

Life of Rachael

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Introduction

My name is Rachael Ann Brown. I'm 33 years old. I don't know how I ended up at this point in my life. Furthermore, I don't know how to convey what my problems even are without relating to you my life story.

Early life

I was born in Warren, Ohio, around 9 o'clock on a Saturday evening. Alright – I'll try and be a little less verbose, but you never know when we're going to need that. I have no memories of Warren; my parents only lived there a few years for work, and moved away when I was a year old. My father described it as “the armpit of Ohio”; with all due respect to anyone with ties to this place.

My first memories are of growing up in a house my parents rented by White Lake, after we moved to North Carolina. I don't know how exactly we afforded to live at the lake. Maybe that's why we only lived there a few years. My memories of this time period seem... pretty gentle. I briefly remember going to daycare

for a bit, before I started going to the baptist church in town for preschool.

I often played with Katelyn, a neighbor who went to the same preschool, and her younger sister Cassie. I also had some other playmates who lived further away. This other fellow named Ethan Bennett; not sure what ever happened to him. But it was mostly Katelyn and Cassie, particularly in those early years.

We moved from our house by the lake to a new double-wide trailer closer to town. We had quite a bit more space there, with a pond and a lot more woods to explore out back. I didn't really have any neighbor kids to play with except for this much older kid named Walt. While this sounds isolating, I don't remember it being particularly so. I was busy using my imagination in the woods and playing Super Nintendo, and we still invited kids over quite a lot back in those days.

I was enrolled in kindergarten at Bladen Lakes primary. And, I still have mostly fond memories of this age. But, it also might be the earliest age when I started to notice I was different. You see, I quickly became friends with this girl named Courtney. And, everything seemed pretty normal for a while. We played at recess, made long strings of Play-Doh together. I remember our parents arranging at least one play date. She lived in bum-fuck Harrells, though.

Things started to get uncomfortable when the other kids began to ship the two of us. "Ethan and Courtney, sittin' in a tree" they'd say, teasingly. I became increasingly frustrated by this. I didn't understand what was so weird about us, and why they weren't making fun of anyone else like that. Eventually, it was explained to me that the problem was that Courtney was a girl, and I was a boy. The other kids were insinuating that we should date, or marry, or that we were already on the path to doing so. But, I was just trying to make a friend. She's just the person I happened to first gravitate toward, for whatever reason.

So, I'm reckoning I have to make friends with boys if I want to not be made fun of. And as I look around at all the other boys, all I can think is... ick, really? They're all just so... wild, and loud, and rambunctious. Perhaps even a bit violent. None of them felt particularly relatable.

Things felt a little awkward initially, when the first group of guys I approached wondered why I wanted to play with them all of a sudden. And, I didn't exactly stop playing with girls entirely. But, this might've been the first time I made a conscious decision to try and act like a normal boy. It marks the point at which I became self-aware. And, it was the beginning of a pattern of behavior that has followed me ever since.

Mid-childhood

After trying on the various hats as one does at that age, it was clear by about first or second grade that I was interested in science, and electronics in particular. Bill Nye and Magic School Bus were among my favorite television programs at that point, and I really liked building the Radio Shack kits my parents had bought me; particularly the shortwave radio receiver. I also really wanted to learn more about computers; which was still a novelty in the 90s, especially out in the country. Bladen Lakes built it's first computer lab on the other side of the wall from our classroom when I was in kindergarten, which probably makes first or second grade the first point at which they started taking us over there; to play Jump Start n^{th} grade, or to look up silly things on Yahooligans.

Just when I was starting to get jealous of kids who got to have actual computer time, we bought our first computer. And oh, do I remember that damn thing.

#snip It was a Compaq Presario with a Cyrix knockoff 586, something like 32MB of EDO memory, and a 1.2GB Quantum Bigfoot, preinstalled with Microsoft Windows 95. It had a serial port, a parallel port, and an internal dial-up modem that was

either on-board or, probably more likely, a small form factor card that took up the only expansion slot. At any rate, I don't remember any PCI or ISA slots available in the thing; and it also lacked USB, which may not have even been around yet.

#snip And, I hope I haven't written about this computer with too much disdain; for as quickly as it was outmoded, it performed its duties quite well for what it was. We got dial-up internet, and I remember my dad bringing home Netscape Communicator on a bunch of floppies. I wanted to make a website, and my dad and I took to making one for our local 4-H group. Not sure what ever happened to that.

Second grade feels like a bit of a turning point in my childhood. We got our aforementioned first computer. I also placed into the gifted program (which we called AIG). Additionally, Josh moved to White Lake from the Fayetteville area that year; he would go on to become a lifelong friend. He was the first friend I made who went to my school and also my church; most kids who went to the Methodist church went to school at Elizabethtown Primary, which was in town and across the river.

When I was in the second or third grade, my father had a heart attack. He was only 39 years old, and was quickly taken to Cape Fear Valley once he was stabilized in Elizabethtown. I went to stay with Josh's family for a time. My dad survived; he needed a stent if I recall, and it was strongly advised that he stop smoking.

