still unaware that the phrase had been officially de-popularized some decades before.

Abashed, Ketchem retreated to the window. He stared out over the Beltway, toward Washington. He knew he was wrong. He had violated a cardinal rule; he had asked a fellow bureaucrat why he, she (or ‘it’, to describe the growing number of would-be administrators who proved their loyalty by becoming sexless) had not been able to do Something Intelligent. His breach of official etiquette would, he knew, have serious consequences. In an occupation that could not tolerate a Brain Rank high enough to remember, let alone examine, past failures, and apply the knowledge gained to increase the probability of future successes,

the mental inability to function outside of the present could only be an asset.

“Oh, come on, Ketchem. There’s no hard feelings, I’m sure.” Dr. Greenback Medpig, the Euthenabort Observer, called over to the window. “Come on back and sit down.”

Ketchem knew, as did everyone, that Dr. Medpig always lied, so there *were* hard feelings. But, he also knew that it was always best to ignore reality and hope to be on pension before its consequences became known.

Abashed, he obeyed Dr. Medpig and sat down, no longer at the high end of the table, but at a smaller, merely calfskin chair that didn’t even swivel near the far end, where Dr. Medpig motioned him. No one was surprised to see Ketchem Squeezum obey. Dr. Medpig, after all, was a powerful man.

Dr. Medpig was Prime Negotiator between the Euthenabort Union and Health In Human Services. In their agreement, Health In Human Services agreed to limit the number of doctors severely enough that Euthenabort doctors could charge as much as they wanted. In return, Euthenaborts agreed to kill as many unborn babies and old people as possible, especially in non-voting, minority neighborhoods. That would minimize the amount of money that would go to actually helping the poor, by reducing their numbers. And, every time they aborted an unborn baby from the middle class, they eliminated a dreaded tax deduction. Euthanasia got rid of older ‘non-contributors’, the new phrase for

Social Security recipients. “All of us win!” Dr. Medpig would insist when he pushed the deal through. “*All of us!*”

The tiny tempest over, Sherm took the President off hold to hear his respectful suggestions. Both agreed that the D’YuYus would get everything they asked for except the right to bring their relatives into the country.

“Can’t give ‘em *that.*” the President told Sherm. “If they started taking over other buildings, taxpayers might see that it doesn’t matter if lots of bureaucrats and bureaucracies aren’t there. They might get some vague idea that we’re all useless. Might piss off the midbrain Field Beasts. If that ever happened, not that I think it would, as long as we do such a grand job of keepin’ ‘em broke, bewildered, and FedTubed, why, we’d all have to work for a living.”

“Perish that thought!” Sherm replied, shuddering.

The Public Employee Defense Committee order was sent to Congress, stamped: FOR IMMEDIATE LEGISLATION!, according to the quaint custom by which it was pretended that mere elected officials could put meaningful pressure on the vast bureaucracies.

The near-total Government capitulation was quickly hailed as an “Epic Milestone In Inter-Ethnic Relationships” in a mammoth All-Media press release personally composed by Dr. Sliderby Smoothe, head of the gargantuan, Higher-Than-Cabinet-Level Secretariat of Public Relations. The entire D’YuYu clan left the

Post Office in a fleet of pink and burgundy Cadillacs, escorted by tank platoons, State Troopers, a flat-bed truck full of belly dancers, The New York Philharmonic Orchestra playing “Happy Birthday” on tambourines, and dozens of FedTube Flunkies providing the evening’s approved news.

At Interstate 90, a ‘shiny, lika da President’s’ 797 took off, with the entire D’YuYu clan aboard. A Bulgarian Rotary Club filmed the historic flight, producing a film they planned to show all over Bulgaria, to show other Gypsies the goodies in store for them, if they’d only go to America. A new Post Office was soon being built; the old one was torn down so that people wouldn’t be reminded.

## **We build the Raft**

That's how Carl came to be talking to the foreman of the wrecking crew tearing down Erie's old Post Office. "If you want lumber for raft decking," the foreman told him, "you need those two by tens."

He pointed to a pile of boards, each one two inches thick, ten inches wide, and twenty feet long. "They used to be floor joists, and they're strong. Lay them across your log pontoons, and they'll make a fine raft. What do you want a raft that big for, anyway?"

"I'm with The Beaver Awareness Program in The Department of Large Rodents. We're studying a newly discovered breed of Lake Beavers. They could provide our nation, and the world, with an important breakthrough in Large Rodent Knowledge. We need a big raft to help get them established on offshore breeding platforms *and* have a place to monitor their pre-fetal development."

"I never heard of Lake Beavers."

"A lot of people haven't. I've been studying them since I went to graduate school and got my PhD. in Large Rodent Studies."

"Well, live and learn." the foreman answered. "Take as many of these planks as you want. We have to clear 'em out of here as soon as possible. The Gummit don't want any reminders of the old Post Office left for taxpayers to see."

The next morning was clear and warm, the first day of my Project Uplift Days. I had two weeks, with pay, to be Uplifted. After the morning rush hour, Carl and I drove the tow truck down to the Old Post Office, well on its way to being a new GSA parking lot. The new Post Office was being built on an old GSA parking lot. On the way, we stopped by City Ice, and bought four huge blocks of ice.

“We’ll stack the boards on top of the ice, and tow them out to the pontoons.” Carl explained.

The ice melted as we went along, lubricating itself so well that towing the huge pile of lumber was easy.

At the entrance to the Park on Lake Erie, we were stopped by a guard.

“Beaver Awareness.” Carl explained knowingly, pointing to the official-looking magnetic sign on the side of the truck.

“Yeah. I saw the signs on those big logs out there. What’s going on?”

“That’s classified. But, I can tell you this much,” Carl said, confidentially, “it’s gonna be big!”

“I guess so.” he replied, slowly taking in the huge pile of wood towed behind us on the steaming slabs of ice.

“We’re using the wood to build nesting platforms for the Lake Beavers.” Carl explained, as we drove through the gate.

We used the logs as huge pontoons, and spiked the heavy planks across them for decking. Soon, our raft was nearly fifty feet long, over twenty feet wide, riding high on the water. As we worked, we were interrupted by dozens of Park officials and employees. Each of them wanted to know if Beaver Awareness had any supervisory jobs available for themselves or for relatives.

After we'd spiked the deck to the logs, we chain-sawed a hole in the raft. That left an opening to hoist the ingots through. The tow truck was chocked in front of it. We lengthened and lowered the drive shaft so that it reached into the water, and fastened the propeller to it.

Sunday morning, we were exhausted, but the work was finished. Darlene drove Carl out to the raft. I'd been sleeping there to make sure no one bothered anything.

"It's incredible!" Darlene said, staring at the huge raft. "I am impressed!" she said, slowly taking in all the details of construction, from the crude tiller to the anchors, oil drums filled with rocks. "How are you going to find the wreck, anyway?"

"I've got the coordinates where it went down." Carl answered, with all the confidence of a landsman who's never been to sea. "We shouldn't have much trouble. Al can pinpoint the wreck. He was in the Navy and knows navigation. It'll be easy."

"I hope so," I said, under my breath.

"What will you do for gas?" Darlene asked.

Carl pointed to three 55 gallon drums. “I figure we’ll get about a mile per gallon. That gives us nearly double what we need to get to the raft and get back.”

“Good luck.” she said and kissed Carl good-bye.

Carl held the tiller, I started what had been a tow truck, and the driveshaft churned the water.

The huge raft began to move into the lake. “It’s not pretty, and it’s not fast, but it sure is cheap,” Carl called to Darlene, who drove home as soon as she was sure we weren’t going to sink.

“We might as well take a nap,” Carl said after the speed and tiller were set.

“Might as well. I’m bushed. Where’d you put the air mattresses?”

“In a box under the front seat of the truck. Let’s inflate them, and put up the tent.”

We put up the tent, hooked up the gas grill, did all the chores that would have been far less pleasant if I’d had to do them at home. As we worked, the huge raft went through squadrons of small, speedy boats, zooming up and veering away like minnows darting around a whale. In a few hours, the only boats ahead were the big ore carriers farther out in the Lake.

I reeled in fish on the baited hooks I’d been trolling.

“Salmon!” Carl exclaimed. “Not bad for a lake that a thousand over-educated environmentalists have officially declared ‘dead’.

Let's cook 'em on a wood fire."

I cleaned them, and Carl lit a fire, burning plank scraps on a small sandbox. Carl cubed potatoes, and diced onions. I cooked the fish while he fried the potatoes.

"I'm just beginning to realize how big this lake is! You don't think we'll have any trouble finding the Lucky Left, do you?" It was the first inkling I had that Carl might have some doubts about our ability to find the ingots. This was no time to worry him.

"If your metal detectors work, we shouldn't have any problem. Putting a dozen of them out on long booms and dragging them through the water, we can cover a hundred feet with each pass. If the coordinates are close, we won't have any trouble.

**I find out about Conventional Reality, Bigbergs, and the Flood. Historical Constants, Tapeworms. We find the wreck. What animals sank first? Does it matter? Who pays State-Supported Academics? Bigberg Theory Widely Hated. Cain, King of Crats**

After dinner, we leaned back in our resin Adirondack chairs in front of the fire. It was the first time in several days that we'd had a chance to relax.

“How long ago did the glacier come through here, the one that made the Great Lakes?” I asked.

“There's no such thing as those kinds of glaciers.”

“What do you mean, ‘no such thing’? Why, we studied glaciers in school.” I added, as if that meant something.

“Government wants people to believe in glaciers. Glaciers are an important part of their Conventional Reality Program.”

“That's absurd. If there weren't glaciers, then what made the Great Lakes?”

“Bigbergs and The Big Wave.”

“Bigbergs? What are bigbergs? Jewish superheroes? What's The Big Wave?”

“Bigbergs came from the Flood.”

“Flood?”

“Yeah. You know..... Flood. Noah and the Ark. Flood.”

“That’s just superstition. Old folk tales. You know it, and I know it. Next, I suppose you’ll be telling me that the Earth is only fifteen or fifty thousand years old?”

“How do you know it’s not?”

“That’s ridiculous. Picture the Grand Canyon in your mind. All those layers and layers of rock. Why, it took billions of years for all those layers of rock to be deposited.”

“That’s what *they* want you to believe. That’s why they spend so much on their Conventional Reality Program.”

“Tell me about your Bigbergs.” I challenged, rolling *my* eyes, for a change.

“You remember something about the Flood. How deep did the water get?”

“I don’t know.” I said, reluctant to get involved in what seemed to be lunacy. “Yes, I do, too. It got deep enough to cover all the mountains. That’s about five miles.”

“Close enough. Now, how thick are the polar ice caps?”

“I think they’re about two or three miles thick.”

“What would happen to millions of square miles of three mile-thick ice caps when they get covered with five miles of water?” he asked, as he poured iced tea into a glass of ice cubes.

“The ice caps would float?” I replied, watching the ice cubes bobbing in the full glass he handed me.

“That’s right. As they were wrenched loose, the huge ice caps were broken up into thousands, millions of Bigbergs. They floated around, bulldozers the size of Rhode Island. In a few months, they re-landscaped everything. They scooped out the Great Lakes in a week or so.”

I thought about that. “That’s pretty thin, Carl. What would move them around? How fast would they go?”

“Trillions of horsepower couldn’t help but be released when the Bigbergs came bobbing up to the top. Tremendous whirlpools and currents were created. They sent the Bigbergs spinning all over the globe. They scooped out bays here, lakes there, gouged out river valleys, shoved up lines of hills, flattened mountains, and covered some places with a mile or more of sediment. Why a fleet of giant Bigbergs pushed all around the globe by The Big Wave would re-shape most of the earth in five or six weeks, even moving at four or five knots. They missed the Rockies, which left them sharp and young-looking, and rounded off the Appalachians, making them look old.”

“What was The Big Wave?”

“You know how the tide comes in and goes out? Well, The Big Wave was the huge tidal wave that washed around and around the world during The Flood. Trillions of tons of water in The Big Wave squeezed up magma. That lifted up the new layers of solidifying sediment above it. That’s why there’s sedimentary layers of rock on top of Mt. Everest and other places.”

I found myself getting more interested as Carl spoke. “What about all the layers of rock? How did they get laid down so fast?”

“Bigbergs and The Big Wave. Bigbergs are the simplest explanation of geology there is. When the Bigbergs floated to the top, they had lots of minerals frozen to their undersides. When they bobbed around, melting slowly, sand, rock, dirt, and dust became layers that turned into rock, especially some of those that are bent or seem out of place.”

“That wouldn’t explain the mile-thick layers of sedimentary rock around the Grand Canyon.”

“Those layers of rock were formed by the huge, underwater clouds of dirt and debris, scraped up as the Bigbergs plowed their way across water-softened land. The thick clouds of earth plowed up Bigbergs and The Big Wave settled, in layers. Those layers were compressed into rock by The Big Wave. Some were twisted and bent by the immeasurable weight of the water above them, and the uneven weight of the beached Bigbergs, themselves. That’s why some layers of rock are bent and twisted, while others above or below are fairly level. The pressure forced magna to squirt out in lots of places, sometimes going right through layers of sedimentary rock above it. The Flood, and the Bigbergs it sent floating around the world account for the anomalies in rock structures better than anything else does. Bigbergs and The Big Wave can even explain the tall, lonely pillars of sedimentary rock

they missed that make the huge rock columns in supposedly glaciated Wisconsin!”

Carl stirred his glass of Lipton Instant as he spoke. I watched, hypnotized, as the whirling particles slowly settled to the bottom.

“But, some ice in ice caps is too dense to float.” I protested.

“In regular salt water, yes. But, Noah-and-the-Flood water was so full of dissolved minerals, held in suspension by turbulence from the rain that it had to have lots more buoyancy. That’s why it floated things that didn’t ordinarily float.”

Carl’s theory did make some sense. “But, where did the water come from? There had to be a lot of water to make that much rain.”

“He just programmed the desired amount of water to appear from rain and out of the ground.”

“Where did the water go, after the Flood?”

“It went back underground. Our planet was only designed to hold so much water. If there gets to be too much, it evaporates into outer space or fills aquifers. Or, He just erased the Extra Water Program.”

I thought for a while, and said, slowly, “Carl, it *could* have happened that way. I don’t think anyone could prove it didn’t. But, what about fossils? How come they’re laid down in layers that show their evolutionary complexity? You know, trilobites under

the layers of more advanced animals. How did that happen in your Bigberg/Big Wave Theory?”

“Use your head, Al. Which sinks first, a dead clam or a dead squirrel?”

“That’s a new one! You’re saying that the entire complexity of the fossil record, what Science uses to ‘prove’ evolution, is based on which animals sank first in The Flood?”

Carl nodded, sipping his iced tea while I shook my head, trying to hold on to what I had been carefully taught. “It took State-Supported Science hundreds of years to make something simple and straightforward into something convoluted, complicated, and profitable.”

“Your theory is too simple. It can’t be right. It just can’t. Why, if it’s even possible that something as simple as your Bigberg/Big Wave Theory is right, then everything I believe about the world might be wrong.” I said, as if that refuted what Carl was saying.

“If it’s ridiculous, then it should be easy for you to disprove.”

“Well, what about coal, and oil?” I asked, hoping for a reason not to take the mind-freeing simplicity and wholeness of the Bigberg/Big Wave Theory seriously.

“BigBerGs mowed down whole forests, and then covered them with silt. Plants were compressed into coal by the tremendous pressure of the water and the BigBerGs above them. Other layers were formed, quickly, when thick layers of heavy silt covered up

lush grasslands. Plants, trees and bushes, floated, stuck together in France-sized rafts of organic material. Some of that sank, and was covered up. That's why there are several layers of coal in some places, and none in others. Or, He made it in place."

"Coal is just something made of plants that were quickly compressed? You think that's all there is to it?" I asked, appalled at how simple, elegant, and irrefutable the Big Wave/Bigberg Theory appeared, intentionally ignoring the more frightening possibility that God had "made it in place". I was nervous. If something that new, different and simple was irrefutable, what did I really know?

"Yep. Of course, layers of coal could have been made of oil that squirted up from deep below, where naturally occurring hydrocarbons are still being produced by heat from the decaying thorium and uranium. It may have been forced up and hardened under layers of dirt that The Flood compressed into solid, rock-like layers between the seams of coal."

"Coal could have been made out of oil?" I asked, incredulous.

"Yes. Oil may not have any organic ancestry at all. It might just ooze out of what is actually living rock, like perspiration. He probably made it just to guarantee the Arabian sons of Ishmael the income he promised to their father, for all anyone knows."

That was too bizarre to even think about. "What about carbon-14? That proves that the earth is billions and billions of years old."

“Only to the people who believe in Babylon. If Bigbergs could make Grand Canyons, mountain ranges, and Great Lakes in a few months, despite what the Conventional Reality Program has successfully taught for years, then you should look carefully at things like Carbon 14. The only accurate way to date old things is by tree rings, and that record, coincidentally, only goes back a few thousand years.”

“What about Tectonic Plates?”

“More self-serving drivel.” he insisted. “Even if a big land mass broke apart, there’s no way to tell how long it took. Land masses could have shifted very rapidly, a long time ago, and are just inching along. Probably, He made them look like they could have moved apart to provide jobs for pseudo-intellectuals. Remember, no one really knows anything, so they teach whatever makes the most jobs for State-Supported Academics. You’ve probably noticed that Conventional Reality changes every time they find a new way to make more jobs for themselves.”

“Reality determined by what makes the most jobs for bureaucrats? That’s ridiculous!” I said. Carl didn’t answer. I thought for a minute about things I had learned in school that were later found to be untrue. “You don’t believe things could be *that* simple, do you, Carl? You don’t actually believe that Creation is as simple as it is in the Bible?”

“Sure. Once you see God as The Loving Programmer, you can see how believable it is that we’re living in The Creation Program.

It's The Big Movie! State-Supported Academics can't survive by teaching that God is real. If they did, there wouldn't be as many jobs. To get jobs, they have to make things complicated. That keeps kids in school longer, slaves of the academy, laboring endlessly to stuff themselves with an ever-changing Conventional Reality."

"There has to be more to it than that."

"Not really. Education is only a tool that every government uses to create an illusion of reality which helps that government survive. That's one of the few Historical Constants, by the way."

"Why would government care about getting people to believe in evolution, or think that the world is lots older than it is?" I asked.

"If government fosters a reality that says 'God is more important than government.', then people will look to priests and ministers for answers instead of their government. What agency ever supported a higher power than the taxing authority that feeds it?"

I didn't have an answer for that, but I didn't like hearing anything so simple. "Carl, if governments make reality, philosophers would have told us."

"They have! Remember Plato's Allegory of the Cave? Masses of people live in a big cave, between the light and the wall. They see shadows moving on the wall and they're happy, looking at

shadows. Those who look into the light see that it's always Government making the biggest, darkest, most believable shadows on the wall. Whether it's the squadrons of town criers in Rome, or FedTube today, government tools make the simpler people think that they're intelligent if they believe in Government-enhancing fads. So, there's an endless parade of environmental hysteria, prohibition, public education, getting rid of plastic grocery bags, anything that generates taxes and makes jobs for tax-addicted drones. Historical Constant."

"Oh, come on, Carl! Government is there to serve." I was getting sick of his 'Historical Constants', too, and I wished I could think of some exceptions.

"Government only serves itself. You know that. Look at Public Education. Can you imagine a huge organization that doubles its spending every decade, but turns out less educated kids every year?"

"That's true. But, why would government actually want people to be stupid?"

"Turn on your brain! It's easier for Crats to get taxes out of people who can't think straight and who are too paralyzed with confusion to act. And, Public Education keeps lots of people off the street and under their thumbs. Think of the poor students! They have to spend four years in college to learn what Japanese kids have learned by the time they leave high school. Loyal followers have to be given jobs. So do loyal administrators. Those

who can't do anything are the only ones PubEd wants teaching. Those who can't teach, administrate.”

“But, Carl, they're trying to make Public Education better.”

“No, they're not. They're only trying to get more money for themselves. That's a Historical Constant.”

“You may be right about Public Education existing to keep people off the street. Parolees in our program are always encouraged to go back to school, where they learn how to do extinct jobs on outmoded machinery. No one cares, as long as they're busy.”

“Public education exists to provide jobs at every level of incompetent uselessness. PubEd pollutes morality and turns kids into functional illiterates.”

I was getting tired. The ideas I was hearing were exhausting my mind. Still, I had to ask another question. “You're saying that government actually makes reality.”

“Conventional Reality, yes. Governments control peoples' view of their history, their accomplishments, their surroundings, and their future. PubEd is how they achieve mental control by getting people to believe in Conventional Reality.”

“Be specific, Carl. How do Crats (As a 'Crat', I found myself instinctively disliking the word.) benefit by teaching, say, something like evolution?” As a Crat, I *was* interested.

“Evolution lets them teach people to believe that they’re really animals. PubEd teaches that evolution took place in a Godless world so they can make monkeys out of children. Once people think they’re no better than animals, Crats can kill anyone, from unborn babies inside ‘undesirable’ mothers to old people whose Social Security payments could be going into their pockets.”

“That’s ridiculous! Governments don’t want people to think they’re animals!”

“To them, people *are* animals, beasts of burden. They use evolution to convince themselves, and us, that we are animals. Then, they can kill and degrade us without feeling guilty and without making us too mad to pay taxes. Why else would Crats fight so hard to keep from teaching Creationism, even as a theory?”

“Well,” I said, suddenly anxious to change the subject from something that was beginning to undermine my justifications for my livelihood, “I’m going to try to find out where we are.”

I unpacked my GPS. We were within a mile of where the wreck was charted. We steered as close as we could in the darkness and threw out the rock-filled oil drum anchors. On the chart, I sketched out how we’d sweep the area with metal detectors in the morning. Then, I got into my sleeping bag. Carl was already snoring lightly. As the raft rocked on tiny waves, I dozed off and dreamed.

“Those really weren’t stars you were looking at,” I heard a strangely familiar voice say. “Those are just blobs of God’s special-effects paint.” As the voice spoke, I dreamed I saw St. Raphael, the Archangel, and heard him call out to clouds of smaller angels, each carrying a solar-system sized palette of blinding light: “Be sure to mix up the colors and sizes of the galaxies. *He* wants to give *them* a choice.”

Fitfully, I sank back into sleep again, or I merely dreamed I was. By that time, I couldn’t tell the difference, the dream was so real. Suddenly, I saw the stars from all over the sky rearrange themselves into letters that spelled:

Never has a tapeworm cared enough to stop

Then, my dream took me outside the building where I worked as a Parole Officer Trainee. People were going into what they straight-facedly called ‘work’. Those in charge were no longer people. They were sucker-mouthed leeches with burned-out souls, wrapped in flesh and faces, skin and cloth. Invisible in ordinary light, I saw octopoid suckers stretching from them, latched onto passers-by, draining them silently through the leech-like arms that held the suckers.

The voice, bouncing words around in my brain like balls on a pool table, began again, and I listened:

“They were born as people. They traded their dreams for a desk, their ambition for comfort. They gave up the joy of standing

tall on their own two feet for the ease of sitting. They gave up everything they could have been to be comfortable. To get promoted, they even had to sell their souls.”

“No, no!” I screamed, not wanting to see myself as having sunk into the self-perpetuating, brain-destroying uselessness that I secretly knew my job was making me part of, but the dream went on, relentlessly, even though the voice faded away. I floated off, like a helium balloon, past air and time, into a Pre-Columbian orbit, floating above the North American continent. Indians moved silently through dark forests. Then, tiny sailing ships arrived. Protestant Imperialists spent two centuries getting rid of the Indians and taking their land. In Catholic areas, settlers were ordered by The Church and obedient Catholic Monarchs to ‘save the Indian’s lives and souls.’ They succeeded so well that, today, 85% of the people in Catholic-settled lands have Indian DNA. “This not a Politically Correct dream!” a nagging voice interjected repeatedly. “You should be feeling guilty about having it.”

Time accelerated. Black Blots appeared. The biggest and the blackest were over Washington. Tendrils of the night snaked through the lights. State capitols, too, became Black Blots, and thinner tendrils snaked out from them. Light grew dimmer. I could hear mad cackling that, dream or no dream, I knew was the Devil. Invaders loomed. I heard the shrieking chant; “Death to the children of Isaac! Death to the sons of Abraham! Death to the offspring of Shem! Death to the descendants of Noah! Death to

the children of Abel! Crown Cain, King of the Crats! Crown Cain, King of the Crats! Crown Cain, King of the Crats!”

I was relieved when full light came, and I could stop dreaming about bizarre horrors. After a quick breakfast of Fruity Pebbles, Carl and I rafted back and forth, over a four square mile area. Alongside us, we towed along a pair of wooden poles with metal detectors spaced every ten feet. Metal vanes kept the poles low in the water as we trolled back and forth.

Just before lunch, through the speaker hooked up to the metal detectors, we heard the sound that meant they were near metal. Immediately, I threw the raft into reverse. When we were back where the buzzers sounded loudest, Carl dropped the anchors.

He got into a wetsuit and went over the side without even taking a walkie-talkie. I stared at the water for what seemed hours, imagining him to be trapped, dead, or injured. Then, I heard a sputtering yell in back of the raft.

“Get it! Get it!” he called, trying to lift what looked like a suddenly heavy loaf of moldy French bread out of the water.

“Ingot!” I cried as I lay on my belly, reaching down to take the ingot out of Carl’s hands. I set it on the deck and gave Carl a hand out of the water.

“There’s thousands of ‘em!” he exulted. “Piled up like cordwood! We found it!” he said. Then he interrupted his own elation at having found the load of ingots so quickly. “We’d better

get to work! There's no telling how long this good weather will last."

We rigged our salvage net, sections of cyclone fencing wired together, and attached it to the cable on the tow truck. Carl rode it down. He took a walkie-talkie.

"Pull up the net." he called, in about an hour.

I engaged the powerful winch and pulled up the load, rotating the boom so that the net would miss the driveshaft. Carl was sitting right in the middle, on top of a pile of ingots. We swung the net over the decking and unloaded quickly. I went down to bring up the next load.

I'd never worked in such dark depths. Most of the wooden ship had long since rotted away. Ingots lay in piles, waiting to be picked up. Above, the raft was barely visible, but only because the loading hole in it glittered very faintly through the gloom.

We raised five loads and got about fifty ingots on each before it got too dark to see.

**Serious Business. Carl explains that everything exists just to give us free will. Creation is God's I. Q. test for souls. We can believe in God or a government's Conventional Reality. Our own Salvation depends on our own choice. Serious Business.**

Carl fried steak for dinner. I baked potatoes in the fire, a tiny glow of light, rocking gently on the dark waves. The cork popped loudly from the champagne we were almost afraid to bring with us. A weather forecast on the truck radio predicted two windless days. Carl figured we'd be able to fill the raft by then.

Glowing embers in the fire made me remember last night's dream, of angels carrying huge blobs of light to make stars. I told Carl about it, and repeated the words I'd heard St. Raphael, the Archangel, call. 'Be sure to make the stars and galaxies all different sizes and colors. He wants to give Them a choice.' What's that mean, do you suppose?"

"That's the most important thing of all! Everything that we can sense was made by God in a very complicated way for a very simple reason: To truly have free will, we absolutely had to have a world so cleverly made that we would not be forced to believe in Him when we studied it. That's why there are fossils, Carbon-14, and such. All we see are just stage props for The Big Movie."

"He made Creation so we couldn't tell if he made it? Why would He go to all that trouble?"

“Free Will is the best way to let bad actors weed themselves out. Free will separates pseudo-intellectuals from smart people, faithful from heretics, sheep from goats. Cain from Abel. Then, when they go to Hell, they can’t whine about it. Or, if they do, He doesn’t have to listen. It’s all an I. Q. test, for souls. That’s all Creation is.”

“That doesn’t mean that He’s real.”

“That’s the elegant part! He made the universe so well that we simply can’t tell if He’s real by looking at any part of Creation. Your dream is a glimpse of what He did when He told St. Raphael to get busy with star-colored blobs of special-effects paint. He made the Universe so that it could look big or small, young or old; whatever people freely choose it to be. He’s covered His tracks so perfectly that you just can’t tell if He made the world or if it was a bizarre compilation of coincidences.”

“I think we could be just as happy if He’d just tell us that He’s real.”

“He did. Hardly anybody listens. He doesn’t tell us too often because he knows how insulted people would be if they thought God believed that they were too dumb to find Him. The twits would be even madder than they are now!”

“I have to agree with that. Still, I can’t see why He wouldn’t make things plainer.”

“He doesn’t want to spoil things. The biggest joy anyone can ever have is to discover God, and see that everything in the universe, including their own salvation, makes perfect sense. None of your Conventional Reality theories ever do that.”

I could not remember any unifying theory that made sense out of everything. I found myself saying unconsciously, “Carl, that’s revolutionary! I mean, if everyone believed that God made things the way He did just to give us Free Will, then there’d be no reason to believe in anything else. Anyone who believed that would be crazy if he didn’t just sit around and pray all the time!”

I asked, “What leads people away from believing and obeying?”

“Satan has power to confuse. He works full time to get people to believe in State-fads, in anything *but* God.”

“I can begin to believe that you make some sense when you talk about God, but active evil, too?”

“As soon as you understand the importance of freedom, and our right to choose what we want, then you begin to see how important the corrupting viruses, fallen angels, play.”

“Do you?” I said, unable to keep all the sarcasm out of my voice.

“All I get is glimpses, like you got when you saw St. Raphael talking to the angels who painted in the stars.”

“That was only a dream.”

“Couldn’t that dream have been your first glimpse of reality?”

“Well, if there’s a God, why is there pain and suffering?” I asked, trying to escape the discomfort of considering the wrenching notion of Biblical reality by asking a question that I’d been taught had no answer. “Why would God allow that gang of Gypsies to get their big jet? Why would innocent people get run over by drunken drivers?”

“There’s pain and suffering and injustice because some people enjoy it, because other people are unconcerned, and because all of us are selfish. And, of course, if we weren’t free to have those kinds of problems, then we’d be God’s puppets. Think how the lost souls would whine about that.”

“Everything that goes wrong is our own fault?”

“Yes. No one in a state religion ever wants to admit it, because then they’d have to change themselves. Self-improvement is one thing that they can’t tax.”

“But a lot of things happen that we can’t control. What about diseases, earthquakes, floods, and other things that destroy people who haven’t done anything to deserve it?” I said.

“In our minds, every single one of us is a liar, a cheat, a thief, an adulterer, a murderer. We love ourselves so much we’ll do almost anything to get what we want.”

“I’ve never killed anybody.” I protested.

“No, but you’ve thought about it, and that’s the same thing. In fact, that was the first thing that made me think Jesus was smarter than the rest of them, you know, Buddha, Confucius, Mahound, and all the rest. Jesus knew that thoughts in the mind were as real as anything outside the mind. That makes perfect sense when you realize that no one can prove that he is nothing more than a character in someone else’s dream. No one but Jesus ever preached that. Then, it hit me. It was no accident that He, among them, didn’t die of old age.”

“He had an empty tomb, too. Do you suppose that He just turned into thought?” I added, not knowing where such an absurd notion could have come from. A micro-second later, I was struck by the fleeting vision of a thought so staggeringly complicated that my mind reeled away from it. I knew, then, that there was an explanation of things that made even Bigbergs and The Big Wave look simplistic, though fundamentally correct, and that it would come to me. In time.

Carl smiled. “What made you say that?”

I looked blank. “I don’t know. I just don’t know.” If I stayed with the thought, then and there, I might have gotten somewhere, but it made me too uncomfortable, so I went back to arguing with Carl, looking for a reason not to have to really think about anything new. Since I’d become a Crat, I’d spent a lot of time doing that.

“What about abortion? What could helpless, unborn babies have done wrong to have to die such agonizing deaths?”

“It’s sickening to visualize what happens in an abortion. Even those who love death the most are afraid to FedTube pictures of abortions and aborted babies. Innocent death is part of the price to be paid for our freedom. If we’re to be truly free, then we must even be free to slaughter the innocent. But, we will pay for it. God will tolerate it for just so long. Then, He’ll Babylon us.”

“If you worry so much about abortion, why don’t you become a Catholic?”

It took a while for Carl to answer, so I knew I’d asked a question that he didn’t like. He poured a glass of iced tea and answered slowly. “If I were a Catholic, I wouldn’t be able to sell the Bird-Gods, and, I really want to do that. As a Perkmistianist, or most any kind of Protestant, I can pretty much do anything that I want. I can abandon my wife and remarry a half dozen times, which is how we Mainliners practice polygamy. I can even kill my unborn children. I can do anything but wear rags to church.”

“Basically, you’re no different than Luther or Lenin?”

Carl grimaced, spitting out a piece of bitter lemon he’d accidentally bitten into.

“Think God’s trying to tell you something?”

“Maybe,” he answered, disgustedly. “I’m so sick of ‘maybe’. Sometimes, I think I’d be better off to give up everything, just for

the joy of never having to say ‘maybe’.”

“If you did that, you’d have to be a Saint.” I chuckled, thinking how absurd it would be to think of him as St. Carl. As my laugh died, I found myself staring into the West, and admired the high strands of faintly glowing clouds.

“If it weren’t for clouds,” Carl said, following my gaze, “the sky would be awfully boring.”

“Maybe your ‘maybe God’ made clouds just so that we wouldn’t be bored. Surely, He could have made more effective ways to distribute water.”

“He could have if He were an East German. But, He’s more artist than engineer.”

“Are you sure Creation couldn’t have been an accident?” I asked.

“Yes. Hirelings for every government that’s ever been always come up with theories to uphold the power of the state. State-Supported academics can come up with reasons to believe in the Divine Right of kings just as fast as they can come up with theories to prove that babies inside the womb may be killed at will or that Jews are bad. They’ll believe whatever makes their jobs secure. If you rely on the State, you have to support it, or you lose your job, or your broadcast license, or your earldom and all your castles. Historical Constant: The S-S always win, in the short run.”

“What about the long run?”

“In the long run, they destroy their own state; suck the life right out of it. But, they’ve sold off their smarts to get their ‘jobs’. So, they can’t see very far ahead. They’re dumbed-down by the good money, good benefits, and good pensions that States pay to people who support them with theories that there are big bangs, nuclear winters, expanding universes, evolution, bio-rhythms, dangerous pollution, ozone holes, carcinogenic cranberries, lebensraum, asbestos, speckled owls, big money in tulips, global warming, special lizards, global freezing, anything bizarre enough to justify the salaries of people too lazy to do anything but mug taxpayers.”

“That’s extreme, even for you. A theory about something as remote as an expanding universe or Big Bang supports bureaucratic salaries?”

“When they can make people believe that there is no higher power than the state, bureaucrats become the power. That’s why they try to make people believe that God or family centered ideas are dumb, old-fashioned, or just plain silly. Big-Bang types of theories help to destroy a rational belief in God, or in the sanctity of man. Glaciers, radio-carbon dating, and all the rest of the ‘scientific’ claptrap are what modern governments use to make themselves powerful. Why? To get more tax money!”

“How do you know that they aren’t right? How do you know that everything isn’t just an accident?”

“Look for a Historical Constant: The people coming up with those theories are the spiritual children of the same Crats who believed in astrology and worshiped cats, when their salaries were paid by Egyptian pharaohs. They’re the same people who promoted child sacrifice to balance the books of Babylon. They’re the same people pushing abortion, hyper-environmentalism, and evolution to destroy the goodness of human life today. Tax-addicts are never right. Never have been, never will be. They sold out for earthly gain and lost forever the joy of knowing and doing what’s right. They don’t let themselves realize that they hate themselves and serve only corruption and death. They are the descendants of Cain. Crats are Cain’s kids.”

“That’s not proof,” I answered, but I did have to silently admit that he’d summed up libraries full of governmental theory in just four words.

“Sure it is.” He got up and paced back and forth between the dying fire and the dim redness of the western sky. “Aquinas was right when he talked about a ‘Prime Mover’. There simply can’t be motion without a mover. Even with a Big-Bang, there had to be something there to go ‘bang’. The ‘Big-Bang’ type of God-hiding theories only go as far as the prime taxing authority wants them to go, and they always stop short of Aquinas and a Prime Mover.”

“But, Carl, a lot of people who work in colleges and great universities would see that, if it were true, and tell us,” I said, secretly enjoying the mindless fatuousness of my reply; enjoying

also the knowledge that Carl would respond to it as if I were actually dumb enough take seriously such a stupid statement.

“Are you so innocent as to believe that the moral caliber of someone who pushes the murder of unborn babies as the cure for pre-marital sex is the kind of person who would give up an easy, tenured job for something they value as little as ‘truth’? Besides, most of them have cunningly constructed or adopted philosophies which don’t believe that truth exists, anyway. Especially any kind of truth based on ability or accomplishment.”

“They can’t all be bad.”

“Can’t they? They were all bad when they butchered babies in Babylon. They were all bad in the Oak Groves of Palestine, sacrificing children in the high places. They were all bad in Mexico and Peru when they ripped the beating hearts out of people. Now, they’re more sophisticated. Their leaders are temporarily satisfied savoring the comparatively invisible death of abortion and euthanasia. But, that’s only because they don’t have total power, yet. No pyramids, yet. We haven’t been crammed into state dining rooms and barracks, yet. That’s the only difference.”

“But, what can you do about it?” I asked, thinking of the awesome size of the bureaucracy and how invulnerable it was to any sort of attack.

“You’ll see when we get back to shore. I’ll show you, then.”

I was uneasy the rest of the evening. I'd signed on to get copper ingots, turn them into Bird-Gods, and make lots of money, not to upset great, big apple carts.

We worked fast the next two days. After we'd loaded over a thousand ingots, the raft began to ride lower in the water. While I winched up the last load, Carl called Darlene.

"We're coming in. Rent a big flat-bed truck, and get a forklift, too. It's hard to move the ingots with our little hand cart. Meet you at the park after dark."

When we got to shore, Darlene was waiting for us. She'd rented a big, flatbed truck and a forklift. She'd even bought metal ramps. I backed the flatbed into the water. We ran the two ramps between it and the raft. In an hour, we'd loaded the ingots onto the truck, and were ready to go. I anchored the raft a couple of hundred yards offshore, put our official "Beaver Awareness" signs on it and swam to shore.

**Birth of Bird-God. Women turned into Tax-Slaves.  
DemoCrats secret policy: bastard-breeding. Doctor V.  
DeDuckDuck buys a Bird God.**

When we got to the farm, I parked the truck near the tumble-down barn that would become worldwide headquarters of the new Bird-God production facilities. While I fork-lifted pallets of ingots into the barn, Carl began to work on the first Bird-God. He carried one of the ingots into an old, cobwebby stall, dimly lit with a swaying bulb.

While Darlene was melting lead and pouring it into a beak shaped mold, Carl laid one of the ingots down. With a four pound sledge and a sharp, short, steel rod, he hammered two eye sockets. Then, he sanded clean an area between and below the eye sockets and dribbled a little flux on it. When Darlene gingerly handed him the hot, lead beak, Carl carefully soldered it into place.

When I finished unloading the ingots, I drove the forklift into the barn, so Carl and Darlene could use its lights. I needn't have bothered. Carl was finished. Resting on the feed shelf of the unused stall, the forklift lights fell upon the first Bird-God.

Surrounded by haloes of cobwebs, it looked as if a proper God had, at last, arrived on earth. The wisdom of the ages seemed to be contained behind those deep eyes. Glints of bright copper

twinkled where the deep, dark patina had been gouged by the eye-punch.

“Should we bow down and worship it?” I asked, laughing.

“No, but people probably will,” Carl answered.

“Seriously, no one’s going to bow down before that.”

“You say that only because you know what it is. People who see Bird-God for the first time won’t know where he came from, how old he is, or how he was made.”

“That’s true.”

“People will really like Bird-Gods! Most people like new things that are old because they don’t threaten anyone, or make anyone feel dumb. And, they give State-Supported academics and other wards of the state the illusion that they’ve something useful to study.”

“Oh, come on, Carl!” Darlene protested. “You go too far. How could civil servants, even state-supported academics, possibly think that they were doing something useful by studying this?”

“The one driving force behind every Babylonian is the fanatic and impossible obsession to seem to do good without ever taking a risk or getting his/her/its hands dirty. They want to feel useful, but not have to give anything of themselves. So, they push papers, make studies, analyze reports, and have meetings. They do that instead of living. High-level Media-twits will love Bird-Gods!”

“When Bird-God comes along, they’ll have something new and different to think and say dumb things about. Just wait until you see their insane drivelings about Bird-God. Bird-God will give them something new to drag down to their level of awareness. Dragging things down helps them to believe there’s nothing higher, and they have to believe that. That’s how they keep on going.”

“Bird-God’s just a narcotic?” I asked.

“Exactly right. A drug, a God who makes no demands, whatsoever, a marionette in the mind of the adoring believer. I think we’ve got something here that’s even more than I first thought.”

“What’s that?” asked Darlene.

“Most people won’t believe in Jesus, even in our simple, watered-down, Mainline view of Him. Their minds have been so intentionally dulled by the government schools that they simply haven’t the functioning brain space left to be able to believe in miracles. Bird-God fills the bill! He’s a God who can’t boggle their minds with miracles and a God who makes absolutely no demands on them. Bird-God is a combination of Buddha and the Schmoo!”

Darlene and I looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders as Carl continued, careening along on his train of thought.

“All over this country, there are thousands of State-Supported sociologists, with no societies simple enough for them to understand. State-Supported historians and anthropologists just drooling to deliver pretend profundities about new discoveries of old things that can't possibly be corrected. Psychologists are always on the lookout for things that they can encourage patients to believe in, things that will keep them calm enough to work, yet confused enough to go on giving them money.”

“Everybody who likes a free ride looks for bandwagons and gravy trains to jump on,” added Darlene. “Especially the low end of the state-supported.”

“That's right,” Carl said, shutting off the lights and leaving the first Bird-God in the dark. “Why, every fad-driven gas-brain from Captain Planet to dirt-worshipping Greenpeacers will jump onto this. Along with every demon in Middle Earth.”

“There you go, again!” I said. “There aren't any demons! Not really.”

“It was a demon who made you say that. Demons are creeping and crawling in and out of your brain cells like snakes among boulders.”

“You keep saying those things, but how do you really know?”

He paused and answered slowly. “I have thoughts and desires that I know would destroy me. In all nature, we are the only

species that self-destructs, so there must be something beyond nature that causes us to do it. What could it be, if not demons?”

“That’s old-fashioned. People don’t believe in that stuff anymore.”

“That’s why they’ll believe in Bird-God. Crats have replaced spiritual reality with twaddle. Bird-God is going to become a hula-hoop of the mind. Everyone who thinks that National Geographic is intellectual and that approved media flacks are great thinkers is going to spend lots of no-brain brain-time pondering Bird-God.”

I remembered Bird-God, back in the barn, staring straight at each of us, unmoving, noble, an incarnation of wisdom and benign approval.

“Let’s go eat,” said Darlene, breaking the spell. “I have pork chops and french fries inside.”

The thought of food reminded us that we were hungry. We sat around the kitchen table in the old farm house and wolfed down Shake n’ Bake pork chops, crisp green beans, salad, and strawberries.

I never thought I’d miss fresh food so much.” I said.

“Next time, we’ll take more with us,” Carl said. “I just forgot about taking as much as I should have.”

“Next time?” asked Darlene. “When do you think you’ll go again?”

“As soon as we finish making and selling these Bird-Gods.”

“There are enough ingots on the Lucky Left for more trips,” I said. “But, where do we go after that?”

“There’s dozens of wrecks, from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic, loaded with ingots of copper, brass, even pig iron, to make Bird-Gods for poor people. There’s some silver out there, and probably some gold, too. We’ll get it all.”

“There sure is a lot of news to catch up on,” I said, seeing the stack of newspapers Darlene saved for us.

“There sure is,” said Carl. “Look at this story, here on the front page. It says that the government’s going to start giving more money to WAWA, Women Awake, Women Aware. They ‘need’ to have more conferences and meetings. That’s the first step in turning people into parasites. Make ‘em think that meetings are important and swell their pride by convincing them that their presence is vital. What hogwash.”

I poured myself a cup of coffee and got ready to provoke another attack on Conventional Reality. “Carl, women’s groups are necessary if women are going to get equal pay for equal work,” I said, realizing as I spoke that I didn’t know where I’d gotten that information, but feeling duty-bound to pass it on as truth.

“Malarkey!” Darlene interjected. “Women’s movements have been around forever. They’re caused by government. Carl’s right about that! Any time there are too many bureaucrats for the workforce to support, they have to get more people paying taxes. That’s why the government supports these lunatic women

movements. They need more tax-slaves to pay for their endless raises. That's why there's Women's Lib'!

“I wanted to stay home and have children. Their souls will last forever. But the bureaucratic greed for bigger salaries and more bureaucrats caused both inflation and high taxes. So, I had to go to work, under the threat of having them confiscate our property for nonpayment of property taxes that support their schools. The tax-addicts who are in favor of incessant ‘liberation’ just want to reduce women to slavery, to get more tax money. And, some people will do anything, to be administrators.”

“Women's Lib is really a front for ‘Women in Chains’?” I asked, semi-sarcastically.

“What else could it be? What on earth could be fulfilling about most jobs? Compared to producing a soul that will last forever, any job is boring and useless. The S-S don't want women home raising their children. They want them paying taxes and the kids forced into State Day Care, where they can be more easily brainwashed into being taxpaying pawns of the State.”

“Always remember,” Carl interjected, “if women won't get rid of their babies with abortion and abortion-inducing birth control, they might stay home to raise their children, and not be taxed. Some of them know they get their salaries by ripping apart the families of today and killing the children of tomorrow. It's the worst kind of deficit spending.”

“But, a lot of women like to work.” I protested. (Back then, I was so naive about some things that I might as well have been stupid.)

“Women with a sense of infinity know that the most important thing they can do is lay the foundations for the future, by having children and raising them properly, so that they’ll have children of their own who raise their children properly to have more. Compared to that, only self-worshippers could think that a mere job could be challenging.” Darlene responded.

“Eventually, Al, it goes back to demons.” Carl assured me. “When you see the whole forest, you know that there are individual trees. Once you see evil, you’ll know that there are demons. But, you can only see the truth with faith.”

“Faith is what I’m lacking?” I said, realizing that I no longer thought the concept of demons was automatically ridiculous. For a moment, I wondered if an angel had made me realize that, but that thought was too foreign to consider.

“Faith is what the demons do their darndest to keep you from ever having. They get to stay out of Hell, and play around in the comparative comfort of our minds, only as long as they’re doing a good job of leading our souls into the fiery pit,” he answered.

Darlene chimed in: “The Demons in our minds are like Communist agents who wanted to be assigned in free, comfortable countries. The only way they got to be comfortable was to destroy the source of their comfort.”

We helped Darlene with the dishes, then, and talked aimlessly of the weather and tomorrow's plans, and we went to bed. Before I went to sleep, I tried to relate the things I heard from Carl and Darlene with what I thought I knew from before.

“Maybe there are demons. Or, maybe Carl and Darlene are crazy. Maybe, it's a demon telling me that they're crazy. Or, is it craziness telling me that there are demons? If so, are demons and craziness one and the same thing, real together, real apart?”

Finally, I slept, dreaming of masked men and women, dragging mothers from their homes and grieving children, leaving crying infants to be abused in state-supported daycare centers while their saddened mothers were forced into taxable labor.

“After a while, the kids don't care! They watch TV. They like TV.” a voice like a government-approved FedTube newsreader told me, as I saw children watching X-rated movies when they came home after school to motherless houses. And, I knew that those who saw, and who thought that it was good, were cunning, left-wing DemoCrats who knew that only the loveless would vote for them, and who, therefore, made hating love the secret cornerstone of every domestic policy.

We spent the rest of the week making ingots into Bird-Gods. My Project Uplift Days were extended, still with full pay, when I made application for my two weeks of Personal Business Days, to which I was entitled twice a year.

“Let’s go sell some Bird-Gods,” Carl suggested. “We’ll get far enough from Lake Erie that no one makes the connection between the Bird-Gods and the ingots they ship across the Great Lakes,” he said, and we drove Southwest, into Ohio.

We went into a big antique store, near Canton, and parked in front of the store, out of sight.

“Let’s all go in, but Al, you kind of disappear once we start talking. Stay in the store after we leave and see what the owner does.”

“What if he doesn’t buy one?” I asked.

“Don’t be silly,” he replied as if the thought had never crossed his mind.

The three of us went inside, Carl first, carrying a Bird-God wrapped in an old towel.

“May I help you?” the owner asked.

“Are you the owner?” Carl asked, knowing full well that a shop that small couldn’t afford a clerk wearing a sports jacket with suede elbow patches.

“Yes.” he said, his broad smile disappearing as he heard the question that meant we were there to sell and not to buy.

“My wife and I have something that was in an old barn at our place,” Carl said, truthfully, as I sidled away to stand unobtrusively behind a cigar store Indian, out of sight but within easy earshot.

Carl cleared off a space on the counter, set the Bird-God down, then pulled off the towel.

“Ever see anything like that before?”

“Yeah, well, not exactly like this one, but pretty similar.” the owner lied.

“Huh?” said Carl, in disbelief. “Well, I never did. I don’t know what it is, but it looks like some kind of a bird or something, doesn’t it?”

“That’s just what it is. It’s an old Indian bird-artifact. There’s lots of em around here.” He piled lie on lie, with the quickness born of long experience.

“Well, if it isn’t worth much, I’d just as soon keep it,” Carl said and started to rewrap the world’s first Bird-God.

“How much do you have to get for it?”

“If it’s not worth much, I think I’d just as soon keep it”

“I might be able to sell it to a collector, but there aren’t many who’d be interested. I’d be willing to give you forty dollars for it, on a gamble.”

“It’s worth more’n that at the junkyard. It’s pure copper.”

“Oh. I thought it was one of the plated ones.” was the smooth reply. “In that case, I’ll give you ninety.”

“I guess I could take a hundred, but none less.”

“Well, seeing as it’s one of the solid copper ones, and I’m taking your word on that, Mister, I’ll buy it. Maybe I can find

somebody at a flea market who's looking for one.”

He started to write a check, but Carl stopped him: “Cash.”

“Oh,” he said, realizing that maybe Carl knew more than he'd thought. He pulled a money roll the size of an orange juice can out of a clock and peeled off five twenties. Carl pocketed the money. He and Darlene left together. The owner hadn't really noticed me, so he shrugged, and went to the telephone.

“Put me through to Dr. Victor DeDuckDuck, Department of Native Americanology.” he said. After a slight pause, he continued: “Doc DeDuckduck? This is Bernie Teaks, down at Uncle Teaks' & Teaks. Listen, I've got something here that you've got to see. I've been in this business over thirty years, and I never saw anything like it.... Some kind of an old Indian thing, guy found it in an old barn, somewhere. . . . What's it look like? Looks like something they used to worship, solid copper, bigger'n an eagle. I called you first because I knew how you like to see interesting things, and this is sure interesting. ... How much do I want for it?”

“Well, I'll tell you, I can't really put a price on it because I never saw one like it. Not even in the magazines or catalogues. But, I'll tell you, I had to pay this guy plenty! He knew it was rare, all right. Listen, I usually don't work on a ten percent markup, but if you'll go nine hundred, I'd be willing to take the loss. That way someone who'll appreciate it will have it... You'll be here this

afternoon? Good. I'd hate to have to hold it any longer than that. I'll tell you, this is something. Really, it's something."

I snuck out of the store then, and Bernie didn't even hear me leave.

## **AGENDAS**

**A family farm remains. Smithsonian: Fat Crat tax deductions. FedTube News. Dr. Brownose, Senator Meddle, Dr. Medpig, PEDCOM. Penny Bugler loves Willard Flotsom? Bored Field Beast. The Mason-Dixon Line doesn't hold. Smithsonian Jubilee!**

It had taken generations to clear and drape the steep hills of Southwestern Pennsylvania with fields of corn and hay. Mattathias and Judith MacAbee had a hundred and fifty acres of that high, hilly land. Matt's great-great-great grandfather had homesteaded it from a land grant given an ancestor for his service in the War of 1812. Matt's father had nearly finished clearing it when he passed on.

Thin soil and steeply tilted fields made the land hard to plow, plant, and harvest. Their only machinery was an old John Deere tractor, more rusty than green, and a few implements that Matt Senior had bought during WWII, and paid for by the end of the Korean Conflict, the only time wars came close enough together to let them accumulate that much investment capital.

Their log house had been built by the first known Matt MacAbee in 1814. Matt covered it with clapboards when he and Judith were married. They kept a few dozen chickens, some ducks, one cow, and a calf, that they were thankful was a heifer. Two sows and a boar rooted, wallowed, and slept in one corner of

the swaybacked barn. In another corner, an old mule dozed on its feet, dreaming mule dreams.

“I didn’t start out to be no organic farmer,” Matt would tell other farmers at the feed store, “but, that’s how you end up if you can’t afford fertilizer and spray.” It was the kind of farm that more and more of disappeared every year. Mattathias and Judith had three children: Lucy, Becky, and Young Matt.

When Young Mattathias came of age, he would have a son and call him Young Matt, and he would be ‘Old Matt’ to his friends and neighbors at Church and at the Post Office and at the Grange and the store. His father would become “Real Old Matt”.

It had been that way since the War of 1812, and maybe before. Matt thought about that process the same way city people thought about jobs and the price of their houses. “Maybe,” he had confided to Judith one night when the balmy moonlight made him giddy, “the next MacAbee boy could be called ‘Mack MacAbee’. Has a nice ring to it, maybe it’s nicer sounding than the plain ‘Matt MacAbee’ we’ve been usin’ for so long.”

“Don’t be silly, Pa.” Judith had replied, in the very same tone she’d used when Matt had suggested making their tax money by distilling moonshine from their field corn. There’s always got to be a Matt MacAbee.”

“Just jokin’, Ma.”

Matt loved his family, his farm, his land. He loved the look of the meadows in the evening, grazed smooth by the cow and calf and mule. He loved the birds and frogs that sang in the high grass along the run, where the snapping turtle that ate half his ducklings every year lived. He loved the farm so much that it never crossed his mind that far from the rolling hills a monster lay in wait, a hungry monster, looking unceasingly for anything on which to pounce.

A world away, in the Smithsonian Institute, a young Curator-In-Training was cataloguing recent donations. One lot, from the socially prominent (in Cedar Rapids, Iowa) family of Brookson Dixon included the actual transit that had been used to survey the Mason-Dixon Line.

“Hmmm.” Willard Flotsom had thought to himself, as he examined the old transit with what he hoped looked like an experienced eye. “If this thing was just the slightest bit off, then the whole Mason-Dixon line would be wrong. Wouldn’t *that* be something?”

At lunch that day, in one of the Employee Cafeterias where Willard and the other highly-paid employees could eat for a tenth of what it would cost a taxpaying tourist to have lunch, Willard found himself sitting across from Penny Bugler, who worked in Public Information Services, Smithsonian.

“You’re right!” she told him, in the continually excited tone she and the other PISS flacks used, “This transit could be big! Why it might even make National Television!”

Willard looked around, embarrassed by her loud voice, but no one ever paid any attention to loud-mouthed PISS workers.

“It could be that big a thing? To get on national television?”

“Oh, we can get anything on National Television! Why, we give the networks millions, billions, you know, to run all that awful Smokey the Bear nonsense, and ‘Give a hoot, don’t pollute!’ twaddle! We pay them so much that they’re afraid to offend us. That’s they put whatever news on the air that we want them to. Why, when we want news, we just tell them what’s new. Then, some parrot-brained newsreader with a good hairdresser reads it while the cameras flash the pictures we’ve given them on the screen . If they don’t cooperate, we jerk their Broadcast license. That’s all there is to the news!”

“That’s all?”

“Well, not quite. We have to give major stockholders in every media a certain number of NIWOS Gov-Jobs for friends and relatives.”

“NIWOS Gov-Jobs?”

“No Intelligence, Work, or Skill, you sillyhead. But, you wouldn’t know about that. You just haven’t been here long enough. But, you did tell me about the transit, so I’ll trade. Maybe,

if we help each other, we can get promoted. Maybe, we'll be able to eat in there!" she said, nodding toward one of the upper-middle level lunchrooms, where higher-ranking civil servants were served free lunches by squadrons of minorities. They ate on translucent china with sterling service and wiped their sagging jowls with monogrammed linen. "Soon, I'll be eating in there! Be nice to see you in there, too!"

"That's how they get there, they're related to somebody?" asked Willard, trying to cover his nakedness as he felt his innocence being stripped away.

"Sure. Most of them are C-R, that's Congressional Relative, or C-IL, that's Congressional In-Law. There might be one or two P-Rs or P-ILs, and there are a few N-Rs and N-ILs. Network Relatives and Network In-Laws. Then, of course, there are C-Bs, Congressional Buddies; P-Bs, Presidential Buddies, you know, anyone at all who knows anything at all that might make re-election difficult."

"Are any of them in there because they've worked their way up?"

"Don't be silly. That's what we're here to do, you know, to kill time while we're waiting to get to know someone or to know something about someone, which is the same thing. Then, we can be escalated right up to the top. The Buddy System. Can't beat it. Besides, how could anyone work their way anywhere when there's nothing to do? Really, you're *too new!*"

“Well, what’s the point of it all?” asked a genuinely shocked Willard.

“You poor baby! The point is there is no point. The thing to remember is that the head of the Whole Smithsonian, Dr. Brownose, himself, is going to be taking an Executive Assistants Group with Him to the Big Conference in Las Vegas. If you want to go, you’d better not let him hear you ask ‘What’s the point?’ like a whiny, little baby. I’m going,” she added, proudly.

Willard and Penny met again, a few days later. Penny was doing her tri-annual Sunday-Supplement article, “Smithsonian, Museum of ALL the People”. She could have written it in her sleep, and usually did, but for some reason, she decided to go down to the vast Incoming Department, deep in the bowels of the building.

When he saw her cascades of blonde hair, Willard left the dusty cartons, straightened his shirt, and came over to her.

“Hello, again,” he said, leaving behind the box of Spanish American War coloring books he was cataloguing. “It’s really interesting here, isn’t it?”

“You really think so, don’t you?” she asked, in her best know-it-all voice, pleased to find someone she could use it on.

“You mean, it isn’t?” asked a properly awed Willard.

“Tax deductions. That’s all the Smithsonian is. Tax deductions.”

“Tax deductions?” he repeated, in the incredulous tone she loved to hear.

“Sure. That’s all any of this is. Look at these boxes of incoming crud! What’s this one? Why, it’s a bunch of coloring books, from the Spanish-American War. That’s only interesting to some simple, state-supported twit with way too much time on his hands.”

“Oh, no.” Willard protested. “Why these are priceless, these are....”

“A lot of garbage. Some well-connected family gives this junk to the Smithsonian after it’s evaluated by some trustworthy appraiser. He gets a piece of the action if it’s found to have ‘tremendous value, due to uniqueness and age’. Those are the standards, into which virtually anything can be made to fit.”

“But, what we’re doing here must help someone? If it’s all a sham, why would anyone bother?”

“Silly. The appraiser says that this box of coloring books is worth, oh, maybe a million dollars, which it will be if it can be gotten enough Media Mentions.”

“And, they get to deduct the whole million?” Willard guessed.

“Right! You’re catching on, Willard. The donors of this box get to deduct a million from their income or estate tax! They might dozens of boxes of dusty crud like this lying around their attic. They won’t pay taxes for generations. Why do you think rich

people have big houses, anyway? They've got to store their tax deductions, and their descendants' deductions, too."

"Oh," Willard said, feeling like he'd just eaten a bad oyster that he knew was going to get worse.

Penny enjoyed piling it on. "Sure. We only do two things at the Smithsonian. We help rich people get out of paying their taxes *and* give a lot of taxpaying boobs exotic, rich-people residue to look at. And, we keep real busy re-writing history. We've got to make the past 'Politically Correct'. So, we make the kind of smart, dead white guys who invented flying and electricity look dumb or greedy and make everyone else look 'sensitive' and 'oppressed'."

"No, no," he replied, so desperately that both of them realized he knew he was wrong. "This is important work, preserving the heritage of a nation," he added, plaintively.

"You've got a bad case of the Innocents. Wait. You'll see."

Willard waited. Willard began to see. He found, once Penny had told him what to look for, that the real work of the Smithsonian, the kind of work that the mysterious Evaluators did, was the basic reason for their being.

The Evaluators, Willard discovered, were the employees whom some mysterious power, as yet undiscovered by Willard, had ordained with the near-priestly right to give a dollar value to, it seemed nearly any material object. They were never wrong. There was no appeal from an Evaluator determination of value.

Willard got an inkling of Evaluator power before the Christmas party when Penny did her annual “Christmas at the Smithsonian” article.

(The Public Employee Defense Committee was, at that very moment, appointing a De-deification Committee to delete all religious references from the language. “Holiday”, which used to be “Christmas”, was being changed to Winterday because “holi” came from “holy”, a banned concept. Christmas trees went from Holiday to Winterday Trees, Christmas cards, from Holiday to Winterday Cards. Christmas carols were to be re-written by a team of modern Methodists, Episcopalians, and Unitarians.

“Let’s make this the last year that any of our State-Supported Fluffmeisters can write anything with the syllable ‘Christ’ in it,” insisted Slith Venum, from HUD. “Will do!” said Sliderby Smoothe. “And, I’ll get the Postal Union cracking!” said Ketchem Squeezum. “After all, since the Post Office can’t help but lose money, those dreaded ‘Christmas’ Cards are being subsidized. We’ve got to have total separation between Church and State. From now on, any card with ‘Christ’ in it, or pictures of those so-called ‘Wise Men’, will be illegal to send through the U. S. Postal Service.”

“Great idea!” shrieked Ms. Medea. “And, it’s always bothered me that people driving on tax-supported roads can see religious symbols on churches and synagogues. Let’s get rid of them, too.”

“The religious symbols or the churches and synagogues?” asked Morty Mealy-mouth from Disarm All Taxpayers. “All three!” chorused the others to the DATrep.

Busily, they began planning how they’d get their Media squads started on these brave, new projects.)

As Penny scribbled, a misdirected semi, carrying Evaluators’ Holiday, oops, *Winterday*, presents from the National Society of Estate Appraisers, had gotten lost. The driver started unloading old Rolls-Royces at Willard’s loading dock. Suddenly, a sleek Evaluator appeared and directed the truck driver to his personal loading dock.

“His personal loading dock!” Penny Bugler exclaimed when Willard told her what happened. “Imagine! His very own loading dock!”

“Evaluators change with administrations.” Penny had explained. “During DemoCrat administrations, RepubliCrat estates are worth slightly less and vice-versa.

Though the evaluators themselves changed when the two parties alternated in power, they looked interchangeable. They were smiling, easy men. Their expensive suits had the right width of lapel even before magazine models. They had overseas homes, country estates, and Georgetown townhouses. Evaluators all ate free lunches in the Biggest Dining Room, on the rare occasions they didn’t dine in their private suites. They had limousines even

bigger than the ones supplied to them by the Government. Penny always made herself look pretty to Evaluators. Willard envied them as much as he dreamed of being one.

They lunched across from each other, Penny and Willard, in the early Spring. It was intoxicating in Washington. The cherry trees blossomed early. Their fragrance, unsullied by hordes of smelly Field Beasts, wafted gently into the outdoor summer dining room provided as a morale-booster for Smithsonian employees. They were next to a crystal fountain, the first art treasure Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering had shipped to his home from occupied Paris. Somehow, an Evaluator had gotten it. To eliminate two generations of his family's estate tax, he donated it to the Single Digit dining room, the one in which Penny and Willard still ate, reserved for Government Service employees with single digit G. S. numbers. Thirty feet tall, it was the largest piece of crystal in the world, yet Willard was completely unaware of it, and Penny, whose awareness of value was legendary among the Single Digiteers, was only dimly aware of its worth.

Penny knew Willard couldn't take his eyes off of her.

"Is it love?" she kept asking herself. She'd never before felt an emotion for something that couldn't be bought or sold and didn't quite know what was going on in her mind.

"You might be able to go to Las Vegas, too!" she said, breaking a silence that had grown almost unbearable. "I think I'm going."

“I thought you were sure.”

“Well, I did get to go to Hawaii, last summer. Everybody knows that if you got to go to Hawaii, then you get to go to Las Vegas.”

“That lets me out, doesn’t it?”

“Maybe not. Remember that transit you found, last fall?”

“That old thing. Sure.”

“The timing is finally right. It might be your ticket to Las Vegas.”

“How?”

“Well, we’ve been getting some flak from the Big Office. You know, Dr. Brownose, Himself. It seems that Dr. Brownose is upset. He hasn’t been on Network Television since Easter, you know, when we do the yearly ‘Easter Eggs, The Enduring Superstition’ Internetwork Transworld program with some FedTube twit from Public Broadcasting. You know, the one who says ‘There is no God but NoGod, and Science is His prophet’ and some bubblehead nods wisely when we rerun his spot encouraging donations?”

Penny continued. “Well, that’s been just *weeks*, now, and Dr. Brownose wants to be on TV with something big. Soon. He was thought to be heard to be hinting that it might be time for something new. Not exactly really new. We don’t want to startle the field beasts. But, it *is* budget time. He is believed to feel that

since the last ten or fifteen Network Appearances have been repeats of his famous ‘*Duty To Posterity*’ speech, he may be starting to bore the brighter Field Beasts.”

“Think that transit’s it? Our ticket to Las Vegas?” Willard wondered.

“Sure. That transit is wrong. Or, we can make it *look* as if it *may* be wrong, which is the same thing. Then, we release a story: ‘Smithsonian Institute Discovers that Mason-Dixon Line Is Wrong —Civil War Not Necessary!’ anything to get it Fed-tubed into the tiny brains of the field beasts.”

Willard stared at her, dumbfounded. “Will that work?”

“Sure. Taxpayers have an endless capacity for believing things, a simple-minded credulity that must be continually strained to keep them busy guessing. Why the best Government PR people are hired from Inquirer-type papers. You know, ‘*Abandoned baby kept alive in heating duct by lactating rats!*’ Then, we let them rest easy, tell them that the Smithsonian will rectify the situation. They might even mention your name — ‘Bright Young Man discovers, etc., etc.,’ What do you think?”

“Well, I don’t know.”

“Don’t know! Man, a network mention is automatically a two digit jump in your GS number! Two closer to being a Double Digiteer!” Penny smiled at him as if seeing for the first time that Willard might have possibilities.

“I could check it out. I have this relative, who works for the government....”

“Don’t we all?” Penny interrupted, with a light laugh.

“But this one’s in the National Testing Lab, you know, where they’re always measuring all kinds of really important stuff. It was my cousin who figured out how far it is, within less than a plus or minus of two hundred million miles, to a moon that it is possible Pluto has.”

“Wow!” said Penny, reverently. “What beautifully sublime uselessness! I wish I could have thought of that! In the interests of Science, of course. What else has he done?”

“He was the man who figured out how big the average feather is,” Willard replied, as admiringly as if Dr. Hooker had invented penicillin.

“Let’s take the afternoon off, and go see him,” Penny suggested.

“How will I get the afternoon off?”

“Easy. I’ll just go and tell your boss that there’s a chance we can get his department on Network television. I’ll tell him that you have to go with me because you have a relative who’s important to the story. That way, he won’t be jealous of you. He knows a well-placed relative is worth ten thousand original ideas. Even more importantly, he knows that you can’t possibly be blamed for

having a relative, not like you could be viciously criticized for thinking up an original idea.”

“I know *that* much,” Willard said ruefully, remembering all the sarcastic names he’d been called when he suggested putting a wastebasket under the water cooler so people could put their used paper cups there, rather than drop them on the unsightly pile that appeared daily under the cooler.

“Leave that mess alone! Don’t you realize that every time a higher-up comes through and sees that pile of cups, they’ll take my request for additional janitorial personnel more seriously?” Willard’s enraged boss had screamed after his suggestion. “What do you want to do, kill my chances for promotion?”

“No sir,” Willard repeated incessantly, finally placating his boss by admitting that his offer to help had been motivated by sheer ignorance.

“I’ll never do anything like that, again, Dr. Wackoff.” He had said, repeatedly. “Really, *I just didn’t know.*”

His boss had let him off with a verbal reprimand and was pleased that Willard had responded so quickly to training. “That boy might go places in the Government.” Dr. Wackoff said admiringly to himself when Willard had finally kowtowed himself out of the office. “He has neither spine nor character.”

“I’m glad you do know *that* much,” Penny replied, interrupting Willard’s unpleasant memory. “It’s sure taken you

long enough to understand that when you work for the Government, you give up all ideas. The only ideas we want are the ones that can get money from those filthy Field Beasts without actually doing anything. That's the kind of stuff that I can write Sunday Supplement articles about. That's the kind of thing that's always big on Network TV. That's what Congress wants. Why, Willard, do you know what happens to GovEmps who won't stop thinking?"

"What?" he asked, astonished that such people could exist.

"Why, they're transferred to Tourist Information, where they have to actually deal with whole gangs of slimy taxpayers. They always ask 'How much do you get paid?', or, 'How big will your pension be?', and 'Do you think you're *worth* it?' Nobody ever lasts long, there. They quit and go to work in gas stations. Where'd you think gas station attendants come from, anyway?"

That afternoon, Willard and Penny were limousined in Dr. Wackoff's giant Mercedes to the office of Willard's cousin, Dr. Harold Hooker.

"How much do you want this transit to be off?" he asked brusquely when they finished their story.

"Are you sure it's off?" Willard asked.

"Of course it's off. Everything's off. That's why the National Testing Lab is here. We make sure that people think things are only off by manageable amounts. If things are thought to be too

far off, no one will have faith in our systems and they'll get depressed. They'll just lie around the house all day, plaintively asking anyone who'll listen 'What's the point?' And, if things seem to be too perfect, people ask the same question, 'What's the point?' Either way, they get depressed. Depressed people don't work and pay taxes. That can hurt all of us."

Penny and Willard nodded; Penny, because she'd always known that, and Willard, because he finally understood.

"So," continued Dr. Hooker, "how far off do you want this transit to be?"

"Maybe we should make it so that the West end of the Mason-Dixon Line would be a hundred yards off," Willard suggested.

"That's not mysterious enough," Penny replied. "It's too easy for people to visualize in their minds, so they won't think it's important. Make it nine hundred yards off. That way, it's still in a familiar frame of reference, football fields, but it's slightly mysterious at the same time."

"Say, you know what you're doing," said Dr. Hooker, with what he thought was an attractive leer. "But, I can't do this for nothing, you know. I want a flintlock rifle."

"Where would we get a flintlock rifle?" asked a startled Willard.

"Storage." chorused Dr. Hooker and Penny, both giving Willard a pitying glance.

“I couldn’t do that. It wouldn’t be right,” said Willard, looking back and forth to each of them and seeing absolutely no support in either set of suddenly hard eyes.

“It wouldn’t be right if I had to go to Las Vegas with anyone but you,” said Penny, “but....”

Early the next morning, Dr. Hooker received his rifle, a fine, silver-mounted flintlock, with “TRUST IN ME” engraved on the barrel. That afternoon, Willard received official certification that the Dixon Transit was off by a small fraction of a degree.

“What we’ve done,” said Penny, as they went to their appointment with Dr. Brownose, himself, the following afternoon, “is to have created something that appears to have the capacity to be made to look important by seemingly more knowledgeable people.”

“Huh?” said Willard, as the thick, mahogany door, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory, whooshed open across the two-inch thick oriental carpet, hand-knotted especially to fit Dr. Brownose’s mammoth hexagonal receiving suite. They sank to their ankles in silken splendor as they crossed to the silver chairs in front of Dr. Brownose’s golden desk.

“So, this is Young Flotsom.” he said, looking up from the expensive briefing notebook Penny had prepared for him, entitled “*The Parameters of the Dixon Transit Discovery*”. A picture of Willard was included in another thick portfolio, along with a short biography. One section of that portfolio, from Smithsonian

Security, chronicled the number of times Willard and Penny had met, along with several other facets of their lives they'd be surprised to know that anyone cared enough to find out about.

The meeting was over in a twinkling. Before they knew it, they found themselves back out in the hallway, wondering what had happened. They could remember a few phrases of their meeting with Dr. Brownose, but nothing of any substance. Dr. Brownose's final words still echoed in Willard's ears. "You are to be congratulated, young Flotsom, this is a real find!"

That night, in the luxurious bar atop the penthouse of Penny's fashionable building, she and Willard watched the news together. An incredibly over-dressed TV interviewer was wearing the clothes about to be made popular by the New York clothing Barons in their endless war against their accomplishments of the year before, interviewed Dr. Brownose, himself. They were in the shadow of a full-size replica of the Graf Hindenburg. Dr. Brownose had generously, though temporarily, transferred it to a public viewing area from his private office display that very afternoon. After three tries, the CNN/FedTube flunky was able to go through the entire interview without giggling.

"If we could use real dummies, we wouldn't have to worry about some of these people snickering." Dr. Brownose himself complained to Penny, the morning after the interview.

“Sometimes, live people just don’t understand how important it is to make molehills into mountains.”

In the course of the interview, hundreds of millions of bored viewers were told a great many things on several levels of understanding. They were told on a verbal level that Dr. Brownose, himself, would make doubly sure that the “Great Smithsonian would go to the end of the earth to rectify this horrid mistake.” They were informed that “as far as I know, Mason and Dixon weren’t involved in any *intentional* fraud”, and, that soon, “things will be put right.”

Three hundred million people nodded wisely, understanding, as they were meant to, on a deep, subconscious level, that the Government was their only friend, the only power on earth that really cared. Dumber tubers were relieved to know that their Government had not tried to insult them with some kind of a ‘cover-up’ of this dire threat to the integrity of a nation. They were made to feel grateful that the Government, in the person of the great scholar, Dr. Brownose, himself, was committed to actually doing something real about a problem that must have been important, otherwise, why else would it be on network TV?

From their small farm, just north of the Mason-Dixon line in the Southwestern corner of Pennsylvania, the MacAbees watched Dr. Brownose on their flickering TV.

“How’d that guy’s nose get so brown, Pa?” asked Young Matt.

“Tweren’t by holdin’ it to no grindstone.” his father answered, and smiled, remembering his Army days.

“That survey business gonna mean anythin’ to us, Pa?” asked Judith.

“Nah. Worst it could do is mean that we was gonna pay taxes in West Virginia, ‘stead of Pennsylvania, that’s all.”

Five months later, the surveying crew reached the MacAbee Farm. Penny and Willard saw it all from the giant screen TV in a Las Vegas bar, an oasis of darkness in the bright, noisy casino.

“Everybody got in on the act,” grumbled a bitter Willard, “Everybody but us.”

“It was such a good idea, though,” Penny said, to console him. “The Army Corps of Engineers did the ground survey, while NASA got to do the satellite confirmation. Air Force Recon planes cross-checked. The Bureau of Mines sent out teams of Mineral Explorers to search for overlooked mineral deposits. Department of Agriculture officials went along to check for crop growth and plant disease. EPA observers tested for air pollution from hillbilly’s whiskey stills that the accompanying BATF Search Teams were sent along to find. All pretending to be useful.”

“Just think, Willard, all those thousands of people would have had to spend a hot, sweaty August in Washington if it weren’t for your idea.”

“Didn’t do us any good. Here we are, stuck in Las Vegas, while all the important people are out there, with those hillbillies. Why I’ll bet you....”

“Look!” interrupted Penny, pointing to the immense TV screen, “See, there, behind the big busses with the telescopes on top, they must be the Treasury Agents looking for moonshine stills, see, right behind them, there are the big Staff Field Greyhounds with ten-wheel drive, carrying Dr. Brownose, himself, and the Official Smithsonian Observers Team.”

Willard was impressed, in spite of being upset about not being invited to accompany Dr. Brownose and his platoon of Young Favorites. “Look,” he said, as the FedTube helicopter flew higher, rising above the other FedTube helicopters, broadcasting a panoramic view of the entire mile-long procession onto TV screens all over the continent, “who are those two guys, all by themselves, walking along in front?”

Penny peered closely. “Why,” she said, as soon as she was able to focus on the tiny figures, “they must be the surveyors.”

They watched dozens of tandem bulldozers as they cleared and smoothed a hundred yard swath through the wilderness for the scores of huge Staff Field Greyhound Buses. Slowly, the mighty tandem double-dozers began to wheel, and the gleaming Greyhounds circled for the night.

They were near the End of the Line, so it was the last campsite. Since it was only a short shuttle from Washington,

many Department Heads took the opportunity to fly out in their huge, double-prop office helicopters. On the ground, they had publicity pictures taken wearing hardhats, poring over maps and charts, pointing out things to awed Photo-Op Underlings, especially hired and extraordinarily well paid for their slack-jawed, blank-eyed, cretinous ability to make any supervisor photograph well.

Network cameramen were under a real strain to get footage of all the important people who were there. The clouds of buzzing helicopters told them they'd be filming for hours.

When Ketchem Squeezum showed up, ostensibly to inspect rusty mailbox latches that had been scratching, and possibly infected with tetanus, the fingers of letter carriers, he was wearing a gleaming, stainless steel hard hat. Immediately, dozens of top administrative assistants were helicoptered back to Washington, so that *their* bosses could have *their* publicity pictures taken in shiny, stainless steel hardhats, too. After they'd returned, and had their bosses re-powdered, reprimped, and re-photographed, Ketchem showed up for more pictures, wearing not only his shiny stainless steel hard hat, but also, a pair of burnished, stainless-steel snake-proof leggings.

“That Ketchem Squeezum!” everyone chorused. “He’s won another one!”

The next morning, after breakfast, there were more publicity shots for Department Heads and a coffee break. More pictures

followed, then, a light lunch. After the short, postprandial nap period, the huge expedition got underway, traveling the last half-mile of the Mason-Dixon-Smithsonian Line, as it was now officially known.

**U. S. D. A attacks the last family-farmers. Meeting makers. MacAbees move to town. Get Gummit jobs. Babeter. First, one MacAbee killed by Gummit. Dr. Shekel Stupor gets another one.**

Judith was the first MacAbee to see them coming. “Pa! Pa!” she shrieked in terror, as the huge line of bulldozers and field Greyhounds came into view, “It’s the Rooshians! It’s the Rooshians! We’s being ‘vaded! We’s bein’ ‘vaded!”

