

# **IMMUNE**

**A FUTURISTIC POLITICAL THRILLER**

**BY**

**CHERYL GRAY**

**DEDICATION:**

To Les, my soul mate and husband. Thank you for  
being my tether to reality when I'm off  
in my world of *what's if's*.

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## PROLOGUE

**YEAR:** 2044  
Shawnee, Kansas  
Uniformed States of America

The New World Order of the early nineteen-nineties that had begun so frantically was gone without as much as a whimper. The people lead peaceful and serene lives with little social consciousness beyond that of personal well-being. No unhappiness, but no real joy.

Life was simple, a perfect existence of peace and tranquility similar to the lifestyle of the mid-twentieth century yet with incongruous advances in technology. Pollution, toxic waste, tobacco and alcohol, as well as sex were unknown.

GOD (Guardians of Democracy), decreed when a woman was to be artificially inseminated and bear a child... No one questioned the procedure. No one objected. There were only whispered rumors of the old society's way of procreation. Only the *Immune* knew for sure.

The Secretary of State, T. Bower Yates secretly ran the entire country, while the Presider and his cabinet went through the motions of government from the nation's capital, Topeka, Kansas. Confident that soon he would rule the entire world, Yates was unaware that Santo Kasawa in Kyoto had an identical plan. The only obstacle to either man was the two-percent of the populace unaffected by the chemically induced *apathy syndrome*.

## DAY ONE

### CHAPTER ONE

The expedition was in its second year on a once living planet that was now a dead lump of rock circling in space.

The daytime temperature was a constant one hundred-eighteen degrees with wind gusts of seven klectons. The nighttime temperature fell to fourteen below zero with winds equal to that of daytime. As unbearable as it was, with grey skies, frigid winds and parched soil, the archaeological team was grateful for the opportunity to study the ancient society. Once awesome in its technology, now gone with few clues to its demise.

Mayton Rude, the head of the team was a swarthy man with a thick beautiful head of auburn hair. His skin was tan and lined from two years of excavating, investigating and cataloging the birth and death of an entire planet. Nuclear winter had long past, but its testimony of death would be eternal.

Mayton and his team had made an unusual discovery in a particularly advanced area of civilization. About ten feet beneath the surface of the planet, in a once inhabited area, a vault was unearthed. Inside the vault were tightly pressed fiber units from plant materials of the region, infused with what seemed to be a petrified clay substance of unknown origin. Mayton speculated that it must be highly religious and well prized to have been that well concealed. As Nathan prepared to run a Carbon-721 test on the fiber units----

Mayton awakened to the sounds of his favorite crystal of ocean waves with the shrill cry of a distant sea gull. He moaned as he reluctantly opened his eyes.

"Same dream, dear?" asked his wife Gretchen.

"Same dream, but each time it goes a little further. Fascinating; really."

"You've had that same dream for as long as I've known you. Still no clue to the meaning?"

"No, but the fact that it progresses, gives me hope that I'll solve the mystery before I grow old and die."

"Speaking of dying--- don't you have something for me, Mayton?"

"Sometimes I think you're even more perverted than I am. What would I have done if I hadn't found you? Lived the rest of my life pretending that sex wasn't important?" he asked as he pulled Gretchen close.

"Be careful with that thing, you're going to bruise me," he gasped as she sank into his arms.

Mayton and Gretchen started each morning of their married life the same way. They thrashed quietly and reached orgasms in total silence. They had long since let go of their guilty feelings regarding their perversion and agreed that even if theirs was a sick relationship like GOD said, they fulfilled each other totally, so it was good. Good for them anyway, and that was all that mattered.

They slept in each other's arms until the alarm went off. Every morning the same: alarm, sex, sleep, alarm. The same ritual, but it was never boring.

"How many other couples do you think there are like us, Mayton?" Gretchen asked as she stretched and brushed her long blonde hair from her eyes. "I mean people who still have carnal knowledge?"

"I don't really know, but I estimate it's about two-percent in this country. But I think it's a lot less in lesser countries and almost non-existent in the still savage countries," he said seriously.

"Mayton, how would you know a thing like that?" Gretchen gasped.

"This is Tuesday, right? I hope to have more to tell you on the subject tonight."

"I can hardly wait, but I'll be late tonight. My publisher wants to meet with me. She has another Ollie Raccoon book assignment for me. I sure hope it's not all crap like the last one, *Ollie Raccoon Whips the Sissy Boys*. I found it personally embarrassing. Is their perversion any worse than ours?"

"I don't believe we are perverted. I believe that substantive-sex is the way that our Creator meant it to be and--"

"You mean that it's just more GOD propaganda?" she whispered. "Just like--"

But a shrill bell emanating from their central telecom unit broke her train of thought. They grabbed for their robes and dashed for their main room as the screen lit up with the nation's most holy symbol, The Flag.

"Mayton, Gretchen," the melodic voice coaxed, "please join us as we pledge our lives."

*"I pledge allegiance to the most sacred flag of the Uniform States of America and my life to the central government which is my guardian and benefactor, from which all good comes. One nation moving in unison and united in the promise of obedience and service for all."*

As the image of the flag faded, an all too familiar voice began.

"Vice-President James Turnbull's, A Moment from History, is a daily program dedicated to the cultural advancement of our citizens. Today's subject is, Medical Malpractice. Mr. Turnbull."

"Medical Malpractice was a sad and dangerous condition of the ancient medical fraternity. Back before the Reformation, medical doctors thought themselves superior. They were not the hard working servants of mankind they are today, but pompous, conceited money-grubbing users. They worked together in gangs under an agreement called, *consultation*, which was archaic-Latin for, *share the wealth*."

"If a citizen came to one of these arrogant individuals but did not have a great deal of money to give the doctor, he was sent away without medical care. Society was sick and ailing and there was no one to care for it."

"After the Reformation, GOD in their wisdom made sure that every American was supplied with lifetime medical care, free of charge. And GOD trained caring, qualified medical personnel that were grateful for the opportunity to care for the citizens of our great country. Thanks be to our GOD."

Turnbull's face disappeared and was replaced with the face of Mayton's central supervisor, Myron Digby.

"Good morning, Gretchen, Mayton. Please don't forget that your input is due on all your patients that suffer from Liberal tendencies. So far, you are the only doctor in my sector that hasn't reported in. Now we both know that's impossible. Just pay a little closer attention, or we might think that you're covering for them for some reason. But of course, that's quite ridiculous. You a Liberal? My, I've made a joke. Do have a nice day, Mayton, Gretchen. Out."

As the screen faded, Mayton and Gretchen both whispered, "Asshole," and laughed.

"Just what did you say an asshole was?" asked Gretchen as she squinted her royal blue eyes.

"I really don't know. Grandfather Rude said it a lot and it seemed to please him. He referred to my father as an asshole quite often. He always swore that some other man beat him to grandmother, because my father couldn't possibly be his. But according to my father, grandfather was a lunatic, which from what I understand if even worse than a Liberal," he explained.

"Then he was a pervert also," she said nodding her head.

"That's the only way it was commonly done, back then. But they decided that society was falling apart because of it, so GOD helped the populace evolve past sex."

"Evolve past— what a ludicrous idea. If intelligent quotients were any lower, people would start flowering," Gretchen mocked with her chin held high. "Ollie Raccoon says, 'sex makes you smarter'. What do you think?"

"I'm sure my grandfather would have agreed with you. It's really unfortunate that you never met him. I know he would have loved you."

"Let's see--- Byron Rude, distinguished Psychometric Surgeon, died when you were just coming into plurality, didn't he?" asked Gretchen.

"Yes, and it's funny but I still miss him. The day before he left, he told me a lot of strange things and said that he would always be with me. Then he laughed! It wasn't long after he died that my now famous dream started. My mother said that it was probably some suggestion that the old lunatic gave me. She also said that his disappearance was *good riddance*. That's when I really started hating her, I guess. I always related better to my grandfather than to my parents. They were so Central Committee."

"Who are you going to throw to the committee? Digby won't give up until you come up with some names. If you don't, you'll be suspect. Frankly I don't believe that they just want the names to research genetic flaws, as GOD says. There have been too many people like us who have just disappeared."

"I'll have to go through my files. I just don't know," frowned Mayton.

"You think that the central committee had something to do with your grandfather's death?"

"That was before the Central Committee, actually. He and his partner both died when the transition was taking place. I really don't want to talk about the circumstances. You know it gives me a headache."

"Don't talk about it. I was just wondering about a timeframe, that's all."

"It was right after the mastoid surgery he performed on me."

"I don't think I know what your surgery was for, Mayton."

"I'm not sure. Grandfather said I needed it, so I agreed. He was the one person in my life that I trusted completely until I met you, of course," he smiled as he pulled her close and kissed her nose.

"Not now, Mayton. We Loyal Preservationists are never late to work, not even because of sexing. We protect, preserve and produce!" she said mockingly.

"I'd better hurry too, my Quizzler will be calling soon," he said as he headed for the personal hygiene room to try and beat his shaggy red hair into submission.

## II

Mayton quickly performed his morning rituals, capped off the solar collector on his white Solis and headed for his medical clinic. Traffic was light as usual. Most people in the service industry couldn't afford a Solis and either walked to work or rode the monorail system. He was fortunate to have been given the opportunity to become a doctor. He didn't know how, but he knew that his grandfather Rude had something to do with it.

*My job may be inconsequential, but it sure beats baking wheat bread for the masses at lunch*, he thought to himself. He had many such silent thoughts, but it wasn't safe to voice them outside his own dwelling space. You could never be sure if a Social Awareness Committee member was eavesdropping. Their large white vans were easily recognized by the solar powered webbed disks, rotating prominently on their roofs. They effectively monitored the conversations of the foot weary masses. Mayton knew his home was safe, and so far he felt that his clinic was safe.

Once at his clinic he was met by Naomi, his ever vigilant nurse. As usual, she greeted him the same way she had for the past eight years.

"A gracious good morning to you, Mayton. Isn't this a glorious day GOD has given us?"

"To be sure," was always his answer. Safe, if not moronic. Naomi was competent enough, but her personal hygiene left a lot to be desired. Mayton had to pretend not to notice, but Naomi was always scratching coupled with her joyous outlook made Mayton crave a long, hot bath. No one else seemed to notice or be bothered by her actions.

She was short, non-descript and had stringy blonde hair. Society supposedly evolved past vanity, but Naomi was unconscionably *gross* as his grandfather put it, and as much as Mayton hated his red hair, fair skin and freckles, he felt like a prize next to Naomi. As uncouth as she was, she was politically perfect, and every morning before the clinic opened she would lead the staff in an approved prayer:

*"GOD is great, GOD is good, let us thank them for our food. Buy their hands we all are fed, thank you GOD for our daily bread."*

"Now family," she chirped, "produce, produce, produce!"

"Do we have any patients, Naomi?" asked Mayton.

"No, we don't. I sent them to Dr. Urse. I thought you needed the time to work on your central committee report," she beamed.

"If I don't see any patients, how can I find those with Liberal tendencies?" he asked calmly.

"I could give you two names without even seeing them again. Once was enough. Like old lady Gaste for instance. I'm sure she is a Liberal and doesn't even have the common decency to try and hide it. Give them her name and you'll be off the hook. In fact, I'll enter the report for you, if you like," she babbled excitedly.

*Oh, go scratch yourself,* he thought to himself.

"Thank you so very much, Naomi, but I'll enter the report myself. You have so very much to do in running the office and all."

"Oh, I don't mind one little bit. After all, I am a real woman and my function is to serve."

"To be sure," he answered absentmindedly. As he sat at his processing terminal, he called up his impressive list of not yet published books he wrote under the pen name of *Dauntless*. Even if he could find someone willing to print his incendiary works, he knew of no book stores that would carry titles like: *From Nostalgia to Nausea*, *Bumper Sticker Politics* and *Analyzing the 90's*. Mayton resented it, but well understood the common sense.

He was currently working on a masterpiece entitled, *2012: The Reformation*, which explored the reorganization of America to the Uniform States and the annexation of Mexico as the fifty-fourth through fifty-ninth states. It also ushered in a whole new society reminiscent of the United States of the nineteen-thirties.

Mayton was suddenly aware of a large envelope sitting on the corner of his desk marked *personal*. It wasn't very often paperwork was handled manually. Almost all information came through the transom.

"Naomi, where did this envelope come from?" he asked into his desk telecom unit.

"I have no idea. It was in the delivery slot when I arrived this morning. Is everything all right?" she chirped.

"Fine, Naomi--- just fine."

Mayton opened the envelope slowly as if he were in touch with something very special. He began to read.

/^~-\>^4/82346 ACCESS APPROVED  
Class 1-1a/Priority Security Clearance

WELCOME 101353- clear terminal at -end of inquiry-

**- TWILIGHTERS -**

FINAL REPORT - April 15, 2000

**O V E R V I E W**

Study time frame: 1975 - 2000

Subject: 105,000 children born 1965 - 1985

Locality: spot checked throughout US

Blind: 5% case study - no drugs used at birth

Code: B-514 / Twilighters

Dr. Eric Van den Patt, Head of research - Washington Genetic  
Education/Research Council

Antidote: (none known)

Contraindications: approx. 1.789% of case study: Immune (cause unknown)

Outcome Prognosis: suicide

Projected probability ratio: 93.211 %

It was determined that when severe interpersonal problems were introduced within the family, it categorically ceased to function as a unit (political/social inactivity).

Although *Family Terrorism* was deemed not to be time efficient (10-12 years to evaluate effectiveness) B-514 is still routinely used for populous control.

-End-

**SEQUENCE TIME LINE**

**CASE STUDY - 1**

Kevin Anthony Brown, male/white 8 lb. 6 oz. / 22 in.

**NORMAL**

Born: March 22, 1975

Parents: Marcia/Wayne Brown

Providence, Rhode Island

Providence General Hospital

Family Code: 3a

Age 12: ran away

Age 17: suicide - drug overdose

**CASE STUDY - 2**

Sheena Juonne Mapes, female/black 7 lb. 12 oz. / 18 in.

**NORMAL**

Born: August 18, 1977

Parents: Luticia/Rodney Mapes

Harlem, New York

Harlem Mid-City Medical Center

Family Code: 5c

Age 14: ran away

Age 19: suicide - gunshot wound, left breast

**CASE STUDY - 3**

Celine Rose Ramirez, female/Hispanic 7 lb. 9 oz. 21 in.

Club foot/respiratory problems - unsuitable for study

**CASE STUDY - 4**

Cory Drew Anderson, male/white 9 lb. / 23 in.

**NORMAL**

Born: December 7, 1980

Parents: Marilyn Drew/Cory Anderson

Boston, Massachusetts

Boston General Hospital

Family Code: 5a

Age 10: attempted arson - family home

Age 11: ran away

Age 14: suicide - wrists opened with razor blade

-End of report-

Mayton locked the report in his private cabinet. He was experiencing a slight sense of panic, when he was suddenly aware that Naomi was standing over him smiling and clucking like a chicken.

"Mayton, I do hate to bother you, but your suspicious man is on the telecom again. Once again just sound, no picture," she huffed as she planted herself firmly in a chair next to Mayton.

"Thank you, Naomi. What would I do without you?" he smiled. Naomi made no effort to leave and stared excitedly at the flashing telecom button.

"Thank you Naomi. Please close the door behind you as you leave," he said firmly, this time without a smile.

Naomi left the room with rounded shoulders and down cast eyes.

"Hello, this is Mayton Rude."

*Hello Dr. Rude. Do you know who shot Presider John F. Kennedy?*

"Yes, it was an elaborate conspiracy that included --"

*Do you know when Mount Rushmore was demolished?*

"Certainly, it was in April of---"

*Do you know why Mount Rushmore was demolished?*

"Yes, I do. The political climate of the country was very tenuous at best and--"

*Read the computer files, Dr. Rude.*

"What files?" asked Mayton sincerely. He waited for a response through several seconds of silence.

*Thank you, I'll call you again tomorrow.*

Mayton released the telecomm with a sigh. Each time the Quizzler called, he hung up before Mayton could answer any of his strange yet exciting questions. Mayton was well aware that this could all be a trap from the Social Awareness Committee, but his life outside of Gretchen felt so empty, he was willing risk it.

His grandfather schooled him on all-important historic facts before his disappearance. He knew when firearms were banned, when world free trade was adopted and when GOD saved the people from themselves. At the time, Mayton wasn't really interested but at his grandfather's insistence, he studied well. He was glad he paid attention, *but what files?*

### III

Gretchen already was in her blue sweat suit by the time Mayton got home. She sat in her favorite chair braiding and unbraiding her long blonde hair; a nervous habit from childhood.

"I truly amazes me that you are able to roll your hair under and make it look *bobbed*. No one would ever suspect that your hair is such an unconventional length," said Mayton warmly as he stroked her hair from behind.

"Well, if I could I'd cut it about an inch long all over and make it orange or blue or maybe even purple!" grumbled Gretchen.

"My, my! Did someone piddle in your salad at lunch?" teased Mayton warmly.