Josh and I quickly became friends. He also placed into AIG, and within a year or two we were helping make a simple website for our 3rd or 4th grade class.

In the mornings before school, I liked to go into my mom's room and waddle in the bed while she got ready and listened to Bob and Sheri. And, I feel like I need to take a break to talk

about how weird it must sound for normal people to hear me refer to “my mom’s room” when speaking of a married couple. But by now, my dad had taken to sleeping in the recliner, while my mom slept in the bed. And now that I’m older, I’m quite certain any spark of romance between these two people had long faded by this point.

But anyway, I liked to lie around in my mom’s bed before school while she was getting ready, and this was when the thought first occurred to me that I really, *really* wanted to try on one of her bras. And, I was old enough to know that those were for girls. I wondered if it was normal to feel that way, but I didn’t really think much of it at first.

I think I was around nine when my parents decided I was old enough to be left home alone. My dad was spending less and less time at home for work-related reasons, that for all I know may as well have been marital. This was decades ago, but I think it might’ve been at the very first opportunity when it occurred to me: what if I went into my mom’s room and tried on one of her bras? As long as I’m really careful not to disturb anything... who would know, right? So naturally one thing leads to another. And, the first time I probably only did it for a minute or two. I was so scared I’d be caught somehow, or that my mom would come home way ahead of schedule.

This quickly became a habit. When I was left alone, I’d get the family camcorder, an RF modulator box, a pocket-sized television, and a 50’ roll of coax, combining them into a rudimentary CCTV system. Nobody would ever ask what I was doing; playing with electronics was well within my normal range of behavior by this age.

My dad would sometimes jokingly sing that Cheech and Chong number when we were driving around in his truck. While there was certainly never any hurtful intent, this *was* my first time learning, both that boys sometimes had the sorts of urges I had, and that parents might disown their children if they do certain



Figure 1: Cheech & Chong - Earache My Eye (<https://youtu.be/VJW67QN24SA?t=59>)

things. I was very confused why something so seemingly innocent would elicit such an extreme response.

My electronics hobby grew to the point that I had a soldering iron in my room, which for all I know my mom still has clenched butt cheeks over. My dad suggested ham radio as a potential hobby. This rapidly drew my interest, and I got my technician class license just after my tenth birthday. The Morse code requirement had recently been eliminated, though I did have to muddle through learning it for the general class license I'd get in middle school.

My mother's first stay at the mental hospital happened around the fourth grade. She went voluntarily, and I really only got bits and pieces at that age. I think she might've driven the van to the edge of the river and contemplated driving in. I think my dad

mentioned she had a traumatic childhood. I do know she had panic attacks, for which she took Klonopin and an antidepressant. My father took care of me during that time.

I had my first emotional meltdown at school when I was in fourth grade. I grew increasingly upset with the librarian during nth period, for some childish reason I don't remember. I started making a fingergun-like gesture at Mrs. Price; which isn't like me. I'm not really a gun person. I think she asked me to go to the principal's office or something, and I sort of just lost it. I don't remember all that much after that. I remember shouting "I want my mommy!" in the teacher workroom; though in that same moment I had a sinking feeling she wouldn't be helpful.

I did eventually find myself crying in the principal's office, where we had this sort of "life is short" talk. I was mostly a good kid, and I didn't really get in trouble.

My mother quickly determined that I had anger management issues. She took me to see a therapist in Fayetteville a handful of times; this was mostly unproductive, and I certainly didn't talk about my little habit with the guy.

In fourth grade, I was encouraged to do a science fair project inspired by my new hobby; no, not crossdressing, amateur radio. I had a lot of subsequent science fair projects that were mostly phoned in; but this one was actually alright, and went on to the state level. It basically looked at what effect the sun had on the noise floor and maximum range of radio communications, especially at VHF and above. Not exactly original research, but I was a goddamn fourth grader.

By this point in late elementary school, the girls were starting to wear training bras, and I was starting to have feelings toward them. But, my feelings were mostly just jealousy. Grown-ups started telling me I was getting to the age where I'd start to have feelings for girls. "Is this it?", I wondered.

The corresponding process began relatively early for me. It was noted in the fourth grade that I had “started puberty”, and I entered middle school with an obvious mustache.

By now, my mother was very keen on bragging about how I had my amateur radio license. I could’ve done without the attention. She seems to have put me in a lot of uncomfortable situations, under the guise of it just being “what moms do”. I’ve needed a lot of hindsight to really see that.

I’m not sure whether it was due to a change in my mother’s behavior, or simply me growing older and more observant. But toward the end of primary school, I increasingly viewed my mother as “emotionally unstable”. My parents fought more often. “Her saddle’s slipping”, my dad said of my mother privately; a statement I was generally inclined to agree with.

I wasn’t really old enough to understand their arguments, so there was always some doubt in my mind as to who was right; but, my mother was very high-strung, anxious, and obsessive, in stark contrast to my carefree and at times lackadaisical father.