“Nah. Looks more like pipple from Gummit.” Mattathias said, catching sight of a small American flag on one of the Department of Indian Affairs scout Jeeps.

Matt, Judith, Young Matt, and the two girls, Becky and Lucy, came out and stood in a small, nervous circle in front of the house.

“This is it! This is it! It’s the End of The Line!” called someone from a megaphone mounted somewhere in the buzzing cloud of Escort Helicopters.

From his throne-like swivel chair, spot-welded securely behind the field desk bolted atop the mirrored, nickel-plated Flagbus of the Smithsonian Field Greyhound Fleet, Dr. Brownose saw the MacAbee family standing in front of their pitiful hovel. Still the Official Leader of the Expedition, despite Ketchem Squeezum’s shiny leggings, Dr. Brownose telephoned his driver to pull over near the MacAbees. His sure, sound instincts could

sense a Network-Worthy Photo-Op in microseconds. The huge line of Field Greyhounds from all the other Departments slammed to a stop, raising a cloud of dust that obscured the farmhouse.

When the dust blew away, FedTube flunkies appeared, as if by magic, to record this epic meeting of lowly taxpayer and lordly bureaucrat. The CNN/NBS/MSNBC divisions forming the FedTube Internetwork Evening News Programs would indelibly inscribe the conversation between Dr. Brownose and whatever MacAbee had the gall to actually converse with such obvious majesty on the minds of the viewing tubers, altering their perception of reality for all time, in a small, but hopefully significant way.

“Sir!” boomed Dr. Brownose, himself, from his swiveling, leather Port-a-Throne, as if he were doing Mattathias and the rest of the MacAbees a great favor, “I am Dr. Brownose, serving you, and the great American people, to the best of my ability as head of our Great Smithsonian Institution! It is our organization which has discovered the error in the Mason-Dixon Line, and we have spared no expense in rectifying that mistake!”

His words were temporarily drowned out in the roars of thunderous applause that erupted spontaneously from alert Smithsonian employees, led by his Young Favorites and augmented to deafening intensity by speakers broadcasting canned cheers and applause from a pre-war Notre Dame football game.

“As you may well know,” he continued megaphoning down to an awed Junior, when the ear-splitting applause finally dropped below the level that made the cats’ ears bleed and goaded the maddened mule into kicking out a section of barn wall, through which it and three squealing pigs frantically raced for the woods, never to be seen again, “our concern for truth, for justice, for rectification, has forced us to forsake our comfortable homes and offices, and come out here, in this Godforsaken wilderness, so that you, the most remote and isolated citizens of this Great Country, The United States of America, would know that *we* care about *you!*”

More thundering applause. (“Perfect!” thought a CNN/NBC/MSNBC/FedTube cameraman as he zoomed in on the wide-eyed, astonished MacAbees. “They look just as dumb as photo-op underlings! I wonder if they are?”)

“We!” Dr. Brownose continued, rising from the Port-A-Throne and striding around the top of his Flagbus, spreading his arms to encompass the vast fleet of Departmental Field Greyhounds, the swarms of helicopters, and squads of Scout jeeps, “We! We care about you! As a result of our concern for your right to live in a country whose Government is concerned with total truth, we have discovered that you, and your family, do not live in Pennsylvania.

“No, you don’t. Our survey has determined that you actually live in West Virginia. You actually live on the South side of the Mason-Dixon Smithsonian Line. All this time, you thought you

lived on the North side, in Pennsylvania. Now, what do you think of that?”

A dozen network cameramen, each accompanied by a licensed Dept. of Communications camera-pointer, closed in, focusing on Old Matt, as he searched his mind for something to say, something which would make him appear to be something more than a rustic idiot in the eyes of a nation carefully trained to equate glibness with intelligence. Sweat began to bead on his forehead, and his left eyelid twitched once or twice.

“Well, Sir!” megaphoned the overpowering Dr. Brownose from the bus stop, impatiently stamping his vellum field boots, “Surely our concern for truth and accuracy in all things must mean something to you?”

“Well,” answered Mattathias, slowly, “I guess that it does mean something that’s pretty important to us, bein’ farmers an’ all.”

“And what’s that, my good man?” megaphoned Dr. Brownose as proudly as if he’d taught a pig to talk.

“It means we won’t have to put up with no more Pennsylvania winters.” Old Matt answered, triumphant at having thought of something clever to say.

Back in Las Vegas, Willard groaned so loudly the other patrons in the bar thought he’d suddenly discovered he was bankrupt. “All that work! My brilliant idea! Just so some hillbilly

can make a dumb joke. Why did we ever bother, and we weren't even asked to go along?"

"We should have realized. We couldn't very well be asked to go along, because someone who didn't know the rules might have asked: 'Who thought of this, anyway?', and you might have taken network television time away from Dr. Brownose or one of the other administrators. They want to remind us, and everyone else who knows, that ideas don't count. If they did, none of those people could."

They spent the next day gambling. "I'm not going to any of those silly meetings," Penny announced when they met at breakfast.

"But, there's just one meeting scheduled for today, and it's only fifteen minutes long." Willard protested. "I don't see why we can't go to that?"

"If we go, people will think we've nothing better to do. Besides, fifteen minutes is just too long to listen to digests of three Doctoral Dissertations on Public Administration. If they'd make the meetings shorter, more people might go. As it is, the only ones there are from the provinces. They don't understand that the real reason for conventions is simply to see who's there. I'm going gambling. You'd better come, too. What do you think per diem pay is for, anyway?"

“I was going to keep mine and buy a new car when we got back. We get over five hundred dollars in per diem pay, *every* day, plus our salary, and the office pays for the room and meals.”

“But, you can’t keep it. You have to gamble with it. They’re watching, you know.” she said, gesturing toward the bright, one-way mirrors above the lobby. “If we don’t gamble, we won’t get invited back again.”

“Why not?”

“You ninny. The people who decide where Government meetings are held, the Meeting-Makers, get kickbacks from the locals. Here, in Las Vegas, they get a percentage of the money we spend gambling. Why Meeting-Makers rank almost as highly as Evaluators. Meeting-Makers have to split with Dr. Brownose, or whomever is head of the vacationeering, I mean, conventioneering bureau, and they get to keep the rest.”

“I never knew that.”

“Of course not, you aren’t in Public Information Services, Smithsonian. If you’d worked in PISS as long as I have, you’d see the connections. If you don’t gamble, then the locals can’t pay as much to have us back, and they’ll tell the Meeting-Makers, and Dr. Brownose will only be able to buy Bentleys for his kids at the Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration instead of Rolls-Royces when they graduate. Dr. Brownose, himself, will be so mad at the thought of one of his employees doing that to one of

his own children that anyone who doesn't gamble all their per diem pay away will be transferred into tour-guide work."

"Ugh! Let's go gamble! Anything's better than having to actually talk directly to a lot of smelly Field Beasts."

The MacAbee farm was destroyed. Dr. Brownose needed a flat place for a group picture of the thousands of important people involved in the survey, and the MacAbee house had to be moved. The MacAbee barn, the MacAbee animals that hadn't run off, the MacAbee tractor, the MacAbees themselves, still inside the house, were bulldozed into a gully a few hundred yards away.

Their misery was compounded when unseasonable rains came a few days later. The few, scraggly plants that had miraculously survived the fleets of Staff Greyhounds and double-dozers were washed away, along with the thin layer of topsoil. Their farm was nothing more than a geologist's delight of plow-breaking rock.

Willard, meanwhile, was promoted to G-S 9, nearly to the coveted Double Digits, and an Evaluator asked him to Concorde over to his Irish Castle for lunch. Things were looking good, in Washington.

"We can't farm this land no more," Mattathias said, looking at the rocky, ruined fields. "The Gummit's done wrecked it."

"Could we ask the Department of Agriculture for help, Pa?" suggested Young Matt.

“Wouldn’t do no good. You remember Jimmy Pike, who owned the old Miller Place? He talked to one of those Dept. of Agriculture people once. The fellow told him: ‘You could grow a lot of apples here, Mr. Pike, a *lot* of apples.’ The Gummit Man gave Jimmy a lot of free books. That man had more free books than you ever saw, on how to plant apple trees, how to take care of them, what kind to plant, why, pretty soon, Jimmy knowed just about everythin’ there was to know about apples. Alla time, this Gummit Man kept comin’ back. Ever’ time, he was sayin’ to Jimmy: ‘You sure ought to plant some apples, Mr. Pike. There sure is a lot of money in apples!’”

The rest of the family settled down on the muddy rocks to hear the rest of Matt’s story.

“Since the Gummit Man spent so much time talkin’ to him, ‘n he used to come ‘round one or two times a week, Jimmy figured that the man must know what he was talkin’ about. Jimmy even figured that the man actually cared about him. Well, pretty soon, Jimmy was convinced. He took that nice, flat bottom land, where the dirt was black as coal and soft as butter, and he plowed it under. Had to get a mortgage on the farm to be able to afford the apple trees.

“Had to borrow big from the bank. ‘Course, the Gummit Man helped him, told him what papers to sign and everything. Once he’d planted all those trees, he couldn’t grow nothin’ else down there in that rich bottom land, so while the trees were growin’ he

had to get a job in Wierton, just to make enough money to live on. Darn near killed him, drivin' back and forth to the glass plant, but the Gummit Man said it'd be best in the long run, that he'd make it all back, 'cause 'there was a lot of money in apples.'"

"Did he raise a lot of apples, Pa?" asked Young Matt.

"He sure did. After twelve years of workin' in Wierton, and gettin' run into three times drivin' back and forth, and gettin' somethin' wrong with his lungs, why those trees just started puttin' out so many apples you couldn't even begin to count 'em."

"Did he get rich, Pa?" asked Lucy, his youngest.

"Well, as soon as he saw them apples, he borrowed more money from the bank, 'cause he had to buy a big sprayer and a lot of spray, which cost him a lot, and he needed a new tractor to pull the new sprayer, and he had to get another mortgage. That fall, he started pickin' apples."

"Did he make a lot of money, Pa?" asked Lucy.

"Well, as soon as he'd got all the apples picked and in the big storage shed he'd had to build, packed in all the boxes he'd had to buy, he went to talk to the Gummit Man, the one who'd convinced him to grow apples. He weren't there. He'd been promoted to be an assistant administrator to the administrative assistant of the administrator. Jimmy finally found him, in some big office in the Weirton Federal Building, and Jimmy says: 'I finally got my

apples. I've got the best apples and the biggest orchard for miles around. What do I do next? How do I sell them?'

'I really wouldn't know. My job was just to get people to plant apple trees.'

'Is there anybody who can tell me how to sell 'em?' Jimmy asked, and he was desperate by then.

'There used to be, but he quit. Said there was too many apples. Now, he works for me, in the Plant-a-Pear Program. He's my administrative assistant.'

As the MacAbee family thought of the back-breaking labor, of the money, of all the energy wasted, they shook their heads, sadly, realizing for the first time how viciously cruel the Gummit couldn't help but be. There were no doubts that it would be at best useless, and most likely suicidal, to ask the Gummit for help.

"There's more to the story," said Judith. "I heard it from Jimmy's widow. The former agent was so good at his job, why, there's overgrown orchards all over this county, that they sent him to Washington. Made him a big shot, you know, like those guys in the shiny hats with all the make-up gettin' their pictures took when they re-surveyed the line. Well, no sooner did he get to Washington than he had enough money to buy himself a little vacation spot, out in the country. The bigshot's brother-in-law was a Federal Bank Inspector who worked around here. He got the bank to foreclose on Jimmy's farm. The Gummit Man's got a real nice vacation place there.

“Jimmy, I’ll never forget the look on his face, lyin’ there in that coffin. He’d hung hisself from a barn beam with baling wire when he heard he was gonna lose the place.”

“Pa,” said Young Matt, “if he knew he was gonna die, why didn’t he take a few of em with him? Why, if he’d a done that, if everybody’d do that, then they wouldn’t be able to push us around like they do.”

“Can’t kill people son. The Bible says so.”

“At school, the Gummit teaches that the Bible ain’t real.”

“But, they don’t know any better. That’s why they do the kind of work they do.”

“Are they all bad, Pa?” asked Becky.

“No, I don’t suppose they are.”

“Then, why don’t the good ones run out the bad ones?” she asked, not realizing what a difficult question it was.

“I don’t know.” her father answered, after some thought. “Maybe there aren’t enough good ones to make things better.”

“Pa” interrupted Judith, “what are we gonna do? You, me, and the kids? We can’t stay here.” she added sadly, staring around the washed-out farm.

“We’ll have to go to Weirton, maybe get a job at the glass plant,” Matt answered. “The Lord will find a way.”

“Why couldn’t He a found a way to keep us here?” asked a bitter Young Matt.

“If it’s His will that we go to town, then that’s where we got to go. We’ll do it cheerful, too.”

“Maybe you’ll be cheerful, but not me.” Young Mat replied, more upset than he dared to let himself know that he wouldn’t grow up to take his rightful place on the family farm.

WELCOME TO WILD,  
WONDERFUL WEIRTON  
WEST VIRGINIA!!!

read the faded sign that stretched across the Main Street between the new Weirton Federal Building and the new State Office Building.

Judith found an apartment in the growing slum in the newly completed Urban Renewal project, above a closed storeroom in what had recently been a thriving business district.

Matt was lucky to find a janitorial job in the nearby glass plant. Young Matt managed to get a “Gummit” job, as a pad holder for a census taker. “I ain’t real proud of workin’ for the Gummit.” he told his family, “But since we lost the farm, I guess I don’t have much choice.”

They were surprised to find how many people they knew in Weirton. “I always wondered where it was all our neighbors disappeared to,” Matt said one night. “Why, they’re all here, in Weirton. Ain’t that a coincidence?”

Young Matt, whose brief exposure to Government Service was already introducing him to things so far beyond his father's understanding that he found it increasingly difficult to relate to him, merely nodded. He could think of no way to tell his father of the many, many Federal Programs in the Dept. of Agriculture that were expressly designed to destroy the farms of families, families themselves, and small businesses, the last bastions of economically independent family units.

"Yeah, Pa, it sure is a coincidence." Young Matt would respond with increasing sarcasm when Mattathias would marvel about how many people they'd known from the hills who were living in the spreading blight of Urban Renewal in downtown Weirton.

Matt met a man at the glass plant, a young man, about Lucy's age. He invited Fred to go fishing with the MacAbees, along the banks of the Ohio. They spent the weekends with lines out in the river, catching catfish. As Matt planned, Fred and Lucy hit it off. "Right well, don't ya think?" he asked Judith as the two young ones hopped in Fred's new four-wheel drive pick-up to go to town for supplies.

They hit it off so well that they were married within a month. Lucy owed their rapid marriage to the fact that she followed her mother's advice. "Don't let 'em lay a hand on you." Judith had told her. "Nobody buys a cow when milk is cheap." The advice, tried and trite, but always true, served Lucy in good stead, despite the

movie Fred took her to one night that, he had been assured by the boys in the glass plant, would “turn on a rock.”

Two months after she and Fred had moved into a mobile home on the outskirts of Wheeling, a month after she'd become pregnant, there was an accident at the glass plant. Fred and Matt were standing near the water fountain, getting salt tablets. Without warning, a huge pour of molten glass spilled from a mishandled kettle. A glowing drop of it, no bigger than a walnut, buried itself in Fred's neck as he and Old Matt talked. He was dead within minutes.

“Damned OSHA!” Mattathias heard the crane operator who'd spilled the glass say to him as he held the dying Fred in his arms, on the dirty floor of the glass plant. “OSHA makes me wear these damned safety glasses. Glasses get steamed up, real quick, sometimes, and I can't see what's going on. I tried to tell that Government Man, but he wouldn't listen. He made me wear 'em. Said he'd put me in jail if I willfully refused to follow Government Directives. Told me that I might lose an eye if I didn't wear safety glasses. ‘Hell, Mister’, I said, ‘I'd rather lose an eye than end up spillin' molten glass on somebody below, all because my glasses get steamed up’. He said he didn't care what I'd rather do, that I had to wear these safety glasses 'cause that was the law. I'm sorry, Matt, I'm real sorry, but there was nothin' I could do.”

Matt barely heard him, as he slowly rocked his dying son-in-law back and forth in his lap. The only sound he heard was the

weeping he knew would shatter him when he heard it coming from poor Lucy.

After the funeral, just after Lucy found that she was pregnant, she applied for the company insurance due her.

Matt had gone through a long and barely comprehensible conference with the benefits officer at the glass plant, along with the union representative. Her husband, it seemed, had not worked long enough to be eligible for a pension, and he'd forgotten, it appeared, to sign his hospitalization forms, so Lucy would receive no benefits of any kind.

"It ain't the company's fault." Matt had reported, unaware that after he'd left the conference that the union representative and the company benefits officer had smiled at each other, and filed papers with themselves as beneficiaries of the automatic hundred thousand dollar policy, with double indemnity in case of accident, that covered every worker in the plant, the plan recently mandated by Senator Mendel Meddle to ". . . provide fairness for America's working people."

"They said that Fred just hadn't been there long enough. They said he had to have six years in to be covered, and there was just five years, ten months on his employment record."

"But, Pa, he always paid his premiums. He told me so."

"I know he did. They said it was a real shame. See, they have to have six years work in, and, it has to be uninterrupted. They

said that they could maybe waive the two months he was short, but he was laid off, once, about four years ago, for a month, they put a new furnace in, laid everybody off, like they do every five years when they replace furnaces. The Union said it was too bad, but that's the way things are. That's all there is to it."

"Can we get a lawyer and fight it, Pa?" a grieving Lucy asked, wondering how she'd ever support the baby she was going to have.

"They said, at the meeting, that I could get a lawyer, but that it wouldn't do any good, and the front office bigshots'd probably fire me, fer makin' a stink. They'd probably fire all Fred's relatives, too, they said. But, they both agreed, we *could* get a lawyer and fight it if we wanted."

"What am I gonna do, Pa?"

"I guess you'll have to get welfare. You can't get a job if you're pregnant. It wouldn't be fair to someone to get a job and then have to leave, after they've trained you, and all."

"But, Pa, I hate to be beholden to anybody. I don't want to take money from anybody, not without workin' for it."

"The welfare people don't seem to mind," Judith told her. "Why, on TV all they ever talk about is tellin' people to get their welfare rights. What's right 'bout wantin' more people on welfare? Wonder why they think that way? You'd think they'd want to do right. You'll have to give up your new mobile home and move back in with us."

“Yes, you will,” replied Young Matt. “Once they get you on welfare, they’ll *never* let you off. Makes ‘em feel good, knowin’ that you’ve got to grovel before them. But, what else can you do? Dad and I don’t make enough to support us, and a baby, too. We sure can’t go gather some extra eggs or jacklight a deer.”

Lucy gave up the mobile home she’d been so proud of, and moved back in with her family.

The sudden move to a cash economy had been traumatic. Young Matt, who’d never lacked for food in the country, became more and more depressed. He could no longer rely on his ability to provide for himself. He was suddenly locked into cash. With other young men from the hills, Young Matt began to drink.

He became a part of the ‘Gang’, other young men like himself, whom a bar owner, Eddie Endlin, would frequently cajole into working for him, remodeling the extensive slum real estate he purchased through Weirton’s Urban Redevelopment Program. For a back-breaking weekend, toting huge loads of discarded plaster through endless clouds of dust, Young Matt and his friends might receive a frosty six-pack. He and the other laborers would drink it with gusto, reveling in their new comradeship, while friendly Eddie Endlin made arrangements for them to help him the following weekend, and maybe a few evenings, in between.

A few weeks after Matt brought home the bad news, Lucy went down to the Welfare office to apply for benefits. The next

day, two women called at the tiny MacAbee apartment. As they climbed the narrow staircase, the older woman warned the younger, “Now, remember, Joyce, let me do the talking. I want you to see how we do this. This is a pregnant widow we’re talking to, and they’re the hardest ones to convince. Sometimes, they put up a lot of resistance. That’s why Dr. Wursavolk sent me here. He said it was absolutely imperative that we develop the Conversational Pattern to convince pregnant widows to abort. Dr. Wursavolk’s computer expert, Dr. Beancount, says that we could funnel an extra six billion a year into The Department’s salaries and benefits if we could just get through to pregnant widows. So many of the pitiful creatures still harbor ‘feelings,’ and are reluctant to terminate the remaining vestiges of their brutish husbands. And, if they won’t abort, their dirty little bastards will collect SSI income out of OUR budget!”

“That’s awful!” said astonished, impressionable Joyce Kilmoore, deeply honored at the rare opportunity to accompany the famed Miriam Babeter on an actual client interview. “I mean, well, it’s so, well, it’s so, so *wonderful* to be here, with you, and all.” Joyce gushed mindlessly as Miriam rang the doorbell.

“Be quiet, Joyce,” Miriam said, as she heard tired footsteps approaching the door. “I understand that there’s a young widow here, about to have a baby,” Miriam announced, in her best deal-firmly-with-the-serfs tone as she roughly shoved her way into the apartment.

“Who, uh, who are you?” asked a hesitant Judith.

“Excuse me for not introducing myself,” Miriam responded, in a voice that said she neither needed nor wanted any excuse whatsoever. “I am Dr. Miriam Babeter, from the Department of Health In Human Services. I have personally come here, to Weirton, to your apartment, to personally interview the young lady,” she consulted her form, “Lucy MacAbee, yes, that’s her maiden name. Lucy MacAbee.”

“Here I am,” said Lucy, coming in to sit on the broad arm of the old chair they’d bought at the Salvation Army.

“We have come to tell you about the choices you, as a young person have, regarding the ‘growth’. I’ve come by to talk to you *privately*.” Dr. Miriam Babeter said, looking pointedly at Judith. Dr. Babeter knew that Health In Human Services never wanted parents present because she had written the manual.

It took Judith a few moments to realize that Dr. Babeter wanted her to leave, confirming both Miriam’s and Joyce’s opinion that any grandchildren a woman so dull might have were just not worth the bother. Few children, if any, were, both believed, not just as a matter of choice, but as a condition of employment. Joyce, a former mother and housewife, and gotten into Government work through the Spunky Chunkies after her youngest child had “dirtied one too many diapers”, as she had told Oprah in an outraged tone that guaranteed her a Health In Human Services job.

“You can remove the ‘growth’.” Dr. Babeter said after Judith finally left.

“Growth?” Lucy asked, genuinely puzzled.

“Yes. The ‘growth’. Inside you. You may have it excised. Taken out.” Miriam added, by way of explanation.

“I don’t have no ‘growth’.” the naive Lucy protested.

Miriam and Joyce shook their heads with professional sadness at Lucy’s ignorance.

“You *are* pregnant, aren’t you?” asked Miriam, after it became obvious that Lucy simply could not understand what they meant. She hated to use words like ‘pregnant’, but sometimes they were necessary, public education being so inefficient, really, at teaching the kind of vocabulary of which Health In Human Services approved. “But soon,” Miriam thought to herself, “after we’ve gotten enough of them watching Sesame Street, they’ll be a lot less difficult to get through to.”

“I sure am. I’m due in just four months.” Lucy answered, proudly.

“Well, you know that you don’t really have to have the baby, don’t you, Lucy?” asked Miriam.

“You mean, give it up for adoption?”

“No, no, why go that far?” asked Miriam, who knew how much Health In Human Services frowned upon that which would not

profit it. “The Supreme Court says that you really don’t have to have a baby at all.”

“The baby sure won’t go away by itself!” laughed Lucy.

“Abortion. It’s really the only way. What they do, is they take out the growth. It really isn’t a baby, just a bunch of blobby tissues, floating around inside. That’s why we call it a ‘growth’. Have you considered removing the ‘growth’?”

“I don’t know about no growth. Why, on the farm, we’d have cows, sometimes, something’d go wrong, and there weren’t no ‘blobby tissues, floating around, inside’. No, they was little calves, in there, just like my little baby inside me. I couldn’t take it out, there’s no way to do that, even if it was right.”

Miriam cursed, inwardly. She hated dealing with people who actually knew things, and farmers knew too much to be easily fooled. She responded as she’d been trained, carefully avoiding the thrust of Lucy’s comment.

“Why, they just take it out with a vacuum cleaner, just like you’d clean out a dust ball, under the bed. That’s all.”

“What happens to it?”

“Happens to what?”

“To the baby?”

“It isn’t a baby, it’s a growth, an invasion of your body, something that will ruin the rest of your life. Wouldn’t you rather have a nice job than a crying, icky baby (Miriam nearly choked on

the word) that would keep you from going out with your friends, and having fun, and getting a good job?”

“What kind of a woman would rather have a job than a baby? Why, a baby, it’ll last a long time. Jobs, why, there’s no point to them. I’d lots rather have a baby. Why, what would happen to a poor little baby that gets sucked up in one of those machines?”

“Why, it’s just removed. It’s a very simple operation, really.”

“Don’t it die?”

“The Supreme Court says that it’s not really alive, it’s not really a baby.” She grimaced when she said “baby”.

“Any of them ever have a baby?”

What they mean, it really isn’t *alive*.”

“I’ll betcha if those Supreme Court Judges woulda been sucked out when they was babies, they wouldn’t a been judges. That’s alive enough for me. Besides, if it’s not alive, then why do they have to kill it?”

In the face of Lucy’s overwhelmingly innocent question, even Dr. Miriam Babeter had nothing to say, no argument powerful enough to penetrate a brain unsoftened by years and years of public education.

“Well, I’ll just leave you some literature. There’s really nothing wrong with it, you know. Why, I’ve had abortions, myself.” Miriam said, with a brittle note of pride in her voice.

“Don’t it bother you, knowin’ that they aren’t, wonderin’ what they’d a been in the world?”

Unaware that her question would have devastated anyone not as highly educated to ignore reality as Dr. Babeter, Lucy had no way of being prepared for the well-rehearsed answer that had so impressed the Examiners on one oral part of her doctoral exam that she was given a doctorate from Harvard in less than six months:

“The fact that they are not is proof enough that they were never meant to be,” replied Miriam, archly. “When you come around, and you will, once you think about how much you’ll be giving up if you decide to have the ‘growth’ continue, call me. My name is on the card.”

“What’d she want?” asked Judith, who came into the room after she heard Miriam and Joyce click their way down the uncarpeted hall on their lightly cleated shoes.

“She wanted me to have one of those ‘bortions’. Said it wouldn’t hurt none, that the baby wasn’t alive, at least that’s what some so-called ‘Supreme’ Court says.”

“That’s Devil talk. They’re just tryin’ to kill off all us poor people so that they get more money for themselves. I never knew how they get money from that, until Young Matt told me, one night when he came home late. I sat up with him while he was sick in the bathroom, and he told me all about it.”

“He says that where he works in the Census Department that they have to count people all the time so that they know how many poor people there are, and how much tax money to charge the workin’ people to pay for them. Then, they get the taxes raised to pay for all those poor people. If they kill off a lot of poor people, they get to keep the difference. For each baby they kill, they’ll get to split up maybe a couple million for themselves. That’s what the Gummit would have to pay for it iff in the baby lived its whole life on welfare.”

“Why would they even think that way?” asked an appalled Lucy.

“I don’t know. Maybe the Devil makes ‘em. Maybe nobody loved ‘em when they was little.”

“I can see why. Nobody could love a person who thought like that. Why the Gummit’s actually payin’ bounties on little babies. Maybe the people who kill babies was bad to start with, and never got straightened out.”

Judith, a Mountain Baptist, knew no more about Original Sin than she knew about the Pope of Rome, but she couldn’t help agreeing.

“I think you’re right, but, what can we do about it?”

“Young Matt said one time that we just ought to kill as many of ‘em as we could before they got any more of us.”

‘He quit sayin’ that, though, as soon as he started workin’ for the Gummit and spendin’ all his time, drinkin’, rather’n workin’ or thinkin’.’”

“Now, he seems to think the Gummit’s something wonderful, when he’s sober. Money does that to a person.” Judith replied. “Especially Gummit money. It’s so easy to come by, it makes a body feel guilty.”

“Do you think Young Matt’s gonna turn out like that Babeter lady?”

“I *hope* not. Why it’s purely evil to have so little regard for peoples’ lives. I’ve never heard of anything like it. Why, I remember once, back on the farm, when Billy Tinhead’s dog got the rabies, why, it tried bitin’ ever’tthin’ on the farm, but it left its own puppies alone. Why, that Gummit woman’s actually worse’n a mad dog.”

Months later, Lucy had the baby. It was a boy. She had wanted to have it at home.

“Have it in the hospital.” her caseworker told her. “Your Pa’s got medical coverage, and you’ve got a welfare card, so it won’t cost anything. It’s old fashioned to have babies at home, and they’re a lot more experienced in the hospital. Besides they’ll give you some gas, to kill the pain.”

“Have a baby in the *hospital*?” Lucy replied, in actual wonder. “Why, I thought hospitals were for sick people.”

The caseworker, used to dealing with people driven from the hills by one program or another, smiled resignedly and went through the Speech to Mothers Unaware of the Advantages of Hospital Delivery (Health In Human Services cassette #390).

Not included in the speech was the fact that at Euthenabort General, approved as a training hospital by the HIHS, nearly three-fourths of the babies were delivered by Caesarian Section, needed or not, because they wanted to give Euthenabort interns direct training. Also omitted was the fact that the interns who delivered babies of obviously 'poorer, disadvantaged' families were totally inexperienced medical students. Few knew that they were jetted in from Club Med Med, a Euthenabort school for rich kids who couldn't get into regular medical schools but who thought that killing babies entitled them to just as high an income as regular doctors. After three in the afternoon, on weekends, Wednesdays, and holidays there were no other doctors available than the interns from Club Med Med. Infant mortality at Euthenabort General was worse than Bangladesh during monsoons.

"I don't know why you can't just have the baby here, at home," Judith said when Lucy told her she was having her baby at the hospital. "Why I had all of you at home, and the only one who helped me was Bobby Craddock's mother, and she's livin' right down the street. She's delivered almost a thousand babies and didn't lose but three, and they were to that Harkness woman what

had The Disease, so it wasn't Ma Craddock's fault. She don't know how to charge as much as a doctor, but that's all she don't know."

"Ma, I'm gonna have my baby in the hospital. It's the modern way to do, and, besides, it don't cost nothin."

"Oh, it's gonna cost, all right. You'll see. It's gonna cost somebody."

When Lucy began to feel the pains, she and her mother took a cab to the hospital. "This cab's already cost us more'n what Ma Craddock woulda charged," Judith complained, as she, emptied her change purse and billfold to pay the cabbie.

Lucy was too excited to reply. "It'll be all right, Ma." She said. Absently, she repeated it both to her mother and to herself more and more frequently.

Judith watched nurses put Lucy in a wheelchair and tried to follow her, but was motioned aside and called into an office, labeled "BILLING", where she spoke to a lady who had MS. FATTICK written on a large sign that stretched nearly halfway across her desk.

As the signing-in ceremony progressed, as it became more and more obvious that Judith had absolutely no financial resources whatsoever, Ms. Fattick grew increasingly less courteous.

"And now," she asked, as the ceremony concluded, "do you, as next-of-kin, have any questions regarding the procedure?" Her tone was far less polite than the one she'd used that very morning

on her thin-headed Burmese cat, which, in a fit of feline pique, had shredded a newly upholstered sofa.

“Yes, I do,” Judith answered, so worried about Lucy that she didn’t catch the hostile tone in Ms. Fattick’s question, a tone that would have informed anyone less preoccupied that the interview was over.

“They told Lucy that they’d give her some kind of gas, to kill the pain.”

“That’s right.” sneered Ms. Fattick, glancing ostentatiously at her watch. “It’s Standard Operating Procedure.”

“Won’t it hurt the baby?”

“Who cares?” Ms. Fattick said, to herself. To Judith: “Of course it won’t hurt the baby. Why our Euthenabort anesthesiologists would never do anything like that. They’re here to save life, not hurt it.”

She snickered inwardly as she thought of the lucrative double-billing techniques many of the medical staff used to hide their income from the Euthenabort Babyrest Clinic nearby.

“But, if the gas puts Lucy to sleep, won’t it put the baby to sleep, too? Make the baby’s heart go slow, and not get any blood to the brain? I remember we had a lamb that came out addled, after it got tangled too long inside the ewe, and it took Pa too long to pull it out.”

“It’s different with people.” Ms. Fattick replied, with the certainty that only ignorance can give.

“I don’t see how that could be.” replied Judith, genuinely perplexed.

“I do.” thought Ms. Fattick to herself. “If we listened to that kind of drivel, there wouldn’t be an anesthesiologist on the staff driving anything bigger than a Ford Focus.” “Just ask one of the Euthenabort Doctors.” she said aloud, “They can explain it all.” “They ought to,” she added, again to herself. “They get paid enough.”

Bemused, Judith followed instructions through the mazes of corridors and departments, marveling at the many medical miracles she and her family had lived without for centuries, back in the hills; often to a life expectancy that seemed strangely out of reach for those close to those same medical marvels that caused her to feel so hopelessly out of touch.

She found Lucy in a large ward with several other young, expectant mothers. Most of them, on welfare, had the small portable radios that they used when they couldn’t get drugs, blaring on their bedside tables. Conversation was difficult. Judith sat a few moments and held Lucy’s hand while they watched the light display on the fetal monitor to which Lucy was attached. She would have sworn that the baby’s heartbeat nearly matched the

throbbing rhythm of the nearby radios, but shook off the thought before she allowed it to come fully into focus.

“I can really feel it movin’, Ma!” Lucy said, placing her mother’s hand on her abdomen.

“It’s a strong ‘un.”, her mother agreed.

Soon, a nurse came and wheeled Lucy away. Unable to tolerate the music blasting throughout the ward, Judith went to a small waiting room, and read the paper.

An hour later, a nurse called. “It’s a boy. Come and see.”

Judith, relieved beyond words, followed the nurse down the hall. Lucy was holding her baby. It weighed eight pounds. It barely moved.

“The birth was only a partial success.” Dr. Shekel Stupor explained. A certified Euthenabort anesthesiologist, it was the part of his job he liked best, high emotions, with him in charge. “There is something wrong with the baby. He’ll never be quite right. His brain was damaged.”

“Oh, Lord!” cried Lucy. “Was it something I did? Did I do something wrong?”

“No, no. It was nothing *you* did,” said Dr. Stupor, gloating inwardly as he savored the brilliant, life-shortening Overgas Maneuver he’d used so well in so many poor and welfare births. “It wasn’t your fault at all.” he assured Lucy, in the same tone he’d

learned after years of practice, the tone that implied “I’m big enough to take the blame, even though it was really your fault.”

“Then, it must have been yours.” said Judith, quickly.

Caught off guard, Dr. Stupor actually stuttered slightly. “Nno. Nnnoo. It was just one of those things.”

“You calling my baby a ‘thing’?” Lucy asked, with hostility.

“That’s not what I meant. I mean, what happened is just something that no one could help. That’s all.”

“It was that gas you gave her. I know it was. I just know it.” Judith said.

“No, no. It wasn’t the gas.” Dr. Stupor lied, with all the positive glibness he’d accumulated over the years since Club Med Med School. “It was just one of those things.”

“One of those things that happened because of that gas.” Judith insisted. “That gas you gave her is what did it.”

Unused to dealing with truth for any length of time, Dr. Stupor could hardly wait to get away, to be with the other Euthenabort doctors, up in their penthouse lounge, the Doctor’s Bar & Pill, where conversation was of pleasant things, of stocks and bonds, of the farms they loved to buy, of the hired men they would mock, of the trouble they had hiring decent help.

“No, no. It wasn’t the gas. It was just something that happens, sometimes. There’s no answer for it.”

“No answer that you want to see, anyway,” Judith said.

Dr. Stupor left, and Lucy began to speak. “Ma, I know it was the gas. I just know it. I could feel my baby moving all over, real active, until they put that mask over my face and turned up the gas real high. I tried to tell ‘em, but my mouth wouldn’t work. I could feel the baby dying inside of me, and they wouldn’t let me tell them. It was that gas; it was that gas that killed his brain!”

Lucy was screaming, by then, so loudly that other patients, even GovEmps in the private wards, could hear. Two nurses held her down, while the intercom called throughout the hospital, “DR. SHEKEL STUPOR, DR. SHEKEL STUPOR DR. SHEKEL STUPOR, TO MATERNITY, PLEASE. TO MATERNITY.” in a mechanical tone. Other patients breathed a sigh of relief as Dr. Stupor gave Lucy an injection which put her to sleep. Judith tried to stop him but was held back by orderlies.

“There’s nothing you can do.” an orderly hissed in her ear. “You signed a release form when you came in.”

Soon, Lucy slept.

The baby died two days later. The autopsy report, signed by Dr. Stupor, listed the reason for death as “causes, unknown”.

Young Matt, enraged into sobriety by the needless death of his nephew, went to the hospital to pick up his sister, while Old Matt and Judith waited in their tiny apartment for her sad

homecoming. Judith had removed the pitifully small assortment of baby things they'd bought as a surprise.

“But, it's not my fault that the baby died.” Dr. Stupor was telling Lucy when Young Matt came into the room. “I was just doing my job. I'm supposed to give that kind of gas. It's a requirement. We give it to all the mothers.”

“Then all the babies that are born here are dumber than they'd otherwise be.” said Young Matt, interrupting the conversation, “And, it's your greed that did it. That gas is just one thing you're doin' to turn us into a nation of idjits too dumb to mind paying taxes.”

“What do you mean?” asked Dr. Stupor, shocked not at the truth of the accusation, but that someone would dare to utter it. “I was just doing my job.”

“Yeah. But, it was your greed that drove you to doing a job that doesn't need to be done.”

“What do you mean, ‘doesn't need to be done'? You've never had a baby. You don't know how women suffer when they don't have anesthesia.”

“Do they suffer less, knowing that their babies are a lot dumber than they'd have to be for their whole lives?”

“You don't understand. Hospital Regulations require that we do what we do.”

“But you make them write the regulations.”

Dr. Stupor quickly reviewed his many medical school classes, but could not recall a reply to that argument.

Young Matt continued; “You make ‘em write the regulations so that you’ll make plenty of money. Hell, if you got paid enough for it, you’d chloroform ‘em to death, and have it written into regulations to back you up. I’ve worked for the Gummit. I know how this stuff works.”

“You do, do you?” answered Dr. Stupor, stung into arguing with a person he’d normally believe to be incapable of rational thought, doubly stung by knowing he was not really intelligent enough to defend what he was doing with his professional life.

“I sure do. First, you write the regulations, sayin’ that your work is necessary. Then, you write in your fee schedule. Then, if anything goes wrong, you blame the regulations. That’s how Gummit works. The more money anybody gets paid, the more they live that lie, ‘It’s the regulations.’”

“I can see that there’s no point in trying to reason with you.”

“Not what you call reason, you murdering pig.”

“There’s no need for you to get hostile.”

“There was no need to kill my nephew. Let’s go, Lucy.” He said as Dr. Stupor left the room, mentally doubling Lucy’s bill.

“I’ll fix those damned hillbillies. I’ll teach them to talk to me that way. I won’t just double their bill. I’ll triple it. People can’t talk to *me* that way! It ought to be a criminal offense, to talk to a

Doctor like that!” he ranted to himself on the way to the Bar and Pill. Seeing a telephone, he stopped and called the Billing Office. “What the Hell. I’ll quadruple the bill. I’ll fix those damned white trash!”

Lucy and Young Matt packed Lucy’s few clothes into a tattered grocery bag and left the room. Young Matt left an unread newspaper Judith had bought the night before. On a back page, out of sight, was an article reporting that HIHS had delayed releasing a report that conclusively proved anesthetic gas caused irreversible brain damage to babies. The report was delayed in being made public while Health In Human Services made sure of various legal questions, a process that had already consumed fifteen years, the unread article reported.

“You can’t leave yet.” the floor nurse told them. “You have to check out through Billing. You’ll see it on your way out. Can’t miss it.”

“We will.” said Young Matt, and the two of them went down to Billing, next to the electrified steel gate camouflaged to look a little bit like a door, that barred the exit.

“Your bill,” said Ms. Fattick, hanging up the telephone from an agreeable chat with Dr. Stupor, “comes to approximately twelve thousand dollars. With sales tax and telephone, it comes to exactly \$12,016. 00” she said, reading a figure off her huge calculator.

“We didn’t have no telephone,” Lucy said.

“We’ll check on that. That would reduce your bill by eight dollars, leaving you owing us \$12,008. 00. Will that be cash or check?” she asked, relishing the bombshell she’d exploded in their minds.

“I’m on welfare!” Lucy protested. “And, my Pa’s got Blue Double Cross. They’re supposed to pay.”

“I checked with Blue Double Cross. Since your husband died, you are no longer covered by his benefits. Your father’s plan does not include dependents’ maternity expenses, so you are automatically ineligible for that coverage. Two operations were performed while you were under the anesthesia. HIHS ordered a tubal ligation, and Blue Double Cross only covers one surgical procedure in an operation.”

Lucy started to cry. She was overwhelmed. And, she didn’t know what a tubal ligation was.

“What about Welfare?” asked Young Matt.

“Health In Human Services informs us that you refused to abort your baby and that you are therefore not entitled to Welfare benefits. Now, what do you plan to do about this bill?”

Lucy stopped sobbing, slowly, and looked at her brother.

“How come it’s so much?” he asked.

“We set all hospital charges by official recommendations of the Blue Double Cross rate-setting committee.

“But,” he protested, “all that does is get doctors to participate in the Blue Double Cross by giving them more money. It’s just a way to get high prices. That’s against the law.”

“Oh, no it isn’t!” Ms. Fattick answered, triumphantly. “Federal Law states, and HIHS orders, that all hospitals will follow Blue Double Cross rate setting guidelines.”

“You’re all in it together, aren’t you?” asked Young Matt, forgetting that he worked for the Government.

“That’s beside the point,” answered Ms. Fattick. “What are you going to do about this bill?”

“We’re gonna let you whistle for it. First, you kill her baby, then try to make her pay because she didn’t kill it, first. We’re gettin’ out of here, before you kill us, too.”

“This is the only hospital in town.” Ms. Fattick replied, matter-of-factly. We have successfully petitioned HIHS so that no other hospital can be built, anywhere around here, ever again. If you ever get sick or need penicillin, or an X-ray, or a blood test, or insulin, or emergency room treatment for any kind of accident, where will you go?”

Lucy and Young Matt stared at her while the chilling words sank in.

“I can assure you,” Ms. Fattick continued, “that if you don’t pay us, and we ever get our hands on you again, there isn’t a

Euthenabort doctor in this building who'll let you out of here alive.”

Ms. Fattick's matter-of-fact tone changed to a sibilant hiss through clenched teeth. “You are either going to pay us what you owe, and I don't care if it's only ten dollars a week forever, or we'll get one of you, sooner or later. You've got older parents. One of them is sure to come down with something.” she concluded in the cold, viper's whisper she'd learned so successfully at the Stanford Graduate School of Hospital Billing.

**Matt MacAbee fights back. Death of Fattick. Matt Leaves Flo 'n Eddie Endlin's. Libreena Fadette. Young Medpig kills another MacAbee. Then, another.**

“That’s all I can stand,” said Young Matt, in a dreamy voice that told his sister something had snapped. Moving automatically, Young Matt shut the office door. In an instant, he wrapped the calculator cord around Ms. Fattick’s neck, holding her flopping body quietly on the desk while she died.

Lucy was dazed. “What are we gonna do, now?”

“You wait here, with the door locked. I’ll be right back.”

Young Matt was careful. No one noticed him leave the office. He went to the laundry in the basement. He found overalls and got a smaller pair for Lucy. Mixing cigarette ashes with water, he made a paste, making his face and hands a leprous, mottled color.

He pushed a laundry cart back to Ms. Fattick’s office. No one wanted to look at him. Two dermatologists he passed shuddered. “Thank God that’s not one of mine.” said one. “Mine, neither.” said the other, equally relieved.

When he got back, he blotted Lucy’s hands and face with the ugly ash paste, and tied her hair up in three pony tails. Matt stuffed Ms. Fattick’s body into the cart, along with the files that pertained to their case. He’d learned enough about computers to press the “delete/trash” button on Ms. Fattick’s terminal, where

their file was conveniently on the screen. He even took the disc to make sure there was no trace of their having been at Euthenabort General.

“Won’t somebody see us?” asked a frightened Lucy.

“Nah. People who work here get paid more and don’t work as hard as the cleaning people they’ll figure we are. It makes ‘em feel guilty, reminding them how easy they got it, so they don’t like to look at us. We’ll just push this cart right through the office to the freight elevator, take it to the basement and nobody’ll even notice.”

Quickly, moving with teamwork they’d learned in long years on the farm, they maneuvered the heavy cart through the crowded hallways.

They took the freight elevator to the basement, and found the incinerator. Lucy held its door open, while Matt shoved Ms. Fattick’s body and the billing information through it.

“This is harder’n stufin’ lard into a cider jug.” he complained as they strained to get the body inside.

Lucy couldn’t help but giggle.

They soon finished. “This won’t bring back your son, but at least there’s one less pig in the world,” he said, as Ms. Fattick began to sizzle.

“You can’t get rid of them all this way. It wouldn’t be right. Sides, there’s too many of ‘em.”

“What else can we do? They own the police. The Army. Everythin’. If we fight, they’ll kill us. If we don’t fight, they’ll kill us. You know that.”

Lucy nodded, sadly. “We do have to do something. That’s for sure.”

“Yeah. But, that Fattick woman, she’s not the heart of the problem. Somebody’s behind her, and all the people like her, all the people who just sit behind desks in offices and mess up all our lives.”

“Who?”

“I don’t know. I just get the feeling that killin’ people like Msss. Fattick (he hissed the ‘Ms.’ like an angry copperhead), is like tryin’ to kill a tapeworm by pullin’ pieces off’n the back end. There’s got to be a head, somewhere.”

“Like the head of Euthenabort General?”

“Nah. He’s just a puppet like Msss. Fattick, killin’ the rest of us for money. What we got to figure out is, who’s the big boss?”

“The Gummit pays them.”

“There’s more to it than that. I’d guess that they’re in all Gummits, everywhere. Well, we can’t think about that now. We’d better get out of here.”

They left, through the service entrance, and quickly disappeared into the anonymity reserved for low-ranking manual workers in a society that valued the ability to consume above all.

As they walked toward the bus stop, a faint smell of cooking meat wafted through the air. “Smells just like a barbecue.” laughed Young Junior.

“Oh, don’t.” Lucy protested. “There has to be a better way.”

“Name it.”

“We could pray.”

“I already do. I ask God for the strength to fight ‘em.”

“That’s not what I meant, and you know it.”

“It’s the best I can do, Lucy. I don’t like killin’, even people like that. I’d lots rather be back, you know, on the farm, the way it was before the Gummit came. Maybe, someday, we can go back.” he finished, dreamily.

“You won’t be able to go back if you’re in jail for murder.”

“If I was in jail for killin’ people like that fryin’ Fattick, or that damn Dr. Stupor, why, I’d be freer’n if I was livin’ under their thumbs.”

Their bus came, the ramshackle one that the Weirton Transit Authority reserved for its runs into the successfully blighted downtown area. No one noticed the two get on the bus, and no one noticed when they got off, in front of one of many boarded-up stores in downtown Weirton.

Young Matt changed. Reading and studying became more important than his ‘friends’ at Flo ‘n Eddie Endlin’s Bar. He began to take his job, Pad Holder I, more seriously. Then, he applied for

a janitorial position in the Federal Building to get more access to what was going on in various departments. That wasn't the only reason for his request for transfer.

"I can't stand bein' a Pad Holder anymore" he explained to his parents. "Do you know what we do? We follow some fancy pants ninny, who's got a graduate degree in Public Census Taker Administration, around all day, and hold the pad, while he asks questions. 'And how many people live here, sir?'" Junior mimicked, in an effeminate voice. "Then, they take all the answers back to the office, and change them around to fit what they need."

"Why do they bother? Judith asked.

"If they didn't count all the time, they wouldn't need as many census takers."

"Why do they have to count 'em, in the first place?" asked Old Matt. "If they know how many was born, and when, and how many died, and when, you'd think they'd already know how many people there are and how old the people are. Don't they have computers? Seems like it'd be simple to figure that out. Why even the wonders of automation that we're always hearin' about on TV never do seem to reduce the number of Gummit workers."

"They don't ever cut the number of Gummit workers. That would be illegal. And, they don't really care about how many people there are, we already know that. Actual counting gives us something to do and gets a lot of Network Coverage. The guy I hold a pad for says that the entire Census Department is an

ongoing search for a few human interest stories that can be released to the media to justify the salaries of the Census Department in the long, long years between censuses.”

“But, son, why do they bother?”

“What we have to count is how many people have applied for Gummit jobs. If fifty thousand people apply in a month, then fifty thousand jobs have to be found. We might have to hire three hundred of them at the Weirton Federal Building. To show a need to hire them, we have to be able to develop our own statistics.”

“But, why do they bother?” Judith asked, again. “Don’t they have anything better to do with their lives?”

“How else they gonna make jobs in the Census Department?”

“It just don’t seem right.” said his father.

“It isn’t right. If you tell them that, they always say: ‘What else can we do?’ They aren’t about to quit work between censuses.”

“Why can’t they just give ‘em their salaries and let them stay home. Wouldn’t that at least save on office expenses?” his mother wanted to know.

“That would be the same, to them, as bein’ on Welfare. They won’t sell their souls *that* cheap. They want to feel useful without bein’ useful. That kind of Gummit work is like a narcotic. It keeps ‘em comfortable, because they don’t have to worry about failure, and they’re busy enough that they don’t have to think about never succeeding.”

“Then, they’re sick in the head, and it ain’t right to kill ‘em, son,” Judith told her son with finality.

“We aren’t gonna tell on you.” his father added, “But, you shouldn’t have gone and kilt that lady.”

“That’s right.” agreed Judith.

Their son looked at them sadly. “If you’d been there, you woult have snapped out, too. I know you would. She was pure meanness, pure evil. She didn’t care that they kilt Lucy’s little boy. She said that they’d kill you, too, if they ever got ‘holt of you. What else could I do?”

“Well, the Lord would have told you, if you’d asked Him,” Judith replied.

“How do you know I didn’t?” Young Matt asked, and to that, there was, of course, no answer.

Lucy, overcome by feelings of guilt for having gone to the hospital in the first place, began to drink. The “boys” at Eddie Endlin’s were more than happy to show her a good time. Within a month, she’d moved out of the apartment. Eddie’s wife got her addicted to cocaine and sold her to a house of prostitution in Wheeling. Her family lost all contact with her.

The older MacAbee girl, Becky, was nineteen when they moved to Weirton. She was twenty when she met Alfred Lambton, a young sailor in the Merchant Marine. Alfred had an apartment in a nearby building that he used during his shore leaves.

Becky hadn't known anyone in the hills as wise and knowing as Alfred. Alfred was charmed by Becky's honesty and enjoyed the feeling of superiority his immeasurably greater knowledge of the world gave him. During the two short weeks that remained of Alfred's shore leave, the two opposites fell deeply in love. The night before Alfred left for his ship, Becky and Alfred got engaged. Becky also got pregnant.

Judith wasn't upset. Alfred had seemed a nice enough young man. She felt sure that he'd marry Becky when he returned from the Middle East, in four months. Matt wasn't worried. He guessed that Judith had been carrying Young Junior a month or two when they were married. And, Matt knew for a fact that most of his friends had married in the same hurried circumstances. In the back of his mind, he half believed pregnancy was a cause of marriage, rather than a result of it.

Alfred was, in fact, an honorable man, who looked forward to marriage as soon as he returned from sea.

Becky quickly grew bored in the small apartment. She began to walk around Weirton, and, one day, nearby, was surprised to see a new office opened. "FAMILY PLANNING", said the big sign across what had once been a maternity shoppe. "No appointment needed", said another sign. "COME RIGHT IN!" said still another. The office stood out, not only because of its brightly colored, professionally lettered signs but also because it was the only

storefront still open on the block, except for a pawn shop and a liquor store.

“Well, I’m gonna be havin’ a family.” Becky announced to herself, “So, I might as well plan it.”

She went in and stood in front of the large, long counter that separated the comparatively bare foyer with the carpeted plushness that beckoned inside. She took in the leafy palm fronds, waving gently in the breeze from the air conditioners, the many pictures on the wall (surprisingly, none of families), the fine paneling, all the luxury with which she imagined herself to be surrounded.

“Do you help people to plan their families?” she asked the bored young lady polishing her nails at a nearby desk.

“We sure do, honey.” the clerk said, brightening at the thought of her own small percentage of the abortion mill kickback. “Sit down and read some of these pamphlets while I get you a counselor.”

“We got a live one.” the clerk said quietly into a lush office, out of Becky’s earshot. “It’s a 6-B, I think.”

“6-B, Pregnant Hillbilly, where is that file?” Ms. Libreena Fadette asked herself as she rummaged through an untidy file cabinet. Quickly, she found the folder marked: “6-B, Health In Human Services, Guidelines on Conversational Patterns Leading To Termination in Females, Rural, Young, White.”

She reviewed the conversational patterns designed to quickly change any point of view into that which would best affect The Department, and, of course, her own percentage of kickback from Euthenabort Babyrest.

Becky's name was called. She looked up to see an overly intense woman, as professionally sincere as a mortician, ask her to "accompany" her. The two went into a beautiful office, where the counselor made a great to-do of seating them in two chairs away from the desk.

"I'm Libreena Fadette, and I'm here to help you in any way that I can." Libreena's smile showed too many teeth to be called warm.

"I'm Becky MacAbee. I came in because I'm gonna start a family and I thought that it sure wouldn't hurt to plan it."

"And, how wise you are." Ms. Fadette gushed with perfect sincerity. "I only wish," she continued with the same awesome sincerity, "that all the girls were as thoughtful as you, planning ahead to make everyone's life easier. You aren't planning a large family, are you?"

"I sure am!" Becky answered, proudly. "An even dozen."

"Really?" asked Ms. Fadette, with the subtle disapproval that had helped her break every termination record in the Weirton district.

"I sure am," Becky answered, a little less proudly.

“But a dozen? Surely, a world that has so many starving people wouldn’t be helped with another twelve mouths to feed.”

“But, my kids are gonna be farmers. They’ll help feed everybody.”

“Yes, but there’s so little land.”

“Shucks, lady, there’s all kinds of land. Why, on our little farm, we grew everythin’ we needed on ten acres and sold the rest. We coulda done it on five acres, ‘cept that Young Matt needed an extry field for liquor corn.”

“Yes, dear,” answered Ms. Fadette, speaking slowly since the manual didn’t cover Becky’s exuberant belief in a cheerful life that Health In Human Services was effectively designed to destroy. “But, so many people don’t have the land. Think of India, where there are so many starving. And Cambodia. And the other places.”

“That’s their own fault.” said Becky, ignoring the look of shock that washed over Libreena’s face at the awful thought that anyone but America’s white males could ever be blamed for anything. “Why, anybody can grow their own food. You don’t have to be smart or go to college. Why look at me.”

“But, if population increases, we’ll run out of space.”

“There’s room for lots more people. Always room for one more.”

“But, today, population is growing so much faster.”

“Makin’ better seeds and tractors, too.”

“But, there are limits, there are real limits, to progress.”

“How do you know?”

“Why,” replied Libreena, “I read, I study, I go to meetings and conferences where wise and learned men and women who study these things tell us what they have discovered.” She waved a lofty hand at a wall of books (actually, a highly textured wallpaper, supplied to each branch office by the Department of Health In Human Services, to give its workers an aura of education).

Becky was cowed. “Well, I guess you do know. You sure got enough books. I never saw so many books, before.”

“One reads, one writes, one learns,” Libreena said, loftily waving her manicured hand.

As she was meant to, Becky noticed the elegant manicure, the fine jewelry, and, in a mirror, cunningly placed for the purpose, caught a glimpse of her own comparative drabness. In her mind, she made the leap that HIHS psychiatrists and psychologists said she and other girls of similar background would make. She thought that because she didn’t look smooth and polished, she couldn’t think well. And, she became more mentally malleable.

Libreena waited the few minutes that the Manual recommended, before continuing.

“You’re married, now?” she asked, knowing full well Becky wasn’t.

“Nope. But we’re gonna be, as soon as Alfred comes back. Then, we’re gonna build a house, on some land in the country, and raise a family.”

“You’re sure Alfred’s coming back?” Libreena asked, sowing a seed of doubt that she would nurture until it became a full grown plant.

“Oh, sure. He’s in the Merchant Marine. He’ll be back in three and a half months.”

“Oh?” said Libreena, making her eyebrows into arches, just like the HIHS Manual said to do. “Well, I hope so, but, you know how men are.”

Becky had only known her father, her brother, Lucy’s dead husband, and Alfred. “They’re all right,” she answered, but a little less positively than before.

“Well, you know what they say about sailors,” Libreena said, sensing that it was time for a frontal attack on the defenses that she could see were shaky. “They have a girl in every port. Why your Alfred probably has a wife already. Maybe two or three.”

Becky was shocked by the thought. And, by some coincidence, she’d read that very morning, why, it was right in the outer office, a pamphlet about how much bigamy there was, about how many wives and children were abandoned by evil men.

Quickly, Libreena pressed her point. “He’s like all men. They’re no good. All they want us for is to use us. When they’re

finished, they throw us away, like old toys. They make slaves out of us to pleasure them and raise their children, and don't give us anything, except heartache, misery, and grief."

"Not all men's like that," Becky replied, more out of hope than knowledge. "Maybe, you just met some bad ones."

Libreena winced but had to ignore that, because it was so true. Unruffled, she continued, "They may pretend to be kind and sensitive, but all they ever think about is using us. Why your boyfriend Alfred's probably bragging right now, about dumb you are, and how he's got you wrapped around his little finger."

"Not my Alfred."

"How long have you known him?"

"Not very long. But, he's a nice man. Really, he is."

"Bought you a few drinks, trinkets, and talked you into going to bed with him." Libreena interrupted, remembering the many, many men she'd known, the dozens at Flo 'n Eddy Endlin's who'd known her as 'Two-Beers Fadette' before she'd met Lydia, her Significant Other. "That's what he did, and you fell for it."

Becky could think of nothing to say. She tried to explain how it really was, how they were in love, how she and Alfred saw deeply within each other's feelings. She tried to put words to the depth of spiritual attachment she and Alfred felt for each other, the positive certainly each of them had that their love would last as long as their lives. She tried to find words to express how she and

Alfred agreed on so many things, about moving to the country, about having a large family, about doing so many things, together forever.

But Libreena's words, the seeds that she had planted, were growing, sending venomous tendrils into every area of her mind.

Libreena, again waiting the few minutes suggested by the Manual, pulled her chair (it was put on well-oiled castors for that very reason) over to Becky's, and gently stroked her hand.

"You're *so fortunate* that you're here, with women like you, women who love you, women who care about you. All of us are here to help you, to keep you from being used, to keep you happy, to let us all be free of the oppressive nets men are just waiting to throw over us."

Becky nodded, her eyes beginning to well with tears. She was unaware that, in the outer office, the receptionist was whispering into the intercom, "Pregnant, black city girl out here. Business is good today", and that another counselor was quickly reviewing another chapter of the manual kept in the folder labeled "2-C, Health In Human Services Conversational Patterns Leading to Termination in Females, Urban, Young, Black, (Coloured, Colored, People of Colour, People of Color, Colored People, Coloured People, Persons of Colour, Persons of Color, Coloured Persons, Colored Persons, Negro, Negro People, Negro Persons, Negroid People, Negroid Persons, African-American, Afro-

American, or whatever we've decided is the most Politically Correct way to destroy their identity this month").

"You aren't going to let Alfred (she spit out his name) think that you're another one of his pushovers, are you?" Libreena asked, noting with satisfaction the tears beginning to roll down Becky's cheeks. "I've got it now!" she exulted inwardly. "That hillbilly brat isn't getting away from me! It's dead meat, now! Hahahah!" Her hands were clenched into triumphant fists, but Becky was crying too hard to notice. "If I get this little bastard, I make quota. I can go to Club Med *and* win the new Volvo!" she said to herself while Becky agonized.

"I don't know. I don't know. I don't know what to do."

With a broad, inward smile, Libreena continued. "After all, what good does it do, having a baby, and being tied down to a lot of dirty diapers for the Best Years of Your Life? Wouldn't you rather have a job, well, like I do, or that nice girl your age who showed you in here, that would let you really help people?"

"I'd like to have a baby, though."

"We'd all like to have a baby, Becky, but other things are more important. Things like Doing What's Best for others, for example, things like Being Free To Make Our Own Choices. To set an example, so that men know that they won't be able to Push Us Around. We're all sisters, Becky, we truly are, and we have to help each other. If we won't, who will?"

“Well, I don’t know. You may be right, but what can I do?”

“Think of it this way, Becky. If you have the baby, you’ll lose your freedom and, what about the baby? Why it would feel guilty, knowing that it was keeping you from fulfilling yourself, (‘Damn!’ Libreena said to herself, ‘that line about Fulfilling Yourself, we’re just supposed to use that on D-3, Termination in Females, White, Middle-Class, Pseudo-Intellectual, not these stupid hillbillies.’ D-3, incidentally, was the Conversational Pattern used on Libreena, successfully, many years ago by Dr. Miriam Babeter, herself, who’d pioneered the use of Conversational Patterns as a means of Controlling the Growth of Non-Taxpaying Populations. Virtually all of HIHS was encouraged to help to develop Conversational Patterns, and most helped, willingly. Especially, the ones who wanted promotions.) I mean, getting a job, and being a Respected Member of Society. Wouldn’t you rather do that?”

“But, what about the baby?”

“Oh, it’s not really a baby. It’s just some stuff, floating around down there. It’s like pancake batter. It hasn’t turned into a baby. And, even if it had, it wouldn’t be considered to be a human being until it’s ten or eleven. There’s really nothing there. Besides, just think how miserable it’ll be if you let it turn into a child? Think how terribly guilty it will feel, even as an infant, knowing that it kept you from the Happiness of Getting a Job, of being a Productive Member of Society. Surely, you wouldn’t want to raise

a child to be unhappy, a child that might feel guilty or unwanted. That would be a sin.”

“But, it is a baby. I’m pregnant, now.”

“No, no, don’t think about it. It’s not a baby. It’s a growth. A wart. That’s all.”

“But, I couldn’t afford to go to a doctor. That’d cost a lot of money, wouldn’t it?”

“We’re your friends, Becky. Don’t even think about the money. We’ll take care of you. That is if YOU want us to...”

“Well...”

“I had no idea of the time.” Libreena suddenly announced “Why we’ve been chatting for a long time, and I haven’t even thought to offer you a glass of water. Can you forgive me?”

“Why, uh, sure, I guess so.”

“Just a minute. I’ll get us both something to drink, and I’ll get some papers for you to look over.” Libreena left, hurriedly. In the tiny “Kitchenette of Death”, a disgruntled employee once called it, she got a glass of iced tea, which HIHS preferred since it masked the taste of the barbiturate she stirred into the glass. Libreena shrugged, and drugged her own drink, too. “As long as it’s free,” she said to herself.

She bustled back into the office, looking forward more than she cared to admit to her drink, and handed Becky her glass and several papers.

“Just OK these papers, if you will, Becky. You do think I’ve done a good job explaining things to you, don’t you?”

“Oh, sure.” she said, woozily, as the powerful drug began to take effect.

“Sign right here, then, and we’ll take care of everything.” replied Libreena, enjoying the sensation of mindlessness that the powder (she used a double dose) produced.

“I’m no pushover.” Becky groggily repeated to herself, as Libreena led her to a small operating room that opened into the alley behind the Fam-Plan Center. “I’m not gonna be used, the way my mother was, the way all women are, by a lot of damned men.”

“That’s right,” answered Libreena, laying Becky back on the soiled linen on the stirrucked table. “We won’t be brutalized, the way millions of our sisters have been, will we?” she asked, in a tone of intoxicated comradeship. “Doctor will be here, soon,” she told Becky, taking another long sip from her iced tea, handing Becky’s glass to her.

Not as used to narcotics as Libreena, Becky soon dozed and didn’t fully awaken when the clinic’s Euthenabortionist, Dr. Greenback Medpig II, bustled in from one of many similar rooms along the hallway. He didn’t wash his bloody hands. “Ain’tcha gonna watch?” he called after the departing Libreena.

To the nurses, he announced: “(I’m in a hurry, today, girls. Big match at the Club. I want to be out of here in fifteen minutes. Just one more after this? I’ll make tee-off. But, let’s be quick!” he ordered the hard-faced “nurse” who roughly injected Becky with a powerful painkiller.

“Hillbilly.” he said, glancing at Becky’s chart, just minutes before the highly trained Doctor, and his speedy, record-setting team of tough Euthenabort “nurses”, tore the tiny baby out of Becky’s womb.

All of them smiled gloatingly when young Dr. Greenback Medpig II ceremoniously squashed the soft head of the tiny baby between his upraised thumb and forefinger before twisting it off and flicking it into the disposal receptacle. They liked that part of the job best, watching the baby’s little arms twitch after her head was twisted off.

“Too many hillbillies, anyway.” Becky barely heard him say, and everyone laughed.

Becky’s tiny baby daughter was dismembered. Euthenabort “nurses” sorted her organs to send to the little-known pharmaceutical firms that bought them. Once, abortionists had sold body parts directly to dermatologists, who resold them as various Elixirs of Youth. That was stopped. Health In Human Services put up signs at the back doors of Fam-Plan Centers all over the country that read: **NO BABY BODY PARTS BEYOND THIS POINT!** Some centers had bloodhounds kenneled at the

doors, trained to buy if employees took tiny body parts to use in recipes or ceremonies of their own. The lucrative, growing trade in baby parts, from which HIHS subsidiaries now made everything from cosmetics to a serum injected into the brains of billionaires with Alzheimer's, was channeled into controllable, official profit centers, all of which were, of course, officially 'Non-Profit'.

Soon, someone gave Becky orange juice. "How thoughtful they are. They care for me." she thought. Before the powerful drugs had worn off, she was ushered out the back door. "Get movin', honey!" said "Nurse" Butchette, shoving her into the alley. "It was a girl you'd a had, but we kilt her." she snarled at Becky, though she knew she wasn't *officially* supposed to tell. Bleeding, barely hearing, Becky woozily stumbled home.

She made her way past her worried parents, and passed out on the bed she had shared with her sister before Lucy had disappeared. The next day, Judith found a copy of her Fam-Plan papers. She told Becky what they'd done to her and to her baby. Becky groaned in agony, hurting all over. She went to the window, opened it, and stared out, into the cold, gray morning. "Too many hillbillies, anyway." she sobbed aloud and plunged headfirst onto the concrete sidewalk four stories below.

## Progress

**The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech. Finally, child-molesters ordained. Spunky Chunkies. WaWa, Women Awake, Women Aware. Not Catholic! Anything But That! Baalocrat. Fr. Gonalthwy hears about Bird-God. Not impressed.**

In a little over a month, hundreds of antique stores all over Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio had thousands of Bird-Gods to sell. Some stores bought dozens. Most paid a lot more than a hundred dollars. One Saturday, we met back at the barn, loaded with money, each with a rental car pulling an empty U-Haul.

“Over a hundred thousand dollars this trip!” I exclaimed when we’d finally finished counting the huge pile of cash. “That gives us almost half a million in cash!”

We slept soundly that night. Next morning, after breakfast, I was surprised to see that Carl and Darlene intended to go to church.

“Come on.” they insisted. “Afterwards, we’ll go out for lunch.”

We drove into the small town near the farm and sat through a passionate, but unmoving sermon about the importance of women ministers, the need for more people to experience the “abortion moment”, and how nice it would be if everyone turned in their guns.

“Our church has changed a lot,” Carl said, on the way home.

“It sure has.” Darlene agreed. “It says in the bulletin that the two remaining 2nd Re-United Reform Perkmistianist Seminaries are required to admit and ordain practicing child molesters.”

“You’re kidding!” Carl exclaimed.

“I wish I were! It’s in the bulletin. There’s a message from the Perkminstry’s General Assembly Synod. It says that ‘Jesus never said that children could not be used for the pleasure of adults, as long as they aren’t forced.’”

I felt a sick feeling in my stomach. “What!”

Darlene continued to read: “The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, Moderator of the General Assembly Synod says that the GAS theologians feel that it’s unfair to deny the joys of Christian living to so-called ‘molesters’. She continued reading. ‘If atheists and sodomites can become Perkmistian Ministers of the Gospel, then, why can’t child molesters? ‘They may have a ‘unique ministry all their own’, and who are we to deny them the satisfaction of serving what may or may not be a God? After all, it is the newest thing, and we are not the type of neurotic, right-wind fanatics who would go against the tide.’”

“How ‘bout that, Carl?” I asked. “First, they let women preach, even though St. Paul said that they shouldn’t. Then, they ordained homosexuals. Now, it’s child molesters. What’s next for you Pertmistianists, ritualized child sacrifice?”

Carl ignored my question. “What else does it say, Darlene? What’s Pastor Pitstop say about it?”

“The Board of Deacons is writing a strong letter about it, a very strong letter. Pastor Pat Pitstop says that he, personally, is opposed to ordaining child molesters, but he doesn’t think that it would be right to resign over one issue. He goes on to say that the General Assembly Synod holds legal title to the Church and to its buildings and that he really has no choice but to go along, in a loving, Christian spirit.”

“That’s exactly what he said about abortion-inducing birth-control, Sunday-School sex-ed, and abortion on demand!” Carl interrupted, angrily. “Why won’t he do something?”

“He can’t do too much,” Darlene said. “After all, he has a family to support, and children in college. There aren’t many Perkmistianist Churches left. Where can he get a job? How else can a man his age make a living? Where could he go? And, his wife has left him.”

“What for?” Carl asked, suddenly more interested in personal gossip than in Big Issues.

“She became a ‘Spunky Chunky’.”

“What in the world is a ‘Spunky Chunky’?” I asked.

“They’re overweight women who sit around the house and think that their problems will all be solved if they could just get on some talk show and tell everyone how unhappy and oppressed

they are. They leave their husbands, have an affair, get an abortion, explore perversions, become animal rights activists, put on a lot of weight, get environmentally and politically active, get addicted to anything, start a support group, practice vegetarianism, look sincere, and take off a lot of weight. Not necessarily in that order, of course. When they've done all that, *and* written a book about it, they get on talk shows. Once they've publicly bleated, they're qualified to get work in Women's Counseling Centers or get a WAWA franchise."

"So, that's where they come from," I said, pleased that the source of incredible numbers of whining, complaining, neurotic women had at last been identified, glad to know from whence the hundreds of Women Awake Women Aware clubs had sprung.

I went back to the big issue, little realizing where it would lead. "Too bad your Pastor, Pat Pitstop, got married. If ministers didn't get married, then their higher-ups wouldn't be able to force them to support their families by doing things they didn't believe in. If they were really free to do what's right, they probably would do what's right."

I rattled on and on, reciting the many advantages of ministers not being married. "Lower fixed costs... reduced pension and medical expenses... only the most faithful into the clergy.. . .", etc. I didn't stop to ask what in my mind had prompted this totally out-of-character flood of conclusions.

I finished grandly, “If your poor Pastor Pitstop wasn’t married, no one could tell him what to do unless he let them. He’d be a freer man, and you could trust him, trust him, at least, more than a clergyman whom you know is over a barrel.”

Darlene interrupted me, “You’re an Agnotheist. You don’t know and don’t want to know if there’s a God. How do you know what you’re talking about?”

I replied: “It’s obvious. With a family, he can’t be as free to follow the Gospel. If that’s obvious to me, an Agnotheist, then you two, who know so much more about it, must not want to see it.”

“He’s right,” said Carl, in a resigned tone. “What can we do? We’ve always been Perkmistianists. I’ve been so used to it, I didn’t know how bad it’s gotten.”

“You could start going to some other church.” I blithely suggested.

“Where?” Darlene asked.

“Well, there’s a lot of small, pure churches around. Go to one of them.”

“I don’t know,” replied Darlene. “The Perkmistianists started out pure and Pentecostal, and look where *they’ve* ended up.”

“Kind of depressing,” said Carl. “Should we go whole hog, and become Catholics?”

I didn’t like *that* idea. I knew that both of them were highly susceptible to moral authority, and I realized instinctively that no

priest this side of Faux-Father Feeley was ever going to approve of us selling Bird-Gods. And, for the first time in my life, I had a duffel bag stuffed full of cash. Cold, hard cash.

I protested to Carl: “You don’t want to be a Catholic. You told me so, yourself. You said that if you were a Catholic, you wouldn’t be able to make Bird-Gods.”

“You didn’t,” Darlene said to him, pointedly.

“That was before this happened.” he said, gesturing toward the bulletin where Pastor Pat Pitstop had agreed to go along with the ordination of child molesters, ‘under protest’. “Catholics are consistent, at least. Everybody knows that.”

“But, *Catholic?*” I interjected. “You don’t want to be a Catholic. They take things too seriously. They don’t have women priests or allow birth control; they won’t allow divorce and remarriage; they’re always having Inquisitions and destroying freedom; and they worship Mary as a God, which is a First Commandment violation, in case you didn’t know.” (“And making Bird-Gods isn’t?” the Voice from the raft suddenly asked me, pleasantly.)

“They don’t worship Mary. Even I know that.” Darlene said, disgustedly. “That’s just an old chestnut that we’re brought up to believe. Besides, even if they did all the terrible things that you say they do, Al, there’s one thing that makes them look pretty good. Catholics consistently teach that it’s wrong to kill unborn babies. Been teaching it longer than any of the other churches. Why, if

they were wrong about everything else, they would still be better than any of the pro-‘choice’ religions. Only Catholics, some Orthodox Jews, and a few Fundies can hold firmly against the State on that. Ultimately, that has to be the biggest thing that separates sheep from goats.”

“We could talk to a priest,” Carl said. “I really wouldn’t mind being a Catholic. If we have children, it might keep them from letting abortionists murder our grandchildren.”

I couldn’t help but chuckle at the obvious truth of what he said. Still, I didn’t want Carl to do anything that might stand between me and the incredible riches that were beginning to pour in. I basically knew that the last thing any vow-of-poverty-taking priest would care about was whether or not I got rich by selling Bird Gods.

“The Catholic Church might have some advantages,” I objected, “but it makes problems, too. Catholic countries are always poor, miserable places to live, swarming with people because the Church won’t let them practice birth control.”

“Carl, why *are* Catholic countries so much poorer?” asked Darlene.

“South and Central American countries are poorer for one simple reason. Prohumanists exterminated almost all the Indians in North America. The Church wouldn’t let the Catholic governments do that, so, they have millions of Indians, who are poor because they’re still adjusting from the Stone Age.”

“Surely, it wasn’t part of Protestant theology to kill Indians?” I protested.

“There were enough Protestant pastors preaching that it was their ‘Christian Duty’ to eliminate Indians that they did.”

I didn’t agree. But, as I looked out the car window at the green countryside rolling by, I realized that I wasn’t seeing any Indians. That made it difficult to argue.

“I wonder if it’s like abortion, today?” Darlene said. “You know, the Mainliners killed the Indians, because the State could generate tax money from white settlers. Today, abortionists kill unborn babies, with government help, for the same reason?”

“The leopard does not change its spots, nor the Ethiope its skin.” I quoted. If they killed then, they’ll kill now. The State is Death.” I concluded, not knowing where such a thought could have come from, or why I, of all people, would utter it. “Does it ever work? Killing poor people? Are the people left alive any richer? Happier?”

“Remember Vlad the Impaler, the real Dracula?” Carl asked. “One day, Vlad called together all the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind in his kingdom. They were invited into a huge, new wooden dining room. He gave them a fine dinner, the first most of them had ever had. When they were finished eating, he asked them if they wouldn’t like to live like that forever. They said yes, so he said, ‘Well, go to Heaven!’ And, he barred the doors and burned the building to the ground, killing every one of them.

Today, he'd be working for Health In Human Services. Or, Fam-Plan."

"Some story!" I exclaimed. "Did it help his country?"

"It got rid of a few poor people, but his kingdom fell apart, anyway. It was just mindless murder to transfer more money to bureaucrats."

"And, there was probably some Prothumanist, puppet religion like ours there to justify it." said Darlene, bitterly.

Neither Carl nor I replied. We drove along in silence, staring out the windows, not really seeing the endless rows of grapes in the vineyards near Lake Erie. They were thinking about saving their souls. I was thinking about the money we'd made. I wanted to find every possible argument to keep Carl away from a Church that might make us stop selling Bird-Gods.

"After all," I said to myself, or something said to myself, "if the Catholics won't stand still for abortion, they sure won't stand still for us willfully violating the First Commandment. They surely won't allow us to make a good living with graven images."

"Overpopulation." I suddenly blurted. "Catholic countries are always over-populated because of the things that the Catholic Church teaches."

"That's not really true," Carl replied, as we drove toward the Park to check the raft. "Look at Spain, Ireland, and Portugal, all of

them Catholic countries. You don't see any over-population, do you?"

"How about South America? Mexico? All the Latin American nations? They're all Catholic, and they're all over-populated."

"The people are Catholic, but the governments aren't," Darlene replied. "They just look more Catholic than they are because the Catholics were the only ones who built churches that didn't fall down. Besides, there's no such thing as a 'Population Problem'. The culture of death invented it to keep people from wanting babies. It excuses the greedy selfishness that keeps them childless. God may think that people who believe insane theories like 'Sterilize yourselves and kill your babies to fight the imaginary problem of overpopulation' are so hateful that He wants to weed them out of the garden. Evil, stupid, murderous theories exist to automate the process of separating sheep from goats. The Garden of Eden was programmed to be self-weeding."

"But, what about Spain, Ireland, and Portugal? They are Catholic, and they aren't overpopulated, not by any stretch. Why aren't they?" I asked, genuinely intrigued.

"The Church is its own population control device." He answered. "In Catholic countries, there are places for spiritually inclined people. Convents and monasteries are places tax collectors hate! They're leaven in the bread, making the whole country rise to a love of life."

“You know.” Darlene said, “I wonder if there’s less sin in Catholic countries because spiritual people aren’t perverted by the more worldly theologies. Men and women who are frustrated in finding outlets for higher service sometimes slide into evil because they can’t find better things to do.”

“Sinners could be Saints?” I wondered to myself, but it was too totally Politically Incorrect a thought to think about, much less say out loud. By then, we’d reached the Park. We waved at the guard, an old friend by now, as we passed.