"No! I have my new book assignment, Rude. They want an Ollie Raccoon book about the practice of abortion, but what they want me to write sounds very odd. Do you know about abortion?"

"Yes, my grandfather Rude told me about it."

"Seriously, I need to know exactly what your grandfather Rude told you. I mean, *exactly*."

"Clinically speaking, it's a medical procedure that terminates a pregnancy."

"Okay, but why on earth would any real woman not want to have a baby?"

"Sometimes poor women without enough food and no medical care would find themselves pregnant, so out of necessity they would get an abortion."

"What do you mean no money or food?" queried Gretchen. GOD supplies food and money for all its citizens."

"In the old days, the government left it up to the people. Grandfather said that a lot of people fell through the cracks of society. Every year, more and more people became homeless and hungry, with more unwanted pregnancies."

"How very sad."

"It gets better, or rather worse. The government started paying people that had babies money for their medical care. But as I understand it, the people didn't spend the money on the babies, but rather on drugs and

alcohol and the babies were neglected. A lot of babies would have been better off not being born."

"Abortion?" asked Gretchen wide eyed.

"I'm afraid so."

"Why doesn't GOD tell the people the truth about the old society? Why are they so dogmatic with their bullshit stories?" huffed Gretchen.

"Gretchen, my love. You are getting too comfortable with using swear words. You know how dangerous it would be to slip outside. I've heard stories about Liberals and Perverts disappearing for good, and we are, both."

"You're right Mayton, but sometimes I get so tired acting like a simpleton and that everything's wonderful. It feels so good to come home to you and let go."

"You and home are the only two things that keep me going," he smiled.

"Okay, so abortion only applied to poor women who couldn't afford babies, right?" asked Gretchen, trying to understand.

"No exactly. Grandfather said that in the old days, some men would force themselves on women and make them pregnant. Occasionally it would even be a girls own father or uncle."

"Oh, that's disgusting! But that's certainly not what my publisher has directed me to write. Just listen to the premise of this book."

Gretchen took her notebook from her briefcase and flipped through pages until, "Here it is! It is suggested--- Mrs. Herman said *suggested* so I will feel like a writer with a sense of choice, but what she means is, I will or I won't be able to get anything published. But I digress.

"Ollie Raccoon is to go back in time to the late twentieth century and stop the hoards of un-women from roaming the countryside killing babies. He kindly talks them into giving their unwanted babies to loving, kind, real women, who will love and care for them until the age of plurality."

"Does this make any sense to you?"

"Yeah, it makes perfect sense. They're rewriting history again. May the Creator damn GOD," sighed Mayton.

"Mayton, don't even whisper that. You know what would happen if anyone were to hear you! Please..." she gasped with tears in her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Baby."

"Oh, Mayton, you know words like that show perversion. We have to be careful. I expect to have the Watchers break into our bedroom some morning when we're sexing."

"Gretchen, the proper usage is *having sex*, or making love, or just plain fucking. After all, you are a writer."

"All right. I don't want anything to happen to our just plain fucking" she smiled.

Mayton tried not to smile but did.

"But seriously-- It's also suggested that the un-women had painted faces."

Mayton frowned.

"You know, I remember my grandmother's picture album with women wearing lip-color and blue stuff above their eyes. I thought it was quite pretty and every woman looked different! Different hair colors, lip-colors, makeup techniques and lots and lots of jewelry items!"

"I remember my grandmothers photo album, also. People had such personal variety in expression back then," agreed Mayton.

"But seriously, if makeup is all that bad, why did St. Rockwell paint women wearing makeup?"

"Let me get my Great American Artist's book and take a peek," whined Mayton in his best Digby voice. "Let's see---"

St. Norman Rockwell lived in the mid-nineteen hundred's and is accredited with some of the greatest works of art known to man. He embraced *wholesome family values* as well as strong and productive living. He showed us pictorially how to live, love, work and laugh. He even had the foresight to paint pictures of evils as a warning to the future citizenry. Made a saint during the Reformation in the year two thousand and twelve."

"It doesn't say much else about him except that all of his paintings are national treasures. But you're right, the women are wearing makeup and it looks like some of the men are too. I guess when these were painted, makeup wasn't illegal."

"Not like now," sighed Gretchen, "Ever since the Tammy-Faye laws prohibiting makeup, we all look almost identical with bobbed mousy hair and shiny scrubbed faces."

"Well, you can always pinch your cheeks and bite your lips for a little color," teased Mayton.

"Oh God, you sound just like my mother! She always made me feel warped as I was growing up. You should be more feminine, Gretchen. You

shouldn't be so aggressive. I wish you could be more like me! You never knew my mother, but she was the consummate victim in life."

"What about your father?"

"He was always too busy to bother with the mundane chores of raising a child. He worried about nothing and my mother worried about everything. She had a way a making me feel responsible for all of her unhappiness, although she would never admit she was unhappy. She'd insist she was fine, with a deep sigh."

"They remind me a lot of my own parents. My father was always busy doing research for the Central Committee and my mother was always baking cookies or dusting the furniture. She always wore old torn and stained clothes when she cleaned the house, as if it were some sort of a holy uniform. They were such depressing people! But then there was my grandfather and he made up for it all. I never knew my grandmother. She died after a short illness when I was just a baby. Grandfather never wanted to talk about it, but I know he loved her until the day he died."

"At least you had a chance to know your grandparents. Mine disappeared when I was just about twelve years old. I still think my father turned them in for being Liberals. So we'll never see my parents. If he could turn in his own parents, he wouldn't hesitate in turning us in," sighed Gretchen.

"Interesting, isn't it? We are opposites of our parents, but almost identical to our grandparents? I wonder then, if we have a child, would he or she would hate us?"

"Certainly not! We're not assholes, and since when do you find bruised cheeks and lips attractive?"

"Oh, you are such a despot, so sinful, vile, and unrighteous. Nay I say, a Liberal!" teased Mayton. "I certainly hope that you don't voice such depraved ideas on the outside," he smiled.

"Certainly not!" she gasped. "But I would just love to cut my hair real short, with long bangs that hang over my eyes, maybe-- or wear bright blue shadow and real black eyelash stuff-- or just tell Digby to go fuck himself!"

"Certainly Gretchen and you'd disappear right along with all of the other writers that have tried such things," smiled Mayton.

"Writer, my ass. Yes, I do know the Ollie Raccoon series is crap, but at least I have the chance to write. But this bullshit about hordes of un-women--- I mean, really!

Just how many people will believe it?"

"I figure about ninety-eight percent of this country, slightly more in less developed countries and total belief in still savage countries," nodded Mayton. "Naturally the people like us won't swallow it, but does it matter? There are so few of us."

"Oh Mayton, sometimes I wish we were just like everyone else. It would be so much easier--"

"Gretchen, I know that look. There's something you're not telling me. Come out with it. No don't, I don't want to hear it.

Gretchen waited knowing Mayton was much too curious to leave it alone.

"Okay, tell me!" babbled Mayton.

"Well dear, we got an invitation today, and you know we can't refuse. I don't make the stupid rules I just follow them. Now Mayton, covering your ears won't help one bit! Stop it! She growled pulling his hands away.

"But Gretchen...." he plead.

"You know we have to go, especially considering you're a doctor and a neighbor. You have no excuse. Don't you even want to know who?" asked Gretchen smugly.

"No, I do not!"

Gretchen waited.

"Okay, who?"

"Say please," Gretchen pouted.

"Please," he groaned.

"Michelle Grant and she's acting like she was the only one ever chosen by GOD to conceive. She just had to bring over the decree with the official seal to show me. 'Honored', she wept," mocked Gretchen as she wiped a pretend tear from her cheek. "I, of course was duly impressed and complimented her on her genes and all. You know we have to go to her Annunciation Celebration."

With a deep sigh, Mayton asked, "When?"

"Next week, as soon as the impregnation is complete," sighed Gretchen.

"Shit."

"I know, Dear--- I know."

## DAY TWO

### IV

Mayton awoke earlier than usual with a particularly urgent need. The Twilighter's report he received still had him perplexed. He was sure that it was genuine, but for what purpose?

Gretchen was sleeping so soundly and it was still very early. He knew it would be nice to just let her sleep but decided on alternate action. He snored loudly and flopped his arm across her chest. He began gently thrashing as if he was having a nightmare. This always worked. Gretchen was very sympathetic to nightmares.

She responded as expected. She took his hand and began gently kissing it. First the palm, then the fingers, then---

"Ouch!" wailed Mayton. "You bit me! I was having a nightmare and you bit me!" he cried as he clutched his finger.

"Bullshit!" she laughed. "You wanted to arouse sympathy for the exclusive purpose of sex, you old pervert."

"Well maybe, just a little," he whimpered.

"Well, come here. I didn't say it was a bad idea---," she cooed as she licked Mayton's sore finger. "There Honey, isn't that better?"

"Not yet Gretchen. I have more hurts..."

Their inventiveness and giving made every morning a new adventure in love. Their breathing had just began to return to normal when the telecom sounded.

"Try to look sleepy, Gretchen," smiled Mayton as he reached for the attendance button.

*"I pledge allegiance to the most sacred flag of the Uniform States of America and my life to the Central Government which is my guardian and benefactor, from which all good comes. One nation moving in unison and united in the promise of obedience and service for all."*

"Vice-President James Turnbull's, A Moment from History" is a daily program, dedicated to the cultural advancement of our citizens."

"Our subject today is *Sheriffs*. Sheriffs, at one time were officially sanctioned law enforcement agents that because of unchallenged power became corrupt.

They were a band of large, muscular brutes that once roamed the country, under the pretense of protecting its citizenry. They were easily recognized by their vulgar mustaches and mirrored sunglasses.

"But as a society we were evolving past the need for law enforcement. And when they felt their power being eroded by sanity, they ran amuck and became outlaws themselves. They beat helpless, gentle people for the pleasure of it, which oft time ended in death.

"Power and greed, feeds on power and greed. They were officially banned in two thousand and fifteen. It was a well-proven fact that these hairy men were beasts. GOD in their wisdom eliminated the excessive hair and thereby eliminated the beast. Praise be to our GOD."

As Gretchen reached to terminate the transmission, an all too familiar voice stopped her.

"Good morning Gretchen, Mayton," whined Digby as he grinned at them from the wall to wall screen.

"Just look at those nose hairs!" whispered Mayton. "And why is that dead-mouse under his nose so ragged? GOD gave him the mustache, maybe he could ask for some sharp scissors to trim the damned thing."

"Good morning, Digby," smiled Gretchen as she kicked Mayton.

"Don't forget about your report, Mayton. The committee is more than anxious to start helping some of the poor unfortunates. We're depending on you to help. A pleasure as always, Gretchen--- *out*."

"Why is it only government stooges grow mustaches? I mean, why can't you grow one? I wouldn't want you to. I think it looks rather vulgar, but why can't you?"

"A shot or a pill or something of the kind, only for the valiant, government few who are allowed the indulgence of a mustache. I guess it's cheaper than a gold watch, but Digby would look ridiculous even without it."

"Maybe we should let him watch us have sex, then he would die of a heart attack and he wouldn't bother us anymore. What do you think?"

Gretchen grinned as she grabbed Mayton's groin.

"I think you're wonderfully wicked, but I should get going to the office. I have a new patient today. I don't get many new people these days. Oh, and I'm going to need a large dose of perverted sex all this week, if you expect me to go to that damned party," Mayton warned with a devious grin.

"If I have to," she grinned.

## V

When Mayton arrived at his office, Naomi was sitting at her desk, smiling and tapping her pencil.

"Did we forget we had a new patient today, Mayton?"

"No we did not, Naomi. In fact I'm right on time for my appointment," smiled Mayton.

"Oh well, Mr. Aims was early then! He's in your office waiting. Here's is his medical history and basics," said Naomi as she pushed a chart at Mayton.

"Efficiency, thy name is Naomi," cajoled Mayton. "Maybe I could have some tea when you have a moment?"

"I'd be only too pleased. After all, I am woman and I'm here to serve," blushed Naomi sincerely.

Mayton smiled sheepishly. *Sometimes you're an asshole, Rude*, he thought silently.

Mayton entered his office and saw an odd little man about thirty-five years old biting his lip and blinking rapidly.

"Hello Mr. Aims. I'm Mayton Rude," he smiled as he extended his hand towards the nervous man sitting across the desk from him.

"Dr. Rude," he nodded nervously.

Mayton began mumbling as he read the chart, "You're five foot, nine inches, and you weigh one hundred, sixty-eight pounds, blood screening: *normal, normal, normal.*"

"Yes, I know," nodded the timid little man.

"Everything looks quite healthy," Mayton smiled. "What can I do for you?"

"I must be careful for both our sakes, you know."

"Certainly," Mayton nodded.

"I am a Senior Advisor in the State Department, accountable to the Secretary only."

Mayton waited for him to continue.

"I am immune," he said with raised eyebrows waiting for Mayton to react.

"The only one in the whole department I think, except for maybe Lewis, and Jamie of course," he laughed. "They're worried, but they're not

sure. I'm very careful not to stand out. It's quite a strain at times. I'm safe for the moment and I don't want to put you at risk. I don't think they know."

"I appreciate that," Mayton smiled not knowing quite what to say.

"I've read all your books you submitted to publishers. You'll never be published, you know. You're at the head of the 'Blue List'. I knew you'd understand and maybe could help. You seem unaffected, and I'm hoping you're immune too."

"Go on." Mayton wrote a note to check on employment and psychiatric history.

"Tell me, do you ever dream?"

*Dream?* Mayton asked himself. With a deliberate snicker Mayton admitted, "Yes, I dream. And no I don't believe that dreams are only for those with guilty consciousness, as GOD says."

"Please, tell me about your most puzzling dream. It's more important than idle curiosity," pleaded Crighton.

"Well, I'm almost embarrassed. Sometimes it makes me seem so dissatisfied and ungrateful," admitted Mayton cautiously as he watched for a reaction.

"Bullshit!" interrupted Crighton. "Those are GOD's words, not our words. Just tell me about your dream."

"Why should I admit anything to a total stranger?"

"Maybe because I'm not a stranger and you've found a mirror of sorts."

*What the hell*, he thought. "It's always pretty much the same. I'm the head of an archaeological team on a planet that is now just a dead lump circling in space. The technology was once awesome, but now everything is gone. We discover a buried treasure vault and I wake up. That's just about it," sighed Mayton as he waited for a reaction.

"Oh," and without as much as a blink, Crighton continued. "There really aren't many of us, you know. I estimate about two-percent. Unlike what GOD says, sometimes our dreams do have validity. Tell me, do you know recent past history? I mean say the nineteen-eighties and nineties?" he whispered.

"Yes," admitted Mayton cautiously. "I know that in the sixties and seventies the "L" word was Lesbian and in the nineties the "L" word meant and still means, Liberal."

"Good," sighed Crighton with a smile. "Then you remember back in the early nineties. Not long before the election, when the vice-President's popularity started to slip because he was thought of as a sissy?"

"I believe that was a *wimp*."

"Wimp, dip, dork, sissy, no matter. At that time, the Secretary of State was Markson. As you know he was supposedly of English decent, but what is not known is that he was actually raised in the Soviet Union. His parents **were** both American but he is Soviet by birth. You do know about the Soviet's, don't you? Of course, you do. He was a *mole*. You know--- a plant for the Communists. Communism was where nobody had anything and they wanted to share it with the world. The Soviet Empire had all but dissolved. No more need for a top-level spy, since there was no central Soviet left to report to. But Markson was a brilliant man--- He was smooth and very tricky. He really knew how to handle *suits*.

"Suits?"

"Yes, politicians. Nice suits wearing *power ties* and nothing inside except old underwear. All image and no substance. He sold the vice president on the idea of a slick Madison Avenue approach of packaging himself to sell to the public just like chewing gum. The party was desperate and agreed. So the *then* Secretary's Team took over the handling of the would-be President and the campaign. He was told how to dress, the proper body language, buzz phrases even to the tilt of his head when smiling. He practiced for hours, snarling and putting the *Media* in their place. He strutted around barking about kicking ass and so on. The team blew so much smoke up his ass he almost floated! It worked and that was just the beginning of the path we are still on today, but the tactics have been escalated and perfected.

"A child genius member of that team is now our current Secretary of State, T. Bower Yates. It was then that Yates' plan was born. He was just a teenager and had time. He stayed in the shadows writing speeches and waited for the right time. So when the Media President's *son* ran for President two decades later the well-oiled machine went into action. He was elected and a string of events began that almost caused world war three.

"One man all by himself?"

"No, some were already in motion. But one bad decision after another, believing he was invincible and continually backing the wrong side almost destroyed our country."

"I never heard the whole story and heaven knows you can't ask."

“It was one more chapter in the ongoing Middle East crisis. We sided with the aggressor trying to expand their territory. The surrounding countries banded together to try and stop the incursion. We sided with an invading army against the rest of the world. Even our allies, distanced themselves from us,” he sighed deeply and shook his head in disbelief. “We were in deep shit and *our side* could not, would not back down.”

“That is Israel, right?” asked Mayton excitedly.