By now, the mag-mount on a cookie tin had been replaced with a Cushcraft vertical on the roof; which in turn would soon be on a used 40’ tower we managed to pick up. It was eventually accompanied by a three element beam for HF, and a 14 element beam for 2 meters, along with a flagstaff-style pulley for erecting dipoles.

My dad heard about Linux from somewhere (the paper, perhaps), and suggested I should learn more about it. I was fascinated by the idea of trying a different operating system; although my dad would never let me use the family computer for that, I managed to get a cheap used desktop computer in late elementary school. I chose pre-Novell SuSE 7.something as my first distro; I find this amusing as an adult, considering I lived two hours away from Red Hat world headquarters.

Our church got a new preacher, Tommy. We went through a few others I won't bother to mention, but Tommy was the preacher through most of my youth. Regardless of where I've found myself in life, I still think he's a cool guy.

My mother and I first met Tommy and his wife at a sort of reception dinner we held for them in the church activity building. We managed to find ourselves at the same table somehow, and it was brought up that Tommy was also born in Warren, Ohio.

The new preacher undoubtedly mingled with other groups; but our table, oddly enough, happened to be the one out of a dozen or so that he gravitated toward. Him, his wife, the Richardsons, the Stewarts, and my mother and I. The festivities died down, and the people began to leave. Our group kept talking as the activity building fell empty. A couple of people from our table left; but the core group remained, and found itself in the much more intimate adjoining preacher's office.

This was a long time ago, and I'm afraid a lot has happened that may have jumbled my memory. But, I do recall some vague discussion about the Freemasons between the remaining members of our party, save for my mother and I. And, something about Tommy and Jody being from somewhere. I could try and be a little less verbose, but you never know when we're going to need that.

9/11 happened during math class when I was in 5th grade. A lot of parents came early to pick us up, including mine. Although it was certainly made out to be a big deal, after Columbine and the Oklahoma City bombing, I honestly underestimated the gravity of the situation, and expected it to mostly fade from the news cycle after a period of weeks to months.

#snip I scored an old Thinkpad with the swappable disk drives under the keyboard for a couple hundred bucks not long after I got the desktop. It might've been showing its age by the time I sold it in high school, but now that I'm older I do regret getting rid of it so quickly. It was a lot

more durable than the Inspiron that replaced it, which needed at least two hinge/lid replacements throughout its lifespan.

My other little hobby had similarly grown, emboldened by the couple of minutes of warning my ad-hoc CCTV system gave me, and my growing familiarity with my mother's routines and early warning signs. I narrowly avoided being caught after she confronted me about her disheveled underwear drawer; defying a forthcoming explanation for my mother's query, she volunteered one of her own: that I was looking for a utility knife she had taken from me and hidden in the drawer. It was like I was playing a video game, where the only choice was to press X and take this sort of plea bargain, which didn't end in any sort of real punishment anyway. It wasn't like her to take things from me, and she just gave it back eventually.

Middle school

Sixth grade-ish

I entered middle school just before my twelfth birthday.

I want to place myself back there, for a moment. The love seat was moved nearer to the kitchen, in this sort of nook. And I'm laying on the love seat, bundled up with a heavy blanket or two. The second TV is in the distance in front of me, toward the back of the house. The main TV is in the living room around the corner. I'm not sure that either one is doing anything, but there could be a little background noise. There's a seemingly military-grade Thinkpad brick plugged into the wall somewhere, and the other end of the cord is dangling in the couch somewhere with me, probably. There's a copy of Lord of the Rings I'm reading for 6th grade English class on the floor beside me, and I'm hacking away on the laptop. Figuring out vi for the first time with some docs I printed out on the other computer... probably

trying to get XFree86 to work or something. I haven't heard of emacs yet, by the way.

An ancient thought experiment poses the question: if grains of sand are removed from a heap, one at a time, at what point does the collection of sand cease to remain a heap?

When Homo Sapiens begin puberty, it typically initiates a process of psycho-sexual maturation. This generality is one rare instance in which my puberty was not exceptional.

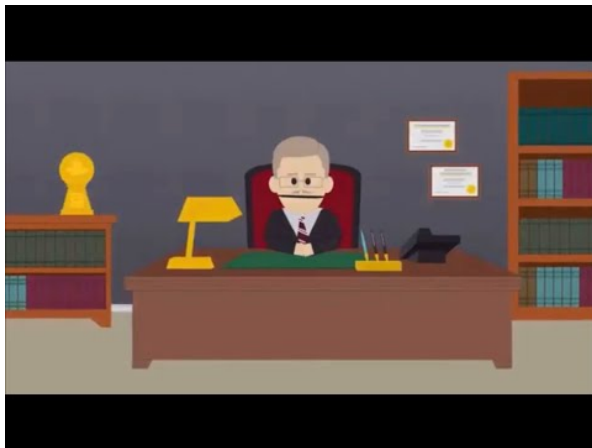


Figure 2: A guide on Canadian puberty | South Park | (<https://youtu.be/28oWUAW85Gg>)

I don't remember exactly when I first experienced sexual arousal, or how. But, it certainly happened by the end of elementary school. And certainly by the end of elementary school, a couple of things had become obvious.