“How’s them beavers comin’?” he called to us, swiveling his La-Z-Boy away from the big-screen TV inside the Gate Guardhouse Suite.

“Real well, thanks,” Carl answered as we drove through the gate.

He waved us on, then turned back to watch the ballgame as two racing speedboats pulled water-skiers through the children’s’ swimming area.

I swam out to the raft, to be sure it hadn’t been bothered. Everything was in good shape, protected by the LAKE BEAVER signs, and swam back to the car.

“Al, while you were gone, Darlene and I were talking. We want to talk to a priest, to find out if this Bird-God business was such a good idea.”

“Okay with me.” I said aloud, but under my breath: “Now, that we’re finally making big money, we have to go get permission from some blasted priest.”

There was a big, old, square Church in downtown Erie. A priest was inside, filling the font.

“Father, there’s something we’d like to talk to you about,” Darlene said. The priest motioned us to sit down. He sat in a pew in front of us, turned around, and introduced himself. “I’m Father Cyrus Gonalthwy.”

“We’d like to find out about becoming Catholics,” Carl said.

“Hmmm. You must be Perkmistianists. Are you Padded-Pew or Plain-Pew Perkmistianists? No. You must be one of the Reform. Second Re-United Reform Perkmistianists, I’d guess. They’re the ones who are ordaining child molesters, and Episcopalians won’t be meeting to do that until next month.”

Even I was impressed. “That was clever of you, Father. Do a lot of people who get fed up with liberals become Catholics?”

“All the best ones.” he laughed. “Actually, it’s a toss-up between us and some new Fundie group for where the faithful go. We usually get Liberal Arts majors who wear regular neckties. They get people with clip-on ties.”

“People leave the Church, too,” I said. “Where do they go?”

“Did you think I was going to answer ‘Straight to Hell’?” he asked, sensing my hostility. “They go different places.”

“Blue-collar, pseudo-intellectual Catholics generally go to small churches where they can feel more important, ‘Welcomed!’ and ‘Fulfilled!’ Upper Middles go where they can push the pastor around. Lots of times, ‘the ‘I’m a Smart Catholic’ wants to trade in a spouse for a new model. He or she turns Mainline Moderne beforehand because it’s less obvious than doing it afterward. Rich oldsters go wherever the most Rich Oldsters are so they can complain about how their children and grandchildren don’t appreciate everything they aren’t doing for them.”

“That sounds awfully callous, Father,” I said.

“Not at all. The ones who leave The Only Church Jesus Founded are just weeds that God is pulling out of His Garden.”

I was used to kinder, gentler Mainline Moderne clergy who’d rather lie than hurt someone’s feelings, not someone who talked like Carl, and asked, “Your Church is supposed to be the doorway to Heaven. Doesn’t that attitude chase people away?”

“We hate for people to leave The Church. But, we’re here to serve the faithful and to keep the other churches as straight as we can.”

“You can keep churches straight if they aren’t Catholics?” I asked, interested in spite of my hostility toward what the priest might do to our profitable business.

“Well, we do have Celibacy, Obedience, and Poverty. As long as we have those vows, like Jesus, decent Christians have to

respect us, even if they don't like us. Our unchanging faithfulness makes them feel guilty if they stray too far. It doesn't keep 'em straight forever, especially since the big Twit Mobilization of the 60's, when they all got together and ganged up on us, but we still keep a lot of them in line."

"Well, a lot of people don't take you that seriously," I said.

"The smarter ones take us seriously, even if they don't like us very much. After all, we are the The Only Church Founded by He Who Fulfilled The Prophecies. Without us, the liberal Prothumanists would be led so far afield that they'd be lost almost immediately. Like the Arians, the Donatists, the Monophysites, and the other Prothumamsts led away by Pied Pipers of the Past. Those denominations are like tree limbs, dropping off and rotting away when they grow too far from the trunk."

"Why are there Prothumanists, anyway?" Darlene asked.

"A few Rogue priests got horny. They were too weak to be celibate and too dishonorable to keep their vows." was Fr. Gonalthwys' blunt answer. "After they gave in to their glands, they invented theologies to excuse their lust. First, Moslems, who had to have polygamy. Then, Greeks, who had to have married priests. Then, the Germans, who had to have married bishops. Then, the English had to have divorce and remarriage, the Protestant version of polygamy. Prothumanists and sex go hand in hand through the ages. Justifying illicit sex leads to justifying illicit

murder. That's where we are now, with abortion going strong and euthanasia about to be."

"But, isn't celibacy unnatural?" I asked.

"Of course it is. It's much harder to control desires than to give in to them. It's not a question of what's natural. It's a question of what's better. What's better is what's most Christ-like. Only those who read from Satan's Catechism say that we are unnatural to be celibate, that we are gutless to be obedient, and that we are fools to be poor."

"Don't you worry that it might be true?"

"No. We've seen the cycles go around so often that we're used to it. They try to us destroy from within, like Judas, and from without, like Luther. Next, the Crats will try to use our alleged violations of women's and homosexual's 'rights' to take away tax exemptions. Then, they'll outlaw us as enemies of equality. The best of us will be jailed and killed. We are always martyred in the name of freedom but in the cause of slavery."

"Surely, that's over-simplifying." I continued to argue, still motivated by fear of vast riches slipping away.

"Just because something is simple, it's not necessarily wrong. All governments turn against the Church. There's not as much tax money if people take celibacy, poverty, and obedience seriously. The Prothumanist clergy are often on the side of the Crats because they don't believe in Celibacy, Obedience, and Poverty, either.

Crats prefer Prothumanisms! They're so disorganized that they're easy to destroy. When they get The Church out of the way, they can pick them off Protestant denominations one by one. Then, even more vicious Crats, who've been waiting in the wings to bring death and slavery, move to center stage. That's about all there is to history."

"I never knew that The Church is as hated by the state," said Carl. "Listening to you has been like seeing myself in a mirror. I knew some were bad, but I'd never thought, even dreamed, that they were your enemy, too. You're just so much better than they are. No wonder they hate you."

"Since Babylon." Father Gonalthwy replied. "The sex-and-tax-crazed enslavers of mankind don't change from age to age. The only thing that ever stands between freedom and universal slavery are a few, mostly old, men with white collars. And the brave nuns who haven't turned into Spunky Chunkies."

"The Church and the state," I found myself saying, in another of those unbidden thoughts that turned into words and came out of my mouth, "and we're in the Teeming Midlands," I repeated, dreamily.

"That's similar to how the Celts described it," said Father Gonalthwy. "Middle Earth. Teetering between Heaven and the alternative. The Church, the state, the Teeming Midlands."

"Father, why can't women become priests?" Darlene interjected, I think because she'd heard the FedTube twits go on

and on about the unfairness of it all.

“What if a woman priest was raped? As a Catholic, she couldn’t abort the baby, and she might not want to give it up for adoption. That would be the beginnings of distraction. Nepotism would follow. No religion ever survived nepotism. She’d have to worry about her child, get money to take care of her child, and that would take her away from her parish. The last thing that our Church wants is for a priest to have an interest outside the parish.”

“I never thought of that, so it’s hard to argue with it. But, do you really think anyone would rape a woman priest?” I asked.

“Every demon in Hell would be cheering for it! Satan’s minions would encourage every deviate, which is almost everybody on the face of the earth, when you probe down to Original Sin, to rape female priests. When it happened, people in the congregation, knowing full well their own natures as endlessly described in popular literature, would be subtly encouraged to conclude ‘she must have asked for it!’ Besides, women priests would be an additional temptation for the clergy, and it was no less than Christ, Himself, who prayed, *‘lead us not into temptation.’* Every Prothumanist and BaaloCrat who wants to destroy the Church wants women priests.”

“Those are good reasons, Father.” she said, slowly.

“There are others. If Christ had wanted women to be priests, He would have chosen some as disciples. After all, actions do

“speak louder than words.”

“But Father, can’t women do everything men can do?” I asked. I felt someone should be saying something that was Politically Correct.

“No. Women can’t do math as well. They aren’t as good at spatial relationships. They aren’t as strong. Or, as inventive. Lots of differences. But, they have equal votes. To get gullible women to vote for their programs, BaaloCrats announce that women are superior to men because they are more ‘sensitive’. Many are too crippled by greed and vanity to see that as vote-buying and pandering. They don’t even see they are being prostituted!”

The priest continued. “Men and women are smart in different ways, like dogs and cats. It’s more important for women to have children and families than to be mere men-imitators. Men/women differences are always exploited by BaaloCrats. They want women to have as few live babies as possible so they can pay more taxes. When women get into the workforce, all wages drop. So, they undermine the special status of women, reducing them to barren men-clones. BaaloCrats want women to be tax-slaves and sexual playthings, not wives and mothers.”

I could tell that the word ‘BaaloCrats’ made an impression on Carl, that giving high-ranking bureaucrats a historically accurate name made a whole lot of things fall into place for him.

“What do we have to do to become Catholics, Father?” asked Darlene, suddenly and intuitively convinced by what the priest

had said that the Big Church was closer to God than any they were likely to find in any of the Mainline Moderne denominations or the new flocks of Fundies.

“Don’t decide too quickly. You can’t be driven simply by your disgust with how your parents’ religion kowtowed to political pressure. You actually have to like, if not love, The Only Church Jesus Founded.”

“How do you actually become a Catholic? What’s the process?” Carl asked. “We could look into it.”

“The American Bishops have made it very difficult. It used to be that you went to a priest and took Instruction. When he thought you were ready, he baptized you. Now, it’s it’s become a real test of faith. If you can get through RCIA, you can be admitted. For many it combines Penance *and* Instruction.”

“You know,” Darlene said, thoughtfully, “I think I could do that. If you guys in the white collars are right, it’s worth it. I hope there won’t be any Spunky Chunky soon-to-be-ex-nuns teaching us to be ‘sensitive’. I could start instruction next week. How about you, dear?” she asked, looking at Carl. “No, you’ll be out of town, working on the raft.”

“You work on a raft?” the priest asked, startled. “What on earth do you do?”

“It’s kind of hard to explain, Father. It’s a new kind of product we’re working on.” Carl answered.

“Uh oh.” I said to myself. “Now, we’re in for it.” The mother lode was going to be turned into a one-time nugget.

“There’s something you aren’t telling me.” the priest said, a very slight trace of a very slight edge in his voice. “I haven’t spent decades in confessionals without knowing when people are hiding something.”

“We make Bird-Gods.” I said, enjoying the discomfiture on Carl’s face, even if that was the only thing I enjoyed about having our newly found good fortune come to a screeching halt.

“Is it wrong, Father?” asked Darlene, anxiously.

“I don’t know what you’re doing, but I can tell that *you* think it’s wrong.”

“It’s hard to explain, Father. It’s really why we came here.” said Carl.

Father Gonalthwy looked expectantly at him, enjoying Carl’s struggle with truth the same way simpler souls have fun bird watching.

“They’re statues that we make, Father. We found a shipwreck full of copper ingots, and we fix them up and sell them. We gouge out two eye holes, and solder a lead beak below them. Sometimes, we give them a navel. We call them ‘Bird-Gods’, but all they are is metal.”

“The golden calf was made from scrap gold, but it caused a lot of trouble.”

“These won’t cause any trouble. We don’t have false priests to go with them.” I interjected. “How could something that harmless be wrong?”

“They’ll confuse people.”

“But, when people find out that the Bird-Gods are fakes, won’t that make them tend to disbelieve in false religions?” asked Carl.

“Should the Church hire prostitutes, so that when people find out how empty the pleasures of the body are, they’ll become Christians?”

Carl poured out the whole story, how he’d found the map, how we’d made the raft, gotten the ingots, and how impressive the Bird-Gods had looked, and how easily they had sold. “We can’t stop now,” Carl concluded. “We can make millions if we keep on going. And, we’ll give ten percent to the Church.”

“We don’t want that kind of money.”

“The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, at the Perkmistianist General Assembly Synod, would never say that,” said Darlene. “If you give him ten percent, that cleans up the other ninety.”

“He also says that it’s all right to commit ‘limited’ adultery, divorce and remarry as often as you want, kill your unborn children, and ordain child molesters.” Carl reminded her.

Father Gonalthway replied: “It’s your choice. You can stop selling Bird-Gods, and hope God will forgive you, or you can give ten percent to The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, and keep ninety

per cent with a semi-clear conscience. It all depends on how much a clear conscience is worth to you.”

“Father,” I objected, “the Bird-Gods are worth as much in scrap as we sell them for. No one is being cheated.”

“If these things look like you say they look, impressive, ancient idols, then pathetic, desperate people, Crats, animal fanatics, environmental fanatics, horoscope believers, anthropologists, all the sad cults of our time, will take them seriously. They will invent a religion, a whole culture to go along with them. They’ll use anything to justify what their demons drive them to do.

“This is dangerous. Baal is still on earth. He’s killing more babies than ever. This Bird-God of yours may give him a way to justify killing even more. You may have given evil a focal point, a platform on which the demons are sure to dance. God will not be pleased.”

“God! God! There is no God!” I said, my Agnotheism hardening. I stomped out to the car, where I sat, suddenly steaming over the money I was going to lose.

Carl and Darlene came out a few minutes later. “Cheer up, Al,” Carl told me. “We’ll go on raising ingots, but we’ll just sell them for scrap. We won’t lose a nickel because we’ll save all that driving around to antique stores.”

“But, you said that if we sold them for scrap, some big salvage company would find out about it, and strip the wreck.”

“We’ll just travel farther away to sell them. Take them to smelters, foundries, and scrap yards as far as Pittsburgh, Trenton, Cincinnati, any place where people won’t make the connection between the ingots and Lake Erie.”

“Father Gonalthwy said that we should try to buy back the Bird-Gods we’ve sold,” Darlene said.

“Father Gonalthwy says this. Father Gonalthwy says that. I’m sick of that fanatic already!” I said, not yet realizing what a nice compliment I was paying him.

“Al, were you interested in something besides the money?” Darlene asked.

“Well, I did want to see what would happen to all the suckers who were so stupid that they’d take Bird-Gods seriously.”

“Father Gonalthwy was right. I had the same thoughts.” Carl said. “It’s not right to fool twits and Crats, no matter how dumb they’ve made themselves.”

“There’s one thing that he didn’t say,” said Darlene. “Father Gonalthwy didn’t say anything about tithing.”

By Monday morning, I had come to agree with Carl, Darlene, and, regrettably, with Father Gonalthwy.

“I’m convinced. We can sell the ingots in scrap yards and junkyards, but should sell them in small amounts, far enough away from the Lake that no one will know where we got them.

“I’ve thought about this. A lot. I don’t believe in God, but I know that if there is a God, He will send me to Hell for certain for intentionally breaking His First Commandment. Statistically, the possibility of certain, eternal punishment just isn’t worth a few years of enjoyment. It’s not smart to risk a lot for a little gain. I’m not dumb enough to gamble with money that way. I’d have to be really dumb to gamble with eternal pain and suffering, even though there’s only a slight possibility that any of this stuff is real. That’s my new, Statistically Correct, Agnotheist position.” I didn’t know then that my opinion echoed that of Pascal.

The three of us de-consecrated the remaining Bird-Gods by knocking off their beaks with a mallet. I drove a truckload to a scrapyards in Pittsburgh. No questions, no problems. I knew enough to charge less than ten thousand dollars a load, so that I wouldn’t leave a paper trail of reported monetary transactions. I thought that might be important, later on, but I didn’t know why.

While I did that, Darlene tried to buy back the Bird-Gods from some antique stores. No luck. “They’ve all been sold. A lot of went for thousands of dollars. The dealers are all looking for more.” she told us.

“What’s done is done.” Father Gonalthwy told her. “*After* you’re Catholics, you can go to confession and be forgiven. Hope none of you die first.” he finished, cheerfully.

**Dr. Wursavolk, of Health In Human Services, helps. Carl explains Modern Feudalism. Consumer brain. Nobility. Mental Real-Estate. I understand about the 2nd Amendment. Low Brain Ranks. Parasites of PubEd.**

Carl and I made another trip to the Lucky Left. This time, we had a better net and equipment. And, Darlene had a new station wagon to drive us to the raft. We chugged out to where we'd left markers bobbing to help us find the wreck. By dinnertime, we'd raised nearly a fourth of a raft load. Our new, insulated wetsuits let us stay underwater longer, and the new net speeded up the operation.

We made a good dinner, and ate heartily. After dinner, we sat in lawn chairs and fished over the side of the raft. We didn't care if we caught anything, it was enjoyable just because it was peaceful and quiet. A few seagulls landed on the water near the raft.

"Say, Al, what are you going to do about your job? Aren't your 'Project Uplift' days about over?"

"When the payroll messenger dropped off my last paycheck, he told me about a new program. It's called 'Work-Study/Study Work'. In order to broaden the private sector experience of Health In Human Services workers, I get to work in the private sector for as long as I think it's necessary to learn about it."

“That’s incredible! You still get paid, I assume. Can you take the money, in good conscience?”

“Sure. It’s not my money that they’re giving me.”

“It is, but it’s impossible for anyone who’s getting money taken from taxpayers at gunpoint to understand that, let alone understand what’s involved in free markets. Why on earth would they want bureaucrats to understand the free enterprise system?”

“Dr. Wursavolk feels that his employees are getting out of touch with the problems of everyday people. You know, taxpayers (I almost said ‘Field Beasts’) get fired, or laid off, or hollered at, or have employers go out of business, or compete with foreign labor. Some years, they don’t get raises! Sometimes, they get wage reductions. They want us to see how the other half lives.”

“They think that getting two salaries for doing one job can put you in touch with reality?”

“Well, we can turn our private sector salary in, but that’s voluntary.”

“Do you honestly think that anyone will?”

“That’s not the point! The Government wants its own employees to get in touch with people who actually work for a living. Why, it’s a great program.”

“Sounds to me like what they’re doing is buying employee loyalty. Same thing every government has always done.”

“No, Carl. Things are different, now.” Time off, with pay, had made me friendlier towards my benevolent employer. More loyal, too. But, I certainly wouldn’t admit it.

“No, they aren’t. Not much ever changes, hasn’t for centuries.”

“Sure, it has. In the Middle Ages, there were serfs and kings and no middle class.”

“That’s what *they’d* like you to believe. The serfs actually were the middle class, like now. Slaves were the lower class, and there weren’t many slaves, except after a successful war with a lot of captives to sell. Today, there are still slaves, but they’re all owned by the Crats.”

“There’s no slaves, and the DemoCratic Party certainly wouldn’t own them if there were!”

“Remember the slaves freed by the Civil War? They’ve been re-enslaved, and are now owned and operated by DemoCrats. They saw that farm labor was being eliminated by tractors, cotton pickers, and combines, and saw that there were lots of jobs in factories. ‘If we can get them up North, in factories, and on welfare, we can smash the Catholic’s urban political structures. In a few more decades, we’ll put the factories out of business by pushing jobs overseas. More people will be utterly dependent on us! They’ll have no choice but to vote for us.’ the Crats realized. It took them half a century, but they’ve taken over the DemoCratic Party and gotten rid of millions of jobs. Worked hard to do it. Had

to pretend that environmentalists weren't crazy and that urban PubEd worked! *That's hard!*"

"But, we don't have Kings and Dukes now." I protested, ignoring his comments on what I still wanted to believe was a Party of concerned, decent people.

"Sure we do. The best countries have the same kinds of social structure today that have been around from the year One. The best, natural state of mankind is feudalism."

"Carl, I don't see any Dukes and Earls around."

"There's lots of them. Look at that Pepsi you're drinking. The CEO who runs Pepsi is the same as a Duke in the old days."

"That's ridiculous."

"Not at all. Back then, the only property was land, and the Nobles owned it. Today, there's mental real estate. The New Nobles are those who have taken over a few particles in the Fields of Needs, somewhere in the vast ConsumerBrain."

"Fields of Needs? ConsumerBrain? This is bizarre, even for you."

"Think of it this way. A long time ago, Sandwich was an Earldom, a physical place, ruled by the King's patent holder, the Earl of Sandwich. Today, an Earl of Sandwich would be like the owner of a few McDonalds. His Earldom is in the section of ConsumerBrain that demands fast, inexpensive food. He battles

the Dairy Queen and the Burger King for market share. All of them fight for more memory molecules in ConsumerBrain.”

“And, they fight for atoms and molecules in customers’ minds the same way that old earls would fight for land?”

“Yes, but I don’t know if they’re after atoms and molecules or something smaller. They have to take and hold several types of the sub-microscopic particles that comprise the real estate in ConsumerBrain. They need to excite Need notes and write their name on Memory charges. Then, they have to maintain connections between them by trying to take over Pathways.”

“When someone needs something, they think of the Noble who best excited their memory molecule. And, everyone remembers good quality, fair prices, and clever advertisements. Why, it’s almost automatic, isn’t it?” I realized, as a wave of understanding about production, packaging, marketing, advertising, ConsumerBrain and the Nobility washed through my mind, altering its sub-molecular structure so that it more accurately reflected Outerworld.

“It is. Historically, Catholic Feudalism provides the most satisfaction and the greatest freedom. Freedom gives opportunity, and opportunity provides the most accurate assignments of brain-ranks to the jobs they’re best designed to do. Catholic Checks and Balances makes Catholic Feudalism the happiest way to live.”

I reeled in my line, checked the hook to be sure that I still had bait, and cast as far as I could into the Lake, toward the glow left

in the sky by the setting sun. While I slowly reeled in, I thought about what Carl had said, and couldn't really disagree with him. Things did seem to be the same, except that we were aware of more and more of it.

“How did you figure out,” I suddenly asked, “that this mental reality of Consumerbrain is real? That there is a mental real estate occupied by a new nobility?”

“After I started believing in Jesus, I started to think about the fact that thinking about sinning was sinful. If sins in the mind were as real to God as actual sins, then the other things in the mind had to be real, too. That was when I began to see.

“From the Year One, the world of the mind, like Jesus said, has been seen increasingly throughout the world as being as real as the world outside the mind. If mental sin is as real as actual sin, then doesn't mental goodness lead to actual goodness? Isn't intellectual property as important as real estate? The world has been evangelized, and doesn't know it. Don't the Crats hate that!”

It was a relief to stare at the red and white bobber I'd been watching. I'd been thinking more about things since our first trip on the raft, I'd spent more time than ever inside a mental world where the only things that happened were thoughts. Things were simpler. It was easy to understand Carl's contention that things barely changed. The Earl of Sandwich still lived. The King of Carpets who advertised on local television owned far fewer specks in the brains of far fewer consumers. He wasn't really a 'King', but

a minor baron with delusions of nobility. I had the fleeting thought that in a truly happy society, nobles would always be people who were smarter, more honest, and more concerned and that they would be supported by people who could freely choose which noble they'd serve. Lurking in my mind was the idea that the peculiarly American Nobility of Ingenuity was slowly being replaced by whichever drones could suck the most taxes from workers. Today's Drone Nobility can't think their way out of a paper bag. So, they strive for connections to the state's armed forces.

Then, my mind was pained by a vision of myself looking in a mirror, and asking: "If people were truly free to choose the best, would they ever choose a bureaucrat? Can we be respectable if we hate our neighbors enough to rob them?"

"Nothing has changed," I said to myself, closing my mind's eye to the vision I didn't want to see. I closed off that thought in my mind because I wanted to undermine the validity of the entire thought process that had led up to it, so I waited until an objection to Carl's theory came to mind. One soon arrived, and I didn't ask what put it there. I asked Carl, "What about the King? We don't have kings anymore."

"Sure, we do. Our political system is just refined Feudalism. Instead of a King, who might get senile and mess up things, we get

kings for a few of their best years, when they're in their prime. It's an easier way to get a good king, and to get rid of a bad king."

"But, kings had a right to choose their successor."

"Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Reagan didn't?"

"Our President is really King for a Term or Two, and that the real nobility is composed of people who own real estate in ConsumerBrain? That's not as weird as it sounds." I realized, with a modicum of reluctance.

"Pretty obvious, really. In every age, some people are only able to get rich by convincing us that everyone has a right to more. A truly noble man, like Washington, believes in freedom. Second-rate, wannabe nobles, like Benedict Arnold, have more greed than ability. They know that the only way they can get money or power is betrayal at gunpoint. That's why the greediest gravitate to elaborate taxation/enslavement systems. What truly free people, unbribed and unbullied, would ever elect a Fidel Castro?"

If Carl wouldn't have put the word 'unbribed' in his last sentence, I would have used Clinton or Kennedy as an example of how a free people could elect glandular incompetents, but he'd denied me that opening.

"If the Middle Brain-Ranks were only smart enough, or courageous enough, to understand how much freedom they've lost because we're stuck with the taxingest Crats since Babylon, they'd realize that they're practically slaves! Naturally, that's why PubEd

won't teach real history, and why they're trying like crazy to get our guns."

"I don't know if people should be allowed to have handguns or those assault rifles," I said, as automatically and unthinkingly as I'd been Tube-trained to say.

"Of *course* they should!" Carl was actually outraged. Whether it was at my innocence, my credulity, or what he thought of as my stupidity, I couldn't tell. But, he was more upset than I'd seen him. "Assault rifles are nothing more or less than standard Infantry weapons. They're no different today than flintlocks were when Washington said in his Second Inaugural that it was incredibly important for Americans to own guns. He, the Adams's, Jefferson, Madison, all the founding fathers knew that if Americans were going to be free from their own government, they had to have infantry weapons."

"But, assault rifles are pretty dangerous, Al."

"Hogwash. Most people killed by guns were committing crimes when they got shot."

"Why do so many concerned people want to outlaw guns?"

"People who think free speech exists on FedTube are carefully taught that all should be dependent on the government. Taxes have to go up to pay for the dependents. When taxes get too high, people are more likely to revolt. That impels the Crats' urge to disarm people. Armed people aren't as easy to tax into slavery.

Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Castro, and all Crats all want to disarm people. Scratch a liberal, find a tax-grabbing tyrant.”

“Only people who own guns can fight oppression. Without guns, there can be no freedom from tyranny.” I realized. I couldn’t believe that I’d never understood why all those millions of NRA people were so serious about the 2nd Amendment. Carl had always understood what I was just now seeing, without the 2nd Amendment, the rest of the Constitution wasn’t worth the parchment on which it was printed.

I reeled in my line. Conversation with Carl had gotten so interesting that I hadn’t noticed that a fish had eaten the bait off my hook. I rebaited, and cast again into the dimmer glow of the West. By then, the seagulls were asleep, gently floating up and down on tiny wavelets. The wind had gone completely, and a full moon was rising. The only sound came from almost inaudible waves, slapping gently against the pine pontoons.

It was peaceful, sipping my drink from the Earl of Pepsi, eating Potato Chips from the Duke of Ruffles, sitting in a plastic chair made by some minor Baronet of lawn furniture. I was thinking not only of how important it was to buy an assault rifle as soon as I got back, but also, of Carl’s queer notion about how things never changed in substance, of how society was still made of nobility and commoners, and that the ownership of sub-atomic particles in Consumerbrain had become as profitable as title to mines, woods, and fields used to be.

“When people start their own businesses, they’re trying to find the proper level of thought complexity for their own Brain Rank, and, they’re subconsciously trying to break into the nobility!” I suddenly exclaimed. “Why, we must be the Barons of Salvage!”

It came clearer to me as I spoke. “And, the Christianization which led to the whole world seeing that mental reality, Consumerbrain itself, is as real and as profitable as anything in Outerworld has even changed the goal of war. Smarter nobles don’t want real estate, but pieces of Consumerbrain. Lenin was a murdering pig, son of Baal, dumb to pile up so much useless Asian real estate, while the far more noble Henry Ford went brightly gathering in the Fields of Transportation Needs throughout Global Consumerbrain.”

As the totality of this new picture of the world became clearer, I went on: “Even the weapons of war have become kinder, and more tolerant of forgiveness. The Earl of Pepsi’s sales-knights are battling with the similarly armed soldiers of the Mad Baron, Dr. Pepper, the Duke of Coke, and all the others. They fight for the two kinds of real estate, in Consumerbrain and Outerworld. Marketing and Advertising people are after need and memory particles of Consumerbrain. Sales-knights fight for Outerworld shelf-space in the stores. The very best sales-knights valiantly try to affect some of the most refined minds of Global Consumerbrain, the buyers for big retail outlets.

“Each Nobleman’s troops battle bravely with advertisements, discounts, promotions, patents, premiums and all the other modern versions of spears and swords. They strive for enough money to invade other areas, to control other Memory and Need particles, different shelves in different parts of the store. It all makes sense.”

“You have it, Al. Automated production, quality control, and marketing techniques have replaced battlefield tactics. Cars and delivery trucks replace warhorses and convoys of wagons and mules. Air Express and UPS take the place of carrier pigeons and messengers; corporation lawyers replace Ambassadors to Courts. More importantly, money has replaced blood. The Law of the Book replaced the Law of the Jungle. Actual warfare is reduced and relegated to actual warfare. Christ has won. Bankruptcies allowed by Chapter Seven and Eleven personify Christian forgiveness written into the Commercial Code. Execution and debtor’s prison have disappeared. The reality revealed in Galilee, that reality is in the mind, is increasingly the reality of commerce. In a civilized and free society, each mind is free to do whatever good things that it was custom-designed to do best.”

“Father Gonalthwy was right. There’s the Church, the State, and the Teeming Midlands. Carl, where do we bureaucrats fit in? Are we good for *anything* at all?”

“Crats used to be the people who hung around the castle, snatching scraps out of the air before they fell to the dogs. Crats

don't want to get their hands dirty, and they don't want to take the risks that many of the Teeming Midlands people do. They don't have the self-confidence or discipline to be in any Nobility based on individual accomplishment. So, they scrounge around the corridors of power, mugging taxpayers; enslaving them whenever they can."

"Not a pretty picture."

"Not a pretty thing to portray. Once, they helped the King to harass the barons, once with customs duties and levies, today with endless, make-believe environmental 'problems' and mindless successions of petty meddling, but they multiply like flies. And, they never think that they get paid enough."

"They don't teach things like this in schools, Carl!" I said, marveling at how simple things were beginning to be.

"It's like we talked about on the last trip. Schools are designed to keep things as confusing as possible. PubEd exists to make Teeming Midlands kids grow up too confused to fight, even for their own lives, lower taxes, families, and freedom. By the time they escape from urban PubEd, they're lucky if they can read without moving their lips, multiply two digit numbers, or have a vocabulary larger than a parrots."

I'd seen the truth of what Carl said in the endless wave of illiteracy that washed through the Parole Officer Trainee program. None of the kids with whom we dealt could read or write any but the simplest sentences. Some could not even write their own

names, yet all had spent years in urban Public Schools. As I thought of Consumerbrain, Outerworld, and those whose only skill was an ability to get money from too-trusting taxpayers, an odd thought crossed my mind.

**How many Crats can a country support? Is there a Host/Parasite ratio? Carl tells me about The Voice. I find out how to put a camel through the eye of a needle. My very own religious experience. Platoons of Angels. An ultimate truth!**

“How many Crats can a country support?” I asked Carl. “You’d think that there’d be some sort of a ratio. You know, like a human body can support only so many segments of a tapeworm before it gets sick and dies.”

“Crats always think that we can support a lot more of them. The exact percentage of Crats to working people should be two or three per hundred taxpayers. The ideal rate of taxation should be less than 10%. That’s eight useful Gov-emps per hundred productive citizens and leaves a little extra for pensions and benefits. At that percentage, every American gets to have a job that pays enough to buy an air conditioned house and two or three cars. We can survive with twenty tax-drainers per hundred workers, almost half of them useless, but there’ll be more poor people living on the brink. Over twenty tax-supported per hundred producers, and we slowly die. Twenty five percent brings bad recession. Thirty, *bad depression*. After that, societies end up with revolution or invasion and the death of the body politic. That’s as close to a magic answer as I can give you.”

I reeled in my line for the last time that night. No bait, empty hook. After I went to bed, I dreamed of shining knights in company cars, of the Fortune 500 fiefdoms staked out in Consumerbrain by industrious noblemen. I remember the strangely familiar voice saying, “Nothing really changes, over the long haul. Especially the Big Church. Crats change their form, but stay the same in substance. The Big Church doesn’t even change its form.”

The next afternoon, while we were bringing up the last ingots of the trip, I had an accident.

A corner of the net caught my air hose as Carl began to lift it. The air hose was ripped out of my mask. Suddenly, my heart began to race, and my mind went blank. All at once, the familiar voice from my dreams spoke to me. “Reach behind your neck, grab the air hose, and stick it back into your mask.” I was filled with relief when I obeyed and breathed air. I told Carl about it after dinner.

“The odd thing was that my heart began to beat faster and faster, using up oxygen. I knew I needed to keep all the oxygen I had in my bloodstream to keep from drowning. Why would my body do the exact opposite of what it should have done?”

“Maybe, fast heartbeats pump more oxygen to the brain so that you can think your way out of the problem,” he suggested.

I still didn't want to tell him about the voice I'd heard when the air hose was jerked away, but I did want to find out if Carl had had any experience with any sort of spiritual reality. I thought I could find out if I asked Carl why he believed in God.

Carl explained. "I wasn't getting anywhere. My life was boring. Sports were boring. Work was boring. Even friends were starting to get boring. Nothing was really as exciting as it was made out to be. Drugs lost their allure when I noticed that a few of my acquaintances simply disappeared. Even rich people didn't seem to be happy. I met Darlene, and we married. There was still something missing. So, I thought I'd 'have a go' at religion. I decided that to believe that the Bible was totally true, absurd as parts of it sounded. My reasoning was that more people had believed in the Bible than had believed in anything else, and that they might have been right."

"Total, unquestioning faith?" I asked.

"Yep. Complete immersion, as the old-time Baptists used to say. I was able to believe everything until I came to that part about the camel and the eye of the needle. I remember saying to myself, 'If I'm an American, and therefore rich in comparison with most of the world, then I've got no chance of getting into Heaven unless a camel could go through the eye of a needle.'"

"That's not meant to be taken literally, Carl. Even I know that. That's a metaphor."

“Not to me. I’d made up my mind that if it was in the Bible, it must be true, or it wouldn’t be in there. That’s when I felt a voice, coming to me in a thought.”

Immediately, I thought of the Voice I’d heard, but I didn’t say anything as he went on.

“How would *you* put a camel through the eye of a needle?’ the Voice quietly asked me. It was incredibly kind and gentle, that’s what I remember the most, how gentle it was. ‘I’d freeze it, and grind it up as fine as flour and dilute the powder in a big tank, and pump it through a microscopic hose so tiny that I could fit it through a needle’s eye. It might take weeks, but that camel would go through the eye of the needle.’ I answered, after I thought about it, awhile.”

“Good idea, Carl,” I said.

“The Voice didn’t think so. ‘Would the camel be able to walk after it went through the eye of the needle?’ it asked. ‘Of course not.’ I answered. ‘Then, it isn’t a camel. Any other bright ideas?’”

“You must have been dreaming.” I said, hoping it was true.

“I wasn’t. Then, I suggested making a needle so big that a camel could go through its eye. The Voice asked, ‘Could you sew a button on your shirt with a needle two blocks long? If not, it’s not a needle.’”

I agreed with what the Voice told Carl: “That’s true.”

“Then I started talking to the Voice, which I now know is what it wanted me to do all along. Well, then, Voice, how would *you* get a camel through a needle’s eye?”

“Did you get an answer?” I wanted to know, more desperately than I let on.

“The Voice said, kindly and gently, ‘Simply remove an egg from ovulating camel, the way artificial insemination people do with cows. You fertilize that egg, and put it in warm amniotic fluid, on a microscope slide. Looking through the microscope, you put the back of a needle in the tiny drop, and lift it so that the fertilized egg goes through the eye, like a golf ball going through a basketball hoop. Then, you put it into the mother camel.....’”

“And when that camel is born, it will be a camel that has gone through the eye of a needle!” I exclaimed, excitedly. “Carl, that’s incredible!”

“Yes. I’d always wondered what people meant when they said that faith was more important than intelligence. Then, I knew.”

“You know, if something like that happened to me, something that made sense out of the most bizarre sentence in the Bible, I think I’d believe in God.”

“It just has,” said Carl, softly.

Suddenly, inexplicably, I began crying. I barely noticed Carl walk away and considerately leave me by myself. I could hear my own, personal Voice singing pleasantly, some ancient hymn, and I

knew it was an angel, my own, personal guardian angel, who'd spent the whole first part of my life, working in conjunction with thousands of other peoples' guardian angels, just to prepare me for this moment. It felt like my whole brain was suddenly filled with platoons of angels, each one cheerfully doing his assigned task of re-arranging and re-connecting different sections of my brain so that everything made sense.

I could feel them cleaning off, with what I somehow knew were high-pressure sub-photon hoses, some sin-stained reminders of my past that made so many of my memory particles look drab and shabby.

As they hosed away the stains, whistling and singing as they worked, I heard tiny, tiny pieces of what first looked like dirt, but which were oddly charged particles cleverly designed and placed to provide maximum confusion. They were alive! Each desperately tried to wrap itself around a slender neuron, or tried to hide in the cracks between the molecules and atoms of my huge brain cells. Each screamed and screeched about going back to Hell to be punished for its failure. As my mind literally brightened, I could see the light, and knew I'd always wondered what that meant, and *knew*.

As they cleaned and scrubbed, a beginning was being made. I knew that what they would do today would only be a start. They even re-arranged a few huge memory molecules; twenty or thirty proton-sized dozer-angels shoved, pried, and towed them where

they were supposed to be, putting them in a most wonderful, logical order. Others were copying, erasing, cutting and pasting the little tiny charged particles that were thoughts, ideas, and memories where they were supposed to be. For a moment, it became clear.

The world and all upon it had been made in six days.

There was a Flood.

I was a son of Shem.

Jericho's Wall fell.

Jonah got swallowed and came out of the fish, alive.

Camels go through eyes of needles *almost* as easily as fingers through doughnut holes.

Most, oh most important of all, Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and became Man. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell. He rose to the Father. He will come again in glory. He will come again in glory! He Will Come Again In Glory! Miracles of miracles, the previously most frightening thought of all, that He will judge the living and the dead, turned into a long, vast sigh of relief!

Everything that the State had taught me was a lie. Most of what my four grandparents believed was true. I looked up, and wasn't surprised to see them above me, tiny, glowing particles of light. There were eight bright puffs, my Great-grandparents

behind them. Sixteen were behind them, and a huge triangle of light stretched back, widening out until it narrowed down to where Abraham and Sarah stood.

“Hey, Abe, what’s happnin’,” was the only thing I could think of to say, inane as it was. He just smiled. I knew that lots of others had found themselves zipping back through time and space and had said equally silly things to him. Another triangle of light widened behind them, their ancestors, until it began to narrow down towards Noah. The triangle of ancestors behind him widened, and narrowed again to Adam and Eve. Three diamonds in the sky. In the relationships between the time and numbers they contained lay glowing the secrets of time and space, God and man. I cried out to the three diamonds of light: “If you could speak, what would you say?”

The accumulated wisdom of all my believing ancestors since Adam was crystallized in their call: “Don’t take money from the Government!”

I was impressed, but still not convinced.

## HILLYBILLY HEAVEN

**Judith meets the Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech. He prays for her, sends her to Psycho ward at Euthenabout General. Dr. Lopalobe to operate. Matt can't help, Lt. Tryn tries. Baptist preacher stands up to Dr. Lopalobe. Lopalobe kills Little Jimmy Simms. Parboils his brain.**

The strain of seeing her grandchildren dead; one aborted, the other destroyed by Dr. Stupor, had a disastrous effect on Judith. She was a long way from the small church she'd attended in the mountains. She wanted to see a minister, but most of the churches in downtown Weirton had been closed or turned into parking lots as wealthy denominations followed the big money moving to the suburbs after Urban Renewal destroyed the city.

Not far from their tiny apartment was a huge, stone church. Its majestic doors opened for an hour on Sunday morning to admit a few former neighbors who still made the long drive from their far-flung suburban estates. It was a full-scale imitation of a Gothic cathedral, built with the money that flowed into the downtown Mainline Churches when they were still somewhat Christian, before the progressive moral collapse of the 1930s, when big government, birth control, and divorce, the harbingers of abortion and euthanasia, received theological respectability from clever Prohumanist bureaucrats who'd taken control of most Mainline hierarchies.

Judith went hesitantly to the “church”, to talk to the minister. In an inner office, a huge printer hummed. It was printing, signing, and sending very personal letters to wealthy parishioners, asking for financial support for a number of social projects. Guilty, rich Prothumanists, who knew full well it was their intentional destruction of traditional values that caused the cities to crumble, sponsored many such activities, none of which had any hope of working.

Their projects *couldn't* work. The Administrative Minister, officially titled Administer, The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, knew that one of the greatest enjoyments available to wealthy Prothumanists, one for which they'd pay dearly, was the deep satisfaction they gained from being able to say “See, no matter what you do for them, they don't appreciate it. You just can't do *anything* for people like that!” That cleared their consciences, so they could raise the rents of their large city landholdings, managed by faceless corporations staffed with eager bill collectors.

“I'd, I'd, I'd like to see the preacher,” Judith stammered.

A secretary finally stopped typing. She stared rudely at Judith, from her worn sneakers to her shabby coat. “Hillbilly,” she thought to herself, with the natural disdain for poor people she'd learned from working in the church. “The ‘preacher’ isn't in. Not the one who deals with the locals. He's gone to an interdenominational meeting in Rio, where there's a World

Church Council studying the problems of the Third-World Urban Super-Poor. He's helping to plan The International Hard Rock Concert, to tour America, so that our own poor people will see how lucky they are."

"Is there anyone else I could talk to?" Judith asked, unable to understand what the secretary was talking about, but gathering that there might be another preacher.

"The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech is here, but he's *In Conference*," the secretary replied, as if that settled everything.

"Could I see him, later?"

"Well, I just don't know. He is *In Conference*."

A thick, mahogany door opened, whispering its way across unusually plush carpeting. Portly Dr. Molech, dressed like a pre-War banker, ushered out an older, well-minked matron. "Thank you so much for your kindness," he said to her. "With the help you've given us, we'll be able to do so much for so many of those in need. Mrs. Intak, you are a *saint*."

"Oh, no, Beetle," she said, giggling lightly as she used the nickname he reserved for large donors. "I just do what I am led to do," she finished, more grandly.

"I *know* you do," he replied, in the sincere, congratulatory tone that made him a Fundraiser To Be Reckoned With. "And, I thank the powers beyond for your selfless dedication to doing good. The new condom dispensers you're putting in the Middle

Schools will do so much to help ease the problems of our poor city dwellers. What a *clever* slogan you've thought of. 'Rubbers, not mudders!'"

"If I can do anything else to help, just call on me, Beetle. I'm *always* ready."

"I will, Gorgette. You can be sure of that."

Mrs. Intak swept grandly out of the large, outer office, leaving a trail of perfume in her wake that had cost a dozen civet cats their glands. She was on her way to her accountant, who'd cleverly balance her donation against the rents she'd just been blessed to raise.

Dr. Molech's eyes fell on Judith, awfully watching Mrs. Intak leave.

"How may I help *you*?" He asked Judith, loudly enough so that Gorgette would hear and be impressed that *he* would take the time to talk to such human rubbish.

"I want to talk to someone," Judith said, beginning to cry. "I just want to talk to someone who knows the Lord. I'm so alone since we moved here. I can't stand it. I got no friends, and it seems like my whole family's dyin' off. I don't know what to do, preacher."

"Come in, dearie," said Dr. Molech with a theatrical patience, rolling his eyes skyward so that Mrs. Intak, who'd never actually heard the voice of a poor person before, would, from that brief

encounter, have conversation for a dozen luncheons, where she would openly marvel at “Beetle’s kindness with those people, really.”

“Preacher,” Judith said, separated from him and his new Hyper-Highback chair by a desk as big as a manure spreader, “I don’t even know where to begin. It started when the Gummit ruin’t our farm. Then, we had to come here. Our one daughter, Becky, was engaged to a sailor. She went and had an abortion, when they told her that he wasn’t ever comin’ home again, and she threw herself out the window, and she’s dead. And, her sailor, when he got back, he was so upset, he run his new pick-up into a tree, and he can’t walk no more. And, Lucy, she was married to a man who worked in the glass plant, and he was kilt, ‘cause the craneman couldn’t see through the steamed-up glasses the Gummit made him wear, and her baby was born retarded because of the Gas, and died, an’ she’s run off, and I don’t know where she’s at.....”

“Then, none of you, basically, have any money at all?” interrupted The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, his faint interest disappearing rapidly.

Judith was lost in thought. Suddenly, the question he’d asked her registered, and she answered. “No, we don’t have any money. We used to have a farm, but we lost it, when the Gummit came, and it all washed away. And, Lucy, my daughter, she couldn’t get welfare, so we owe Euthenabort General twelve thousand dollars,

and what are we gonna do? What are we gonna do? My husband and my boy, they've started to drinkin' again, and what are we gonna do, Preacher?"

"There are always problems, my dear," the Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech glibly replied. "They're caused by the transition from rural to urban living. There are many studies of the dilemma that I could give you to read about. You've just had more than your share of problems. You're a statistical quirk, that's all."

"How's it gonna work out? I mean, how's my babies ever gonna come back?"

"Oh, I don't know," The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech replied, loftily waving his hand as if chasing away a persistent fly. "These things have a way of working themselves out. You'll see."

"But, how's it gonna work out? How can we get twelve thousand dollars to pay that bill when my husband spends all his time and money drinkin'?"

"God will find a way," replied the minister, unobtrusively fondling Mrs. Intak's six figure check in the pocket of the vest he and a thousand other Mainline Moderne ministers had learned to wear at one of the "Clothes Make the Man" seminars, where clergymen learned to dress like bankers of the 1940s to impress potential contributors with their stability.

"Will you pray with me?" Judith asked.

With distaste that would have been obvious to anyone not as blinded by desperation as Judith, the Reverend Dr. Molech recited the newly approved, official prayer of the Prothumanists:

“Dear Parent from Beyond, if you are, if you hear, and if you care, be you man or woman, gay or straight, let us thank you for this woman’s problems. They have brought her to you, and we know that you will help her now. You will give her the strength to go on. Guide, Dear Parent Beyond, and show her the way. For her sake. For your sake. For Gosh sake’s. Amen.”

“Is that all?” Judith asked, as she raised her head. “Is that all?”

“Nothing more is necessary,” he answered, briskly. “Now, if you’ll excuse me...”

Dazed, Judith got up and left the large office, blindly walked past the huge, humming printer, and went back to the street.

Going down the broad, but surprisingly unworn marble steps, she tripped on an empty wine bottle and fell heavily. The sudden pain was too much for her. She sat on the curb, her feet in the gutter, cradling her head in her arms, sobbing, wracked with shudders.

The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech could see her from his office, through the thick, beveled leaded glass panes that made the whole window appear to be full of grieving women.

“She can’t be allowed to do that here!” he thought to himself, alarmed at the thought of her being seen by someone important.

“It could give the church a bad name!”

Quickly, he stepped to his desk, and pushed the Medical Emergency numbers he’d long ago memorized.

In a matter of minutes, two white-coated orderlies had loaded Judith in an ambulance whose windows were marked with snakes crawling over a stick, a primitive, totemic symbol that had suddenly and mysteriously replaced red crosses on the windows of medical vehicles.

The great minister smiled approvingly as Judith was hauled away. He sat down at his desk, as pleased with himself as if he’d just thrown a piece of street trash into the proper recycling bin. With a satisfied sigh, he picked a letter from the stack of mail whose reading occupied most of his mornings.

It was a personal appeal, from his Alma Mater, the Princeton Seminary of Comparative Theologies & Divinities.

“A new degree program is under consideration,” the letter began. “We intend to train ministers to perform the abortion ceremony. After all, why should we have to pass up this lucrative field, and turn it over to selfish, medical interests? If rabbis can circumcise, we can abort! The advantages of an Abortion Ministry are obvious. So many frightened and confused people still have feelings of guilt over abortions. We feel that if Forgiveness-trained ministers perform the abortions, we could remove that guilt. That would make repeat abortions far more popular and our cash flows would dramatically increase.”

The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech approved wholeheartedly. He was a great supporter of the School, and the School, in turn, generously supported him. He had the coveted Princeton degree. It licensed him to speak, in any United Reform Perkmistianist Church, for a mere fifty per cent of the plate.

He had, as did all his Fellows and Fellowettes, certain specialties. Less educated ministers would often ask them to speak on certain topics in their own churches when they needed to undercut any types of deviant thinking that might lead to income reduction or disaffection of wealthy tithers.

One of his most popular sermons, a subtle attack on Pro-Life groups, “Life Before Birth is as Unlikely as Life After Death”, was his personal favorite. Another, “Life is for Life”, blistered the ‘strait-jacketed mentality of anti-homosexual forces, of which a few benighted survivors remained, particularly in rural churches. Another sermon, “What Did Jesus Know About Women’s Rights?” he saved for vacation. In it, he lampooned the occasional behind-the-times Perkmistianists who still believed that women should not be ordained, simply on the grounds that Jesus was wrong to have not ordained any female disciples.

His last, a rarely called for, and therefore considered scholarly piece, reduced ‘Jesus, The Historical Figure’ to a ridicule of the Catholic Church and the few, remaining Mainliners who still believed in such “Unfashionable Superstitions” as the Trinity and the Virgin Birth.

As he read, approvingly, he mentally estimated his own increase in income if he could squeeze a few abortions into his usually empty days. He was so engrossed in the potential increase of his income that he didn't hear the wailing siren of the ambulance that carried Judith away to Euthenabort General.

Judith was gurneyed into the Emergency Room, dressed in the newly mandated HIHS strait-jacket that prevented every newly admitted patient from interfering with Medical Procedures. The examining nurse raced over, took a quick look for jewelry on her fingers and wrists, went through her purse and billfold, found nothing of value, then examined her. Seeing Judith's obvious distress, she called Dr. Lopalobe, the foremost practitioner of psychiatric surgery in Weirton. She knew whom to call first. Dr. Lopalobe, after all, gave any nurse who called him in before any other doctor five per cent of billings, a practice unknown to some of the older physicians. She pushed the private beeper he always left with the examining nurse on duty.

"Damn!" Dr. Lopalobe said, "Just when things are getting interesting."

What was interesting was the experiment he'd been performing on little Jimmy Simms. Jimmy had been brought to Dr. Lopalobe because he'd disrupted his International Middle School Course in Eskimo Studies by loudly imitating a seal.

“You really must do something with him, Doctor,” a classroom observer from Health In Human Services had said. “This is a Government-required course, dealing with constructive uses to which people can be put when they’re too old to pay taxes or too poor to be of any interest to a funeral director. When the film shows Eskimos happily feeding frozen oldster parts to their sled dogs, this awful boy distracts the class by making obscene seal noises. The students aren’t taking the course seriously. You have to do *something*.”

“I always help the Government because the Government always helps me!” Dr. Lopalobe had replied. So, little Jimmy Simms found himself escorted from his classroom to Euthenabort General, strapped to a table, while Dr. Lopalobe injected tiny squirts of boiling water deep into his brain.

“Take over, nurse!” he called dramatically, and headed to the emergency room. He was soon over his pique at being interrupted. “There’ll be lots more bad kids,” he reassured himself, as he bustled down the hall.

Judith, already depressed, was nearly frightened out of her mind, finding herself strait-jacketed in the same hospital where her grandson had been ‘accidentally’ killed by Dr. Stupor.

*“Slash and cut, slash and cut, deep into the brain!  
Slash and cut, slash and cut, take away the pain!  
Stand atop  
a ziggurat  
And catch the crimson rain!”*

Dr. Lopalobe hummed his old school song to himself, gleefully anticipating the destruction about to descend upon the world contained in Judith's skull.

"Nurse, prepare her for surgery!" he ordered, briskly, without examining Judith.

"But, doctor, her next of kin...."

"This is a Psychiatric Emergency!" he bellowed, unwilling to believe that a lowly nurse would dare to speak to him in any tone not bordering on slavish devotion. "I have the Health In Human Services Permit to operate in Psychiatric Emergencies without kin consent."

That was true. He'd performed everything from hundreds of needless tonsillectomies to abortions under the protection of the Permit. The Slashing License, as it was jocularly called at the Doctor's Bar and Pill, had cost him plenty. He'd given money to liberal politicians ever since the night he'd met a Kennedy in a whorehouse. The Slashing License had been a good investment. Under prevailing Blue Double Cross rates, other doctors had to split their fees with him to get him to approve emergency operations for their own patients. He was a valuable man to the medical staff, even if one or two of the more traditional doctors didn't like him.

Old Matt lurched into Euthenabort General at the same time. He'd been drinking, had fallen in the street and bounced his head against a Mini-Meter, one of dozens of low parking meters

installed for wheelchair riders near a sheltered workshop by a financially desperate Weirton City Council.

Matt was in two kinds of blur, alcoholic and cerebral, but he could still recognize Judith, going out of the emergency room on a gurney.

“Judith, Judith?” he called piteously. “Is that you?”

The sound of his voice had a calming effect on her, and she twisted her head as much as the straps would allow.

“Matt, Matt, they’re gonna cut my head open. Please, don’t let ‘em.”

He staggered towards her, sobering at every step, but Dr. Lopalobe was too quick for him. Quickly sensing that he might lose out on a lucrative, tax-supported welfare case with virtually unlimited billing rights, Dr. Lopalobe called for Security.

“That man is a dangerous psychopath,” he said, with the calm assurance he’d learned in his acting courses at the Harvard School of Medicine. “Restrain him!” he directed the uniformed guards.

As enthused as hounds gratified by hearing their masters’ voice, the guards raced toward Matt and roughly slammed him up against the wall.

Dr. Lopalobe chuckled to himself. He knew that Matt would probably break under the strain of watching his wife be needlessly turned into a zombie while he was unable to help her. Many past experiences told him he’d soon get another fat welfare fee from

operating on Matt, after he was driven sufficiently mad from grief and frustration.

The police lieutenant investigating Ms. Fattick's disappearance came into the room when he heard the disturbance.

“Officer! Officer!” Matt called, frantically. “That man’s goin’ to operate on my wife’s brain. She don’t need no operation! You got to stop him! Please! Please, stop him!”

Lieutenant Tryn stood in front of the gurney, forcing it to stop. Dr. Lopalobe cursed himself for not having thought to have Matt gagged.

“This is Psychiatric Emergency Surgery!” he told Lt. Tryn. “I have the Federal, Health In Human Services Permit to perform surgery at my own, personal discretion. This woman is in need of immediate surgery, in my professional opinion, if she is to become a Contributing Member of Society.”

“Don’t let him. Please, don’t let him,” Judith moaned. “I’m all right. I’m just sad, because my daughter died, and both of my grandchildren, too. Don’t let him cut me, please, don’t let him cut inside my head.”

“This is my permit!” screeched Dr. Lopalobe, waving the certificate he carried in an amulet. “It’s signed by Dr. Wursavolk, himself, the Secretary of Health In Human Services. It gives me permission to operate at will, as an officer of the Federal

Government. If you try to stop me, you're guilty of interfering with a Federal Officer. Your tax returns for the last ten years will be audited," he finished, hissing the last sentence under his breath so that only Lt. Tryn could hear.

"I'm not arguing with that, but this lady seems all right to me," protested Lt. Tryn.

"Are you a doctor?" asked Dr. Lopalobe, just as he'd been carefully taught when challenged on virtually anything.

"No, but..."

"Well, I am!" snarled Dr. Lopalobe, as if it meant something. "And, I say that she needs immediate psychosurgery."

"Please, don't let him take her, officer," pleaded Matt, from his knees, knowing that the policeman's gun was the only thing that stood between Dr. Lopalobe's scapel and Judith's brain.

"He *does* have the permit," said the Lieutenant, in a voice that meant he was going to give in to superior authority. "What if she was your wife, and you were me?" asked Matt, in an attempt to swing the policeman's sympathy. "Would you want me to let him do it?"

"Doc, maybe we ought to get a second opinion on this," suggested Lt. Tryn, trying to find a middle course.

"I warn you, officer, you're interfering with a Federal Officer."

"Stuff it, Lopalobe," a new, cold voice broke in. "This woman doesn't need any of your surgery, or any of your hot water

treatments, either. She just needs to go home.” It was a Baptist minister, filling in for the regular chaplain, a vasectomized Episcopalian. That chaplain had never been known to object to anything, even to the strange ceremonies that took place some nights behind the barred windows in the Children’s Wing, so the hospital staff was stunned when a real minister went over to the gurney, and unstrapped Judith.

“You can go now,” he said, kindly. “Stay out of this place.” he whispered in her ear. “Don’t let them get you again.”

“You have no right!” screamed Dr. Lopalobe. “You have no right to interfere with billing procedures or the health of patients, and you know it! I’ll report you to the Administrator! I’ll have you fired! You’ll never work again! Depriving a licensed Euthenabort Doctor of potential billing! That’s a crime against the Government, against the whole Medical Establishment! You ought to be shot! I’ll get you, just you wait. You’ll be sick someday, and I’ll get you!”

Shaking with rage, Dr. Lopalobe strode down the long hallway from the Emergency Room, as the chaplain helped Judith onto her feet.

She staggered and fell when her full weight came down on her ankles.

“See! She can’t even walk!” screeched Dr. Lopalobe from the hall. “I told you. She needs surgery.”

“She can’t walk because she was strapped so tightly into the gurney that her circulation was cut off,” called the chaplain, calmly.

“You haven’t heard the last of this!” yelled Dr. Lopalobe, shaking his trembling fist. He went upstairs, still in a rage, and the eminent surgical psychiatrist jerked the syringe of boiling water from his nurse, a sex-murderer on a work-release program, and injected nearly a cup of still-bubbling water deeply into the brain of the boy who’d disturbed his Eskimo Study class for the last time.

“That’ll fix ‘em,” Dr. Lopalobe said to himself, as the anger flowed out of him. Little Jimmy Simms began to grow pale, and Dr. Lopalobe smiled to himself. His smile grew broader as he noticed his assistant’s wide eyes and blank grin. As usual, he was considerate enough to leave the room before rigor mortis set in.

**Lt. Tryn tries to find Ms. Fattick. Can't. MacAbees decide to go back to the hills. Gummit gets another MacAbee. Then, another. Two MacAbees remain. The Matts figure it out! Strike Back! Old Matt Zaps a Crat!**

Downstairs, Lt. Tryn watched Matt and Judith leave the room, Judith leaning heavily on her husband. He resumed his interrupted investigation of Ms. Fattick's mysterious disappearance.

"She was in Billing, in her office, the last time I saw her, talking with some colored, I mean, black, I mean, African-American people," Dr. Drainm, CPA, Head of Billing explained. "Then, she just seemed to disappear. She wasn't at our luncheon symposium, when The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech gave his talk on the Ethical and Moral Responsibility of a Licensed Abortionist, and How it Interfaces with Responsible, Effective Billing Techniques and the importance of Cash In Advance.

"So, she must have left slightly before lunch. She was here at break-time, from nine-thirty to ten-thirty, so she must have gone between ten-thirty and eleven, when our luncheon meetings begin."

"You people get an hour break *every morning*?" asked an incredulous Lt. Tryn.

We find that longer breaks actually result in more productive work,” recited Dr. Drainm, CPA, staring blankly at the framed accounting degrees on the wall.

“Is there anyone who saw Ms. Fattick between the morning break and lunchtime?” the officer asked.

“No. We’re all in private offices, so that people with no money won’t have witnesses when we call them nasty names to bully them into paying their bills. None of us could see her leave, since her office is next to the exit.”

“What about the people you saw in her office? Who are they?”

“I don’t know. They might be involved with a private account she was working on. Senior Collectors are allowed to work written-off accounts for themselves, you know. They feel they should get a piece of the pie, too, and we really don’t check into what they’re doing very often.”

Lt. Tryn shook his head, to clear it. He didn’t know what to do or to say. He’d never dealt with anything like the inner workings of hospital billing, not even in prison work or organized crime investigations.

“Were there any personal problems in her life?” he asked, looking for any lead at all.

“No, she was just a typical hospital employee. Hard-working. Dedicated. No reason for anyone to dislike her. Not at all. She was

a real contributor. A team player. She was a credit to Euthenabort General and to the Billing Department, too.”

“I see.”

“Do you have any idea what might have happened to her?” Dr. Drainm asked.

“None, really. Her roommate, Ms. Levee, called my office this morning, and said she hadn’t been home for two days. We’re checking out all the possibilities.”

“I wish I could be more help, Lieutenant. She certainly was a good worker. The only problem that I know she had was with her cat, who kept ruining her furniture. But, sensitive as Ms. Fattick was, I don’t think that would have caused her to do anything drastic.”

Neither of the men realized that they were speaking of Ms. Fattick in the past tense, much less stopped to think about what might have made them do so.

After a fruitless morning interviewing orderlies, nurses, and other secretaries, Lt. Tryn left. “She seems to have vanished into thin air,” he said to his assistant as they walked under the shadow of the smokestack on the way to the car.

“Let’s go back to the hills, Judith,” Matt said, after they’d gotten back to their apartment. “We’ll be happier there.” They decided to borrow some money from Judith’s father, the last of her family. Paps had retired after thirty years as a barge

deckhand. He was eighty, but still healthy. He lived in two small, sparsely furnished rooms. He rented them from an old hotel near the river, in what had been the commercial section of town, before the railroad came, and moved commerce uptown. The business district moved still farther away as new highways were built. Judith had seen her father more frequently, in the weeks after Becky's death, when Matt had begun to drink heavily.

Matt and Judith went into the old hotel. As they passed by the long-unmanned desk, into the dark stairway that led upstairs, they felt unaccountably depressed.

Matt, whose eyes were better, led the way down the even darker upstairs hallway. The oppressive smell made them glad to get to Pap's apartment, where the air was cleaner.

The door was closed, but not latched. "Suppose he's out, somewhere?" asked Judith.

Matt pushed the door open. The room was a shambles. All the furniture was overturned. The dresser drawers had been dumped out on Pap's body, covering him with the few clothes he had.

Judith collapsed. Matt knew there was nothing he could do for Paps, not after he'd seen that cold, twisted grimace on his still, stony face. He picked up his wife, and carried her thin body down to the couch in the lobby.

"Wake up, honey," he pleaded. "Please, please, wake up."

He ran to the long-unused janitor's closet under the stair way, and brought an old mason jar of water that he sprinkled on her head. Finally, she moaned, and awakened.

"They've kilt Paps. They've kilt my grandchildren. My daughters is gone. My farm. My house. My neighbors. What are we gonna do, Matt? What are we gonna do? We gotta fight. They're killin' us, one by one."

"Nobody's killin' us," he said, trying to sooth his wife, but in his heart, he knew she was right. Something was destroying them, and all the other working people they knew. They were being picked off, one by one by one.

"Wait here," he said, as if she could have gone anywhere. "I'll call the police."

He went outside, found a pay phone, dialed the police, and raced back.

"Go up to the room, Matt," Judith whispered, faintly. "See if you can find somethin', anything at all that'll let us know who killed him. The police won't ever do nothin'."

He was glad to have something real to do. Fleeing the helpless feeling Judith's condition put in him, he rushed upstairs, back to Pap's room.

He picked up the clothes dumped on Pap's body, uncovering his hands, which, even in death were trying to pull loose the suspenders with which he'd been strangled. Held tightly in his

right hand was a small envelope. Matt had to pry apart the cold, stiff fingers that held it in a death-grip.

Part of a check was inside the envelope. It was from the Department of Health In Human Services. Stapled to it was a small, half-empty plastic bag.

“What’s this doin’ here?” Matt asked himself. “The only checks that Paps got were from Social Security. Whoever killed Paps must have dropped this. It’s a clue!” he said, aloud, as he stuck it in his shirt pocket. He looked around for further evidence.

“Hold it right there, Mister!” a loud voice suddenly commanded. Junior turned, to see a crouched patrolman aiming a huge, black, bulbous automatic at him.

“It was me who called you,” Matt explained, slowly raising his hands. “This here’s my father-in-law. That’s my wife, downstairs, on the sofa.”

“Okay,” said the policeman, holstering his gun. “I didn’t want to take any chances. If that’s your wife down there, you’d better see to her. She don’t seem any too good. I’ll look around here.”

Matt rushed by the policeman, and nearly bumped into Lt. Tryn, right behind him. The check and envelope pocketed and forgotten, Matt raced downstairs. Judith was coughing, weakly and spasmodically.

“I’m goin’, dearest,” she said to him, softly, as he knelt by her side.

“Don’t go. Don’t. You don’t have to die. You can make it, Judith, you can live!” Matt hugged her, awkwardly. “Please, don’t leave me, don’t leave me alone. I don’t have nobody left but Young Matt, if you go. Please. I’ll call an ambulance.”

“Won’t do no good,” she answered, even more softly. “You know what they’ll do to me in that hospital. Besides, there just ain’t no more reason to live. They’ve kilt everything I ever loved. I never did nothin’ to them, but, still, they’re killin’ us. I don’t even know who it is, I just know that there’s death all around. The gummit’s killin’ us all, and I’m sick of it.”

“Judith, Judith,” Matt protested.

“It’s gone, Mattathias. All those years, all gone, all for nothin’. All my children dead or gone, ‘cept Young Matt, and he drinks so much he might as well be gone, too. No, I can’t hold on to it anymore. I just don’t see no point in it. Poor old Paps. Goodbye, Mattathias. Goodbye.”

Matt knelt over her, on the old, velveteen sofa, as an ambulance crew carried Pap Freeman’s body down the stairs. He felt Judith’s hand grasp his, with a strength that hadn’t been there for years. “Get ‘em, Matt. Get ‘em for me!” She whispered, faintly. Suddenly, like a swallow bursting out of a barn, she was gone.

Mattathias sobbed. He allowed himself to be interrupted by the policemen. They took Pap Freeman’s name and the information they needed for their report. Matt was beyond caring. He followed the stretcher bearers to the hearse as they drove her

to the mortuary, and staggered blindly down the middle of the street after it.

As he went down the street, racked by grief, things began to become clear. “It was the Gummit, weren’t nobody else, that ruin’t the farm. Then, they kilt the babies. Then, the girls, one dead, one gone. My son, my only son, a useless drunk, my wife dead from heartbreak. Pap’s gone. What good is livin’ if I don’t try to get as many of ‘em as I can? Isn’t that what Young Matt said, ‘Why not get as many of ‘em as you can, if you know that they’re gonna get you anyway?’ I’ll do it. I’ll get as many of ‘em as I can. Is that it, Lord? Is that what you want me to do?”

That night, Mattathias went back to the apartment. Young Matt, his eyes fixed and burning, glared blankly at him.

“They got Ma, too? It was on the news. They got her, didn’t they?”

“Whoever, or whatever, killed Paps killed your Ma. Broke her heart.”

Suddenly, Matt remembered the envelope and the check he’d tucked away.

“I found these gripped in Paps’ dead hands. He musta taken ‘em from whoever kilt him.”

“They’re both from Health In Human Services,” Young Matt said. “The same print is on the check and envelope. What’s that mean?”

“Computer foul-up? Somebody at Health In Human Services sent the check to Paps, and the envelope to someone else, but, now they’re together? That don’t make no sense. What else is in it? Some kind of powder?”

His son licked his finger, and stuck it in the white powder, and tasted it.

“It’s some kind of a drug. Let’s give some to the cat.”

He went to the yellowing refrigerator and found a piece of hamburger. He rolled it around in the powder, and gave it to the old Tabby they’d rought from the farm.

The cat ate it. In a few minutes, it began to rub up against their legs, purring loudly. Old Matt picked it up.

“It’s heart’s beatin’ a mile a minute,” he said, and handed the cat to his son. It was dead by the time he got it.

“What do you make of it?” asked Old Matt, so used to death that the passing of their last link with the farm meant nothing.

“It’d be my guess,” his son answered, slowly and thoughtfully, sitting down at the linoleum-topped table, “that the Gummit don’t want old people around, suckin’ up Social Security money. I’ll bet they confiscate drugs from dealers and give them to addicts if they’ll agree to steal Social Security checks from old people.”

“They’d stoop that low?” his father asked, forgetting what Dr. Medpig and Dr. Stupor had already done to his grandchildren.

“Once, I heard ‘em, down at the Census Bureau. They was sayin’ how they got to keep track of how many old people there are, and if there get to be too many, then each district has a quota they got to get rid of, otherwise people will think that the Social Security fund’s gone broke, and they won’t want to pay into it, any more. I guess that they get drug addicts to kill old people, ‘specially if they won’t sign living wills that’ll let the doctors and hospitals kill ‘em ‘n sell their parts.”

“Who would kill some nice old man like Paps?”

“Drug-addicted kids, most likely. They make the public schools real bad, so the kids can’t learn anything, anyway. Then, they make sure that the schools get real rowdy, so no one will go. They won’t let ‘em teach right from wrong, so nobody really knows anythin’ about good and bad. N’ they’ve broken up their families so that there’s no fathers to tell the kids to get out of bed in the morning and get to school or work. When the poor bastards finally quit school, which they have to do to keep from payin’ protection or gettin’ beaten to a pulp, the Gummit makes sure they’s plenty of drugs to get ‘em hooked on.”

“But, the Gummit says drugs is illegal.”

“They just do that to keep the price of drugs real high. Since the kids are kept illiterate, they can’t get jobs that pay enough to buy drugs, so the only way they can get it is steal it or start sellin’ drugs themselves. To make sure that the kids’ll kill the old people,

the Gummit sends them a nice check, every month, for bait. Is there an easier way to get rid of old people?”

“It’s like fishin’, ain’t it? The kids get hooked, and they kill the suckers, all us people who figure that we’re gonna get a good return on our Social Security.”

“That’s it, Pa.”

“We’re gonna have to get ‘em, aren’t we?”

“We’re gonna have to.” his father said, suddenly straighter than a ramrod. He looked as steely-eyed as old John Brown had been, the day before he attacked the Federal Powers at Harper’s Ferry, the powers that kept his fellow men in chains.

The next morning, a policeman knocked on the door. “They’d like to see you down at the morgue, to make a final identification and to pick up your wife’s effects,” the patrolman said.

Old Matt followed the officer’s directions to the morgue. He was appalled by the cold, white rooms. After identifying his wife, he went outside, into a warmer hallway, and sat on a bench.

“Do you want me to get ‘em, Judith? Is that what you want me to do? We’ll do it. We’ll get ‘em all. Young Matt and me, we’re gonna try to get ever’ one of ‘em. If we don’t stop ‘em, who will?”

Lost in his deadly daydream, Mattathias didn’t notice the undertaker walk by him, and go into the morgue. He only became aware that something was going on when he heard voices raised in argument.

“The price of gold’s gone up again,” the Coroner was saying, clearly audible through the partly-open door. “That means that their teeth are worth more. If we don’t get another ten dollars a body, we’ll start cremating them and we’ll just keep all the gold.”

“You better not try that,” replied the mortician. “If you start taking it all, I can guarantee you that the newspapers will make one big stink about it.”

“Why would they make a stink if we keep the gold?” the Coroner asked. “They don’t ever mention anything about the countless pounds of gold some of you undertakers rip off every year.”

“It pays to advertise. You think we need to buy all that newspaper space every year? No way. People are going to die and be buried whether we advertise or not. We use part of what we get for the gold to buy advertising space. You think there’s a newspaper in the country that’s gonna kill that golden goose? Now, you listen to me, buster, and you listen good. You start taking teeth, and I mean, if I find one empty socket, you’re gonna find out how it feels to have no media protection at all. You might actually have to work for a living.”

Soon, the double doors swung open, and the undertaker, still muttering to himself, roughly shoved the cart that carried Judith’s body into the hall, past her husband.

“Is that the only way they can make a living?” he asked himself. “Stealin’ from the living, then stealin’ from the dead after

they kill them? They ain't even people.”

As he sat there, trying to digest the knowledge that seemed to be drowning him, he heard the Coroner pick up the telephone.

“Doctor Greenback Medpig II, please. If he's not there, please connect me with Dr. Shekel Stupor.” There was a short pause.

“Dr. Medpig, this is Dr. SuccEAU, down at the morgue. We have a problem.”

“Well,” he continued, after a pause, “you know the morticians, Nightlift & Sons, who have all the county business?”

Matt quietly went over to an extension on a desk in the hall and lifted the receiver.

“Sure, I know Nightlift, the grave-robbing ghoul!” he heard the hearty, booming voice of Dr. Greenback Medpig II reply. “What's that old stiff-sticker up to, now?”

“It's the gold. The gold in the teeth. The price of it keeps going up, and that thieving mortician won't us our money. The County Medical Association is supposed to get five hundred dollars for each ounce of gold for the Euthenabort out-of-country retirement fund, but that snake Nightlift is keeping all the increases.”

“How long's this been going on?” thundered an outraged Dr. Medpig. “Why, that's the same as stealing!”

“It's been going on too long. Last time I asked him about it, he said that if we kept pestering him, he'd get his brother-in-law, in

the state legislature, to sponsor legislation, letting more people into the medical schools.”

“You should have told me *immediately*, Dr. Succreau! I’ll tell you what, let’s start taking the gold before the corpse leaves the morgue. If any relative is greedy enough to notice the missing fillings before Nightlift gets the stiff’s mouth sewn shut, we can blame it on some ambulance driver or a greedy deputy with a set of Vise-Grips.”

“I told him we’d do that, Doctor, but he said that if we did, he’d leak it to the papers, and they’d expose us. He said some of us might even lose our licenses.”

“When’s the last time you ever heard of a Doctor losing his license?” asked Dr. Medpig II. “Why, even in New Orleans, at the last Health In Human Services convention, Dr. Wursavolk was there, and served fresh fetus and real ladyfingers from the SierraGreen Recycling Committee. You think he lost his license? No way. Health In Human Services, and Senator Mendle Meddle congratulated him on finding a new food supply! There’s no way a Doctor like you or me can lose a license, not as long as he pays his Euthenabort dues. You tell Nightlift that if he doesn’t fork over what he owes us, he’ll be hearing from *me*! If necessary, I’ll leave Standing Orders at the Emergency Room, in case any of his family ever gets hauled in from an accident. He’ll know what I mean.”

“Thank you, Dr. Medpig,” the Coroner gushed. “You’re really a chip off the old block. Your father must be proud of you! You’re a

real asset to Euthenaborts everywhere. Good-bye, sir.”

As the receivers clicked in his ear, Matt hung up, pale as a sheet. He walked woozily back to the bench, and sat down, his head in his hands.

Dr. SuccEAU came out, on his way to lunch.

“What are *you* doing here?” he asked, roughly, afraid that Matt might have overheard the conversation. “You have no right to be hanging around here, after you’ve identified a corpse. You must have a job you can go to, or something better to do. We don’t like people hanging around the morgue unless they’re on official business.”

“Business like sellin’ teeth?” Matt asked, his self-control falling away.

Dr. SuccEAU opened his mouth to call for a deputy, to have him jailed on some charge or another. Before a sound could come out, Mattathias had slammed him into the wall, so hard that his skull was fractured.

Remembering what his son had told him about getting rid of Ms. Fattick’s body, Mattathias slung Dr. SuccEAU over his shoulder, like a deer, and headed down to the building’s basement incinerator. He stuffed the body inside. “If you ain’t dead, you will be soon!” he said. As he closed the door, a roar of blue flame filled the combustion chamber.

“I’m gonna get some more for you, Judith. I’m gonna get some more.” and he walked out the door into the suddenly sunny streets of wild, wonderful, Weirton, West Virginia.

**Darlene buys a motorboat, comes out to the raft. “It’s about time.” I think about revolution. I don’t want to talk about the Loch Ness Monster. Carl’s right, but, so what?**

We’d seen a few speedy boats out on the lake, but none had come up to the raft until Darlene showed up at breakfast. She brought bacon, eggs and fresh orange juice. We’d finished as the sun rose high enough to evaporate the dew on the raft.

“If we’re going to make the world a better place, shouldn’t we be thinking about starting a revolution?” I asked. “Is there anything else that can make things better?”

“When the time comes,” Carl replied.

“That might be never.”

“It might be this afternoon,” Darlene suggested with a smile.

“Why should we put it off? What about the Boston Tea Party, and the raid on Harper’s Ferry? They were things that got America’s train moving in the right direction. Why aren’t we doing something to get it started?”

“We might knock some of our own cars off the track,” Carl answered, continuing the analogy. “If we start to fight too quickly, those who are still more afraid losing their money than losing their souls will turn against us.”

“But, that only gives the other side time to get stronger.”

“The other side is never weaker than when it seems strongest. The other side was never so sure of victory as it was when He was dead and in a tomb,” Darlene said.

“I’m sure that’s true. But, the sooner we fight, the more babies we’ll save from death, the more children we’ll save from being turned into morons.”

“Not necessarily,” Carl said. “First, we have to clean out the evil in ourselves.”

“I’ve been listening to you and Darlene, and if I’m not ready now, I never will be.” (“You haven’t even quit your government job!”) The Voice pleasantly reminded me.

“You’ve got a few dragons, yet, lurking around in your mind, but you’ll get them. You’ll see,” Carl answered.

“Dragons, too?” I said, in mock astonishment. “They’re in there, dragons?”

“Sure. Not real ones, not leftover dinosaurs that ducked the Bigbergs, like the ones Beowulf and St. George had to kill, but dragons, nonetheless,” he answered.

“Are you seriously suggesting that the most bizarre flights of medieval fancy actually had a basis in the physical world?” I said, ready to believe he’d gone around the bend.

“Sure,” said Carl, ignoring my skeptical tone.

“Real dragons, like sheep and cows are today? Real, touchable dragons that people saw and fought, just a thousand or so years

ago.”

“Of course there were. There still are some. Swimming around in Loch Ness. They aren’t much older than redwoods.”

I wasn’t ready to hear about medieval dragons being leftover dinosaurs, but I *was* ready to shift the conversation back to the financial. I told them of my plan to find smelters and scrapyards, from Weirton to the Mississippi.

“I want to be able to supply them by barge or railcar,” I explained. “It makes things seem simple and believable when people see them come by barge. And, it makes their point of origin harder to find. We can’t be too careful about that.”

“No, we can’t,” said Carl. “If anyone finds out how much money’s out in the Great Lakes in ingots, they won’t leave any for us to finance the Battle when the time comes.”