“The area is Israel now, but back then it was many countries, but they no longer exist. They were absorbed and we as a nation did nothing. And although Yates wasn’t ready, U-81 was released in the Mideast as well as test pockets around the world.

“What---“ Mayton began but stopped when Crighton continued.

“Then methodically changes were made. A Constitutional Convention allowing unlimited terms of office, title of President changed to Presider, a few updates of the *intentions* of the founding fathers, and viola! The Uniform States of America: sixty-one identical properties. The annexation of Mexico almost seemed noble, at the time. But that too was all part of Yates’ plan.

“How do you---“

“I know all this from well-kept records. Then not long after that, the Presider was convinced of the idea of the peoples need to be cared for and that they were not intelligent enough to make their own decisions. He and his team started re-thinking, re-shaping history, which had nothing to do with facts. The people that supported him believed the distortions and those who didn’t just shook their heads and kept quiet.

“Words like: control, nurture and care for, a more docile nation. The Presider bit, hook, line and sinker. He even agreed that Congress couldn’t be trusted and everything on a *need to know* basis was for their own good. And Yates was pulling all the strings.

“Finally the people had enough of the lies and bullshit. The sounds of Revolution were beginning, but Yates could not allow something as bothersome as that. Then U-81 was deployed across our country, grievous but not deadly like their Ultimate Solution, TG-6. I’m sorry Mayton but I’m bouncing all around. Please try to stay with me.”

Mayton just nodded as he took notes.

“In a nutshell, TG-6 is the grandson of an viral invention commonly known as Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome.

"Aids? Wait just a minute, Mr. Aims," Mayton stammered. "The AIDS virus you're talking about a cure was found early in this century! I realize that memories seem to have disappeared, but I can assure you, mine is in tact."

"Wonderful!" grinned Aims. "I will call you Mayton and please call me Crighton. We have a lot of very hard and close work to accomplish together."

"Go on, Crighton. You have me interest."

"As you so clearly remembered, the AIDS virus was cured because it found it's way into the general populous. Don't you see? It was not supposed to! It was intended to eliminate social deviates and it ended up eliminating a lot of very talented writes, film stars, dancers and artists of all kinds. Then came the breakthrough with TG-6.

"Are you trying to tell me that the AIDS virus was a product of our government?" whispered Mayton.

"No, no, no, certainly not. It was a product of, let's say a group of scientists and elitists that in their own minds, were trying to purify the world," explained Crighton.

*Thank the Creator*, whispered Mayton to himself.

"But I'm afraid that TG-6 is a product of our fine government. Very similar to the AIDS virus, but perfected."

Mayton tried not to show his excitement at the possibility of some answers.

"There were five others before it, but they had too much of a shot gun effect. What they were looking for was a targeted approach. The official stated purpose was to rid society of homosexuals, drug users and other deviates through their own volition--- a kind of suicide through anti-social behavior. Under those guidelines, TG-6 was the consummate solution.

"TG stands for?" squinted Mayton.

"Targeted Genocide."

"It's almost funny when I think about that television preacher taking credit for ridding the world of *homos*," grimaced Mayton. "The self-righteous ass."

"Precisely," agreed Crighton.

"I know something has been happening slowly, very slowly. People have seemed to regress and become more simple or," pondered Mayton.

"I've secretly labeled it the *Apathy Syndrome*.

"I knew I came to the right man! U-81 is responsible for what you've aptly named, Apathy Syndrome."

"How?"

"Step by step, U-79, or more commonly, the Med-Fly was also created in a government lab. Then a spray to eradicate it, to protect agriculture. But first it had to be tested to make sure it wouldn't just kill all the agriculture--- enter acid rain. That was their near fatal mistake. The U-80 compound was much too strong. It killed vegetation and pissed the people off. Too much made people psychotic. So a weakened U-81 was introduced into the Great Lakes and worked well. That took care of the entire North Eastern United States and a large part of Canada as well.

Also the weakened solution was introduced as Malathion to be used on the Med-Fly, which took care of the Southwest. You see we couldn't put it in the water supply of California, because they monitor it so closely --- health freaks and all. But the ghetto areas and large parts of the south, it went right in the water, and no one noticed.

The nations food was contaminated through the government supplied fertilizers. That was the real boon. It held its integrity even when the grain was harvested, processed and consumed. Stores sold U-81 bread and of course no one even suspected.

"Then U-81 is like a tranquilizer? puzzled Mayton."

"Not that easy. U-81, simply put is *chemically induced apathy*. Little by little, over time, people were not as mad, didn't protest as much, didn't care as much. But let me back up--- I'm ahead of myself again."

Mayton nodded.

"Although the Presider was pleased with the results of his eighty percent popularity in the polls, the worried that if Congress found out, he'd be disgraced, impeached and worst of all, his place in history would be muddled. He honestly believed that his popularity was of his own doing and he wanted nothing to interfere with his planned memoirs and lucrative speaking engagements, especially in Japan. By then it was very close to the National Convention and suddenly the Presider decided not to run. The then vice-President was assured of the nomination, but he needed a running mate--- obstacle number one.

"“Mr. Vice-President, I assure you that no matter who you pick, you will be elected President,” his aides promised him.

"He knew U-81 worked well, but this was a big gamble.”"

"But to prove his point and in a flash of perverse genius, the Secretary picked as the running mate, a man who was a leader in the Star Chamber--- the power behind the government. Under normal circumstances, pre-U-81 he would never have come out into the light. But post-U-81, it no longer mattered. Mayton sighed and kept writing.

"The new Presider ordered the Secretary to cease and desist implementing U-81. He felt he had accomplished all he needed and there was still that twenty-percent who could end his career.

"But after tea with the Yates, we had a kinder, gentler Presider. The Presider who no longer worried and did what the Secretary directed him to do. The Vice Presider just went along. Slowly the Star Chamber simply died away.

"Except the twenty percent was now only two-percent, but holding firm. That small portion of the populace seemed to be immune to U-81. They would not accept *dots-of-hope* and *take care of each other and don't expect the government to help*. They were expected to simply send in their taxes and expect nothing in return."

"You mean that some of what we're seeing today actually was put in place forty years ago?" queried Mayton.

"Precisely. It stopped a very real Revolution in the making. And now, just as approximately two-percent of the nation is allergic to monosodium glutamate, two-percent of the nation seems to be allergic to U-81 and sees the true picture. Just think about it, an oatmeal Presider, a video Vice-Presider and an unseen someone running the country.

"May the Creator help us," whispered Mayton.

"But it's not all bad. Nuclear power is a nightmare of the past, replaced by solar power. Drugs are almost non-existent. The gang has been replaced by clubs and the Presider takes all the credit," Crighton smiled weakly.

"What about the Twilights?" asked Mayton casually.

"Twilight as in dawn or dusk? I sorry, but I don't know what you mean," apologized Crighton. "But wait, I have to tell you about the SAM's."

Crighton's wrist alarm started chiming. "I've stayed long enough. I don't want to arouse undue suspicion, although it may already be too late."

Mayton was convinced that Crighton knew nothing about the mysterious Twilights report that was sent to him. He now knew there was another resister trying to contact him.

Mayton had a lot to think about. Some of the information correlated with information he had been collecting on his own regarding what he called the Apathy Syndrome.

Mayton spent the rest of the afternoon checking files and reviewing hospital records. Only one in the one-hundred charts he saw seemed to be hostile and question the sanity of the nation.

"If it's chemical, I should be able to find it in blood and urine," he surmised. So he methodically started to collect samples from his patients. It didn't seem like much, but at least it was a starting place.

Logically, he decided to use his and Gretchen's as the base, mostly because they were both as mad as hell and he knew they were unaffected. He found a strange substance in both the blood and urine of many patients, yet the lab reports always came back normal. Even his own office staff, didn't notice anything strange in the results.

Mayton knew that all Resisters were at risk and those responsible for U-81 would be working on something that would bring the two-percent into line. He had to find out more.

The next afternoon Crighton was back. "I can see by your face, that you've done some checking and that you believe me, at least in part, but it is no dream and I assure you that if you make waves, you'll have a fatal accident. The Secretary is deadly serious. He will let nothing interfere with his final plans.

"And that is?"

"The Commander and Chief, or sorts," said Crighton flatly.

"Of what?" asked Mayton simply.

"The world, of course. Make no mistake, Dr. Rude. He means the whole damned world," breathed Crighton softly.

All Mayton could manage was a weak smile and a raised eyebrow.

"I know, I thought it was insane, but I can't say a thing. I can't risk being labeled a *two-percenter*. At first I thought maybe the old Soviets was behind the whole thing, but then, of course I realized that they couldn't possibly afford it. This has all must have been very expensive."

"But the Secretary acting alone? Not likely," pondered Mayton aloud.

"Frankly, I don't know. But that's why I'm here, I need your help."

Crighton and Mayton sat staring at each other hoping something would become evident. Nothing did, except for the deafening quiet.

"Just how far ranging is this?" asked Mayton solemnly.

With a forced weak smile, Crighton answered, "Most of the world".

"Shit; no, wait! I'm a factual student of history. So let's be strictly analytical. The communist party fell, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic went bankrupt and disbanded in the early 1990's. The United States tried to support the world for an amazingly long time before the reformation," said Mayton firmly as if he were reading.

"Government was costing more and more, and the people were getting less and less," added Crighton.

"America tried to garner world rule through financial indispensability," added Mayton. "And today?"

"The Presider and the Vice Presider are ineffectual, yet the people smile and cluck how cute and quaint they are. America has slowly turned into a nation of water buffalo. They live their lives happy, dumb and docile, while the Secretary holds secret and unchallenged power," finished Crighton sadly.

Mayton theorized that either Japan was responsible for U-81 or, they were naturally immune. He decided that Crighton must be only half right and told him that he must try to convince congress of Japan's involvement."

"I've already considered Japan. It was my favorite theory for some time. Clear up until this morning, in fact," said Crighton.

"Why?"

"Just this morning it was announced that Japan has opened up unrestricted trade with the us and has voluntarily agreed to take all the imports we can supply with guaranteed prices. So we can scratch Japan".

"Shit!" I should have known that it wouldn't be that easy. But you said most of the world. What parts haven't been effected?"

"Most large populated areas within all countries seem to be following. All of Canada, except Quebec, all of Mexico and even the farmlands of China," said Crighton. "This is no small scale plan, Mayton. The entire world has fallen into line with the exception of the Brazilian rain forest and the United Arab Republics," he chuckled.

"The Brazilian rain forest?"

"It's certainly not public knowledge, but the United World's Armed Forces have gone into Brazil and wiped out the slash and burn natives. The World Court has confiscated the forest for it's own protection," confided Crighton quietly.

"What about the United Arab Republic?" he asked.

"I'm sorry. That was a poor attempt to ease the situation with a rather tasteless joke. Of course UAR was turned into a dessert of glass in

2012 and there's nothing left but a handful of scattered nomadic tribes. Considering the trouble that area once was, that's not all bad."

Mayton had the feeling that any minute he would awaken and make love to Gretchen.

"I've been here much too long. I must leave, but first, let me give you my computer access code. Please, read some of the reports yourself. Seven minutes is safe. Any longer and a monitor might get suspicious."

/^~-\>^4/82346.

"Memorize it and destroy the paper. I'll be in touch".

Mayton said good-bye as Crighton left. A strange sense of emptiness enveloped him as he began typing:

/^~-\>^4/82346

working...

*Welcome 101353, access approved*

Mayton didn't know what he was looking for so he decided to randomly search the data base. (search) *Colin Fitzpatrick. Colin Fitzpatrick. Born 1980, currently 6'2," 195 pounds. Married Joan Balentine in 2007 - no children. Hobbies: jogging, fishing, tennis, weight training, horse shoes, cycling and skiing.*

"Whoopee," he thought as he typed:

(search) *James Turnbull - access denied.*

(search) *current Vice-Presider - access denied.*

*T. Bower Yates override code needed.*

"What the hell is up with Turnbull?" fretted Mayton.

(search) *Med-Fly*

*working...*

*The Tephritidae or Drosophila, commonly called the Med-Fly, (Mediterranean Fruit-Fly) was created for Sector 14. For full report access, MFF/31\_*

*-end-*

(search) *AIDS*

*working...*

*ACQUIRED IMMUNITY DEFICIENCY SYNDROME REPORT*

*Created: see file 365-\*.*

*Identified as a disease (by medical community) in 1981. By 1996 more than 748,000 deaths were reported worldwide. The AIDS virus is a retrovirus, having a special enzyme that reverses the usual pattern for translating the genetic message i.e., from ribonucleic acid to deoxyribonucleic acid. First known human retrovirus: T-Cell leukemia virus type-1. (HTLV-1) 1980.*

*Diagnosed symptoms: Candidiasis of the esophagus, trachea, bronchi, or lungs cryptococcosis, extrapulmonary cryptosporidiosis with diarrhea persisting 1 month cytomegalovirus disease of an organ herpes simplex virus infection causing a mucocutaneous ulcer that persists longer than a month bronchitis, pneumonitis, or esophagitis Kaposi's sarcoma lymphoma of the brain lymphoid interstitial pneumonia/pulmonary lymphoid.*

*hyperplasia*

*Mycobacterium avium complex*

*Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia*

*progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy*

*toxoplasmosis of the brain*

*Incubation period to be between four to six years - average.*

*Targeted: homosexuals, bisexuals, intravenous drug users, prostitutes (venereal disease)*

*Cure found by Dr. Jonas Juneau in 1997 and disease eliminated worldwide.*

*See file 598^+98TG-6 for update*

*Sealed - Secretary of State override code needed to open*

**WARNING: Inquiry is being monitored.**

(escape)

"Think Mayton, think," he mumbled softly. "I need safety to work on the antidote for U-81 and especially TG-6, but if I were to..."

A sudden blinding headache was the perfect excuse to lie down on his old lumpy couch for a much-needed nap. Just as when he was younger, sleep was when he did some of his best thinking.

As he slept he theorized that the basis for U-81 was in the body's ability to absorb and use iodine. Which meant that possibly the oceans themselves carried U-81 throughout the world in the water, the seafood and

the kelp. The resister's immunity was partly linked to an iodine allergy. So logically, people that were allergic to iodine would have a natural immunity...

But upon waking, Mayton realized two things. A link between iodine allergies and being immune from the effects of U-81 was the result of an overworked mind and his telecomm was buzzing.

It was Crighton.

"Listen. I stumbled on some kind of formula, but you'll have to see it and tell me. I'll meet you....." (buzz...)

"Hello, Crighton. Crighton?" But the unit was dead. Mayton waited for a return call, but it never came. He tried Crighton's apartment, but there was no answer. All there was to do was wait and that was something Mayton had a lot of practice doing.

## HAMILTON, BERMUDA

### Gaithway Cottage

Reginald Smythe sat typing, occasionally clearing his throat and sighing. He was old, tired and fought a good fight in his day. Now he was waging his final battle.

"I don't know why I'm bothering. No one will be left to read this or even care. It's just too late," he lamented, "much too late." Never the less, he kept typing.

Bermuda was quiet these days; not like when he was a child, spending the *season* with his parents. Good friends, good food and spirited political debates. Gaithway Cottage had also seen better days. Days of soirees, afternoons of watching yacht races from the terrace, and clear tropical days that only Bermuda had.

Sadly those days were long gone and this was no holiday. This was his last ditch effort to save his world. The very notion made the old man chuckle. Never the less, he kept typing.

## DAY THREE

### CHAPTER TWO

"Gretchen, wake up. We've overslept! The telecom... History is starting!" yelled Mayton as he grabbed his bathrobe. Gretchen had barely covered herself when she sat down next to Mayton.

Mayton was worried. They had never overslept and never missed a day of making love. Mayton hit the attendance button with a frown.

*"I pledge allegiance to the most sacred flag of the Uniform States of America and my life to the central government which is my guardian and benefactor, from which all good comes. One nation moving in unison and united in the promise of obedience and service for all."*

"Vice-President James Turnbull's, "A Moment from History" is a daily program, dedicated to the cultural advancement of our citizens." Today's subject: Zygote Protection Enforcement. Mr. Turnbull."

"In the late 1900's, unworthy women were still having babies. They treated the function very casually and pregnant women became careless. They ate salt, fried foods and even drank alcoholic beverages. Then people finally started to protect the future babies. They realized that a pregnant woman has no personal rights and was only a vessel for the unborn child.

"When a pregnant woman was turned into Zygote Protection Enforcement for improper exercise or nutrition, she was sequestered and the child was taken from her at birth and given to a more deserving woman.

"Since acts of perversion were responsible for an inordinate amount of crime, GOD helped the people evolve past the basic need for sex and thereby eliminated crimes of adultery, incest, rape and all forms of homosexuality. GOD in their wisdom bestows the privilege of childbearing and there are no more unwanted children. There only the loved, beloved and blessed.

"So if you know perverts who are defiling their bodies, talk to them. Tell them you care and that GOD cares. Let them know that there are programs to help and that they're not alone. Convince them to turn themselves into the Social Awareness Committee and with treatment, they will be able to return to society as useful, productive members.

“Remember carnal knowledge is a disease and it's not their fault. GOD is there to help. Praise be to our GOD.