You might (or might *not*) be wondering if I ever experienced sexual arousal while crossdressing. And while the answer is yes, especially in middle and early high school, that wasn't really the most profound pattern to emerge. One of my first and strongest urges was actually that I really wanted to be tied up. I was really into bondage, ropes, cages... and always as a bottom. The universe just sort of delivered that to me at that age, along with my mustache.

When I was younger, I always enjoyed playing games that involved the aforementioned elements, as one often does with cops-and-robbers style roleplay. But by the fourth or fifth grade, I found that I enjoyed them a little *too* much, and that they had become "private" activities. I distinctly remember escaping after being tied to a basketball goal around age 10 or 11, frantically yet begrudgingly, because I *really* didn't want to explain to Aaron why I had a raging hard-on.

In sixth grade, I started attending Clarkton School of Discovery. I grew up in what some might call a rural backwater; the county generally lacked magnet schools, or even more than one or two AP classes at the high school level. The one exception to this was Clarkton, which had a sort of "magnet hallway" for AIG students. The AIG students took their core classes together in the morning, and afternoon electives were mixed between AIG and general education students. The general education students either lived in southern Bladen county (which wasn't exactly "in town" for most people), or managed to get in through a lottery system. Clarkton had by far the best reputation and resources of middle schools in the county, and hosted a band, drama, tech lab, and AV program; at least the latter two were the only of their kind in the county.

I started getting bullied regularly for the first time in sixth grade. This was almost exclusively a problem during my afternoon electives, when the AIG kids were mixed with the regular

students. One of the first electives I took was Christine White's Greek mythology class, and one of the kids did shit like putting thumb tacks in my seat when I wasn't looking. I think that guy might've eased up a bit as the nine weeks went on, but he still had an attitude with me.

The worse problem was this group of guys I sat beside in keyboarding class. The main issue with this class was that the assignments were designed for people who barely knew how to type, and eventually worked up to using one of those rubber pads that covered the keys. The assignments invariably consisted of merely typing in something on a hand-out and saving it on a network drive. So, I'd finish in the first ten to fifteen minutes of the period. And, I'd wait for the troublemakers surrounding me to finish. At which point they'd find various ways around the content filter to play flash games or look at porn. I was the one white boy from AIG, in between this group of black boys who all knew each other and wanted to do shady shit in the plethora of time even kids who *weren't* Linux users would have after completing the assignments. And, I didn't share their taste in porn.

After one of the boys had made a long-standing habit of popping me with a rubber band whenever the teacher wasn't looking, I eventually lost it and took a swing at him as we were leaving class. I missed, and he gave me a black eye. We both got suspended for ten days. My mother wanted me to turn the other cheek. My father wanted me to fight like a man; his wisdom is something I've always agreed with since with respect to bullies, though I've unilaterally failed to carry it out in practice.

I was getting older, and starting to have feelings I didn't understand about mom's lingerie. And, I increasingly had the urge to tie myself up for fun, with little bits of shoestring or lanyard cord that I could find lying around. I really wished I was born a girl, and was starting to think all adolescent boys must.

Why would they *want* to be made out of snakes and snails and puppy dog tails? We all just drew the short straw, right? We have to be *the men*.

I remember first learning of the tradition of collegiate panty raids. “Is that what I’m doing?”, I wondered. I figured I’d understand when I was older.

I think it was in sixth grade when my parents announced their separation. By this point my dad wasn’t really around much anyway, so it didn’t really feel like a big deal to me. That’s not to say he wasn’t a part of my life and didn’t remain so - he was just out of town for work most of the time.

I remember being asked which parent I wanted to live with: the mentally unstable mom who already takes care of me, or my, at least well-intentioned, dad who’s never really cooked or cleaned much before. The choice felt more obvious at the time, though as I’ve grown older I *have* wondered what could’ve been if I chose the other way.

My mother and I moved into a house in town, beside the Methodist church that we attended. The house had a little bit less space, but still had three bedrooms and was plenty adequate for the two of us. That’s not to say my mother wasn’t a class I or II hoarder.

That same summer, I went on a trip to Iowa to spend time with my dad’s family. While I generally enjoyed myself, my grandfather (who I only remembered meeting once before) kept giving me a hard time. My dad eventually explained that I hurt his feelings when I last saw him as a young child, because I was *very* surprised when I learned he didn’t know how to read, and I wouldn’t drop the subject. I had completely forgotten that my grandfather was illiterate by this age, and didn’t even remember the incident.

#snip There was a sort of tragic story underlying my dad's family, and I'm afraid I could have a couple details wrong. My dad's parents separated during his adolescence or later childhood. He went to live with his dad, but often saw his mom for holidays. The family was at his mom's house (for Christmas, I think), when his mom's previously-institutionalized mentally ill former lover opened fire on the family with a shotgun. My biological grandmother was killed, and my father, grandfather, and uncle were wounded. My dad would occasionally set off metal detectors with a couple shotgun pellets lodged in his neck and side, that had been deemed too dangerous to remove.