“You’re right,” I agreed. “We’ve got to start piling up money. That way, when we have to fight, we can buy what we need. Today, we’ll need more than we can get just by ‘sell your cloaks to buy a sword’.”

“Al, you sound like you’re looking forward to revolution,” Darlene said.

“Oh, I am. I’d like to do something worthwhile.”

“We’ll do something that will make a difference. There’s so much pain. So many murdered babies,” Carl replied.

“We haven’t helped. Not so far. Look at this,” Darlene showed us a copy of *TIME* Magazine that she’d bought from a newsstand.

There, on the cover, staring out at the world, was a photograph of a Bird-God. The article inside was the thrilled reaction of the usual, pseudo-intellectual drones.

“There are families, losing their jobs and homes with no place to go. Billions of unborn babies are being killed by abortion and abortion-inducing birth control. The sick and dying are deprived of effective, inexpensive medicine by bribe-taking bureaucrats, and they fill the media with this kind of ignorant swill?” Carl exploded. “And, it’s my fault. I brought that execrable idol into the world! Now, it’s being used as another excuse to drain more money into more uselessness.”

Carl was right. Every tax-grabbing drone from the American Geography Society to Canton U. Archeology classes was mounting major expeditions to search out and discover more about “The amazing Bird-God!” Vast sums of Federal money had begun to flow into yet another repository of idiocy. The article clearly indicated the appeal of Carl’s idol.

“Originally discovered by a bright, young professor of Anthropology at Canton State University, these strange mementos of lost ages remain an enigma. ‘Each of them combines the eternal qualities of all primitive statuary’ reported Curator Willard Flotsom, of the Smithsonian Institute, as he catalogued the first Bird-God to be publicly exhibited in the United States.

“There is a comprehension of flow, of restrained movement, and perfect proportion, that so many more modern things seem to have lost,’ Dr. Victor DeDuckDuck said in an exclusive interview with this reporter.

“Not only do the strangely beautiful idols undeniably exhibit the mastery of art in ages unknown, but also of a metallurgical technology only recently discovered,” Darlene looked up from the magazine, aghast. “Carl, how could we have done such a thing?” she asked, in a horrified tone.

“I don’t know,” he said, shaking his head sadly. “I didn’t realize how stupid I was not to realize how utterly brain-dead many of the state-supported Academics are. Keep reading, it’s bound to get worse.”

“It will,” I said, as Darlene continues to read aloud.

“There was no idea among historians that such a brilliant people could have lived anywhere near the pre-Columbian Midwest. ‘It’s hard to believe that so much of modern metallurgy is only a rediscovery of processes well known in the past.’ Dr. Victor DeDuckDuck said, shaking his head at the sheer wonder of it all.”

“Most State-Supported Academics hate the thought of anyone actually being able to invent anything,” Carl interrupted. “They like to think of everything as being a ‘re-discovery’. That way, they don’t have to feel jealous of more intelligent flesh and blood contemporaries, but can pass others’ successes off as pale

imitations of a brighter, yet sadly passed era, about which only an enlightened few, the sensitive, professional studiers of that particular line of bilge, can really understand.”

Darlene continued to read. “Each of the bird-like God-forms is made in two pieces. The first, or main piece, is made of amazingly well-refined copper. That forms the body of the statue.” Darlene held the magazine to show us the drawing that illustrated the two parts of the Bird-God, the body and the beak. Two arrows pointed from the words ‘body’ and ‘beak’ to the body and the beak in the drawing.

“Part two of the Bird-God”, she continued reading, after we’d absorbed the pseudo-complexity being passed off as deep thought by respected pseudo-intellectuals within the endless horde of “*professional journalists and researchers*”, “it is comprised of lead. The sheer brilliance of this ancient society produced that metal as pure as commercial grade lead of today.”

Darlene kept reading. “The lead ‘beak’ is actually *soldered* onto the body. ‘This discovery calls for a complete restructuring of our assessment of aboriginal intellect in Pre-Columbian America.’ announced Dr. V. DeDuckDuck. ‘Rather than being so unevolved as to need to be wiped out, as is popularly believed, American Indians seem to have developed a culture that surpassed that of their European counterparts.’”

Carl interrupted, “S-S Pseudo-Intellectuals love to run down Shem-Tribe accomplishments. Especially things like electricity,

radio, internal combustion, X-rays, computers, and all the things that *real* intellectuals invented. What they hate is that the inventors of those things were almost all white men. Pseudo-intellectual white men hate that most of all! Some hate it so much that they spend their lives attacking the kind of intellects that made possible everything they own and do.”

Darlene kept reading, “Radio-carbon dating, at the United States National Testing Laboratory showed, that their ancient origins may go back to, or beyond, the beginnings of time, itself.’ according to Dr. Harold Hooker.”

“Wow! That’s old!” I interrupted.

“Remember what he’s talking about,” Carl reminded me.

“Oh,” I said, sheepishly, realizing for the first time how believable the account seemed.

Darlene went on reading from the TIME article. “A huge, buried trove of Bird-Gods, as they’re popularly known, may exist somewhere in the Eastern Ohio/Western Pennsylvania area. All of the known Bird-Gods are nearly identical. Ever-increasing evidence is leading scientists to believe that the Bird-God People reached a high point of civilization, and then mysteriously vanished, leaving only these few remnants of non-rusting metal to show where their makers must have existed in great numbers. Some have suggested that this amazing culture developed space travel hundreds of thousands of years ago. Many believe they

invented space flight and that they have re-located to other planets and solar systems.”

We shook our heads in astonishment as Darlene turned the page. “It is estimated that the few thousand Bird-Gods found so far are only the tip of the iceberg. Millions more may await discovery, possibly all through the Midwest, maybe throughout the world.”

Darlene went on reading: “According to Dr. DeDuckDuck, ‘there are indications of similar cultures in other areas. Similar statues exist among the Wigwags of Mowequa, a primitive Midwestern culture. They may have been a small band of survivors of this once-great tribe. Similar statues and basket-work designs have been found in Alabama, in the middens of the Magneto People, Stone Age tribes believed to have invented the magneto and used its ability to provide electric shock as part of their ancient mental health therapies, pre-dating our own application of electro-shock therapy by millions, if not billions, of years.’

“Preliminary spade work in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, where Dr. DeDuckDuck and a select band of young Archaeolettes are planning to mount an expedition, may at last turn up concrete proof that the American Indians came over the frozen Bering Straits.” Darlene stopped reading, and looked up at us.

“Not that Bering Strait crudola! Not again?” Carl cried. “How many times can people swallow that without vomiting? How

many times have you heard in your schooling that the Indians came over the Bering Straits millions of years ago? Five, six hundred times? It's one of the pillars of Conventional Reality. They think it helps make people believe in glaciers. Think of all the souls kept out of Heaven because they thought the Bible was stupid because they thought there was an Ice Age, and they believed in far-off Ice Ages because they heard about those imaginary Indians crossing the Bering Straits millions of years ago. Focusing on such a mindless detail only distances people from God. It makes me sick.”

I refrained from reminding him that the whole Bird-God Craze came from what had been his idea in the first place. “There’s more, Darlene,” I said. “Turn the page.”

“What a glorious opportunity for science!” Darlene read. “That was the reaction of Dr. D. Bell Grossvender, of the International Geography Society. ‘This provides us a golden opportunity to prove, I mean, really prove, that ancient Indians did, actually and truly, cross the Bering Straits, millions of years in the past, spreading down through the Western Hemisphere. How happy it makes *your* Society, The International Geography Society, to be able to help sponsor such an expedition. How happy it makes us to be able to offer you the opportunity to become a part of it, not just reading about it in our magazine, or watching one of our TV shows, but being able to give you the opportunity to contribute something more substantial, by...”

“Shoveling him some money,” interrupted Carl. “Pseudo-intellectual white men are even dumber than Photo-Op Underlings. They mock the Hindus for starving to death while a ton of sacred sirloin wanders around in front of them. It’s no different with pseudo-intellectuals, here. There sits Dr. Dingdong Bell Grossvender, the most sacred cow of all, and there are bloodstains on the sidewalk in front of his office, where men and women are mugged and murdered as soon as he and the police that protect him disappear for the night. And, all he does is talk about the Bering Straits and the self-serving theories that elevate the parasitic elite above living, breathing, working people.”

Darlene went on reading, more to punish Carl for having inflicted Bird-God on the world than to find out what the magazine had to say. “Dr. DeDuckDuck believes the discovery of this new Indian Culture will open up whole new fields of Pre-Columbian, possibly, *Pre-Glacial* studies.’

“Other historians, archaeologists and anthropologists were not so quick to agree with Dr. DeDuckDuck that the discovery of the Bird-Gods might push the frontiers of human history back quite as far as three billion years, but all did agree that an important new field of study had been opened, where great contributions would doubtless be made.

“Dr. Lee Chenut, head of the Federal Indian Affairs Department, was glad to hear of important research in the area. ‘We’ll be giving a lot of grants to study this. We’d like to find,’ the

noted administrator reported, ‘that the American Indians are just as smart and capable as other people. It would be wonderful, both for them, and for us, if they didn’t have to be coddled on their reservations, but could become contributors, earning their own living and paying taxes, just like the rest of us. If these aborigines can be shown to have an intelligent ancestry, there’s no reason why their descendants can’t be moved into the rent-controlled, tax-paying mainstream of American life. This is good news for all true Americans.’”

Darlene continued to read: “Dr. DeDuckDuck, in his new book, *BIRD-GOD AND YOU*, offers positive proof that the new study of Very Early Native Americanology is going to be booming on every campus in the land. ‘If we could only discover what made the Bird-God people so intelligent, we could help our own people.’ the noted scholar said in a Weekly Reader interview with Miss Pre-Teenage Oriental America,” Darlene concluded, folding the magazine and dropping it neatly into the fire.

“Why did we ever do such a thing?” she asked Carl, anguish in her voice. “Why?”

“I don’t know,” said Carl. “I really don’t. In my heart, I knew it was wrong. I just got carried away with myself, that’s all.

“Let’s go see Father Gonalthwy when we get back,” I suggested. “I haven’t seen him for weeks, now, and we could see what he has to say about all this.”

Darlene said she’d schedule a meeting.



**Dr. V. DeDuckDuck hits the big time. Dr. Emma Reilly-Dumazol doesn't care enough. Dumb People Inc. American Manufacturing hits the skids. Emma is politically correctest. Not! Dr. V. DeDuckDuck might be a Grant-Grantor. Dr. DeDuckDuck: syphilis. Emma has second thoughts. Then, third.**

“Didn't *feel* like seeing *me!*” Doctor V. DeDuckDuck raged angrily to himself, remembering how his approach to Dr. Emma Reilly-Dumazol had been spurned the night before at the door of her faculty condo. “She'll be begging to see me, after she sees this!”

He spread several copies of *TIME* out on the tables in front of the stained couches in the faculty lounge. He stared at one of them, intently, as he'd done for long, long hours in the privacy of his office. He admired the various pictures of himself, holding his discovery, pointing out various Bird-God features like the body and beak. He absorbed and re-absorbed each phrase, particularly his own quotes, mouthing them over and over, preparing for the many interviews sure to follow. Indeed, the afternoon the article had appeared, aggressive representatives of several major textbook publishers had called him.

Unused to such attention, he put them off, but their offers were pleurably mind-boggling. “Put it this way,” one of the more persistent Pub-Ed profiteers had said in his eagerness to sign Dr.

V. DeDuckDuck to a long term contract, “any time a man can invent a whole new field of study, he can sell text books! That’s what higher education is all about! Who cares if it makes sense in five years, or even in five months? Remember Black Studies? Why, we made our authors *millions* on that, and it barely lasted a few semesters. Blackk-rap, we call it, now, and nobody is smart enough to ever put the hyphen in the right place. There might even be movie rights, maybe even a show of your own, on Public Television. They go for this kind of stuff, you know, where pseudo-intellectuals can watch simple crud and pretend to be smarter than they are.”

“You could even write International Geography Society articles. Illustrate ‘em with parades of half-naked Injun chicks carryin’ Bird-Gods to a high priest. Secret rooms? Lots of sex! That’s the kind of crap they like. Hell, Doc, as long as it’s got ‘Doctor’ on it, and it’s about primitives, it’s not pornography! They’ll love it. We’ll run it down the middle-class, Prothumanist, pseudo-intellectual, church-goin’ route. Skin mags’ll pay PhDs plenty for intellectual reasons to look at naked girls. We need Injun gals with boobs strainin’ against wet buckskin, usin’ one of these things in real personal ways. They’d pay a lot for a real scholarly article ‘bout that. Yessir, Doc, you’re lookin’ at some Big Bucks here, some Mighty Big Bucks.”

Doctor DeDuckDuck’s dreams weren’t all of money. One thing that haunted him was his latest infatuation, Dr. Emma Reilly-

Dumazol. She was forty three, the mother of six. She'd accidentally been locked in an abortionist's office overnight with nothing to read but dozens of state-subsidized women's magazines. By the next morning, she was not only guilt-free about her abortion, but also realized that she was *A Person In Her Own Right*, who would never again 'Ms' out on anything.

She made plans to leave her husband and five children. In exchange for that, she knew she could get enough FedTube talk-show time (pseudo-astonished talk-show host: "You felt so strongly about being a Person in Your Own Right that you left your husband and *five* children?" Audience, packed with feminists desperate to make similar appearances, applauds. "Yes, I did. I didn't really have a choice. I owed it to *myself*." etc.) to get the attention of some Grant-grantor to get her a full scholarship. Why should she be a common housewife, when she could be an intellectual with a hyphenated last name to prove it? A Spunky Chunky with enough sense and self-control not to be "too" chunky?

By the time she left the Euthenabort Clinic, it was a new Franchise Operation, booming on the Big Board. It was hailed as a 'real growth stock' by everyone on Wall Street. The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech used it as a safe place to deposit the retirement fund of Moderne Mainline Ministers, for whose investment funds he was responsible. Emma Reilly-Dumazol didn't know that. She was totally committed to self-fulfillment.

She wasn't aware that the Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech had sold a big part of Euthenabort, Inc. to a wealthy consortium of Arab fundamentalists, who kept a surprisingly accurate count of the numbers of Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Buddhist babies aborted, by nationality, on a huge, electronic scoreboard near Mecca, a scoreboard displaying a long, long number that Emma Reilly-Dumazol's own aborted baby had increased by one.

Confronted with a new reality, one that made no demands on her except that she fully exercise her capacity to enjoy herself, Emma left her family, and went to school, believing that she was fulfilled, happy, productive, and, of course, *contributing*, in a 'vital' way to making "one, better world".

She supported herself by working at the same Clinic where her third trimester baby had been dismembered. On graduating, in record time, from the great Weir University, she moved to Canton. There, she taught Personal Awareness Seminars so well that soon she was in consideration for heading up the entire Personal Awareness Department.

"And, why not?" she'd say. "There should be administrative positions for second-rate intellects, too." It was a rare burst of honesty that shocked some, but was effectively used as an excuse for more money and prestige by others, who quickly saw that keeping less intelligent people from administrative responsibilities, and the higher salaries that accompanied those jobs, was a Violation of their Civil Rights.

All over the nation, thousands of self-proclaimed Dumb People had begun to line up in front of America: Confused, Lost & Undermined offices. Court dockets were quickly clogged with Dumb People who knew that they were, “just as good as them smart people what ended up with all the good jobs.”

Since only the government was exempted from these new, “necessary” Civil Rights laws, the burden of having Dumb People in executive positions fell on businesses. A tax-addicted, moron-filled Congress, totally under the power of the Public Employees Defense Committee, ruled the land.

Funded by foreign manufacturers and offshore energy producers, an intense lobbying effort supported the Rights of Dumb People. They forced American Corporations to be increasingly run by winners of Executive Lotteries. In them, the names of all certifiably Dumb People in the company were drawn from a hat. Some companies had two presidents, a ‘Smart President’ and a ‘Dumb President’. Originally, it was thought that the ‘Dumb President’ would keep his mouth shut, take the money, gawk FedTube all day, and do interviews with State Media. But, many of them were prodded by to sue for operational responsibility, as well.

“It’s not right,” they’d claim, “that some ‘Smart President’ gets more job satisfaction than us ‘Dumb Presidents’. We gotta be able to make big decisions, too.”

DumbPeople, Inc. sued for handicapped status, and were given desirable parking spaces beside stores and offices all over the nation. To get coveted jobs with high pay and virtually no work, *and* get good parking spaces, many Smart People were pretending to be Dumb, and DumbPeople, Inc. was outraged.

“Some people aren’t as dumb as they say,” said one Spunky Chunky, offering her services as a Truly DumbPerson to certify that some smart people were just pretending to be dumb enough to get the best jobs. “Just because they be reel smart, they can figger out how to act dumb better than us Truly Dumb Persons. They be gettin’ the jobs that we oughten ter be havin’ for uss’ns. That’s not fair. It’s just not fair. It’s prejudice!”

S-S colleges began offering credit courses in acting dumb. PubEd gave courses in High Schools to help students achieve lower SAT scores. The Department of Education announced in a press release to state media:

“We were already getting the SAT scores to decline. Now, we have sound, moral reasons for doing so. For the first time, the dumber Field Beasts are beginning to understand that any smarter person is an automatic violation of any dumber person’s Civil Rights. It’s the ultimate violation!”

Gouge VacMouth, from Teachers’ Union, explained to a National Convention of applauding DemoCrats. “The Justice Department should be able to go after Smart People any time they

can be found! Hunt them down! Put them away! Kill them when we can!” How he was cheered!

DumbPeople, Inc. and the ACL&U took up so much FedTube time that no one noticed that no automobiles were being made in the United States any more, and that unemployment was staggering. “We can be proud that alla dem imports be far up!” one of the Big Three’s ‘Dumb Presidents’ reported.

Riding this new wave of intentional mindlessness, Dr. Emma Reilly-Dumazol had become a powerful faculty member. She was one of the first self-proclaimed ‘Dumb Doctors’, though by no means the first moron with a Doctoral Degree in a useless field. Dr. V. DeDuckDuck desired her.

“She’d like me; I know she would, if I just taught in more contemporary studies,” Dr. DeDuckDuck said to himself, as he unconsciously began to drool on the magazine. “Maybe,” he said, as he caught himself, startled back into reality by the watch alarm he’d set to ring to remind him when there were only two days before the one class his ProfUnion contract required him to teach each year. It was his popular class on Archaeological Evidence for Kindergartens and Day Care Centers in Great Cultures of the Past 202, (a mandated prerequisite for a graduate degree in the growing Government Service/Child Guidance For One to Three Year-Olds Degree Program) as he stared at the closed door.

“I doubt it,” Dr. Emma Reilly-Dumazol was saying at that very moment to a graduate student in her popular, “Everybody Dumb Gets An Automatic ‘A’” Personal Awareness Seminar. “When I got my degree in Interpersonal Relationships, we quickly learned that ideas like yours, that take life too seriously, are very disturbing, not just to the individual thinking them, but to the external society as well.”

Her words were uttered with all the slow, professional sincerity she’d accumulated on her road to Dumbo Doctordom, that hallowed land beyond the ken of most mortals where time is to be wasted, work avoided, and deep-thinking indistinguishable from masturbation. Indeed, for most S-S academics, deep thinking was what they did when they were hired to write various Fam-Plan grants whose applicants needed scholarly papers justifying demands for more funding. Her sincerity was more than enough to silence the pathetically naive student who’d asked if it wouldn’t be better to teach chastity in the first place, rather than have to abort, later.

“We must overcome our simplistic prejudices as to believing in any real value of human life, per se,” Dr. Reilly-Dumazol continued, becoming even more sincere, if such a thing were possible, with each slow, thoughtful phrase. She was gratified at the way the carefully certified graduate student-morons in her Dumb-Doctoral program eagerly wrote down her passing thoughts. “As if they were gospel,” she thought happily to herself.

“We must be freed from the past.” she continued, with ever slower, ever more perfect intonation, giving the stale, tired, hackneyed thoughts as much relevance in sound as they lacked in meaning, “We must learn to live, really *be alive*, in the present. There are those archaic superstitions,” she went on, slowly and disdainfully, “alive today, relics of a blind and historically ignorant thought pattern that give men and women an unproductive outlook on life.

“There are those, for instance, who would actually discourage pre-teen sex,” she said, in a practiced voice, successfully calculated to provoke sympathetic giggles, tongue clucking, and headshaking from the well-trained graduate student-dullards in her Department. “There are those who would take away our right to *read* the kind of things we want, our right to *do* the things we want, there are those who do not believe that pre-teen women have the right to control their own bodies.” She looked sternly at the downcast girl who’d stupidly asked about the advisability of teaching chastity, before continuing.

“We have no right to teach anything that interferes with the right of an individual to experience all aspects of life, whether it be abortion, pornography, intimacy of any kind. No matter what a person wants to experience, he or she has the right to it, as long as it doesn’t *really* hurt anyone else.”

Dr. Reilly-Dumazol, stirred nearly to tears by her impassioned, sincere defense of a philosophy that no one making

a living in any State-Supported academic circles would dream of attacking, suddenly noticed a bird, a pigeon, slice cleanly through the outside air.

“Look!” she exclaimed, quite consciously enjoying the electrifying affect her abrupt command had on the pathetic simpletons in the doctoral program, each of whom leapt in his/her/its seat at the change in tone.

They turned, following her imperious gesture, to catch a glimpse of the disappearing bird. “Even that poor bird,” she said, “has the right to feel and enjoy! Who is any of us to say that we’re better than that bird, or worse?”

No one in the class answered. Though the question might have seemed absurdly simple to a normal person, it was simply too hard, unfairly hard on a classroom full of students who’d been carefully chosen to enter the PhD. program by their lack of ability to question fundamentals as taught by the professors. After all, their future livelihoods of uselessness and job security, they were subtly reminded in every class, depended on the recommendations of their professors to various Government personnel offices.

She continued, after making sure that no one would embarrass themselves by speaking at such an important moment. “There are those who would destroy that bird, take its freedom without a thought, just as they might take away ours. Those white, primeval beast-men, who think that they have the right to shoot

anything that moves. I personally think it's too bad that the animals aren't given guns to shoot at them!"

Her serious sentence, ending in the professorial joke-tone that even simple-minded graduate students in useless programs had long since learned to reward with a laugh, brought merriment to all. No one in the class had the intelligence to remember that they'd each heard the very same joke' fifty or sixty times since entering college. Those with the intellectual ability to remember and compare might mention contradictions which would confuse others in learning the ins and outs of the rapidly changing onslaught of fads the select graduate students studied and were encouraged to take seriously.

The class ended. The student with the primitive moral ideas was properly contrite. "Really, I didn't mean to be smart. *Really!*" she apologized after class. Emma, exhausted by her impassioned defense of an unattacked position, went into the teacher's lounge and collapsed theatrically on a stained sofa. On the table in front of her was one of Dr. DeDuckDuck's two hundred copies of *TIME, The Weekly Newsmagazine* that would propel him to academic fame and fortune.

He'd also left copies at dozens of other places around the campus, where colleagues would be sure to see it. Emma winced as she read the article, not because it offended her mind with its fatuous uselessness, but because she immediately recalled the all-too-clearly remembered incident very early that morning, when

Dr. DeDuckDuck had appeared at her faculty condo, demanding to be admitted.

“Why didn’t I let him in?” she asked herself, harshly. “It wouldn’t have mattered, anyway, and he’s going to be big around here. Why, he might even be able to get a job as a Grant-Grantor.” In her mind, she pictured them together, in spacious offices, reviewing applications that would be life and death for hundreds, even thousands, of State-Supported academics.

“How they’d grovel, how they’d beg,” she thought to herself, her face contorted in anticipation of seeing her enemies, especially her friends, supplicant before her. “I’ll teach them to like me. I’ll...”

Her reverie was interrupted. She turned, to see Dr. DeDuckDuck re-enter the lounge from one of the tiny faculty bunkrooms, ostensibly provided for the professors to sleep, after long, long hours of study at the library. They were never known to have been used for that purpose. He disentangled himself from an attractive girl, dressed in that year’s Student Uniform of The People, burlap feed bags sewn together with clothesline over a denim liner.

He finally ripped free of the adoring girl, who was fondly rubbing her breasts against his arm as she stared admiringly into his pre-maturely jaded, wizened face, whispering “So big, so big!” as she’d been taught in Getting Ahead In A State University 101.

Finally, he got away, and sat down across from Dr. Reilly-Dumazol.

“If I didn’t like it, I wouldn’t be here,” he said, nodding toward the closing door as he wiped perspiration from his learned brow. No code of academic ethics in any State-Supported University would allow her to be outdone in proclaiming herself to be as free to enjoy her body as he was his, so Emma answered, “Yes. I know *just* what you mean.” There was enough emphasis on *just* to give Dr. DeDuckDuck the point.

“Too bad you didn’t feel that way, earlier,” he said, harking back to her rejection of him that morning.

“I do have the right to say ‘no’, don’t I?”

“To deny another, a sensitive human being, the right to self-expression, when it certainly wouldn’t hurt?”

“When it infringes on my own rights as a person? You could have said ‘please’.”

Dr. DeDuckDuck could think of nothing but attacking her, then and there. He didn’t know, and neither did she, that he was entering the final stage of syphilis, one of the very few hazards of teaching in a State University. His brain, like so many of his liberated colleagues, was slowly being eaten away by sin made manifest in the form of microscopic brainworms. Students were trained to think admiringly of him as an Absent-Minded

Professor, so lost in intellectual wonderlands that he simply couldn't be bothered with details, not as a third-stage syphilitic.

The Absent-Minded Professor Syndrome was often rooted in similar causes, sexually transmitted diseases contracted from the flocks of job-hungry coeds with student loans that had to be paid back. Venereal disease was easier to pick up at Canton State than it was in the old Canton red-light district that Canton University had absorbed in its relentless expansion.

"It's amazing!" Dr. DeDuckDuck had said to a colleague from Canton's Department of Education, after an orgy in which the two had been serviced by half a dozen willing coeds. "Getting sex-ed in the Public Schools was the best thing you ever did! Some of these girls today are as moral as dogs! As experienced as whores! Cheaper, too! Why, they'll do things you couldn't have paid a hooker to do twenty years ago! And, they'll do it for free! My Baal, but you guys in PubEd have done a great job!"

"Baal-damned right we have!" the lightly drugged and drunken Dr. Dickal had replied. "We get as many of 'em as we can to believe that the most important thing that they can do is to be sexually liberated enough to service any man or woman who asks. The ones weak or dumb enough to believe us are mostly from families broken by divorce caused by the high taxes we shaft 'em with to pay four times as much as they need to for lousy PubSchools.

Dr. Dickal then explained: “Once we replace family values with SexEd, the girls forget all about having homes, kids, and families. Keeps ‘em sleeping around. Then, nobody marries them, so they have to spend the rest of their lives, working, and paying taxes. We get to screw ‘em their whole lives, sexually, intellectually, and financially, every way we want, once we get ‘em sucked into this great system!”

Dr. DeDuckDuck recovered from his ‘blank’. He realized that Emma was actually inviting him to approach her again. Then, he noticed the open magazine in front of her, where he’d left it. She saw him look at it, and cursed herself for not having had the sense to not let him catch her doing so.

“That’s why she’s so friendly,” he thought, viciously wanting to torment her, forgetting that he’d left the article there precisely because he wanted his colleagues to see it and be jealous. “Quite an article,” he said, nodding at the magazine.

“Yes,” she said, realizing it was impossible to have him believe she hadn’t seen it yet, knowing he knew she was suddenly friendly only because there was a danger that he was becoming famous and promotable. Her honesty lessened her in his eyes and made her less desirable in every way. “If she’d pretended not to have seen it,” he thought to himself, “there might be something really long-term useful about her. But, she won’t lie when she’s surprised, when she’s under pressure, so she’s no good to me. No good to any of us. She might admit that none of us ever really do

anything, if some leftover Republican legislator on a budget committee should question her suddenly. Can't have that. I can't see what I ever saw in her. I can't understand it at all."

Emma, too, knew she'd lost something, and, for a brief, frightening moment, she thought of the home she'd left. She remembered the crying children who'd begged her to stay with them when she went back to school, 'to find herself'. She'd tried to make them understand, even taken them to group therapy with her, so they could 'work out their feelings'. It hadn't helped, of course, even though she'd promised to spend a few minutes of "quality time" with them every week or so. The therapy was only there to convince her that she was doing something so "vital" that it would be irresponsible for her to worry about its effect on mere children.

But, then, in that moment, when she knew she could not root out original good, the impulse toward truth, what she'd lost came flooding in on her.

"Why am I here, where I have to be dumb to be promoted? Where I have to live an endless lie? Where I can't do anything, anything that will last? My children. Oh, my poor, lost children! What have I done to you?" she cried out to herself.

Doctor DeDuckDuck looked closely at her. He'd seen those moments of deep thought in others, right after they'd made similar realizations. He'd seen, but never felt, what happened to

them when they let lost goodness begin to burn within them, and he knew what was coming. His heart rejoiced.

“She won’t be around here much longer,” He exulted silently as he watched her walk to the window, and stare out over the campus. He smiled, as tears began to roll down her cheeks. “I could have used her, if only she wouldn’t have shown that she’s liable to tell the truth under pressure. We can’t have people like that around. I’m headed for the big time. I’ll have my own textbooks, Committee Appointments in Washington, maybe even be a Grant-Grantor!” At that last thought he began to drool again, anticipating the near and dear things people gave to Grant-Grantors.

He knew she was lost. She was no good to him, to the department he dreamed of beginning. Of the Chair-chair he would sit in. She was finished, washed up. She was useless to Canton or any other State University. “We’ll have to get someone else, either someone younger, who doesn’t know what success is, or someone older, who’s desperate for it. But, she’s no good to me. Not anymore.”

Dr. Emma Reilly-Dumazol was beyond caring what Dr. V. DeDuckDuck thought of her. The only thing in her mind was her youngest son, not the one she’d aborted, but Timmy, whom she hadn’t seen for months, who’d sobbed endlessly when she went away for the last time, who’d cried, ‘Mommy, mommy, don’t leave, please don’t leave!’, when she’d gone to live by herself in the

new Faculty Condo. She thought of her oldest son. He'd dropped out of school and disappeared, probably murdered, she had once let herself think, by homosexuals.

Then, as Timmy had done before, she began to sob. "My children, my children! What have I done to them. Why? What good did it do, me coming here, teaching drivel to dullards? Was driving a stupid-looking Volvo this important? Oh, God, help me, I want to go home!" She left the room, blinded by tears, hoping, against hope, that there would still be a family for her to return to.

Dr. DeDuckDuck watched her leave the room, her bright, brave make-up streaked, her stylish hair in disarray. He needed to exert no effort to keep from feeling sorry for her. He smiled, triumphantly, replaced his magazine, and went to the halls, figuring, maybe, that he'd be able to spot the adoring co-ed who'd followed him to the lounge only a few minutes before. He needed to find someone new, someone to make him forget the horrible effects of honesty on an academic career in a great, State-Supported University like Canton.

## WEEDING THE BIG GARDEN

**I formally meet my GA. Conventional Reality = The BIG BaaloCrat Lie. I move a little farther right. Dr. V. DeDuckDuck keeps pushing Bird-God. Media Twits love it! CNN/NBC/MSNBC/FedTube ecstatic! We eat at Freddie's'. So Do BDTs. Pie in the sky. Hy and Lo, Adam & Eve. The long Fall. General Rules. Gummit work or rubber room? You pays your money n' you take their choice.**

Carl and I fell into a routine that made raising the ingots nearly automatic. We were more careful in our work, since my accident, but we continued to make good speed. After one long dive at the latest shipwreck, I sat in the truck cab, thawing out after a long dive in deep, cold water. I asked myself the question I'd been dreading.

“Well, Al, do you really want to quit your nice, secure job with the Government? Don't you want to get back to doing your important work? Don't you want to help make a real contribution in an important effort directed at paroling the criminally insane from institutions and back into society? After all, if you would turn Carl and Darlene in to the IRS, there'd be a big reward. Why are you here, with Carl and his Bigbergs and Bird-Gods, thinking about making things better? It is insanity!”

Another part of my mind replied: “Al, what you've got here is a classic approach-avoidance problem. Part of you wants the safety

and security of a Government job. Another part wants to take the risk of continuing to salvage ingots out of more wrecks that *might not be there.*”

As I slowly got warmer, I could feel another force in my mind. “This isn’t an approach-avoidance situation. That’s a lot of post-Freudian mumbo-jumbo for God against the Devil. Those are demons, in your mind, telling you things. You can listen to them, Al, or you can listen to me. I’m your Guardian Angel.”

“Oh, no!” something in my mind yelled, “You can’t believe in a Guardian Angel!”

“That last thought came from a demon,” announced the thought that claimed to be my Guardian Angel.

“How do I know that you’re a Guardian Angel?” I asked what I hoped was.

“Because I can tell you that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Prophets’ prophecies. He is God in the Flesh,” the thought announced, in a stentorian tone.

There was silence in my brain for a few blessed seconds, and I was happy in the relaxation that flowed through me, lulled by the slapping of tiny waves against the log pontoons.

Suddenly, a host of thoughts exploded in my mind. “Don’t listen to that stuff!” shouted one thought. “That’s dangerous thinking!” yelled another. “Watch out for that,” warned a third. “Did you ever hear anything so ridiculous?” asked a snide fourth.

“You’re getting emotionally involved,” recited a fifth, “Withdraw and relax.”

Through the cloud of conflict, I kept hearing the echoes of the thought that claimed to be my Guardian Angel, repeating firmly, “Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Prophets’ prophecies. He is God in the Flesh. Jesus Christ is God in the Flesh.”

Then, an even more powerful thought invaded my mind, or what I had thought was my mind, and not some kind of a battlefield for spirits, and announced: “Jesus Christ did not die of old age.”

“Who are *you*?” some part of what I hoped was my mind had the strength to ask.

“I’m the Guardian Angel of your Guardian Angel. I’m on special assignment to your brain. You’re undergoing increasingly heavier attacks, now, and I’ve been sent in with a squad of Demon-pullers to match the enemy build-up in your brain.”

“Why? Why? Why!!” I demanded to know.

“You’re going mad. You’re going mad. Hahahaha! You’re going crazy,” something sang in a singsong chant.

“You must have a free choice,” the voice claiming to be my Guardian Angel’s Guardian Angel replied. “When there’s a demon build-up, we have to match it, to keep you free and in spiritual balance. You’ll begin to hear fewer and fewer voices, now that we’re here. Our presence frees your personal Guardian Angel to

patrol the hidden corridors, down among the memory bits, searching out and destroying all kinds of evil electrons. We'll not only keep cleaning things out, but we'll rearrange some of them to be what they would have been if you'd listened to Him in the first place."

That voice, or thought, or whatever it was, did seem to be telling the truth. I began to feel more peaceful as fewer and fewer voices demanded to be heard.

"What's going on, now?" I asked the thought that claimed to be Higher Guardian.

"There's a whole family of demons, really established in your memory banks. They're entrenched at several levels, and we're having, if you'll pardon the expression, the devil's own time getting them out."

"What kind are they?" seemed as sane a question as I could ask.

"The ones who keep telling you that you're crazy. Your memory is jammed full of those thoughts that you've been carefully taught to think any time you begin to believe that God is real."

"Will you drive them all out?"

"No, no. That would make it too hard for you to relate to other people, after you've been freed. What we'll do is set it up so you'll be able to put things in proper perspective."

“Why is this happening to me? Why now?”

“It’s because of your religious experience. I have it right here, on my orders.” The Guardian Angel of my Guardian Angel showed me a glowing tablet. Though I’d never seen the writing before, I could understand the pulsating words of light that said, in a crude translation: ‘Al underwent religious experience, demon forces counteracting.’ He went on: “That’s why we’re here. We’ve still got some mopping up to do, deep down in there, but you’re about over the hump. Feels pretty good, doesn’t it?”

I ignored the fact that my mind, for some reason, was more peaceful than it had been for weeks, and asked the thought: “How do I know that *you* aren’t a demon. How do I know that I’m not mad?”

“That old chestnut,” and I could feel its exasperation as it sent an angelic roto-rooter to eradicate the demon who’d prompted the question, or who *was* the question, I couldn’t tell which. “Easy one to answer.” was the answer from The Guardian. “I can recite the Apostle’s Creed, frontwards.”

The thought, or angel, or whatever it was, proceeded to do so, and I felt my whole being begin to rest peacefully as I heard the ancient phrases marching through my mind. “conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,. . . crucified, died and was buried, . . . on the third day He rose again, . . . sits at the right hand of God, the Father,.. will come again in glory,.,

judge the living and the dead,.. one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.....“

“How do I know a demon couldn't tell me that?” I asked.

“It was another blasted demon who made you ask me that,” My Guardian Angel's Guardian Angel replied, and I could feel it directing a slightly larger roto-rooter to go get it at the very same time it answered my question. As the demon melted away under their onslaught, I realized what a silly question it had been, and settled back to enjoy the fight, while the answer to the silly question was answered so easily I wondered why a supposedly clever demon would have asked.

“Demons can't ever repeat the Apostle's Creed because demons aren't allowed to tell the Truth. They can't trifle with the Holy Spirit. They must always lie. When the Creed says: ‘Jesus Christ, His only Son’, it makes clear that Christ, and Christ alone, is the only legitimate heir to Creation. If a demon repeated the Creed, he would be destroying the Devil's only claim to creation. He'd have been an angel. Understand?”

“I do understand. I do understand! I believe, oh, I believe!” and I fell to my knees on the rough planks, and heard every angel in my mind, I couldn't count how many, break into a song that shook my soul free of the chains that held it down to the primitive superstitions that the current Babylon called “Modern Science”.

I knelt there, my elbows and head resting on the running board of the truck for what seemed forever, until I was distracted by Carl, returning from the deep water.

“What’s the matter? Why didn’t you answer? I’ve been calling for fifteen minutes? Are you all right?” he asked, dripping as he came over to me.

“Better than I’ve ever been,” I replied. He gave me a half-quizzical look that I didn’t respond to until that night, after dinner.

“Is that how it happened with you?” I asked, after I told him what had happened to me last night and that afternoon.

“No. My own experience was completely different. When I first understood that God was real and that Conventional Reality was a BaaloCrat lie, it was a completely rational feeling that slowly and logically moved right through my mind, cleaning out all the garbage that I’d been carefully taught to believe.”

“Do you suppose everyone has a different way to see it?”

“We’ve all got different fingerprints, so I suppose we’ve similar differences in all our fine points, our mental apparatus, too.”

“I don’t see why angels, I’m truly sure that’s what they were, would help us. We’re so comparatively gross.”

“I don’t know either,” he answered, thoughtfully. “I suppose it has something to do with the fact that we’re made in God’s image, but that we need help to see it.”

“We could ask Father Gonalthwy.”

“I think we’d better. We’re getting out of our league.”

We finished loading the raft with ingots the next afternoon, and returned to shore. Darlene met us with the truck and forklift, late at night. We put our official “LAKE BEAVER” signs on the raft, anchored it safely offshore, and left the Park.

I drove down the narrow park road to the broad highway toward the farm as Darlene pulled a newspaper from the glove compartment.

“Wait ‘til you see this!’ More Bird-God crudola!”

She opened the Plain Dealer to show us the entire top half of the front page. There, staring out at us was a picture of a Bird-God.

“NEW! OLD INDIAN TRIBE DISCOVERED IN OHIO!!” the headline blared. Darlene read to us as we drove along.

“Startling evidence for the existence of a completely unknown Indian Culture was discovered a few weeks ago by Dr. V. DeDuckDuck, associate professor of Comparative Anthropology at Canton State University. The brilliant, sharp-eyed Dr. DeDuckDuck was bicycling home from a kayak trip down the Cuyahoga River....”

“Now tell me,” Carl interrupted, “just why it is that those kind of people are always traveling by kayak and bicycle? They’re always peddling, or paddling, with packs, in packs. Why can’t they

get into a line of work that would force them to keep up with the rest of us?”

“When his eye was caught,” Darlene continued, ignoring the question, “by a strange statue, half-buried in a grove of oak trees. It had been accidentally unearthed, Dr. DeDuckDuck reported, by an uneducated backhoe operator who thought it was nothing more than an old piece of metal.

“To Dr. DeDuckDuck’s trained eye, however, the ‘old metal’ seemed to have slightly more significance. ‘It seemed to have a presence all its own.’ Dr. DeDuckDuck told this reporter.”

“That’s good!” Carl interrupted, again. “As if it could have had a presence that wasn’t all its own!”

“Dr. DeDuckDuck,” continued an unruffled Darlene, “who has advanced degrees in Anthropology, Archeology, Anthropological Archeology, Archaeological Anthropology, and Esperanto, quickly identified the statue as being unidentifiable. ‘It’s vastly different than anything before or since.’ The world-renowned Dr. DeDuckDuck said, ‘I believe evidence may exist to indicate that possibly it is definitely pre-Hopewellian, and is certainly not later than mid-to-early-late Hopewellian. But, I would not discount the possibility that it is post Hopewellian. It’s a real breakthrough.’”

We said nothing as Darlene turned the page and continued reading.

“Dr. DeDuckDuck thinks that the statue may be thirty five or forty million years old. ‘We may have to rewrite the history books’ said a serious Dr. DeDuckDuck, when asked of the implications of his remarkable find.”

“They sure will, and guess who’ll re-write them?” Carl asked. “Good ol’ Doc DeDuckDuck. Then, all those poor, bamboozled kids, the ones who get conned into taking those ridiculous courses in Conventional Reality will have to buy *another* expensive book. Hundreds of thousands of University schoolchildren, all over the free world, suckered out of hundred dollar bills, just so Doc DeDuckDuck can get his pick of the co-eds at Canton State.”

“Father Gonalthwy was right,” Darlene said, as she folded the paper and put it away. “Only a few thousand of our Bird-Gods are out, and look at the lies they’ve spawned already. Carl, next time you think of something like that, you should keep it to yourself.”

He nodded, ruefully. “You can bet on that. We’ll think of some way to expose him.”

“I hope so,” I said. “I really do. But, I have the feeling it’s going to be harder than we think. Tomorrow’s Saturday,” I mentioned, as Darlene stopped the car in front of my apartment building. “Why don’t we go out to dinner and forget about it?”

“Well, that’s a good idea.” agreed Darlene.

“We can go to Freddie’s,” suggested Carl.

“Freddie’s?” I asked, plaintively. “Do we have to?”

“Oh, it’s not so bad,” Carl answered, in that tone of his that meant it was worse. “He’s remodeled.”

“The only thing Freddie should remodel is his brain. Even if he is your half-brother.”

Carl smiled. “I know. I know.”

I hadn’t seen Freddie in some time, and wasn’t really looking forward to seeing him again. He thought so oddly that it was unpleasant to be around him.

We met Saturday evening, and drove to his restaurant, the Red Bullet Inn. I should have known, but didn’t, that the menu would be a red bulletin. We stood outside, and read it, posted in the window. The logo, naturally, was a red bull, eatin’.

“Freddie opened this restaurant on a shoestring,” the red bulletin explained. “He embedded it in the foundation.”

“I don’t want to read any more,” I said to Carl. “He hasn’t changed at all.”

“Yes, he has,” Darlene sighed. “He’s gotten worse. He got a hit of the High Life.”

We went inside. “Don’t turn left!” Carl exclaimed. “That’s Freddie’s Dining Room for BDTs. Brain-Dead Twits,” He explained.

“I can read,” I said, testily. “Why is that so bad?”

“We can go in, if you want, and let you see for yourself.”

We went into a fancy, stylish dining area that looked as if it came from the latest issue of Vogue. “What’s wrong with this?” I asked. “And, what’s so bad about a free lunch?” A sign on the wall said “Free Lunch! All you can eat!” Another, in a section on the left side of the room, said:

*“NO COATS OF MINK, NO SHOES OF LEATHER,  
ANIMALS SHOULD LIVE TOGETHER!”*

“Sorry, sir,” the hostess said through unsticked lips, “But, we’re all out of the Free Lunch. We ran out just last month. The Ted Kennedy Seafood Buffet was closed by the Health Inspector. So was the Animals Who Died A Natural Death Smorgasboard. But, we do have our vegetarian special.”

“Go ahead,” Darlene whispered. “Ask her about the vegetarian special.”

I did, and was impressed to hear the waitress say, “It’s for *real* vegetarians. Phony Veggies, who drink milk, eat eggs, and wear leather shoes and belts, why, they make us sick, here at Freddie’s. They’re just a lot of hypocrites. We cater to *real* vegetarians, people who are so sensitive that they feel the pain when a delicate, living carrot is plucked from the ground, its torn rootlets writhing in agony. True Vegetarians are so sensitive we can hear the shriek of agony when leaves are heartlessly torn off heads of Living Lettuce to make salad for unfeeling Pseudo-Veggies.

“Here, at Freddie’s Dining Room for Brain-Dead Twits, we serve only dead leaves, fallen naturally from plants and blown by

the wind into fencerows, where sensitive ‘Gatherers’ bundle them for us. They carefully avoid stepping on bugs and other Earth Creatures by being suspended from balloons, floating gently above the ground, as they gather Food For Sensitive People. We have roots, today, real maple roots from a tree blown over in a windstorm. The roots have been carefully soaked in unboiled water to be sure that not one microbe has been killed. They’re good, nutritious, and government-approved to be Totally Guilt-Free. It’s the only kind of food that’s FDA certified to build a strong body and a truly healthy mind.”

She smiled, and I saw that most of her teeth were gone. We quickly left Freddie’s Dining Room for BDTs, and turned right, into the Regular Dining Room. It was homey and comfortable. We got chairs, not futons.

“I thought Freddie was going to be a comedian. Why did he open a restaurant?” I asked.

“His jokes consisted entirely of puns. Not because he liked puns, but because he didn’t actually know what words meant.”

“I’ll believe that!” I said, remembering the awful day in the high school cafeteria when the Religion in Life Committee sponsored the Hallelujah Baptist Choir for a lunch time serenade. When a transfixed Freddie heard the emotional rendering of “There’ll be pie in the sky, by ‘n by!”, he leapt atop the tables, shouting with evangelistic zeal: “I can make it happen!”, and frisbeed a lemon meringue lazily through the air, while repeating

mindlessly, “It’s happening now! There’s ‘pie in the sky!’ It’s happening now!”

The pie landed in the middle of a table of bored football players, who quickly threw it back. On its return, the pie broke up, and during the wild food fight that resulted in Freddie’s permanent suspension from high school, there was, indeed, “pie in the sky”.

“How did he come to get hit with the High Life?” I asked, as we waited for our waiter. “Enjoy your waiter wait,” suggested a menu footnote.

“He wasn’t exactly on a nightclub circuit,” Carl explained. “He was on a VFW Hall tour. He’d go into some sleazy bar, peopled permanently with drunks who have that thick, wrinkly skin people get from drinking all the time while cigarette smoke curls around their faces. Freddie would stand up on what passed for a stage, or, more likely, unplug the juke box and stand in front of it, so as not to startle anyone with noise coming from an unaccustomed place. Then he’d start his ridiculous monologue.

“‘Hi’, he’d say. Then, he’d forget what he meant. ‘Hi. High. Hy. Lo. Low.’ Then, he’d slip even farther out of reality, and he’d start, ‘Hi. High. Hy. Hy is. Lo is. Lois. If Hi is, Lo is, so Hy and Lois have to be.’”

“After five or ten minutes of that,” Darlene interrupted, unwilling to listen to Carl’s nearly-too-good an imitation of Freddie, “the drunks would be listening to him, hypnotized, since

their own minds work that way. You know how a drunk thinks he can think deep thoughts? Well, when Freddie started that insane babbling of his, the drunks would think they'd found the fountain of wisdom."

"They sure would," Carl broke in. "And, when Freddie started going on about 'High in the tree, Hy in the tree. Lo is climbing high. Lo's a squirrel. Lois climbing High. Lois climbing Hy. Climbing higher, higher on Hy's pantleg. LO'S BITING HY!!!' and then..."

"Then," Darlene interjected, "all the old drunks would jump up and start dancing around, trying to shake biting, bushy tailed squirrels out of their pant legs."

"That happened one time in Weirton, at Freddie's last VFW bar," Carl continued. "There was some old guy with the DTs and his son. The son was trying to drink his father to death so he could inherit the family rooming house. The old man heard Freddie go through that routine, and jumped up, kicking and screaming with all the other old drunks, and fell over dead of a heart attack. After he made sure the old man was dead, the kid pretended to be outraged, so he beaned Freddie with a bottle of Miller High Life, to prove he loved his father. That was the end of Freddie's nightclub career. Then, he collected his disability insurance and opened this place. On a shoestring, as it says."

"It's not a bad place," added Darlene, "but don't drink the Salade. It's a drink, of pulverized lettuce. We're hoping he never

gets the idea of grinding up one of his helpers and calling it Salaide. You can't tell with Freddie."

"I guess not," I said, wishing even more fervently that we'd gone somewhere else to eat.

We ended up ordering the 'SPECIAL'. "Always order the 'SPECIAL'," Carl explained, "because it is, at least, always 'special'."

When the waitress had taken our order, Freddie came over and put his hands on our shoulders.

"He always does this," Darlene said. He thinks all restaurant owners should roam around from table to table, dispensing good cheer."

"Welcome aboard!" he said, hail-fellow-well-metly, reading from a dwarf-held cue card. "Welcome a board?" he added, to himself "Why would anyone want to welcome a board? That's as silly as getting a leash and walking a plank."

Darlene kicked him sharply in the shins, and Freddie shifted back to regular conversation.

"Did the waitress take your order?" he asked, and added, in the bemused aside that followed every attempt he made to communicate, he added, "Where do they take them? Do they pay for them, or just take them away, without so much as a by-your-leave. 'No, buy my leaves', the greedy head of lettuce said. A cabbage replied, 'Buy mine!', in a sharp rejoinder to the Head of

Lettuce, a small country near Permissiveness. ‘Lettuce go there, let us go’, the people cried.”

“Freddie, be quiet!” Carl ordered, sharply.

“Be quiet? Change, just like that, from being Freddie? How could I do that? I’d have to remodel extensively, find some Crat to give me a building permit for my brain? No. I’ll just be Freddie.”

He wandered away to greet other tables, still muttering to himself.

“What on earth makes him like that?” I asked.

“Multi-Purpose words,” Carl answered, after some moment’s reflection, in the table. Freddie had all the tables in the restaurant topped with mirrors so that people could reflect easily when they needed to. As it said in the Red Bulletin, “our exclusive mirrored tables make it possible to reflect upon the reflections of our reflections, and what could be better than that for those who want to watch themselves flex and reflex at each new reflection?”

“In the beginning,” Carl went on, shaking his head to clear it, “each word meant only one thing, and had a sound different from every other word, the way words are with God. That’s why Adam could talk directly to God. God and Adam only had one meaning for each word, which allowed them to be precise, with absolutely no confusion between them.

“That’s why God let Adam name everything, so that Adam could have the joy of creating an inner world that matched the

outer world exactly, even though Adam's names were a bit simple, by God's standards.

"The devil just couldn't stand it. He knew God loved the new man, loved him so much that He'd given man freedom. The devil was furious, because God loved the man so much, and because God and the man were so close, always together, just full of love for each other. The devil, of course, was jealous, like some do-gooder enviro-twit trying to destroy a business he's too dumb to start, and too lazy to run, anyway.

"Satan knew he couldn't get at God, so he'd get at God's finest creation. Dog-in-the-manger mentality."

"Carl, you're talking about this like it really happened" I said.

"It did, silly," Darlene said to me, as Carl went on.

"The Devil knew that Adam's main link with God was the fact that they could talk to each other. They'd walk around in the Garden, and talk 'til the cows, as Adam called them, came home. God and Adam loved each other deeply, as a grandparent and grandchild, fully and trustingly."

"What'd the devil do about it?" I asked, caught up in the story.

"The devil just couldn't stand it. He tried everything, but Adam just wouldn't listen to him. Then, God's next plan for Adam came up on the agenda. God knew that Adam would enjoy being close to something besides God, something like Adam."

"Eve?" I asked.

“Right. God made an image of Adam out of his rib, the only bone Adam had that could grow back. Eve’s main problem was that she had time on her hands. And, she was slightly jealous of God, because Adam still spent a lot of time with Him. Eve, you see, was a small step, but a step, farther from God. Eve was not made in God’s image as closely as Adam, but was an image of an image, like a photograph of a picture. Very close, but not quite as close.”

“And, don’t the women’s libbers hate *that!*” laughed Darlene.

“Eve sensed this difference, slight as it was,” Carl continued, “and, so did satan. ‘That’s the weak point.’ satan said, because it was. He began to whisper to her.”

“Adam and Eve knew about the tree, and knew they weren’t supposed to eat from it. Satan told Eve: ‘God and Adam are closer than you and Adam. Adam loves God more than you. Adam loves God more because God knows more. The only way Adam will love you is if you know more than you do. The only way you can know more than you do is to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. God doesn’t want you to eat from that tree because then you will know more than He does, and Adam will love you more than he loves God. The Devil lied. He tol Eve that God and Adam used to laugh at her, and call her ‘Stooo-pid!’ So, Eve finally ate from the tree, and got Adam to do it, too.

“When they did that, and were so dishonest and self-righteous they blamed each other for it, God threw them out. After all, how

much free will do you have if you can't decide to defy God? What good is God if He doesn't punish disobedience? But, He knew that Adam would die of sadness without having God to talk to, the way some people pine away, after a spouse dies. So, He had to make Adam forget the intense love he'd had for God, the incredibly deep joy of knowing absolutes. If Adam was ever aware of the immensity of his loss, why, he would have killed Eve and himself on the spot. He'd have gone mad from grief if he ever really understood what their sin had taken from them.

I wanted to know, and asked: "What did God do?"

"God took away the precision in Adam's brain, and took the exactness from Adam's language. Then, Adam could barely tell God from a Golden Calf, and he didn't miss God as much. On top of that, Adam was busy working for a change. He had to work because his mind didn't solve his problems as well, because he couldn't think clearly.

"He couldn't think as clearly because God's punishment was to replace the precise words with general words, words with more than one meaning, more than one sound. It became a full time job for Adam and Eve just to talk straight, or even know they were talking about the same thing, let alone talk to God, or remember doing it in any but a vague way."

Carl finished just as the waitress arrived with our food, and it did look special. Each plate was gift-wrapped, decorated with

seals, ribbons, and posies.

“You can see how the fall in the Garden ties in with Freddie’s problem,” Darlene said, as we unwrapped our Specials. “Since the apple, men and women have had to generalize their way through life, rather than ever know anything in real detail. Everybody looks for general rules, which may be why, a lot of times, generals rule.”

Freddie, who’d come up silently behind her, began to twitch when he heard that, and began to mindlessly ramble. “It’s a general rule that generals rule general rules. Generally. Generally, rules rule. Generally, general rules rule. Generally, generals rule rules. Rue ruling rules? Long live General Rules!”

Carl clapped for the maitre’d, who saw the familiar problem, Freddie muttering uncontrollably, spittle flying, rocking back and forth, spewing a torrent of words. With skill born of long experience, he threw an inner tube tightly over him, pinning his arms to his sides. Quickly, Freddie was hustled out to his ‘special’ room, where he could happily bounce off the walls without hurting himself.

I need to explain: The maitre’d was an old Hungarian whom Freddie had hired because he carried a slug from their Revolution in his thigh. He finally refused to carry a measuring probe so that Freddie would stop asking, “How far is the red bullet in?”

Carl continued as Darlene took the tiny skirt off her salad dressing. “What Freddie has is a bad case of what God gave Adam, except that Freddie’s flipped a switch somewhere. He doesn’t know that he should pretend to know what he’s talking about, like the rest of us do.”

“What’s going to happen to him?” I asked.

“He’ll have to get into Government work or be put into a mental institution. People like Freddie can’t be allowed out, for fear they’ll warp taxpayers’ outlooks on Conventional Reality to such an extent that no one could pay taxes.”

“It would get on your nerves hearing that all the time and, pretty soon, not even knowing what was what,” Darlene said.

“Especially, since we don’t know, to start with.”

“Boy, this food is good!” I interrupted, surprised at how good it actually was.

“Sure is,” smiled Carl. “It’s ‘Specially good.’”

After dinner, Darlene and I went to the car, while Carl went into the room where Freddie was kept during his fits of generalizing. When he joined us in the parking lot, he looked grim.

“He thinks he’s head of Health In Human Services,” He said, grimly.

“Not again?” commiserated Darlene.

“You mean, he thinks he’s the head of HIHS every time he gets like that?” I asked, incredulously.

“It’s a little more complicated,” Darlene explained. “He starts out by generalizing and generalizing, until he’s completely abstracted himself from reality. Then, when he thinks he knows things, he thinks he can find answers to problems, and he thinks he can help people he doesn’t even know. Or, want to know, let alone live with. Then, he wants to solve their problems, from a safe distance, so that they’ll love him. In his fantasy, he gets paid a lot of money, and has lots of flunkies, too.”

“It’s really insane,” Carl continued. “He thinks that the poor people will love him because he sends them to smelly Job Training Centers, where they learn to operate old machines to do jobs that no one does, any more. He gives them play money to buy food with and gives them real money to murder their unborn babies, it really gets bizarre.”

“He gets worse, as he goes along,” Darlene added. “He knows that he can’t really help those people, and that he really despises them. He knows he can’t cure their ills, any more than he can make their cuts heal from the outside in. He knows it’s all a pack of lies he’s telling them. Most of all, he knows that he’s making more money in his exalted position than they’ll ever make, and that he’s not giving any of it to them.

“He knows how hypocritical that is, trying to help poor people without actually giving them any of his own money. He knows

that if he didn't keep them poor, he and most of the relatives he's fantasized into employment he's provided for them would be out of jobs."

"And," Carl interrupted, "he gets his role as head of HIHS confused with the heads of organized crime families, and he's their boss of bosses, because, of course, his abortionists kill more people every day than all the mob's hit men put together kill in a century."

"Then, what happens?"

"He breaks down completely, goes into a state where all he does is bounce off walls and drool uncontrollably. It lasts a day or two, until his senses are deadened, then he goes back to work. Until the next time."

We left the parking lot, and turned onto a main street. Stopped for a red light, we saw a gaily colored poster stapled to a pole, advertising a carnival outside of town.

"Let's go," said Darlene. "I haven't been to a carnival for ages."

"It might be fun," Carl agreed. "What do you think, Al?"

"Good idea.", I agreed.

**Carl: tired of talking. *Another* PubEd attack on the Host Culture. Long Diatribe. We leave Carl for the Carnival. One of the D'YuYu kids picks my pocket. YeYe responds. Big boom. Carl blows Crat hole. Father Gonalthwy not enthusiastic.**

As we passed through a very poor section of the city, we saw three or four square blocks of older homes being torn down. They were to be replaced by a huge school. Immense billboards, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, assured us that The International Middle School would be a real contribution to education.

“International Middle School? What’s that?” Darlene asked.

“It’s an excuse to keep building schools when there’s fewer students than ever,” Carl answered.

“There’s more to it than that,” I said. From my vantage point as a Parole Officer Trainee, I could appreciate the need for new schools. “Things in the world are always changing, and education has to keep up. Otherwise, children wouldn’t be able to contribute to society when they graduate.”

Carl groaned. “Don’t tell me you fall for that? You know as well as I do that kids can’t contribute much of anything when they graduate, because Public Education is very careful not to teach anyone to read, write, or do arithmetic very well.”

“That’s a little extreme, surely,” I said, a small part of me still wanting to believe that there was *some* small vestige of the Government worth its money.

“Pub-Ed will never teach kids to do anything worthwhile. If they did, kids would know how to milk cows, raise vegetables, build houses, tell the truth, stay away from drugs, read real books, do arithmetic, write coherent sentences, know why they should be chaste, get married, raise children, and actually take care of themselves. Instead, they get rid of shop and home-economics classes.”

“Not everyone can build their own houses, Carl.”

“Who built log cabins? Union carpenters?”

“Let’s talk about something light and airy,” Darlene said, in a light and airy tone. I’m tired of always hearing about how bad PubEd is. Of course it’s bad, and a colossal waste of money on useless pretenders. We all know that. Let’s just have a good time at the Carnival. All right?”

“Huh?” said Carl, his mind wrenching away from a subject near and dear to his heart: PubEd’s mindless focus on taxing and spending and producing graduates and drop-outs too dumb to do anything but vote for BaaloCrats and get money from helpless taxpayers.

“Well, I do get tired of always talking about such dreary subjects. Of course public schools are rotten. Of course many

teachers are overpaid and underworked. Of course there are too many administrators who can do nothing but feed off a corrupt system. Of course the endless layers of consultants, unions and associations are a lot of human tapeworms, feasting off helpless taxpayers. Everyone knows that. But all this talking! It's enough to drive me crazy."

Carl stopped the car near the new school, not far from an Exxon station. "I'll tell you what," he said to her. "You're right. I'm tired of talking, too. These schools don't do anything but turn children into morons, and give teachers and the tax-sucking drones who work in PubEd the illusion they're doing something useful."

"What are you going to do?" I asked, not really wanting to know.

"I'll tell you as soon as I figure out what to do. I'm getting sicker and sicker of just talking and talking. It's time to put my money where my mouth is. Put my life where my mouth is. I know PubEd is bad, it's a vicious child-destroying monopoly, busing helpless kids all over the place, just to benefit bureaucrats and bus builders. Even bankers."

"Bankers?" Darlene asked, startled into taking part in a conversation she didn't want to have. "How can busing schoolchildren benefit bankers?"

"You don't know?" he said, incredulously. "Think about it. Busing only exists to make sure that people keep on moving to

safe neighborhoods, to keep the construction industry busy. Any time that housing starts are slow, they just force more busing. That makes more people need to get away from the inevitable terror that teen-aged drug dealers are encouraged to bring into their new schools. Decent parents who want to take care of their children are forced to build new houses in the suburbs. That increases urban decay, which has to be hidden with unnecessary sports arenas, convention centers, and all the other useless frippery that destroys America's cities. Bankers mortgage the whole thing. Banking and busing go hand in hand. In a society with stable, happy neighborhoods, there just isn't much mortgaging. That's why there's busing."

"I didn't realize that," I said.

"It's sad, but true. There's one, immutable law behind Conventional Reality: any time a Government does something that ninety nine per cent of the people know is absurd, the Death and Tax interests are making big money from it.

"But, if knowing doesn't lead to doing something about it, what good is knowledge? I could do something real. I could blow up that school," Carl said, his face lighting up like a schoolboy's at Christmas.

"Why, it might set an example that would inspire other people to blow up these useless monster schools in their cities. I could blow it up easily," he went on, dreamily. "I don't think I have a choice. All that schools teach is the absurd Conventional Reality

that the BaaloCrats need to convince people to believe in to keep tax money flowing. The PubEd monopoly has to be broken up, if the next generation is going to be free.”

“Hadn’t we better talk about this?” Darlene asked, forgetting that a few moments ago, she was tired of talking.

“No. I’m sick of talking. PubEd just slows down education so that the kids are forced to stay in school longer. It forces them to waste years in college to learn what they should have learned in High School. Think how that destroys their sense of self-worth, knowing that they’re just job objects of a lot of greed-crazed parasites. You go on to the Carnival. I’m gonna zap that school.”

“Don’t do anything hasty,” Darlene warned.

“I’m not. I’m doing to do something worthwhile. To tell the truth, I’m bored raising ingots and selling them. Making money is too easy. My life is far better spent trying to rescue at least a few children from the blood-sucking leeches in PubEd.”

“Carl,” I said, trying to think of something to dissuade him, not realizing that, unlike me, he wouldn’t want to be dissuaded from taking such a final step. “Why not just leave well enough alone. The teachers aren’t trying to hurt those children. Most of them try to help the kids.”

“Don’t you see?” he replied. “The State won’t let teachers teach good things. They aren’t allowed to teach about right and wrong, about the kind of things that matter, because the state desperately

needs a large class of people who can be counted on to have no morals. Governments won't let morals be taught. It wants willing slaves. Why do you think that the State destroys private and parochial schools? They don't teach slavery as slavishly as the State wants.

"Al, I have to do something if my life is to mean something, and I can't think of a better place to begin than by blowing up that school."

"Won't they just build a new one?" I asked. "Isn't it futile?"

"They'll have to use the old ones, at least, for a while. It'll be a step in the right direction. Maybe, next time, we can blow up some busses."

Darlene smiled, resigned. Carl kissed her, and shook hands with me. "If I get away, I'll meet you at the farm. If I can find a sling, I'm going to throw a rock at Goliath."

"What's he gonna do? How's he gonna do it?" I asked, as we drove on to the Carnival.

"He'll find a way," Darlene answered, proudly. "He'll find a way." she repeated, her eyes shining. We went on to the Carnival, each of us hoping silently that Carl would be able to do what he had to do, and escape, safely.

"I'm not as worried about him getting caught as I am worried about him hurting himself," she said. "Sometimes, he gets so wrapped up in things, he just doesn't pay attention."

We drove into the Carnival, where our car had to pass under the broad wing of the shiny 797 parked there.

“Oh, good! It’s the D’YuYus!” exclaimed Darlene. We joined the crowd staring at the gaily painted jet.

“They’ve got to be the greatest thieves in the world!” I said.

“As bad as the Department of Health In Human Services?” asked Darlene, a dig at the agency responsible for the Parole Officer Trainee Program in which I was still enrolled.

“They aren’t *that* bad,” I said.

“It’s almost a pleasure to be robbed by Gypsies. At least they give us a fighting chance. And, they’re honest enough to admit that they’re thieves.”

A little girl, dressed in clothes whose original bright colors were obscured by some unidentifiable and incalculable amount of grease, I thought it was, approached us.

“Tell your fortune? Tell your fortune, Mister?” the girl repeated.

I backed away, realizing that what I thought was grease might be something else.

Suddenly, I felt a sharp tug at my back pocket. I reached around and grabbed for my billfold, but I was too late. A boy, dirty as the girl, tried to race away, but Darlene was too quick for him. She quickly stuck one finger through his earring, and brought him to a skidding, screaming halt.

“She was distracting you while this young devil tried to pick your pocket,” Darlene said, over his howls. “Here’s your wallet.”

She plucked it from his grimy hand and gave it to me.

“What you do with that child?” a gruff voice demanded.

We turned back toward the girl, who was screeching:

“That man try to grab me, YeYe. He tried to take me away with him. He offer me money to go with him!” she shrieked in practiced outrage.

YeYe looked at me, well-rehearsed anger on his face.

“You make one move, you thieving Gypsy, and I’ll rip this brat’s ear into rags,” Darlene said firmly, extracting an unusually loud yelp from the boy with a twitch of her finger.

YeYe realized he’d lost. He took his rage out on the girl. He turned, and backhanded her so hard she fell heavily into the dirt. “You two got caught!” he said. “Second time this month. Take a bath.”

“No, no! Not that! Not that, YeYe! Please! Please? I won’t get caught again. Please, YeYe.”

“Malda!” YeYe called, and a plump, kerchiefed woman appeared at the door of the 797. “Take this son *and* daughter of yours, and give them a bath!”

The girl walked to the beaded door, sobbing all the way up the gangplank.

“You ever get caught again,” he called after the crying girl, “and I’ll make you get a job!”

“Let boy go,” he said, turning to Darlene. “I beat him after his bath.”

“You shouldn’t beat him for getting caught,” I said. “You should beat him for trying to steal.”

YeYe looked at me, pityingly. “You got a 797? No? Well, when you get *two* 797s, *then*, you can tell YeYe D’YuYu what to do.” He turned and left us then, striding ponderously up the sagging gangplank.

“How can you reason with people like that?” I asked Darlene, as YeYe disappeared through the strings of bright beads hanging over the airplane door.

The fun had gone out of the Carnival. We turned and went back to the car. The Erie skyline was stark between us and the setting sun’s remaining arc of light. As we watched, what seemed to be another fireball rose from the darkness of the city’s shadows, and rose in the sky, to dwarf the edge of the sinking fireball beyond.

A few seconds later, a great blast shook the earth.

“That’s Carl!” Darlene exclaimed, proudly.

“I’ll bet it is!” I agreed.

We got in the car and headed toward the farm. We hadn’t gone far when we saw him, near a bus stop, whistling down the

road, periodically turning around to watch the bright, orange blaze growing ever brighter in the gathering gloom.

“Pretty good, huh?” he said, as he climbed into the back seat.

“Oh, Carl, it’s wonderful!” she exclaimed. “We felt the earth shake, all the way out at the Carnival!”

“How’d you ever get such a big blast?” I asked, as we headed into the farm.

“It wasn’t hard. I looked all around the school. Boy, what a waste it was. One of the neighbors told me that they tore down fifteen neighborhood schools, just to build one big school to which they bussed nearly every elementary kid in town. They were going to start airlifting International Minorities to it, so that American kids can see how truly insignificant they are as a percentage of global population. The whole thing was built simply to destroy the American kids’ self-confidence, keep them under the thumbs of those accused PubEd bureaucrats, and make them give more tax money to invaders. Well, the more I studied that school, the harder it seemed to be to flatten it. It was today’s version of a Norman castle, built to enslave the Saxon Yeomen. Chain link fences, instead of moats, was the only difference.”

“How’d you blow it up?” Darlene asked.

“While I was looking at it, I saw a tank truck about to fill the underground tanks of an Exxon station, a couple of blocks away. There was only the driver and an attendant on duty. Before the

driver got started, I bopped them on the head and tied and gagged them in the bathroom. Then, I drove the truck through the chain link fence around the school.”

“Any trouble?” I asked.

“Like cutting cottage cheese with a cold chisel. I backed up the truck to a basement window in the middle of the boondoggle, broke the window and opened up the spigots, so’s the gasoline would run into the basement.”

“Wow!” I said, visualizing what would have happened.

“That’s right,” he replied, smiling. “The gasoline began to vaporize inside, and fumes filled every room in the place. I gave the tank truck time to dump most of its gas into the building. Then, from well beyond the fence, down in a low in the ditch, I threw rock after rock at the broken window. How the neighbors cheered!”

Darlene and I shook our heads in admiration.

“Finally, one of the rocks struck a spark, and you know the rest. I got on a bus, and headed home, and met you.” He concluded, looking toward the bright blaze easily visible from the farm.

“Do you think it will make the PubEd porkers think twice about building any more of these monster schools?” Darlene asked.

“Not likely. They’ll raise taxes and build another one right away.”

“Then, what good did blowing it do?”

“First, it will keep kids developing in their neighborhood schools for another year or so with mostly decent teachers. Second, it will force the educational bureaucrats to raise taxes, which will bring us over-taxed peasants that much closer together.”

We heard a car in the drive. Guiltily, we looked at each other. “Did anyone follow you?” I whispered.

“Why are you whispering?” Darlene demanded. “He hasn’t done anything wrong.”

You wouldn’t have known by the stealthy way Carl went to the kitchen window and peered out.

“It’s Father Gonalthwy,” he said, and I could hear the relief in his voice.

“Hi, everybody,” he greeted us. “See the big fire in town? That brand new International Middle School is up in flames. It’s really something.”

“We do know a little something about it, Father,” said Carl.

“Something going on?” he asked.

We exchanged glances.

“Well, Father,” Carl explained, “I blew up the building.”

“Why?”

“I was just sick and tired of talking all the time. I knew that school would do nothing but destroy more children by teaching permissiveness and abortions, and I just couldn’t stand it. So, I blew it up.”

“You certainly did a good job. Looks like every fire company in town is trying to put it out. What if there’s another fire, somewhere else, and someone was killed because all the trucks are at your fire?”

“Don’t you think God would watch out for that?” I asked.

“Tempt not the Lord, thy God,” Father Gonalthwy quoted. “Your intentions were, I’m sure, good. But, spur of the moment fire-bombings are hardly the kind of things The Church encourages. Was anyone in the building?”

“No. I checked to see if the doors were forced or unlocked, and made sure there were no cars in the parking lot. I’m pretty sure that no one was inside.”

“I hope no one was hurt. Carl, if you’re going to be a Catholic, you have to understand that you just can’t go on a crusade when you feel like it.”

“But, Father, you know what they teach in those schools?”

“Yes, but I also know what it means to go on a crusade. You simply can’t go off on your own if it causes injury to innocent people.”

“What about Joan of Arc?” Darlene asked. “No one told her, and she went ahead, all by herself.”

“Sure, she did. But, you didn’t hear any voices from God, did you Carl?”

“No.”

“And, you didn’t perform any miracles, did you?”

“Was it a miracle that I was able to take out that huge building all by myself?”

“Well, we’ll just have to see how it turns out. I do hope no one was hurt.”

“I hope so, too. But, if someone had been injured, it might have been God’s will.”

“That can be dangerous thinking, Carl. Very dangerous. The line between a crusade and self-willed butchery is a narrow one.”

“I know, Father. But, I just couldn’t stand it, any more. The longer I thought of those poor children, locked up for needless years to learn what could be taught in mere months, having their brains washed clean of all morality by tax-sucking BaaloCrats, I just had to do something.”

“I understand, Carl. Believe me, I understand. I’ve seen too many lives shattered by promiscuity, abortion, and divorce caused by believing in Conventional Reality to think you’ve done something wrong. I can only warn you.”

“Warn us of what, Father?” I asked.

“Of the consequences of what you are doing. You may not understand what you’ve done tonight. Every great upheaval of humanity is preceded by an act similar to yours, action directed squarely at the authority of the established Government. You may have pulled the pin.”

“What do you mean, Father?” Darlene wanted to know.

“Think of our Revolution. The act that galvanized the colonists to action was a few brave men, defying the Crats’ taxing authority by dumping the Crown’s tea in the water. The Civil War began when John Brown attacked the Federal Government in one of its own arsenals, forcing the Government to respond. They galvanized the abolitionists to give themselves a moral excuse, and fought a needless Civil War, causing countless casualties. Some of them were so bloodthirsty they’d rather kill their own sons and brothers than lose a nickel of tariff and tax revenue.”

I protested, “Surely freeing the slaves was important!”

“That was just an excuse. The Federal Government could have spent a tenth of what the war cost, bought all the slaves, shipped them to Liberia, and avoided the War. The RepubliCrats of that day wanted a lot of freed slaves they could count on to vote for them, no matter how many people they had to kill. When the BaaloCratic Party has an opportunity to kill and expand their powers, it’s hard to predict what their desperation for more money and softer jobs will drive the wings of their Party to do.

“Think about the small acts that trigger big events. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand let the BaaloCrats begin WWI, and turn most of Europe into an unholy mess of socialistic, Big Government fiascos. Something as small as the destruction of a Bastille can grip the mind of men and women so thoroughly that a great state crumbles. The revolutions that follow gives Baal and his Crats the chance to kill, sucker and enslave more helpless, unarmed people.”

We were sobered by the priest’s slow words. Yet, we felt no fear.

“Come what may,” Carl said, “if the destruction of that school can spark wholesale revolt against a tax-mad bureaucracy squarely based upon murdered babies, I pray that it does.”

“Amen.” I found myself saying, and when that word sprang unbidden to my lips, I knew that I was with him until death.

**Words are spirit-bullets? Revolution, pointless? How much tax should a county pay? What makes people into Crats! The reason for Creation: Sheep from Goat separation, that's all there is to all there is! How does spirit rule flesh? Actual mechanics of it?**

The four of us sat around the kitchen table, drinking Kool-Aid and iced tea, talking of this and that, feeling more and more that we were brought together for some purpose beyond our immediate knowledge. I mentioned my doubts. Not about what I found myself increasingly committed to, the overthrow of yet another bureaucracy based on the bloody sacrifice of helpless children, but my faith in the God who said that such slaughter deserved death, destruction, and ultimately, damnation.

“Impossible as it would have seemed a few weeks ago, I have been born again. I still have questions. But, things have changed so much that I don’t know if questions are demons, or some sort of mental reflection of some spirit world, beyond.”

“I don’t either,” replied Father Gonalthwy. “If no one knows what questions are, sometimes it seems foolish to try to answer them.”

“I never thought of that,” said Darlene. “What are questions, anyway? What are words?”

“Words are bullets, fired by spirits. Good words reflect good thoughts, fired by good spirits. Bad words and destructive

thoughts are fired by evil spirits. Words lurk like land mines on printed pages, ready to explode into peoples' minds where they can help or hurt the soul, itself. They hide in pictures, films, and photographs, waiting for an opportunity to alter the particles in our minds to distort the little bit of reality we can perceive."

"Father," asked Carl, returning to revolution, "The Church has had more experience with Governments than anyone. You've seen hundreds of them, budding, growing, and passing away like leaves on trees. Where does the Church really stand on revolution?"

"We generally feel they're a waste of time. But, we feel that way about most things in the world. The Church believes that Revolutions are mostly pointless, when you get right down to it, in that the need for another revolution quickly follows."

"Aren't some revolutions necessary?" Darlene wanted to know.

"Revolutions are, to some extent, based on greed, rather than goodness. All those factors enter into every revolution, no matter how high-sounding it may be made out to be."

"Do you think we need one now?" I asked.

"I don't see how else more babies can be kept from being butchered. I don't know what the Church thinks, of course, but I do know that unless the Pope commands, we priests can't have much to do with it. We've chosen our master, and we can't have two."

“Why do governments always cause revolutions that destroy them?” I asked.

“Because bureaucrats don’t want to get their hands dirty. Tax-slaves, forced to work threats of jail cells and confiscation, get resentful. When enough people get mad, they start killing bureaucrats. That’s revolution. Then, another generation arrives on the political scene. They soon start making things as soft for themselves as they can. That sets the stage for another revolution. And, so it goes.”

“But it’s so terrible!” Darlene exclaimed. “All those mothers seeing their children killed, and for no good reason. Why don’t you priests tell people how futile it is?”

“We do. Who listens?”

“Isn’t there any way to get a lasting government?” Carl asked.

“Sure. All you’d have to do is to pass three laws. The first law would be that no one could have more than twelve percent of total income taken by taxes. The second law is that anyone who made more than ten times the average income would have his taxes tripled. The third law is that the Crats couldn’t spend any more than they actually collected.”

“If it’s that simple, why don’t they do that?”

“It would reduce tax money available to them. As Crats becomes entrenched, they become so desperate for money that people must be increasingly enslaved to keep everyone paying for

their demands. It's much better to have an early revolution than a late one. But, you can't get the huge masses of Mid-Brain Ranks, the bulge in the bell curve, excited until things get really bad. By then, people are usually disarmed and close to slavery, if not actually in chains."