Gretchen cleared the screen as she and Mayton said, "Bullshit!"  
*Maybe it's all right, thought Mayton. Yes, it is all right. There is nothing wrong with missing one morning.*

## TOPEKA, KANSAS

### Office of the Secretary

Office of the Secretary - T. Bower Yates sat behind his large oak desk, glaring at his computer terminal. "Two God damned files. You'd think I was asking a schoolboy to decipher an ancient Macedonian monolith. Either these two files are opened immediately or there's going to be a rash of suicides!" he growled as he slammed his fist on his desk.

The door to Yates private quarters opened and in walked a young blonde Adonis attired in brief shorts and a heavy gold neck chain.

"Bowzer, you know that all that rage is absolutely awful for your blood pressure or something. If that crap upsets you, don't look at it! Just turn it off!" cooed Jamie as he began massaging Yates shoulders.

"Oh, Jamie. What would I do without you? You are the only person in my entire life that truly understands me."

"Oh, yes? What about that bitch you're married to?" he huffed.

"If I didn't have a politically correct wife to act as hostess and a front, there would be no you, my young, strong stallion. I'm old Jamie--- and sometimes I think I'm cheating you. You are every man's dream. At least those who still dream," he said chuckling.

"You old? Nonsense! Don't you know, 'the older the bull, the stiffer the horn'? And you're proof. Let Jamie help you relax, you fine old bull."

"Yes--- do what you do best, Jamie."

"Don't I always?"

Secretary Yates always surrounded himself with muscular, handsome, young men. It made him feel less like a dinosaur. His personal aide, Lewis was one such man. Tall with dark hair and a well groomed mustache topped off a perfectly muscled body.

Lewis burst into Yates office without knocking. "Mr. Secre.... Oh, my God— are you all right?" he gasped as he gazed on Yates writhing at his desk. His face was purple and he looked as if he had stopped breathing.

A long guttural: "Ahhh..." was all he could manage to say.

"Shall I call the doctor, Mr. Yates?" Lewis gulped as he reached for the telecom.

Yates said nothing but waived him away with a long moan.

"Of course I'm all right," barked Yates. "Jamie, be a good boy and get out of here. I'll see you later."

Lewis looked around to see who Yates was talking to when out from under the desk, Jamie appeared smiling broadly.

With a deep sigh, Jamie bent down and kissed Yates on top of his head and yawned, "Jamie needs a sauna. See you later, Bowzer."

As Jamie slowly walked to the door, he studied Lewis and raised his eyebrow approvingly. "Good-bye, Lewis."

"Global warming figures, Sir," mumbled Lewis as he watched Jamie until the door was closed. "Ocean temperatures are up four degrees across the board. Another town has disappeared and forty thousand unlucky bastards with it. Santa Barbara Heights is in tact. Too bad, they had some great golf courses. The Netherlands, the south of France are almost..."

"Don't bother me with trivia! Has Rude accessed those files yet?" he roared.

"Not yet, Sir."

"Good," mumbled Yates with a crooked smile, as he tilted his head thoughtfully.

"I've noticed you and Jamie giving each other looks when you think I'm not looking. I'll make you a deal, Lewis. If you can get those lame-ass computer experts to crack Rude's files, I'll lend you Jamie for a whole night. Believe me, he could melt the paint off of a billiard ball," laughed Yates.

"Oh, Mr. Secretary! I can assure you..." stammered Lewis.

"And he's even more creative than you could ever imagine."

"I'll get on them right away. They're as good as opened, Sir!" assured Lewis.

"You do that, Lewis. You do that," laughed Yates as he leaned back confidently in this chair. "Is that all, Lewis?"

"No Sir. Our illustrious Presider would like to see you right away. He seems rather agitated, for him at least," chuckled Lewis.

"Why isn't he fishing, or something," growled Yates as he headed for the oval office.

Yates entered the Presider's office to find him reading a copy of General Orson Welles, *War of the Worlds*.

"Most stirring, Yates. Most stirring," nodded Fitzpatrick approvingly. Colin Fitzpatrick was tall, and easy to look at. He photographed well and had a winning smile. He was the perfect Presider, according to Yates.

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Presider?"

"Yes. How is the country doing, Mr. Secretary?" asked Fitzpatrick sincerely.

"Fine Sir," smiled Yates.

"How am I doing, I mean as Presider?"

"You're doing an exemplary job," assured Yates. "Why you have a ninety eight percent approval rating!"

"My, that is good, isn't it..."

"Yes, it is marvelous! If I might, why do you ask?"

"Sometimes it bothers me that running almost the entire world is so easy. All I seem to do is jog and play golf."

"Well Sir, you had the drive, intelligence and commitment to the world to surround yourself with competent people that carry out the mundane chores of life. While you my Captain, keep us steered on a straight course to the future," blustered Yates.

"Yes... I guess when all is right, it should be easy. Correct?" smiled Fitzpatrick warmly.

"Correct, Sir."

"Good, now is you'll excuse me. I desperately need a round or two of golf," beamed Fitzpatrick.

"By all means," nodded Yates graciously as he left.

*Dumb son-of-a-bitch*, thought Yates warmly as he headed back to the real power center— his office.

While at Terminal #34 in Sector 4, Pentagon:

File 2a472/ Mayton.\*  
access denied-improper password  
retry, abort, ignore?  
File 711bf9/ Mayton.\*  
access denied-improper password  
retry, abort, ignore?

"Shit! Come on Rude open the damned files! You must be one lame bastard," shouted Yates.

## II

Mayton's favorite patient was an old woman named Shellie Gaste. She claimed to be ninety-one and looked every minute that old. She had chin length silver hair that was cut in the standard bob and thin in spots. The lines around her wise brown eyes turned to deep furrows when she smiled. She was tall, thin and confident. She had no need for a man to validate her existence.

Mayton had seen her before regarding an allergic reaction to seafood. She loved lobster, shrimp and clams, but became deathly ill with even one bite. She developed a severe rash, headache, vomiting, stomach cramps and diarrhea. Even so, she had indulged herself the night before and was looking to Mayton for a miracle pill.

"Can't you give me some damn pills or something, like maybe an allergy pill so I could eat lobster on my birthday, at least? That's the one decent damned thing they do for us at Cherrywood Retirement Home."

"I wish there was a *before* pill Shellie, but there isn't. All I can give you is a shot to ease the cramping and all. I'm allergic iodine too and..." Mayton's voice trailed off as his mind started forming a theory. He knew Shellie was immune to the effects of U-81 and could possibly hold the key to an antidote—*iodine*. Now he had a starting place.

Shellie was strong willed and openly defiant. She proudly called herself the last damned feminist on earth. She was proud that she had her kids the old fashioned and 'the lot more fun way'. She insisted she would not be a 'dumping ground for any man's vanity'.

"Did I ever tell you about flying to Mexico City?" she asked with a grin.

"No, you haven't. How exciting! We could never afford a trip like that on a doctor's salary," whispered Mayton.

Shellie smiled and began her story with a sigh. "Shawn and I were very much in love, you understand. We were on our way to a beautiful little resort and the plane was practically empty. I was on the aisle and he was sitting by the window. He started rubbing my neck and it felt so good! He moved down to my shoulders and back as I laid across his lap. Before I knew it, I actually had his *Adam* in my mouth... although back then we called it a *dick*. Right there on the plane!"

The shocked look on Mayton's face made Shellie roar with laughter, and the more Mayton tried to compose himself, the more she laughed.

"Don't worry, nobody saw anything. He really loved it!"

"Well, I would guess so! Just when did all of this happen?" gasped

Mayton.

"Let's see, the summer of--- nineteen seventy three."

Mayton burst into laughter. He laughed so hard he started braying like a mule, which in turn made Shellie roar.

"I thought you meant this was recent," howled Mayton.

"Oh, my God no! I'd get a stiff neck at my age!" she roared.

Mayton laughed so hard that his sides were aching. He wiped his eyes and found Naomi standing in the doorway wearing her idiot's grin.

"If you're finished, I'll show Shellie out so you can work on your report," she whined as she scratched her crotch.

"Thank you, Nurse, but we'll need a few more minutes. Please close the door as you leave," he said firmly.

"We're two of a kind, Mayton. Too bad you're so damned young," she smiled wistfully.

"I'm afraid you'd be too much for me, Shellie. But I assure you I'll never think of planes in the same way again," he beamed.

"Yeah, I dream about that trip quite often," she sighed. "At least they haven't found a way to monitor our dreams yet."

"I wish I didn't dream. There's no joy or pleasure in mine; only questions," he confided as he glanced at the closed door.

"Tell me, tell me, tell me! I use to do dream-interpretation about a hundred years ago," she beamed. "Way back when people still named their kids, Wendy, Stormy... Dopey and Doc," she laughed.

"Well, basically it's always pretty much the same. I'm an archaeologist and the expedition is in its second year, on a dead planet.

"The daytime temperature is a constant 118 degrees and nighttime, fourteen below. As unbearable as it is, we are grateful for the opportunity to study the ancient society.

Awesome in it's technology, now gone.

"I am the head of the team. My skin is tanned and lined from two years of excavating, investigating and cataloguing the planets birth and death. Nuclear winter had long past--- nothing but death.

"My team and I make an unusual discovery in an area of particularly advanced civilization. About ten feet beneath the surface of the parched planet, in a once inhabited area, a vault is unearthed. Inside the vault are tightly pressed

fiber units composed of plant materials once native to the region, infused with what seems to be a petrified clay substance of an unknown origin. I speculate in great detail that it must be highly religious and well prized to have been that well concealed.... Then I wake up," he sighed as if he had just confessed something dreadful.

Shellie squinted her eyes and laughed. "It sounds like a personal waste disposal system of the twentieth century, called a *septic tank*. But of course you're much too young to know about such things."

"Sewage? But what about the pressed fiber units?" he frowned in disgust.

"That's what's so damned funny! You'd have no way of knowing about those. Why, women haven't needed those for more than forty years and those who knew, seemed to have forgotten that they ever existed. They were used internally to absorb the blood of menstruation... in preparation for pregnancy. Understand?" she asked wide eyed.

"It's rather disgusting, isn't it?" he frowned.

"Well, it seems so now, but back then, it was all quite normal. They say we have evolved past menstruation, but I say they have somehow stopped it! I suppose that it was done chemically. What do you think?" she asked earnestly.

"I think you are a breath of fresh air! But you mean to say that I've wasted most of my life dreaming about an ancient sewage system?"

"Look for the purpose of your dream and be glad. So few of us dream anymore and those who do, won't admit it. Someone is sending you a message. Find your purpose, Mayton."

"Doesn't it bother you? I mean everything that has happened. You're old enough to remember the truth. It must bother you to see what has happened to the country," argued Mayton.

"I used to be bothered. And do I feel superior and think that I'm above the bullshit? The answer is yes! It's been my experience Mayton, that politically people generally get what they want and deserve."

Shellie left with the promise that she would stay away from all seafood. Mayton knew as well as Shellie did, that she didn't attend to.

Mayton accessed his terminal to work on his report for Digby and sat starrng at the black screen. He could hear Naomi's terminal tuned into her favorite program, The Faith Associates.

"And now the most reverend, .....

“In the old society, Television Ministers claimed to speak for the Creator. Their words were powerful and people easily became their victims financially. While these self proclaimed *men of God* preached their gospel, condemned people to Hell and spat upon carnal knowledge, they all too often were hardy partakers themselves.

“There were all too many of these men, invading the citizen's homes on the telecoms’, crying and begging for money all in the Creators name. We all know that the Creator has no need for money because he is a spirit and not flesh. But week after week, they successfully wrung millions upon millions of dollars from the poor, the needy and the devout.

“You may ask me, what did these men of God do with all this money? Help the less fortunate? Feed those without proper food? Clothe the naked children in the old society?

“Nay! I say. They instead took the money and built huge palatial mansions equipped with all the pleasures of this life. They lived like kings and yes, even dabbled heavily in carnal knowledge, wine and all forms of sinning. They claimed this *good life* was their reward for ministering to the people. Hypocrites, I cry, one and all! Users, abusers and ultimately, losers.

“Then GOD visited themselves among us and created a new society, dedicated to the good of all men. We no longer have to guard ourselves against being taken advantage of spiritually or financially. GOD rid us of these con men and in their wisdom chose one Minister of the State to care for the spiritual needs of the citizens. And my dear friends, I am so fortunate to be that one. I thank the Creator every day for my mission to install Faith, Hope and Charity to all mankind.

“We now have Faith in our GOD, Hope in our glorious future and Charity to all productive citizens of our great nation. I do not mean to speak for the Creator, but I'm sure you'll agree we would not be the great world power we are, if he didn't want us to be! I have Faith that the Creator believes in the Uniform States of America and that he himself installed GOD to care for us in our mortal walk.

“Remember your charitable tax donations to the Central Government are due at the first of every month. The government needs your generous donations to keep our great nation strong. Let us pray... "For what we are about to pay, let us truly be grateful. Amen.

"Until next week, friends... Have a nice day and a productive tomorrow."

"She should be in your report, you know," Naomi offered eagerly. Mayton hadn't heard her sneak up behind him.

"You septic everyone, Naomi. There is nothing politically wrong with Shellie, except old age," he smiled.

"I septic everyone? What on earth does that mean," she queried.

"Is your hearing all right? I said you suspect everyone. Maybe I had better take a look at your ears. Sit down."

## DAY FOUR

### III

.... Mayton and his dedicated team were absorbed in sketching, cataloguing and recording the appearance of large concrete and metal composition structures. One after another: large, small, short, tall. Some catalogued as old-ancient and some as new-ancient, meaning a construction difference of only two or three hundred years.

They were digging in rubble, when one of the team members discovers a hidden vault about ten feet below the surface, in a once inhabited city. Inside the vault were tightly pressed fiber units from plant materials of the region....

"Crap," moaned Mayton as he awoke and reached for Gretchen.

"Crap?" she yawned. "Do you call that love talk?"

"Crap on my insipid dream. Guess what I have for you?"

"Is it hard and pink?" she sighed.

"Yes," he whispered as he pulled her close.

"Oh that," she giggled.

Mayton truly expected to tire of the ritual, because he was so easily bored. Even as a child his attention span was extremely short, but making love to Gretchen was his reason for being. That and figuring out his dream.

"Crap," they moaned in unison as the shrill bell from the telecom unit sounded.

"History time," groaned Gretchen as she wrapped herself in her robe.

"Do you think the Vice-Presider would mind if I fondled you during his speech?" grinned Mayton as he cupped her breast in his hand.

"Perverted bastard," she smirked as she raced for the central unit and pressed the attendance button.

*"I pledge allegiance to the most sacred flag of the Uniform States of America and my life to the central government which is my guardian and benefactor, from which all good comes. One nation moving in unison and united in the promise of obedience and service for all."*

\*"Vice-Presider James Turnbull's - A Moment from History is a daily program, dedicated to the cultural advancement of our citizens. Today our subject is Zaidenism and Hessism. And now, James Turnbull."

"Zaidenism, or Zaidenists, were a group of vicious and disturbed men who forced otherwise gentle people into fighting and destroying each other's lives in a ritual called *suing*. It was bloody and hateful. One of the worst of these demons *attorneys* was Zaiden. While he persecuted perverts and liberals, he performed perversion himself! He used illegal drugs, owned illegal weapons and practiced all types of sexual perversion on a regular basis.

"Hessism, is that of being a compulsive liar. He too was an attorney and he lied needlessly, just to see if he could make people believe him and he never let the truth or the facts get in his way. He lied to make money, and he destroyed people with no conscious. Even today when a Liberal is suspected, we call a Hessism infection.

"Rightfully, when someone is suspected of being an *attorney*, they are immediately sequestered for treatment, if possible. It was one of the twentieth century's worst diseases.

"We have evolved past all of that. Thanks be to our GOD."

"I have to be a Hessist to cover my being a Zaidenist," Mayton whispered to Gretchen as he released the telecom.

"Busy today?" asked Gretchen as she rubbed her forehead.

"This afternoon I have a new patient, unless Naomi runs him off with her insipid good cheer," huffed Mayton. "Do you have a headache, Gretchen?"

"No, I guess I just have the creeps. Nothing a good hot shower won't relieve," she smiled as she headed for her personal hygiene room.

Mayton decided to indulge himself for a few minutes. He sat at his desk and began to type an entry in his personal diary: Shelly Gaste has given me a possible answer to my dream, which leaves as many questions as it provides answers. Every since I turned thirty, my faithful dream has changed. In my dream, my hair has thinned considerably and I have developed a pronounced potbelly--- how very odd even for my peculiar dream. I look more like what I remember my grandfather to look like than I actually do. Scientists discovered a cure for baldness long ago and men no longer suffer the agony of losing their hair. I'm quite puzzled about the potbelly also. Why on earth would anyone have such an affliction? The human body is a perfectly balanced machine. I'm surprised that I could even walk with that large belly hanging out in front...

The shrill bell from Mayton personal telecom unit broke his concentration.

"Damn!" he moaned as he reached for the transmitter button. He quickly rehearsed excuses to make to Digby for the lack of his report, when...