#snip Anyway, after the incident my grandfather quickly remarried a woman named Joan, who is the person I actually knew as my paternal grandmother.

Grandma Joan was *not* my mother's favorite person. I never really knew her well enough to form my own opinion about her.

So, my dad's family has this sort of underlying base level of trauma, I'm in bum-fuck small town Iowa spending time with grandpa Francis and grandma Joan, and if I didn't know any better I'd say illiterate career-electrician grandpa Francis feels threatened by me. He dropped the skin effect, as if it's relevant at 60 Hz, and kept calling me Sioux City Sue; which I guess is supposed to be an insult, but I secretly kind of liked it.

Around the time of the move, my mother had gotten me this sort of birds and bees, going through puberty book. Actually, I think she might've gotten it for me a few years ago, but I was weirded out by it at the time. Anyway, it was around the time of this move when I first looked through it; perhaps because I had burning questions about my now obviously-divergent puberty experience.

Half of the book was devoted to male puberty, and half to female puberty. And, it was in this book that I first learned the role of androgens and estrogens in the development of secondary sex characteristics. And sure, it used more childish language, but I'm too pretentious for that now.

Upon learning this, a slew of related questions and biological conjectures flooded my brain, in what might as well have been the same instant.

- If I were to somehow “take” estrogen, would I start developing breasts?
- Is it even possible to “take” estrogen? Is it available as a medicine? Would I need to get a job working at a lab somewhere to even get access to self-administerable estrogen, or could it somehow be a common medication?
- What would it look like? Is it a pill? Do you have to inject it?
- I would also need something to block my testosterone, right?
- Do they even make that?
- Or, would they just have to cut off my testicles first?
- Could I even find a doctor who'd cut off my testicles if that's what I needed to do?
- What if I became a pharmacist when I grew up, like Mr. Terry. Could I give myself estrogen *then*? Does Mr. Terry have estrogen in his store?
- Or, maybe I'd have to become a doctor. Can doctors write themselves prescriptions, or do they have to see another doctor? Jeez, I really wouldn't want to explain this to another doctor...

At this point, I'm ready to switch my career path from computer-something to medicine if it means I could somehow take estrogen and grow breasts.

It was right around this point, perhaps even exactly at this point, when I had enough information to take to the internet. I was already teaching myself Unix and shit, so to me the internet

was the obvious end to figuring out what was wrong with me. There were two things holding me back:

1. A lack of vocabulary to even explain the problem, despite an abundance of, generally unfavorable, allusions to the phenomenon in pop culture (My daddy disowned me 'cause I wear my sister's clothes...)
2. An utterly irrational fear of the subject matter

This changed after I heard one particular word in passing: *crossdresser*. I'd learned how to use context clues years ago, and I knew exactly what that word meant, just knowing that it existed. Because, *I* was a crossdresser. I'd been searching for that noun for years! Good, bad, ugly... at least I know what the fuck I am now. I'm a crossdresser.

I'm transsexual

Now that I had a word to Google, I could learn about what it meant to be a young crossdresser. Although, I was actually partial to dmoz back in those days. Maybe it's because I wanted to whoops-uh-daisically click through the lifestyle section and find myself scrolling through the LGBT pages, whatever that's about, instead of very purposefully and incriminatingly typing the 'c' character, followed by the 'r' character...

For a month or two, I privately identified as a crossdresser. I'd nervously nibble away at the information at first, a page or two at a time, just like when I started sneaking into mom's room. My nerves eventually settled, and I began properly learning about this stuff; feeling confident in knowing that I had my own room with a private computer, and a mom who could barely use her own without my help.

The acronym 'LGBT' stands for 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual', and... something else. I bet you think you know what the fourth letter meant; but unless you were there, I bet you don't fucking get it.

Not long after I learned the term ‘crossdresser’ and took to the internet, I also learned the term ‘transgender’. Transgender was defined as an “umbrella term”, encompassing the entire range of gender-variant human behavior. “Transgender people” included crossdressers or transvestites, transsexuals, drag queens, and people who were generally averse to the concept of binary gender itself, for either personal or socio-political reasons; the latter group tended to identify as simply “transgender” in absence of a more precise label, and would likely be described as “non-binary” today.

Because ‘transgender’ has taken on a meaning that largely overlaps what ‘transsexual’ meant in 2003, I feel I have no choice but to present to you a pedantic little list of what all the different types of transgender people were in the mid 2000s; a list you’d struggle to reproduce without either an old-timer like myself, or lots of time spent on Wayback Machine.

Crossdressers and Transvestites (CD/TV) Transvestites are (mostly) men who enjoy wearing women’s clothing in a recreational and non-performative capacity. The underlying motivation for the behavior may or may not be sexual. Contrary to what one might expect, transvestites are often straight men; but could also be gay or bisexual.

Transsexuals (TS) Transsexuals suffer from an understudied congenital medical condition in which one’s cognitive gender differs from their physical sex. Although no obvious cause has been identified, the symptomatology reported by transsexuals overlaps significantly with that of intersex people who had their ambiguous genitalia surgically corrected at birth, only to suffer from gender identity problems later in life.