"What are the signs of revolution?" I asked.

"They're always the same. Increasing numbers of government employees as a percentage of population, increasing pensions, salaries, benefits, and automatic wage increases not tied to any realistic measure of productivity. That causes the export of manufacturing, which is accelerated by too many trial lawyers, destruction of core cultural values, and huge increases in the number of jails and prisoners. Sins begin running rampant. Parents become powerless to protect their children from them. Then, money becomes less and less valuable. That causes inflation, which further weakens the government by showing everyone how powerless it is to control itself. Those are the usual signs."

Carl agreed. "Inflation means that the Crats have to raise still more taxes, and that makes people proportionately more angry, so the Crats need to hire more police, and that gets expensive, so taxes have to be raised again, and that needs more force, and that raises taxes, again."

"That's right. Once the ruling authority, whether kings, committees, or elected officials, comes under Crat control, then

the courts are the only force left. Many are weak, slow and too easily manipulated by bribes and lawyers to be reliable.”

“It seems simple,” Darlene said. “But, back at the beginning of the process of corruption, why do the bureaucrats demand such excessive pay and protection from the problems that normal people face every day as an ordinary part of life? Does the downhill slide from conservative to liberal to socialist to communist to death camps always happen? The fundamental reason for collapse seems to be that some people think that they’re so much better than the rest of us that they don’t have to work.”

“Yes,” I said, blithely ignoring my own livelihood, “What turns a person into a tax-grabber in the first place.”

Carl made a suggestion. “I’ve read that parasitic animals used to be free-living and self-supporting. It’s the only kind of evolution that I believe in, Backwards Evolution, in which things backslide from their created state into lower and more parasitic forms, before they disappear.”

“And, you think crats become crats for the same reason that worms turned into leeches? They get lazy, take the easy way out?” I asked. “Then, they justify it by saying that they’re better than the people they’re feeding off? There must be more to it than that.”

“A little,” said Father Gonalthwy. “The sins of Vanity and Sloth destroy states and bring down empires. The Deadly Sins are tribes of demons. Demons of Sloth are related to the demons of

Pride. Pride makes many believe they're better than other people. That excuses them from meaningful work. Pride justifies ways to get money from others. That gives Sloth time to Lust. Envy and Greed invent more reasons to enslave others while Anger strikes fear into the hearts of the Tax-slaves. Gluttony takes over before collapse. That's celebrated as a great day in Hell, when the heads of the former bureaucrats and their families go rolling down the gutters to the cheers of the oppressed. Nothing gives the Devil greater glee than the moral, intellectual, financial and genetic erasure of those who served Him."

"That makes sense," I said, even as I realized that a month ago I would have seen it as insane gibberish.

"Sure it does. The main reason that the Church lasts and that governments inevitably collapse is that we make sense and they don't. We, in The Church, learn, grow, and stay poor, that's the key. Governments just can't keep themselves from getting so fat that they clog their own arteries with sin and die."

"But, why?" I asked. "What's the point of it all?"

"The point of it all is that everything exists to give each person a chance to save his soul. Separating sheep from goats with total fairness and justice," the priest answered. "The Creation Program is nothing more than the simplest way to give people free will to choose good or evil. That's All There Is To All There Is."

"Aha!" Carl said, with the peculiar enthusiasm he reserved for an answer to something complicated, "Sometimes, our souls are

saved by revolting against tyranny, sometimes our souls are saved by knuckling under. Here and now, under a Government that is killing nearly millions of helpless babies a year, we have no choice but to fight. Is anyone who doesn't damned?"

Father Gonalthwy answered, thoughtfully. "I wouldn't go that far, but, maybe I don't go far enough. Do you sincerely believe, with all your heart, mind, and soul, in the innermost recesses of your conscience, that revolution would solve the problem?"

"Yes, Father, I do. More children would be allowed to live. What other choice do we have?"

"I honestly don't know. When I pray about it, I remember two passages: 'Thou shalt not kill' and 'Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord'. So, I keep praying."

"Pray? Again? Still more praying?" I said, with uplifted eyebrows.

"Praying. Remember, you're talking to a priest, a priest in The Big Church. The Old Church. We've seen 'em all come and go. Believe me, prayer helps. Have you prayed, Carl? Have you, Darlene?"

"No, Father, I haven't," Carl answered, as Darlene shook her head. "You see, Father, I want to become a Catholic because the Church is the only thing that's consistent. The Church is for life and freedom. I don't care that much about what makes it tick."

“A lot of people are attracted to the Church because they’ve seen how well it’s stood up to the tortures of Nero, Diocletian, Pig Henry and thousands more. But, that’s only half of it. Beneath the form, there is the substance, and the substance is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Without that, there would be no Church. Carl, you’re like an architecture student who falls in love with buildings, but forgets that the mind of the architect is far more impressive. Once you get inside the Church, you’ll see that it’s not built simply to stand through the ages. Even pyramids can do that. You’ll see that The Church has been programmed to move through the ages, without Her Teaching being moved. That, ‘unmoved mover’ quality is the truest reflection of God on earth.

“Some Catholics hardly even think about God. They’re so impressed with the Church and its miraculous consistency that they don’t go farther. You’re that way, Carl. Now, you see the wonder of the Church and not the God Whose body it is. It may not happen for years, but you *will* be aware that there is a living God, the Body of Christ, within The Church.”

“Do I have to see it? Do I have to take the time to understand all that before I go on with making things better.”

“Fast and pray, that can’t hurt.”

“We might try making some money, too,” Darlene added, a note from the worldly. “We’ve got some big bills here, for truck rentals and forklift charges. And, if we’re going to fix things, it would help to have some money.”

“That’s right,” said Father Gonalthwy. “The richest men in the colonies helped finance the American Revolution. Wealthy abolitionists financed John Brown. Rich, bitter, jealous relatives of the King of France subsidized the French Revolutionaries. Religious revolutionaries usually get money from rich people, too, donors like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Smarter rich people are always glad to help. What better way can they get into Heaven? The dumber rich people give money Earth Worshippers. If you’re going to make the big time in the history books, you’ll have to make money yourself or find some smart rich people.”

I made a suggestion. “I could take some time off and travel around. Set up a chain of scrap dealers, so we’ll have a widespread outlet for our ingots.” I suggested. “That way, we won’t have anyone getting too suspicious about where our money’s coming from, and we can keep piling up untraceable cash.”

“How do you manage to get so much time off work?” Father Gonalthwy asked me, in sudden astonishment.

Carl laughed. “Tell him Al, I can’t explain it with a straight face.”

“Well,” I began, as amused by the programs as I was ashamed for still taking money from them, “it started with my Personal Business Days. And, The Department of Health In Human Services provides time for Federal employees who are depressed, disturbed, or worried about something. So, I had two weeks of Project Uplift Days. When that ran out, I got on our Multi-Year

Work-Study Program to understand the free enterprise system. If that ever runs out, I have two years of Mental Health Days, at full pay, to fall back on. And, a little more time than that will have been in accrued vacation. Then, there's a couple of years in accumulated sick-days. Then, I can retire with a full pension."

Father Gonalthwy looked sternly at me. "By all means, start to make things better. Just make sure you don't have a foot in both camps."

"You *do* have to make up your mind, Al," Darlene agreed.

"When the roll is called up yonder, we'd sure like to hear your name. And, ours, of course," Carl added.

"I know," I said. "It's been bothering me. It's such easy money, such easy work, employed by Health In Human Services. You don't know how hard it is to give it up."

"Government money is harder to get away from than heroin or nicotine," agreed Father Gonalthwy. "But, if you're ever going to work up to your full capacity, if you're ever going to be happy, you simply can't take money from taxpayers at gunpoint without doing something useful for it. There *are* many useful Govemps, mostly in Departments that existed before The New Deal."

"Materialism is really what we're fighting, isn't it, Father?" asked Darlene, changing the subject.

"Yes. It's the new name for Gluttony. The only way to fight Gluttony is with Self-denial; Sloth with Activity; Envy and

Covetousness with Charity; Anger with Peace; Lust with Chastity. You've come a long way, all of you but, you still have a long way to go. Don't forget to fast and to pray."

"We ought to cool it, for a while, then?" I asked, with sudden relief.

"For a little while," the priest replied. "You've blown up an empty building, but that doesn't mean that you'll have to keep going. You may be only a few of the people whom God has gotten his angels to involve in this. Before you go on striking blindly at every evil you see, it might be good to fast and pray. Wait for a sign."

"Sounds boring," said Carl, still excited by his successful blast. "But, it does make sense to wait and be sure we're heading in the right direction."

"We don't have to fast for forty days, do we?" Darlene asked.

"No, not unless you really want to go big time." Father answered. "Just fast long enough to know that what you're doing is what God wants you to do."

"Aren't you supposed to fast in a desert?" Carl asked.

"You could get a healthy start on it right here. Try it. You'll understand more than you ever thought possible."

"Will they find out that Carl blew up the school?" asked Darlene.

“No,” the priest assured her. “Crats never want to believe that revolution is coming. They’ll just blame it on some racist or wacky right-wingers who don’t like to see children bussed away from their neighborhood schools. But, you’re better off praying, for now.”

“I’m not much for praying. I’ll work on the money, and you two take care of fasting and praying,” I said. “I’ll travel around and find more smelters and scrapyards who’ll buy ingots.”

“How long do you think you’ll be gone?” Carl asked. “Forty days?”

We all laughed. Father Gonalthwy said, “Before you start fasting, let’s eat what I brought for us.” He went out to his car and brought in an icy watermelon, dripping with condensation. Darlene cut us each a piece.

“Watermelon is sure good,” I said.

“Most food is good. It was meant to be,” Father Gonalthwy replied. “Except to the food freaks who can’t enjoy anything except the process of not enjoying. Still, by fasting, we can begin to understand more easily how things work, how the spirit flows into the flesh, how the spirit rules the flesh.”

“How does the spirit rule the flesh? What are the mechanics of how it works?” Carl asked the priest.

“Suppose that you and Al are driving a truckload of ingots, some evening when it’s getting dark. Suddenly, a child’s ball rolls

out between two parked cars. Al slams on the brakes, and a huge truck with ten tons of ingots comes to a screeching halt. What stopped the truck?”

“The brakes,” I answered.

“But, what moved the brakes?” the priest asked.

“Al’s foot?” said Carl.

“What moved Al’s foot?”

“Nerve impulses from his brain,” Darlene said. “That’s what stopped the truck.”

“Where’d they come from, those nerve impulses?”

“They started in his eye,” answered Carl.

“No, they started from light,” Father Gonalthwy explained. “The ball reflected light. Maybe a billionth of a trillionth of an ounce of light bounced from the ball into Al’s eye. Most of it was reflected by his shiny eyeball, but a tiny bit of it went through his lens and retina. Even less light hit his optic nerve. A tiny bit of it was bio-digitized and sent to his brain for further processing.”

“Then, it was light that made Al stop the truck?” asked Darlene.

“Almost. Wavebits of light can be ridden like horses, by angels and demons. That’s how spirits control flesh. In fact, it would have been the child’s guardian angel who surfed the surging wave of light reflected from the ball through the lens, across the vast ocean of vitreous humor, through the vast canyons and peaks of

rods and cones, down the gleaming tunnel of the optic nerve into the distant boondocks of Al's brain. The tiny signal was amplified until Al's wandering mind became aware of it, and his conscious mind amplified and directed Al's foot to move. By a far simpler arrangement of pumps and levers, Al's muscles were magnified into enough power to stop the truck. Amplification and direction. Surely you can see how tiny angels are, and how easy it is for them."

"How would there be time for all of that?" I asked.

"Time doesn't flow in a straight line. It has waves, currents and eddies in it, like a river. Milli-microseconds give angels enough time to stop the truck."

"It works the other way, too, doesn't it?" asked Carl. "Couldn't The Loving Programmer have time flow fast or slow so that He *could* have created the world in the six days, as the Book of Genesis records? Still, I think He wrote The Creation Program in six working days, each eight hours long, with Programming Assistants, angels, working around the clock."

"Of course He could have," Father Gonalthwy answered. "As long as I've been a priest, I've never really understood why there aren't more Catholic Fundamentalists, Bible-believing Catholics. Too many priests have made a Secondary Religion out of the successive stages of modernism, especially from Voltaire on. Some priests will embrace bubble-headed sciences, even outright lies from Freud and Darwin, before their conceits let them admit

there's anything to a Biblical, fundamental approach. And, of course, too many Baptist-type clergy are just as stuck in their conceits of imaginary independence to let their egos see the immense, God-like nature of the Big Church, much less become the integral, critical, important part of it that they could be.”

**Why are some Priests Liberal? Are they Trinitarian Storm Troopers working undercover? God's way to separate sheep from goats? Is Faux Father Feeley really ushering Crats and pseudo-intellectuals out of Heaven? "The disobedient spend eternity, at best, in the slums of Heaven." "Heaven doesn't have any slums." "Then, they must be in Hell."**

"Some Catholic priests do other things that worry me," said Darlene. "Not only are many of them downright gullible about accepting State-Supported Pseudo-Intellectuals and Pseudo-Scientists as equals, but a lot of priests worry more about kowtowing to governments. Some of them hate successful farmers in Central America more than killing millions of babies. Why, if priests would speak out against abortion, *and* encourage all of their Catholics families to have just one more child, rather than worry about a lot of brain-dead do-gooderism, we could have a growing population and a healthy society."

"It is sickening," agreed Father Gonalthwy. "The only way that I can figure it is that God weeds the garden. Once, He did it with flood, fire and plagues. Now, He uses intellectual plagues, like making people believe that promiscuity, homosexuality, abortion, and abortion-inducing birth control are somehow good. Anyone who believes any of that is headed for genetic extinction in a generation or so. God has it programmed so that the weeds pull

themselves out of the Garden. Leftists disappear because they've chosen to separate themselves from Truth. To weed out false Catholics, God provided liberal priests. That's the only reason for them I can think of."

"That makes a lot of sense," Carl said. "After all, most aborted babies would have grown up to vote for liberal DemoCrats who would have used their votes to give themselves more tax money. There are only two possibilities: Either the leftists aren't smart enough to figure that out, or, they'd rather have death than money!"

"Right on both counts!" said Father Gonalthwy. "That's the best proof there is that liberals either have Low Brain Ranks or love death more than life!"

"Liberal priests are liberal on purpose?" Darlene asked, in sudden astonishment. "Do they believe that they're doing God's will by not complaining while unbelievers kill themselves and their children? Are they helping God get rid of liberals by focusing their intellectual efforts on Imaginary Problems?"

"Do you suppose that the Faux-Father Feeley types aren't really liberal, after all? That their true, God-given purpose in life is to provide shallow, empty reasons to help shallow, empty people kill themselves and their children? Do liberal priests realize they are God's avenging angels, getting rid of the self-centered by ushering them into slow-acting, intellectual gas chambers?"

Father Gonalthwy thought before he answered. “No liberal could be cunning enough to live such a lie. They actually believe their own drivel, or believe that they should. Most of us conventional priests have given trying to straighten them out. They’re trying to be intelligent, and they aren’t bright enough to know how badly they fail.”

“Why doesn’t the Church have its own newspapers and TV stations, then?” I asked.

“People will only watch Catholic TV if we have decent, traditional people saying decent, traditional things, and you know how much the twits hate that! As a practical matter, the liberals are better at office politics, so they’d end up running the station, taking over from the conservative Catholics. Then, it would stagnate. As usual, they’d blame the ‘hateful clods’ who won’t watch their endless lies and twaddle. Regular Catholics would be offended, and the Church would lose. Which, of course, is what the liberals want.

“And, if a Catholic television station ever showed what went on in an abortion, people might rise up in rage against a murderous government. They’d never allow that. They don’t want people to know that life is not as important as their desires. They especially don’t want people realizing that thoughts are never as important as prayers.”

“Father,” interrupted Darlene, “would it help people if they were forced to fast and pray?”

“No,” he laughed. “It’s been tried before, and it doesn’t have a long-term effect. For a while, people wake up to the higher facets of their capabilities, but they sink back very fast. People have to want to be good. Moslems force their people to pray. It’s a great kind of crowd control. Insecure governments like nothing better than seeing entire population in machinegunnable positions several times a day. That’s why some governments prefer some religions to others. Governments hate Catholics for believing so consistently in love, life, families, and freedom. You can guess which religions God likes!”

“How do you get people to be in God-centered religions?” I asked.

“We set good examples. Actions are really the only things that get respect.”

“That’s hard!” Carl said. “Setting a good example is hard work. I was hoping that if we could convince a lot of people to quit working, and stop paying taxes, that we could wean the Crats away from their lust to enslave us.”

“Won’t work. Crats get so scared at the prospect of having to get real jobs and take risks like other people that they just call out the troops and give the peons a whiff of the grape. They confiscate their property, throw them in prisons and do whatever it takes to get them back in chains again. Besides, when taxes get too high, people do stop working.”

“Too bad there’s not an easier way to inspire us to higher things,” I said.

“If there were, then Our Founder wouldn’t have had to meet such an awful death,” Father Gonalthwy answered, as we finished our watermelon.

Carl broke the silence. “We may not need a revolution with guns and bombs. Maybe we should revolt against our lower natures, and set an example that would inspire bureaucrats to leave us alone. Maybe that would be better than going to Washington and picking out some useless pigsty, and blowing it off the face of the earth.”

I found myself protesting: “I’m not interested in that kind of revolution. That’s no fun at all. I want troops to command, artillery to fire, planes to strafe, napalm bursting into flames, big guns booming, big ships sinking, tanks crashing through buildings, land mines, grenades, machine guns! Why, a revolution without that’s no fun at all, it’s like a Sunday School picnic.”

Darlene looked at me, horrified. “Al, I’m ashamed of you! All you’re looking for is an excuse for excitement, never mind that someone else will have to pay for it.”

“That’s partly right. But, what’s so wrong with that?” I said, turning instinctively to Father Gonalthwy. “The Church has launched Crusades before, against people a lot nicer than the butchers who kill billions of unborn babies. Why not a Crusade, now? What’s stopping us?”

Father smiled, wistfully. “What stops us is the ancient fear that by doing what we think is right, we may be doing something far worse. We must make sure, before a Crusade, that we are not pillagers, but pure, not full of lust, but of love, not hateful but honorable. Blowing up an empty building is one thing, but shedding blood is a serious business. To be sure, there is ‘*a time for war*’, but we must *know* that we are doing God’s will before life is destroyed.”

“You’re right,” I said. “Look at me. I haven’t even officially quit my job with the Government, and here I am, wanting to fight against it. If I were going to be consistent, I’d have to kill myself, and I don’t want to do that.”

“That’s right,” said Father Gonalthwy. “Many of the people you’d be fighting actually don’t know how evil some of Government has become. If you battle against them, they’ll harden their hearts and fight back, losing whatever slim chance of salvation they might have. They have to be led into doing right.”

“I guess so,” I reluctantly agreed.

“That’s not always enough, though, is it Father?” asked Carl. “After all, in the history of the Church, there were times when the Vicar of Christ called for swords about the Cross, times to put teeth in prayer.”

“Still, you must make more than a perfunctory attempt to know God’s Will.”

“You know,” said Carl, “it’s such a great temptation to believe in easy answers. I really want to believe that I could go to Washington, blast a few buildings and everything would be all right. But, it’s more complicated than that.”

“Yes, it is. Jesus could have killed His enemies. He didn’t kill any of them. He just made them want to be better. Even tax collectors,” said Father.

“But that’s so hard,” I said, plaintively. “There must be an easier way.”

“It depends on whether you want to be a fisher of men or a mad bomber.”

“I get your point. Why kill when you can convert.”

“That’s it, exactly,” said Carl. “This might be the time for revolution, with the blood of aborted babies flowing in rivers. But, I can’t go Cratzapping on my own. I can’t even hate the bloody butchers some have become. Should we think of them as lost sheep, even the baby-destroyers? I’m waiting, millions of us are waiting, for God to flip the switches in our minds, the deep spiritual switches, the buried buttons that only He can push when too many of His sheep have been slaughtered.

“God, let it be soon. So many of your children have been destroyed! We are growing weak with grief and helplessness. We can do nothing without You, Lord.” Carl continued, talking more to God than to us, “We need you, God, to show us the way, to lead

us from this evil, where mothers are made into tax slaves, and their unborn babies made into quack medicine. Let us do your will. Lord, help us deal with evil.”

His voice grew ever softer, ever more intense, as he continued: “Let us, Lord, rise as Your People. Let us drive away these death-loving demons, that we may begin to live as You want us to live, free and clean.

“I’m tired. I’m so tired,” he said, sadly, and left us, with our plates of watermelon rinds and seeds. He slowly climbed the narrow farmhouse stairs to a bedroom above.

“He sees more than I knew,” Father said. “He hates the Crats, but he pities them, too. He knows how easy it is to revolt against them, how much hatred is building up toward them, and he knows how easy revolutions are to start. He knows that Satan always likes to see a revolution that would kill, because Satan loves nothing more than to destroy his own children. Satan hates all trust, especially trust in him. On the other hand, Satan grieves to see a Crat converted to Catholicism.”

“I never thought of that,” I could only partly comprehend a depth of the feeling that moved Carl. “It must be hard, being a Catholic, and have to give up the freedom to go on a Crusade any time you want. It is harder to love your enemy,” I said.

“Crusades aren’t just fought with tanks and planes, Al,” Father replied. “They’re fought with spirits; Powers and Principalities, Angels and Archangels; Thrones and Dominions; Cherubim and

Seraphim and Virtues, rolling out of Heaven like great, sounding rivers of light.

“Demons and dervishes come boiling out of Hell, swarming in uncountable numbers to blot out the light they hate. It’s a reflection of that battle, here, in the Teeming Midlands, that we call a Crusade. The Church against the evil states, God against Devil. All that any of us have to do is pick the right side and fight for all we’re worth.”

“I’m out of my depth,” I replied. “I feel like a child who’s stumbled into a board meeting. I know the words, but not all their meanings. I just can’t seem to get a grip on any of this, not the kind of grip...”

“You can’t, Al,” Darlene interrupted. “Not until you quit this shilly-shallying around. You’re either with us, or, you’re against us. You have to decide. Who’s side are you on? You can’t despise Government for being a lot of lardy porkers and still take money from them. You can’t serve two masters **and** stay sane.”

“She’s right, Al,” agreed Father. “What’s it going to be, Church, or State? You can’t muddle in the Teeming Midlands forever.”

I shook my head. I didn’t want to decide. If I stayed with the Government, I’d never have to work again, unless, of course, there was a successful revolution, but, if there was, I’d be dead and wouldn’t know the difference. If, on the other hand, there wasn’t a revolution, I’d be set for life. I’d never have to go to work, other

than to maybe make a few reports on my Personal Progress, and I'd get money in the mail forever. I could feel my commitment beginning to fade. Finally, I got up, and walked outside, leaving Father Gonalthwy and Darlene in the kitchen.

Mostly, I couldn't believe that I hadn't already made the commitment to God. I was disgusted with my own ambivalence, and wanted to blame my friends for my problem.

**I'm mad at me, No guts. I see the stadium and finally decide! I meet Brother John. More religious stuff happens to me. Still, I don't catch up with Carl & Darlene.**

“Who do they think they are?” I asked myself. “Why do they think that they have to save the world? Why can't they just relax, and enjoy life? Why do they torment me? Why won't they let me tag along, one foot in both camps? What difference does it make? I don't know what to do,” I said, aloud, as I wandered into the old barn where Bird-God had been born.

“Oh, yes, you do,” a clear voice said to me. “You are, after all, a human being. You are the high point of Creation. You human programs have been written and downloaded with more power than any other force in your level of existence. You *can* know what to do. You can actually know truth. It is only the forces from below that have made you weak. Look up, look up and know!”

“No, no!” I screamed silently at the voice. “Stay away. Leave me alone! Leave me alone! I want to be me! I want to be free! (Oh, God, can you stand such trite, crap-brained fatuousness and still love me? Nobody could love a human who consciously uttered ‘I want to be me! I want to be free!’ And, I even put explanation points after each brain-dead phrase! You can even forgive *that*, Lord? You would want someone as hyper-affected as that in Heaven? You could tolerate twaddle that benighted for even a

nanosecond, let alone, eternity? You do love us? You must!) Stop this! I don't want to be tormented, anymore! Please, God, leave me alone!"

I collapsed, almost sobbing, on a pile of straw, and slept so soundly that I didn't hear Father Gonalthwy come in, cover me with a blanket, and drive away. I dreamed of my friends, of eager, enthusiastic Carl, itching for the chance to draw the sword he didn't know if he should use; of calm, confident Father Gonalthwy, who fought his Crusade with prayers, of Darlene, preparing in her way.

"There are the good, the bad, and the uncommitted. Church, state, Teeming Midlands," I said to an unseen questioner in the dream. "I know, I'd rather be able to make a commitment, and I'd rather be committed to good, but I'm afraid, so afraid, that evil will win. Can't I just give my heart to Christ and my body to the Devil? Can't I?" I asked again, and heard that same question echoed by a billion voices.

The unseen questioner opened a curtain, deep in my mind, connecting my memory, or my imagination, I could no longer tell them apart, with a scene I knew but had never seen. Beyond the curtain, preparations for battle were beginning. Angels were marking off the field, sweeping the bleachers, painting the goal posts. At first, it appeared to be a small arena. Then, my sense of perspective improved, and I saw that the goal posts at either end of the field were a lifetime apart. It took the official, timekeepers'

light more than three quarters of a century to get from one end of the field to the other. There were lots of exits along the sides of the field.

The bleachers were big enough to hold clusters of stars. They weren't lined up to watch as much as they were there to give a feeling of majestic, timeless dignity to the proceedings. "The stars from earlier performances don't have to buy tickets," said a glowing cloud about two feet away from my right ear. "They're just here to cheer!"

"This is too much for me," I protested to the form that rapidly coalesced beside me. "I really think that you're overloading my spiritual capacity. There are comets, zooming through the aisles."

"If it's too much, then how is it that you're seeing it?" replied the neon-outlined Cherubian shape assigned to guard me, whom I was seeing for the first time.

"I am seeing it, aren't I? And, *you!*" I said, in amazement. "It isn't too much to see, is it?"

With the glowing light beside me, I floated far above the grandstand. Next to it, there was another grandstand, and beyond that, another. "Does everyone get his own grandstand?" I asked, in astonishment.

"Yes, but only for symbolic purposes," my Guardian Angel replied. I had a vague feeling, then, very vague, of all the grandstands moving through time and space, but the feeling

evaporated when a voice called to my tour-guide, “Take him back. He’s not supposed to come any farther, today.”

Then I spun through the stars, like a bird through fireworks, and shivered beneath the blanket. It was still dark, and I tried to get a grip on the different parts of the dream, but they’d disappeared, leaving only the vaguest memories. I was about to shake all of it off, when a voice, that I would swear was my Guardian Angel’s, said, “You don’t remember Caesar’s wife’s name, but she was real. Therefore, reality and memory cannot be the same.” But, when I shook my head, that, too, was left only as a dim memory.

“I still don’t know what to do,” I said to myself, wishing I really knew if I was awake. “If I knew how Carl was going to do, I’d know better. If he starts a revolution, I’d at least have a place in the history books. But, if he just sits around and prays, people will think he’s an idiot, and, me, too, if I stay with him. If I stay with the Government, I’ll have money, but my only friends will be others who’ve dulled themselves to anything beyond their immediate needs.”

I could understand Carl and Darlene becoming Catholic. In fact, I was tempted, once or twice, myself. But, that was such a big step, and only the first of many that had to be taken. That’s what bothered me. There was just no telling where it would end. Why, if I stayed with Carl, I could get so enthused about God I might end up in a monastery. Prothumanists never ended up with Celibacy,

Obedience and Poverty. At least, not on purpose! And never all three! Or, I could be martyred, thrown into jail, endlessly harassed by unwitting pawns of the State whose new slave-labor was provided by frightening the middle class into taxable submission by their cunningly publicized perversions.

Still, I knew from my short view of the grandstand, that I'd only get to play one time, and I might as well head for the goal post. There, I had the definite memory, spirit joined with spirit, flesh with flesh, and, by some miracle, the body was resurrected and reunited with its soul. I didn't really know, but I thought I'd feel more peaceful, on the side of Carl and Darlene and Father Gonalthwy and, maybe even the Big Church. I went back to the kitchen to write a letter of resignation.

“Dear Dr. Worsavolk: (to resign from Health In Human Services, you had to have permission from your department head so that you didn't skip out when they were making new budget requisitions without giving them a chance to replace you from the huge stockpiles being graduated yearly from the SS Obfuscation Centers.) Effective immediately, I wish to announce my resignation from the staff of the Parole Officer Trainee Program.”

I thought about giving him reasons, but knew no one cared.

“Every person is replaceable, but no position is expendable,” had always been the Health In Human Services philosophy. It kept people busy working, if you could call that what they did. You wouldn't believe how they'd dread finding themselves replaced,

even though they knew they could never be fired or laid off. Even though they never did anything useful. Especially because they never did anything useful.

As I signed my name and government service number, I felt the cloud clearing from my mind. I could see that my future would depend only on me, and not on the ability of the government to collect taxes. I was as buoyant as a man who, for the first time, has put his money where his mouth is.

I left a note for Carl and Darlene, and told them I was heading out to find more outlets for our ingots.

“Fast and pray,” I wrote them, “and I’ll take care of business.”

From Erie, I drove to Wheeling. I spent the night there, and found a small foundry. It used a lot of copper and didn’t seem to be run by anyone who’d wonder where it came from.

Then, I drove to Cincinnati. A small plant there would buy even more. I spent the weekend. Saturday night, there wasn’t much to do. The movies all seemed to be made for turning adolescents into sex-crazed guerillas in a class war being waged by Hollywood producers. Then, I happened to drive by a big, old tent. Faded letters on a delaminating piece of plywood proclaimed it to be an “Old Fashioned Gospel Revival”. I stopped, wondering what Father Gonalthwy would have thought of it.

I sat in the third of twenty rows of wooden folding chairs, joining ten or fifteen other people in the huge tent. Many had a

family resemblance to the tent-owner/evangelist. I listened, as Brother John spoke unintelligibly for ten or fifteen minutes. “Tain’t nothin’,” A man whispered loudly to me. “Oncet, I seen him talkin’ in tongues ‘most all night.”

“Oh?” I whispered back, not knowing what he was talking about.

“Near seven hours, straight, it was. His wife, Sister Alice, the lady by the piano, she sent word to England, to that there Book of Records. They sent back that they didn’t even know what speakin’ in tongues was. Can you ‘magine that? They said they didn’t have no records in that department, and didn’t allow as they’d be plannin’ any. But, you can see, he was almos’ famous.”

Soon, a plate was passed. I put in the only folding money. A few minutes later, a stout lady in black, high top shoes, a long gingham dress, and a faded blue bonnet came to sit by me.

“I’m Sister Alice. We’re so glad to have you with us at Service, tonight.”

“It’s nice to be here.”

“Yes. So many folks just love this old-time preaching,” she said, waving her hands proudly at a largely imaginary audience while Brother John, spittle flying, raved on and on, totally unintelligible.

I wanted to laugh. Ordinarily, I would have, but Sister Alice was obviously sincere. “They sure can’t be in this for the money,” I

said to myself as I caught a glimpse of moonlight through the tattered tent top.

“What brings you here?” Sister Alice asked.

“Traveling. On business.”

“Oh, no. It’s the Lord brought you here. I just know He did. He has his reasons.”

“Oh?”

“Yes sir. The Lord’s decided that it’s time for you to know Him.”

Something kept me from replying that I knew Him quite well enough, and she motioned to Brother John. He quickly stopped his manic muttering and came over to us. “This here man is with us tonight because the Lord wants him to be.”

Brother John began to speak, in a slow, singsong chant that seemed familiar, (Father Gonalthwy would have called it ‘Gregorian.’) though I’d never consciously remembered hearing it before.

“Lord, here we is, with this poor sinner who’s come to us, here, before You. Lord, we ask that you fill him with your Spirit, that you let him be at peace with hisself and with You, dear Lord, and that you lead him away from the deathly paths of sin, Dear Lord, and into a closer walk with You.

“The fields are white, Dear Lord, and this here grain of wheat, why, it’s about to die, to die to the world, to die to hisself, Lord,

and to become one of your own. Plant him deep, Lord, plant him in good soil, in rich dirt, that he'll grow, and return plenty for Your goodness and for Your Glory.

“Help this poor sinner, Lord, help him come to You, and You will Lord, knowin’, as you do, that I’m askin’ in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

At that moment, Brother John laid his rough, callused hands on my head, and it suddenly felt as if someone had dumped a bowl of warm gravy under my skull. I felt more of the nasty filthiness I’d always felt to be a part of me be washed away in the cleansing flow. From deep within, I could hear again anguished demons screaming, angels singing, and I knew that the spirits who visited me in my dreams were the realest things I’d ever know until the time came to stand before my Maker. God was in me, then and there, as indisputably as anything could be. I could see, with Thomistic wholeness, choirs of heavenly light, singing above the endless lines of grandstands in the sky, rank upon rank, immutable, unstoppable in perfect, pristine Glory.

Brother John’s strong hands began to tingle, and he took them from my head. With the slight weight gone, it seemed nothing could stop my buoyancy, and I floated, I think, right out of my chair. I spoke in a queer way, making sounds I could remember later as purest gibberish, though they made perfect sense to me then.

I walked out of the tent on legs I understood for the first time, slowly growing in the knowledge of what it meant to be made in the image of God.

I was in a glow and a glow was in me, holding me off the ground, shielding me from anything that could dispel my incarnate joy, and only the music Sister Alice played on the rickety piano penetrated my mind, re-echoing the joy I felt within. Brother John began to sing, then, and I could hear that, and the dozen spectators started to sing the Doxology as Sister Alice played. I heard the angels of Heaven, so many that every receptor in my inner ear was set to ringing. It went through me, through my mind and body and soul, filling me with light and sound.

“I know the Lord!” I exclaimed, as a thousand heavenly choruses sang, “GLORY BE TO THE FATHER!”

“I know the Lord!” I said, again, shouting with deep joy, and ten thousand choruses echoed, “AND TO THE SON!” I laughed, and cried, nearly blinded with the light, yelling, “I know the Lord! I know the Lord! Truly, I know Him!” while every voice in all of saved Creation sang, “AND TO THE HOLY GHOST!”

I could barely stand it, as I became aware of the endless singing of rank after rank of beings, Angels, Principalities, Powers, creations I had never known. They joyfully set the galaxies to ringing, “AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT END! AMEN! AMEN!”

Exhausted, yet invigorated, I went back to my motel, and began to read from the Gideon Bible. I read nearly all night, slept for a few short hours after dawn, mastered the hunger pangs that gripped me on awakening, and began to read, again. In three days, I'd read the entire Bible, from cover to cover. I was surprised at how familiar it all was, at how easily it fit within my mind.

Then, I headed West, making short zigzags off Route 40 to the North and South, finding a few more likely scrapyards, foundries, and smelters.

Each night, I reread more of the Bible, and was surprised at my sense of *deja vu*.

"Maybe we inherit religion," I said to myself one night. "Maybe there's something in us that reaches out and grabs for it, when we give it a chance. Genetic? Passed on in the genes that God gave Adam. Maybe people who aren't chosen, who don't get to feel this way, don't have it in their DNA. Maybe the sins of their fathers erases it from their genes. Am I saved because my parents were born of people who were saved, like flatworms, inheriting knowledge of God from earlier generations of trained flatworms? Saved because I am a Son of Adam, Sham, and Abraham? Am I saved because I am descended from Jacob's Tribes? Is there proof in DNA that some of us are the Children of God? (How that question still staggers me!) Or, are all the children of God? Am I at a crossroads between Protestantism and Catholicism? Determinism and Free Will?"

“That’s what’s happening,” I said, interrupting myself. “My spirit is free, it’s roaming all over my brain, picking up thoughts I never knew I could think. It can go anywhere, fearlessly, because it’s not afraid of Conventional Reality, not anymore.”

During the following days, I could feel my mind continue to be cleansed of false ideas and strange notions carefully implanted by the priests of Conventional Reality. All the confusing drivel that had taken over two decades and hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to stuff inside my brain disappeared. “What a waste!” I marveled.

Fears and anxieties that had lurked in me for a lifetime were banished. Dark powers were driven away, and I rejoiced to see them go. “My whole philosophy,” I wrote to Carl and Darlene, “was nothing more than a fearful unwillingness to see the emptiness of Conventional Reality. That fear kept me from seeing how real the spiritual side of life truly is. I didn’t want to see that nearly everything I’d learned in the State Schools was taught to me by equally frightened men and women who knew less than a child knew. They hid from the light inside the intellectual crannies of ramshackle huts they built for themselves on the valuable living time of carefully confused students. The poor saps had sold their souls for tenure. Free at last, free at last, I thank my God, I’m free at last.”

“Quite a change,” Darlene said to Carl, when she’d finished reading the letter aloud at what had been lunchtime, before their fast began. “It’s a good thing he quit working for the Government, so that the Holy Spirit could through to him.”

“Sure is. It’s kind of funny, too. Here we are, becoming Catholics, and there Al is, taking the same first step we did.”

“I feel that way, too. Fasting and praying has opened my eyes to the forces that have accumulated on our side, over the centuries. It’s heartening to know that they’d let someone as wretched as me into a Church that’s produced so many saints.”

The two smiled at each other, deeply and tenderly, grateful for the love that let them know the joy of living and loving. Carl leaned across the table, and took her hands in his.

“We’re more than we were. Before, we were two people. Now, we have something to believe, without any reservations whatsoever, and we’re more. We’ve become brothers and sisters in a far bigger family, bound by bonds stronger than blood. We’re fighting a common evil for a common good with a common bond between us and the largest, oldest family on the face of the earth. We are the children of Noah, the sons of Shem, descendants of Abraham, out of Jacob’s Spiritual Tribes. We’ve graduated from being small, basically useless complainers, whining all the time. Now, we’re part of the main battle force. We’re moving on, to victory.”

“I know it, too. Now, our lives count for something. We’re led, for the first time, by men who’ve proven themselves worthy of leadership by real sacrifice, men with the power of celibacy, obedience, and poverty behind them. Who else has leaders whom they can trust? Father Gonalthwy was right. We have to remember who’s in charge. God will tell us when to fight. If there is a call to arms, it will echo down the chain of command, from God to Mary to St. Michael to all of His angels and beings; from God to Pope to Bishop to Priest, to us. Then, we will take our weapons from the wall. Then, the battle will begin.

“We make ourselves ready, and we will remain ready for the clear call from beyond, blasting across the Heavens like a million splitting stars. We will hear it when it comes, and will answer.

“Michael, himself will lead us, with all the light that there is blazing brightly behind him! Battalion on battalion, brigade upon brigade, divisions and divisions, army after army, force on force, peoples, Archangels, Angels, Principalities, Powers, Thrones, Dominions and Virtues! The souls of the lost babies will march with us in Invincible Infantry! The armories of Heaven will be opened! The Saints shall draw their swords! The ravaging evil that dares to destroy the holy children of God will be brought to total, complete destruction. Time and all things will end. It will be as it was in the beginning, God and man speaking freely to each other. Joy, forever. Victory, complete.”

Carl nodded, his head bowed before her intensity. When he raised his eyes and looked at her again, his wife was no longer there. Joan of Arc, clothed in light resplendent, the soul of every woman more interested in the future than in herself, sat across from him. And, the angel in Carl's mind reminded him that Michael's Commander-in-Chief, the greatest of any force in Space/Thing/Time, was brought into the world by a woman.

“How far we've come,” she said, bowing her head. Beneath the collar of her blouse, Carl caught a glimpse of a hair shirt.

## **THE ENEEMY IS BIG. AND, OLD.**

**The last of the MacAbees go to war. Dr. Grifter empties a floor. The Matts see a meeting. BaaloCrats gather. Miriam initiated clipped. Baal speaks. Praises Luther. Mocks Catholics and Pro-Life Jews and Fundamentalists. Dog eats Lobster. More attacks on Big Church. Baby, wok. Grifter Gets Got.**

“What I’m gonna do, Dad, is keep on workin’ for the Gummit. I’m gettin’ transferred to a janitor job at the new Weirton Federal Building. Maybe I can find out just who gave the orders to staple a Health In Human Services check to a tiny bag of cocaine.”

“You think you could get me a job, too? Might help to have both of us there.”

“Sure can! I’ve already worked for the Gummit long enough to get most anybody a job. They like for a person to get jobs for his friends and relatives. Even hitch-hikers that you pick up along the road. Especially hitch-hikers you pick up along the road.”

The two men smiled at each other. Their relationship had matured. The last of the MacAbees had a common cause. For the first time since they left the farm, they looked forward to harvest.

Their hatred had become an immovable wall around them, cemented by blood and unslaked wrath. They’d seen their flesh, blood, and bone destroyed. They would leave no stone unturned for the revenge they knew God would give them. As the days went

by, their hatred became a third partner in their plan, a cold, abiding rage that carried them along, past two or three meals at a stretch, as they considered ways to attack.

“For four things the earth is disquieted,” Mattathias quoted, “and the first of these is a servant who reigneth.”

“And, we’re gonna knock ‘em off their thrones,” Young Matt happily replied.

The two men got on the same shift on the janitorial staff. There wasn’t much to do. Nearly all the physical labor involved leisurely strolls through the building, compiling lists of things to be contracted out to various firms whose employees, mostly illegal immigrants, did the actual work.

Wandering through the building gave Matt an opportunity to see for the first time just what a big foe he was fighting. He wasn’t dismayed.

“A tapeworm’s mighty long, son,” Old Matt explained to his son, “But, it’s head is pretty small. We get to the head of this thing, and lop it off, and the whole accursed beast will die.”

“Yeah,” said Young Matt, dreamily, smiling with the deep satisfaction of a man who sees his true vocation as clearly before him as a mountain above and beyond the plains.

As they worked, they noticed a surprising number of top-level meetings in the Weirton Federal Building.

“I think, Pa, that they use Weirton as a test for all their new programs. That’s why there’s all those big shots in and out all the time.”

“Any way we can find their schedules?”

“Sure thing, Pa. I’ll request ‘em from the building manager. I’ll tell him we need to know when meetings are so we can coordinate our maintenance schedule.”

When Young Matt made the request of the Building Manager, Dr. Herman Grifter was astounded. “Why, in all my years of classes at the Harvard Graduate School of Federal Building Management, I never heard of such a thing. Imagine, a janitor actually trying to make me think that he can read and plan ahead! Of *course* you can have a schedule, my good man,” Dr. Grifter handed a list of meetings to him, with the indulgent air of a zoo-keeper giving a telephone directory to a chimpanzee.

He chuckled, rippling the waves of fat that layered his egg-shaped body. Dr. Grifter laughed aloud, when the door had shut, and called up another Federal Building Manager, an old Harvard classmate managing the nearby North Suburban Weirton Federal Building, to share the joke with him.

Young Matt didn’t mind being laughed at. “I’ll fix y’er fat ass,” he said to himself as he left the office. “You jus’ wait.”

That night, he and his father went over the list of meetings.

“It is funny,” Matt said. “So many of ‘em meetin’ in Weirton.”

“They usually to go Acapulco, or the Riviera, or Hawaii, or Aspen, or places like that. I’ve heard that they come here to see how their experimental programs are workin’ out. The pipple who work here get promoted to run the programs, if they work well here. That meeting on the top of the list, the one with all the Regional Directors. That’s gonna be a *big* meeting. I can tell, I’ve heard all those names on CNN/NBC/MSNBC, the FedTube news channels.”

“Is there any way we could listen in on ‘em?”

“I think so. If I can get the floor above the conference room emptied during the day, we can drill some spyholes. Then, we can hear and see what’s goin’ on their meetings.”

“You gonna get ‘em to empty a floor?” Old Matt asked his son in amazement. “How can you do that?”

“I’ll fool with the air conditioner. Any time the temperature in a Federal office goes more than three degrees above or below the Official Federal Building Comfort Zone, which is 72. 57, all the affected employees are given time off, until the temperature is properly stabilized for 48 working hours within the guidelines of the OFBCZ.”

“Do they get paid, while they’re off work?” asked his dumbfounded father, remembering the cold, twenty below mornings when he’d milked and fed his cow for a gallon or so of milk worth less than a dollar at wholesale.

“Sure they get paid. They get paid time and a half, since they’re inconvenienced. They get carfare home, too.”

“We can’t fight ‘em fast enough, can we, son?”

“Nope.”

The day of the meeting, work in the floor above the Executive Conference Room was suspended. Federal Building Inspectors, who’d halted work on a major project the day before, where hundreds of workers at full pay still waited for their decision on whether or not their water cooler temperature was in compliance with OSHA bulletin #986,890,721,029—Job-Site Water Cooler Temperature at 38-42°Latitude, were told that the office temperature was dangerously cool.

Immediately, thermometer-carrying, hard-hatted FedUnion officials raced to the floor, their faces contorted with well-rehearsed worry. “It’s sixty-nine degrees!” a hyper-concerned FedUnion Stewardette read from the thermometer held for by her shivering aide. “We will have to close the floor.” She commanded a shivering Dr. Grifter. “I won’t expose valuable Federal Personnel to such hazardous conditions.” TV cameras broadcast that proof of great, human concern on that evening’s “news”.

“Right. We’ll close the floor,” agreed Dr. Grifter, and it was done.

The employees raced away from the intolerable conditions, some, in their expensive foreign automobiles. Department Heads

left in waiting limousines that carried them to their country estates. Matt and his son checked to make sure there were no heroes, staying on the job despite the deadly temperature hazards. There were none.

Young Matt went to the thermostat, adjusted it, and they felt the temperature begin to rise almost immediately.

“Why didn’t *they* think of doin’ that?” asked Mattathias, deeply puzzled.

“I honestly wish I knew,” his son answered, and the two of them began working.

It was no trouble for them to drill through the floor. They made tiny observation holes that were hidden by the deeply ornamented gilt ceiling below. The huge, Executive Conference Room was two stories tall. From its floor, their observation holes were invisible in the bright gilt-work on the deeply carved ceiling panels.

Using a copy of a building master-key, Young Matt took some high-tech bugs from the Federal Bureau of Taxpayer Information, along with several tiny tape recorders. “We want to remember what they say,” he told his father, as he figured out to operate the equipment. While Young Matt worked, his father cleaned up the dust that had fallen on the floor below from the spyholes they drilled.

The meeting wasn't scheduled to begin until five, so they slept on the comfortable beds in the many Executive Workout Rooms next to the Personnel Department.

At four-thirty, they lay down by their spyholes and watched uniformed servants push steaming carts into the meeting room. A huge aquarium of live lobsters was brought in. The mammoth table was set with golden flatware next to silver plates. At one end of the room, the stage was prepared, draped with satin curtains. A huge, deeply carved, ebony chair was set up at one end of the largest dining table.

"This don't look like no meetin' I ever heard of!" Mattathias whispered, as a black, mongrel dog on a golden chain was brought into the room. It jumped upon the red, satin cushion on the immense, ebony chair and stared out at the table from its throne.

When all was ready, only two servants remained; a pair of identical, loin-clothed Nubian twins. They held ostrich plumes on long, golden shafts above the panting mongrel. Dozens of expensively dressed Crats came in, chatting happily among themselves, thankful to powers beyond that they had been invited to this Very Important Meeting.

"Look!" whispered Young Matt. "There, right outside the door they're opening for him, it's Dr. Wursavolk, hisself!"

Sure enough, the sleekly dressed, nearly prancing head of Health In Human Services led a high-level delegation into the room. He took a seat to the right of the ebony throne at the head

of the table. When all were seated, he threw back his head and stared directly at the ceiling. Others, sitting at their lesser chairs up and down the table, did likewise.

Mattathias and his son thought they were discovered, but soon realized that The BaaloCrats below were invoking a blessing on the gathering that was about to begin.

“Dear Baal,” the head of Health In Human Services intoned, “be with us, now, and forever, forever and now, while we do everything in our power to bring you to more power so that you may bring more power to us. We offer the dead and the dying, whose blood has been shed by our hands at your command, to you and to you alone. You, truly, are the Wonder of Power, the Power of Wonder. By the blood of our own babies, passed, at your command, through the fire, we have sealed our loyalty. We will do all we can to force you to all, and all to you.”

When the invocation was finished, all paraded by the seated dog, and kissed its paw. Then, in the official, Pre-dinner Chit-Chat Period, they renewed old friendships.

Dr. Medpig, who hadn't seen The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech since his last board meeting at Family Planning International, enthusiastically shook hands with him and introduced him to his son, Dr. Greenback Medpig, II. The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech was careful not to mention anything about the new course of study being prepared for the esteemed Princeton Seminary, (“We

put the semen in Semenary!” he was fond of saying.) and its new Abortion Ministry Degree Program.

“I am so very, very pleased to meet such a fine, young man. He’s been well thought of by all of us at so many of our meetings. After all,” he said to the senior Dr. Medpig, “we’ve got to have *some* Young Blood to follow in our footsteps.”

Young Dr. Medpig introduced himself to Ms. Miriam Babeter, part of the evening’s program. Young Matt picked up snatches of their conversation through his tiny microphone. ‘People think it’s all easy money, being a doctor!’ he was reciting to her. “But, I’ll tell you we work hard, real hard to be a doctor. Why, if they knew how hard I had to study in ClubMed MedSchool, they wouldn’t begrudge me a cent. Two, even three hours a day, sometimes. Hard, mental work. And, the cost! Why, it cost my father plenty!”

“How true, how true. Those pitiful little people just don’t understand,” Miriam properly replied, smoothing his stylishly ruffled hair as she spoke.

“Their squalid, wretched little lives, why, they’ve no way to know how hard it is to be a doctor, why, if it weren’t for us Euthenaborts, who’d kill. . .”

Young Matt couldn’t hear the rest. Dr. Brownose, himself, had just that moment come in, carrying something wrapped in scarlet silk. Young Matt tried to see what it was, but couldn’t make it out through the folds of plush velvet.

Mattathias heard Dr. Wursavolk: “Oh, yes,” the high-ranking administrator told Uriah Leech, from GSA, “Health In Human Services is so much more profitable than organized crime. And, we get to kill ever so many more people.” The former prison guard smiled.

“Did you get it?” Dr. DeDuckDuck asked Dr. Brownose, in an aside barely audible to Young Matt.

“It’s over there,” the hearty Smithsonian boss gestured, “On the table, near Ketchem Squeezum.”

“Hello, there!” said an exuberant Ketchem, hearing his name mentioned. “How are things at the ‘Toot?’”

“Just fine. Just fine,” answered Dr. Brownose, himself, smiling at the little-used nickname for his huge Smithsonian Institution. “How’s every little thing at PeeU?”

“Postal Union couldn’t be better. We’re putting in for more money and shorter hours, same as always. Gettin’ it, too! Our people love it, and we’ve got ‘em convinced that they deserve it.”

“That’s the name of the game,” agreed Slith Venum, from HUD, ordering himself a pharmaceutical and smiling happily as the druggist injected it with a practiced hand.

“You said it!” agreed Sherm Souldout, recently retired from EPA, but, still lobbying for Asian manufacturers, working to strangle European countries with so many environmental regulations that they’d be as helplessly uncompetitive and

unemployed as Canada, the United States, and the other formerly Christian nations.

“Initiation tonight?” Sherm asked Dr. Wursavolk.

“Yes,” he answered proudly. “One of our own. Miriam Babeter. I’m sure you remember *her*. She’s been at a *lot* of meetings.”

“Oh, sure,” Sherm answered. “She’ll be a real asset.”

“Asset? Who’s an asset?” old Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide asked The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, a former student from the Princeton Seminary. Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide had taught “New Hebrew Studies”, where his ‘Subjective Translations For Subjugated Translators’ was always popular.

“Miriam’s, right over there. She’s going to be initiated,” answered The Semi-Reverend Dr. Moloch, turning away from Faux-Father Feeley.

“Why, I guess she is,” the old Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi replied, taking in the dark satin tunic she was wearing. “I love a good initiation. Who’s presiding?”

The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech gestured toward the end of the table, toward the dog, lapping its appetizer out of an emerald dog dish. “This is a *big* meeting!”

“Where’s the baby?” someone asked above the hubbub.

“She already ate it,” Dr. Greenback Medpig II was heard to explain. “I ripped it out, gave it the famous Medpig Squish n’

Twist, watched it twitch, and ground it into the linoleum. Miriam scraped it off the floor and ate it.”

Scattered applause greeted these words.

“Oh, just a hillbilly brat,” the up-and-coming young doctor told Gouge VacMouth, from PubEd. “No one important, unfortunately.”

Conversation continued, but it was hard to hear, as bottles and hypodermics and silver pill cups disgorged their contents into the dozens of Important People. They talked of many meetings attended, many bottles drank, many drugs tried, many nocturnal episodes, many good ideas crushed, many babies killed, many filing cabinets filled, and of the many “unco-operatives” who’d been viciously harassed and destroyed. The high points of their BureauCratic lives filtered up through the spy holes to Mattathias and his son, who could barely hear individuals in the growing roar of the crowd below.

Then, the dog barked, once, briefly. Conversations stopped as quickly as if the attendees had been suddenly draped with sheets of lead. With mute, total obedience, each of them went to his/her/its chair, and sat down.

Dr. Wursavolk stood next to the dog, and spoke. “I have a message for you, from Baal,” Dr. Wursavolk said, slowly, dragging out the word ‘Baal’ into two, reverent syllables. The total silence that followed his words was as deep as the wellspring of doom.

Each person at the table flattened his/her/Its face as far down on the cool mahogany as possible, their arms out stretched in front of them. Dr. Wursavolk kept speaking.

“You know I am Baal,” he began, in a completely different voice, a strange, kindly, metallic guttural which filled the room. He seemed to be a ventriloquist’s dummy, whose strings were being pulled by dog, which stared intently at him while he sang an odd sing-song:

*“Baal loves the bureaus, Baal loves the Crats.  
Baal loves death, so do his Crats!”*

He repeated it three times, before starting to speak in sibilant hisses.

“Only Baal has loved and helped you, BaaloCrats, from the dawn of time.

“I, Baal, stood with you at the ziggurats when the blood of babies began to run down hot, porous rocks of the high altar. I, Baal, helped you, BureauCrats, to build the pyramids of Egypt, when we kept a people in bondage for what seemed ever.”

“Thank you, Baal. Oh, thank you, Baal!” the bowed heads said with one accord.

“In Mexico, in the Yucatan, in Peru, at the great mud Mounds of the Mississippi, I was there, laughing with you, as the babies were butchered, as the unruly savages were brought to heel by we,

working together, BureauCrats and Baal, Baal and BureauCrat. We have prevailed.

“All their leaders, even Solomon, come to us, in the end. When their crude thoughts and ‘rational’ nonsense runs dry, when they need help from beyond to keep their people in chains, when they need pure force to keep them paying and paying the taxes that are our right, they come to us, and we give them what they need to keep people paying. First, we give them false, middle-brain-rank guilt about their own success. Then, we give them lies. Then, we give them terror! Then we give them chains and flint knives! Don’t we?”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal,” they chorused, again.

“It was we, who threw the virgins in the deep, dark wells of the Yucatan. When we exhausted the people building silly stone cities, we helped Aztec leaders grow in power by killing the children of the disobedient and selling them in the meat markets. Didn’t we succeed?”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal,” chanted the Crats.

“Don’t we always help those in power? Don’t we always do their dirty work? Don’t we make it seem clean? Don’t we?”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal.”

“Oh, I hear them now, the screaming children of the Mayas, the dying babies on the hill outside Sparta, where we kept the

people frightened by the sound of their piteously screaming babies, ripped to pieces by wild dogs. Do you remember?”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal.”

“And the Incas? Stone cities, enslaved people. Dead babies! Cannibalism! Why not today?”

“You do know that only I can give you power, through terror, over people vastly more intelligent and able than you. You, wretchedly Low and Middle Brain Rank dimwits know, and will always know, that people as stupid as you can never have power over your betters without me.”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal!”

“Everywhere that we have subjugated our betters, *I* have been there! Only *I* can help you to bring the second-rate intellectuals to power so that you vicious, heartless, mindless, lying, third-rate scum of the earth jackals may become rulers when you dispose of your betters.”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal!”

“Haven’t we prevailed? When rulers ran out of reasons to tax, didn’t we help them govern with fear, blood, death, and human sacrifice? When you see the great ruins, you know we were there, writing our will upon the serfs and peons of all lands and times with the awful power that I gave *you*, the power to choose who would be sacrificed. You do know that, don’t you?”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal.”

“It is we, BureauCrats and Baal, Baal and his BureauCrats, who must keep the downtrodden trodden down. But, sometimes, they try to rise!” he screamed, suddenly, as if the anguish of the ages would pour out of him. “THE ACCURSED BEASTS WANT TO BE FREE! THEY WANT TO ASSERT THIR OWN MINDS! THEY WANT TO LIVE THEIR OWN LIVES! WE MUST SMASH THEM DOWN!!”

“Yes, Lord Baal! Yes, Lord Baal!” the BaaloCrats chanted, in complete unison, while the silent watchers above remained glued to their spyholes.

“You know the enemy,” Dr. Wursavolk continued, in a quieter, calmer tone. “You know the Enemy. It is the Chosen People. For all those many years those miserable prophets would not join in. They’d never come to the oak groves. No, not them! We tried, and we bribed, time after time, to get them to side with us. As today, many of them did. But there were always a few who abhorred us. That’s how we knew they were chosen, chosen by Him, unspeakable Thing that He is, to fight against the sacrifice of the innocent to enrich the children of Baal. We thought we had them, but, no, there was always a remnant, always a few who fought against us. Curse them all, from Moses to the Maccabees! But for them, we would have triumphed. Only be thankful that Luther got that Maccabee part out of the Prothumanist Bible. And, the stupid Catholics never read theirs! Now, no one knows how tiny a handful of life-loving, God-fearing people it takes to stop us!”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes Lord Baal!”

“Then, He came. He came. With His great know-it-all attitude, He came! He drove us of the Temple where we were making headway against even the Orthodox. Turning their sons into homosexuals in our lovely Greek gymnasia. Oh, those bathhouses! Fountains of disease, gardens of despair! In another generation, we’d have had them, all. But, He came. We thought we had Him, but He Who should never have been born died. He ordained twelve Catholic Bishops to tell others of Him. Many followed when they realized that we, with all our power, could not kill Him.

“Worse, yet, He still has a remnant. That remnant still fights against the sacrifices we used to perform in the oak groves, sacrifices that we now enjoy so much more in the pleasant, air-conditioned offices of our Fam-plan facilities. Now, peoples of the Tribes are beginning to find that they are descended from Abraham. Despite every State university in every State in what once was Christendom, the truth is emerging! People realize His Tribes have come back together in the Catholic, Pro-Life Churches. We must fragment them! We must destroy all those whom He has chosen!

“That’s how we can tell them from us. When all is said and done, the people He chooses will neither compromise nor conciliate. They will not give in! They stand firmly, lunatics that they are. Don’t they see that we must win, that we will win, that

we are winning? Curse the Catholics, the Pro-Life Protestants, Jews, and Muslims!”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal!”

“From those thrice-damned prophets of the Old Testament to the Apostles of the New, to the Bishops of Rome today and all the Devil-damned dimwits who believe and obey them, the Chosen People are always the ones we must destroy. Catholics! Pro-Life Protestants! Orthodox Jews! Muslims! Destroy the accursed Fundamentalists, too!”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal.”

“You know how well we’ve worked together. We make them move endless stones. We keep them off the streets and make the falling government safe. Then, on those self-same stones, we sacrifice. We keep them in line by the fear we will choose their children for slaughter if they dare to do anything against us. Look how well it worked, in so many places. We, Baal and BureauCrat, BureauCrat and Baal, hand in hand through the ages. Unholy State forever!

“But, now, things have changed. Oh, you’re still slaughtering babies, but it’s not effective. No one can hear them screaming. No one is frightened. No one is afraid.

“Killing unborn babies strikes fear into only an oversensitive few. The masses are unconcerned, brain-deadened, unfrightened. You do a fine job, slaughtering old ones. And, you get rid of many

of the lame, the halt, and the blind. Everyone who enters one of your new Euthenabort hospitals has an excellent chance of being sterilized or killed. Still, you do not go far enough!”

Painful silence filled the room. The BureauCratic leaders remained prostrate over the meeting table, silently cursing themselves for the shreds of pity that kept them from being the kind of truly effective Civil Servants they fervently wished to be.

“Now, it is time again, time for us to kill those we can hear screaming! How else can our power be manifested? You must begin to kill the healthy. You must sacrifice infants, adolescents, adults, the middle-aged, the elderly, *all of them!* You can find reasons to pick them out at apparent random for slaughter. All must fear death at *your* command!

“You, my beloved liars and murderers, know that you cannot maintain power alone. You need, you always need, me, to keep your serfs in line. If you try to do it all yourself, you will be overthrown. You must force the liberal ministers, the Really-Reform Rogue rabbis, and apostate priests, to kill, too. That way, the people won’t have anywhere to turn. We’ll kill all who are Pro-Life, at last! Spill the remnants of His blood on the hot and stinking stones!”

“Yes, Lord Baal. Yes, Lord Baal.”

There was a long silence, during which the watchers above dared not move. They’d lived in the hills long enough to know that none of the people below would hear them, but they knew the dog

would pick up their slightest sound or scent. They lay still, frozen in place, hardly daring to breathe, while the long silence continued. The only things that moved were the long ostrich plumes and the dog's red tongue, gliding in and out over its gleaming teeth as it stared benignly over the bowed BureauCrats.

“How wonderful it was, in Sparta. It was my favorite, I think,” Dr. Wursavolk continued, his queer voice mellowed with a reminiscent tone. “How wonderful the acoustics! The hills echoed weak cries of dying babies as starving dogs ripped into them. And the people! Stupid clods! Believing us, every dumb one of them, when we told them it was for their own good! Why, I laugh every time I think of it, how many, many, many of their babies died so well. It kept everyone paying taxes, as fast as they could, parents and grandparents, so that their own babies could be spared exposure. How they'd plead! Oh, the bribes we got then,” His obscene chuckles filled the air, reminding Young Matt of Dr. Grifter's laugh, his indulgent snicker when he'd asked for a list of meetings.

“Wonder why Dr. Grifter's not there,” he suddenly wondered. Then, something made him think, “Maybe he'd be in charge of security, bein' the manager of the building. Maybe he's wanderin' round here. We'd better watch out.”

He waited a few moments, until Dr. Wursavolk stopped talking and food was served. When the dog's attention was

diverted by a two foot Maine Lobster, the first chosen from the tank, Matt crawled over to his father.

“Dad, there’s somebody missin’! There ought to be that fat Dr. Grifter there, who runs the building. I’ll bet he’s sneakin’ round, just checkin’ on ever’thing. They’ve got to have guards out.”

“There’s only one door to this room,” he whispered back. “And there’s no windows. I’ll go wait at the door. If somebody comes in, I’ll take ‘em out. You stay here, keep track of what they’re doin’. You know how to work them tape recorders better’n I do.”

Mattathias stood by the door, the shimmering blade of his knife faintly gleaming in the dim light. He waited, as patiently as a snake, waiting to strike at prey that must inevitably come.

Young Matt could hear snatches of conversation, as the sated BureauCrats began to talk through their mouthfuls of lobster, caviar, and filet.

Conversation was of things past. They’d been put into a reminiscent mood by their leader, and they enjoyed reliving their triumphs of old.

“It’s only fear of losing their children that keeps people in line. That’s all, when you get right down to it,” Young Doctor Medpig told Miriam, who answered with adoring eyes.

“You’re right there, young fellow,” said craggy old Sherm. “The only thing those pitiful bastard taxpayers love more than the money for which they trade the squalid little pieces of their lives is

their children. Threaten ‘em with that, and you’ve got ‘em under your thumb. Right, Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide?”

“What, oh, yes. That’s right. That’s why I’ve always liked to do circumcisions myself. One slip of that knife, genetic extinction. Hehehehehehehehe.” The nearly senile old man laughed, remembering how easy it was to collect his fee from parents overwhelmed with gratitude that his purposely trembling hands had not slipped. “Hehehe,” the old man giggled, again. “What a money-maker!”

“I don’t know if I like that idea about letting ministers and reform rabbis in on our abortion business. It might take a lot out of our pockets, if they started aborting, doing mercy killing, and random sacrifices. Abortion is a proper function of the Medical Denomination.” Old Doctor Medpig said to young Doctor Greenback Medpig II, talking about the rumors he’d heard about SS Euthenabort ministers, trained in Forgiveness, performing the abortion ceremony.

His son was quick to agree, as did Dr. Shekel Stupor. “We do have the snake and stick. It’s ours. We’re the only ones who should be allowed to take life.”

“That’s right,” said Young Dr. Medpig. “That’s our territory. Always has been.”

“Not always,” answered The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech. “It wasn’t so long ago that the hand that held the knife was nothing but a barber. And, not so long before that, it was held by the

priests of the oak groves, from Babylon to Druid Britain. From the cannibals of Capetown to our Voodoo killers of Haiti, it is *we* who held the knife. We will never give it up!”

“But, you don’t deserve it,” answered an angry Dr. Medpig. “You keep compromising, with Him,” and he pointed upwards, where none could bear to look alone. “You’ve diluted your silly Moderne Mainline ceremony with His blood. Even though it’s only pretend blood in a comfortably ‘symbolic’ communion, still you Devil-damned Mainliners are tainted with it. We Euthenabort doctors, on the other hand, have always worshipped the Power of The State, clearly and cleanly. We proved that when we changed our Oath to allow abortion. Why should we share the knife with you cowardly twits who are afraid to erase every word He said? You can’t be trusted until you clean those accursed partial-Bibles out of your Pretend-Churches!”

“Only then will we know you hate Him as much as we do,” said his son, in a nasty voice.

“There’s enough to go around,” answered The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, smoothly, ignoring the ‘theological’ objection. “After all, there’ll be fat teaching fees, rich consultations, and many, many boards of directors and lots and lots of stock. We aren’t trying to take anything away from you, we’re only trying to expand into a new market, where there’s room for everyone. Those poor, damned bastards out there just keep on having babies. There’s plenty for us all. Plenty for all of us to do.”

Not completely mollified, but at a loss for words, Dr. Medpig sullenly replied, “Well, we’ll agree to disagree,” And everyone relaxed. (To himself, Dr. Medpig said, “It’s only a question of time until he has to have an operation in a hospital. It will *not* be successful.”)

“Those Devil-damned Catholics, Pro-Life Protestants, Jews, and Muslims!,” Gouge VacMouth, from PubEd, said to Uriah Leech. “We still haven’t done much to them.”

“Oh, I don’t know. You’ve gotten a lot of priests to leave their orders.”

“We never get any good ones. We get the shallow, gullible fools who would have done more damage to their Church if we’d left them there, causing scandals. It turned out better for Him than it did for us, getting lib-twit priests to forsake their vows.”

“What was that, Gouge? What was that you said?” asked Dr. Wursavolk in an unusual voice with a tone that brought complete silence to the table. Only the smacking, slobbering of the dog gorging itself, broke the silence.

“Well, sir, I was saying that we still haven’t managed to do anything against them. Against the Big Church. We still haven’t been able to attack them effectively.”

“We haven’t!” shouted Dr. Wursavolk. “What do you call Martin Luther? Why, look what we did, with him, alone! In only a few hundred years, we made abortion legal *and* respectable. Do

you think we could have done as well without Martin Luther, and Calvin, and Henry he 8th and what those so-called 'churches' they founded turned into? Why, we gave respectability to men who could not take His vows, celibacy, obedience and poverty. And, you say we never did anything?"

"I only meant. . ."

"I don't care what you meant, you sniveling ingrate! Do you know how hard we had to work to fragment His Church? Do you know how long it took? If we weren't able to make Prothumanists and Really Reform Rogue Jews look respectable, could we kill billions of babies a year with abortion and abortion-inducing birth control?"

"But, but, but. . ."

"And, on top of that, and best of all, none of the Pro-Lifers realize that they're all in His accursed Family. They don't realize how important they are to Him. We've destroyed their sense of history with our paid historians and S-S academics. They won't teach anything to anybody, anymore. We've destroyed them historically, educationally, intellectually, and morally. Victory is ours. His Chosen People can no longer see themselves in their own mirrors! They're really lost! Gouge, we're doing very well against the Catholics."

"I know that, sir, everyone does. But, the point I'm making is this—all we've done is make the Catholics look good and everyone who disagrees with them look bad. Why, it makes more and more

people turn to them. That's bad for all of us, Master, since they always turn out to be right, to people who care."

"And what do you suggest we do about it, Gouge?"

"Sir, I think we ought to get more of our own people into their seminaries. We must do more to destroy His Church from within, the way we did to the rich, Mainline Protestants!

"We do that, Gouge. We do it every day. We're always getting people to volunteer to go to Catholic seminary who promise us that they'll help us when they get out. Do you know what happens to many of them, Gouge?"

"No, sir."

"Those disgusting, Devil-damned priests of theirs throw them out. They aren't like our Mainline Moderne Seminaries! They'll take child molesters, sodomites, cannibals, why, we can get anybody we want, in them. But, those Devil-damned Catholics, why, they'll make a man stay up all night, praying, fasting for days, even weeks. Why, we've actually had people leave our side for His, after a year or so of that! And, the ones who don't join up with Them, why, they're no good to us anymore. Some of them turn into decent, honest, life and freedom-loving people in the Teeming Midlands. Some of them look at the odds, and realize that if they're Catholics, they might get to Heaven!

"We've tried fighting from within. It hasn't worked. The Church is still there, still consistent. Oh, we get neurotic nuns and

priests who can't keep their pants zipped, but you know how useless *they* are. We aren't going to try again, it's pouring bad money after good. Any other suggestions, Gouge? Think we need more Spunky Chunkies?" Dr. Wursavolk asked, sarcastically.

"No, sir," Gouge said, abashed momentarily. "Unless," he added, brightening, "we go back to hiding aborted babies in convent basements. That was always a good one." Murmurs of approval rippled around the table.

"That's brilliant!" gushed Miriam Babeter. "I never heard of that before."

"We used to do it, *all* the time," snickered Faux-Father Feeley.

"We sure did," said craggy old Sherm, a dreamy look coining into his eyes at all the faithlessness they'd caused.

"That's The Trouble With Young People Today," Lamented Uriah Leech. "They just want to titillate their *own* pleasure centers. They won't go out of their way to get at Him. There's no idealism, not anymore."

"True, true. Some of our best people end up backsliding into the Teeming Midlands. That wouldn't be so bad, but, sometimes, once they're there, they see the Church, and some of the fools get sucked into it," replied Dr. Wursavolk.

"We're working. You'll see. We'll fix them. Not with a lot of old, tired pranks, but with some fresh, new vitality." Dr. Wursavolk ended his sentence by raising a frosty glass of

carbonated blood, pumped straight from a still living baby, struggling for life from a late, third trimester abortion, growing pale and cold on the cold, black marble bar top.

“There are new ways,” said craggy old Sherm. “New ways for a new generation. Why, there’s movies and TV. We’re doing a fine job, there. We’ve made traditional families seem laughable. Just look at all the illegitimate births that causes. The more little bastards, the more divorce, the more broken families, the easier time we have. The fewer fathers, the more DemoCrats!”

“We’re doing a lot. We really are,” many chorused around the table. “New drugs, too. Why, we’re killing millions of them!”

“Yes, and most Mainline Modernes are practically one with us, now. Except for those Devil-damned Pro-Lifers who escaped the control of Mainline Moderne BaaloCrats,” said The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech. “We’ve made great progress, all throughout the entire membership of the Council of World Churches. We’re doing very well. Very well indeed. Except for the Catholics, Pro-Life Protestants, Muslims, and Jews. In five thousand years, we *still* haven’t gotten to *them*.”

Suddenly, Dog barked! Silence fell. Servants cleared the dishes, leaving the empty table shining in the flickering torchlight. It was all Young Matt could do to control himself as he saw a tiny, very tiny baby being brought to the altar next to Dog.

A fire burned brightly, so that the bottom of a curved brass pan glowed as brightly as the fire itself. The baby was placed in the pan, on its back, and as it began to cry out in agony, everyone smiled. It's tiny, weak cries for help went unheeded, though they were so well amplified through speakers that even old Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide could hear them. He smiled, broadly, as he listened to the magic music played long ago in the Oak Groves of Palestine, when his spiritual forefathers first went whoring after strange gods.

“That was a good idea, that amplifier,” Dr. Medpig whispered to The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech and Faux-Father Feeley.

“Yes. We're putting them in most of our Fam-Pan Centers. The help like a nice lift, too, you know.”

The men smiled and leaned back in their chairs. Their favorite part of the Death Symphony was coming, next. The part just before the baby dies, when it's faint, oh, so very faint cries could barely be heard, drowned out, at last, in the sizzling finale.

The servants turned the baby, and, when it was done, Dr. Wursavolk leapt to the stage. With his old, favorite flint knife, he quickly sliced off succulent tidbits for everyone with a practiced hand. Servants passed them around, in the baby's scooped out skull.

“What an attractive serving bowl!” gushed Miriam. “How did you ever think of it?” she asked Dr. Wursavolk, from Health In Human Services. She didn't realize that it was a far older part of

the BaaloCratic Ceremony than Dr. Wursavolk, that it reached far back, past Babylon, past the long-ago priests of Molech, when the beginnings of government began, in the earliest councils of Nimrod, who'd learned so very, very much from Cain.

When their after-dinner tidbit was finished, the BaaloCrats looked expectantly at Dr. Wursavolk, who ordered the servants from the room with a near-imperceptible gesture.

When they were gone, Dr. Wursavolk, with near super-human strength, lifted the huge chair, dog and all, and carried it to the center of the stage, where the baby had been fried alive.

“Baal! Baal! Baal! Baal!” the BaaloCrats began to bray. Their obscene chant, no rhythm, no cadence, just a repetition of pure, monotonous sound, filled the room so fully that no other voice could be heard. Even Mattathias, standing guard by the door in the room above, could feel the vibrations. Suddenly, he heard footsteps.

“Hsssst!” he signaled his son. “Hsssst!” and, when he had his attention, he pointed to the door. Silently, on moccasins his half-Cherokee Grandmother had made for him back on the farm, long before the surveyors came, Young Matt joined his father. A heavy, rubber mallet was in his hand.

The two men stood, back to one side, as the door swung silently open on expensive, oiled hinges. Young Matt saw Dr. Grifter's belly before he saw him, but that was all he needed to see to know who it was.

Duck-footed, in his fat waddle, Dr. Grifter came, peering around the room. He walked past the two taut men, who waited a moment to be sure he was alone. Then, like powerful springs, suddenly released from great compression, they launched themselves, striking as swiftly as snakes, as powerfully as battering rams. Dr. Grifter was down, cushioning the sound of his fall with layers of his own fat. He tried to scream, briefly, but the blow of the hammer cut it off before it could be heard.

“S’pose there’s any others?” he asked.

“Don’t care if there are. We’ll take as many as they send.”

They tied and gagged Dr. Grifter. Young Matt went back to observe, while his father resumed his post at the door.

The monotonous chant was dying, and the people below stripped. They crawled, on all fours, past the platform on which the dog sat, rising to their knees to kiss a paw as they passed. When the Prostration Ceremony was complete, Dr. Wursavolk announced that it was initiation time for Miriam Babeter.

With a sponge, he sopped up some of the juice from the platter on which the bones of the baby lay. He rubbed the sponge over Miriam’s body.

“When I call Dog, in whom the Spirit of Baal resides, you do to him whatever he does to you. Your hands and feet will follow his hands and feet, your nose his nose, your tongue his tongue, and so on.”

Through the powerful listening device, Young Junior heard Sherm whisper to Uriah Leech, “She’ll be one of us, now. There’s no turning back after you’ve been video-taped doing to a dog whatever it does to you.”

It was only then that Young Matt noticed that the very newest type of video equipment had been installed on one side of the stage. It recorded as the dog began the licking/sniffing ceremony peculiar to its race, and Miriam followed suit.

He couldn’t bear to watch. He rolled away from the spyhole, and prayed silently. “God help me now. Lord, be with me and my Pa, now, and later, too. We’re on to somethin’ mighty bad, Lord, and we gotta get ‘em all. Help us Lord.” He repeated the prayers he remembered from the little church, deep in the hollows of the hills.

His prayers were soon interrupted by the voice of Dr. Wursavolk. Miriam was taken to the cushion, on which the dog had sat, and motioned to a reclining position. Dr. Wursavolk signaled one of the flunkies to bring him the flint nippers.

“She’s gonna get clipped, now!” exulted Dr. V. DeDuckDuck, beginning to drool as another ecstatic ‘blank’ possessed him. All smiled when Miriam winced, while Dr. Wursavolk clipped and cauterized out a small, V-shaped piece of flesh that she’d touch daily to remind her of her commitment to Baal.

Matt could stand no more. “Let’s get out of here,” he whispered to his father, as they began to orgy, below.

“What have we got into, Dad? he asked, as they dragged Dr. Grifter’s portly body to the service elevator.

“Dunno. Fiends, of some sort. They’d have to be, to kill helpless babies, and ever’tthin’ else that they do.”

“Can we kill ‘em?”

“I dunno. What we gonna do with this fat one? ‘Course, those others, in the room below, they might be different, might be impossible to kill them. They might be dead, already. We gotta get help.”

“Where can we get help?” his son asked, while the two men forced the body into a dumpster they wheeled into the street. They did not realize that Dr. Grifter was literally choked to death in the process by his own sagging jowls.

“I dunno. I don’t know any minister that knows anythin’ ‘bout what we’ve just seen. From what I heard ‘em say, they hate Catholics most. Their worst enemy has got to be our bes’ friends. Are there any ‘round here?” Young Matt asked.

“I don’t know. I don’t know jus’ what Catholics are. But, what are we gonna do, now? Maybe you should wait around, outside the building for a while, and follow ‘em when they leave. You could stick one of these here tiny microphone things on one of ‘em. Then follow ‘em.”

“I’ll do it. I’ll wait ‘til they come out. Then, I’ll pretend to be drunk, I’ve sure had enough practice. I can bump into that main

guy, that Dr. Wursavolk, from Health In Human Services. I'll follow him, wherever he goes, once I get the 'bug' on him. And, a tracker!"