"Do you know what crude oil was used for?"

"Yes," Mayton said breathlessly. "Back in the early nineteen hundred's..."

"Do you know when Mexico ceased to be an independent country and became part of the Uniform States?"

"It was in the summer of nineteen..." Mayton attempted.

"Do you know what *free will* is?"

"Free will was a popular concept in regards..."

Every time he called, he hung up after Mayton could finish his answer. The calls had no picture identification, no real conversation or explanation. Mayton felt it was dangerous to answer such questions, no matter how exciting he found them, but it had been a very long time that he had talked to anyone about anything significant outside his own home. He couldn't resist. This time, the caller didn't hang up.

"Your grandfather left two sealed files: 2a472 and 711bf9. You know the passwords; use them!"

"I don't know any passwords, I swear!"

"Open the files, Dr. Rude. They're your legacy. 2a472 and 711bf9.

"I really don't know the passwords! Please, don't hang up," Mayton begged.

"You have the knowledge. Find your purpose." (click)

Mayton sat stunned with the telecom unit buzzing in his ear. "Septic," he whispered. He realized that his home terminal would be closely monitored, so he quickly dressed and headed for the clinic.

Shawnee was an easy little town to live in, although he had never lived anywhere else. The streets were precisely lined with trees of alternating maple and oak. Efficient little cookie cutter houses in various pastel shades from pink to mint green sat on neatly manicured lawns. Humorous garden figurines squatted next to trapezoidal shaped hedges.

Every Saturday at precisely ten hundred hours, the sound of lawn mowers filled the air and by eleven hundred hours, it was again silent. Anyone lucky enough to possess their own Solis automobile, then washed it. Those who didn't own one, simply watched the ritual. There was no envy, only the sense that if GOD had wanted them to own a Solis or anything else for that matter, they would.

Sunday was bar-b-que day in the suburbs. Each block of houses had a block supervisor that designated *host* duties on a rotational basis. Every Sunday was treated like a once a year party. Everyone ate one hamburger and one hotdog and gushed endlessly about the marvelous lemonade.

Mayton and Gretchen knew that they had to keep up appearances and attended three out of every four bar-b-ques. They lived for that one Sunday a month that was all theirs.

## IV

Mayton opened the office door to find Naomi talking to someone on his telecom. She immediately disconnected the unit and claimed it was a *wrong number*.

But her flushed cheeks and darting eyes told him that he had better watch himself. *Digby*, was his first thought— *Shit!* was his second.

He hurriedly babbled to Naomi about working on the report for Digby and that he couldn't be disturbed for any reason.

She expectedly gushed that she would and could handle any and all circumstances while he was busy.

"Wonderful," he smiled as he closed his door and locked it securely. He sat down at his terminal and took a deep breath.

*\access:2a472/septic*

*working...*

*Well done, Mayton! I knew you'd break the code and find this report. I will have been long since dead. I'm sure you feel quite out of place in the new and improved society. I'm sure that you are also very careful not to be noticed.*

*I'm really sorry about the septic-dream but I had to make sure that you kept searching for the answer. Now that you've found this report, the rather odious dream will cease. Actually it was quite easy to program you. Remember your mastoid surgery when you were seventeen? It was simply a microchip implant containing the septic dream sequence. I keyed it to repeat more and more frequently until you cracked the code. I can only assume that another resister helped you. When you have thoroughly read this report clear it with Septic#^\*/<> 74/5+clear and it will be gone forever with no trace.*

*However, it will be replaced by a very special report called Septic. I'm sure that the Central Committee or the Guardians of Democracy or whatever they finally settled on calling themselves will be trying to crack this report. But we must hurry before we're monitored and traced. You only have 7 minutes. The following are the fact that I have learned:*

*The cessation of sexual activity is not due to evolution of mankind or belief in GOD or faith in the Creator. It is a simple yet ingenious chemical suppression. I suspected that they started placing it in the water supplies of*

*what we called third-world countries (parts of Asia and most of Africa) to suppress their birthrate and thereby save millions of dollars in aid. It worked so well that the birthrate fell at an astonishing rate, resulting in no more famines due to overpopulation. But they dared not use such a thing on our own people, until the Guardians of Democracy took and held power.*

*GOD would stop at nothing to totally eliminate venereal disease, abortions, homosexuality, and various other carnal consequences. No sex, equals no problems, and there was artificial insemination for the genetically superior couples.*

*I don't have to tell you about the Mind Fogging. If you didn't already know, you wouldn't have been able to find this report. The antidote lies in understanding of your own immunity to the fogging and sex-suppression drugs. I estimate that there would be approximately 1.78% of the people that would remain immune. But be warned, GOD will not allow this. They will put all their power and resources into bringing you into line.*

*The key is that GOD can't all be naturally immune So there must already be an antidote. If they have one, you my dear grandson can find it. Quickly, access\211bf9-/rambo. But you must work fast, they have killed for this file. I love you, Mayton. Good luck and forgive me.  
-end-*

Septic#^\*//<> 74/5+clear

Mayton felt an enormous burden of destiny fill his being as his terminal screen cleared. "5.3 minutes" he sighed.

access\211bf9-/rambo

working...

*To whoever finds this file: I, freely and without coercion, confess that TG-6 is my own deadly creation. I confess my crime against humanity without reservation or excuse. I have created the unthinkable and deserve damnation. There is no antidote for TG-6, as it is a true Armageddon virus. Once created, it mutates and adapts. It cannot be destroyed. I apologize to my family, my country and the entire earth. May God forgive me."*

Mayton stared at the screen in disbelief.

Rambo#^\*//<>74/5+clear  
deletion denied - retry, abort, ignore?  
Rambo#^\*//<>74/5+clear  
Rambo-data//+delete  
deletion denied - retry, abort, ignore?  
Rambo#^\*//<>74/5+clear  
b:\delete\rambo-file  
deletion denied - retry, abort, ignore?  
Rambo#^\*//<>74/5+clear  
    “Shit!”  
deletion denied - retry, abort, ignore?  
-exit-

Mayton wanted desperately to talk to Crighton.

## V

Naomi ushered a tall, good-looking man into Mayton's office.

"Please be seated, the Doctor will be with you as soon as he finished his very important report," huffed Naomi pointedly.

Mayton hated when Naomi talked at him rather than to him, but then again, he hated when Naomi talked to him at all. Mayton turned off her terminal screen and turned to his new patient.

"Titus Crest, Dr. Rude," he smiled as he extended his hand towards Mayton. His heart raced as he realized he was shaking hands with the *Quizzler*.

"I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Crest. My, what an unusual ring you have!" smiled Mayton as he stared at the large ornate silver ring on his hand.

"A gift from my grandfather," said Crest with his chin raised.

Mayton nodded and scanned his chart mumbling, "Titus Crest, 6'4," 207#, brown eyes, black hair...

"Well, it seems that your health is generally excellent. What bring you here today, Mr. Crest?"

"Twilighters," said Titus quietly.

Mayton's heart jumped. At last, the mystery report sender.

"Twilight as in dusk?" asked Mayton.

"Twilighters as in control study dated April 1997..."

"Sssh!" wheezed Mayton watching towards the door. Just to make sure, he buzzed Naomi and asked her to go to the central library and check out a copy of *General Orson Welles History*. When he was sure she was gone, he smiled and extended his hand to shake Titus'.

"I'm sorry about the whole Crighton Aims thing," sympathized Titus.

"What about him? I've been trying to get in touch with him."

"Shit, I just assumed you knew! Crighton was found dead this morning--- officially they're calling it *suicide*. It appears that he jumped, or more likely was pushed from the State Department roof. I'm very sorry," consoled Titus.

"Poor Devil--- he called me and said he'd found..." Mayton shot a startled look at the man sitting across from him and started to frown.

"Crest. Crest. Crest, you Bastard!" Am I wrong, or are you the grandson of my grandfather's partner, Titus Sims?" grinned Mayton excitedly.

"I was beginning to believe you were brain-dead, Mayton!" laughed Titus. "And yes, it was me that sent you all those reports. I work in Sector Four, Pentagon. I couldn't just drop in and say 'by the way, the world is fucked up and we have to save it'. I figured that government reports would let you get used to it slowly."

"Then maybe you can help me with Digby?"

"That's partly why I'm here. Digby is getting very anxious about your report. Write these names down: Marion Drew, Alure Deevins, Simpson T. Blair and Miller Sumner.

"Don't worry, they're fictitious, but the central computer will think they are genuine. As soon as these names are entered, the files will show, referred to Sector-Seventeen-- Files closed."

"Thanks. I couldn't in all good conscious, give Digby any names," confided Mayton.

"It will get Digby off our ass, at least for a while," laughed Titus.

"Just what do you propose we do?," asked Mayton.

"First of all, you must figure out how to access the secured files your grandfather left. According to my grandfather, Byron Rude left you the antidote to TG-6," sighed Titus.

"Oh, I have accessed it. Let me show you," smiled Mayton.

"No don't! It's being monitored," whispered Titus as he grabbed Mayton's arm.

Mayton embraced a rather bewildered Titus. "I had to be sure, Titus. Trust me and take a look."

Mayton accessed the Rambo file and let Titus read it.

*access\211bf9-/rambo  
working....*

I am sorry to have to confess that TG-6 is my own deadly creation. There is no antidote as it is a true Armageddon virus. Once created, it mutates and adapts. It cannot be destroyed...

"Aren't you going to erase it?" asked Titus nervously as he checked his watch.

"Why? It doesn't say anything helpful."

"I can't believe this past six years has been a waste and a joke!" Titus snarled as he threw his jacket on the floor. "Bullshit! It can't be, there must be a code in that message. There has to be an antidote!"

"I've tried everything. There is no sequential lettering or patterns. No misspelled words or cryptograms, that I am aware of. There is nothing!" said Mayton emphatically.

"There has to be, damn it! My grandfather had no sense of humor when it came to his work!" blustered Titus.

"I agree. But for now, we'll just have to wait. Something will show up. It was my grandfather's way of fucking with life in general," smiled Mayton as he tugged on Titus' neck.

He felt close to Titus, maybe because their grandfathers had been so close in life and in death. And maybe because they had a common cause.

"Okay, we'll wait," agreed Titus reluctantly.

"I just wish I knew what we were waiting for."

"A miracle, I guess," smiled Mayton.

"It's not all bad though, you know," thought Titus aloud. No one is homeless or hungry anymore. And from what I learned from my grandfather, *my* people used to have a real hard time in the old days. We were thought of as second class citizens.

"Why on earth?"

"Because at one time in ancient history, they called us *niggers*. I'm not sure what that meant, but it generated a lot of hate. I'm what they used to call *black*. We were brought to this country as slaves to work in the fields. Take a look, Mayton, I'm obviously different from you."

"Yes, I can see that your skin is darker, but you're also taller and frankly better looking than I am. So what?"

"Hell if I know! It doesn't matter anymore, but before *fogging*, it mattered a great deal. I'm just saying that maybe the old days weren't as grand as we think they were. It's hard to believe people hated each other because of their skin color."

"You mean beige people like me hated all dark people?"

"Well, it wasn't all that noble. Blacks hated you *beige* people too."

"If we can actually turn this whole thing around, lets not let that happen again."

"I'm counting on it, Mayton. Titus bent down and pulled a rather thick envelope from his briefcase. He smiled as he handed it to a puzzled Mayton.

"Just thought you might like to catch up on some world news. Just be sure it's burned as soon as you've read it. Fascinating, really," smirked Titus.

"Thanks," was all Mayton could manage to whisper.

As Titus left, Mayton began to devour news items from around the world.

*Population: 2.3 billion and falling*

*Ten-year projection: 1.75 billion stabilized*

*AUSTRALIA: More than 5% of the country is beginning to hold rallies and mini-riots. The government is at a loss to explain their anti-Australian behavior.*

"Good job!" thought Mayton. "But why Australia? That's twice the number of resisters here. Hmmm..."

*EURASIA: Peace and harmony abound...*

*Wait! What's this?* thought Mayton.

*London has guillotined two hooligans for being disruptive to the Eurasian way of life.*

"My Creator--- the guillotine? How barbaric!"

*AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA: The thirty-year famine has officially ended and the birth rate is holding at a constant - 07%.*

"-.07%? Why in thirty or forty years, there will be no more people on two entire continents! Don't they see that? Oh God, the problems are so big and we are but two men..."

*AMERICA: Land of the free and home of the brave. The perfect life for the Creator's chosen people...."*

"Right," whispered Mayton. He continued long into the afternoon reading pap news items from countries he had never heard of. Crighton was right, the whole world was falling into line at an alarming rate.

"Within a month..." he sighed. "Just one month."

## DAY FIVE

### KYOTO

#### Tumian International Pharmaceuticals

Santo Kasawa sat staring out of his high rise office window. He was a small man, made even smaller by the size of his power-desk and office. Deep lines in his forehead and thick brows totally obscured his small almond shaped eyes. He flinched when an expected knock came.

"Yes," he barked.

"The weekly world updates, Sir," said a young man struggling under the weight of an armload of file folders.

Itto was not only his most trusted assistant but his nephew as well. He trusted Itto with the family wealth as well as with the fate of their enterprise.

Don't bore me with the inconsequential, Itto. Just fill me in on what I must know," growled Kasawa. Itto learned as a small child that his uncle's growl had no teeth, for him at least.

"Of course!" bowed Itto respectfully. "South America: their thirty-year famine is officially ended. The birth rate is now -.07%. We will soon have to stabilize it, or..."

"Why?" interrupted Kasawa with a smirk.

"Yes, Uncle," grinned Itto back. "Australia: very strange country. There are precisely 2.7% more unaffected people there than elsewhere. We've already upped the strength of the U-81 in their grains and fertilizers. We should have favorable results in about six weeks."

"Very good, nephew. What about Eurasia?" he asked seriously.

"On schedule, nothing of consequence to bother you with, except London had two more guillotine this week. They no longer call it treason, only *disruptive to the Eurasian way of life*," grinned Itto broadly. "And Africa is about the same as South America, in another forty years they will be continents devoid of humans."

"How very civilized," bowed Kasawa sarcastically. "And of course my counterpart, the esteemed T. Bower Yates?"

"Yes, America," mumbled Itto fumbling through his papers. "Ah! Everything seems to be on schedule. The U-81 shipments go out like clockwork. No reported problems--- yet!" laughed Itto.

"Yet!" laughed Kasawa with him.

## HAMILTON, BERMUDA

### Gaithway Cottage

Reginald could hear his old partner from the glory days in MI-5 coming down the hall, tap-thump, tap-thump. He could hear him muttering about *his blasted cane, his blasted stiff knee and the whole blasted world in general.*

"How's it coming, Reggie?" Harold asked as he puffed his way to the high backed wicker chair in the corner.

"Listen to this: *Can you sympathize with an entire country of people who would willingly embrace slavery? I think not!*" Reginald waited for a reaction that never came.

"Damn it Harold. I need your input!" he scolded.

"Sounds priggish," he answered as he cleared his throat. "Don't beat around the bush. You're going to have to grab them by their balls, if this is going to work."

"All right then: *While two Presider's were taking credit for the collapse of Communism, the Master Manipulator was free to implement his insidious plan. The truth is, Communism simply collapsed under it's own weight.*"

"Yes," nodded Harold. "Now you're on the right track! How are you going to handle to fact that the Prime Minister knew of the *Clouding Effect* and did nothing?" asked Harold.

"I'm going to state that fact quite clearly. I cannot in good conscience lay all of the blame at the feet of the Americans. Many Head's of State knew of the process, but it served them well. It wasn't until they realized that they too were targets, did it present them with any moral dilemma!"

"Excellent. Since you want my input, I see that the whole process began with the leaders convincing the American public that government owed the people nothing. They convinced them that they must just become better consumers and the market place would seek it's own level. And it did, the sewer!" added Harold thoughtfully.

"Go on," said Reginald and he typed notes furiously.

"Their leader was always saying that Europe did not have any banking insurance, and the country should follow suit. What they didn't say was that

Europe did not allow the banks to steal their depositor's money's and go unscathed.

"Good point! That will make a whole chapter by itself. What else?"

"I do hope you cover the billions of dollars sent to third world countries while their own people had no socialized medical care. There is so much involved---"

"I know."

"Then there's the *almost* Revolution and the whole Clouding issue---"  
"I have most of what you said already written. Start reading and editing as you go."

"There's so much to cover, my friend. I doubt we'll have time. If *he* gets word of our endeavor---"

"But it will be quick--- we'll probably never know." They both nodded and resumed working.

## CHAPTER THREE

"Good evening, Mayton and Gretchen. Welcome to our humble home and may the good wishes of GOD be with you. Please join us in our celebration of a future life," beamed Talon Grant as he ushered them into the main-room.

The Grant's home was small but comfortable. A stuffed unicorn sat on a chair next to Michelle. 'An animal of the old society', Michelle said. A blue bassinet with checkered buntings was predominantly displayed in the center of the room, indicating that they were to have a boy.

Everyone in the neighborhood was in attendance. Men who worked for the Human Essence Disposal Units, Community Standard and Practice Committee Members, various service industry workers and of course all of their wives.