Transsexuals are divided between male to female (MTF) and female to male (FTM); the transsexual community was by far the most balanced between the two sexes, while transvestites and drag queens were comprised almost exclusively of men with male

gender identities. While it wasn't always the case with other flavors of transgender people, target gender was always used when speaking of transsexuals; thus MTFs were trans women and FTMs were trans men.

Drag Queens Are amateur or professional actors who perform, typically exaggerated or burlesque, roles as women, for fun or profit. Drag queens are often gay men who otherwise have no connection to the greater transgender community; though they could be hetero transvestites, or even transsexual women. You... *probably* know what a drag queen is.

Transgender (TG) People who identified as blanket transgender often rejected the concept of traditional gender entirely; either because they didn't strongly identify with the idea of being either a man or a woman, or because they had social or political motivations for breaking down the gender binary. However, it bears reiterating that 'transgender' was also used as an umbrella term that included CD/TV/TS and other niches under its banner, without denying the individual identity of any particular group.

Intersex (IS) While not generally included under the transgender umbrella, intersex people suffer from a range of different medical conditions that result in an ambiguity of their physical sex. Despite what one might expect, intersex conditions are actually fairly common, and typically don't produce obvious disfigurement. The intersection between the IS and TS communities exists where intersex people *do* have associated gender identity problems, often in conjunction with corrective surgery they may not have asked for.

From around 2010 to 2015, a major shift in language took place within the transgender community. The term 'transsexual' fell out of favor, becoming associated with outdated information and conservative transmedicalism. Usage of shorthand like 'GG' (genetic girl) was replaced with newer vocabulary like 'AFAB' (assigned female at birth; a phrase loaned from the intersex

community). MTF and FTM became adjectives instead of nouns, and new words emerged, like ‘cisgender’ for a non-trans person. Additionally, I recall minor shifts in idioms otherwise still present in the transgender community (read like a clock: “the barista ‘read’ me” would have been more idiomatic 20 years ago, whereas “the barista ‘clocked’ me” is more recognizable today).

I remember my initial shock after learning that crossdressers didn’t actually *want* to be women. Because, I *really* wanted to be a girl. And, as unusual as my problem appeared to be, there seemed to be an unexpected plethora of reasons why a boy might want to wear women’s clothing. I thought for sure I was good enough at context clues to know that I was a crossdresser.

At the time, it felt like the resources for the CD/TV community were both flashier and more numerous. It seemed like a lot of crossdressers were into the thrill and excitement of, wearing women’s panties under their boy clothes, for example. And, that wasn’t *quite* what I was looking for. I *do* remember that I was looking for advice on making DIY breast forms.

I wrestled with the concepts in my head for a while. Looked at transsexual resources a bit. Went through the CD/TV pages some more. Took all the silly little quizzes that probably didn’t mean anything. The conclusion I kept coming back to, was that I was transsexual. I was so certain I was a crossdresser, until I learned what transsexuals were. Now, I couldn’t get it out of my head that *that’s* what I was.

One of the earlier resources I found was Antijen. Whether or not it was ever stated publicly, Antijen was a pun on creator Jennifer “Aunty” Lynn’s name. Aunty ran a humble website and associated mailing list for transsexual youth aged 26 and younger, during an era when listservs were still the primary method of organizing semi-private group discussions over the internet. While there was also a Yahoo group or two devoted to the same niche, I have little doubt Aunty ran the largest forum

for transsexual youth in the early 2000s and probably until large sites like Reddit and Tumblr finally took over.

It was now, in the year 2003 and just after my thirteenth birthday, when I decided to join Aunty's list. I made a new email account for the purpose, and sent a message that probably had something like "Join" in the subject line with an empty body; thoroughly expecting an automated system to respond and add me to the mailing list, as was often the norm back in those days.

As I started wondering if the machine was broken, I found a message in my inbox 24 to 48 hours later:

Hello,

Could you tell me a little about yourself?

I immediately decided I'm not going to answer. Things are happening pretty fast, and I kinda just wanted to lurk for a while. Maybe I'll try joining the list again in a few months or years, now that I know human interaction is involved.

A day or two later, I got a variation of the same message. "Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?"

I was home from newly entering the seventh grade at the time, waiting for hurricane whatever to pass on September something. I thought more about writing back, and eventually started putting something together.

I needed a name for myself, and I went with Elizabeth; imaginative as it might not be. I went through a lot of names. Elizabeth, Sarah, Morgan... I go by Rachael now. It's actually my legal name.

I returned to find, probably, a few messages in my inbox. It's been too long to remember exactly what was replied to my talking about the weather; though, it undoubtedly ended with

Hugs,
Aunt

I quickly learned that what Cheech and Chong were singing about wasn't a joke; disownment, homelessness, familial abuse and runaway youth were all rampant problems in the transsexual community. There was an active member of Antijen who was pretty open about having ran away from home to work as an underage prostitute.