"Yeah, you do that. Follow 'im right to his hole. Maybe that's where their leader lives. Follow 'im there, then we can root 'em all out. Hahaha!" the old man grimly laughed. "I'll tell you what son. You stick that little 'bug' and 'tracker' on that boss guy. I'm goin' back upstairs. I want to hear what else they're doin'. After that, I'll mop up the mess. You may need this money." He handed his son the very thick rolls of bills he'd taken from Jimmy Grifter's billfold.

**BaaloCrats hate Catholics! Abortion exterminates the poor. New program, LSSOBKOP: Lower Social Security Outflow By Killing Old People. Get little animals addicted so they'll mug old animals. Big money in busing. First, gun control, then, Direct Control. Miriam helps old Dr. Medpig in 2nd orgy.**

Matt got back to his spyhole in time to hear Slith Venum, whose age precluded him from too much orgying, complain. "They're organizing, Doctor. Those accursed Catholics and Pro-Lifers are getting a few Mainliners on their side. Now, some of them want to stop having abortions paid for by the Government. What are we supposed to do?"

"First of all," Dr. Wursavolk replied, "All the pseudo-intellectuals secretly like abortion. They think it lowers taxes by cutting welfare costs, and that it gets rid of Negroes at the same time, though they haven't said so since Margaret Sanger used to encourage KKK chapters. As long as we keep our politicians and public relations departments repeating like broken records 'We're personally opposed to abortion, but..', we're safe, and, we get to keep that wonderful platform from which we can preach the advantages of hypocrisy. Even better, taxes just keep going up! Right, Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech?" asked Dr. Wursavolk.

"Oh, yes. Yes, indeed. Spread the lie, make it bigger. That's what we do in our churches, and no one who matters, no one with

money, ever minds.”

“What about LSSOBKOP?” asked Heebert Flatvurmm, behind-the-scenes director of that unknown department in the Social Security Administration. “I have a LSSOBKOP report that you said I could make tonight. This sounds like a good time.”

“Excellent suggestion,” replied Dr. Wursavolk. ‘Places, please!’ he called to the few bizarrely coupled BaaloCrats still orgying. They came to their senses, adjusted their clothing, and got fresh stimulants from the drugtender.

“What’s LSSOBKOP?” Slith Venum whispered in Gouge VacMouth’s ear, frightened that he might be missing something.

“It’s a good one. You’ll see,” he replied, as Heebert began to speak.

“LSSOBKOP is an acronym for “Lowering Social Security Outflow by Killing Old People” a new program we’ve recently begun at the Weirton Proving Grounds.”

“And, it’s working, isn’t it, Heebert?” asked Dr. Wursavolk, proudly.

From his observation post above, Mattathias suddenly realized that this might have a connection with Pap’s death.

“Oh, it is. It is,” Heebert answered proudly, rubbing his hands gleefully as eunuch flunkies, hand-picked from his personal drone-pool, flounced in, with easel after easel, each holding beautifully oil-painted graphs on pure, white linen.

“This first graph, right here,” Heebert began, pointing, “shows the increase in retiree death. See how it accelerates right here, on May 1st, when our program began? See, how nice and sharp the upturn is? This next graph shows how much money we don’t have to send to prematurely dead oldsters. See, how nice and sharp the upturn is? Why, even on an experimental basis, we’re saving over a million dollars a week, right here in Weirton, and no one has noticed. No one! Old people are just invisible, that’s all. I’m surprised we never noticed them.”

“Who gets to do the killing?” asked Dr. Medpig, with the beginnings of what sounded like moral outrage.

“Hospitals do some of it. We bribe nurses in geriatrics wards, that sort of thing. Living wills help us a lot. We’ve got the simple twits thinking that it’s ‘intellectual’ to let doctors cut them up and sell their parts. What idiots we’ve turned them into! (A round of snickering giggles went around the table.) Our best efforts, though, have come from a cooperative attack we’re waging against the aged with the Drug Czar. But, let’s start at the beginning, so we can see what a huge, profitable program we’re developing. I’d like your input as I go along, since you’re all good at getting rid of the useless, non-taxpaying Field Beasts out there in the Midlands.

“LSSOBKOP is truly an interdepartmental effort. It begins with school children. The ones who live long enough to get out of the womb and into school,” he said, with a light laugh, quickly echoed by his audience. “We begin, in the new, mandatory pre-

kindergarten, by teaching children that they're only monkeys, and that old people are just old monkeys, who will take away their bananas.

“It really pays, having Federal Agencies coordinating our pre-pre-primary education, I can tell you that. Those new centers are the best thing since sliced bread! By getting them hooked on cradle-to-the-grave care, we can reduce the time between their cradles *and* their graves. Our goal is to start them working and paying taxes right out of High School, and die the day after they retire!

“After we teach the little animals that they *are* little animals, we mess up most of the schools so badly that no one can learn anything else. After all, we don't want the little animals reading difficult books, or thinking, or doing anything else that might let them not need us.”

“Hear, Hear!” called Gouge VacMouth, PhD, glad that his branch of PubEd was finally getting some of the credit it deserved.

Mattathias listened, finally understanding Paps' death. Heebert continued. He showed how much money was remaining in the SS Administration accounts, and how well it was being filtered, through myriads of academic study groups, presenting one useless paper after another, finally ending up in the pockets of the faithful.

“Why, it's wonderful,” gushed Miriam, when she understood how much money they would make. “First, we only got to kill

unborn babies, and we couldn't even hear them screaming, until clever old Dr. Medpig (who smiled benignly at the mention of his name) figured out how to hook up tiny speakers to their throats, and now, old people. Soon, why, we'll be able to get anyone we want. Anyone at all! Think of the money we'll make!"

The spontaneous eruption of applause was finally silenced by Dr. Wursavolk, and Heebert Flatvurmm continued.

"A most important contribution of the Department of Education is the wonderful way we're modifying the concept of the old person. Rather than having little animals see older people as kind, grandfatherly and grandmotherly types, we teach that the older a person is, the crazier, the meaner, the nastier, and more worthless he/she/it is. Little animals are carefully taught that other cultures kill their sterile, senile old nuisances, and that we're being silly, over-emotional and downright impractical if we don't kill ours, too."

"The only cultures we teach anything positive about are long-time Baal worshippers." interrupted The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech. His Princeton degree in Semi-Christian Theology made him such an authority that he'd authored several of the successful, and mandatory, textbooks published by their privately held firm to fill Education Department orders.

"We portray them as 'fun' cultures, where little animals are always having a good time without a lot of interfering adults hanging around. And, now, there's no prayers in the school to

counter our teaching, even for a moment. We actually have little animals, even big ones, convinced that cannibals and cultures whose people couldn't even invent wheels are far superior to Catholic-formed nations whose people invented everything from electric lights to airplanes."

"Thank Baal for that!" exclaimed Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide. "Another triumph over intelligence." The others added their "Omens".

"Don't the parents and grandparents object to all this?" asked Slith Venum, from HUD.

"To whom can they complain? School boards whose members hire the right kind of teachers?" Heebert answered. "It's easier with forced busing, so we can get the little animals a long way from home. Their parents, both of whom have to work to pay their taxes, just don't have time to see what's going on, another big plus for our side. Now, before someone can get a job as a teacher, principal, or superintendent, they have to pass our Free of Traditional Values Test."

"How do you keep the School Boards on our side?" asked Young Dr. Medpig.

"That's easy!" answered Gouge. "We elect the School Board. We have hundreds, even thousands of teachers in every district. We tell them who to encourage their relatives, friends and neighbors to vote for. We've taken over almost every School Board

in the Country. The Field Beasts are just too dumb to notice that most of them will do anything to give jobs to relatives.”

“Best of all,” interrupted Dr. Blindsight, Gouge VacMouth’s assistant in the Department of Education, speaking out for the first time, “we own most of the stock in every bus manufacturing company in America. We bought it cheap, before we mandated busing. We’ve made billions in dividends and share increases. Since busing is the most useless activity the Government engages in, it’s automatically a great contributor to inflation, which, of course, helps worry old people to death. And, our hired Congressoids pass laws ordering them to buy new school buses far more often than necessary!”

“And,” said Heebert, after more applause had died, “with the whole-hearted support of psychologists, sexual guidance counselors, curriculum-coordinators, staff assistants, and all our other allies in urban PubEd, we have eroded discipline in nearly every city school to the point that there’s no way the little animals can ever learn *anything!*”

Applause interrupted him again, and he sipped from another bubbly glass of crimson liquor through a golden straw as he waited for it to subside.

“Our fine, liberal friends in the Congress, whom all of us hold in awe as being more intellectually useless than anyone, even the brain-dead, Doctored Drones of PubEd, have succeeded in raising the minimum wage so much there’s no one who can afford to give

drop-out students a job, so we can be sure they can't escape us. Even if they can get a job, they're so ignorant and, even better, permanently brain-damaged by heading soccer balls and destroying their brains with football, that there's no way they can keep it. So, they have to sell drugs for a living, destroying both their useless selves, and a lot of worthless old animals they mug for their Social Security checks at the same time. We've done a fine job," he smiled.

"To sum up," said Dr. Wursavolk, from Health In Human Services, "if we don't kill the little animals before they're born, we end up locking them into illiteracy-producing schools, put them in jails, or force them to roam around the streets. Either way, they're exposed to so much violence that they simply can't stand it. Ignorance, Sex, Drugs, Jail, and Death. Ain't life wonderful! At least, for us!"

"Yes, sir," Dr. Flatvurmm answered, obediently. "Now, drugs are a two-pronged problem. We have to keep taxpayers convinced that drugs are bad. If we didn't, people would grow their own marijuana and opium, for free, the greedy pigs, and not pay all the taxes we've levied. So, our various Bureaus of Narcotics spend billions, convincing people that drugs are bad. The only bad drugs are the ones we can't tax!

"At the same time, of course, we have to keep a reasonable amount of drugs in circulation, to keep drop-outs from rioting.

Well, we've set up a Drug-Release Timetable as part of LSSOBKOP.

"Drugs are released to our pushers whenever Social Security checks are mailed out. Before the Narcotics Agents release drugs, they tell the pushers to let the addicts know there's got a big shipment coming in. We tell them when the checks are likely to be cashed and in the old animal's pockets. Then, the kids club them on the head, take the money and buy drugs. They get high, to forget, and old, useless Field Beasts are brought that much closer to death, if he/she isn't killed outright. After all, our figures show that each mugging takes six months to a year off an old animal's life.

"In a nutshell, that's one small part of Lowering Social Security Outflow By Killing Old People. At the next DemoCratic National Committee meeting, I hope to be able to give more particulars. Thank you."

"FANTASTIC!" shouted an alert Ketchum Squeezum. He was the first to sense that it was time for the LSSOBKOP Briefing to be interrupted. As usual, he was the first to leap to his feet and applaud while cheering, "Thank you, Baal! Thank you, Baal!"

None could afford to be left behind in praising Baal. "That damn Ketchem Squeezum! He's won *another one!*" a few older Crats muttered to themselves as they creaked to their feet, forcing themselves to applaud and cheer madly. Finally, they crawled across the floor, like snakes, with their hands clasped behind their

backs, to lick the shoes of Dr. Wursavolk, as he stood by the Ebony Chair and petted Dog. A look of intense pleasure suffused the benignly smiling face of the head of the Department of Health In Human Services, under whose auspices nearly all of their most successful programs had begun.

When all finally returned to their seats, Dr. Wursavolk continued: “You can see how effective LSSOBKOP has been, even in our pilot program. There are sizable fringe benefits, aside from all the money we make. We’ll be able to pay large study-units of State-Supported academics to endlessly study the ‘new problem’ of Premature Oldster Death. They’ll barrage media twits with FedTube press releases to keep anyone from finding the truth. That gives us far more flunkies to order around, and we all know what fun that is. We get to destroy millions of young peoples’ faith in themselves and destroy a positive outlook on life. That makes it more likely that they’ll see life as a hopeless, uphill struggle, and almost ensure that they’ll get addicted, pregnant, and nearly as sure that they’ll abort, or give their little animals to us for sacrificial purposes, or, stop having little animals altogether. Whatever happens, we win!

“And, the drugs we hook them on? We make them for peanuts in our overseas laboratories for a few pennies a dose. Our approved song-writers make sure that the music the little animals hear on their little radios is invariably oriented toward sex, drugs, and violence. We do the same with their movies and television.”

There was applause, not as much, since the many stimulants had begun to take hold, and everyone wanted to re-orgy, but Slith Venum had a question. “I wish he’d shut up!” Miriam Babeter whispered to Dr. Greenback Medpig II. “I’ve got something I’d like to try on you!”

“What about gun control?” Slith asked, oblivious to the far more pressing concerns of the Young People. “I keep seeing these right-wing kooks with National Rifle Association decals on their pickups. Not around Washington, of course, but as soon as I go to one of my summer places, or when I’m out inspecting project proposals and whatnot, I keep seeing these bumper stickers and gun racks. What if they get mad, and start shooting?”

“We have a special department to fight against these lunatic misfits. Why, we’re actually able to convince the pseudo-intellectual field beasts that it’s socially hurtful to defend personal freedom,” Dr. Wursavolk answered. “Every day, we crank out hundreds of press releases, citing the number of little animals killed playing with guns, while we ignore the number aborted.” He began to chuckle, and then, to laugh insanely as he enjoyed the lunacy of getting nearly a billion people in Europe and America believing that two or three people dying of unfortunate accidents could possibly compare with the millions of babies they were ripping into pieces. “Pseudo-intellectuals are so dumb!” he laughed, as the others joined in. “Those Field-Beast idiots in the Teeming Midlands DESERVE us!”

When he controlled the mad fit of guffawing hysteria that field beast gullibility always brought on, he continued.

“We magnify daily how often guns are used in crimes of violence. As a result, public opinion now favors more and more gun control. Soon, we’ll have all their guns, and we’ll be able to move into Direct Control.”

Everyone smiled, contentedly. Of all the different stages of government they inflicted on societies throughout history, Direct Control was the most satisfactory to the BureauCrat. Only privately owned weaponry held them back.

“Omen! Omen to that!” they said, excitedly. The mere thought of Direct Control, and all the perks and real slaves, not just GS flunkies, that Direct Control brought them stimulated them beyond belief.

“That’s right!” interjected Gouge VacMouth, PhD., from PubEd. “Remember the goal! Consider the method. First, school lunches. Then, school breakfasts. Then, school dinners, for working parents. Then, school day care. Then, school sleep rooms. Then, it’s just a short step to getting everyone sleeping in state barracks and eating in state dining rooms. That’s the goal! PubEd is behind you all the way, Dr. Wursavolk!”

“Why, I’m certainly glad to know that, Gouge. You’ve been one of our strongest supporters. How clever you Public Educators are! Why there are still Field Beasts so unbelievably brain-dead that they think you care about them! Well done!

“I have to leave now, as do one or two of you,” Dr. Worsavolk said, signaling The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, old Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide, Faux-Father Feeley, and Young Dr. Medpig, who obediently left the room. “But the rest of you, why, the night’s still young!” Miriam frowned when Young Dr. Medpig left, but she soon showed a groaning Old Dr. Medpig her newest trick. Old Dr. Medpig was kind enough not to tell her how often he’d forced teen-age girls who’d do anything to pay for an abortion to do the very same thing. But, he was able to encourage her to give him greater pleasure by commenting on how well she was doing. He’d done that before, too.

Dr. Wursavolk led the others out of the meeting as the rest of the celebrants stripped and began to catch up to Miriam. “This is what makes living worth dying for!” he heard Miriam shriek as he went out the door.

## **READY TO ROLL**

**Darlene makes Ark-building believable. Where believers come from: The Tribes. Moving west, mostly. Getting back together, where & how. “Generation” is “Gene Ration”. Finally, why. Arthur’s coming! Wee churches. Corrupted. What it’s all made of! 3-D pixels compiled into Systems and Beings! Fractal patterns! “He can program energies, particles, systems, and beings just by talking!” Mustard-seed-size nuggets of energy can fractalize and refractalize whole mountains. It’s incredible! Luther’s soul?**

“This is good!” I exclaimed, as we sat down to eat at the plastic picnic table we’d put on the raft after my return from finding ingot outlets.

“Glad you like it,” Darlene said. “Freddie was glad to pack some of his ‘specials’ in Styrofoam, and it takes less than an hour to get here in the motorboat.”

“This is a nice set-up,” said Father Gonalthwy, who’d come out with Darlene. “It’s the biggest raft I ever saw. You know, Noah could have built something like this, before The Flood.”

“Didn’t that ark have three or four decks?” I asked, perversely trying to shoot down the only history that I now knew was true.

“It did,” said Father Gonalthwy. “But, it would have been easy to stack three or four rafts like this on top of each other and build a triple-decker ark in a month.”

“Did Noah have trees as big as our pontoons?” Carl asked.

“They wouldn’t have needed logs,” Darlene said. “They could have made pontoons from long bundles of tightly wrapped reeds. Easier than sawing up Cedars of Lebanon, and a lot cheaper. Building a huge raft by lashing deck boards to reed pontoons wouldn’t be hard. Then, he could build another layer of pontoon and decks on top of that, and add as many as God told him to on top of them. A man and his three sons and their wives could have built a big ark, in a few months.”

“When you think of it that way, the ark *is* almost believable,” said Carl.

“Makes sense to me,” I said, my new faith driving out another demon of doubt. “Maybe that’s why there are different animals in different places. Maybe a section with kangaroos and marsupials broke off and landed in Australia.”

“Sounds as good as anything I ever learned in school,” Carl said. “And, it’s a lot simpler. Even if the Bible stories aren’t true, it’s smarter to believe in them, simply because they don’t waste so much time and brain space on things that really aren’t very important at all.”

“You’re right about that!” I exclaimed. Why, I wasted more time studying their silly theories *about* the Earth than God spent *making* it!”

“Speaking of wasting time,” Darlene said, “if we don’t eat this ice cream, it’s going to melt. It’s chocolate ripple.”

Since it was Freddie’s chocolate ripple, it was actually packed with little chocolate ripples on top.

“Father, speaking of Noah, aren’t all the people alive today descended from his sons?” I asked the priest.

“Yes. White people are descended from Shem, the Yellow races come from Japheth, and Blacks from Ham.”

“Wasn’t God mad at Ham?” Carl asked.

“For awhile. But, Christ came for all men, regardless of their tribe.”

“If we’re English, Irish, and German, or from other places in Europe, where did we come from?” Darlene asked.

“Most of us descend from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob’s sons founded twelve tribes. Ten of the Twelve got sick of paying high taxes to Solomon’s son and his tax-crazed crats. Those Ten revolted, and became free, in their own country, but they turned against God, too. A little before 700 BC, God had the Ten Tribes in the North of Israel deported into the Caucasus Mountains. Most Europeans come from them.”

“That’s why we’re called Caucasian?” Darlene said, remembering that we were.

“Yes. Most of the Caucasian tribes moved west, across Europe. They got as far West as far as Seattle before 1900. Today, they are

the 'new Indians', and governments take whatever they can from them.”

“It seems so simple,” Darlene said.

“It is. Trace it out in your mind. In a generation or so, deported Tribes had gotten as far as Greece. They kept going throughout Europe. They're popularly called Celts, Goths, Gaels, and Indo-Europeans because State-Supported historians don't want people seeing that their origins are Biblical, rather than accidental.”

“Did they keep their tribal identities?” I asked.

“Many of them did. They always loved their tribe more than the Governments they found and founded as they moved west. Some tribes washed in waves over Greece. They became, or took over, tribes of Spartans, Athenians, Trojans, Dorian's, and Corinthians. They kept moving west and become Etruscans, Romans, Saxons, Parisians, and more. Then, they sailed farther, and become Irish. Some of them reversed course, went east, and became Scots. You can trace the Westward movement of the Gaul's easily. They were one or more of the Northern tribes, around Galilee, so some kept the name of Gaul. Some of them formed Galatia's in North-central Turkey, in Bulgaria, and the Gaul that Caesar said was divided into three parts. A fourth Galatia is still in the Northwestern corner of Spain, right above Portugal. Some would get together at family reunions for a

thousand years at Drunemeton, in the Turkish Galatia, whose language was the same as theirs, until recently.”

“Were the tribes were able to maintain their identity?” Carl asked the priest, as I thought of the successive Iberias in the Caucasus, Spain, and Ireland, all from “Eber”, the root word for “Hebrew”.

“Sure. Tribes named after Gad and Simon had large areas named for them in pre-Saxon England. Just as some of Isaac’s sons, ‘Saxons’, so did the Danes, Half-Danes, Swedes, and all the different Teutons. Some Finns went north, others east, which is why there’s such a language similarity from India to the Baltic. Jesus, after all, said that he had come to bring the Twelve Tribes together. That’s why He had 12 apostles, one for each Tribe. Europe became Christianized more easily than the rest of the world because there was a historical and a Jungian, race-inherited awareness among the scattered Ten that told them that the prophecies had come true, that Christ was The Prophesied Messiah.

“The dominant Europeans were almost all, by that time, descended from Shem through the Ten. They subconsciously and historically knew that everything the Apostles told their tribal leaders was true. Plus, they got to get a theological step ahead of the tribe of Judah, who’d driven them from the Holy Land with the corruption that turned into the high taxes that enslaved their own brothers.”

“And Judas was the Apostle for the apostates!” I suddenly exclaimed, prompted by what I knew was my Guardian Angel, whistling happily as he moved brain particles around to fit in all the truly startling ideas I was hearing.

“Which tribe are we?” Carl asked.

“Many of us are Scythians, previously ‘Goths’. Others are Saxons, the name contracted from ‘Isaac’s Sons’. Isaac’s sons were one of the last big groups to settle down from the Migratory Periods as they moved West, out of the Ukraine, toward Germany. Big tribes of Saxons were wandering around Europe, looking for cheap real estate, more than five hundred years after Christ. A lot of us are from Slavs and Teutons. Most Caucasians came from the Caucasus, from splinters of nine and a half of the Ten Tribes.”

“Who came from them?” I wanted to know.

“Everybody! Goths, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Gepids, Geats, Lombards, Frisians, Thuringians, Alans, Normans, and more. Teutons moved North from Turkey, up the Danube, and into Scandinavia. They took, or bought fertile land, grew strong, and went slashing Southwards. By that time, most of the tribes had come together again, under the tribal leadership of Christ’s Popes. They had taken the rightful place of David, anointed as King of the Twelve Tribes by Jesus Christ, Himself, Son of God, son of David, Father of David.”

“And, the Normans became Catholics, too?” asked Darlene.

“Yes. The leading Tribe was always the most faithful tribe, and the leadership of Europe always went to the most faithful tribe.”

“You mentioned that most of the Ten Tribes ended up in Europe. Where did the others go?” Carl asked.

“India. You remember Doubting Thomas, the Disciple? He was the Apostle who was sent to the sons of Abraham, shortened to Brahmins. St. Thomas was sent to the ones who went East, and ended up in India. Most of the Caucasian Tribes just took over their countries, genetically and politically, but the Brahmins in India were a little more perverse. They’d enslaved the masses, and put them into castes. Then, they invented and imposed a religion on them that made them put up with it. That tribe had so much power, and loved it so much, that Thomas just couldn’t make much headway. Still, even today, Brahmin-caste Indians and Pakistanis have a lot of genetic affinity for their brothers in the other Tribes. Today, many of them move to England and America to be with their ancient family, rather than live with the awful poverty that the Hindu heresies of their ancestors inflicted on India.”

Suddenly, I heard a nagging demon of doubt in my brain. “It can’t be that simple,” the voice began to whine. “Why, what about the Neanderthals, and the Cro-Magnons, and all the rest?”

My Guardian Angel sat back to see if my brain particles had been arranged logically enough to let my own spirit respond to the attack. “Well,” I felt myself replying, “There’s really no proof

about Neanderthals or Cro-Magnons, or anything else that can't be explained either by The Flood, its BigBerGs, or by inbreeding. In actual fact, there are no human artifacts anywhere that are actually much older than ten thousand years, despite what the State-Supported Academics say, and they have a vested interest in making all artifacts appear to be much older than they really are. So, why shouldn't I believe what's simplest, easiest, covers all the bases, and wastes the least amount of time?"

My Guardian Angel smiled, and I could feel a leftover demon/fact that the State-Supported Academics had put in my mind writhe in agony as it was forced from the comforts of my mind and returned to the punishment that awaited it for having failed to continue confusing me.

Carl had a question about the Ten Tribe Theory. "According to your TTT, were all the European wars just an extension of the tribal conflicts from the time of the Northern Kingdom of Israel?"

"Basically, yes. As the Tribes slowly went West, through the Greek City-States to their Italian Colonies to *their* colonies in France, Spain, England, and Ireland, they fought with the original inhabitants, the Sons of Japeth. They never stopped fighting each other, until God had the Caesars forcibly unify them. God caused Rome to rise and unify Europe for the first and only time until now in order to bring the Tribes together."

"What about the Holy Roman Empire?" Carl asked.

“Another attempt at unifying the Ten Tribes. The Hapsburgs tried and tried, and are still trying, to get it together again. They’re trying, with the European Union. That’s failing because their bureaucrats have eviscerated The Church that once held Europe together. But, it was America that brought the Twelve Tribes together.

“What!” exclaimed Darlene. “You’re going too fast. How’d that happen?”

“Europe was too factionalized for the Tribes to unite after Rome’s empire fell. God had America discovered so that all Tribes, together with those of Ham’s kids upon whom He bestowed the grace to live with them, could get together, for the first time since they left Abraham’s fold.”

Father Gonalthwy continued. “America was a perfect place for the homeless of the Ten. The sons and grandsons of the Saxon nobility had been punished for their sins by the loss of their English Dominions several hundred years before. And, there were landless tens of thousands of younger sons of Norman aristocrats, along with Jutes, Frisians, Picts, Gaels, Alans, Visigoths, Northumbrians and dozens of other fragments of Shem and the Ten who needed a place to live. Then, other Ten Tribe descendants who’d stayed in Eastern Europe, the Slavs, Czechs, Croats, Serbs, Greeks, Poles, Magyars and Ukrainians began to send their sons.

“God saved America for the European descendants of the Tribes, rather than His children in Asia. That’s why He’d had the BigBerGs shave down the Appalachians so they could be easily crossed, opening up the rich, black dirt of the Central Flats to the Ten. In the West, He kept the Rockies High and the deserts dry, as a barrier to the Oriental Sons of Japeth.”

“I never heard of any of this,” I said. “Is there any proof of it in the Bible?”

“God never makes things too easy,” answered the Father. “The Books of the Maccabees tell us that Jonathan wrote to Sparta for help, claiming that Spartans were related to the Jews. The Spartans wrote back, said they’d looked in their ancient writings, and agreed that there was a relationship so clear that a treaty between them was signed. Martin Luther, of course, following the orders of the petty German princelings who financed his attacks on The Church, took the Books of the Maccabees out of their cut-and-paste Bible. They didn’t want people to be reminded of any Scriptural proof that the Ten Tribes were related to each other, and especially not to the Jews. Crats never want anyone to know that we actually do have a Great White Father, and that He lives in Rome.”

“They sure didn’t teach us that in school,” I said.

“Not very likely! Can you imagine any Government agency teaching that its peoples’ very existence was pre-ordained by a God in whom they cannot believe while they simultaneously claim

a monopoly on secular and moral power? Crats would rather teach drivel and porn than real things. That tells God who His friends are.”

“But, didn’t the Greeks get to Greece before 700 B. C.?” Carl asked.

“Some did. Splinters of the Twelve were always going off to settle new places when they’d filled up available farmland. Some early group of settlers had become Spartans. Abraham’s sons were spreading out for centuries.”

“Why didn’t they head South?” I asked.

“God gave that land to Ishmael, the son Abraham had by Hagar, his wife’s maid. When Ishmael was disinherited by Abraham, he and Hagar became very busy. All of Ishmael’s twelve sons were brought up to be bitter and angry at Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. The last mention of Ishmael reminds us that *‘he set his face against his brothers’*.

“The only intellectual pretensions they made came after they looted the ancient Greek libraries and took credit for early math and science accomplishments, like Algebra. They weren’t as clever or as inventive as Joseph and his brothers. The Loving Programmer let Ishmaelites use their free will to invent and believe a crude Protestantism based on conquest and polygamy. Those distractions kept them unelectrified, unmedicated, unmechanized, and intellectually uneventful until they started selling oil for the Ten Tribes’ inventions. It was that which finally

dragged the poor Arabian sons of Ishmael off their camels and out of the Iron Age in the nineteen hundreds.”

“Can you tell which Europeans came from which Tribe?” Darlene wanted to know.

“Sometimes. You can tell by looking at DNA. You can also tell by the shape of their ears, and by their coloring, head shape, and how they think. Lots of Goths and Visigoths, for instance, are in Spain. I’ve always thought that they’re from the Tribe of Naphtali, with their long, sad faces, and their long, sad thoughts. What some people think is true about the twelve signs of the Zodiac identifying different personality types may actually *be* true of the descendants of the Twelve Tribes. America’s Hispanic peoples are largely descended from God’s beloved Visigoth Branch of the ancient Goths.”

“Are the ancient leaders of the Tribes the ancestors of today’s aristocracy?” I asked.

“Yes. Our social ranks come directly from their ancient, tribal counterparts.”

“What’s all this about Commoners and Nobility?” Darlene asked, bringing us a fresh pitcher of iced tea. “Did I miss something? Aren’t we all equal?”

“No. That’s one of the Great Myths of Our Time,” the priest replied. “I know that I am not a bishop, that a bishop is not the Pope, that an angel is not an archangel, that a dog is not a man,

and that a parasite is not a respectable, free-living being. Some people are actually better than others. People who can live with that are the ones who get constructive things done. Trouble in the world is caused by people who don't know their place, who won't admit that they have a place, and who can't stand for anyone to have a better place than theirs. Lame-brain Cain-brains."

"But, who separates nobles from commoners?" I asked.

"The same Awesome Majesty Who separates sheep from goats. There are ranks of nobles, you know, and ranks of commoners. Ranks of officers, and ranks of enlisted men. The universe is made of ranks and ranks and ranks of beings. Among men, nobles are, quite simply, determined by their degree of kinship with King David."

"That's preposterous!" I found myself saying, more loudly than I should have.

"Not at all," answered Father Gonalthwy. "The royal houses of Europe are descended from the nieces, nephews, and cousins of Mary, and Mary was descended from David. A blood relative of Mary is a blood-relative of Jesus Christ, Himself, King of the Universe. The more of those genes that a person has, the more like God he is, the more will be expected of him, and the more he can do. Remember, God is different from us, but not so different that His Spirit could not conceive His Son in the Holy Womb of Mary, just as the Prophets painfully, and repeatedly, predicted.

Remember, too, that ‘God can make Sons of Abraham out of stones.’”

In an evening full of boggling, bizarre thoughts, thoughts that were staggering me with their implications, a notion came, full-blown, into my mind, an idea so lunatic that I would have thought it madness a few minutes earlier.

“You mean, we could find our Rightful King just by doing some sort of genetic analysis?” I asked, amazed at how easily and how naturally the phrase ‘Rightful King’ leapt into my mind, and how incredibly comforting it was.

“Sure. God may be allowing all this no-brain, scientific crud to go on because He knows that it is going to lead to a genetically undeniable way for us to have our Rightful King and get rid of our swollen, parasitic bureaucracy. Then, things on earth will be run the way they’re supposed to be with free people, not tax-slaves.

“He wants us to find our King for ourselves. Quickly, before the self-serving bureaucracies that run the countries of The Ten drive us into spiritual, mental, fiscal, and genetic bankruptcy. Remember, in the period when Israel was ruled by Judges, how the Tribes begged for a King? Soon, we may have something like the sword and the stone. Someone will be able to pull the sword from the stone! Will Arthur return? People are crying out for him, though most don’t know enough to put it into words!”

“Why on earth would God go to all that trouble?” Carl asked.

“How else could we ever understand how tragically wrong we’ve been? How else could we see that faith is more important than intelligence? After all, illiterate, but faithful, peoples have understood and believed in the Divine Right of Kings for a hundred generations. The only reason that God wants a process like progress is to show those who have the sense to be saved that faith is far closer to reality than anything accomplished by human intelligence. The Faithful have always known what vain pseudo-intellectuals can never admit to be true.”

“But, how could our ‘Rightful King’ exist, in the huge Melting Pot that we’ve become?” Darlene asked.

“If we have a ‘rightful king’, he probably is in the Americas. The seemingly random accumulation of Davidic genetic material in the Americas is far greater than in any single country in Europe. Nowhere else have so many of the scattered fragments of the Twelve Tribes been able to genetically combine. The other Tribes, you see, had kinship with Judah through their father, Jacob. Our Rightful King can be related to David through his ancestors, as well as through Mary’s cousins, nieces, and nephews. The King has been here all along, in the gene ration of Jacob’s sons. That selfsame King may be getting ready to arrive, in person. That’s one hidden reason Crats are so desperately pushing abortion and birth control. Just as Herod slaughtered helpless children in a vain attempt to get rid of the Messiah-king, children

today are being slaughtered by BaaloCrats to get rid of our rightful king.”

“There’s more to abortion than that!” I objected.

“There is. Abortion is bloody proof that Crats have so much power that they can kill. Those who are for abortion are fighting for the right of the state to murder its most helpless citizens. Then, the state can kill anyone, whenever it wants. Those who fight for life put people and families above the state. The battle lines are drawn cleanly. Those who are Pro-Life have an improved chance at spending eternity in Heaven. Those in the Culture of Death have no chance of that. Abortion separates sheep from goats cleanly and distinctly. God has hated goats since Cain was set to wandering. He won’t let them kill our coming king!”

“What about the ones who can’t decide?” Darlene asked the priest.

“Jesus was clear: *‘The lukewarm water, I spit out of my mouth.’* I think that’s what happens to those who profess to be ‘concerned’ but are ‘unable to commit’. God seems to despise those who are too fearful of offending people to make a commitment to Him.”

We sat in our plastic chairs on the raft, rocking gently in the evening breeze, warmed by the rays of a sun whose setting was no more than a prelude to its inevitable rising. We were warmed even more by the priest’s prophecy of what could be our coming King.

Carl looked puzzled, as if he'd remembered something. Suddenly he said, "Father, you said that all the wars in Europe were extensions of tribal battles that the Twelve Tribes had fought before. If that's true, what caused World War II?"

"Wars are caused by men, but they do serve God's purpose. Hitler was used as a modern-day version of Nebuchadnezzar, Shalmaneser, or Caesar, the very same kind of person He'd used before, to punish those who worshipped False Gods. In WWII, and every war, God's punishment fell on those who had abandoned Him."

"But, so many people died!" Darlene exclaimed.

"Our ways aren't God's ways," the priest replied. "What is truly awful is that many turned from God's Commandments, as they did when they went to the Oak Groves, sacrificing their babies for Baal. Unbelievers revenge themselves on God's people by pushing for more and more death, especially of the unborn, among all the Twelve Tribes, even including their own. The only reason that there is a 'state' is to give self-worshippers 'Equal Opportunity' to make their own way to Hell."

I didn't want to deal with that idea. It strained the notion of mercy and justice and God and love beyond our poor abilities to handle. We watched the darkening sky in silence, as the seagulls that followed us out to deep water began to circle lower and land on the water to sleep. Suddenly, I could understand why some

people were atheists. Believing in a God in Whom Omniscience and Omnipotence were One takes more faith than I realized.

But, as I thought of God, and how many Catholic views there were of Him, from the seemingly simple faith of St. Francis to the rigorous Dominicans, I remembered my trip to find outlets for the ingots we'd be shipping. I wanted the priest's thoughts on the religious experience I'd had and on the man who'd been so instrumental in my receiving it.

I told him what had happened at Brother John's, of the extraordinarily powerful feelings that had swept through me. I related the simplicity of their theology and of how sincere the ministers seemed to be.

Father Gonalthway replied. "Some of the small churches are not the simple lunatics that intellectuals make them out to be. They start with a tent. Then, they want a building. They buy buses, to travel around in, then airplanes. They get radio programs, then TV programs. As their audience expands, their expenses get so high that they can't afford to offend anyone. Then, they preach what donors want to hear, rather than what God wants them to say. Their kids usually end up going into what they see as the Family Business. The kids don't have the sensitivity of the founder. They don't know what it's like to be poor, so they don't relate to their audience, and end up parading a sham before the viewers. What you saw at Brother John's tent was the purest stage

of the independent evangelist. In one more generation, nepotism will make his organization corrupt. In another, extinct.”

I’d seen enough television to know that he was right! The priest continued. “He might be able to start his own denomination, with franchised outlets. A few have been able to institutionalize his own thoughts to the point where nepotism can be minimalized while providing answers universal enough to appeal to a lot of donors, assuaging guilt without requiring real sacrifice.”

“He didn’t seem that clever,” I said, remembering his big, roughly calloused hands.

“John Wesley didn’t seem clever, either. But, Wesley was able to find out what spiritual cravings were not being met by England’s State Church. He was able to meet those needs, set up Franchise Outlets, run by licensed subordinates who swore loyalty to him, and come up with a McDonald’s of the Mind, a Methodist Church that started out as pure as the driven snow. It lost some of its luster when Wesley taught, ‘Gain all you can.’ It lost more when the Indians were wiped out with little protest from Methodists. Like all the once-more-faithful doctrines, they ignore billions of deaths from abortion-inducing birth control. The same declines were duplicated by Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and most of the others. The ruling hierarchies of those structures have rotted because they don’t have the Big Vows.”

“Are all of them damned?” Darlene asked.

“No. Their obey-the-state-instead-of-God leaders will fry for sure, but the ones who hold true to the bits of Catholic teaching still in their churches, like fighting abortion, may be saved in spite of their denominations’ liberal leaders.”

“Brother John wasn’t like that,” I protested.

“None of them are, when they start. The Protestants of the Past have been formed and re-formed so often that no one knows what they believe. The religions of the last Protestant Building Boom, from 1600 to 1850 are breaking up now. A lot of them have gotten so far from God that you can’t tell them from the Ford Foundation. There are always opportunities for new religions that seem to be closer to God. Why, with a good marketing manager, Brother John could be another Martin Luther. He could probably get state help, too, by simply being Pro-Abortion. Tax-addicts hate any Church who won’t help them kill more poor people.”

“But, a lot of individual Protestants hate abortion,” Darlene said. “I did, before I started moving toward The Church.”

“Yes, they do. But, their leaders can’t be promoted into the ruling hierarchy unless they follow the Liberal Line. Cunning leftists at the top control money, grants, pensions, curricula, seminaries, hiring, and bank accounts. No man on earth has a harder time than a decent Protestant clergyman who tries to follow God. He knows that his congregation is divorcing and remarrying at will, despite that they solemnly vowed to stay together ‘until death us do part’. The decent Mainline clergyman

knows what God, Himself meant when He said ‘Let no man put asunder’. He knows that they’re killing their unborn children with all kinds of abortion-inducing birth control in the name of freedom. He knows that if he preaches a strong line, they’ll leave. He understands that his Board of Deacons, Presbyters, or Elders, or whatever they call themselves, won’t let him be ‘too faithful’. He knows that his hierarchy won’t condemn abortion-inducing birth control. He’s basically stuck.”

“What happens to men who stay in that position? If they know that what they’re doing is wrong, and they stay there, are they damned?” I asked.

“Think of all the babies that would have been born if it weren’t for liberated denominations, and all the other ‘*ravenous wolves*’ in sheep’s clothing, it would have been better if they had collapsed before their rot led to billions of unborn babies being killed. As far as the safety and well-being of unborn children are concerned, they can’t disappear fast enough. They ought to stand tall, and lead the faithful of their congregations into the Catholic Church, or, at least teach that life must be defended from conception to natural death.”

“Could they become Catholic, if they’re married?” I asked, astonished.

“Sure. Lots of Episcopalians who get fed up with liberal boobery become Catholics. Some have taken entire congregations

straight to Rome. If more believing clergymen had the faith to do that, they could strike a tremendous blow for goodness.”

“That won’t happen,” Carl said, positively. “Most have been brainwashed to think the State is their friend. Most of them are too scared of peers, to change. Why, think of the Protestant beginnings. The eighth Henry, Pig of England, was an ax murderer, sex addict, syphilitic, brain-damaged, and founder of the Anglican Church. How could anything decent come from such crass, tawdry, base beginnings?”

“Think of Martin Luther,” Carl went on. “a nun-molester who broke his holiest vows while he got other people to break theirs in his ego-crazed zeal to start a new church in which he could be a new Pope. He started off by telling people that ‘anyone could translate the Bible’. A few years later, when people came up with interpretations he didn’t like, he said that they weren’t smart enough to understand Scripture. He was a pawn in the hands of German princes, used for political gain in the guise of True Religion.

“And, he was common. He fell into the one, common, and I do mean common, denominator that all the liberated priests who leave the church fall into. After too much sex with too many people, he got married. Almost every priest who left the Church got married. Was that a coincidence, or are all of their theologies are just excuses to have sex?”

For anyone who had not talked to Father Gonalthwy, it was too startling a question, to suddenly consider that, say, the entirety of Calvin's Institutes had been written simply so that John could have sex between burning over seventy people at the stake.

After a long conversation with brain-altering significance, I wanted to be alone. Sitting on the front of the raft, barely able to hear them over the slapping waves, I stared out, over the Lake. Lost in thought, my spirit wandered through the clouds of memory bits, and my friend, the familiar neon-outlined cherub, was at its side.

“Where are we going, Guardian? In my mind or out of it?”

“In is out, and you're going farther.” I went far above the grandstands I'd once thought so huge, where individuals fought their fights with the powers beyond in the great Amphitheaters of the Individual. Soon, we'd gone so high that the grandstands, themselves, became small. Part of Creation came into focus as a huge figure 8, made out of a spiral line. The spiral line was made of time, an immense Slinky. The Cross at the center of the 8 was the present.

A broad highway of light illuminated the center, the present. The businesses, the recreations, the schools, the peoples of the past faded, leaving little sign.

“Everything is programmed out of 3-D pixels in fractal patterns. The Loving Programmer programmed and downloaded

every thing and energy there is. Then, He compiled them into the systems and beings we were given the ability to see.”

I didn't immediately relate to that, though I knew what 3-D pixels were, little shapes that computers combined to produce startlingly realistic pictures in actual 3-D. Instinctively, I knew the tiniest building blocks were the sub-atomic particles that made everything. They were the tiny building blocks that made our reality. “God's Words are 3-D pixels in fractal patterns!” I triumphantly cried. “He made everything just by talking!” Suddenly, for a brief, glowing moment, I heard part of one of the songs the angels sing eternally:

*“In the Beginning, was The Word!  
All that is seen, or felt, or heard  
Are just echoes  
Of His Word!  
The only things we sense and see  
Are echoes of fractality!”*

Suddenly, my Guardian Angel sang a chorus:

*“Men all live in Pixel-land  
Remember that, you Pixelman!  
The only things you sense and see  
Are echoes of fractality!”*

How the words rang! What words! God's words. Each day, He spoke a different type of noun or process, so there are seven classes of Fractal Patterns, seven broad classes of matter and movement. He spoke “Earth”, and the echoes formed everything

from iron to mica. He spoke “Animal”, and there were cows and frogs, each species a slightly different echo. Some words had more echoes. The reverberations that stayed within some words, I saw, were the Power of Life. Some word/fractals had the power to reproduce themselves. The biggest, most complicated Word was “Man!” Man, I saw, was more than a reverberating, replicating fractal patterns, like a dog. Man had the ability to know that he was, and what a complicated combination of fractals that required!

Each electron, atom, molecule, chromosome, gene and cell was a note in a symphony! Some of the human sub-programs, like tooth, nail, digestive tracts and reproductive Fractal Patterns, had counterparts in the animal programs. Man, however, had vastly different mental fractals woven in among the common life fractals. Suddenly, I saw a huge map of chromatic material, made out of stars. It hung in a huge picture frame made of singing angels that was suspended opposite God’s throne, across a courtroom that was measured by galaxies, eternally praised by angels. Next to it was another, blazing map of lights. It was, I knew, Woman.

Oh, how complicated we were! Not just a few simple Fractal Patterns, like trees and plants, in Whom His reverberations echoed far more feebly. The human programs were immensely complicated. Each person was nearly as complicated as all the sum total of creation, because we could see so much of what He

had downloaded. Women were even more complicated, I could see, because they'd taken God one day plus a nap to make. I knew that sounded simple, but I knew it was right. If a nap took two hours, then they were exactly  $2/24$ ths, or one twelfth, more complicated than us men. I couldn't argue that.

Complicated as everything was, I knew, too, that the pixels compiled into the Fractal Patterns that made everything were just a few of His thoughts that had become words. I could only relate what I saw to the words in my mind, and, how disappointed I was with Adam and Eve for having thrown away the joy of knowing God's Words so fully and completely. I knew then, that I was blind, and thanked God, falling on my knees, for having become flesh, and dwelling among us, so that we could again see without being totally blinded by sin.

It came to me, then, how much I owed to Mary. Mirror image of Eve, like her in all things but sin. Mary, a miracle, Mother of Miracles, who, without knowing Jesus, gave birth to Jesus, who, without knowing of salvation, made salvation possible. "Oh, Mary!" I suddenly cried, falling on my knees in a blazing shower of light, Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" For a brief moment, I vibrated to the Glory of the Word with no barrier between me and and The Mother of God and all His children!

Behind the cross of the figure 8 I'd seen before, there were bones, chunks of bloody meat from which the souls had fled to

their reward. I could see descending souls, some darker than others, stained and spotted with sin.

The right half of the 8 curved upwards, toward a glow so far away that I could only know it was there. The left end sank down into total darkness, where I had the vaguest inkling that a dark, whirling funnel sucked up many of the dim sparks, along with the flotsam from the battlefield. The light in the east didn't pick up anything, but sparks flew to it, of their own will, and with each new spark, the huge light grew, imperceptibly to my senses but not to my mind, slightly brighter.

The dark funnel, too, was growing, spinning faster from the energy it was able to accumulate from the things it whirled into its gathering spiral of darkness. On the lighted strip, I could see people. Each one, with every word, thought, and action, moved closer to the ends of their own grandstands, often not wanting to realize that there were serious choices to be made, choices that would determine where their own sparks went, when their bodies were reduced to brittle bones.

I tried to call to the people moving about on the strip, but they would not hear, they would not see the huge signs that read "Sheep to the right, goats to the left," that they went by every day. They wandered along, going here and there, doing this and that. Guardian Angels tried to help everyone go the right way. Most were too self-centered to heed. As their time in the light was done,

the shining souls of the sheep rose, the dim souls of the goats fell into eternal agony.

The souls of the sheep did not scream when they were plucked from their fleshy homes in The Big Movie. They went high and to the right, to the Great Light; happily, even joyfully. Cries of pain continually echoed below the battlefield from those sunk into the dark, unending pain.

I began to feel helpless to get through to the gaily dressed, chattering flocks of men and women, and I heard, of all things, the voice of Father Gonalthwy, his echo picked up somewhere beyond the stars and bounced back to me, saying, “How do we fight? We fight as we are ordered. And, Armageddon’s on the way.”

Suddenly, a spotlight lit up a small space, far beyond the broad strip of light, and showed me a still-living picture of the past. I saw a Pope, ordering the faithful to purchase the swords their Lord had ordered them to sell their cloaks to buy. They were preparing for a battle that would change the final resting place of billions of the sparks to follow.

The light shifted, illuminating a little patch of darkness just beyond the moving strip of light. It illuminated a small missionary outpost, somewhere in Africa. Two priests were killed, and nine nuns, violated. They were butchered by a band of Baal worshippers, directed in their attack by haters of life and God, the clergy in a far larger denomination of the same, hopeless religions. I watched as that Holy Father fell to his knees.

He wept the most bitter tears I'd ever known it was possible to weep, as corrosive to the soul of a weaker man as acid. He prayed for Almighty God to forgive those poor, frightened, savage despoilers of His most precious temples. I found myself crying, as well, and saw that there were many who shed silent, painful tears along with me.

For a brief instant, I went higher, so high that I could see more galaxies beyond, in neat, orderly rows stretching forever. All were at various angles to the huge figure 8, and in the middle of it all, was Jesus enthroned, sending the souls of goats one way, the souls of sheep the other.

Then, I was back on the raft, floating on the Lake, bobbing up and down with my friends as the gentle evening breeze kept us cool, and blew the bugs away. The three of them were looking at me. They said nothing, even though they saw the tears streaming down my cheeks.

“What did you see?” The Priest asked.

“The 8, the figure 8,” I answered, and told them how things had appeared to be.

We sat and talked, one of the most enjoyable evenings of my life. Conversation was always different, out there on our raft. Words meant more. I was quieter than usual, and I listened to them talk, often comparing what they were saying with the visions that had so totally possessed me.

“Father,” Carl asked the priest, “do members of other religions resent priests, since you guys are living more like Jesus lived?”

“Some do. Most, since they don’t want to understand anything real about the Church, grasp onto whatever straws of misinformation they can find. Many Prothumanists, for instance, prefer to believe that the Catholic Church is robbing believers blind, that She has billions of dollars of real estate, that The Church causes over-population, and that we’re bilking poor people of their money. Most of their criticisms have to do with our material possessions. Odd, since, per capita, the government of Bangladesh is richer than the Church of Rome.”

“They just want to believe you’re rich so they won’t have to feel guilty about their comparatively high salaries, is that it?” Darlene asked.

“Probably. Most of our ‘wealth’ is nothing more than a lot of inner city slum property that no one else wants. A little of it is in the form of paintings and trinkets we’ve accumulated over the years, donations that we really can’t sell, stuff that’s a headache to take care of, but which is useful, in that it does attract a surprising number of converts who are struck by it.”

“How did the Church ever end up with so many El Greco’s, DaVinci’s, Michaelangelo’s, Cellini’s, and all the rest?” Darlene wanted to know.

“A great artist knows that the small, insignificant political systems never last. They want their work to influence the ages, so

they get it to us. The artists smart enough to know they've been given the talent to be truly great know that. They're the ones who provide their works to us. They know people will see their work long after the other museums and galleries are looted or turned to dust. We provide them with an art gallery in which humanity will come to be struck dumb with wonder for a long, long time."

"I always wondered," Darlene said.

I heard them with a curious sense of detachment. Everything they talked about, I now saw, in the back of my mind, taking place on the lighted strip of my vision. Everything seemed clearer, now that I'd seen how things fit into Fractal-land and saw the stage sets and props were words and letters in words, and the WORD was God. How happy I was to finally understand. Not everything, but, more than I had ever understood before.

"Father, I have a question I simply can't answer," I said. "Is Martin Luther in Hell?"

"Lutherans don't think so, and 'modern' Catholics don't think so, either. On the other hand, if Europe and the American countries were all solidly Catholic, there wouldn't be the screams of so many torn and mangled unborn babies. I can't help but think that if Luther would have kept his pants zipped, and not let himself be used as a pawn, spiritual unity would have been preserved. Abortion would be as far from us today as the sacrificial rites of Babylon. I pity him. He went from priest to fool. He gave into lust, and lost his own soul in the entanglements of

the world. And, countless millions of helpless babies are dead in the Lands of the Tribes.”

Father Gonalthwy’s voice took on an edge that we’d never heard before.

“Luther and Calvin, Marty and Johnny, were demon-possessed. They abandoned their true Mother, and ripped beloved children from her arms. In a few centuries, their “churches” left those children undefended from the onslaught of Baal and his followers, always eager to slaughter poor babes at their Master’s command. They lost their souls so that a few princes, long dead and vanished, could steal Church property and keep money in their pitiful prinedoms to buy new weapons for their soldiers. They valued vanity and their own realms more the more permanent Kingdom of God.

“Those who wanted to destroy The Church hired the Luthers and the Calvins to justify stealing Church property and raising ever more taxes. They sold out, for lust, for material gain, for personal popularity, for more tax money. Their only lasting result, four hundred years later, are billions of dead babies. Across the bottom line of their crooked books are pornography, abortion, abortion-inducing birth control, divorce, materialism, shattered families, confused children, gluttony, slavery, slaughter of primitive peoples, all justified by second-rate theologians, working for the State.”

“You’d have thought they’d have seen how the State used them, to justify anything, an inch at a time, once they had the theologians safely married, with children to be held hostage, locked into tax-supported twit-churches,” said Carl.

“They didn’t want to see it,” the priest answered. “Most priests have feelings, sometimes, that we can somehow do more if we’re free of Rome, but it doesn’t work that way. We are free *because* of Rome. We are free to do good. We are not held hostage to earthly concerns so that we can be free to follow a conscience that cannot fail, if we let it, to lead us right to the throne of glory itself.”

I could see just how much sense the priest’s words made. The Prothumanist movement was a step backwards in goodness, soon sinking to the heathen sacrifice that the Obedient Jews and Christians had fought against since Cain. I could see that love of God, children, and neighbors was the link between God’s Chosen. And, it was the division between the saved and the damned. Father Gonalthwy began to speak, and his words were the very ones springing to my own mind.

“The pitiful, short-lived churches begun by ego-crazed Donatists, Albigensians, Arians, and their modern counterparts never last long. They’re like petunias, gaily sprouting around the base of a giant redwood tree where the Jewish roots meet the Catholic trunk. Hard times and cold weather destroys the gay petunias, but new ones blossom, each year.”

“You’d think that they’d have sense enough to get back to The Church. We see it, and we’re no smarter than anyone else,” Carl said.

Father Gonalthwy thought before answering. “Every person has the mental capacity to choose between Catholicism and the Marketing Plan Denominations of every age. They’re ‘smart’ enough to sell stock they own in companies that are going down the drain. You’d think they’d work even harder to pull their souls out of a sinking ship than their money from a failed investment, but they don’t. Choices have always separated sheep from goats.”

“You think that the collapse will come soon?” Darlene asked.

“It’s been going on since they first began. They just ‘reform’ when their collapse becomes too obvious, and start over, or pretend to, while moving ever-deeper into error.”

We were all tired then. Not just from the heavy work of moving ingots all day, but our brains felt full of ozone, weary from moving our souls and spirits through tiny memory bits, moving them around to inwardly match the outer God-fractals that we endlessly tried to place properly in our brains. We unrolled our sleeping bags on our air mattresses, and went to sleep.

“Do you know how saints perform miracles?” my Guardian Angel asked as I dozed into sleep. “They have limited powers to program the 3-D pixels from which everything is made.”

“I know that,” I said, and I did, but I don’t know how.

“But, did you know that even *you* can fractalize, a little bit, by praying?”

“I know that. That’s why people pray, because they really can make a difference,” I answered, and, as I answered, I knew that it was the G. A. who’d rearranged bits of brain fractals so that I’d be able to give him precisely the answer that was the most correct at precisely the time that I was supposed to come up with it.

As I finally dreamed, it was of Jesus, talking about moving mountains with bits of energy the size of mustard seeds. I was able to realize the brilliance of His calculation, that one mustard-seed-size piece of energy was enough to move a mountain by reducing it to fractals, moving those fractals, and programming them to reassemble. Poor Mohammed earned himself a place in Dante’s lowest level because he had to go *to* the mountain, rather than bow before the only Man who could make mountains come to Him, and could calculate and communicate the energy necessary to make that many fractal patterns obey with almost atomic precision. As the dream ended, I could feel that the End of Time was simply De-Fractalizing. “A surprisingly simple process,” my Guardian Angel assured me. “It’s no harder for God than erasing an e-mail is for us.”

**Dr. Wursavolk kicks a wino, catches a bug, goes to Switzerland. Others follow. Old Matt sees Dr. Brownose. Bird-God. Third orgy. Matt flies tourist to Geneva. Nest of Crats. Hears Dr. Wursavolk's boss. Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide, Faux-Father Feeley, Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech join The Big Meeting. Young Matt meets old monk.**

The brass-lined executive elevator took them swiftly down. Dr. Wursavolk said good-bye at street level to the three who accompanied him. "We'll meet in Switzerland."

"Yes, sir," each of them said, gratified to have been chosen to attend The Really Big Meeting. It was Young Dr. Medpig's first chance to attend the highest-level gathering of them all.

They descended to the basement, to their own waiting limousines.

Dr. Wursavolk walked toward the huge Rolls that awaited him, right rear door held open by a uniformed chauffeur, bowing in the approved manner. Blundering out of nowhere, a drunk staggered down the street. He stumbled, nearly tripping Dr. Worsavolk.

"You disgusting field beast!" Dr. Worsavolk exclaimed, non-sexual contact with taxpaying swine nearly nauseating him, "Out of the way!" he said again, aiming a vicious kick at the groveling wino's midsection.

The groan he extracted prompted the good Doctor to kick him again, though not as satisfactorily. The drunk rolled away, then back, momentarily trapping Dr. Wursavolk's shoe. "Get away!" he commanded, "You'll get my shoe dirty!" Quickly, he pulled free, and resumed his stately progress toward the car, whose chauffeur was racing to help him.

"It's all right, James. Just a damn field beast, drunk, as usual," Dr. Wursavolk said, ignoring the indisputable fact that James, too, was a peon taxpayer.

Incredibly, James was elevated, temporarily, to his master's exalted level. He exclaimed, as he'd been taught, "What's the world coming to, when men like that can't even recognize their betters!"

James shook his head, looking properly horrified at the thought, and gently shut the door as soon as Dr. Wursavolk was seated. They sped off, leaving the Federal Building and a lone, prostrate figure, lying motionless on the sidewalk until they were out of sight.

"I might have scratched my shoe, kicking him like that. What if my toe had hit his zipper, or a button? Why, I'd better check," he thought. "Lights, James." he said, and he looked closely at his delicate, coffee-with-double-cream colored loafers, tanned from the rare, unblemished back-skins of color-matched mulatto twins, procured from a late trimester abortion that Young Dr. Medpig

had thoughtfully delayed until the babies' backs were big enough to make matching, seamless uppers.

There were no scratches, but he didn't see that in the instep, stuck into the front of his heel, the small, black, flat pinheads, virtually unnoticeable. Young Matt had stuck them in the good Doctor's shoe while the good Doctor was kicking him. The miniature perma-mike was the smallest, most effective shoe microphone that the Federal Bureau of Taxpayer Information had to offer. That, and the GPS unit next to it, was powered by tiny piezo-electric crystals that generated electricity when the material around them flexed.

Young Matt got up, wincing slightly at the sore spots in his stomach, where the good Doctor had kicked him out of the way, and checked his billfold. "Let's see," he said to himself, as he counted through the considerable number of hundred dollar bills that his Dad had taken from Dr. Grifter's billfold. "He's probably goin' to the airport. That's where I'd better go, too. Hope I got enough money to follow him."

Something told him not to worry about money, but just get moving. It bothered him, the way the thought just stayed there and nagged him. "I got a hunch," he said out loud, using the hillbilly name for Guardian Angel, "that I better follow him. I can call Dad, later."

The quickest way to get to the airport, he correctly reasoned, would be to steal a car, so he did. By driving quickly, he got a beat-

up old Ford to the airport long before the slow, elegant Rolls deposited Dr. Wursavolk at the entrance. Young Matt watched him go to a ticket counter as James checked his suitcases with the skycap.

“He goin’ to London?” Matt asked the clerk, gesturing toward Dr. Wursavolk, who was disappearing into the Billion-Mile Clubroom.

“Geneva,” the clerk answered.

“That’s a coincidence. So am I.”

“First class or coach?” asked the clerk, in the ritualistic way, forcing the customer to choose good sense or status.

“What’s the difference?” asked Matt, whose only airplane experience involved shooting at a low-flying sports plane whose pilot had buzzed the family cow. Once.

“On first class, you get a more comfortable seat, better food, better movie, and a free drink. In tourist, you get a seat that’s 20 inches narrower, and only one pat of butter for both baked potato and roll (“Now, that’s a real hardship,” Young Matt muttered.), and each drink costs five dollars. The movie is not in stereophonic sound, of course.”

“How much is first class?”

“One-way, coach fare is \$850.00. First class is \$6,000.00.”

“I guess I’ll go coach. That’s darned expensive butter on the first-class. When’s it leave?”

“The plane is boarding in an hour. Would you like to check your luggage?”

“Na, I’m travelin’ light,” he said, in the embarrassed way poorer people have of responding to assumptions of wealth made by people who know better, but whose enjoyment of the poor’s evasions of an open admittance of their poverty is one of the few bright spots in their jobs.

Matt went down to wait in the gate area. He had some trouble getting his knife by the metal detector in security, but managed. He just put it on the floor, and kicked it before him, soccer style. He didn’t know that he was going to need a Passport, but the man in front of him said “Government Employee”, and showed his identification card. Matt had been issued one when he’d first become a Pad-Holder for the Census Department, so he did the same thing. Both were motioned into the plush, carpeted area reserved for GovEmps, spared further searches from a manic Homeland Security whose employees believed that the truest dangers to well-being were innocent Christians.

He waited for his flight, carrying only the tape recorder/receiver and several micro-cassettes, one barely used from the meeting his father continued to observe.

While his son was following Dr. Wursavolk to Switzerland, his father kept watch over the room below. Mattathias was sickened by what he saw. He couldn’t bear to watch, for long, but only

peered down occasionally. By the time his son had boarded the plane, he saw Dr. Brownose. “That’s the man who led the surveyors in the destruction of our farm!” he realized. He watched, as Dr. Brownose showed the others what he’d carried into the meeting.

“Look what we have found,” he said, during the next re-stimulation period, implying by his tone that it was, of course, Dr. Brownose, himself, who’d found it. He unwrapped the long package he’d brought in, and, at the head of the table, recently occupied by Dr. Wursavolk, he put a Bird-God.

“How beautiful!” exclaimed Miriam Babeter.

“It is,” agreed Old Dr. Medpig.

“What is it? Something new to worship?” asked Slith Venum hopefully.

“It’s an American Horns,” explained Dr. Donald V. DeDuckDuck, proud to be at his first Big Meeting, prouder still of the opportunity to speak alongside Dr. Brownose, himself. “It was brought here from ancient Babylon by our early priests.”

“Actually, no one knows what it is,” Dr. Brownose said, “So, we just tell people it’s whatever we want.”

“That’s right” added Dr. DeDuckDuck. “We’re going to sponsor, with the help of a grant from one of the pseudo-intellectual Geography Societies, and its famed fad-finder, Dr. D. D. Bell Grossvendor XI. He, by the way is our nomination for

Living Proof That Intelligence is Not Inherited. He's leading an expedition designed to provide solid, archaeological proof that the ancient God of Babylon was actually worshipped in America! We're going to establish a new religion here, based on an imaginary cult that we'll say has such historical significance that *all* should believe in it. We'll convince simple twits who believe all the things that the Public Television Division of FedTube tells them. Our goal is the institution of our own state religion, one that we'll have full power to change as often as we need."

"Where do the statues actually come from?" asked Gouge VacMouth. "Can I have some?"

"A bunch of Indians made them, out in Ohio, or someplace like that," Dr. Brownose answered. "There's only a few thousand of them, and we've got nearly all of them. Quick work by our Smithsonian Accumulators, with value determined by our Evaluators, has made them worth, literally, their weight in gold."

Everyone admired the Bird-God, but they could maintain their interest for only a short time. Even with renewed doses of stimulants, they were nearly too tired for more orgying. A few managed. Then, exhausted, they slept the sleep of the doomed. They were helped, of course, by copious quantities of powerful narcotics.

Mattathias stole away and went home after Dog had curled up comfortably in its ebony chair and gone to sleep.

Young Matt watched Dr. Wursavolk go through the red-carpeted, first-class entry on its moving walkway. He rode on the red velvet carpet through the ivory inlays that depicted the history of flight around the edge of the gilt-rimmed doorway. Then, Matt, with the other travellers flying Lower Class, went through their rickety entry. They walked over ripped and torn indoor-outdoor carpet to the Lower Class seating section of the plane. He sniffed, wondering what the sprayed Essence of Athletic Socks odor was, not knowing that the airlines uniformly sprayed it on all the Lower Class cabins, to make people realize how shabby they were, if they didn't fly First-class.

Through the swinging doors, lined on his side with linoleum, on the other with rosewood veneer, Young Matt caught a glimpse of Dr. Wursavolk, whose seven course dinner order was being taken by a smiling, happy, extraordinarily pretty girl. Matt was offered his choice of an over-cooked TV dinner unceremoniously deposited on a tray he had to fold out for himself or a stick of Juicy Fruit.

His overweight, airborne waitress, so surly she'd flunked out of Spunky Chunky training, was one of a tiny handful denied a WAWA franchise for being even too emotionally out of control to be trusted as a Woman Awake, Woman Aware participant. She cursed his slowness as he tried to figure out how to unfold his tray.

After eating, he slept most of the flight to Geneva. When the airplane landed, Matt was nearly frantic. He realized that the First-Class travelers would disembark first, and that the Lower-Class travelers would be delayed.

He had a 'hunch' that he shouldn't be concerned. "Don't worry about a thing," it told him.

As soon as he was able, he raced down the ramp, and toward customs. He didn't realize that he'd catch up with Dr. Brownose, who'd had to wait for the mountain of luggage that Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide had given him from his own collection, a personal gift from Hermann Goering, who'd had it made for himself from the skins of Catholic priests, personally skinned alive by Hermann, himself. Matt, who had no luggage, nearly walked into him, but stopped, unseen, just in time. "Relax, I told you," said the 'hunch', and he obeyed.

Dr. Wursavolk, travelling to downtown Geneva by private limousine, was unaware of Young Matt. If he'd seen Matt a dozen times, of course, he wouldn't have recognized him. He saw no one poorer than himself, or of less stature. He remembered the orgy he'd just left, of all the orgies he'd attended, even an early one, when they'd discovered the joys of involuntary amputation. "That was real self-expression," he thought, remembering proudly the pain and suffering they'd been able to inflict on innocents even back in the Dark Ages, before Abortion-On-Demand.

Matt followed, in a taxi, not knowing where he was, beyond the name of the city, Geneva, and the nation, Switzerland. He passed by an old statue, erected by the citizens of the city. A plaque on its base apologized for a religious execution that had taken place there. A man had been burned at the stake at the behest of John Calvin, an early Mainline leader. He'd been "forced" to burn a man at the stake for disagreeing with him about The Trinity in a city that was ostensibly a "home of religious freedom". Young Matt, of course, couldn't read it. Besides, he wasn't focused on anything but the taillights of Dr. Wursavolk's car. They pulled up, finally, alongside a large, columned building near the city's center. Matt couldn't tell if it was a bank or a temple, but he knew it was big and expensive.

He didn't follow Dr. Wursavolk inside. There was a small park across the street, half a square block of trees, paths, manicured lawns, and several benches. Matt sat on one of them and watched. The long, fall days he'd spent hunting deer, sitting as still as stone, paid off. He was partly hidden from the building, and, as the hours went by, he noticed more people going inside. A few, he recognized from the meeting at the Weirton Federal Building; he saw Young Dr. Medpig, Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide, Faux-Father Feeley, and several he didn't recognize, some in turbans and robes.

Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide and Faux-Father Feeley were among the last to enter, hand-in-hand. After their entry,

huge, bronze double doors swung shut. The building looked like any one of the impressive Swiss banks, sealed and shuttered for a long weekend.

Matt was hungry. He hadn't eaten since the small package of stale crackers they'd served for breakfast in Lower Class.

"Don't worry," his 'hunch' told him. "You'll be taken care of."

Matt saw lights being turned on in the building's top floor. In a mirror on the far wall, he got a glimpse of a large dining room, where food was being served. With the stoic patience of a deer hunter, he stayed still and anonymous, unnoticed even by the police who passed every ten minutes. "Don't worry," his 'hunch' told him. "They won't see you." He tuned the receiver in the tape recorder he'd taken from the Bureau of Taxpayer Information to match the frequency of the tiny microphone he'd stuck in Dr. Wursavolk's shoe, and began to listen to the conversation inside while the miniature recorder was running. At first, he only heard dinner chatter. One of the voices he could tell from the others was that of Rogue Reform Rabbi Genocide.

He listened while climbing a huge tree and weaving himself a blind, high in the thickly leafed branches of the sycamore. The passing police never thought to look up.

Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide was reminiscing about the Hitler Campaign that had been waged.

He said, to the Bangladesh Minister of Agriculture, "Prosperity, killing us. No one was giving us any money. They all wanted to buy cars and boats and summer homes. We'd tell them, 'Remember what happened in Spain, in 1492, when the Spaniards threw us all out.' 'That was a long time ago.' they'd answer. They just weren't scared enough to support us. So, we knew it was time to get them again. We knew that if we could kill off a bunch of poor European Jews, the rich American ones would be scared into giving us money, like old times. So, we did. And, they did."

"I didn't know that," interrupted Young Dr. Medpig. "So, that's why those millions of poor Jews in Germany, Poland, and Russia were never warned."

"You think we're stupid, already? Every few centuries, we Really Reform Rogue Rabbis have to help set up somebody like Hitler. He kills a bunch of poor Jews, and the rich ones are scared back into line. You think people like to give us money? You know how many different organizations we have, squeezing money out of every Jewish person in the world who isn't on welfare? For us Rogue-Rabbis, Hitler was the best thing since Ferdinand and Isabella."

Hendo Kelar, the Bangladesh Minister of Agriculture, whose insane plan to convert his nations' croplands to bib lettuce and macadamia nuts had resulted in the starvation deaths of nearly a million poor people, was quiet. He realized that he had nothing to

brag about. In this gathering, he wasn't even close to the Slaughter-Scores that his fellows had attained.

Dr. Wursavolk, Secretary of Health In Human Services, had presided over the deaths of more human beings than anyone in the world, including the Khans and Mongol Warlords whose pictures graced the walls. Dr. Wursavolk was universally acclaimed to be the Vandal of Vandals, Barbarian of Barbarians. As such, he took his rightful place at the head of the table, outranking even the highest Commissars of the Ukraine, whose death totals were only in the tens of millions, and far above Rogue Rabbi Genocide, who was, to tell the truth, only at the meetings out of respect for his age.

The preliminaries were quickly gotten out of the way. Long-time BaaloCrats, they had been going to meetings since Babel's first "Tower Committee" was convened. Dr. Wursavolk quickly got to the point of the meeting, uninterrupted by anyone. After all, his Health In Human Services agencies had killed more people, no matter how tiny most were, than any agency in history. As such, the head of Health In Human Services was closer to pure evil than any man since Cain. While others worried about how their golf games had gone, he enjoyed reminding people of his Slaughter Score. He had become the official go-between for his fellow butchers and forces beyond.

He began sternly. "We're having trouble generating operating cash. Too much money is being soaked up by overhead. We've got

to trim some fat from our payroll. We just can't afford to expand operations if we have to spend all our money on staffs. After all, we aren't some damn Government, with a lot of wretched taxpayers to bleed.

“You think that the guns we run into Northern Ireland are free? You think it's cheap to provide terrorists with bombs and guns? Is germ warfare research cheap? You think it's free, setting up Councils of World Churches? Fancy Geography Societies? Peace, Plant, and Dolphin Twitgroups? All the crud we need to appear to be respectable costs money! You think it's fun, listening to stupid Leftists or even dumber actors and environmentalists and pretending that you think they are 'smart' and 'sensitive'? You think it's free, actually having to hire staff to talk to bubble-brained actresses who all have agents with their hands out?

“It all costs money, ladies and gentlemen, and you're just not coming up with enough. We've done a good job of attacking those accursed Traditional Values, but we aren't doing a good job of supporting ourselves. Everything we do costs money and we need more!”

The Semi-Reverent Dr. Molech took advantage of a momentary lull in Dr. Wursavolk's speech. “Speaking of the Council of World Churches,” he bragged, beaming with pride, “we now have majority representation on the Boards of Directors of every Mainline Moderne Church with over ten thousand members.”

“That’s wonderful!” exclaimed Archbishop Perqswine, of the English Anglicans. “We’re doing well with our own State Church, too. We’ve made it into a theological laughing-stock. No one, from the pretend Archbishop of Canterbury on down takes it seriously. How could they?” he giggled.

As the Conference wore on, no one was aware of Young Junior, high in a tree in the park across the street. He’d slowly woven himself into a huge clump of leaves that looked as if a giant squirrel had built an apartment for all his friends.

“We’re doing well against all the Mainline Churches,” The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech concluded. “All over the world, we’re sending missionaries with conflicting gospels, confusing the heathens so that they’ll stay that way. We’re doing very well, indeed.”

“Against all but three,” said Rogue Rabbi Genocide. “All but Catholics, the truly Pro-Life Protestants, and the Pro-Life Jews. We haven’t done much damage to them. It’s hard to hit them, they’re so scattered around.”

“Part of His plan. He’s got organized forces in the Big Church, and those accursed, Devil-damned guerilla Pro-Lifers are lurking around everywhere,” a new, unidentified voice replied. “They are more dangerous to us than you think.”

“We’re making gains, we really are,” Vice-Chairperson Medea said. “We get more Catholics into ‘free, unoppressive’ churches every day. The simple fools believe that because the priests don’t

pander to them, that they don't care about them. Lots of them are becoming liberated Mainliners doing their own thing. And, we have the dumber ones convinced that the Pope is Anti-Christ.

“Can you imagine anyone being dumb enough to believe that the world's biggest enemy of abortion is the Anti-Christ? What fools they are! They deserve whatever we give them.”

“Self-righteousness makes some of them that dumb. But, we aren't getting enough of them killed, let alone the smarter ones.” Matt heard the harsh, guttural voice of Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide interject. “We've killed lots of Catholics, and lots of Jews, thanks to Precious Adolf, but we aren't getting the real Pro-Lifers. It's hard to get money out of anyone if they aren't scared of you. If we don't get 'em scared, we can't get money, so let's start killing the Pro-Lifers.”

“Surely, the Jews are still scared from the last time,” Dr. Wursavolk insisted. “You could squeeze more money out of them, Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide! Is it time we put a younger man in charge?”

“I can always get money out of Jews. We can always set up a program in some out-of-the-way place. We could do Russia, again, or Moldavia, but those Jews don't have any money. There are still too many Christians to let us build up the leftists and the KKK to help us in the U. S.”

“Aren't you afraid that people are smart enough to catch on that you Rogue Rabbis are behind the pogroms?” asked Ms.

Medea.

“That’s why we canonized Freud! Now, if anyone is intelligent enough to figure out what’s going on, we call them ‘paranoid’. Besides, we have enough FedTube control that no one is ever allowed to publicly mention even the possibility.”

“Don’t the Jews know that you’re doing it to them?” asked an astonished Hendu Kelar.

“Of course they know! You think Jews are stupid? They know we only get poor ones, ones with no voice, or rich ones who don’t make big enough donations, or who might accept Him. Down deep, they know it’s us because we want them to know it’s us. Why, our Postwar Collections have been the biggest since we got the Romans to sack Jerusalem.”

“You still haven’t told me how you’re going to bring in more money,” Dr. Wursavolk said. “Sure, you can keep on scaring money out of a few million Reform Jews, but we need Catholic money, and every penny we can take from Pro-Lifers. Every dime we can get from them does double duty, it impoverishes them *and* enriches us.”

“We can push for Government Certification of all clergy. Make them all get Princeton degrees in Semi-Christian Theology,” the unidentifiable voice remarked, and Matt heard many “Omens.” to that. “We have to make them stop even pretending that You-Know-Who is You-Know-What in The Flesh.” the same voice continued.

“The only way to do that,” said Faux Father Feeley, “is to wreck the Big Church, from Pope to priest to people. Our infiltrating molesters have done real damage. We just have to get more.”

“I concur,” agreed Dr. Wursavolk, relieved that one of them had finally said what he wanted someone to say, but surprised that it would have been anyone as dumb as Faux Father Feeley. “Once Rome collapses, then all the little churches will disappear. Rome is the trunk. They’re the only ones who can take vows of poverty and actually give up money.”

“Pervert sickos,” someone commented.

“They give up sex, too,” said young Dr. Medpig in amazement, remembering the fine orgy he’d just attended.

“Weird bastards!” Ms. Medea said, seeing the approval she craved on every face.

“They even give up independence. They actually obey that Pope of theirs,” said someone else.

“Speaking of obedience, we could use a little of that around here,” Dr. Wursavolk said, rapping for order.

“Yes, if we’re going to get anywhere, we have to be organized,” said Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide, looking sternly about the room.

“You don’t think we’re going to organize around you, you turncoat Jew?” said the unknown voice.

“You can trust me,” answered Rogue Rabbi Genocide, plaintively in reply.

“Oh, I can trust you to start stuff but when it comes to keeping it going, you’re no good, you have no staying power. I just can’t count on you.”

“You can, you can. You know you can,” Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide protested, a hint of alarm in his voice.

“You blew it in Russia, and Stalin had to take over. You blew it in France, too, and we had to send Napoleon in. You Rogue Reform Rabbis just can’t hack it. For good, old-fashioned terroristic government, for big-scale, long-term murder and abortion, give me a Renegade Catholic, like Henry the Eighth or Hitler.”

“We do our best,” protested Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide.

“Your best! Ha! You don’t even try. If you really wanted to help, you’d become priests and subvert the Church. If you could get a lot of your hotshot Libtwits to become priests and start seducing every woman in their parishes, why we could make Catholics even more despised than Unitarians and Episcopalians,” the new Voice concluded, spitting out the last word.

“We’ve tried. It hardly ever works, except for a few like Faux-Father Feeley. (Faux-Father Feeley smiled, and nodded agreement.) They can’t stand up to the horrors of seminaries.

They either drop out altogether, or they turn into some of the best priests there are. We can't tell them too much, or they might turn against us. If we don't tell them enough, they won't know how to argue and fight against what that The Church teaches," whined the Really Reformed Rogue Rabbi.

"Infiltrate, fool! Infiltrate, and don't worry about a few useless turncoats. They're no good to us, anyway, if they end up like Him, sacrificing their senses for the sake of their souls. I want you to hit the Big Church. His Church! By this time, next year, I want to see real Christians burning! I want to see Catholic flesh roasting! I want to see butchered priests and raped nuns! Pro-Life preachers impaled! I want death, destruction and My Wrath to fall upon the only thing on earth that dares resist! DEATH!"