Gretchen was the one women in the neighborhood who had a job. Writing children's books and nursing was about all that was fit for real women to do outside the home.

The women essentially looked alike. Chin length bobbed hair, no makeup and a strand of pearls if married over ten years. But tonight, everyone's eyes were on Michelle, the expectant mother.

An Annunciation Celebration was more than a party, it was an affirmation of life itself.

"Congratulations, Talon. May you continue in GOD's grace. You must be very proud of Michelle. Of course I knew all along that she would be chosen to carry GOD's child. She has such a wonderful bone structure and thick ankles. That's very important, you know," rambled Mayton.

Gretchen stepped on Mayton's toe and feigned surprise. "I am so sorry, Mayton my dear. All you all right?"

"Quite," he said quietly.

"Talon, Talon, Talon. What can I say? As a woman I am thrilled at the prospect of just being close to someone as womanly and dear as Michelle. She is indeed blessed," gushed Gretchen as she stepped aside to avoid Mayton attempt to step on her toe.

Talon was radiant and seemed even taller than usual. His soft brown eyes shown with the glowing pride of a future father and protector.

Gretchen and Mayton hated parties of all kinds, but especially Annunciation Celebrations. Most of the time, they found legitimate reasons not to attend, but the Grant's party was necessary.

Oh God no! Here comes that pain-in-the-ass dentist, Ian Dean. If he starts in, I swear I'll choke the living shit out of him," smiled Mayton through clenched teeth.

"Be nice, Rude. Our futures depend on it," smiled Gretchen.

"I hate his greasy slicked-back hair," whispered Mayton through smiling lips.

"We are supposed to have evolved past vanity, Rude."

"I hate the way his lips curl up over his gums when he speaks," nodded Mayton.

"He can't help the way he was born."

"Okay, then I hate him because he's an asshole," nodded Mayton firmly.

"Now that's fair" beamed Gretchen as Dean walked up grinning mindlessly.

"A birth--- thanks be to our GOD. Don't you say?" spurted Ian. "I'm lucky to be able to be here tonight. I had to find someone to trade my night on duty with."

"Night on duty? I thought you were a dentist, Ian," said Gretchen sweetly.

"Oh, my yes. I'm a dentist. I was referring to my being a member of the World Guard. I've been trying to get Mayton to join us. We can never have enough good men," said Ian earnestly. "Good men is hard to find."

"This is true," agreed Gretchen with a smile. Mayton stepped on her toe.

"Ian, if I really thought that we were at risk, I'd join in a minute. But seriously...."

Gretchen got very serious and uncomfortable at Mayton's lack of discretion. He was usually more careful about voicing opinions that were not politically correct.

"Mayton, I'm surprised at you! Oh, I see! You're putting me on, as they say. Everyone knows that Mars once tried to invade our mother earth! But let me refresh your memory. I never tire of the heroic tale.

"We, the inhabitants of earth, must be ever-vigilant as to not forget the near fatal war in our recent past history. General Orson Welles lead the combined world forces to victory over the invading armies of Mars.

"General Oliver West discovered a plot within our own Congress to assist the invading armies, but was able to foil the scheme with the help of General Hanz Solo. Together they ferreted out all of the evil-doers and coupe plotters. Under the direction of Commander Orson Welles, the earth was saved. And I don't have to tell you, that's when GOD took over and guaranteed our future as safe, secure and serene under their watchful eyes."

"Thanks be to our GOD," mumbled Mayton dutifully.

"It was during that historic struggle," continued Ian, "when mankind itself was on the brink of annihilation that we put aside our cultural differences and truly became an united planet. No longer did we mistrust each other because of origin of birth, religion or socio-economic conditions. One earth - one people - ever vigilant. Thanks be to our GOD. And I tell you what, Mayton. The next meeting I go, I'll just come by in my Solis and pick you up. What do you say to that?"

"If my work permits, which I seriously doubt."

"Just what is your job, I mean with regards to our glorious government?"

"I have a working arrangement with the Central Government, doing genetic research and input from my patients' files."

"Direct access to the GOD computer. What an honor!"

"I have only limited computer access. I enter any patient with anxiety responses categorizing chemical make-up, genetic patterning, and so forth, for GOD."

"Tell me. Why does GOD need that information?"

"I'm told it's for the betterment of mankind."

"How lucky we are, to live in this glorious country. You know, we could have born in a hell hole like Cuba!" stated Ian firmly.

"Only if your parents were Cuban," sighed Mayton as he quickly dodged Gretchen's kick.

"Attention friends," called Michelle as she sat in an easy chair like a queen holding court. "Talon will now recount GOD's blessings.

Everyone found chairs and floor area to sit as Talon began in a solemn voice.

"GOD, in their wisdom has willed that Michelle procreate. Blessed is she among women to bare GOD's Fruit. And I, Talon, as Michelle's husband, swear to serve as protector and keeper until GOD's offspring comes to plurality. Blessed be our GOD."

With a great heart-felt cheer, everyone was on their feet, hugging, kissing and wishing the Grant's well.

Mayton got uncharacteristically caught up in the moment and grasped Talon's hand.

"I know he'll be quite a little Rambo, Talon and...." Mayton's jaw dropped as he turned ashen and started pouring sweat. He dropped Talon's hand and grabbed his head.

Gretchen wasn't sure what to do. She didn't know if Mayton was in real trouble, or if for some unknown reason this was all for effect. She did know, she had to get Mayton out of there and home.

"Oh, dear, it must be that pesky virus again. Don't worry anyone, it's not contagious," Gretchen called as she helped Mayton towards the door. "He'll be fine tomorrow. Please excuse us."

Once outside all she could think of to say was: "What?"

"Home," was all Mayton could manage to get out. "Home."

Gretchen had learned a lot about medicines in her years married to Mayton. She once suffered a migraine and Mayton gave her Livertohn. Gretchen quickly turned down the bed and slipped two Livertohn in Mayton's mouth and made him sip cold water. She knew better than to talk. Every word seemed like the thunder of a thousand drums when a migraine hit. Although she pretended that nothing was wrong, she was worried. This was not the Mayton she knew.

Within three minutes the Livertohn did its job and Mayton was asleep. Gretchen watched him for almost an hour. Slowly, his furrowed forehead relaxed and his breathing became slow and regular. Gretchen didn't want to risk waking him, so she made her bed on the main room relaxer.

.....Mayton walked down a misty hall past several doors that were boarded and covered with cobwebs. The mist was cool, but not cold. Ahead he could see an open door. He stopped short of the opening and peeked through as if he were afraid of what was inside.

"Mayton, do come in. I've been waiting for you," smiled his grandfather.

"Grandfather! Am I dead? No, wait, I had a headache. I think I probably died of an embolism or an infarction. Oh, God, I don't want to be dead."

"Mayton, you're not dead. You are having a very real dream. Another microchip implanted in your mastoid. Remember? I am really sorry about the headache, but I had to get you here for the antidote," explained a rather young and fit Byron Rude.

"What triggered the headache?"

"Rambo. You were programmed to say *Rambo* the evening after you accessed the 211bf9 file. If you were home, you were to simply fall asleep and come here. But if you were out or had company, I inserted a migraine implant. I'm sorry about all of this, but you have no choice. This is your legacy, so let's get down to business."

"Then there is an antidote! Titus said there was," beamed Mayton.

"Perfect. Sims and I had hoped that you two would work together on this. You make me proud, Mayton."

"Will I be able to remember the formula? I'm only a simple medical doctor, not a research biologist."

"The antidote is so simple and obvious, that if it weren't for *fogging*, a school child would have stumbled on it long ago. The antidote for TG-6 must be placed in the drinking water. San Diego is the headquarters for the drinking water system for the entire country."

"San Diego water supply— okay."

"Sims and I discovered the TG-6 virus quite by accident. T. Bower Yates was thrilled. He assured us that it would only be used on countries that were a threat, or over-populated third and fourth world countries. When we discovered that our own country was also on the Secretary's agenda, Sims and I started to work on an antidote.

"But before we left, I placed two sealed files in the GOD computer for you. I'm quite sure they've been accessed by now. The *Septic* file will drive that old queen Yates nuts but the *Rambo* file should make him feel quite safe. Tell me Mayton, do you remember the Peabo and Sierra stories I used to read to you as a child?" asked Grandpa Rude chuckling.

"Of course I do. The book was... The Weiner Dog Chronicles! Let's see... *Peabo and Sierra talked all afternoon about puddles 'n' poodles, trees 'n' bees, cats 'n' rats, bats 'n' gnats, hat and...* so on. I still have a picture of my Dachshund, Peabo," he chuckled.

His grandpa just smiled warmly.

"In fact sometimes I think if it weren't for my memories and of course Gretchen, I'd lose my mind. Come to think of it, maybe I have."

"Oh no, you don't. That would be too easy. The elimination of household pets was one of the worst side effects of fogging. I mean, people at their best are a pain in the ass, but a dog--- Never the less, you and Titus must work fast."

"About your death--- We were told that you and Sims committed suicide because you two were lovers," stammered Mayton staring at his feet.

"What do you think?" asked his grandfather sternly.

"Mother and father said it was true, because GOD said so, but I figured that you two were murdered and *they*, whoever they were, made it look like a suicide."

"You're right and your parents are still assholes," huffed grandfather Rude. "Sims and I were ambushed in San Diego before we could dispense the TG-6 antidote into the water system. We didn't have a chance. We were taken to a warehouse and injected with a very nasty little number that made people appear to explode, as if they had fallen from an extreme height. Painful too, but we didn't tell them dick! Where were we found?"

"At the base of the old Space Needle with a lovers suicide note in your pocket. No autopsy by order of the government, just a pervert's burial in a common grave."

"I'm sorry you had to go through all of that. But enough bullshit, you'll be waking soon. Let's get on with it!"

"Do you have an antidote for fogging?" asked Mayton.

"You'll have to find that one, Mayton. But first you must stop TG-6. Very simply...."

Gretchen awoke with a start. She felt strangely apprehensive. She crept quietly down the hall and peered into the darkened bedroom.

"I have something for you, Baby," came Mayton's voice.

"Honey, you were so ill. Are you all right?" she asked as she sat gently on the bed.

"More than all right; perfect! You see the key to TG-6 is Africa itself, where the ancient strain was born. Oh, I have so much to tell you, but first I have an urgency," he growled as he ran his tongue down her soft white neck to her breast.

## TOPEKA, KANSAS

T. Bower Yates and Jamie were sharing a private moment in their sauna when a familiar voice came booming over the wall speaker:

"Secretary Yates! I want to see you and Turnbull in the Oval office at once. No damned excuses, just get your fat ass in here!"

"Did he say, Turnbull?" laughed Jamie with his hand cupped over his mouth as he so often did when he was truly tickled. "Yes Bowzer, go and get Turnbull for the man!"

Yates glared at Jamie in such a way that he immediately ceased tittering. Yates drew a deep breath and buzzed Lewis on his private pager. Lewis appeared in a flash as Yates hurriedly dressed.

"In precisely seven minutes you are to bring some aspirin and a very strong tea to the Oval office. And then contact Kasawa in Kyoto, the little son-of-a-bitch! You tell him that Tumian Pharmaceuticals had better do some quality control on the shit they send me. If another batch fails, I'll just produce my own!"

"Then what?" asked Lewis coolly.

"Just follow my lead. Seven minutes!"

"It must be all the exercise. We'll have to increase his dosage—" thought Yates aloud.

"Good luck, Bowzer," said Jamie sincerely with well-practiced sad eyes.

He wiped a drop of sweat off Jamie nose with a smile. "Don't tire yourself out by staying in here too long. I'll see you later."

Six minutes later, Yates was knocking on the door of the Oval office.

"Come!" bellowed Fitzpatrick.

Yates straightened his tie and burst in with a wide grin.

"Mr. Presider, what on earth is wrong? Mr. Turnbull will be along in just a moment. What can I do for you?" cooed Yates.

"Close the door, Yates. Something is frightfully wrong! Watch this," he said as he turned his monitor towards Yates.

"I've been trying to access information and can't!"

*Employment figures: denied.*

*Global warming trends: denied.*

*Foreign trade figures: denied.*

*Cost of living indexes: denied.*

"All I can do on my terminal is play a game with a little man and pizzas! Just what the hell...."

A loud pounding on the door stopped him in mid-sentence. "I'll get that Sir," whispered Yates as he opened the door to Lewis. "Oh Lewis, how very nice of you. Look Mr. Presider, some nice tea and some aspirin."

"I don't want any damned aspirin. I want some answers!"

"Certainly, Mr. Presider."

"Take the tea away, Lewis," said Yates with a waive of his hand.

"Leave the tea, Lewis. I said if didn't want any damned aspirin. I want the damned tea! Do not presume to speak for me, Yates!" demanded Fitzpatrick.

*Whew!* sighed Yates and Lewis silently.

Lewis quickly poured the tea and handed it to the Presider. After just a few sips, all the rage drained away from his face and once again, the nation had a kinder, gentler Presider.

"Mr. Yates, would you like to play a game with me? It's really a lot of fun. You can toss the pizzas, if you like," said Fitzpatrick sweetly.

"I'd love to, Mr. Presider, but, don't you remember?" asked Yates wide eyed. "I have to check on your private helicopter. In one hour you and Mrs. Fitzpatrick are leaving on vacation to the compound in Sedona. You've been working much too hard lately. It's time to fish and relax. No one deserves it more than you, Sir."

"Fishing! I really love to fish, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick didn't say a word about it! I'll bet she forgot," laughed Fitzpatrick.

"I'm sure she's ready, Mr. Presider." Yates nodded for Lewis to see to the arrangements.

"Let's play just one game before I have to leave, Mr. Yates. Please?"

"Certainly. Then I will walk you and your lovely wife to the helicopter! Now, you promised that I could toss the pizzas," smiled Yates.

He was the master.

## DAY SIX

### II

.....Titus found himself walking in a resplendent jungle of vibrant green trees, vines and grasses. He was wishing Deedee were with him to share his dream. While the smell of moss and herbs filled his senses, mud filled his toes. He hadn't noticed before, but he was naked except for a loincloth. The soft warm mud between his toes made him feel nauseated. He didn't even like being barefoot in his own dwelling.

Insects as large as his feet were landing on his arms and shoulders to feast on his flesh. He swatted himself until he was sore.

As he continued to walk, he could hear sounds in the distance of old-society animals. He heard a lion roar, even though Deedee's research told him that lions didn't live in the jungle, but in the savanna. Naked or not, it was exciting. But his smile soon turned to a frown when a snake longer than his Solis swung down in front of him from a nearby tree.

"Enough of this," he said aloud as he headed for a clearing ahead. "I'm going to look for my closet and get dressed before I go any further."

As he entered the clearing, he saw a man wearing only a loincloth; holding a spear.

Suddenly he gasped. "Grandfather?"

"You've been wondering about our ancestors. I just thought I'd show you. I assume you've guessed that it wasn't an easy life, huh?" He tossed down his spear and laughed.

"Are you trying to tell me that my life isn't so bad after all?" asked Titus.

"Hell no! I just don't have much of a chance for fun these days that's all. We have some important business to take care of right now, Tiger.

Titus hadn't been called Tiger in years. It sounded so good to his tired ears.

"You see, there is information that I'm allowed to give you and some that I'm not. I can't interfere with your right of decision, only help you with decisions that you've already made. Understand?" asked that frail looking old man.

"Okay—" answered Titus cautiously.

"You and Mayton are on the right track and will soon have at your disposal, the answers to mankind's present problems," began Sims slowly.

"It sounds like a big hairy *but* comes in right about here," interrupted Titus with a smile.

"You're right. But only if you don't let needless sentimentality get in your way. It will be the beginning of the end, Tiger. Understand?" asked the old man with a tear in his eye.

"No, but I promise you that I'll do my damndest, Grandfather," answered Titus sincerely.

Sims sighed resolutely and looked upward as if listening.

"Your wake up sensor is sounding. You have to go now Tiger. Good luck and remember, I love you," yelled the old man as he faded and was gone...

Titus slowly opened his eyes and was relieved to be in his own bed next to his loving Deedee.

*Needless sentimentality*, he kept wondering.

"Deedee," he whispered as he shook her gently awake. "Define, needless sentimentality."

"It mean *shut up*," she groaned as she rolled over.

For the first time since he was an invincible teenager, Mayton awoke feeling that he was in control of his own destiny. Out of habit and need he reached gently for Gretchen.

"Mayton!" she snapped. "What on earth---? Oh Honey, I'm sorry--- but don't you ever...." she stumbled confusedly.

Mayton flushed bewildered and pulled back silently.

The central telecom unit sounded and Gretchen broke out in a wide grin. "Hurry Mayton, we'll be late."

Mayton tied his robe modestly and followed wide-eyed. Gretchen was already halfway through with her *life* pledge and frowned that Mayton was late. As the flag faded, Gretchen glanced pleadingly at Mayton. But the plea disappeared as the announcer began:

"Vice-President James Turnbull's, "A Moment from History" is a daily program dedicated to the cultural advancement of our citizens. Today's subject is: THE MEDIA. Mr. Turnbull."