I soon observed a common thread between all of these bad family experiences trans folk often had; they were mostly *Christian*, with religion often playing a central role in the conflict.

There was enough apologeticism to be found for those who wanted to reconcile their faith with their gender identity. I ate that up, for a while. I began to resent my southern Methodist upbringing, and found myself wanting to run away to San Francisco to join a Unitarian-Universalist church or something. I also recognized that a "Methodist upbringing" is about as good as it gets in the south.

This was similarly instrumental in forming my earliest political opinions. There was a lot of peer pressure in Bladen county to be anything *other* than a Democrat; which often led to me adopting more outwardly-libertarian views in my youth to fit in than I probably would've professed otherwise.

I could tell one side might be summarized as saying "Yall's lifestyle is *sinful* and *unnatural* and *immoral!*"; while the other was defensively claiming that "We were just born this way!"

And then there's, uh... me. I'm just... *this*. Whatever *this* is.

Drugs for trans kids

One of many things I didn't understand about my unique situation, was that not every young transsexual got their start by sneaking into their parent's rooms like I had. Then again, it isn't exactly unheard of either.

Now that I'm older, I actually feel pretty weird, and pretty bad, about the extent to which I did this. This feeling is balanced out by the understanding that I was clearly just born with some sort of abnormality, and that I really needed help knowing what I was at that age.

I experienced my first orgasm right around this time. I had taken to tying myself up while wearing my mom's clothes, because it felt good I guess, and pulled the vibrating motor out of a massage pillow, because it seemed like a good idea at the time. One thing led to another, and the rest is history. The feeling took me completely by surprise after I'd haphazardly tied my hands behind my back with a bit of string.

This quickly became a habit. About as quickly as I formed this habit, I hatched a sort of laundering scheme; both literally and metaphorically.

It probably started with one pair of panties or something, that just *really* needed to be washed; despite layers of protection that were, again, both literal and metaphorical. They can't go back in the drawer. *Somebody* needs to wash them eventually. I suppose you *could* just fuck around and find out with the regular hamper. Not even I was so adventurous. Mom comes home in an hour. You don't exactly have time do to a special load of laundry before then.

So it starts with, maybe, one pair of panties. At first you're freaking out that she's gonna notice one pair missing out of, probably more than a dozen or something. But the thing about it is, she's probably *not*. Or if she does, she'll probably think

she's just imagining things at first. Because, where else would they have gone to? The gnomes?



Figure 3: South Park - Underpants Gnomes (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpnM37A4P_8&t=20s)

So, now you have a pair of panties under your bed. And, thus far, you probably have good intentions of simply washing them next time mom's at work and returning them to their rightful place in mom's drawer. But, as you think about it more, you realize you got away with it. You just *took* a single pair of underpants, and she didn't notice. It's just one grain of sand, and she has a whole pile over there. What's more, I might actually raise suspicion by *returning* them, now that she thinks everything's normal. So, maybe I should just keep this pair for myself. Because, this is clearly becoming a habit anyway.

I can't help but laugh inside, when I remember that finding advice on making breast forms was what was at the forefront of my mind when I first discovered Antijen. Don't get me wrong;

breast forms have very much always been a subject of discussion in transsexual forums. But, I totally missed the point at first.

That stuff is like heroin for gender dysphoria, what I did as a kid. And, it's great. But, you never catch the dragon. What you *can* do, is make a plan and stick with it. Grow your hair out, it takes a few years anyway. No, nobody is going to think you're trying to be a girl. This stuff is actually really, *really* rare. I know it feels like a really long time at your age, but... you'll be eighteen in five years. Maybe trust a guidance counselor or another queer kid or something, but you really shouldn't talk to normal people about it. They won't understand. It's actually disturbingly easy to order prescription medications from overseas pharmacies without a prescription. And when do you turn eighteen anyway, the start of your senior year? What do you mean you can't take hormones in high school? It doesn't. Get. Easier. Just. Fucking. Do it.

That's what I would tell myself, anyway. I did get reasonably far through this list the first time without my future self's help, considering the calamity that followed.

Seventh grade-ish

So, I entered seventh grade thinking I was a closet crossdresser, unless I already knew I was transsexual by then. I had a new home, a new bus route, and a different outlook on life.

This was the first year I was actually able to take CSD-TV, which was the school's AV elective. I had been eyeing it since I first saw their studio and control room as a middle school prefresh or whatever. I soon proved myself to be one of the more knowledgeable students in the class, along with my friend Noah; who by now I was beginning to suspect was a closet homosexual. The future of the program was in question after the recent retirement of Mr. Jameson, who had a history both with the school and the local television station. Mrs. Fletcher

had been recruited to teach the elective in the interim; she had no prior experience, but she was friendly, and we all did what we could with the resources we had.

I don't remember having so many bullies in my electives at this point, but I now had a different problem: my new bus route. The crux of the problem, was that my new bus stopped at the middle school in town, where the parents of (mostly AIG) kids would often pick up their kids halfway so that they didn't have to drive all the way to Clarkton.