The voice grew so intense that Matt could barely stand to listen to it, even through the tiny receiver. He could feel the others at the meeting, melting under the hatred, fairly bleating under the pressure. He was afraid he'd fall out of the tree. "God, give me strength," something prompted him to say, and he felt his resistance stiffen.

The Voice dropped to a slow, precise, overpowering whisper. "Now, you make your plans, and you make them to attack ROME, you sniveling cowards! You think I chose you! No! He rejected you. That's why you're here! He detected some fatal flaw in your soul, some awful sin from your fathers has been visited upon you, and has damaged you so badly in His eyes that you are here. He

rejected you, and that's why you are here. You are good for nothing but Me, and we will WIN! WE WILL WIN!"

Again, the voice rose in intensity, a piercing scream that seemed to be nearly pure energy. Even with his receiver turned down as low as possible, it was nearly deafening. Matt could see clearly into the room in which they met. It was lit, far more brightly than any in the City, as if someone had carried pure light into it. Even through the curtains, it was so bright that Matt had the impression of a small ball of light, moving to the head of the table. Even Dr. Wursavolk, of Health In Human Services, was nearly blown away by its power.

"AND YOU HAVE the nerve to brag about your silly little killings? Yes, you have killed billions of His precious unborn, but when you kill someone who won't believe in Him, do you think the angels cringe? But, when we can bring one of HIS to be one of MINE, that makes His nail holes bleed!

"Blood! That's what I want, His Blood! All you talk is academic rubbish! I'm sick of your bragging about how soon the pitiful Prothumanist cults collapse. Of course they do! It's a law of His nature. You might as well expect me to be pleased when you find that in His world, water runs downhill.

"I am sick of your vain posturings. I am truly tired even of your sins. They bore me. YOU bore me. Your naughty little perversions and the tortures you think to be so imaginative? Your cunning fetus-mangling? You think that you can compare to Me?

You are but a pale, pale imitation of my far, far more perverted nature. You dare to say that you follow me. You do not follow me unless it is into battle against HIS Church!

“I want to destroy each and every cell of HIS body. I want the soul that lives within each cell of HIS body to come crawling to me, begging an impossible forgiveness. I WANT HIM DEAD ON EARTH THAT I MIGHT TAKE MY RIGHTFUL PLACE IN HEAVEN! I am God, not HIM! Not the Son. Anyone but the Son! His Body, His Mother, His Church, all must be destroyed. I’ll show God, I’ll make Him love me! Then, I’ll kill Him! I will, I’ll show them ail! I will!”

The insane anger, the mad rage, was corroding Matt’s mind. He could nearly feel flecks of burning spittle spewing from the speaker. He felt an energy that rooted him to the spot, cold, helpless fear. He was scared, almost to death, but he couldn’t stop listening, as the voice slowly whispered:

“Do you fear the book, the bell, the candle? Do you fear the curse of darkness? You already have it, and for all time to come. You fear the biting sword of Michael? My light is greater than His faith. You fear Raphael, Gabriel? I am greater than any and all of them. I am greater than any and all of the forces beyond. I AM GREATER THAN HE WHOM I WILL DESTROY!”

Matt was afraid, not for himself, but for his recording equipment. He didn’t know if it would stand up to the stress of the

voice. Finally, he shut it off, and climbed down the tree and walked away.

In a nearby hotel, he found a telephone at a miraculously unguarded desk, so he put through an overseas call, to his father, in their Weirton apartment.

“You wouldn’t believe it, Pa,” he said, when he connected. “There’s some of the same people who were at the Weirton Federal Building over here in Geneva. That old Genocide guy, he’s some big-time Renegade Jew. He and a bunch of liberal priests and preachers set up Hitler to kill poor Jews so’s they could scare the rich ones into givin’ ‘em money. Can that be?”

Old Matt answered, “In the Old Testament, it says that a lot of bad Jews was goin’ off to oak groves and pagan Gods, despite that the good stayed away. I don’t suppose things have changed, much.”

“I guess things haven’t. Listen, Dad, I’m gonna try to come back to Weirton. I can’t stand it here. They’re in a meeting, and it looks like they’re gonna be here forever. I’m cold, and I’m hungry. I want to come home.”

“You stay right there, son. God got you there, He’ll bring you back when he’s ready. Just keep track of what’s goin’ on. Don’t worry about food. They got pigeons in the parks, don’t they?”

“Sure do, Pa. Big ones, like Real Old Matt used to tell us that passenger pigeons looked like.”

“Well, I don’t know much about cities, but I know that where there’s cities, there’s parks, and where there’s parks, there’s pigeons. Where there’s pigeons, there’s people feedin’ ‘em, so they’re nice ‘n fat. Use them for your food, they’ll be your manna and quail, out in the wilderness.”

“All right. I’ll stay here and keep watch. What are you gonna be doin’?”

“Well, I read a story in an old newspaper about this here big school what got blowed up in Erie. That didn’t sound like too bad an idea to me, to just go around and blow up some buildings. Blast some bureaus.”

“Then, I’ll know how to find you when I get back?”

“Yep. You still got the cash from that Dr. Grifter’s wallet?”

“Over ten thousand dollars left.”

“Take care of it, son. Don’t worry. The Lord will provide.”

“I know He will, Pa,” and strangely, all of a sudden, he did know, and felt much more comforted. He left the hotel, not realizing that the desk clerk’s oversight had allowed an incredibly expensive daytime overseas call to go uncharged, and went back to the park.

Cold and hungry as the dawn broke, he sat on an isolated park bench. He had no popcorn, but pieces of old newspaper thrown to the ground attracted a pair of pigeons, on which he promptly dove.

Used to being fed by fat, stodgy Swiss, the pigeons were culturally unprepared for the quick hillbilly. It a few minutes, two were plucked, gutted, and spitted over a tiny fire in the remotest part of the park.

Matt wandered around the city. He was careful to never lose his bearings so that he could find his way back to the park and the imposing Council of World Churches building. He felt himself drawn to old, stone buildings on a hill, far from the downtown area. The cold wind was biting, and he had another 'hunch' that he might find shelter within.

It was a Benedictine Monastery. A kindly monk brought the shivering American inside, took him to a steamy shower room, and gave him clean, warm clothes that he wore to fresh bread and barley soup.

"Why are you doin' this for me?" he asked Father Militant, after he'd finished the soup and was taken to a room.

"Because, you are doing this, for us," the monk said, pointing to his tape recorder. "We heard, this morning, that an American was coming here, on a reconnaissance mission. With prayer, you know, you just might be promoted from Reconnaissance to Search and Destroy," Father Militant said, and smiled when he realized that the cold, tired young man was already asleep on the hard, comfortable bed.

He slept around the clock, and had another simple meal of bread, this time, with butter, and more barley soup. This time,

with salt.

**ZAPPIN' DE TWITS!**  
**Old Matt starts stickin' pigs. Suddenly, mercy! Blast  
nesting places! Big-Burg Fed Bldg. Then, the District  
of Crats.**

“There’s no tellin’ how long Young Matt’s gonna be over there, listenin’ to those damn demons,” Mattathias thought to himself. “No point in wastin’ any more time. I’m gonna start stickin’ as many of them fat pigs as I can. Right now.”

He took a Greyhound to the nearest big city, Pittsburgh, where, he correctly reasoned, he’d find another huge Federal building, one even larger than the one in Wierton.

“I’m gonna level it,” he said, staring at the huge, gleaming temple to the awesome forces of the BaaloCrats. He walked around and around the building. He noticed, on one side, an underground garage door at the bottom of a ramp that went from the street to the basement. There, high-ranking civil servants parked their limousines. A guardsuite was adjacent to the ramp, but its tanning booth blocked much of their view to the outside.

“I think I’ll get me somethin’ to eat, and think this thing out,” he said to himself, and went Tommy’s Bar and Grill across the street.

He ate two hamburgers and drank a Coke. On the seat across from him, someone had left a copy of a newsmagazine. It was, by

one of the strange coincidences he was beginning to take for granted, open to the “EDUCATION” section. Mattathias couldn’t help but notice pictures in another article about the burned out school, in Erie.

“How’d *that* happen?” he said to himself, picking up the magazine and reading the article.

“Suspected KKK members, enraged about the Supreme Court’s recent decision to airlift minority students to achieve international racial balance, are believed by authorities to be responsible for the complete destruction of the two billion dollar International Middle School recently completed in Erie.

“‘This school would have ensured a real mixture, for the first time in history, of all students in our area and the world.’ said a disappointed member of Erie Board of Education.

“It is a setback.’ said Gouge VacMouth, from PubEd. ‘This school was going to be the first, a pilot program, to see just how much society would be helped by finally having a true racial mixture of students. Lack of schoolchildren contact with world-wide racial balance has recently been theorized to be the dominant factor in racism. It’s only fair to give all the different races a chance to get to know each other according to their global population numbers. We need a huge, non-White school population in every American school. Airlifting hundreds of millions of foreign students into America’s school districts and

forcibly quartering them in local homes is the only way to achieve this proper balance.”

“The Neanderthal Fundamentalists who destroyed this magnificent building just don’t understand,” complained Dr. Ms. Fraydamen, of the Federal Department of Education.

“It was conjectured by police, from evidence at the scene, that an over-sized multi-wheeled container of liquid petroleum distillates was impermissibly removed from a nearby distribution center, and de-filled into the school, where it was later detonated by a sophisticated timing device. EPA officials said that this was just one more indication that all petroleum distillates should be distributed by Government agencies.”

“Now, what’s that mean?” Mattathias asked himself, admiring the burnt-out remains of the former middle school. “What’s a liquid petroleum distillate? What’s a petroleum distillate distribution center? What’s an over-sized multi-wheeled container?”

Unable to decipher what was going on in the article, he asked the bartender to tell him what had happened.

The bartender read through the story twice, before answering. “Looks like somebody went and dumped a tank truck full of gasoline into the school, then lit it. It’s hard to tell, from the way this story’s written, but, I think that’s what happened.”

“Hmm,” Matt said when he’d returned to his booth, still staring at the picture. “I could do somethin’ like that.”

He realized he should study the situation, so he found a room in a cheap hotel. Early the next morning, Friday, he returned to Tom’s for breakfast and sat in a booth that gave him a good view of the Federal Building.

The first workers to go inside were soldiers, followed by groups of young men and women, taking military tests and examinations. A little after nine, other employees started arriving. By ten thirty, all but a few thousand stragglers were inside. Shortly before eleven, the basement door opened. The large limousines of high-ranking civil servants glided silently to the basement for their free, underground parking. Lower-paid employees, of course, had to pay to park their own shiny vehicles in nearby parking lots, grateful to avoid crowds of smelly, bus-riding taxpayers.

“I’ll just bet that those cars got full gas tanks.” Matt said to himself. “Maybe, I’ll just go take a look, after things quiet down.”

By eleven-thirty, the building’s incoming traffic slowed down. He left Tom’s, and strolled over to the building. The guards, some in the tanning booth, others reading their newspapers, watching television, playing cards and pool, doing part-time, long-distance telemarketing for cemetery plots on free telephones, sending e-mails, and making free calls to far-flung friends, family, and to

sexually arousing porno-800 numbers, didn't notice as Junior crossed the sidewalk and walked through the open garage door.

"Wow!" said one of the overweight guards, looking up from his newspaper. "It says in the paper that the earth is eleven trillion years old, and that this guy, Doctor DeDuckDuck, has proof. He's uncovered statues from a hundred billion-year old Indian culture, right here, in the Tri-State area. Now, don't that beat all. I always figured..."

Matt was spared the forthcoming profundity, as an incoming liquor truck drove down the ramp between him and the guards. Carefully, he trotted alongside, hidden by it from the dozen guards in their comfortable, air-conditioned guardsuite, where the only ones standing were too concentrated around the pool table to notice.

Soon, he was safely inside the vast basement of the building.

"Gonna get 'em all," he said to himself, remembering the sight of Paps, lying dead in his hotel room, remembering Judith, his daughters, his grandchildren, all gone, forever, all because of the things people endlessly administering in the vast building above had introduced into what had, only yesterday, been a free country of decent people.

He hid in a dark corner, and prayed a fervent prayer, to the only God he knew, the fearsome creature that had come into his mountain church once a week and had taken him, through the words of Pastor Sam, to repeated task. Suddenly, he became

aware of a new God, a God of kindness and mercy. He immediately knew that it would not be his duty to repay death with death, murder with more murder.

“I can’t kill ‘em?” he said, wonderingly to the new spirit that seemed to be within him. “Destroy their nesting places, instead?” he asked. “Is that what you want me to do, blow up the building, but not hurt any of the people?” he said, as the feeling within made itself increasingly clear.

“Wait ‘til everybody’s gone home, then blow it up, is that it?” he said, suddenly knowing that’s what his mission truly was. For the first time in months, a smile creased his leathery face.

“Blow up the buildin’!” he cackled to himself. “Why, sure. If they don’t have a place to come to work, they can’t bother decent folks. They’d have to stay home. Maybe they’d have to start to think, even want to do somethin’ useful, instead of pesterin’ workin’ people.

“That’s it. I’ll just blow up the buildin’. Why didn’t I think of that, before? Come to think of it, who did think of it? What’s goin’ on here? God, is it YOU?” he asked, suddenly awed as the only explanation that made sense made itself perfectly clear in his mind.

With sudden, blinding certitude, he knew that his mission was to be modified by mercy, and that he had the aid and approval of great and powerful forces, far beyond.

Against one wall of the underground parking area, fifty Government vehicles were parked. "I'll bet they all got full gas tanks," Junior thought to himself. "They're the only ones who can afford it. That gas'll blow as good as dynamite, any day," he said, nearly aloud, remembering the picture in the month-old newsmagazine that he now knew was not left in the bar by accident.

"It sure will," he said, again, remembering the time a leaky gas can had filled Old Billy Tinhead's Shell Station with fumes that had blown out the door and all the windows when Billy had showed the boys the right way to light a flare.

"Ain't no windows for the explosion to get out of, down here," he muttered. "That means the blast'd have to go up, maybe take the floor above with it. Maybe I could take out a couple of these columns, too, bring the whole buildin' right down here to the basement. Not hurt anybody at all. Big noise. I'll park a couple of those trucks in the entryway, so the explosion's kept down here in the basement, and fill up the elevators with gas, too.

"Whoooooeeee!" he said, as he began to understand what he was to do, and that he'd better wait until night to do it.

He curled up in a corner of the garage, and dozed on several thousand flattened corrugated boxes, remnants of a Federal Recycling Program that had cost hundreds of millions, saved six pine trees somewhere in Georgia, and finally fizzled out when the manual laborers hired to carry empty boxes from the incinerator

to the recycling area a few feet away joined a union and went on strike.

At precisely two o'clock, the Government's official policy ended the Friday workday, high-ranking employees began streaming to their cars. Within half an hour, all the private cars had been driven from the Federal Building basement.

Soon, all the cars were gone, except a few in the corner, where a GS-200 kept his collection of vintage Bentleys. Three hours later, the poorly paid enlisted men, the first to arrive that morning, left to catch the buses that took them to their rooming houses.

Whistling happily to himself, Matt scouted around. He gathered a couple of dozen metal garbage cans, and put each one on a dolly. He found a watering hose, and cut a piece to use for a siphon. He spent several hours filling every garbage can he could find with gasoline siphoned from the gas tanks of the hundred vehicles in the basement. He plugged the drains in the basement with pieces of rubber floor matting from the cars. "I don't want any gas to leak down the drains, and maybe blow up under some other building."

By five, the building was nearly unguarded. The Civil Service guards had it written into their contracts that they didn't have to work on weekends. The only guard on duty was a Rent-a-Cop on a toot. He lay on a guardsuite sofa, downing one beer after another while watching old Mickey Mouse Club reruns on the big screen.

He was able to see Old Matt working, on one of the many TV monitors running in the suite, but he drunkenly concluded that busy, busy Matt was either a lost Mouseketeer or just one of the half-dozen low-paid migrant workers who actually pushed brooms, washed windows, moved furniture, and did all the real work in the building while being observed by endless echelons of Civil Servants who took turns admiring the workers' diligence, cursing their slowness, and being fatuously sympathetic with the basic downtroddenness of their existence. Rupert Slugoo watched him while the Mickey Mouse Club was interrupted for commercials from Fam-Plan subsidiaries encouraging eleven and twelve year old children to "Come to one of our clinics, boys and girls, before you start having Pretend Sex, and we'll show you how to have FUN!"

Guard Slugoo couldn't figure out what Matt was doing, as he wheeled cans of gasoline all over the building. "What's he doin?" he asked the monitor. "He's the hardest worker I ever saw in this place!" As Rupert drank more beers, he cared less. By the time Matt had filled twenty five garbage cans with gasoline, and had wheeled them to most of the floors in the building, Rupert was sleeping soundly, tired from turning his head back and forth, watching Matt, then the Mouseketeers, on monitor after monitor, as Matt went from floor to floor. That, in itself, was exhausting, but Guard Slugoo just couldn't handle the extra effort of focusing his bleary eyes on the big screen, after focusing on all the tiny

monitors he had to watch to keep track of what Matt was doing. By the time he was totally asleep, it still had not occurred to him that Matt might be up to something no good.

That idea might have crossed his mind if he'd been awake when Matt started up a huge, armored van, one of many in every Federal Building, stationed so that high-ranking BaaloCrats would be able to drive safely through the armed mobs that would inevitably descend upon them if people ever understood what they were doing to them and to their children.

Matt started the mammoth MEV (Mob Escape Vehicle), and began smashing into the huge concrete columns that supported the floors above. Naturally, he couldn't knock the columns over. He could, however, spall off big chunks of concrete, and expose the metal lath and reinforcing rods inside the column.

"When the fire starts," he reasoned, "the exposed metal will expand, and crack the concrete. Maybe the whole accursed place will fall down. Whoooooee!"

For an hour, he drove around, smashing into columns, knocking concrete away until their metal reinforcements were exposed. Just as importantly, the columns were weakened with shock-cracks running well up into where the columns intersected with floors above, destroying the structural integrity of the lower stories.

Then, he took the elevator to the top floor, and began spilling garbage cans of gasoline all over each floor, sluicing it under the

doors where it would soak into the thick, plush carpets that concerned Fedunion officials had laid so that the sound of word processors and copiers wouldn't frazzle the delicate nerves of the many Civil Servants, some of whom were already in shock at the idea that the office machines were there to be used, sometimes. By them.

After more exhausting work, he was finished. The building reeked of gasoline, over a thousand gallons vaporizing throughout the building. Since the windows were all hermetically and expensively sealed to Fedunion Specs, not a whiff of it got outside. With a fire ax, he punctured the gas tanks of all the vehicles that remained in the basement, flooding it with an inch of gasoline.

He punctured the gas tank of the MEV, and drove away, leaving a long fuse of gasoline trickling behind him. As he drove past the guardroom, he could see Rupert Slugoo, sound asleep in front of a big-screen Mousketeer earnestly explaining to an audience of drugged children the importance of using condoms, being a good citizen, preventing forest fires, and of keeping our National Parks "Clean!". Matt climbed down from the huge MEV, went into the unlocked guardroom, dragged Rupert Slugoo out, and drove him down the street. A few blocks away, but still with a clear view of the Federal Building, he pulled over, parked and dumpstered the still-sleeping guard.

When all was clear, he dropped a match onto the trail of gasoline, and watched the flame race back to the building. It raced

down the incline, to the basement, as if it had a mind of its own. The flame hesitated a moment, at the rubber barrier between the door and the concrete, but found the opening where the door had shut over the pencil Junior had left there. When the flame flickered its way under the door, the vaporized gasoline within exploded, with a blast that shook Pittsburgh to its roots. A moment later, the MEV burst into flames.

Almost simultaneously, flames burst from the windows at every floor of the Federal Building. He watched, fascinated, as the downtown was lighted in a reddish glow. He walked away quickly, his quiet footsteps unheard in the growing wail of sirens. As he crossed a bridge, looking for railroad tracks to follow, to Washington, his slim figure cast a very long shadow.

The elevator shafts turned into exploding, twenty-story bombs. Intense heat in the basement caused the reinforcing rods in the concrete columns to expand, weakening the structural members to such an extent that the last sound Matt heard, from across the river, was the thunderous crashing of floors, dropping onto each other as the internal supports of the Federal Building collapsed.

“Whoooooeeee!” he said, over and over to himself, as new salvoes of explosions rocked the still, night air.

“That’ll slow ‘em down. Today Pittsburgh, tomorrow, Washington!”

Clouds of choking dust combined with the smoke, and began to settle out of the air as he made his way past rows of cheap, dirty movie houses, where blank-eyed patrons, emerged to see what the noise was all about.

“Whoooooooooooo!” many of them heard a thin, poorly dressed man say as he shuffled past them. “Whoooooooooooo!”

He wandered along the Eastbound tracks, but left them when he saw a huge trucking terminal. The gate guard waved him through, believing Matt to be one of the many winos who came looking for enough unloading work to buy a few bottles and rent a room in which to drink them.

Matt walked along the loading dock, until, by another of those ‘coincidences’ he’d learned to expect, he heard two men talking to a driver.

“You can leave for D. C. in an hour. We’ve only got a few more pallets to load, and you can go. There’s time for coffee, if you want to get some in the lounge.”

“See you then,” the driver said, and left.

When the two loaders were out of sight, Matt hopped on the loading dock, and ducked inside the trailer, making himself a place to sleep in some of the wrapping quilts he found.

He slept, wearied from the hard work of the night, and was snoring by the time the semi left the terminal. He was still

sleeping when the doors opened in a terminal near Alexandria, early the following afternoon.

He ran from the truck as soon as he could dart behind the forklift unloading crates of slot machines. He ate at a small restaurant, spending nearly half his remaining twenty dollars.

Matt looked forward to Washington as an athlete looks forward to the Olympic games. “The bigger they are, the harder they fall. They really do,” he said, over and over to himself, marveling at the ease with which he’d just rendered tens of thousands of BaaloCrats even more useless, if such a thing were possible, than they had been the day before.

**Penny & Dr. Brownose remember Willard, former Curator, Tour-guide, gas station attendant. Theodore Crumlove and the “Deductability of Memorabilia” Pity the children of the poor when the Crats get all their parents’ guns.**

“Look at this!” exclaimed an excited Penny Bugler to Dr. Brownose, himself, as the two of them lay in a beach-side cabana, attending the monthly Smithsonian Work-Hard/Play-Hard get-together outside Acapulco. “The paper says that a Federal Building has been destroyed.”

Dr. Brownose roughly snatched the paper from her hand. “You’re right! It doesn’t say how it happened, though. Says that they think it may have been a leaking valve that allowed gas to accumulate in the building. Hmm.” he added, thoughtfully. “I wonder if it was another case of taxpayer sabotage?”

“Who would dare to sabotage a Federal Building?” asked Penny, whose Security Clearance wasn’t yet high enough to allow her to know of the thousands of individual attempts to reduce Federal spending that took place every year, attempts that had were brushed off as accidents on the rare occasions that they were allowed to be FedTubed.

“You never know. It could have been the Corps of Engineers. They always like to build new buildings, and they’re always threatening to do something to make us stop cutting their

budgets. Could be some hare-brained Health In Human Services fringe group, looking for Over-Cabinet Status, as if that means something. Department of Education people are always trying for more money to airlift newly discovered minority students to achieve Worldwide Racial Balance. It might be environmentalists, mad because the building interrupted butterfly migration. Environmentalists are all as crazy as bedbugs.”

“It couldn’t be anyone outside the Government then?” Penny asked, in relief.

“None of them are that smart. Anybody who pays taxes isn’t going to have enough guts or brains to do something like that, not without a leader. When the mandated SATFedTests find somebody smart enough to lead such a movement, we get rid of ‘em. That’s why we have those tests. Gouge VacMouth, from PubEd, explained it to me. Now, we can get rid of Edisons and Westinghouses and Jeffersons and Washingtons before they grow up and make trouble. We don’t kill ‘em, of course, we just give ‘em to homosexuals. One of our own groups looking for more money blew up the building. Maybe the FBI wants to increase their spending. They’ve always been good at creating an Investigative Crisis and ‘desperately need funding for more manpower’, just before budget-time. Or, it was an accident. We’ll see.”

“I hope so,” Penny said.

“Say, speaking of ‘seeing’, do you ever see that Willard Flotsom?”

“I should say not! Not since that time you sent us to Las Vegas, you know, the time you got all that good TV time that someone I know arranged.”

“What happened to him? That was a good idea he’d had, to resurvey the Mason-Dixon-Smithsonian Line. I thought we’d hear more of a Bright Young Man like that.”

“Well, he had some relatives who didn’t work for the Government.”

“That’s bad,” Dr. Brownose replied, his fingers absentmindedly walking through the deep, pale canyons creased across the tanned rolls of his stomach.

“Yes, when someone hangs around with outsiders, he’s bound to get a twisted impression of things. His brother was self-employed, had a small business.”

“That’s the worst kind of all,” he interrupted. “They’re the only ones who can really see how bad things are. I wish the SBA would wipe out all those small businesses, like the Department of Agriculture got rid of those accursed family farms. What’s the SBA do all day? They should have gotten rid of small, independent businesses by now.”

“And, he ran into problems with the IRS,” Penny continued, more interested in gossip than in theory.

“Of course he did. Why does he think we have an IRS? Somebody’s got to make it hard for people to be independent and

get uppity. They audited him, of course, and found irregularities.”

“Yes. The company was clean, to start with. They’d been paying their taxes right along, but, you know how it is. Any time they run an audit, they have to get enough to pay for the audit, or it comes out of the agent’s bonus. They found some way to figure it so that Willard’s brother owed about fifty thousand dollars.”

“Peanuts,” replied Dr. Brownose, who spent more for cocaine at office get-togethers.

“He didn’t think it was. He went crazy, right there in the examiner’s office, and just flipped out. Picked up a chair, and crashed it over the auditor’s head. Then, he went out and brained two people with a fax machine. They finally shot him down, threw him in the river, you know, hushed it up like they always do, but Willard found out. He started drinking. I don’t know where he is, or even if he’s still alive.”

“I remember, now. He smarted off to an Evaluator, didn’t he, and got transferred to Tourist Information?”

“Yes. He couldn’t stand it, dealing with those dreadfully grubby little taxpayers, and he finally cracked under the strain. He quit, got a gas station job, you know, first step on the road to ruin, but he couldn’t even keep that. They fired him for attacking a Federal Officer. They were going to jail him, but somebody from Senator Meddle’s office got him off.”

“Attacked a Federal Officer?” Dr. Brownose thundered in outrage.

“Worse. Nearly burnt him. It happened at the gas station. Some poor salesman was in there, getting gas for his car. Remember how we made the unleaded gas cost a dime more a gallon, and changed all the gas pumps and car tank openings to force people to pay more for the gas so the Elected Officials could get bigger oil company election contributions? Well, those damn taxpaying pigs figured a way around that. They got these little funnels, so they can put regular gas into their unleaded tanks.”

“Why, that’s treason!” thundered Dr. Brownose. “Those filthy field beasts! We’re going to have to do something about that!” he finished, ominously.

“Yes, well, anyway, this salesman drove into the self-service station that Willard was managing, and used one of those funnels, you know, to save himself a couple of dollars.”

“Imagine! Breaking a law passed to raise campaign contributions just to save their own money! Have they no respect?”

“Well, a Federal Restroom Inspector came over, and saw the salesman bilking our oil companies and Congressmen out of their paltry dime a gallon. He tried to arrest the salesman, on a RICO charge, naturally.”

“Naturally!”

“Willard flipped out. He sprayed the inspector with gasoline, right out of the hose, and that grimy salesman threw a match on him. It was terrible.”

“Was he killed?”

“No, but his clothes were ruined, and his haircut, it was an expensive razor-cut, too, just looked awful. Willard and the other man disappeared, then, and that’s the last anyone saw of either of them, but you can bet we’ll find him.”

“I should hope so!” said Dr. Brownose, his voice trembling with rage. “I should hope so!”

“He’s probably drunk himself to death, by now.”

“Thank Baal, there’s always liquor. How would we get rid of the Field Beasts who can’t afford drugs if there weren’t?”

“Cheaper drugs, I suppose,” yawned Penny, “but that usually burns them out too fast, before we’ve gotten all the taxes we can out of them, so we have to keep them illegal.”

By mutual accord, the two went back to their suite, high above the huge, nearly empty auditorium where the usual symposium on the “Deducibility of Memorabilia” was taking place as half-blind Theodore Crumlove raved about the importance of “taking care of tomorrow by taking care of today”. He was the oldest living Evaluator. Even though Dr. Crumlove was nearly senile, even Dr. Brownose called him “Sir”.

“The best things to collect, so that your own heirs can avoid paying any taxes whatsoever, should meet several requirements,” Dr. Crumlove recited hoarsely to the empty seats. “Otherwise an Evaluator might not be able to declare them to be of ‘great antiquity and uniqueness’.

“First of all, they shouldn’t cost you anything. Bottle caps, aluminum cans, old pieces of earth, bronze baby shoes, things like that are easily picked up for little or nothing.

“Secondly, they shouldn’t rot, or be able to be eaten by bugs. They should either be small enough to hide, or big enough so they can’t be stolen, anything between old bus tokens or modern sculptures will do. Large boulders that may be said to be ‘modern sculptures’ are popular, inexpensive, and are never stolen by thieves.

“Third, your collectibles must be unique. Arrowheads are nice to collect. They don’t rust, rot, get mold growing on them, and aren’t valuable enough to be stolen. Stories of mythical Indian tribes can be readily invented to give them more value, by way of Media Mentions. That makes them all the more unique. If they *are* stolen, you can replace them with others and still claim full deductibility. No one can tell them apart.”

“This is one of the best *objects d’ deductability* that I have seen in my long career as an Evaluator,” the doddering old man continued, motioning to a bored assistant, long used to parading out varieties of odd *objects d’ deductibility* to be viewed by empty

seats in endless Smithsonian meetings. He carried out a Bird-God, and set it on a table.

“It’s about as unique as you can get,” the learned Doctor said, gesturing toward the statue. It doesn’t rust, rot, and is too heavy to be easily pilfered. In twenty years, Elroy Crumlove, my adopted friend and namesake, already an Evaluator I, will inherit this, and will donate it to the Great Smithsonian. Buddy-system appraising will ensure that he’ll be able to write off all his taxes for at least a generation because this is the perfect *object d’ deductibility*. I have one of these for each of my friends. (His “friends” jokingly sneered at each other, and made obscene gestures with their fists.)

“We at the Smithsonian have always excelled at getting without giving. Even though that’s the game that all the Departments play, we’re just better at it, that’s all,” he said, with a crooked smile.

He concluded his speech, and doddered off the stage, the roar of imaginary applause ringing in his ears, as the three or four younger friends who accompanied him to comprise the total audience at these speeches smiled at one another, and went to buy some candy to entice poor Mexican boys to their rooms.

As meetings went, it was average. Nothing much happened out of the ordinary, either on the beach, or at the exciting, secret ceremonies that took place each night on top of one of the nearby Aztec pseudo-pyramids, built by Mexican BaaloCrats for the use of their world-wide brethren. They wanted to be near the beach,

and still be able to put the children of poor, disarmed peasants to the uses for which they were originally bred.

**Carl & Darlene read about Old Matt and the Big-Burg Blast. Father Gonalthwy goes on a mysterious journey. Finds Young Matt up a tree in Geneva. Listening to the Crats Big Meeting. Tells Carl “find Old Matt MacAbee”. St. Anthony’s help promised. We get the Big ‘Burbans ready to roll. Guns! Bombs! Whooooeee! OK? No! Freddie’s going, too. Babble, babble, rouse the rabble!**

“Look at this!” Carl exclaimed to Darlene at breakfast, leaping to his feet and showing her the morning paper. “It says that the Pittsburgh Federal Building has been virtually obliterated. Just look at that picture!” he said, showing her the Approved Press photo the Pittsburgh Federal Building’s remains, looking for all the world like just another ruin from a tax-crazed civilization of the past.

“You think someone did it on purpose?”

“I don’t know. The paper says that investigators believe it was an accident, but, what else could they say? They certainly wouldn’t want to admit that people might go around blowing up Federal Buildings, because others might see what a good idea it is, and blow up more of them. It is a good idea, isn’t it?”

“Yes. Why, if only one person out of every million had the courage to fight back, why, we could be free! Was anybody hurt?”

“No. A guard seems to have disappeared, but they haven’t found his body.”

“I hope he’s all right,” she said. “You know, blowing up Federal Buildings won’t hurt anybody, and it’s a great way to cut spending.”

“Yes. They might even lay off some BaaloCrats. Why, we could be saving millions a minute, from something like this. Even if they’re still on the Government payroll, they won’t be able to work, and bother people. It’s a wonderful idea. Wish I’d thought of it,” Carl said, not knowing that it was his destruction of the giant Erie International Middle School that had inspired old Matt MacAbee to level the Federal Building.

“Can we blow up some, too?” Darlene asked, as eagerly as a girl would have asked for a new Barbie.

“We’ll have to talk to Father Gonalthwy.”

“He’ll probably say ‘No.’ Sometimes he’s a real stick-in-the-mud.”

“He might think it’s a good idea, as long as we don’t hurt anyone. If we can keep a few babies from being butchered, there couldn’t be anything wrong with it,” he said, and they smiled in anticipation.

“Maybe, we could do more. Maybe, we should try to level Washington. Put all the grubby porkers out of work, wreck all the pigsties.”

“We *will* have to talk to Father Gonalthwy,” he replied. “I wish he’d hurry and get back. How long will he be in Switzerland?”

“I don’t know. It was funny, how he left so fast, wasn’t it?”

“Yes. I have the strangest feeling something’s going on. I almost think that we’re part of something big. First, you were moved to blow up that school. Then, that Federal Building was blown. Then, Father Gonalthwy disappeared. I think something’s going on.”

“I feel that way, too. I feel as if we’re part of something big, the beginning of a mustering army, the nucleus of a gathering force fighting for life and freedom.”

“We know that it’s serious,” Bishop Ture had told Father Gonalthwy, the morning he called the priest to the chancery. “Sister Wilma, from the Cloister at Briarcliif, hasn’t spoken a word to anyone but God, in prayer, since her novitiate. Last night, she came out of her cell, and told her Mother Superior that she had received a message, that she was to give to me to give to you, Father.”

“This is unusual!”

“Yes. She told me, and I am repeating the message word for word, ‘Father Gonalthwy, a priest of your Diocese, is to go to the Archabbey of the Benedictines, in Geneva. There, he will meet with a young man, an American, named Matt MacAbee.’”

“Is that all?”

“Yes, Father, it is. I called the Archabbey, and spoke to Archabbot Theodore. He told me that there is a young man who stays there, an American named Matt. Archabbot Theodore told me that one of their priests, Father Militant, was moved to ask Matt to stay with them because he was doing the Lord’s work.”

“When do I leave?”

“You’re on a flight to Geneva this morning. My secretary has your tickets. I hope your Passport is in order. Your plane leaves at eleven-thirty.”

Bishop Ture gave the priest his blessing. Father Gonalthwy raced home, and packed his sparse belongings, half-filling a tiny suitcase. Since he was travelling Lower Class, he didn’t notice Miriam Babeter and Slith Venum, from HUD, in the small, elite Government section in front of First Class.

Father Militant met Fr. Gonalthwy at the airport. He was driving the old, battered Peugeot that was the Archabbey’s only form of mechanized transportation.

“Wait ‘til you meet Matt,” Father Militant said as they drove toward the Abbey. “He’s an American, but not like any of the other Americans I’ve met in Geneva. He said that he’s a hillbilly, or billhilly, or something like that. I know that we’ve not had so much meat with our meals until he came. He brings us dozens of the most tender, plumpest game birds you can imagine.”

“Surely,” the American priest said, dryly, “I didn’t come all this way to hear about an improvement in your diet?”

“No, Father,” laughed the monk. “Young Matt seems to have been directed onto some kind of a coven of something worse than witches. They’ve been meeting here, in Geneva, at the Council of World Churches Building. Somehow, he’s got a microphone planted on one of them, and he can hear everything they say. It’s all on tape.”

“Who all knows about this?”

“No one. Except you, and your Bishop, and some nun who’s never left her cell. She told your Bishop to send you here. Archabbot Theodore knows, of course, and a few of the Brothers, but we’ve told no outsiders. We were afraid someone on the Other Side would find out, and kill Matt.”

“How long has this been going on?” asked Father Gonalthwy.

“Weeks. Different people are always coming and going into their endless meetings. You can hear them, on the tapes.”

The two men drove in silence through the old streets of the ancient city.

“Sounds more like a job for a Jesuit,” said Father Gonalthwy, breaking the silence.

“They don’t like Jesuits in Switzerland. For the longest time, they weren’t allowed here.”

“Made the Crats feel insecure, I suppose.”

“That’s usually the way it is. Maybe that’s why you’re supposed to be here. Or, maybe you know other people, who might be able to fight against this thing.”

Father Gonalthwy suddenly thought of Carl, Darlene, and Al, back in Erie. “Maybe I do, at that,” he said.

“There must be something big going on. Archabbot Theodore talked to Matt, and asked him if he didn’t think it would be a good idea to ask the Pope to send in a few Jesuits, but he had a ‘hunch’ that someone was already on the way. I guess he was right, because here you are.”

“What’s Young Matt think of all this?”

“He’s not flustered in the least. I don’t think he’d be fazed by going into Hell, itself. Remarkable faith. He said that when he was a boy, he was something called a ‘Mountain Baptist’. Said that they had to pick up live rattlesnakes, or some kind of poisonous asp, and that they hardly ever got bitten. What in the world is a ‘Mountain Baptist?’”

“In some of the hills of America, there are small churches, often Baptist in origin, where they believe that they should take Scripture literally, especially that passage in Mark, about handling snakes and drinking poison.”

“Incredible. Do they actually live through it?”

“Most of the time. This is unusual. I’ve never heard of a Baptist having much to do with The Church.”

“He said it was new to him, too. He said he felt comfortable in our monastery. Said it was like being at home, with simple, honest people who didn’t love money. And, I must admit, he does fit right in. At first we didn’t tell him about midnight prayers, but, as soon as he found out, he joined right in. Said that in the mountains, people often prayed all night. Who are these Baptists, where do they come from?”

“Same place all the denominations come from, the Catholic Church. The pure, tiny churches, like the ones that this young MacAbee comes from, are truly striving to follow Scripture. But, they’re missing their ancient roots, so it’s hard for them to develop the broad, lasting, historical knowledge to shore up their simpler faith.”

“He said we ought to send a couple of monks back to West By God Virginia, where he’s from. He said everybody’d be Catholic in a minute, if they just knew about it. Can it be, that people in America don’t even know about the Church, even in a place called West By God Virginia?”

“America’s a mighty big place. In a lot of isolated spots, the only things that they know about the Church are totally wrong, but we just haven’t had the priests and brothers and sisters to go into those areas. We have so few vocations that it’s getting hard to take care of the flocks that we do have.”

“Well,” said Father Militant, turning into the driveway that led to the monastery, ‘you won’t have to do much to take care of

young Matt. There he is, now, going in the door.”

Father Gonalthwy saw a tall, thin young man, wearing a red and black plaid, wool jacket. He carried a small, leather-cased tape recorder. In his other hand, several pigeons were looped over his fingers by strings tied to their feet.

“Matt! Matt!” Father Militant called. “Father Gonalthwy’s here. He’s come all the way from America to see you.”

“I’m proud to meet you, Father,” Matt said, shifting the birds to his left hand to shake hands with the priest. “I’ve been expecting you.”

“I got here when I was supposed to, I’m sure of that,” answered Father Gonalthwy, and he told him how Sister Wilma had been moved to break a vow of silence to get the message to him.

“You’ll have a lot to talk about,” broke in Father Militant. “I’m going to the kitchen, and I’ll be glad to take your birds there, Matt.”

“Sure thing. I’ll bring more tomorrow. See you at Chapel.” Father Militant hurried to the kitchen, while the two Americans talked.

“You can go back with me, after dinner. They usually meet until about midnight, then they have an orgy, or take drugs, or eat a child,” he said.

“Who comes to the meetings? Where do they meet?”

“Near the middle of the city. In the Council of World Churches Building. On the very top floor. Lots of people there, but most of them are Americans, so I can understand ‘em. They all speak English, but some have such bad accents, I cain’t hardly unnerstan’ ‘em myself,” he answered, in a drawl that only another American could have easily understood.

“What kind of people are they?”

“Well, they’re mostly Doctors. Doctor This and Doctor That. They’re mostly American, like I said, and they mostly work for the Gummit. You know, in Washington.”

“Who all is there? Did you get any names?” Father Gonalthwy asked, as the two men walked down the quiet cloister while peaceful evening prayers sounded gently throughout the courtyard.

“Well, there’s this one guy, they call him The Semi-Reverend Doctor Molech. He’s always goin’ on about how they aren’t killin’ enough babies, and how they ought to be able to abort the born, as well as the unborn, without parental consent. Then, there’s this Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi, name of Genocide. He’s always talkin’ ‘bout how they’ve got to kill more poor Jews ‘cause the rich ones aren’t givin’ ‘em as much money as they should, and they need a good scare.”

“And, they’ll blame it on the Christians, just like they always do,” the priest interjected.

“Yeah. That’s what he always says. Then, there’s Faux Father Feeley. He’s some kind of renegade priest. He says that he’s got the leftist Catholics in his pocket, that they’re dumb enough to help blame their own Church for anything, anytime. There’s another guy there, but he never says as much. He just yells at ‘em all the time, so loud I can barely stand to hear ‘im. He’s a high muck-a-muck in the meetings. He says he’s kilt more people than anybody in history. He’s head of the Department of Health In Human Services.”

“Dr. Wursavolk?”

“That’s him. For a while, I thought he was the leader, him and this Dr. Medpig.”

“Dr. Medpig? He’s there? Which one? Old Medpig or Young Medpig?”

“Young. He’s always tryin’ to figure out ways to let more people hear the dyin’ babies die. Says that if more people got involved with the esthetics of death, that they’d have an easier time of it. He’s tryin’ to make nurses stop wearin’ pins with crosses on ‘em, and he’s always makin’ sure that ambulances have pictures of snakes on sticks. They’re all real big on snakes.”

“They would be.”

“They never talk about doin’ anythin’. All they talk about is killin’, destroyin’, why, they’re like BureauCrats, but without the

camouflage. They'll do anythin' for money. Anythin' at all. And then, there's one guy, the one who carries the ball of light...."

"Carries the light?" interrupted Father Gonalthwy, his heart skipping a beat.

"Yeah. I never see him go in or out of the building, but he's always there, in the Council of World Churches. The first night, I saw him, in my mind, you know, like a vision or somethin', and it was this half-goatguy, with skin burnt like cracklin', and you shoulda seen those bloodshot eyes, looked like they was glowin' coals. I'd swear, even if it sounds dumb, that he had hooves on his feet, and leetle nubbins of horns on his head, like a polled goat. But, when I see him, he looks like a regular guy."

"It doesn't sound dumb."

"He carries this here ball of light, in his hands, or in a little black bag, like a doctor carries, or used to, when they'd come 'round to your house. When he gets mad at the others, and he 'most always is, why, that light starts to glowin' like the whole building's on fire. I don't know why nobody else notices, or else the people in Geneva are just used to seeing it around The Council of World Churches building, but it's really bright."

"A lot of other people just come and go, too."

"Yeah. Dozens and dozens of 'em. Most all of 'em got big, shiny cars, with drivers, too. They're all rich. They go in and out every day, in and out. It looks like it never stops."

“Carrying the light,” Father Gonalthwy repeated. “He carries the light. Lucifer. I can’t think who else it could be,” he said, grimly.

“Ol’ slewfoot, hisself. Right here, in Geneva. That’s what I think, too, Father. I’ll bet that’s who it is. What do we do, drive a silver stake through his lyin’ heart?”

“I hardly think it will be that simple,” the priest answered, appalled, but encouraged, by Matt’s unbelievably simple faith.

“Prob’ly not,” he agreed, suddenly aware of the awesome nature of their enemy. “What do you think we ought to do?”

“First, I’ll listen to a few of your tapes. Then, I’ll go downtown with you, and have a look at what’s going on. Then, we’ll pray. Right now, I’m going to call a friend of mine.”

The priest called Carl, at the farm.

“Carl, it’s Father Gonalthwy...”

Carl interrupted him: “Father, did you hear, did you hear about the Pittsburgh Federal Building? It was blown up late last night! Nobody was killed!”

“What?” he asked, in astonishment. “The huge, Pittsburgh Federal Building, blown away? Last night?”

“That’ll be my Pop,” Matt said, interrupting the conversation with an unmistakable note of filial pride in his voice.

“What?” said Father Gonalthwy, turning away from the telephone.

“What? What? Who’s that?” said Carl, “What’s going on.”

“Never mind. Just be ready when I call you back. ‘Sell your cloak and buy a sword.’ Cash in all your ingots, and get ready! Understand?”

“Yes, Father, I do. “We’re going to slow ‘em down without killing any of them. Is that right?”

“That must be it. Get all the cash together you can, and let the Spirit guide you. I can feel that you’ll have as many angels as you’ll need, dancing on dustmotes, surfing on lightwaves, racing through the ranges of your minds. You’ll know what to do, and you’ll have the strength, the faith, and the resources. Follow the angels!” he said, and hung up.

“Now,” the priest said, turning to Young Matt, “What’s all this about your Father, blowing up the Federal Building?”

“Well,” he answered, proudly, “Dad always said that I’d know where he was by where the buildin’s was startin’ to blow.”

“Why? Why is he blowing up Federal Buildings.”

“Well, we don’t much like the Gummit. See, it was the Gummit that wrecked our farm, ‘n we had to go to the city. Then, the Gummit kilt my Sis, and my other sis just disappeared and their little babies was killed too. One, ‘fore it was even borned. They kilt Grandpa, in that program, that Lowers Social Security Outflow By Killing Old People. And, my Ma, who’d seen both her grandchildren ‘borted, she died of a broken heart. Pa and me,

well, we figure we're gonna kill all the Gummit workers we can. But, I cain't figure Pa out. Why'd he blow that building at night, when there warn't nobody in it? Why didn't he do it in broad daylight?"

"Maybe he decided that it would be wrong to kill. Maybe he just wanted to wreck their offices, you know, so that they'd be alive, but couldn't go on killing and plundering people."

"That makes sense. Course, I can't see how somebody like Pa's ever gonna be that soft-hearted. I just cain't figure that out at all."

"I don't understand," said Darlene. "Did Father Gonalthwy tell us to get ready to 'attack'?"

"Yes, he did. But this is too important to wait. You stay here, in case he calls. I'm going to get Al. We've got to get ready to go to Washington. I want to level some buildings while there's still some left!"

"Did you see the news!" I cried, rushing through their back door. "It's started!" I cried, opening the morning paper, showing them the same picture of the ruined Federal Building in Pittsburgh they'd already seen.

"Carl's wants to go to Washington, and start blowing buildings," Darlene told me.

"When do we leave?" I asked, eagerly.

"How much money do we have?" Carl asked.

“We have over a half million, in cash. There’s that much more in the bank,” I said, proudly.

“Withdraw what we have in the bank, the two of you. Get it all in fifties and hundreds. We’ll need every bit of it.”

The ringing telephone interrupted him. “Father, Father Gonalthwy? Is that you, again? Father, can we leave for Washington, right away? Can we start blowing buildings?”

Carl put the on the speaker. We heard the priest answer, “Carl, get started right away! But, find someone, first. We’re in a battle bigger than we ever dreamed of. There’s a man you must find, named Old Matt MacAbee. He’s a transient. He’s the one who took care of that business in Pittsburgh. His son’s here, with me, in Geneva. Their whole family has been wiped out by the Government. God seems to have chosen them to wage a bloodless battle against the Bureaus and their Baals. Link up with him, in Washington. He’ll need money, supplies, and a knowledge of how things work that you three can provide.”

“How do we find him?” Darlene asked.

“How should I know? Ask St. Anthony. If anybody can find a lost hillbilly, he can! None of us know just where Matt is, but I’m sure that Tony’ll help you locate him. Listen, all of you, to your angels, and let them make any decisions you can’t decide yourselves. Matt and I will be here in Geneva, waiting to hear what we’re supposed to do. *You* must take care of America!

“We cannot fail. The prayers of centuries of Saints go with us, so we will prevail. Bless you, my children, and all those who fight so that more innocent blood will not be shed.”

The connection was broken. We left to withdraw the cash we'd need to buy our supplies. Carl went to the library for chemistry books to figure out what we'd need to build real, big incendiaries. By the next day, he figured out how to make Drum-Bombs, out of 55 gallon oil drums; Bucket-Bombs, out of 5 gallon plastic pails; Bottle-Bombs, out of plastic pop bottles; and cute, little Can-Bombs, out of tiny V-8 Juice cans.

Darlene and I got the cash we'd stashed, and were back at the farm by noon. Carl had lists of supplies we'd need, chemicals, scuba gear, inflatable boats, the list seemed endless and ridiculous. But, Carl had planned the successful salvage raft out of what we had thought was a spastic collection of junk, and that had made us more money than we'd ever seen before.

“We need big, solid vehicles,” he announced, and sent Darlene and me to two different car dealers to buy a couple of big, 4WD Suburbans. “Get 3/4 tonners.” he instructed. “We've got to carry a lot of weight. Big, dark Suburbans look real official, and they'll carry a lot of gear. Get roof racks and trailer towing packages.”

It was like building the raft. We spent a long, hard week, getting supplies, and following Carl's instructions, some of which seemed excessive. We bullet-proofed the pair of new, dark blue

Suburbans with sheets of Kevlar in the door panels, ceiling panels, and under the floor mats. “The Suburbans will carry the weight, and if they try to shoot us, or blow us up, or strafe us, we’ll be safer,” Carl said, as we fitted the formidable vehicles for combat. The windows were lined with sheets of clear Lexan for bullet-proofing. We even put gunports in the sides, hidden by the magnetic signs that already proclaimed us to be associated with

Ranger Rick Richards  
BEAVER AWARENESS  
U. S. DEPT. OF LARGE RODENTS

We filled the big Suburbans’ tires with foam so that they couldn’t be flattened by gunfire. Even so, they sagged under the load of supplies, the hundreds of pounds of explosives and incendiaries, along with Carl’s greatest guerilla invention, a compressor driven, ball-bearing firing machine gun, driven off the powerful engine aimed and fired by the steering wheels’ tilt lever to give us the close-range firepower of an Infantry platoon.

Backing up the amazingly powerful compressor-driven machine gun, Carl had canisters of compressed air, which could loft the cute, little Can-Bombs, like mortar shells, over buildings, and drop them onto targets ten blocks away.

We mapped out the route to take, and got ready to go. We towed the second Suburban, which was even more fully loaded than the one we drove in.

“I can’t wait to meet Matt!” Carl said, as we drove out to begin our incredible crusade. “I can’t figure out how he got all those floors to collapse when he took out the Pittsburgh pigsty. He must be a genius.”

Darlene interrupted, “We ought to take Freddie with us. He knows how to drive, and if we get stopped, nobody who talks to Freddie will ever take us seriously.”

“Oh, no!” I said, cringing in agony at the thought of having to spend whole days working closely with Freddie, my very sense of reality under constant threat of distortion from the mental short-circuits that put extra meanings into every word, phrase, and sentence.

I groaned inwardly as we swung by the Red Bullet Inn, and picked up Freddie. He’d just been de-inner-tubed, and was surprisingly lucid.

“How are you!” he called. “How are V, W, and X?”

Carl explained our mission. By what could have been nothing but a miracle accomplished by a division of angels, physically holding down the leaping neurons in Freddie’s brain, he seemed to actually understand what we were doing, and why he should help us. It was the first time I’d ever seen so many words mean the same thing to Freddie that they meant to the rest of us.

“We’re gonna stick some pigs,” Carl concluded. “We’re gonna set our people free!”

“I’ll go inside and get dressed. I’ll be right back. I wanna stick some pigs!”

“Better go see what’s holding him up,” Carl suggested, after several minutes had passed.

I went toward the Inn, just as Freddie came out. He was dressed in tan jodhpurs, tunic, and pith helmet. In his hand, he carried along, light lance, with a small, triangular banner flying from it, reading “77th Bengal Lancers”.

“I’m ready to stick some pigs,” he said. “We will have horses, won’t we?”

“Not *those* kind of pigs, Freddie,” Carl said, patiently. “But, come as you are. One of us might as well be dressed for it.”

“It’ must be the new fashion judge of military uniforms,” Freddie said, climbing into the back seat with Darlene.

“Freddie, you can go to sleep if you want,” I suggested, after Freddie mentioned repeatedly that a Pennsylvania Turnpike sign was a command for skinny fish to veer off course.

“No, I’m going to Washington,” he said, and did.

Between Freddie’s chatter, I explained more about how I was realizing that we lived in Fractaland, and that The Loving Programmer had programmed angels to help Him download it for us human programs.

“That makes a lot of sense,” Darlene said, when I’d finished. “Your Fractal Theory shows that the Two Testaments are the only

things that makes sense out of everything in the physical world! It's simple, it's revolutionary, and there's no way to argue against it! The twits'll hate it! Why, it's as undeniable against Materialists as Aquinas's arguments were against Moslem theology! Simpler, too. Lots simpler! You could write a book, *Zap Crat Crap with Fractal Facts!*"

Carl agreed. "That may be how the Disciples knew that Jesus was the Messiah. When He turned water into wine, multiplied loaves and fishes, and walked on water, He was showing His mastery of fractals and His power to program.

"When He raised Lazarus from the dead, He proved to all human programs that He had the programming power to restore the complicated human program after it had been erased. He could program with such power that the spirit world and the physical, fractal world obeyed His Operating Instructions. No wonder they believed in Him!"

"The best part is about 'faith, the size of a mustard seed, moving mountains, is this.' I explained "If you did concentrate faith into physical form, a grain of energy the size of a mustard seed actually would have enough power to fractalize a mountain and re-fractalize it anywhere you wanted. And," I added, sharing my conclusion with them, "that proves Mohammed simply wasn't as powerful as Jesus, 'cause Mo said that 'if the mountain won't come to Mohammed, then Mohammed must go to the mountain.'

“It’s almost as ridiculous as camels going through the eyes of needles, but if you did have faith the size of a mustard seed, you could move mountains around like feathers. Mohammed either didn’t have the intelligence to realize about the fractal nature of things, or he was afraid to boggle the minds of his followers with it. Jesus knew it, and wasn’t afraid to say it! Hooray for Jesus!” I found myself concluding with an utterly simple-minded faith. Oddly, I didn’t feel stupid about it, not like I would have back in the days when I thought it was important to be Politically Correct.

## **WH000EEEE!**

**Father Gonalthwy and Young Matt listen. Crat-fight: who's the biggest blood spiller? Want to make big money? Keep drugs illegal.**

Matt took Father Gonalthwy to the park near the Council of World Churches. They listened, as the foul fiends plotted and planned to increase the flow of blood from populations made helpless by more 'enlightened' assaults on traditional values. What they heard would have stunned less faithful men into submission. The twisted talk was a lust for blood, a hatred of life, of truth, faith, justice, hope and salvation. "Destroy the family, enrich the State." was the focus of the meeting we heard.

Later, at the monastery, Matt and the priest resisted the temptation to join the others at prayer. They passed by the peaceful, joyful sounds of good men praying, and went to Matt's cell.

"This is the tape I want you to hear. It really shows what they're like. Listen." He pressed the 'play' button, and the harsh guttural of Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide filled the room with hatred.

"You think that because I thought to be a Jew that I like them?" he asked unseen listeners. "I am no Jew, no more than my fathers were Jews when they went to the Sacred Groves of Oaks to cut beating hearts from the squirming babies of the Twelve Tribes

with flint knives. I despise the Jews. I hate the Jews. They're too close to God. I want them all dead. I am a Rogue Jew, an Ultra-Reform Jew. I am so re-formed that no form remains. Just as Faux-Father Feeley and The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech and you other Prothumanists are nothing more than Rogue, Really-Reform Catholics.

“What ‘Reform’ means, of course, is that man’s covenant with immortal God was reformed to take second place to a covenant with death. Life beyond must become secondary to life here, and, of course, we can rule this life best with death and threats of it.

“How we loved to see His bleating little sheep die! How wonderful it was, to be in the death-camps in Spring, working, pretending to be forced, funneling accursed believers into the death we’d taught them was final. How some screamed, and how we loved to watch them, through the little observation windows, as the Godless climbed atop the believers, screaming, scratching, clawing, to get to the top, before the gas burnt their lungs to ashes. How they clawed and fought, for a precious few moments of life. How we loved it! How we snickered at their agony! How we of Cain enjoyed their pain!

“They’re so dumb, so pathetically, so desperately dumb. We knew that Hitler would kill them all. That’s why we chose him. He would do as we said. As our allies from beyond grew stronger in his mind, haunting his dreams, forcing away the other spirits, we

had him, a zombie, destroying our flocks, his flocks, and finally, himself.

“What an operation that was! And, do you know, that we Really-Reform Rogue Rabbis remaining, are still thought to be decent, respectable people by some real Jews! They still can’t bear to ask themselves why we didn’t warn them. That’s how scared of us they are! Hehehehe. We’ve got them giving us nearly anything we want, except for the usual remnant of those Devil-damned Orthodox. We haven’t made even a dent in them. But, we’ll get them. The time is nearly near.”

“You aren’t such hot stuff, you know,” The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech replied. “We Prothumanists helped just as much as you did. We have just as much blood, even more blood, on our hands. And, a lot of it is Catholic, too. Catholic Blood is even better than Jewish blood, because they’re in the Church HE founded. It’s a lot better to get them, because it makes His Precious Heart bleed!” hissed The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, spitting out the last word as if it were a bug, just landed in his mouth.

“We Prothumanists have more deaths, maybe even ten times more, to our credit.” The Semi-Reverend Dr. Moloch went on, hostility vying with pride in his voice, as he began to enumerate triumphs that made the victories of the Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi seem insignificant. “Just in America, alone, why, we killed more of those Stone-Age Indians than there ever were Jews. Why, we ‘Reform’ Catholics, we single-handedly all but wiped out every

Indian in North America. Then, we wrote the history books, to make it look like we were doing our 'Christian Duty'. While that Devil-Damned Pope was saying that Indians had souls like real people, our Prothumanist ministers were saying that Indians were animals, and it was their 'Christian duty' to wipe them out.

Why, in the Prothumanist countries, primitives were hunted like foxes, ridden down and speared. Far more satisfying than herding them into little rooms and gassing them to death! Not only did we justify slaughtering all the Indians, all those millions and millions of people, we also got to kill millions of African we bought from Moslems.

"Then, by making a God of self-righteousness, we Mainline Modernes got the Brain-Dead Twits to outlaw liquor, and started Organized Crime in America. That self-righteousness turned into thousands of deaths and more political corruption than ever. We make even more, today, by keeping drugs illegal. That gives us an opportunity to justify ghetto abortion, so we get to kill more little animals. We've killed a billion little animals with abortion and billions more with abortion-inducing birth control! And, we've convinced parents that it's good for them to kill their own children! We get to keep the profits! Why, we're doing so much more than your branch that I'm surprised you have the audacity to mention your puny efforts in the same breath with ours.

"Surely," The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech concluded, "we'll be allowed to be in charge of things."

“Of course you will,” said another voice, one that Matt identified as belonging to the being that carried the ball of light. “You’re doing a fine job, but you must admit that it was the Really-Reform Rogue Jews, before Solomon, who showed you baby-killing is the only way to serve Baal.”

“It always is! We all know that,” said The Semi-Reverend Dr. Moloch, smoothly. “It’s just that they’re in a rut, that’s all. They can’t break out of it. All they ever kill are Jews, and, even then, only when they can get a dictator or Commissar to do it for them. But we get everybody, I suppose because we have more ‘catholic’ tastes.”

Everyone chuckled at that little joke, and Father Gonalthwy shut off the machine.

“They’re fiends, not people.”

“That’s what the Archabbot said.”

“We can’t kill them, that’s for certain. Only other spirits can do that. We’re fighting the human link with Satan, just as they’re dealing with the Church, the human link with the Living Christ.”

Matt looked up at the crucifix, the sole decoration in his cell, and seemed to see why there was a bleeding body there for the first time. “There’s going to be fighting at every level, then,” he said, prompted by what he’d called a ‘hunch’, until Father Militant had explained to him that everyone who wanted one had a working Guardian Angel. “There’ll be fighting between angels and

demons in Heaven and Hell. Fighting on earth, between us and them, fighting at all the levels in between. We're going to be thrown into the thick of it, aren't we, Father?"

"I don't know. This may be a skirmish, making ready for a battle in the future. That may be what it is, because there's been no call from Peter's chair. There has been no holy council of war. Bishop Ture would have known of it, and told me when he sent me here. I think we're supposed to engage in a guerilla attack upon them, enough to draw the attention of the world to the evil that Baalocrats are bringing upon helpless people in every country they rule. One battle will be fought in Washington, to provide the opportunity to cleanse from the evil many have unwittingly done."

"You mean that a lot of Gummit workers don't even know what bad things they're doin'?"

"Most of them don't. You have to remember, they've gone to S-S schools longer than you and your father, so they're far more ignorant and much less sensitive. Their brains are so battered with contradictions, stuffed with drivel, and overloaded with insane twaddle that most of them simply can't tell right from wrong."

"They've got to know that they're killin' little babies 'n destroyin' ever'thin' they touch."

"Most of them keep themselves from knowing how blighting their professional lives are. Their minds are so filled with the lies and misinformation from the compulsory public educational

systems, and from the carefully controlled FedTube networks, that their poor minds just don't work well."

"I just couldn'ta thought they'd be that dumb."

"They are. I hear their confessions, and I can tell by what they don't even think of confessing that most of them literally can't tell right from wrong."

"Well, I wish I was in Washington, at any rate."

"No, we should stay here. We might have to be a diversion. There've been two buildings blown, you know. One was a school that my friends took out. The other was the Federal Building in Pittsburgh. If they get suspicious, it may be our job to keep them distracted."

## **Freddie drives us nuts. D'YuYu's almost blow us off road. Slith Venum hijacks his own 797. Libreena Fadette gets burned and breaks through!**

It was a ten hour trip from Erie to Washington. Having Freddie with us made it seem like ten days. Listening to his tortured version of reality was as much as we could bear. First, he thought that the Tollroad paid itself tolls. He went on and on about that. Then, that it rang. "Ask not for whom the road tolls. . . Uncle Remus, he say 'I tole de road'." Then, he was distracted by a Howard Johnson's sign. For the next ten minutes, we listened to "Ho, Ward, John's on. How are de Johns, son? Howar, d'John's son, will tell us." When we left the Turnpike and into Maryland, he went off into new verbal paroxysms of confusion.

We soon found that we could talk, and ignore him. Once in a while, a startling phrase would make its way into his mind, and, regrettably out his mouth for, but we soon learned to ignore most of what he said. It was, however, disconcerting when he succeeded in making more sense than we did, which happened more than I'd have thought possible.

As we approached the Beltway, ("The way of the Belt," according to Freddie) as he wondered "How much does the belt weigh? Who weighs it, and how?", about three in the afternoon, after homebound rush-hour traffic was long gone, we heard a loud roar, coming up fast from behind.

“Are they after us?” Darlene asked, anxiously, from the back seat.

“No. They’re before us!” shrieked Freddie, in the joyous tone he used when he was making real, as well as verbal sense, as a huge airplane swept low over the car.

“It’s the Air Force! They’re going to strafe us!” I said, close to fear of being caught before we’d accomplished our mission.

“Might be,” said Carl, trying to hold the steering wheel as the backwash from the powerful jets nearly blasted us off the road.

Cars ahead of us were blown into the ditches, both by the powerful airflow surging ahead of the giant jet and the flood of air turbulence behind it.

“Get the guns,” Carl ordered, grimly, and Darlene shoved a loaded pump gun into my hands, and turned on the compressor-driven assault machine gun, opening the magazines of tiny ball bearings that would be sprayed into anyone who tried to stop us.

Freddie, more sobered from his wordy drunk since I’d known him, held one of the small air-mortars with a case of can-bombs, still with the V-8 logo on them, as he prepared to do battle with the troops we were sure would spew from the belly of the plane to attack us.

“They must have made Father Gonalthwy talk,” I said, visions of a tortured priest flashing into my mind.

“I doubt that,” said Carl. “They may have tapped our telephone. Maybe they know about the school, and they know we’re on our way to meet the man who blew out the Pittsburgh Federal Building, to help him fight the Baalocrats.”

“It’s none of that,” said Darlene, exasperated at all the wasted adrenalin. “It’s those blasted D’YuYus.”

Sure enough, their huge plane taxied to a stop. The rear cargo ramp YeYe had installed came down, and we watched the plane disgorge a cargo of brightly clad men and women in black Cadillacs. Slith Venum, and a gang of frustrated HUD employees, wanting desperately to be able to have the glory of being able to take off and land the huge airplane on Interstate Highways, had hi-jacked it.

We saw them point their machine guns and grenade launchers threateningly at the Gypsies until they backed away. YeYe himself, whom I’d remembered from the carnival, shook his fist out the window of his long limousine, shouting Bulgarian curses at the status-crazed BureauCrats who’d robbed him of his prize.

When the caravan of Gypsies had driven away, Slith and his status-starved BureauCrats ordered the plane airborne. It took off, its backblast burning the bugs off our windshield, blistering the paint on hundreds of cars, igniting a long line of vinyl tops. Our windshield was pitted from the gravel and stones thrown up by the take-off. At least our faces weren’t lacerated, as were a few

motorcyclists who were blown, like tumbleweeds, past our bigger, more stable Suburbans.

“Let ‘em eat cake!” we could hear from the jet’s powerful loudspeaker system, installed by the D’YuYus to advertise carnivals and games of chance when they’d fly over cities.

“Let ‘em eat cake!” the speakers repeated, again, as injured people began to walk around, glad they were still alive. “Eat cake, Field Beasts!” Slith megaphoned a few final insults as the huge jet, skimming along the highway, soared above the traffic speeding ahead of it.

As we watched, the awesome jet headed sharply upward, and the blazing back-blast scorched cars and set dry grass in the median strip on fire. Pine trees, expensively planted alongside the roadway by the dozen manual workers among the ten thousand salaried employees of the Federal Department of Beltway Beautification, burst into flame, and would have to be re-planted, at great expense.

A woman, driving an expensive convertible, raced from her car, hair blazing, as she disappeared into the flaming woods along the road.

“It’s worse than the king’s own barons,” Carl said, “riding roughshod through the peasants’ fields and gardens. We’ve got to fight. We’ve all got to fight. If they keep taxing and spending, taxing and spending, there’ll be nothing left. Nothing at all.”

We watched as the sobbing, hysterical, badly burned woman was gently escorted from the trees by YeYe D'YuYu, himself, who'd careened his big limousine to a stop and raced out of it to help her.

It was Libreena Fadette, badly burned by the unquenchable drive for attention that propelled Slith to get his own plane, no matter what cost others might have to pay.

I recognized her from frequent publicity photographs in newsmagazines and various periodicals, each chronicling her concerned participation in activities ranging from "Save the Whales" to recycling old buildings in downtown areas in futile attempts to reverse the effects of excessive bureaucratization on the educational system. "It's Libreena Fadette!" I said to the others. I felt sorry for her.

"She doesn't look anything like she does on television," said Darlene. "Why, just last week, she was on a Spunky-Chunky talk-show, explaining the problems of being a high-level official, another try at making people think they've got it rough. And, here she is, nearly burned alive by another BaaloCrat."

"We'd better do something," Carl said, as he saw that Ms. D'YuYu, as we presumed her to be, was about to smear rancid lard all over Libreena's serious burns.

"Wait a minute," he said, running over to YeYe. "That stuff'll only make her worse. Let's get some cool water."

“No water ‘round here,” said YeYe. “Stale lard work good.”

“There’s water right there,” Darlene said, pointing at some singed cattails growing from a damp place in the median strip.

“Come with me,” she said to the sobbing Libreena, forgetting, for the moment the awful crimes that the awful woman had endlessly justified to a host of Fed-Tube talk-twits.

The cool water soothed her burns, and we were able to squeeze Libreena into the Suburban, between Carl and me. We held her upright, while Darlene sponged her with cool water from a cup she’d carried from the mid-road spring.

“Who, who are you?” Libreena asked, when she’d recovered enough to speak, and noticed my shotgun, lying across the transmission hump at her feet.

“We’re gonna overthrow the Government,” announced Freddie from the back seat, before we could stop him.

Libreena didn’t respond. For the first time, she was aware that the pain she felt was the same burning pain she’d ignored when babies were burned alive by saline abortions. The same degree of pain helpless womb-kids suffered when their arms and legs were ripped from their sockets by the forceps of abortionists. I had the feeling that all of our guardian angels had left us, and had hopped into Libreena’s brain, like hungry fleas onto a bald dog. Suddenly, they’d rearranged things so that she knew what she’d done, and knew at the same moment that God could forgive her.

“I’ve worked for them. I’ve helped them. I’ve made the innocent to suffer. I know what I’ve done. I’ve been part of a lie-spewing Death Machine.”

The sudden pain she’d felt, burned by the backstab of Slith Venum’s status-crazed hijacking a departmental jet, and quick work by Guardian Angels with some time on their hands, had brought her to an awareness of reality she’d never known in the BaaloCratic life she’d led.

“Ask YeYe where he’s going,” I said, to Carl, as we passed him getting into his car. “He’ll be mad at the Government, and we may need more help.”

I was right. The D’YuYus were enraged. “The Damgummit, they have no right to take way my plane!” YeYe screeched.

Carl explained to him that we were going to slow down the Government, make it listen more to mere taxpayers, by blowing up buildings so that the BureauCrats would have to stay home, and not be able to bother working people. YeYe was ecstatic. “I do anythin’, anythin’ at all. I help you, and maybe I get my plane back, too. If I had my plane, I’d bomb em!”

As Carl outlined his plan, it became clear that we would need the manpower resources of the enraged, deplaned D’YuYu clan to help us.

“Me, YeYe and the D’YuYus, we drive to Alexandria, to the fair we was gonna fly to. We be there one, maybe two weeks. Maybe

we never leave, since we got no airplane. When you need us to help, you let YeYe D'YuYu know. Us Gypsies, we be there!"

I thought of telling him he had no right to the 797, anyway, but knew it wasn't the time for petty moralizing.

We took Libreena to a burn unit in a nearby Catholic hospital.

"After a few weeks in the hospital, she won't be able to go back to the baby-killing BaaloCrats," Darlene said, when she returned to the car. "She'll know what pain is, and she won't be able to boar to inflict it on other people."

"She's done her share already," I said, bitterly.

"She doesn't really know any better. None of them do, really. They've worked high up in the Government for so long they barely have any love left."

"What about this Mattathias MacAbee?" asked Carl. "We'd better try to find him."

"He's probably going to be living in one of the parks, hiding out, or he's going to be in one of the black sections of town," I said.

"How do you figure that?" Darlene asked.

"He doesn't have much money. There are no poor white people in most of Washington, only poor blacks. There's probably only a few places he could be."

"That makes sense," Carl said. "We'll start cruising through poor neighborhoods. It's the first place to look. Hope that it's the

last.”

“The last of the its,” Freddie suddenly called, from his own world in the backseat. “Think of it, a language with no ‘it’. That ‘it’, that, the very ‘it’ you hope to be the last of the ‘its’. Oh, Carl, do you think it will be, do you think?” cried Freddie, in painful puzzlement, pith helmet slightly askew. “I think it will keep cropping up, it will always be around. “You’re wrong, Carl,” he concluded, finally. “See, here ‘it’ is, again.”

Fortunately, Freddie quieted, and we stared out the windows, hoping for a glimpse of the man we’d never seen, old Matt MacAbee.

**Old Matt map gawks, makes big plan. Mugs the Vice President. He's saved by Tax Whitey More volunteers. Malachi Free tries mugging Matt. Joint Zap-Crat plan. We all go to Malachi Free's row house in the slums. We meet Malachi's family, plan attack.**

Old Matt sat in the sunlight, poring over a map of Washington, D. C. He was struck, as he sat on a bench in Arlington Cemetery, looking at a map he'd gotten from a gas station, by the number of bridges in the city.

“You know,” he felt something say to himself, “if the Gummit pipple couldn't get to work, they wouldn't be able to pester us. If I blew up all them bridges, they couldn't get to their offices, and they wouldn't be able to meddle in decent pipples' business. Wouldn't be hard to blow 'em up.” he continued, staring over the city. “I'd need something like dynamite, but I cain't get that, not around here. I'll bet I could get some fertilizer, though. Maybe there's some, right here in the cemetery. Ijust mix that up with some fuel oil, and that's as good as dynamite, any day.”

Prompted by the angels who'd opened enough neuron switches to connect the appropriate memory bits, Junior had providentially remembered the time, back on the farm, what seemed centuries ago, when he'd helped Old Billy Tinhead blow big oak stumps out of the ground, using oil-soaked fertilizer in place of the dynamite that officious BureauCrats, afraid sticks of it

might come hurtling through their office windows, propelled by the muscular arms of desperate taxpayers, had outlawed for farm use.

He left the cemetery, wandering into Washington, marveling at the fact that he saw no old cars. “This’ud be a nice bridge to blow,” he commented to himself as he walked across the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Upstream, he could see the huge Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, and, below, other bridges.

*“All the bridges, fallin’ down, fallin’ down,  
“All the bridges, fallin’ down. My fair lady.”*

He sang softly to himself, thinking of Judith, and how proud she’d be. “If’n that fertilizer’d blow out sumthin’ as tough as a big oak stump, it’d sure blow out them brittle bridge piers,” he said, as he leaned over the side and stared at the huge supports. “What I’ll do,” he went on, nearly aloud, as what he thought were thoughts came to him with increasing speed, “is get some fertilizer, and some fuel oil, that’s not hard to get, and mix it up in oil drums, or garbage cans. I can wrap them with big, plastic bags city people put their trash in. Then, I lash ‘em onto a bridge pier. I’ll do a bridge ever’ night, and in a month or so, blow ‘em all up at oncet! Why, there won’t be a bridge left standin’. Then, none of these pipples can get to work and wreck our lives anymore. They’ll have to be useful by actually bein’ useful, not by bein’ so endlessly damn pesky. Whoooooeeee!”

To get the money he'd need, he mugged a prosperous looking man in striped pants, right outside a White House parking area. He had no way of knowing that it was Vice President Bider Gordum, but he wouldn't have cared, anyway. Saving other wealthy-looking Washingtonians the trouble of contributing to Matt's Debridgeification Campaign, V. P. Gordum was carrying over fifty thousand dollars in cash and the usual No-limit credit card issued to senior officials.

He didn't exactly know what a credit card was, but, he took it anyway, along with the incredibly expensive billfold, sewn together out of the tender skin from the armpits of two dozen unhatched hawksbill turtles, a present from The Executive Committee of Save the Animals For Us. He gagged the V. P. with his own silk stockings, trussed him with own garters, and left him in some of the luxuriant shrubbery nearby. If the poor man hadn't been found by Census Recount employees looking for winos and derelicts to increase the census in order to fund their perennial Tax Whitey More Campaign, he might have died, since no one missed him.

Matt disappeared into a slum neighborhood, and was soon able to buy a dump truck of dubious legality for two thousand dollars. He parked the truck near a small park, and went to relieve himself. As soon as he'd left the sidewalk, *he* was mugged, just as he'd mugged the Vice-President a short time ago. A wiry young man dropped from a tree, grabbed him, and knocked him down.

Malachi Free, however, didn't get off that easily. He was used to robbing GovEmps, most of whom were were trained to feel too guilty about being so wealthy to put up much of a fight. After long years of successfully mugging soft, white Washingtonians, Malachi Free had come to the unfortunate conclusion that white people all worked for the Government, were as soft as lard, and dumber than collard greens. Old Matt, however, had had to work for the money he was used to getting, so he fought back, and with a sharp blow to the jaw, knocked Malachi out.

"I hope I didn't kill 'im," he said, worried, as he knelt over the prostate young man. He shook him, very gently, and sponged his face with a dew-soaked handkerchief.

"Why'd you jump me?" Matt asked, as he wiped the young man's face.

"You dirty, damned white devils. You murdered my baby. 'Fore it was even borned. I'm gonna get all of you. Kill me, mister, 'cause iffen you don't, I'll get you next time."

"It weren't white people what murdered your baby. It was Gummit people," Matt replied. "They murdered my kin, too. That's why I'm here. I'm gonna shut 'em down."

Drawn to each other by a force outside both of them, and aware, dimly, of the echoes of both their Guardian angels singing in perfect, two-part harmony:

*"Zap-a-Crat, Zap-a-Crat, sis-boom-bah!  
"Zap-a-Crat, Zap-a-Crat, Rah! Rah! Rah!"*

He told Malachi Free, a twenty year old black drop-out with a haircut that made his head look like a box, about the way the BaaloCrats had killed his grandchildren, his wife, Paps, daughters, farm, nearly everything he had. “That’s why I’m gonna get ‘em, young fellow. What do you say we go at ‘em together?”

Malachi’s hard, street-wise eyes stared deeply into Junior’s, and found no fault.

“I’m with you, Mister,” he said. “to the death.”

“Good. Come with me. I want to show you what I did the other night.”

Matt finished doing what he’d gone into the Park to do. He and Malachi got into the dump truck. Matt showed him a newspaper. “See that picture. I did that buildin’ all by myself,” he said, proudly.

Malachi stared at the photograph of the Pittsburgh Federal Building, his attention riveted by the few, lonely columns that stood above the still-smoking rubble. “You did this, Mister?” Malachi asked, with all the joy that a seeker of truth has when he finds himself in the presence of a true prophet.

“Yep. You still with me?”

“I sho’ nough am! This is all right! All right! Bro, this is really somethin’! Us-uns am gwine to zap some crats!” Malachi said, his dark face split with the broadest grin Matt had ever seen.

In the complete invisibility with which a poorly dressed pair of men, one white, one black, can travel in a large, noisy dump truck, they scoured a white, wealthy suburb, loading dozens and dozens of shiny, new garbage cans into the back of the truck, dumping the garbage onto the Crats' lawns. When challenged by a few homeowners, Matt explained that they were EPA employees, random sampling garbage cans for leaks, in the process of establishing a new Federal Department Of Garbage Can Inspection. "That way, we can be sure that the nation's leaking Garbagecan Ooze didn't pollute Precious Groundwater," Matt would explain, mimicking the way he'd heard high-level Crats talk about programs in Weirton.