"Before the Reformation, the Media was a very large organized network of self proclaimed intellectuals, both men and women who attempted to force their depraved views on the good citizens of our great country.

"The Media invaded our lives with distorted printed material that was forced upon us daily and even hand delivered to our very homes. They filled our telecom units with lies and innuendo, and filled our lives with stories of hurt and evil.

"They became so powerful that they even cast aspersion on the very fabric of American society, our Politicians. They would accuse these selfless men of all types of corruption greed and perverted misconduct. The Media in their heartlessness ruined many fine men's lives.

"The Media was finally disbanded and all news disseminating was done through the only truly trustworthy source: GOD in Topeka, Kansas. GOD protects us from harmful or lust producing thoughts and gives us not only History but uplifting stories of courage and patriotism.

"Thanks be to our GOD."

"We are so very fortunate to live protected and cared for. GOD is indeed kind to their own," sighed Gretchen.

"Wow, that's spooky, Gretchen. You know, I can still remember when God was our Supreme Being, creator of the universe. Now when people speak of GOD, they're talking about our Guardians of Democracy. Who would ever believe that a government of any kind would have the balls to call itself GOD?" asked Mayton incredulously.

"Mayton, sometimes I—" said Gretchen rubbing her forehead in an all too familiar triangular pattern.

His heart felt like it was bleeding, for Mayton had seen enough *fogging* that Gretchen rubbing her forehead in that manner meant he had no time to lose. Now he would have to be extremely careful, even in his own home.

### III

Mayton wasted no time dressing and driving to his office. Naomi wasn't due in the another two hours, so he had time.

"Please be there," he half whispered as he reached into the delivery slot. "Gotcha!" he squealed as he retrieved a small white paper envelope addressed to him and marked *personal*.

"What is that?" came a voice from behind him and a tap on the shoulder.

"Shit, Titus! I thought you were Naomi," gasped Mayton as he held his chest. "I didn't even recognize your hand without your ostentatious silver ring."

"Naomi? Yeah, I look a lot like a short, beige woman," he laughed. "And it's not ostentatious, it's a family heirloom. I was in such a hurry, I left it on my bureau."

"God, I'm glad you're here. Gretchen is infected. I thought about giving her a dose of the antidote, but I figure she will be safer fogged, in case we fail," said Mayton sadly.

"God I'm sorry, Mayton. Antidote— I have obviously missed something," huffed Titus as he continued to scratch his arms and shoulders.

"This envelope contains the formula for the U-81 antidote, if I knew Crighton at all. Just before he died, he called me to say he had found the antidote. Being as pedantic and paranoid as he was, this has to be a backup!"

Mayton tore open the envelope and just as he said, it contained a neatly printed formula for the U-81 antidote.

"Just because you're paranoid, doesn't mean that they're not after you, and why are you scratching?" asked Mayton.

"Long story. Now if we only had the TG-6 antidote, we could don our Super-hero capes and save the world. Why are you smiling? And don't you have some kind of itch-lotion, or something?" asked Titus with a frown.

"My grandfather came to me in a dream last night and gave me the formula," answered Mayton as he handed Titus a large bottle of foul smelling salve.

"I knew they had something up their sleeves! Even dead, they fuck with the system!" laughed Titus as he began rubbing the salve on his bites. "The Water Plant is guarded with lasers. Without the code, you're fried. In case anything goes wrong, just use: *access/water123*."

"Nothing can go wrong— I need you! And what kind of secret code is *water123*? It's way too easy."

"That's what makes it so good. Besides, who's left to figure it out? I'll get my family out of town and wait for your call at home."

"Family? God, I'm sorry Titus. There's been so much happening, I never asked about your life. Please tell me," said Mayton sincerely.

"My life?" sighed Titus with a smile. Where should I start?"

"What about your grandmother. Is she still alive?" began Mayton.

"No, Grams died about six months after the *accident*. A broken heart, I think."

"What about your parents?" asked Mayton.

"My parents are alive and well and living in the apartment next to ours. My father works for the central government in intelligence. They too are unaffected. But to help keep up the cover, mother stays home, bakes cookies and baby-sits some of the neighborhood kids. How about your parents, Mayton? You've never mentioned them," stated Titus.

"My parents are well, I would guess. I haven't seen them in years. Grandfather called them *assholes*," smiled Mayton watching for a reaction.

"Assholes? I thought it was only my grandfather that used that word. How wonderful! They could have been twins!"

"What about a wife?" smiled Mayton.

"I have a fine wife named Deedee. She works for the government library and secretly researched all that nigger business and Afro-American crap. Frankly, when you read and understand life in Africa, I know I'm better suited to *this* than to running barefoot through the jungle trying to kill things to eat. I'd much rather catch a bus than my food," laughed Titus shaking his head.

"Interesting. A child?" queried Mayton with a smile.

"Yes, a son named Byron," smiled Titus.

"Byron?"

"Yeah, after your grandfather. I knew my grandfather would have liked it. Grandfather Sims always called your grandfather his very best friend, except for Grams. I didn't think the world needed another Titus, especially a *third*. Now don't start getting sloppy on me," grinned Titus.

"A son," sighed Mayton with a raised eyebrow. Through Annunciation I assume?"

"Of course, but..."

"I know. It's great isn't it?" whispered Mayton as he slapped Titus' leg.

"Deedee is so loving, inventive and quiet! I'm so lucky to have found her," whispered Titus. "We're beginning to sound like a couple of perverts, Mayton."

"If everything goes just right, and we're the two luckiest sons-of-bitches ever created, and everyone will again know the pleasure and pain of sex," sighed Mayton firmly.

"Pain? Maybe you're not doing it right" teased Titus.

"The pain of knowing what they've been missing," said Mayton earnestly.

"No children?" asked Titus.

"Not yet. Gretchen and I don't want a child unless we can bring it into a much different world than this," whispered Mayton nervously. "Did you hear something?"

"No, why?"

"Naomi likes to sneak up and listen through my door when I have a new patient. I think she's a spy for Digby," said Mayton seriously.

"Of course she is. I just assumed you knew. She has been working for Digby since she came to work here. She submits a weekly report on you and your patients. Didn't Crighton tell you? She's a *SAM!*"

"Her name is Naomi, not Sam. Before?" asked Mayton.

"Try to stay with me. Not Sam, but a SAM--- a Sensory Automated Monitor, out of Sector-Seven. Mayton, I really thought you knew," babbled Titus.

"A Sensory Automated Monitor, a Sensory Automated Monitor. Artificial intelligence--- you mean, an android?" gasped Mayton. "I thought androids were only used in high risk ventures, like clearing old toxic waste sites and nuclear fuel dumps. Besides, they have green skin covering to distinguish them."

"Android is still as good a description as any. The green models are still used for toxic waste cleanup, in places that practically annihilated themselves earlier this century, like France and about sixty-five percent of the old Soviet Union. And they're still used to seal the old reactors with the fortified selium/cement compounds. Quite efficient really. If one falls into the steaming mess, it's no great loss. Just requisition another."

"But?" asked Mayton.

"But these models look and act human and they feel no pain, although they're programmed to take three sick days a year just to keep up appearances. That's the whole point, you're not supposed to know. But if you were to cut one open, you'd find a stack of disks encoded with everything you and your patients have ever said," answered Titus.

"Shit! What if she has been monitoring us? She's very sneaky!"

"I carry this," he said as he produced a black pen-shaped cylinder.

"What is it?"

"It's a SAM-Scrambler. All my conversations are protected. SAM's are everywhere."

Mayton examined the cylinder questioningly.

"Ever wonder about your neighborhood? That one person that always seems to be around asking stupid questions and studying you for answers? Chances are it's your local SAM," said Titus.

"Stupid questions? That could be ninety eight percent of everyone I know. Digby my supervisor has to be one of them. He's the dullest man I know. No not dull; gullible. Lord, he makes me nuts!" grumbled Mayton.

"I'll work on a Scrambler for you. I should be able to have one whipped out before we leave for San Diego," smiled Titus.

"I'm in no mood these days to act brain dead. There's too much at stake," grunted Mayton. "Where did you get a SAM-Scrambler?"

"Hell, I didn't even know about SAM's, let alone Scramblers. Both were a gift from my grandfather in a dream," smiled Titus. "By the way, can you define *needless sentimentality*?"

"Crying because you still miss your dog?" answered Mayton. "Hell, I don't know, Titus. Is there any way to tell a SAM from, us?" queried Mayton.

"They have no crazy-bone," smiled Titus.

"Crazy-bone? You mean like whacking your elbow?"

"Precisely. All you have to do is sneak up on a suspected SAM and crack their elbow with a blunt object. Of course, if your wrong---" chuckled Titus.

"Wonderful. I wonder---," but a knock on the door ended their gabfest.

"Come," answered Mayton firmly.

"Oh, Mr. Crest. I assumed that you'd be long gone by now. Nothing wrong, I hope," gushed Naomi as her eyes darted around the room as if taking inventory.

"No. In fact I feel quite wonderful. You're very lucky to have the opportunity to work for such a fine doctor. You should count yourself fortunate," beamed Titus as he rose and prepared to leave.

"To be sure," faltered Naomi as she scurried back to her desk.

"I'll call you as soon as I have the antidote compounded for compatibility. It has to be right. We only have one shot," whispered Mayton.

"I'll be waiting. No, wait! I need to use your telecom unit before I leave. It will be safer, yeah," mumbled Titus as he keyed in the code to the Topeka library.

"Deedee, its Titus. I just called to remind you that we have to make the lemonade for Sundays' bar-b-que. Have a nice day," he sighed as he disconnected the telecom unit.

"Bar-b-que?" asked Mayton in astonishment.

"A code. Deedee knows to pick up Byron and my parents, and go to our pre-arranged safe-place. I'll join them when this is all over. We knew this day would come for a long time," explained Titus.

"I feel like I'm always two steps behind of you, Titus," he laughed. "Just where is your safe-place?"

"It's safer that no one but Deedee knows, my friend," whispered Titus.

"Shall I contact you at your apartment?" asked Mayton.

"No, I'll only be there for thirty seconds, but use that same number code. I'll re-route it to my pager. Good luck, Mayton," said Titus as he grasped Mayton's shoulders firmly. "May the Creator be with us."

## IV

T. Bower Yates sat at his desk day-dreaming. He and Jamie were on a desert island watching the sun set. Just the two of them, without any outside interference--- Their own private little world without the crushing weight of world domination. Maybe then Jamie would really---

A pounding on his office door shocked him back to the present.

"Come."

"Mr. Yates, the files have been cracked! Please allow me," quivered Lewis as he turned the terminal and began to type:

\access:2a472/septic  
working...

Yates' eyes narrowed as he began reading his computer screen.

"What the hell is this nonsense?" he bellowed as he waived his arms violently.

"Research tells me that is an excerpt from a children's book of the old society called, *The Wiener Dog Chronicles*, Sir. It was very popular at its time."

*.....Peabo and Sierra were fast asleep in front of the big window in the greatroom. Summer was almost over, but it was still very hot in 'Zona. It was too hot to sleep in his cheetah print fuzzy bed. But the crisp, cool, cotton carpet was just right. Everyone called them the dog days of summer and Peabo knew why.*

*"Summer is when 'Zona people bar-b-que. And when they bar-b-que, they eat outside. And when they bar-b-que and eat outside, they feed their adorable little puppies pieces of hamburger, hot dog and chicken. Dog days for sure!"*

"Are you sure this is the Rude file?" demanded Yates

"Yes, this is definitely the Rude file. I'd say he had nothing and was just 'yanking your chain', I believe the ancient expression was," nodded Lewis confidently.

"Maybe," whispered Yates through clenched teeth. "What about the second file?"

"Oh this one will please you..."

access\211bf9-/rambo

*working...*

*I am sorry to have to confess that TG-6 is my own deadly creation. There is no antidote as it is a true Armageddon virus. Once created, it mutates and adapts. It cannot be destroyed.*

*-end-*

"Where's Fitzpatrick?" growled Yates.

"Playing that insipid pizza game."

"Where's his wife?"

"She is hosting a senate wives' tea, mounting a drive to eliminate first names for married women."

"What?" winced Yates.

"Just Mrs. Yates, instead of Betty Yates. As soon as a girl gets married, she gives up her first name as well as her last," shrugged Lewis.

"How's it coming?"

Lewis smiled and made a thumbs-up sign.

"You see, Sir? We're safe! He had absolutely nothing," bragged Lewis.

"Maybe," whispered Yates staring at the screen as if he could divine something no one else could. "You know what has to be done now, Lewis. Put two good men on it. I don't want any loose ends!"

"Of course Sir. Now, about Jamie---"

"Yes, yes. First I want you to work on the Vice President's imaging. I think it's about time that he starts graying around the temples. Give him a few worry lines too," said Yates thoughtfully.

"What about adding a few pounds to him? It's almost time for his vacation, so he can lose them jogging or something," suggested Lewis.

"Good, just do it. I wish we could get away with just a computer image for the President, too. Life would be so much easier," laughed Yates.

Lewis laughed obligingly, but his mind was on Jamie.

## V

"Be there, Titus," Mayton prayed as he dialed his telecom unit. "We have no time to lose. Answer!"

Mayton had a flash of despair with ever-increasing drone of the buzzing telecom. He couldn't wait any longer. He checked his Solis and found fifty-nine percent charged. Enough to safely get him to Topeka and back. He figured by the time he drove to Titus' apartment, Titus would have returned and they could leave from there.

He had to fight off the nagging feeling that something had gone wrong. It took less than an hour to reach the apartment. As Mayton turned the corner and approached the large brick building that housed all the Secretary of State support staff, his heart began to bleed in terror.

The State Human Essence Disposal Unit was parked in front. Mayton had no proof that they were there for Titus, he just knew. He parked down the street in front of a political reading room and casually strolled towards the apartment building.

A Disposal Unit parked in front of their building and no one even seemed to notice. Strange thing about the fogged — nothing seemed to bother them.

Mayton walked up the stairs, turned right and bit his lip as he found Titus' apartment. A small boy was playing space ships in front of the open door.

"Is Titus home?" he asked. The boy just nodded and pointed inside.

Mayton walked in and found himself in the midst of seven men. Five were dressed in suits and two in the unmistakable Disposal Unit's orange jumpsuits.

No one seemed to notice or care that he was there, so he just listened.

Mayton recognized Lewis as Yates assistant, from a picture that Titus shown him. Lewis was busy talking quietly with two other men in suits. They nodded and stepped aside as Lewis began to address the Disposal Unit.

Mayton stood motionless, staring at the living room sofa. On the sofa, dressed in a leisure jumpsuit was the exploded body of Titus. If it weren't for the recognizable black skin and silver ring clutched in his hand, it could have anyone that had fallen from a great height.

*Needless sentimentality— the ring!*

The apartment was in shambles. Several of the *suits* had various items in hand, mostly books. On a table next to where Mayton stood, were assorted objects: money, travel script and a black pen shaped cylinder. Mayton's heart raced as he slipped the SAM monitor into his pocket. No one noticed him or the sweat pouring off of him on the cool afternoon.

"The Secretary wants the official report to read suicide," said Lewis firmly.

"Suicide," repeated the Disposal Unit together.

*Miserable Bastards!* Mayton screamed inside his head.

"I know the late Titus Crest had a wife named Deedee and a son named Byron. Put a trace on them; we have to be sure," mumbled Lewis to another member of the party.

Mayton left quietly and made his way through the winding corridors. "Yates had Titus killed," he mumbled to himself. "Now wait, Titus was the most efficient man I know and I'm sure Deedee and Byron are safe. I just wish I could tell her, instead of just letting her guess."

As he reached the sidewalk and headed for his Solis, he stopped short.

"Shit!" he gasped aloud. "Then I'm next! Don't panic you asshole--- just get in your car and drive away slowly.

The drive back home was torturous. What about Gretchen--- what about the antidotes? What could he accomplish all by himself?

Mayton pulled into his driveway and got out. He locked the door of his Solis, although there was no need it. If his mind hadn't been on Titus, antidotes and saving the world he would have noticed Ian and Margo Dean hailing him.

*Just perfect*, he thought to himself.

"And a gracious good day to you Mayton. I'm here to formally invite you to our World Guard membership meeting tomorrow night. We've been put on alert due to the increased Out-Worlder activity in earth's sector. Mother earth really needs you Mayton."

As Mayton was about to make up yet another excuse, Ian turned abruptly and banged his elbow on the door of the Solis. Mayton winced, but Ian didn't seem to feel anything.

"Certainly, Ian; I'll be there for sure," said Mayton with a forced smile. "I'm only too glad to serve our glorious country."

"Good! And I know that you'll be pleased to know that Margo will be making her very own original whole wheat raisin and ginger happy-face cookies for our meeting," beamed Ian proudly.

"Oh Ian, how you do go on. Mayton, did you hear? The Grant's have decided on the baby's name. Hanz Solo, named after a great, great general," gushed Margo.

Mayton smiled, but he felt so empty. He excused himself and went into the house to find Gretchen baking whole wheat, raisin and ginger happy-face cookies.

"Welcome home Mayton. I got my horrid hair cut today. How do you like it?" blushed Gretchen modestly.

Mayton forced himself to smile. A Gretchen he didn't know stood before him wearing an apron--- a Gretchen with short, bobbed hair and blank eyes.

"Your hair befits you Gretchen," he smiled. "Thanks be to our GOD for your creativity and talent."

"Oh thank you, husband. Now I am a fitting real woman worthy of you," she said with a shy smile. Mayton's heart was breaking.

"Your nourishing meal will be ready in exactly twenty minutes. Is that acceptable?"

"But of course, dear wife. I have a bit of work to do in my office. I will be back in nineteen minutes--- acceptable?"

"As you please," she said sincerely.

Mayton locked himself in his office and sat down at his terminal.  
*access\water123*

And as simple as that, the sequence for disarming the lasers at the Central Water Project was starring at him. He simply wrote it down and put it in his pocket. He well knew if he were caught, it wouldn't matter if it were in code or not.

He sat rubbing his temples. *Oh fine, an anxiety headache is what I really need!*

"Oh Titus, it's too late, but I know what *needless sentimentality* means! I'll leave in the morning and may the Creator be with me," he sighed deeply. Mayton quickly packed the antidotes he had prepared and sat down for possibly his final supper with Gretchen.

## HAMILTON, BERMUDA

### Gaithway Cottage

"No matter what happens Harold, I want to thank you for your help. At least we know we've done our best," smiled Reginald as he clasped his friend's hand warmly.

"I really like it, Reggie, but I fear it's too late."

"Never the less, one hundred, forty-four crates will arrive in Bar Harbor, Maine tomorrow for distribution. My network there is first class—twelve people that are closer than family."

"And you're sure they're really *one of us*?"

"Absolutely! I just wish there had been time and resources to have them printed and bound properly. You know, my first book and all." They both laughed and sat down by the huge, dirty bay window.

"I think we were lucky to even get them copied. They are simple, but complete. I still don't trust that man at the publishing house. He said all the right things, but there was something strange about him, as if he were evaluating or something."

"I know what you mean, but we have nothing to lose at our age and the world to re-gain if we succeed. With the Creators help, our final battle will be our most glorious."

"Odd isn't it?" chuckled Harold, "that the title was the hardest?"

"I know. At first I thought, *The Would-be Revolution*, then, *SNAFU-AMERICA*. I toyed with, *Beyond Control*, but I think the final title is by far the grabber it needs to get the world to read it and wake up."

"I hope so, my friend," sighed Harold sincerely.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TOPEKA

It had been a long and arduous day for T. Bower Yates. Jamie had a headache and was in his room, and his wife was at a *Save the Something* dinner, so there was nothing to do but take a long hot sauna and unwind.

As he undressed he caught a glimpse of himself in the full-length mirror on the far wall. His once firm body was now loose and sagging. His skin had taken on a thin quality with blotchy pigmentation. He sighed deeply and muttered about being old, tired and ugly.

"I may be old and not very attractive, but with my power, I can buy all the praise and respect I need! From queer child genius to ruler of the whole world," he laughed as his mind drifted back to Skip—

He was eighteen years old and working as an aide to Secretary of State Markson. He alone suspected that Markson was a soviet plant, but he was in awe of the power the position held. And even at eighteen, Yates aspired to that same position, only higher. Skip was also an aide. He was his first love and sexual encounter. He was young, scared, and emotionally ablaze. Unfortunately his father wandered in and caught them. *Like two dogs in the street*, he said. His father beat him and forbid him to be a homosexual. Yates was embarrassed and deeply hurt both physically and emotionally, promised.

As a reward, his father treated him to a real guaranteed manly experience with short-legged blonde hooker named Nola.

"Try it, you'll like it, son!" Yates tried and Nola did her best to arouse him. "I'd need spray starch and sprints to make that thing work," she laughed. And worst than being utterly limp was she kissed him on the forehead and shook her head as she left. Yates cried for the first and last time in his life.

"The world would be better off without sex," he wept. With that thought, destiny was simply a matter of time. He was young and could well afford to be patient. After all, he had been hand picked by the Secretary of State. He would learn and wait for the right moment—

"Jamie," he whispered with a smile. Jamie always made him feel young and virile. He wrapped himself in a soft Turkish robe and headed for the sauna. It amazed him just how noisy his knees were, as he walked across the marble floor in bare feet. But an hour in the sauna and he would be ready to see Jamie and become whole again.

His private living quarters were large and deserted late at night and no one had access without his approval. His mind raced to make excuses for what he was hearing but there was no denying the unmistakable sounds of lovemaking. Jamie gasping *Lewis* over and over again ran through Yates' mind like a rampaging bull.

"Oh Lewis, yes, yes, yes!" he groaned.

"Jamie," howled Lewis in a burst of ecstasy.

Soft laughter cut through Yates to his very soul. Tears welled up in his eyes and his upper lip began to twitch. He meticulously picked a thread from his robe and left silently except for the creaking of his knees.

It was almost dawn when there came a soft knock on Yates' door. Yates sat in the dark and said nothing. The door slowly opened and in the dim, grey light of morning he could see his golden Adonis, Jamie.

"Bowzer?" whispered Jamie.

"Your headache gone, Jamie?" asked Yates.

"Oh, my yes. It was so very wicked. I'm sorry I neglected you last night, but I'll make up for it now, Bowzer." He cooed gently as he walked behind Yates and began stroking his shoulders.

Yates couldn't stay angry with Jamie. He had a more consuming emotion. The need to feel young and cared for. Even if it was out of obligation or necessity.

As usual, Jamie satisfied all of his needs. But this time when Jamie laughed and called him a *randy old bull* Yates stopped him cold with a glare.

"Bowzer, what on earth has gotten into you? Have I somehow offended you? You know I just can't stand it when you are cranky with me," pouted Jamie convincingly.

"By the way, if you want to see Lewis again, you'll have to go to the Fluffy Bun Factory. Since he loves buns and can't keep his hands off of them, he'll love his new job! Of course, you'll no longer appeal to him," smirked Yates.

"Oh Bowzer, you really do love me!" squealed Jamie as he threw his arms around Yates' neck.

"I'm warning you Jamie, don't trifle with me. You'll find yourself working at a fast food dump in a permanent state of limp!"

"You know I'd be hard to replace, you old bull," cooed Jamie as he bit his lip.

"Maybe," replied Yates coldly with a shrug, "or maybe not."

## DAY SEVEN

### II

## KYOTO, JAPAN

### OFFICE OF TUMIAN INTERNATIONAL

Santo Kasawa sat behind his large mahogany desk frowning. His lips were tightly pressed together and twitched in cadence to the tapping of his pen as he waited the arrival of Itto.

Three short, hard raps signaled his arrival.

"Enter," barked Kasawa. As he did, Kasawa was pleased at how tall and handsome Itto had become. Most Japanese men Itto's age were all six feet tall, but six foot four inches tall, with green eyes was to be admired. Kasawa smiled and carefully looked him up and down to access the news. It was good.

"We have accessed the Uniform States GOD computer, Uncle. Their research correlates most closely with ours," he smiled.

"Most closely?" questioned his uncle, knowing Itto well.

"Yes, they say one-percent of their citizens are immune. What they have failed to realize is that one are resistant and only two-percent of the populace are permanently immune. Our laboratories have found a way to mirror that permanent immunization as well as how to infect the one point ninety-eight percent."

"Very good, Itto. So we can permanently immune as many of our people as we need," thought Kasawa aloud. "Then you know what must be done next."

"Its already in place; a very clever story of my disgrace, betrayal and abandonment. Even our closest allies believe the story and are shunning me. I have an offer, which I already accepted. This will be our last meeting, for now. I leave within the hour."

"Very good, my nephew. Very good."

"Thank you, Uncle." He smiled, knowing he'd pleased his uncle and mentor.

"Any questions? I sense some hesitation, Itto. I know you very well."

"I was just thinking that we must be very careful. Immunization is for life, Uncle..." started Itto.

"However, mortality is subjective, my dear Nephew," interrupted Kasawa.

"True, Uncle. I have perfected a plan--- a final solution, of sorts. It is all outlined in this report," he said as he bowed low and handed Kasawa a leather bound report.

"You please me, Itto," smiled the old man, brimming with pride.

Itto smiled broadly and bowed. He more than loved his uncle, he admired him above all other men, even his own father. His father was a good man, but Itto saw his gentleness as weakness. He was devoted to his uncle's power and ruthlessness. And since Kasawa had only a daughter, he was sure to inherit the Tumian Empire and possibly the world.

Tumian was a worldwide distributor of pharmaceuticals, including the growth hormone that produced Itto's size and eye color. Tumian was very selective about their *Imperial* line of products. Products that raised intelligence, developed muscle and enhanced height and size were strictly for home use and never distributed to the rest of the inferior world. Japan under the direction of Tumian, were becoming a super-race. And now with Itto's help, Kasawa was about to lead Japan to their manifest destiny.

Kasawa turned to look out his large glass wall overlooking Kyoto. His breast flushed with pride of his beautiful Japan. He and his company had created a paradise on earth. No pollution, no crime, gorgeous scenery and only one million people spread over Japan's entirety. Soon his people would spread over the rest of the *future* uninhabited areas as well. "Soon," he whispered with a smile.

## DAY EIGHT

### III

## CHERRYWOOD RETIREMENT HOME

### Shawnee, Kansas

...."Today's subject is Conformity, the key to Happiness. And now our Vice-President, James Turnbull".

"Welcome Friends, today we're going to talk about the concept of harmony. If a society is to be harmonious, the nail that sticks up must be pounded down. It's the way our forefathers decreed it and the way it will remain. This wonderful country we are so blessed to live in, has no room or patience for dissenters. We are a homogeneous society and now even more than ever, must be One World. We at this very moment are under the threat of attack from yet another Out-World Empire. We know that their advance scouts have already infiltrated our very society. As we all know Out-Worlders on the surface look like us, but watch for the little telltale signs that they are different. Look for anger, individualism, discontentment and most of all, criticism of our grand and glorious government. These spies, these pirates from space, these scavengers that will pick our bones while we cry for mercy, must be stopped! Report any and all people that you suspect of being different to the Central Committee for action.

"Make no mistake, Out-Worlders are among us. Be ever vigilant. One World, thanks be to our GOD."

A tall man in the unmistakable orange jumpsuit turned off the central telecom unit with a nod of agreement. The Human Essence Disposal Unit began to methodically record and bagged the essence of what was once Shellie Gaste. Since it was a suicide and she left no family, the State would acquire all of her belongings.

From the moment the Disposal Unit showed up, neighbors began dropping by to pick up some of the things that they had *lent* Shellie. A crystal vase, a silver picture frame and several rare books. It didn't matter to the Unit; they had already taken everything they wanted.

The housekeeper found Shellie early that same morning. She was as stylish in death as she was in life, reclining dramatically on the sofa wearing a low cut blue satin evening gown, lipstick, eye-shadow and smelling of old crushed flowers. It was neat and clean--- no blood, mess or gore, simply an overdose of Quadralain. Quadralain was an illegal substance used exclusively for painless suicide by despondent Liberals. And defiantly pinned to the blue satin with an antique pearl pin was a note:

*I've outlived my purpose and in all good conscience, cannot continue to live with this bullshit. I've been told that change is good and to stop changing is to stagnate and die. But what if the changes are immoral and degrading? Then it is time to embrace death and welcome it as a long awaited friend. My forehead aches. I am tired and choose to go home. My true friends will understand and to the rest I say— fuck the Presider, fuck the Vice-Presider and most of all, and fuck the Secretary of State, the son-of-a-bitch!*

"One less Liberal--- no great loss," muttered one of the Unit members. "Shall we send the note to the Presider?"

"The Secretary wants all of the notes. Some kind of statistical information or something," was the answer.

As they prepared to zip up the *essence bag*, a diminutive old woman reached down and took the pearl pin off of Shellie's dress.

"I almost lost my most precious pin," she smiled.

"Sure," muttered the Unit Member as he zipped the bag and grunted, "Up".

Down the long hall, up the pathway lined by roses and out to the waiting Disposal van while all of her neighbors watched silently, oblivious to the life and death of Shellie Gaste.

## DAY NINE

### IV

## HARVEY/WADE PUBLISHERS

### TOPEKA, KANSAS

"Gretchen my dear, we are so very pleased with your latest effort in combating the misinformation that seems to permeate our society by the hands of the Liberals. I must say, this is your best Ollie Raccoon book yet!"

"Thank you, Mrs. Herman. I was only too honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve my country and mankind. And I do feel that it is extremely important that all children know about the un-women of the old society and how GOD saved us. It's still hard for me to believe that they really once had the power to ruin good men's lives with their lies and incriminations. Men are honorable!"

"That is a fact of life, just as men have one less rib than women," Mrs. Herman added.

"And to think that anyone gave credence to charges of harassment simply boggles the mind. Why would a man harass a woman? What would the purpose be? Men protect women! It makes me embarrassed to be a woman, at times," Gretchen blushed as she hung her head.

"I feel the same way. Well fortunately, my dear, those times as long past. But you're right, we must never forget our mistakes, lest we repeat them," quoted Mrs. Herman sanctimoniously.

"Oh, that is beautiful! Who said that?" gushed Gretchen.

"I believe it was Richard Nixon of the twentieth century. Unappreciated at his time, but history proved him to be one of the greatest men ever!"

"Oh, goodness me, Mrs. Herman. I almost forgot. I baked you some cookies. I hope you enjoy them!" smiled Gretchen as she handed her a brown paper bag.

"Thank you, Gretchen. It's women like you that keep our country great."

"You are too kind, Mrs. Herman, too kind," blushed Gretchen sincerely. "If you have a moment, I'd like to discuss an idea I had for a new book. I think it would be just dandy."

"Of course Gretchen; tell me," she smiled as she reached for another cookie. "But please, call me Cindy."

"Thank you, Cindy. It would be a how-to book on sewing Christmas Angels. It would be ever so interesting. I could include paper patterns and instructions for the wings and even how to attach their hair. Real women would just have to have the book!" gushed Gretchen.

"I think you've got something here. Let me make a few notes for the production department. I think I can safely give you the go-ahead, my dear," she grinned. "But you'll have to hurry, it's already February and well into the Christmas season."

"I'll get started right away, Cindy, I promise!"

## DAY TEN

### V

## TOPEKA

"Come," growled Yates.

The door slowly opened and a tall young man of thirty entered and bowed politely.

"You are?" snapped Yates.

"Itto Tanawa, Mr. Secretary. I'm your new Aide to replace Lewis. I understand he been placed at the Whole Wheat Fluffy Bun Factory, doing inventory control. He should work out nicely," smiled Itto proudly.

"I think so. You come very highly recommended, Itto. And you being Japanese is a bonus. I'll depend on you to help me understand the complex cultural differences."

"I'd be honored, Sir."

"Fine, that will be just fine." Yates beamed confidently.

"And I have good news for you about that pesky two-percent. Within two weeks they will be as non-existent as free will. Also I have made a thorough study of Sector Seven's Sensory Automated Monitors. There seems to be a high degree of malfunctions in the D-series in the arm joints. I recommend that they be recalled and a auto-sensor be placed in their elbow. This will correct the malfunctions and make detection quite impossible."

Yates broke out in a broad smile as Itto handed him a single page report.

"One more thing, Sir. We have confiscated one hundred forty-three crates of this, in Bar Harbor," said Itto as he handed Yates a cardboard covered book. "They all have been burned, except this copy. I thought you might enjoy reading it, for *auld langsyne*."

"*The Death of Free Will*, by Reginald Smythe - MI-5, retired."

"And the author, printer, etc.?" asked Yates coolly.

"Taken care of, Sir, with no loose ends," smiled Itto broadly.

"Fine--- real fine! We're going to be able to work well together, Itto. I'm sure of it," beamed Yates confidently.

"I too am most sure, Mr. Secretary," smiled Itto as he bowed low.

"Feel free to familiarize yourself with the set-up, Itto. I think I'll take a little break and do some reading," he laughed as Itto bowed and left the room.

"Festering egomaniac? No, I just happen to know my talents. Star Chamber? Most astute!" he laughed as he began reading about the would-be revolution he stopped, and the country he now ruled.

## DAY FOURTEEN

### VI

## SHAWNEE

*Titus somebody, is dead. Gretchen hasn't understood my mood and I awoke limp this morning.*

*I know I should be sad or something, but I frankly don't care.*

*Everything is quite fine and I have nothing to complain about.*

*I don't think I ever did.*

*All the apprehension of the past weeks is almost completely gone.*

*In fact I can't clearly remember what my apprehension was all about, but everyday it is less and less.*

*I do know that they have found a way to bring the two-percent in line, but I can't quite remember just who they are.*

*erase personal diary file.*

*WARNING: you are about to erase a file*

*(enter)*

Mayton turned off his terminal and readied himself for his World Guard meeting, complete with whole wheat, raisin and ginger happy-face cookies.

**END**