"That's a great idea!" wealthy Washingtonians invariably said, forgetting the piles of garbage on their manicured lawns in their eagerness to ask: "Is the New Department hiring for executive or administrative jobs?"

They stacked the cans in a vacant lot, near where Malachi lived with his mother, brothers and sisters, in one of the endless row houses that filled that section of the city. Within a week, a dozen Very Important People had magically appeared on CNN/NBC/MSNBC/Fed-Tube to decry Garbage Can Ooze, solemnly announcing to America that Garbage Can Ooze was: "A hidden threat to our water supply and to our National Health."

Next morning, Old Matt and Malachi drove their dump truck to Arlington Cemetery. They followed winding roads until they found a groundskeeper's storehouse. They loaded the truck with bags of fertilizer, using a fork-lift that Malachi had learned to operate in a three-year course of Forklift Theory at a Job Corps camp. He loaded the dump truck with ease.

“Man, I feel like Peter, or Paul, or whoever it was, bein’ led out of jail by de angels,” Malachi said, breathing a deep sigh of relief as they drove out of the Cemetery with their load of fertilizer.

“I know what you mean,” Matt replied, unable to keep himself from nervously looking in the rear-view mirror as they passed yet another plush guardhouse. “I figure God’s with us, so there’s no way for them to stop us. He’ll keep helpin’ us, so long as we don’t kill no Crats on purpose.”

Ahead of them, two big, black Suburbans were brought to a sudden stop by a Congressman. In order to get across streets whenever they wanted, every Very Important Person in Washington was given a White Cane and allowed to cross any street, any time.

Immobilized, Freddie got out of the car.

“Say, Malachi, what’s that guy doin’ there, the one gettin’ out of the car we almost ran into? What’s that he’s carryin’?”

“Looks like some kind of a spear wif’ a little flag on the end, or somethin’.”

“Yeah, it’s a flag. It says ‘77th Beagle Lancers’?”

“No, it says ‘Bengal Lancers’. What’s a Bengal, Matt?”

“Beats me,” he replied. “Say,” he asked, suddenly, “why isn’t this traffic moving?”

The traffic didn’t move. Tax Whitey More workers were yelling threatening obscenities at white motorists in the stalled traffic. If people didn’t listen respectfully, they’d be ticketed with “Prejudicial Fines”. Horns began to honk in the melodious notes of expensive automobiles from around the world.

“What’s goin’ on, mister?” Matt called to the spear-carrying man, standing on the roof of one of two big Suburbans in front of them, the one they’d just missed.

“My name is not ‘Terr’, and I am certainly not a ‘Miss’,” Freddie responded, reluctantly abandoning his classic rendition of Peering Into The Distance, with his hand visoring eyes in the best Bengal Lancer fashion.

“Oh, no,” Carl groaned. “He’s going to end up getting us arrested. See anything, Freddie?” he called, trying to distract him from talking to the two men in the dump truck, two men who looked as if they might start a fight with the smart-alecky sort of fellow that Freddie always seemed to be to those who didn’t understand his affliction.

“I see someone who has grievously insulted me, calling me ‘Miss’, when I am obviously a ‘Mister’. I think I’ve been insulted,”

he went on, beginning to wonder if his lance would penetrate one of Matt's tires.

"He be some kind of a DemoCrat," Malachi Free explained. "There's lots of 'em, in de Distric' of de Crats."

"I guess he is," Matt agreed, unable to take his eyes off Freddie's outfit.

"I better get him in here." I climbed out of the Suburban, and went back to the towed Suburban, on which Freddie stood, staring.

"What's going on, Freddie? What's causing the traffic jam?"

"They're clearing the road so that a 797 can land."

"Might as well get out and stretch our legs," Carl said. He and Darlene got out, as much to keep Freddie under control as to look around.

"Hey, buddy!" called Matt. "What's goin' on with the traffic up ahead?"

"Some BureauCrat is landing his 797 on Constitution Avenue," Carl answered. On a "hunch", he went back to talk to the truck driver.

"You don't say?" Matt said.

"They think they own the country," Carl replied.

Matt looked at Carl, and said, "They don't think it, Mister, they know it.

"You from around here?" Carl asked, catching a hint of

musical, hill country twang.

“Na. I’m from what used to be Pennsylvania, ‘fore they resurveyed the line. My farm, the one I used to have, is in West Virginia, now.”

Carl remembered something about Young Matt, something Father Gonalthwy had told him, about the young man in Geneva, Switzerland coming from a farm, in West Virginia.

“You still farm it?”

“Na. The surveyors wrecked it.”

“You workin’ here now?”

“A fellow might say that.”

“You don’t have a boy in Geneva, do you?”

“Now, how would you be knowin’ ‘bout a thing like that?” he asked, staring intently into Carl’s eyes.

“I think we’re on the same side. Are you Mattathias MacAbee?”

“Who wants to know.”

“The fellow who blew the school in Erie. The new International Middle School.”

“Well, he’s the fellow who gave this here fellow the idea to take out the Bigburg Federal Building.”

Eyes welling with tears, Carl climbed onto the running board of the truck and shook Matt’s hands. Neither noticed a smiling

wisp of St. Anthony disappear.

“Proud to meet you,” he said.

“And, I’m proud to meet you.”

“That a friend of yours?” Matt asked, pointing to Freddie, again staring, frontiersman fashion, into the setting sun, a direction away from Slith’s 797, but knowing he looked more picturesque, facing West.

“He sure is. He’s a little different, but he’s a good distraction. Nobody can possibly think we’re here for any kind of serious business after they listen to Freddie for even a few minutes.”

“He fooled me.”

“Is he with us?” asked Carl, gesturing toward Malachi Free.

“I sure am, Mister. Them baby-killin’ ‘Crats murdered my own baby, talked my girlfriend into killin’ it ‘fore we could get married. I don’t know if it was a boy or a girl they got, but I’m with this here guy all the way. If we’re all in it together, we’ll get that much more done.”

“Where are you staying?” Carl asked.

“Stayin’ with Malachi’s family. There’s an empty house next door, and y-all could stay there. Who’s your friends?”

Carl introduced me to Matt and Malachi, and I must admit it was a thrill to shake the old hillbilly’s hand.

“We’re so proud of you,” I said.

“Shucks, tweren’t nothin’. Why, if Carl here hadn’t blowed up

that school, I'd never have figured how to blow that Baalocrat pigsty. Pleased to meet you, ma'am," he said to Darlene, tipping his faded baseball cap.

"Freddie!" I called, interrupting his certain-to-be ill-fated attempt to pole vault from the car roof with his lance, "I'd like you to meet some people."

"What do you think I am, a butcher? A cannibalistic butcher?" he replied, in a properly insulted tone. "I am a pig-sticker, not a people-meater."

"Get in the car, Freddie," Darlene commanded firmly, holding an inner tube threateningly. "Get in the car."

Seeing the hated tube, Freddie obeyed. Sullenly, he climbed into the rearmost seat of the Suburban, muttering.

After Slith and his gang of BaaloCrats had finished disrupting traffic, we let Matt and Malachi pass us so we could follow them to Malachi's house.

The row house was surprisingly large inside, with a basement big enough for storage. The house next door was empty, as Matt had said. We unloaded the fertilizer, and took it downstairs, where we stored it in the newly joined coal cellars under the front porches.

We met Malachi's large family, all of whom were excited by the commotion Freddie caused, pacing back and forth in front of the house, the banner fluttering on his spear, tunic buttons

polished to gleaming droplets of blazing brass, high boots shining, his jodhpurs and pith helmet objects of intense interest to the fashion-conscious children who watched admiringly from a safe distance.

“What the hell is that?” I heard a policeman in a passing patrol car ask his partner when they drove past.

I stopped carrying my bag of fertilizer long enough to hear the other say, “Just another crazy local.” Ignoring Freddie’s obviously blue eyes, blonde hair and Caucasoid, Son-of-Shem features, they drove off, shaking their heads.

“Keep up the good work,” I said to Freddie, as I carried another heavy bag of fertilizer into the house, disappearing before I’d have to listen to his reply.

As soon as we had the fertilizer out of the dump truck, Carl, Matt and I and drove to farm areas north of the city, to get fuel oil. Carl quickly agreed with Matt’s plan to take out the bridges, instead of buildings. “That’s a great idea! We can keep the Crats from getting to work! I don’t think we could blow more than a few buildings in a night, and, by then, the place would be crawling with troops.”

We got to know each other better on the way, sharing the comradeship of soldiers going into battle.

We drove north, past Rockville, past the pretend farms and expensively fenced estates of the BaaloCrats, to the real farms,

where real farmers had dirty hands and weren't suspicious of others who did. We purchased two big, 275 gallon tanks at a mobile home supply outlet, and filled them at a nearby fuel oil distributor.

We were back at Malachi's house in time for dinner. Malachi's mother had baked carp that Malachi's younger brothers had caught in the Anacostia, boiled sweet corn from their backyard garden, and made a big salad.

"I can't carp about this carp," Freddie said when he went back for seconds, interrupting the conversation between Carl and Matt as to the relative merits of igniting the explosives electronically or with blasting caps, or with both.

"I was figurin' to use cherry bombs," Matt said.

"We brought a case of blasting caps," Carl said. "They'll work lots better."

"They sure will. How we gonna ignite 'em?"

"I figured that we'd want to do it by cell phone. I brought some stuff at a hobby store, for model rockets. It's a radio controlled detonator to ignite rocket motors. I think I can adapt it to work on blasting caps without too much trouble."

"Radio?" asked Matt.

"What we might be able to do is to hook up our explosives with a battery and a receiver, and pack the battery right in with the explosives. When we dial the number, the blasting caps inside

the explosive will go off, and blow the charge. That way, we can make sure that no one is on the bridges when we drop them.”

“That’s good. I wondered just how we was gonna keep from killin’ anyone. We can mix the fuel oil and fertilizer, and pack it in the garbage cans, all sealed up nice and tight with duct tape and roofing cement. Can you fellows handle the detonators?”

“Sure,” I nodded, confidently, never having seen a detonator in my life, but knowing that Carl could figure out almost anything.

“We have a lot more to do than that. We need boats, motors, and wire cable to lash the garbage cans to the bridge piers. We need more Scuba tanks, so we can go plant them under the surface so they won’t be noticed. We need electric, noiseless motors for the boats, and we need fishing stuff to carry along, so people will think that we’re just harmless fishermen. We need...”

“Where we gonna get the money for all that?” Matt interrupted, realizing that Carl had nonchalantly totaled up tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of equipment.

“We’ll take care of that,” I said, feeling the money belt I wore that had nearly a hundred thousand dollars in it, knowing that we had far more, already hidden in the basement.

“Then it’s settled,” Carl said. “You and Malachi take care of mixing the explosives, and packing the...”

“Bridge-boom-booms,” interjected Freddie, remembering a phrase from toddler days, rejoicing in a totally alliterative double

hyphenation. “Call them bridge-boom-booms.”

“All right,” Matt answered, giving Freddie a wary glance. “We’ll make the bridge-boom-booms, and we’ll plant ‘em together.”

“I shall stand guard or I shall sit guard,” Freddie announced. “But, we do need a guard. We don’t have one. So, I will do it. I will be the guard.”

Malachi’s younger brothers and sisters looked at him, their respect for honest eccentricity written clearly across their expressive faces.

“Good idea,” said Carl. “With Freddie on guard, it would be impossible for anyone to think that we’re up to anything.”

“Can’t argue with that,” said Matt, shaking his head as he returned to the delicious fish Mrs. Free had prepared for dinner.

She was a warm, loving mother, who demanded, and got, instant and total obedience from her children. With nods of her head, children were sent to refill glasses of Kool-Aid, bring more salad, more fish, whatever was needed.

“Now, don’t none of you kids dare say nuffin’ at all to anybody ‘bout what be goin’ on here,” she ordered. “Iffin you open your big mouths, why, this place’ll be swarmin’ with PO-leece, and they’ll put me and your big brother Malachi in jail, and they’ll put you in homes, where you’ll be beaten bloody ever’ night or ‘lest by

whitefags. You know what they does to little kids, so's you keep yo' mouffs shut!"

"We be good, Mama," they chorused, looking fearfully from their mother to Freddie, who glared ominously at them from under the brim of his pith helmet. "We won't tell nobody!"

"Yeah, you kids keep your mouths shut," Malachi commanded. "You stay in the house and watch TV, or you go in the back yard, but you don't say nuffin' to nobody!"

"TV broke," said one of the youngsters.

"We'll buy another one, but only if you promise to do what your mother says," said Carl, getting up from the table.

"We promise!" said the children, bouncing from fear to anticipation with pre-adolescent speed.

Carl brought the Free children a TV with a screen as big as a picture window, and we hooked it up the next morning.

Then, he and I began buying the things we'd need for our upcoming attempt to immobilize the bureaucracy and free the American people from their civil "servants". We bought fishing boats, electric trolling motors and regular outboards. We purchased new skin-diving equipment, enough to cover us completely from goggles to fins.

A rental agent for the vacant house next door to Malachi's, an astounded realtor who couldn't believe that white people would

dream of moving into such a neighborhood, came by, and said that we should be paying rent, and asked who we were.

“We’re in a government program, validating the awful effects of Garbage Can Ooze on inner city residents. We feel that it’s responsible for low test scores, and that Fixing The Problem will Transform America,” Carl explained, knowing that could justify the most outrageous boobery to anyone inside the Beltway.

“Oh, well, then, of course,” the agent had said, wishing he’d known there was a possibility of government funding before he told us what the rent would be.

In a few days, we had purchased most of what we thought we’d need, dozens of 12 volt lantern batteries, miles of wire, switches, and receivers from fifteen different stores. Malachi and Matt, with some help from the older Free children, had made a dozen bridge-boom-booms, and we were all anxious to try one.

“No,” said Carl, firmly. “We have to wait and blow them all at one time. We don’t want anyone to catch on.”

“But, Carl,” I protested, “we should check to see how powerful they are, to see how many we’ll need to take out a bridge pier.”

“I hadn’t thought of that. We should have a test, but where? We don’t want anyone to suspect anything.”

“How about tying one to one of the piers on the Cabin John Bridge?” Darlene suggested. “It’s a newer bridge, and it has lots of

columns. We could probably take one out, and no one would notice.”

“It wouldn’t be safe. What if we weakened the bridge, so that it collapsed with a lot of cars on it?”

“Why don’t we blow up the Washington Monument?” asked Freddie. “That’s sure to be lots of fun, and it wouldn’t hurt anyone.”

We all stared. Even the Free children turned their eyes from the TV to look at Freddie, who went on to explain, in tones of clear lucidity I’d never thought to hear from him.

“We could topple it, just like a big tree, lay it right across the Mall about four in the morning.”

“We could, at that,” Carl said, with rising enthusiasm. “Blame it on the NRA, Republicans, businessmen, Tea Partiers, women who stay home to raise children, Congressional conservatives. Any of the other approved FedTube whipping boys.”

“Let’s do it!” I agreed.

After midnight, the Mall was deserted by all but a few hopeful muggers, on the alert for a few tourists naïve enough to believe that the Government’s seat of power was as safe as a million small towns after dark, we put eight bridge-boom-booms in the Suburbans, and drove to the Monument. Magnetic signs labeled our vehicles to be the property of a lawn care firm. Several lawn mowers following in the dump truck gave us more believability.

Quickly manned by Malachi's brothers and sisters, the mowers soon setup a buzz around the moonlit Monument that lulled the suspicions of passing patrolmen.

In a big, riding lawnmower, purchased for several thousand dollars that afternoon, I towed a cart with gleaming garbage cans to the doorway, where guards under Fedunion sunlamps dozed in chaise lounges.

"Time you got some new garbage cans, isn't it?" I called to them.

"I guess," one said. "How come you're bringin' 'em now?"

"The day crew couldn't get here. There were so many planes landing on Constitution Avenue that we had to wait until tonight to deliver. Is there anyone who can give us a hand unloading?"

"It's not in our contract. Come on, John. John!" the guard shouted, over the din of the lawnmowers and their loud TV, "Wake up. I need to know if we're allowed to do any actual work while we're on duty."

The other guard, a portly, sullen man, came out, rubbing his eyes. Mattathias and Malachi pounced. Malachi took the first guard out with a sock full of sand. Matt got the fat one with a long, looping uppercut. Quickly, trussing them, we put them in the cart and unloaded the bridge-boom-booms.

We put four bridge-boom-booms on each side of the door, nearly a ton, altogether, of high explosive. "Whooooeee!" I heard

Matt whisper as we worked.

When the explosives were in place we covered them with sand to direct as much as possible of the blast into the base of the tower. Carl planted literature all around the blast site, proclaiming the destruction to be the work of the usual Enemies of Society. When we finished, Malachi's brothers and sisters quickly loaded their lawnmowers onto the truck. The rest of us piled into the big Suburbans.

A few blocks away, we stopped. Freddie, since it was his idea, got to push the "call" button on the cell phone. There was just enough time for all of us to think that our bridge-boom-booms were duds. Then, we saw the huge flash of light. The roar of the blast hit us, followed quickly by a rush of dirty air that blew so much debris into a dense cloud that we couldn't see the monument to one successful revolution fall to a second. We felt the ground shake twice, once when the blast first went off, and a second time when the Monument, like a felled redwood, crashed to the ground.

"WHHoooooooooEEEE!" I heard Matt cry in ecstasy, and I heard all of us echoing it. As we drove away, sirens began to wail in the distance.

We dumped the guards out in back of the Capitol, and disappeared into the darkness of the nearby slums.

"I guess we know that the bridge-boom-booms work," I said. "We'd better get busy planting them."

“We’ll wait a day or two, until we’ve got them all built,” Carl said. “Things’ll calm down, soon. The troops they’ll call out will want to get back to Fort Myers, where the barracks are air-conditioned.”

“You aren’t worried that they’ll find us, are you?” Matt asked.

“No. We are, after all, revolutionaries,” Carl answered. “People revolt because they’re tired of being turned into slaves to support bloated multitudes of bureaucracies. Any government that’s overthrown is overthrown only because its Crats inevitably become too conceited to even think the citizens would want to be free. As governments hire ever less able people to run their bureaus, they won’t be able to find us or stop us, much less understand why they can’t, or, that we even are.”

“That’s what Young Matt used to say. He said that if they weren’t dumb, they wouldn’t get hired, and if they didn’t get dumber, they wouldn’t get promoted.”

“That sums it up,” Carl agreed. “If they hadn’t freely chosen to be that dumb, you’d have to feel even sorrier for them.”

We parked in front of Malachi’s house, and continued to prepare for the coming attack on bridges. Darlene, in the dining room of our rented house, had put a huge map on the wall of what became our war room. We called YeYe D’YuYu, still enraged at being deprived of his plane by status-maddened BureauCrats. The Gypsy workers he assigned to us increased bridge-boom-boom

production considerably. Darlene had numbered the map to show where and when they'd be attached to the bridge piers.

“The D’YuYu’s,” she began, when we were all seated in folding chairs in front of the map “will get a hundred bridge boom-booms, a Suburban, trailer, and one pontoon boat. They’ll go down the Potomac. Al will go with them as technical advisor, and show YeYe how to have his people attach the bridge-boom-booms to the bridge piers. They will mine all the bridges from the Beltway Bridge at Cabin John, all the way down the Potomac, portaging over the Little Falls Dam, and mining Chain Bridge below.

The next night, they’ll get Key Bridge, and the big Theodore Roosevelt Bridge below that. The next night, they’ll get the supports under the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Then, the two Memorial Bridges below that. It’s a big job, YeYe, but we’re sure you can do it.”

The big-bellied Bulgarian beamed with pleasure. “YeYe D’YuYu can do it. YeYe D’YuYu can do anything.” He stared around the room, daring anyone to contradict him. No one did.

“Handle him carefully, Al, and he’ll do a good job,” Carl whispered to me.

“Matt, you’ll be responsible for the Anacostia River. You’ll start at the Route 1 Bridge over Indian Creek and work South. You’ll plant bridge-boom-booms on two other bridges and a railroad bridge your first night. The next night, you’ll mine the Beltway Bridge and the Greenbelt Bridge below that. The third

night, you'll mine the rest of the bridges, down to the New York Avenue Bridge. That'll be the last one you have to do. You take Malachi and two of his older brothers with you."

"How about me?" Mrs. Free demanded. "I want to blow some bridges, too!"

"You come with me," Darlene said. "We're going to take out the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. It'll take the two of us three nights to do it."

"What about me?" Carl asked. "Which ones do I get?"

"You take a couple of YeYe's Gypsies, I'm sure he won't mind..."

"YeYe not mind." YeYe answered expansively. "He can have young Ya, my own brother, and even my mother, too. They good workers," he said, proudly, remembering the havoc they'd caused catapulting thousands of Zip-Loc bags all over Erie from its old Post Office. "Ya," he promised, "you do good job, this time you get your second syllable." Ya sat up a little straighter and paid closer attention, after that.

"And," Darlene continued to Carl, "you'll be responsible for taking out all the bridges on the lower Anacostia, starting with the Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge."

"What about me?" complained Freddie. "Everybody gets to blow up a bridge but me. It isn't fair."

“You have a more important job, Freddie,” she explained to him, in the tone she’d use talking to the simplest child, “You have to be sure that everybody gets their bridge-boom-booms, or none of the bridges will be blown up. Why, you’ll really be blowing up all the bridges. You and Malachi’s younger brothers and sisters will bring bridge-boom-booms to us, so that the bridges can be blown.”

“Good!” said Freddie, thumping his lance up and down on the floor. “we’ll get ‘em all! And, if no one minds, I’ll get the subway. You forgot that.”

“I’m going to call Father Gonalthwy,” Carl said. “We may have to fight on two fronts, and he’ll want to be prepared.”

I couldn’t believe it was happening so quickly, so easily. Crazy Freddie, a near-illiterate hillbilly, a gang of what we’d thought were utterly amoral Gypsies, and a family of slum-dwelling Black Americans were all joining with us to overthrow the universally hated, tax-crazed Gummit, whose totem we’d just toppled.

“If it’s going to be a bloodless coup,” Freddie said in a strange, cooing voice when he understood that the bridges would be blown, one at a time, when there was no one on them. “then, I want to drive there in a bloodless coupe.”

We worked hard, following Darlene’s schedule as closely as possible. We finished on time. Every bridge in Washington was mined, along with several tunnels. After a week of back-breaking

labor, we were finished. We gathered at Mrs. Free's kitchen, early in the morning, for a quick breakfast.

**Call from Geneva. We listen to Crat fight. Dr. V. DeDuckDuck calls for body-count. Says S-S Academics kill lots more than Health In Human Services. Wursavolk counters skillfully. "Get their guns away! Then, Direct control!"**

We were interrupted by a call. Father Gonalthwy, still in Geneva, called to say that something was going on in the Council of World Churches building. More BaaloCrats than ever were showing up.

"They know something's going on," he told Carl by telephone, the night after we'd told him about toppling the Monument. "We've been listening to them. They think there's some kind of a plot against them. Listen on the speakerphone, and you can hear the recording we made last night."

"I think that it's time we had a new leader," we heard the voice of Dr. V. DeDuckDuck say. "Something's going on in America that our present leadership is showing itself to be incapable of handling. A new International Middle School was blown up, a Federal Building has been destroyed, and the Washington Monument was toppled! We need someone in charge who can deal with these problems. Why, what if there's a revolution, and they start to fire BaaloCrats? Then, what are we going to do? We'd better never have to get our hands dirty. That wasn't part of our deal."

The smooth voice of Dr. Wursavolk replied, “Now, now, there’s nothing to be worried about. We’re monitoring the situation carefully. We know that the school was blown by anti-busing people, and we know that the Federal Building in Pittsburgh was an accident. Washington’s Monument was blown up by American Manufacturers, protesting the environmental laws we just shoved through Congress in return for bribes paid to them by lobbyists for overseas industries. They’re just mad because they have to shut off all their electric motors when it’s cloudy. There’s nothing to worry about. Who would dare to attack the best Government we’ve ever had, in terms of innocent blood shed, in history?”

“Well, I think that there *is* something to worry about,” Dr. DeDuckDuck replied. “I call for a body count.”

“Not that!” someone groaned. “Why, we’ll be here all night.”

“Come, come,” said Dr. Wursavolk. “I think we know that the Department of Health In Human Services has killed more people than anything in history. Who would dare to argue that? If you added every Mongol murderer, every Commissar, and every Barbarian horde together, you’d see that they haven’t come close to having killed as many people as we have. At Health In Human Services, in abortions alone, we’ve killed over forty million, and that’s only in the United States.”

“We have some new figures,” said Dr. DeDuckDuck. “I think they’ll show that we need someone else in charge, someone with

the guts to kill adults, whole populations, like we used to use Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide to do.”

“Yeah, that’s right!” the Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi’s harsh guttural broke through.

“And if we have a recount, who’s going to win?” asked Dr. Wursavolk, with lilting sarcasm, giving ‘win’ two syllables.

“We, the State-Supported academics will win,” said Dr. V. DeDuckDuck positively, slurring his words slightly through the drool.

“And, how do you figure that?” asked Dr. Wursavolk.

“Yeah, how?” said Slith Venum, from HUD, the agency responsible for driving people into Government housing of such depressing squalor that they’d kill their own babies.

“Yeah, how?” asked Ms. Medea, whose FedTube Networld programs were such a big help to Dr. Wursavolk on the evening news. “Academics don’t actually kill. They only have staff jobs, so they aren’t eligible for command. They have no blood on their hands.” she read from the BaaloCrat Manual.

“Let’s hear what Dr. DeDuckDuck has to say,” said the sibilant voice that was new and very harsh to our ears, though Young Junior and Father Gonalthwy had gotten used to it.

“The figures from Southeast Asia are coming in,” began Dr. DeDuckDuck. “The anti-war campaign that we waged so

successfully during the Vietnam conflict has borne far more fruit than we ever thought it would.”

“Really?” said the hissing voice in an interested tone.

“Yes, I have the figures here, but I’d like to provide a little background, first.”

“By all means,” said Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide sarcastically, reluctant to admit that S-S academics could kill as many people as his group, but always happy to hear about more death.

“You all remember Vietnam,” began Dr. DeDuckDuck. “It was at such an awkward time. All those babies from the baby boom, you know, like The Tribes used to have, before we popularized birth-control and abortion, well, they were getting old enough to go to college, and most of them planned to get married and have families. We couldn’t have that!

“We got State-Supported Academics to undermine the very notion of marriage, self-sacrifice, and children. If they wouldn’t help us, they didn’t get tenure! Pub-Ed made lots of them too dumb to do anything but teach in State Schools! We confused the children and then got them hooked on drugs, sex, and life-destroying philosophies that rendered them stupid, sterile, sex-crazed and selfish. And, our tax policies wiped out hundreds of private and church schools and colleges, so kids didn’t know enough to argue with us. We kept over seventy five million children from being born, caused sixty million divorces, forty

million abortions, and made a fifty million children grow up in broken homes, where they were easier prey for child-molesters and television pornoganda.

“We trivialized decent, traditional, moral values. We’ve killed more than anyone, by far! We made death intellectually respectable! We deserve command!

“Our Anti-war movement gave morons and dimwits intellectual credibility. For the first time in their shallow, empty, useless lives they began to see that if they embraced the empty values of the Left, they could call themselves ‘intellectuals’, and get higher-paying jobs than they’d ever dreamed possible.

“Suddenly, people too lazy to flush their own toilets convinced themselves that they were as smart as anyone else. We, the state-supported educators, did that! Our best plan was to teach them that even if they were dumb, that their opinions were as meaningful as those of vastly smarter people. We told them that even if they were ignorant, illiterate, and illogical, that they should still fight for what they ‘felt’, because they were so especially ‘sensitive’.

“‘If it feels good, do it.’ we told them, and they did, the pathetic fools. Now, they’re childless, hopefully damned forever, and, still, confused. Some of them are now so stupid that they still vote for we who have destroyed them! Even though they know that they’re committing family suicide, we’ve got them so bamboozled that they get deader and dumber every day.”

“I’m tired of listening to this,” interrupted Dr. Wursavolk. “*We* are the ones who did the killing. *We* are the ones who tear the arms and legs off writhing, unborn babies. *We* do the dirty work. *We* should retain command!”

“No way!” answered Dr. DeDuckDuck. “*We* are the ones who provide the ‘intellectual’ justification that brings their pathetic mothers and the fathers who don’t want to pay child support to the abortionists. *We*’re the ones who’ve destroyed the ancient culture of the Pro-Life Jews, Catholics, and Fundamentalists. *We*’re the ones who made ignorance as good as wisdom. *We*’re the ones who made feeling as important as thinking. *We*’re the ones who made death as good as life and slavery more respectable than freedom. *We* should command!”

“Interesting,” hissed the strange, sibilant voice over our speakerphone.

Dr. DeDuckDuck continued, “*We* started, big-time, during Vietnam. *We* destroyed the major Christian toehold on Mainland Asia. *Our* Communists had destroyed the Catholics in China and North Vietnam. *Our* supporters in America, Crats of both parties, passed on every lie that our totally controlled FedTube told them, and *we* rewarded them with State jobs. *We* even made draft-dodging cowards into Presidents, where they can destroy the Armed Forces! Every word they spoke was supported *our* lies. Everything they said, thought, and did were lies that *we* told them

to tell. We, the State-Supported academics, are the truest friends of Baal since Babylon, WE SHOULD COMMAND!”

“No!” shouted Dr. Wursavolk. “You do not have blood on your hands! You do not abort. You do not maim. You do not sell drugs and risk jail! You do not hemlock the oldsters! We, who have supported the Euthenabort movement in the Congress, in its media, and in our glorious Public Schools, WE SHOULD COMMAND!”

“Let me hear more from Dr. DeDuckDuck,” hissed the Voice, and we could almost feel Dr. Wursavolk losing power.

“*We* were the ones who destroyed the concept of cause and effect. *We* undermined the logic of Aristotle and Aquinas. After that, *we* invalidated the pro-life teachings of that Devil-damned Catholic Church of his. We separated sin from its consequences. *We* destroyed causality! It was only after *we* did that, that everything crumbled!”

“Us, too! Us, too!” interrupted Really-Reform Rogue Rabbi Genocide. “We began to undermine the Orthodox position four thousand years ago. Quibble, quibble, quibble, quibble! If DeDuckDuck doesn’t get it, then we should have command!”

“But, we undermined HIS CHURCH!” screamed The Semi-Reverend Dr. Molech, as a shouting hubbub of power-crazed Crats jockeyed for position. “Sure, you did it first, but only to a few wretched Jews on the fringes, in pitiful hovels like Masada. We were the ones who smashed directly into the center of HIS

CHURCH! We attacked celibacy, obedience, poverty. We destroyed billions of people. If we didn't kill them in the womb, we ruined their childhoods by approving of every divorce there was! We destroyed their families, racked them with poverty-by-taxation, and, even as I speak, our Mainline Moderne ministers are already performing the Abortion Ceremony! Because of us professional heretics, the aged, the crippled, the unhappy, and the inconvenienced, slip into the worlds beyond as our own staffs begin to inject the poison at our own Prothumanist Deathtismal Fonts. WE DESERVE COMMAND!"

"All very true," hissed the Voice. "But, since when am I interested in what is true?"

"Go back to Vietnam, unholy Master," Dr. Wursavolk began. "We'd caused inflation with guns and butter spending by our Johnson-cretin. And, we destroyed the Public Schools as guardians of *His* culture. Department by accursed department, we took over. *We* gave them Health In Human Services funding to destroy the basic concepts of logic, philosophy, history. We made the only study of religion 'comparative'. We made opinion the only truth, feelings the only reality, sex the only joy. And, we made them so dumb that they believed it!"

"But, it is *we* who have rewritten history," shouted Dr. DeDuckDuck. "No one realizes any more that those who believe in Him are one family of the saved, that believers are brothers. People smart enough to get things done have been so thoroughly

undermined that they can't even let themselves think that almost every human-helping invention was made by one of them. If anyone is honest enough to say so, we call him 'racist'! Haha! We have destroyed the very awareness that their God-given talents have made the world a better place. We've undermined their self-confidence so much so that they won't even have babies! Please, Master, run it through DeathWatch. See how much life we've stopped from happening. Compare that to the lives they've snuffed out, and you'll see that it is we, the S-S Academics, it is WE, WHO DO YOUR WILL!"

"We have the blood on our hands," insisted Dr. Wursavolk. "They only have words in their mouths." He spit out the last words.

"*We* destroyed the accursed baby-boomers," repeated Dr. DeDuckDuck. "If that huge number of normal, decent, middle-class Americans and Europeans had done what they should have done, and raised decent, normal, church-going families, why, we might never have destroyed their minds and souls. We'd never have been able to butcher so many, many millions of their babies. We made Communism respectable, even while it killed and killed and killed. Who can lie better than us State-Supported Academics? Even when the truth about how evil and vicious the Communists were began to seep out, *we* got them distracted with ozone holes, global freezing/warming, and all the other Imaginary Problems. And *we* were the ones who taught people to call

themselves “journalists” while they passed on our lies! Why, we’ve turned His chosen peoples into driveling idiots! We can get the fools to elect the greatest America-haters of all as Commander in Chief, and we’ll get their guns away!

“We began by teaching Americans to mock the most noble war that the baby-boomers would ever be able to fight We made it unpopular, and we’d flunk any student who disagreed with us, or give them bad recommendations, so that no one could get jobs, especially in the government, if they didn’t think like we did. Which, of course, is to not think at all.” he added, in a happy tone.

Light laughter interrupted him. BaaloCrats had used S-S Academics since the early days, at Babylon U. But, no one in the Educational Denominations of Baal had ever made such a claim as they were now hearing. Dr. DeDuckDuck continued. “Then, we paved the way for the North Vietnamese to destroy the Catholic toehold in Asia, and for Pol Pot to turn Cambodia red with the blood of those accursed Buddhists.

“Soon, we made the war so unpopular that our students began to demonstrate against it. We taught them that it was fine and brave of them to protect the killers of the helpless Christian and Buddhist families we were slaughtering, that it showed them to be ‘concerned’, ‘active’, and a host of other things that proved them to be fools proud of thinking no better than geese. We kept our fat academic budgets, of course, long after we ended the war. We enabled the killing of over thirty million Cambodians, South

Vietnamese, Laotians, Thais, and a lot of Americans, Koreans, and anybody else dumb enough to try to keep us from our rightful slaughter. Since *we*, the State-Supported Academics, kept the Christian forces from fighting, *we* have earned the right to be the new leaders of our movement. After all, our intellectual perversions are what made dumb people think that they're as smart as smart people. *That's* what's wiped out millions of decent people, and kept a billion families from forming. We've done more than they ever did in Health In Human Services!"

There was scattered applause, much to the dismay of Dr. Wursavolk. Though he was taken aback, he responded skillfully.

"We and the state-supported academics are on the same side," he began, smoothly, "And, we appreciate what they did for us in the Vietnam Crisis, when the slaughters could have been easily stopped by a little military muscle that you, our professional bleaters, kept a cowardly, gutless, brainless, DemoCrat Congress from flexing. Still, it is *we* who actually do the killing. It is *our* hands that are red, ours, and the Drs. Medpig, and the rest of us Health in Human Services BaaloCrats. You and the S-S academics never actually KILL anyone, you just make it possible for us to do it. You can't take credit for killing ANYBODY. You're just accessories. Simple, big-mouthed, greedy ACCESSORIES," he finished, spitting the word, disdainfully.

"I appeal to judgment! said Dr. DeDuckDuck, ending the debate.

Slowly, the hissing voice began to speak. “I must agree with Dr. Wursavolk. His hands are dripping with gore, but you have only perverted your minds and souls. You S-S Academics live in a world of thoughts, which, while they are all lies, properly convoluted and corrupted, still have not led you to slaughter. You may not lead. Not yet. Not until you are blooded, personally, by taking the lives of a billion innocent children.”

“Thank you, Lord of Darkness.” Dr. Wursavolk said into the silence that followed the hissing decision. “And, I say, that there is no current problem about which we need concern ourselves. We are not under attack. We are only seeing coincidental, spasmodic outbursts of hatred against taxes. There’s nothing in these mindless explosions in the United States that should worry us. We should welcome them, because they give us an excuse to crack down, to increase our control so that we can destroy the tiny bits of freedom that still exist. We may even be able to use what they’ve done as an excuse to get their guns away! Then, Direct Control!”

**Malachi's mother committed to D. C. Debridgeification. "Gummit treat us wors'n Simon LeGree ever did!" City paralysis planned. Police at the door. Fr. Gonalthwy arrives. Blessed. Baptized. Confessed. Communion! Freddie: brain in gear. How'm I singing? Remarkably well, thank you.**

"I think we're safe." Father Gonalthwy said, shutting off the tape and talking to us through the speakerphone. "They still don't know what we're up to. But, be careful not to get caught. If we see that they're about to catch on, we'll blow their building, here in Geneva. Young Matt's already built a boom-boom, as you call them. We're working on a catapult that will throw it right into their boardroom when the time comes."

Carl hung up the telephone. Mrs. Free was the first to speak. "You know," she began, "I knew that the Gummit was bad, but I didn't know it was bad as that. Why, Malachi's grandfather was in the Marines, kilt at Pleiku, and those people think he was a damn fool. Why, we got to stops' em. Look what they's done to us. Why, we was happy, once, back when we lived on our little farm north of Valdosta. They drove us up here, after WWII, and we's been miserable ever since, 'specially since they closed the Catholic school down the street and started busin' our kids clean up to Pennsylvania.

“Why, times was hard, down there, but, still, they didn’t go around killin’ babies, like they did to Malachi’s little chil’. I never even heard of slave owners doin’ things as bad as that to us. Why, the Fed’ral Gummit be treatin’ us worse’n Simon Legree ever did! Heck, we wuz better off livin’ in slave’s cabins ‘n bein’ safe then in Gummit projects. We’ll blow them bridges up! We’ll get ‘em, we’ll get ‘em all.” The powerfully built woman sat down with an air of positive assuredness that heartened all of us.

“We’ll slow ‘em down, at least. We sure will,” Mattathias said.

“Let’s slow ‘em down ‘til they stop!” his mother replied. “‘Til they stop killin’ little babies jes’ because their parents don’t pay ‘nuff taxes.”

“Amen!” Malachi said.

“Amen!” we chorused.

We slept late the next morning, since we’d been working mostly at night. Carl came back with a Washington Post. Its front page had more pictures of the fallen Washington Monument. None of the related editorials regretted its destruction. “Thankfully, the symbol of a white male revolution has been removed,” said one of the paper’s three hundred liberal columnists.

“It’s just as well that it’s gone. For years, it has been a barrier to flight patterns of migratory birds and insects,” bemoaned another.

“Architecturally and aesthetically, it was appalling,” wrote a third.

“It’s not unhealthy to eliminate the reminders of revolution,” believed another. “The Government should be ashamed of itself for putting it there, anyway. Not only was it a focal point for possible domestic disturbance, but it was an ecological and esthetic disaster, typical of the mindless building that went on without proper governmental co-ordination, planning, and control.” wrote the fifth columnist.

“You know,” said Carl, looking up from the paper, “I wonder if there aren’t some more things that we could be blowing up, as well?”

We looked at him, hopefully, but Darlene spoke before he could finish.

“Let’s just stick with our original plan, and see how our Dee Cee Debridgeification (Freddie, don’t you ever think up any more words like that!) Program will help.”

“Debridgeification will help,” said Matt. “It’ll give ‘em time to think, first of all, about what they’re doin’ to the rest of us, destroyin’ freedom in the name of savin’ us from ourselves. We want ‘em to see how we could just as easily have dropped the bridges with them on ‘em, that we could just as easily have blowd up their offices with them in ‘em, that they could just as easy be dead as alive, if we wanted that.”

“Do you really think that will help? Do you really think their minds can function that well? Do you think that they aren’t too blinded by parasitism to see it?” I asked.

“We’ve got to give them one more chance. We have to let them see how vulnerable they are, what a very few decent, dedicated people like us could do. If they see that they owe everything they have to our patience, which God can take away at any time, then, surely, they will no longer want to prey upon us and our people. Surely, they will loose the bonds that bind us, surely they will thank God for his mercy.” Darlene said.

“I would have agreed with you, once,” replied Carl. “Now, I don’t know. But, we’ve made our plans. If we don’t accomplish our mission, we can strike again.”

“Do you think we’ll have the energy?” I asked, exhausted from the past week.

“If we can hear the screams of murdered babies, of poorer old people frozen stiff in their houses, mugged in the street; of girls forced into prostitution rather than raising children of their own, of molested, maimed and murdered schoolboys slaughtered by perverts on parole, can we not have the energy to overthrow enslavement by blood-loving BaaloCrats?” he replied, and I had no answer.

“The battle that we’re about to begin is long overdue. People oppressed are people demeaned, made gutless and cowardly. Too many lives so stripped of meaning by the BaaloCrats that they see

no point to living or passing on life. They've been left with nothing but desires to titillate their senses and ignore their conscience. They fear tomorrow so they live for today, not knowing how they will fare at the hands and claws of their grasping Crat-masters. They have given up on having children because they want no link with the horrors their lack of commitment to life and love cannot help but bring to tomorrow. They may deserve their fate, but we can't stand idly by and watch them being inched ever closer to slaughter and damnation without doing *something* to help. If we do nothing, we damn ourselves. We can give an opportunity to be free. They can stand on their own two feet, and act like children of God, rather than bowing before their oppressors, fearing to let their voices be clearly heard defending love, life, truth and freedom.

"We will," he went on, "finish our work as planned. We will blow the bridges and bring the BureauCrats to at least a partial halt. But, I warn you all, we are in this to the death, and we will have to be prepared to strike again."

"If we got to hit 'em twice, then we gonna hit 'em twice," said Malachi.

"And if we gots to hit 'em after that, we'll keep on hittin'," Mattathias added.

"We all fight again if we have to fight again!" said YeYe, and he looked at those of his band he'd chosen to help. They nodded. Ya asked if YeYe was going to get their 797 back, and if he was going

to get his second syllable, but, before YeYe could answer, Darlene spoke.

Choosing words that seemed more appropriate than ever before, Darlene began to pray. “Hail, Mary.” she began, kneeling, “full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen. Dearest Mary, you had a Son, murdered by the BaaloCrats. You know the agony that all of us face here, seeing our sons and daughters sacrificed on the new altars of Babylon, the abortion chambers of Baal. Pray for us, Mary, that this, our first strike, may be bloodless, and that it will humanize the butchers, stop them from killing the innocent to preserve their own worldly concerns. Help us, Mary.”

“Amen,” we chorused, and got to our feet, heartened.

“Today, we fast and pray. Tonight, we strike!” Carl said, “Our last bridges are ready to blow. We’ve mined a dozen major highway interchanges, three tunnels. We’re blowing some marinas to take out as many boats as we can. We want to keep them from carrying the Crats across the rivers to their accursed offices.”

“There’s going to be a lot of confusion, tomorrow,” I said. “Maybe we should go out and zap one Building. Matt would really like to get rid of the Department of Agriculture.”

“No. Let’s wait. One blow might be enough. We can always flatten Federal Buildings. Okay, Al? Matt? YeYe? Mrs. Free?”

We weren’t nervous. We were so convinced of the rightness of our cause that we didn’t see how we could possibly be stopped. To tell the truth, I felt a lot better about doing something than I ever felt, in the days before I knew what feeling was. I called Father Gonalthwy, at the Archabbey, but he wasn’t there.

“He’s gone,” Young Matt explained to me. “He wanted to be with you today. We’ve got everything setup here. As soon as you’re finished, we’re going to take out this accursed Council of World Churches Building. He’s on a plane to America, or he’s there, by now.

“That’s great news! And, we’re all looking forward to meeting you. We’ll have to get together when this is over.”

“I’m staying right here, in Geneva. I really like it at the monastery. They said I could stay as long as I wanted. Quiet, peaceful, it’s the place for me. And, I have some sins,” he said, thinking of Ms. Fattick.

“Maybe I’ll join you there. It sounds like a good place to be,” I replied.

“God bless us all,” he said, as we hung up.

I went to the living room, to tell Carl and Darlene that Father Gonalthwy was coming. As I came into the room, I heard a knock on the door.

Instantly, Carl and Darlene rushed to the kitchen, and Mattathias went to the top of the stairs, training a shotgun on the doorway. Malachi had the radio detonator clasped in his hand. We'd decided that if we were caught, we'd blow the bridges anyway, regardless of the time.

Mrs. Free went to the door. "Be ready to jump to your left," Matt called from his vantage point at the top of the stairs. "I don't want to hit you if I have to shoot."

"I don't want you to hit me iffen you does have to shoot!" she said, over her shoulder then turned and opened the door.

It was a policeman.

"You own that dump truck?" he asked.

"No, suh. I doesn' own no dump truck."

"Do you know who does?"

"What you want to know for?" she asked, peering out over his shoulder, to see if there was anyone on the street who shouldn't have been.

"It's parked in front of a fire hydrant." the patrolman replied.

"Malachi, go move that truck," she called.

Malachi left the detonator with Freddie, and went with the policeman to drive the truck away from the hydrant.

"Give me that detonator, Freddie," I said. "You don't know how to work it, and you might blow everything."

"You can trust me," he said. "I won't blow up anything until its

time. You all think I'm crazy, because I dress differently, but I'm not. You all think I'm nuts, because I talk differently, but I'm not. You all think I'm untrustworthy, but I'm not. No, I'm not. Freddie Knot, that's me. I'm Freddie Knot, and you can trust me not to come."

He began to huff and puff, and didn't notice Carl coming up behind him, with an inner tube.

"Catch the detonator," Carl mouthed silently to me, and he dropped the inner tube over Freddie's shoulders, pinning his arms to his sides. I caught the detonator before it hit the floor, and Darlene gagged him before he had a chance to yell and alert the policeman, still talking to Malachi outside, where Malachi was explaining to the departing officer that it really wasn't his truck, but belonged to a friend of his whose name he couldn't remember and who lived at an address he could not recall. Finally, the police, unwilling to spend the next three days on the paperwork required for the arrest of anyone who might claim to be in a racial minority, left. Malachi returned.

"That was close!" I said.

"Too close!" Carl agreed. "We're going to have to put Freddie in the basement, tied and gagged, until we're finished."

"Somebody's coming!" I said, seeing a taxi pull up outside the door as the patrol car left.

Quickly, Carl dragged Freddie to the basement, and the rest of us went to the kitchen. Again, Mrs. Free opened the door, and we all relaxed when we heard Father's voice,

"How do you do? Mrs. Free, I presume? I'm Father Gonalthwy."

"Come right in, Father!" she beamed. "I'm so glad you're here! Glad to meet you!"

"It's great to meet you! I'm glad I got here in time."

"We're all glad, Father," I said, as we came out of the kitchen, and Matt came downstairs, cradling his shotgun.

"I'd know you, anywhere!" Father said. "You look just like your son."

"Only a little more wrinkled," Matt answered, smiling.

We sat in the living room, and Father Gonalthwy told us what they'd been doing in Geneva.

"But," he said, when he'd brought us up to date on the endless meeting of the BaaloCrats, "that's not really why I came back. I realized that not a single one of you had been baptized, and I certainly didn't want you to go into battle without that."

"But, Father," I protested, "We haven't finished our instruction."

"You can tell me when you go to your first Confession. There's a Catholic Church not far from here. We'll go there."

Darlene and Carl and I looked at each other. In the mounting excitement, we'd completely forgotten that Carl and Darlene were still, officially, Padded-Pew Perkmistianists, and that I hadn't been baptized anything, by anyone.

"I've been thinking like a Catholic for so long it seems like I already am one," Carl said.

"Me, too," Darlene added. "Oh, Father, I'm so glad you remembered. Let's go, right away. Let's all go!" she exclaimed, looking around the room at Mrs. Free, and Malachi, his brothers and sisters, YeYe, Ya, their squadron of hand-picked Gypsies, Freddie, still inner-tubed, but able to wander up from the basement; and old Matt, still cradling his shotgun. "Let's all go!" she said, again, and we did.

"Father," I heard Mrs. Free say, "Me and my family, we's all Methodists, but they've gone sick as the Devil on this 'bortion business. I think I'd be dumb not to be baptized Catholic, too. After all, the Catholics are doin' more to keep baby black kids from bein' butchered alive than most of our own churches! The Catholics are payin' a lot to give our kids a lot better schools to go to than those blasted Gummit schools will ever be. It's about time we got ourselves on the right side. Can't we get baptized without that 'struction' that Al was talkin' 'bout?"

"How about me, Father?" asked Matt. "I'm not one to complain, but the people I've been churchin' with just don't seem to ever want to do nuffin'. Besides, all the people we's fightin',

why, it seems like they hate Catholics more'n anything! I'd be proud to be a Catholic, and grateful, too, but, like Mrs. Free, here, I ain't had no 'struction, neither. And, I have blood on my hands."

"Father," Freddie asked, walking quickly and awkwardly to the priest, his arms still restrained by the inner tube. "Can I be baptized, too? There's nothing else that can help me. Things are so confusing, so bewildering, I just can't tell what's going on."

"What about us?" demanded YeYe. "We're sick and tired of always having to travel around, fleecing suckers. We'd like to settle down, grow some real roots. How about us, Father, can we be Catholics, too?"

It was a strange procession that went down the street to the Catholic Church a few blocks away. We laughed and talked, as boisterously as school children on an outing.

"All of you, come in!" Father Gonalthwy answered, from the church doorway. "All of you. Why, I know Catholics who've had solid, Catholic educations, from grade school through graduate school, and it hasn't made the slightest impression on them. Some of them are so scared of the State that they'd rather be pseudo-intellectuals than be saved. Some of them prefer bowing before Baal than in being true to the faith of their own parents. Why, you're more Catholic than anyone I've known, all of you. You're concerned with right, you hate wrong, and, best of all, you do something about it! You lay your lives on the line! You know that

God's far greater world is just beyond. You can hear its clear call and see its beckoning brightness. All of you, come in."

And we did. Oddly, I was grateful to Brother John for opening the door I'd just been blessed to enter.

In a little over an hour, we were baptized, confessed, confirmed and blessed. We walked back to Mrs. Free's, for a fine dinner. We had a glow, a radiance that Darlene, especially, had always had, but even was more radiant. We knew we were chosen. From all the masses of humanity, *we* had answered the call that anyone can hear. We were about to risk our lives for the lives of our unborn brothers and sisters, God's children. "I almost hope I die doing this!" I said to myself. "It might be a straight shot to Heaven!" After a moment, I realized that was selfish. God might have something else for me to do. Still, what a great way to go!

"Greater love hath no man," Father Gonalthwy said, after our baptism, "than to lay down his life for his friends. You are risking your lives for babies you don't even know, for families that haven't even been formed. God bless you all!"

After Baptism, the priest heard our Confessions. Then, we were blessed with Holy Communion. Then, we were one body, one blood, far more together than we could ever hope to be apart. Sons of Jacob, sons of Ham, sons of Japeth, all the sons of Noah, brought together in One Body, One Blood, in The Only Church Jesus Founded.

“Even if we’re all arrested, it will be worth it.” I said. “Even if they execute all of us for treason, it will have been worth it.”

“It sure will,” said the oldest of the MacAbees. “Now, we’re part of the ages. We’ve made a commitment to things so far beyond us that we’ll never lose the joy of finding more.”

I began singing silently,

*“I’m in the Big Church!  
I’m in the Old Church!  
I’m in Christ’s own Church, and I’m never gonna leave!”*

For a moment, my old friend, the neon-outlined cherub, was visible to me, and I felt my spirit soaring faraway, to the vantage point from which both space and time are visible. I saw the arenas below, the vast arenas where each of the children of Noah fought his own in battle in the space and time allotted to him. I could see myself as the watchers in my grandstand saw me, and I sang to the packed house of my ancestors,

*“I’m in the Big Church!  
I’m in the Old Church!  
I’m in Christ’s own Church, and I’m never gonna leave!”*

They cheered and applauded. The joyful noise echoed off what I used to think were planets, and reverberated among what the accursed Public Schools had taught us were mere stars. “Your salvation, one of them called to me, “was why we fought so hard, when it was our turn in the arena. And you, you’re fighting so

you'll be able to sit here, too, and know the joy of others being saved."

But, I couldn't stand to listen long. I was so full of joy that it seemed that the only reason that I was created was to know it. Again, I sang.

*"I'm in the Big Church!  
I'm in the Old Church!  
I'm in Christ's own Church, and I'm never gonna leave!"*

Suddenly, in my ecstasy, my guide beckoned me even farther, even higher, and I could see myself, sitting in Future bleachers, cheering the chosen who would choose to be saved on the way to their victories over evil. Then, I understood that evil only existed so that each of the Sons of Noah could have the joy, the deep, abounding joy of growing closer to God. A simple little song from my childhood came to me, with a slight change.

*"Jesus loves me,  
This I know!  
The Bible  
And His Own Church  
Tell me so!"*

I went upstairs and prayed that none of us would be lost in the coming battle, that we would all be safe from harm, not because it would make us happy, but in case we'd need to fight again.

Close to midnight, we were ready to go. Freddie, by the miracles of Baptism, Confession, and Communion was no longer bonkers. He was sane, lucid, and saw the same world, heard the

same words, with the same meanings, that the rest of us understood. He explained, “Like Original Sin, The Church is the only thing that everyone can have in common. The Church gives us a common culture, a common value, a common language, in which we can know truth. It is the enemies of the Church who try to confuse and destroy us by confusing and destroying our sense of unity with our past and with each other.” He’d never made so much sense on purpose.

He was even happier than because he’d had so much more from which to recover. He still wore his pith helmet and jodhpurs. It was odd, that being so crazy for so long, he was the only one of us properly dressed for battle when it came.

**Finally, Ya gets his second syllable. The Free family makes BIG plan: take over their own county in West Africa. Want other Am-Blacks to help. Chopper goes up, Bridges? Whooooee**

“Carl,” asked Father Gonalthwy, “how are you going to make sure that there’s no one on the bridges who might be hurt when the bridge-boom-booms are blown?”

“We found the pilot of a local TV station’s traffic copter. YeYe’s little brother, Ya, agreed to kidnap him, if YeYe would *finally* give him his second syllable. Ya earned it! We’re forcing the pilot to fly us and we’ll stop any traffic with its huge loudspeakers. As soon as a bridge doesn’t have any cars on it, we’ll blow it. A few of YeYe’s family will barricade them with their Cadillac limousines if we need them. That way, no one will be hurt.

I interrupted Carl. “Ya got his second syllable? What’d he get?”

“Who.”

“Ya. What’d he get? What’s his second syllable?”

“Who.”

“Ya, that’s who. What’s his second syllable?” I could feel myself getting exasperated.

“I feel like I’m stuck in a bad joke,” Carl answered. “Ya’s second syllable is ‘H. O. O.- Understand?”

“Ya-Hoo? What kind of a name is that?”

“Gypsy. Now, forget it, before you think that everything that we’ve done so far is either an excuse for a remarkably bad joke, or an opportunity for you to get out your journal and write down some bubble-headed comment about the ‘sublime joy of discovering that God has a great sense of humor.’ That is what you were going to do, isn’t it?, Carl asked me.

“Yes, but only because it’s true!” I replied, wishing I could be offended, but knowing that was exactly what I’d planned. “I mean, think about it, this whole thing could have been some sort of running gag, just to end up with some Yahoo. I honestly don’t see how all this could have happened if God didn’t have a great sense of humor. Don’t you think....”

Carl interrupted me. “Do I have to you blather on, or can I get on with it? This is important. We do have to know how to get out of here after the bridges are blown.”

“All right,” I answered, testily. “I won’t go on and on about it. We do have to go over how we’re getting out of here. But, I’ll add it in, later,” I said to myself, and added this in, later.

“After we blow the bridges, the chopper will drop us off in Maryland. That’s where Matt and I will meet you, Darlene, and Freddie. The D’YuYus are going to go South. We’ve given them

some money to buy a farm. Mrs. Free and her children are going with them. They're going to live there while they get ready for their Crusade."

"*Their* Crusade?" I asked. "What's that?"

"We be gwine to Africa. Straighten out de folks in some country we gwine to take over," Mrs. Free explained. "Dey ain't one country in Africa dat the 'Crats'll let 'em run right. We figure dat iffing we can bust up dese 'ere Crats, we can go ober dere, and git a whole country runnin' de way it should be. "Den, we make Malachi de king."

"That's incredible!" My initial resentment that no one had told me about their plan temporarily overcame my ability to see what a good idea it was. "What country will you go to?"

"We figure dat we was brought here from somewhere in West Africa, 'cause we is stocky Blacks, like dem. Iffing we wuz tall 'n thin, den we'd be thinkin' 'bout takin' over a country in East Africa, where the people is tall 'n thin."

"That makes sense!" I thought to myself.

"Us going back is why," Malachi said, "God had us brought over here in chains. What faster way was there for us to catch up on two or three thousand years of progress? Now, it's our duty to go back, with crosses and guns, to help the poor African Blacks who weren't lucky enough to be sold into American slavery."

“Wow!” I marveled. “That’s got to be the most Politically Incorrect thing lever heard! Why, if groups of Black people went over there and got their own countries, who’d be left to vote for DemoCrats? If AmBlacks went over there, they wouldn’t be forced into drug addiction and theft, enslaved to provide jobs for America’s criminal justice system. In Africa, in their own countries, they could be free!”

“I hope they can do it,” Carl said. “We have the same duty to help the sons of Ham as to help everyone else.”

“When this is over, I guess that we’re going to head back to Erie, and see how things turn out. If we have to get back together again, we will.” I said, realizing that I really wanted to go to Africa and fight with the Frees to crown Malachi the Christian King of a new country on the Dark Continent. “By the way, “Who gets to go in the helicopter? Who gets to blow the bridges?” I asked, slightly hurt that I wasn’t invited to be in the detonation crew or in the Free Africa movement.

“Mattathias and I will,” Carl answered. “He’s lost more people to the BaaloCrats than anyone, so it’s only right that he gets to blow the bridges. I’ve studied the maps the most and know the alternatives if something unexpected comes up. AL, I’d like for you to make sure that *everyone* gets out of here safely, and gets to wherever they’re going.”

I agreed. Carl had led us this far, and I wasn’t about to argue now.

“God bless you all,” Father Gonalthwy said, making the Sign of the Cross when Carl and Matt got ready to leave. The Frees needed a car, so Carl gave them one of our Suburbans. We’d drive the other one back to Erie.

Moving quickly, we packed the Free family’s few possessions. By the time we’d finished getting everyone and everything ready, the Frees and the D’YuYus had agreed to travel together. Mrs. Free still had relatives down South, family who hadn’t been pressed into the Northern labor pool after WWII, family who hadn’t been drugged, aborted, and brutalized to near-extinction by DemoCrats on their endless vote-buying spree.

Mrs. Free carried my money belt, expanded considerably to fit her far more ample waist. “We ought to let her carry the money,” Darlene suggested. “YeYe’s a little more likely to spend it on something that might not be as wise a purchase.”

“Something like a 797?” asked Carl.

“Good bye! Good-bye!” we called as the Free family and the D’YuYus pulled away from the newly emptied row houses, heading South, to farms and freedom. The Frees led the way in the extra Suburban, followed by the dump truck and the long line of dark D’YuYu limousines headed to blockade any necessary bridges, curtains of bright beads jiggling in their windows.

Freddie, Darlene, Father Gonalthwy, Matt and I had tears in our eyes, as we waved the convoy around a corner and out of sight.

“We’d better get moving,” Freddie, newly sane, said, breaking the sadness.

“Yes, we had,” I agreed. We dropped Carl and Matt and the radio-controlled detonators at the helicopter, where the pilot had been tied and gagged by Ya-Hoo D’YuYu and two of his burly cousins.

“God speed!” we told each other as the chopper blades began to turn. We breathed a sigh of relief when the chopper took off, and another sigh as we got past Rockville and the Northernmost of the bridges they were going to blow. Oh, but we were glad, when we got to the safety of Maryland, where Carl and Matt would rendezvous with us when they were finished.

“We made it out,” Darlene said. “We won’t be trapped in that awful city, with that awful gang of BaaloCrats.”

“I hope this gives them time to come tops with realities beyond their salaries, soft jobs and pensions,” said Father Gonalthwy.

“It won’t help all of them,” Freddie said, with a lucidity we were rapidly growing used to. “They have to be approached as individuals and dealt with by example. They can’t be bullied into being good.”

“That’s true,” Darlene replied, “But, force can stop the butchery of unborn, innocent children. Once they stop doing that, they have a chance at salvation.”

“Let’s listen,” I suggested. “We might be able to hear how Carl and Matt are doing.” I pulled off the road, on a hill outside the City, and shut off the motor. We got out, and heard, very faintly, the sound of rolling thunder.

Between the thunderous road of bridge boom-booms, my Guardian Angel must have opened up a channel in the air, because I’d swear I heard Old Matt, crying “Whoooooeeeeee!”

POSTSCRIPT: After our successful mission, I flew to Switzerland and met Young Matt at the Benedictine Monastery. He wanted to hear the details of what had happened.

After I’d finished telling him of our great adventure, he thought for a moment. Then, he said, “Come take a look at the Benedictine’s idea of those 3-D pixels and fractal patterns you been talkin’ bout. You might like to see how crude all human efforts are compared to The Loving Programmer’s ability to program the energies and particles that He compiled into the systems and beings that make up The Creation Program.”

He led me into the great, Gothic chapel. We went behind the altar, and down a stone staircase. We entered what was once a huge crypt. There was an immense electric train layout. Little villages, little people, little animals, and little electric trains were in a tiny land that had been made with uncanny reality. A monk sat at the controls, and kept the electricity flowing. The little,

plastic engineer who leaned out of the little train was a remarkably complicated robot.

“His eyes are really little optical receptors wired into heat sensors. When he ‘sees’ something warm on the track, his hand pulls a lever that stops the train. When the track is clear, the train speeds up. If, while you operate the model train, you picture a real engineer, who can have children, read books, and think about being alive, you see the difference between the best creations that man can make and The Loving Programmer’s Creation Program.”

I watched the little engineer drive the little train around the little track. It slowed down or stopped every time a warm animal or person-like robot got in front of it. It was a little more complicated than that, but not much. It was the best that the minds of men and the hands of model makers could do.

The monk who ran the pale reflection of God’s creation?

“He’s doin’ penance for somethin’, but I don’ know what,” Young Matt explained.

The monk looked up, and explained, “We used to be scourged for manifesting vanity. Then, we found a better punishment. We discovered that making us sit and stare at the best that man could do and be kept away from seeing what God did was an even better punishment,” explained the monk.

“WHOOOOOO! WHOOOOOO!” went the whistle on the remarkably unlikelike little train as it ran around and around

through the most unlikeliest little villages populated with the most unlikeliest little people.

Portersville, Pa. 1993/2012/2017

## Glossary:

**Abortion:** Proof that Government has the power to take innocent life. In the descent into slavery, abortion follows birth control, comes just before Euthanasia. See also Euthenabort, Historical Constant(s).

**Acid Rain:** First big, bureaucratically profitable Imaginary Problem (which see). Also see: Environmentalism.

**BDT(s):** Brain Dead Twit(s). Believer(s) in Conventional Reality (which see).

**Baalocrat:** Final stage of Crat moral decay, beginning with control by DemoCrat, then bureaucrat, ending with BaaloCrat. Stage identified by slavery, State Barracks and Dining Rooms (which see), human sacrifice. See in other sources: Aztec, Babylon, Communist, Maya, Planned Parenthood, USSR.

**Backwards Evolution:** The process by which free-living beings turn into parasites. eg: Earthworms turn into leeches, private-sector workers get NIWOS Gov-Jobs (which see). Most honest, accurate (therefore most Politically Incorrect) answer to any question about cause of government mistake or policy failure. "Because they're can't do any better." Phrase is not to be spoken aloud in most countries. Doing so may be punishable by

discharge, death, imprisonment, torture in most BureauCratic Governments. BaaloCratic governments have eliminated anyone with a Brain Rank (which see) high enough to think this thought along with anyone with the courage to speak it.

**Beaver Awareness:** EPA/USDA Program to eradicate or reeducate animals that build dams. “If people shouldn’t be allowed or encouraged to work hard and build dams, why should animals?” asks V. P. Bider Gordum.

**Bigberg(s):** Huge, county-sized, mountain-flattening, valley-gouging chunk(s) of ice broken from ice caps floated in the Flood. It’s a simple concept whose uncontractability undermines pillars of Conventional Reality (which see). Implicit in Bigberg Theory is the notion that The Loving Programmer wrote and downloaded The Creation Program within the past ten-twelve thousand years.

**Bird-God:** Like all idols, a bad idea.

**Brain-Rank Theory of Reality:** Each, individual brain has an ideal level of operational complexity. Higher ranking brains are more valuable in Free Markets, and generally get paid more. Governments and Special Interests thrive by getting more money for their followers than their actual Brain-Ranks would entitle them to in a free market.

**ChairChair:** Chair sat in by Chair.

**Consumerbrain:** Place where all economic activity takes place.

**Conventional Reality:** What all good taxpayers are supposed to believe. Fedtube (which see) calls it “News”. PubEd (which see) calls it “Education”.

**Crat(s):** 1. Stand-alone noun, suffix and abbreviation for people who take money from their neighbors at the point of a gun. (See also Historical Constant) 2. People who take more money from their neighbors at gunpoint than they would make doing the same job in a free market. (See also PubEd.) Cratify v, Cratification. n.

**DAT:** Disarm All Taxpayers. Unified private/public Crat effort to disarm citizens in order to achieve Direct Control (which see).

**De-Fractalize, De-Fractalization:** End of time. Erasure of The Creation Program.

**Direct Control:** Stage in which DemoCrats and BureauCrats are eliminated by BaaloCrat. In this, and other sources see: slavery, enslavement, enforced prostitution, gun control, human sacrifice, PubEd.

**Environmentalism:** Large collection of Imaginary Problems (which see) providing High Brain Rank pay for Low Brain Rank

people. In this and other sources, see also: Acid rain, Government Worship), Host/Parasite Ratio, liars, MT(s).

**Euthenabort(s):** Those helping the descent toward Baalocracy by encouraging the Death portion of Death and Taxes.

**Eucharist, Holy:** Where The Loving Programmer provides direct access to The Program. See also, Transubstantiation.

**Evaluators:** Employees of the Smithsonian and similar institutions who have been given the power to appraise estates and donations of Politically Correct tax-dodgers to eliminate tax liability. (See also Grant-Grantor, Meeting-Maker, Smithsonian)

**FedTube:** Demo/Bureau/BaaloCrat controlled means of mass indoctrination. Pseudo-free TV features parrot-brained “news” readers specializing in making mountains out of mole hills, Imaginary Problems, distractions from Death and Taxes programs.

**Field Beast(s):** The new, Politically Correct name for “taxpayer(s)”

**Fields of Needs:** The endless tracts left to be homesteaded on the perimeters of every holding in Consumerbrain. Free access to the Fields of Needs makes Crats nervous. People who work hard in Fields of Needs called “greedy”, “callous”, “selfish” by

Crats who can't or won't work or explore in them. See also: Consumerbrain. Mental Real Estate.

**First Principal #1:** Outside the Trinity, no two things are equal.

**First Principal #2:** Of any two things outside the Trinity, one is better.

**Fractal(s):** Building blocks of building blocks. Related to:

**Fractalization:** Process of creation. Gods' words and the echoes from them are the fractals that give form and substance to The Creation Program. Fractaland, where we live, is composed of echoes of God's Word, and has been, from the beginning. See also: De-fractalization, Outerworld, Reverberating fractals, Replicating fractals, Multi-dimensional fractals.

**Free Markets:** Where people in Consumerbrain (which see) can freely find their rightful place in the Fields of Needs (which see) where their skills and Brain Ranks are best utilized.

**Government:** An organization with power to tax, regulate, enslave, imprison, and kill. Exist by being the biggest source of income available to its supporters; and by paying those supporters vastly more than their Brain Ranks (which see) give them the ability to make in Free Markets (which see).

**GovEmp:** Person who may be inclined to take more money than his job and abilities are worth from his neighbor at gunpoint. See also: Gov't Worshipers.

**Government Worshipers:** Crats and Crat wannabes who think it's perfectly respectable to take money from their neighbors at gunpoint, and who seek every opportunity to give them access to even more of it. See also: Backwards Evolution.

**Grant-Grantor:** Gov-Emp with the near-priestly power to grant grants. Have ability to take money from Field Beasts and give it to selected Crats (which see) to make things worse while pretending to do the opposite. They are the lowest-level Baalocrats, highest level Bureaucrats. See also: Evaluator, Meeting-Maker.

**Gun Control:** Necessary to maximize government power, destroy individual freedom, achieve Direct Control (which see). See also: Historical constant, slavery.

**Happiness:** Finding the proper level of complexity for one's brain rank and not being taxed more than 12-15%.

**Historical Constants:** Things that stay the same. God. Devil. Choices between them. Death, taxes. Inevitability of salvation or damnation. Hosts, parasites. e. g.: Progressive enslavement of formerly free citizens is an Historical Constant.

**Host/Parasite Ratio:** Number of parasites that a biological or governmental body can support before it dies.

**Imaginary Problem(s):** Distractions that Crats and Government Worshipers (which see) invent and publicize so that Field Beasts (which see) will continue to pay ever-higher taxes without noticing their ever-heavier chains. See also: Acid rain. Environmentalism, PubEd, Historical Constants.

**LSSOBKOP:** Acronym standing for “Lower Social Security Outflow By Killing Old People”, Health In Human Services program for eliminating Non-Contributors (which see).

**Little Animal(s):** Politically Correct term for the young, non-taxpaying offspring of Field Beasts, (which see). See also: Non-Contributor.

**MT(s):** Media Twit(s). Obediently parrot Imaginary Problems (which see) Eg, FedTube newsreaders (which see).

**Mainline Moderne:** Liberal essence of left-leaning Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, etc. who are convinced of Salvation By Worshipping Government. Believe in whatever Conventional Reality (see also) their Government demands. Half-way to Baal on the Big Scale. See also: Baalocrat, Prothumanist.

**Mental Real Estate:** Intellectual properties; ideas, inventions.  
See also: Consumerbrain, field(s) of needs.

**Mid-Level Brain Ranks:** Most of us.

**Mohammed:** Early, extreme Protestant, successful missionary work among descendants of Abraham and Sarah's maid-servant, Hagar. Countries converted provide rigid class structures, polygamy, high levels of homosexuality, drug use dislike of disruptive, original thinking. Homogeneous populations caused by lack of genetic variety that polygamy invariably takes away from the gene pool. Common to inflict painful sexual surgery on girls at puberty. Formerly called Mahound, name now Politically Incorrect. Most Moslems are Pro-Life, always a Saving Grace. Many revere Mary, another Saving Grace. Better chance of Salvation than most Mainline Modernes.

**Multi-Dimensional Fractals:** Specific type of basic fractal used in the programming of larger objects, systems, and beings.  
See also; Fractals, Replicating Fractals, Reverberating Fractals.

**Multi-Purpose Words:** Since each word has several meanings, assigning each word to the meaning intended is such a difficult task that it partly paralyzes most minds, forcing people into Lower Brain Ranks. God's punishment for sin, both at Eden, later at Babel, Tower of.

**NIWOS Gov-Jobs:** Lucrative employment opportunities that require No Intelligence, Work Or Skill. These jobs are provided by Crats for themselves and for Government Worshipers (which see). It's estimated that 60-70% of all civilian Government employment requires NIWOS, all such jobs are unnecessary to all but the job-holder.

**New Nobility:** Those who own tiny particles of mental real estate in the Fields of Needs within Consumerbrain.

**New Feudalism:** Modifications of basic feudal structures to provide maximum freedom to allow all the different Brain Ranks find jobs appropriate to their abilities. See also: Free-Market, Happiness.

**No-Purg-Burn Heaven Entry:** Most desirable thing for soul to make after separation from body.

**Non-Contributor(s):** Field Beast(s) too old to do anything taxable. 2. Field Beasts who are sick, crippled, or otherwise unable to be taxed. 3. Field Beasts too young to do taxable work. Abbr: Non-Cons. See also: Little Animals.

**Objects d' Deductibility:** Items donated or bequeathed to the Smithsonian (which see) or other Govt. approved repositories of uselessness that can be given vastly inflated values by Evaluators (which see).

**Old Animals:** Field Beasts (which see) too old for work, usually collecting Social Security. See also: LSSOBKOP, Little Animals, Field Beasts, Non-Contributors.

**Outerworld:** That portion of reality which appears to be outside the mind.

**Overgas Maneuver:** Excessive pain-killing gas during birth of Little Animals (which see) found to cause permanent loss of intelligence. Invented by Dr. Shekel Stupor, the Overgas Maneuver has lowered the Brain Ranks of Field Beasts worldwide so that they will pay taxes obediently and believe whatever is broadcast on FedTube. (which see.) See in other sources: Sonogram.

**PEDCOM:** Acronym for Public Employee Defense Committee, high-level Bureaucrats and low-level Baalocrats empowered to focus powers of state upon any deviant (freedom-seeking) thinking. Each nation has its own PEDCOM. Local efforts coordinated through United Nations, where the protection, multiplication, and enhancement of bureaus and crats is based.

**Photo-Op Underling(s):** Cretinous-looking Field Beasts selected for their ability to make their supervisors appear to have higher Brain Ranks than they do when photographed next to a Photo-Op Underling. Formerly: Pinhead.

**Prothumanist(s):** Formerly Catholic or Fundamentalist Protestant(s) who have, or are, spiraling toward Mainline Moderne. Also, The stage of moral decay proceeding Mainline Moderne (which see).

**PubEd:** Vast governmental training structure maintained to convince Little Animals (which see) that it's good for them to believe in Conventional Reality (which see) and pay taxes (which see) while remaining as ignorant as possible.

**PubEd Porker(s):** People with 'jobs' in the Government Schools. Introducers of little animals into government worship. See also: State-supported Academic(s),

**Replicating Fractal:** Very complicated Fractal Programs with the power to duplicate themselves in the right circumstances and surroundings. Known as "plants" and "animals". The offspring-producing portion of Creation.

**Reverberating Fractal:** Type of Fractals found in many parts of living beings. See also: Fractal, Replicating Fractal, Multi-Dimensional Fractal.

Rightful King, Our: 1. Man with the greatest percentage of Davidic genetic material. 2. Single most Politically Incorrect political theory. 3. Efficient form of Government unpopular because it deprives Crate of N1WOS Gov-Jobs (which see).

**Shem:** Ancestor of white people. Shemite, Semite: A white person. In other sources, Ham, Japeth.

**Soccer:** Game that requires hitting a hard, inflated ball with the head. Effective way to cause brain damage, and thereby lower the IQs of children, a “sport” that’s greatly encouraged by all crats.

**Smithsonian:** Largest of the Government Institutions that provide tax deductions for knick-knacks gathered by those who worship government. See also: Evaluators. 362

**Spunky Chunky(ies):** Women who watch talk shows on FedTube until they become quivering masses of neurotic, aggrieved, outraged Reverberating Fractals, (which see). Generally overweight, indeterminate sexual orientation, not found in happy marriages or families.

**State Barracks & Dining Rooms:** Ultimate goal of Crats (which see) and government worshippers. Minimize cost of controlling large numbers of Field Beasts (which see), provide easy access to Field Beasts and to their children for sexual and sacrificial purposes. See, in this and other sources: Baalocrat, Pol Pot, Sparta, State-Supported Academics, Taxes.

**State-Supported Academics:** Providers of “intellectual” justification for Conventional Reality. Over-educated, over paid, under-worked N1WOS Gov-Emps who support Death and

Taxes with lies and deceptions. Trade tenure for the death and enslavement of their own children. Too dumb to notice, too selfish to care.

**“Worship this idol or die”:** Last words many of us will hear. See also: No-Purg-Burn Heaven Entry, Direct Control.

**Taxes:** Precise method of calculating degree of slavery. As an Historical Constant, all taxes taking over 12% of income relate directly to the Degree of Enslavement. Eg. 32% taxes equals 20% enslavement. Direct correlation with Host/Parasite ratio (which see).

**TOTT(T):** Acronym for: Ten Or Twelve Tribes (Theory), the idea that most Whites, Mulattoes, Eurasians, and Mestizos of full or partial European descent who are not descended from the Ten Lost (Northern) Tribes of Israel are descended from the two Southern Tribes. Politically Incorrect idea despised by State-Supported Academics (which see). See also: Rightful King, Our.

**Transubstantiation:** The changing of the wafer and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist of the Roman Catholic Church; The Loving Programmer’s ability to download Himself within His believers. Fractilization for the masses.

**WaWa:** Also, WAWA. Acronym for Women Awake, Women Aware. Leftist women who believe in Big Government, Administrative Jobs. Many members are Spunky Chunkies (which see).

**Zion:** Chosen People. Catholics, Baptists, Fundamentalists of all denominations, Orthodox Jews. Characteristics: Pro God, Pro-Life, Pro-Family, Pro-Freedom, Pro-Gun. Not afraid to defend faith, family, and freedom with armed force, but usually wait too long to do so. See also: [Historica1 Constant](#).

## About the author:

The author attended St. Bede's Academy/College as a "token Protestant". There, he read Chesterton, and his poem, *Lepanto*. Graduated from Ripon College, Infantry OCS at Ft. Benning, MLIS from U. of Pgh, and was a Children's Librarian in Pgh. Public Schools.

Learned the Fairy Tales as a librarian, and understood there were levels of meaning in them. He believed that men could kill giants, and began to understand that public education was neither. After inheriting ten thousand dollars from his grandfather, he left his tenured position and started a business making gadgets and gizmos. He has 170 U. S. patents.

His theological world was shaken when Presbyterian Church was taken over by evil "ministers" who favored letting unborn babies be aborted. He realized that if his donated money filtered up to "Church" headquarters, it would cause reduction in his chances of Salvation, if not automatic loss thereof. His choices were clear. He could become a Catholic, Baptist, or Fundamentalist. If he had not been led by the Prophets to believe that Jesus Christ was The Messiah, he may have become an Orthodox Jew.

He became a Roman Catholic and continues to be grateful to The Church for having received him.

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