So, this was a particularly busy bus stop, where about half the kids on the bus got off, and the remaining half got off at various stops around town; mostly on the black side of town, possibly contributing to racial tensions. The final matter that made the situation untenable was that ridership was inconsistent; lots of families would make runtime decisions about where to pick up their child, aided by the newly-ubiquitous nature of cell phones; by the time I graduated from middle school, even *my* broke ass had one.

Some days, there would just be way too many people riding this bus. It was an absolute madhouse, trying to get a seat; and, I usually had to make the bus from the tech lab because of CSD-TV, which was at the absolute furthest reaches of the school. The problem was compounded by a number of "tough" guys and girls, who would insist on sitting in *their* seat, with *their* boyfriend or girlfriend, or maybe just their regular friends. I could never manage to keep up with whom these people were, and what their absurd pecking order was. But, they were mostly black students from the general education side of the school; and I mean that in the least racist way possible.

Sometimes I could get a head start, or I'd get lucky and manage to find a seat. Other times, I'd find myself walking up and down the aisle, over and over again. The bus driver is yelling. "Sit down! Slide over!" She can't legally move until everyone's butt is in a seat. The other kids are starting to get mad at *me*

for not finding somewhere to sit. They all want to go home. But, there isn't anywhere. Most of the seats have three, maybe even four people in them. There are maybe a couple seats remaining with only two people, but they're for Rayshawn and Shanequa or some shit, and they usually push my cracker ass out by force if I try to sit there. I seem to be the only kid who keeps pissing off Rayshawn, too. I guess all the other kids just know who the fuck he is. Or, maybe they're friends with him.

(I'm sorry if these fictionalized names come across as a wee bit racist. But I mean, they *were* black...)

On these days, it would feel like the whole world was mad at *me* in particular. I know it's nothing personal, but the bus driver is mad at me for not sitting down. The kids are mad at me for not sitting down. That kid is mad at me for *trying* to sit down. I keep walking up and down the aisle. "No." "Nope." "Aww, hell naw!", I'd hear as I moved toward the only obvious remaining sliver of bus seat. I often had to fight with the worst of the assholes for the only remaining space, as they guarded it for extra legroom like a bunch of wild hyenas. Sometimes, I'd eventually get Rayshawn to move over after he pushed me around a bit. In fact, I usually *had* to. Because, none of us can go home until I do. "Tsk, maaaaaan..."

I had at least one or two mini-meltdowns over this before I eventually had the big one. One day, I just lost it. "There's **NO FUCKING SEATS** on the **FUCKING BUS**" I screamed, punctuating my words by banging my trumpet case against the roof. Some other kids tried to restrain me, as I kicked and bit at anyone who tried to hold me back. The SRO was called over to escort me off the bus, and I was taken to the principal's office. The principal called my mom, and the SRO drove me to the mental health center in the cop car. I got to sit in the front seat though, and he was nice about it.

My mother was quick to label this a resurgence of my "anger management" problems; I think this was the incident that ulti-

mately lead to my first being prescribed Zoloft. It never really helped me, and in retrospect it was a total miss to think it would help with *any* of my problems. I stopped taking it by the end of middle school. I didn't get to go on the field trip to the state fair because of my little "outburst".

It was probably also around this time when I started seeing a therapist regularly. I was too nervous to talk about any of my *actual* problems, and thus the sessions were unproductive.

The tran who would be queen

It was in this same year that J. Michael Bailey published the now-infamous pop science book, "The Man Who Would Be Queen". The book promotes the theories of researcher Ray Blanchard, who argues that there are actually two types of male-to-female transsexual.

Homosexual transsexuals (HSTS), he argues, are essentially just gay men who've (perhaps unconsciously) adopted a female gender identity as a sort of mating strategy.

Autogynephiles (AGP), on the other hand, are basically men who fetishize the idea of themselves as women. The affliction has been described as an "erotic target location error", in which otherwise heterosexual male lust is directed inward instead of outward.

The main finding in support of Blanchard's theory is the presence of what would appear to be two correlation clusters in demographic studies of male-to-female transsexuals:

Ostensibly-HSTS cluster	Ostensibly-AGP cluster
Pre-pubescent dysphoria	Pubescent or later onset of dysphoria

Ostensibly-HSTS cluster	Ostensibly-AGP cluster
Attracted to men	Attracted to women (or sometimes bi)
Transitions before their late twenties	Often transitions later in life
Average IQ	Above-average IQ

Blanchardianism is... *not* very popular among the general transgender community; which overwhelmingly views transsexualism as a sort of neurological intersex condition. As evidence of this, the mainstream position looks to the similarities between MTF and FTM transsexuals, as well as intersex individuals, arguing that all of these phenomena can be explained by the presence of a neurological gender that can become uncoupled from one’s physical sex.

Blanchardians are accused of jumping to conclusions and implying causation from correlation, as well as hand-waving away inconsistencies by accusing trans women of simply not being honest. In turn, Blanchardians pan mainstream trans advocates as hysterical, or perhaps even “protesting too much”. Though it’s considerably off-topic from this text, I’d recommend the Contrapoints [video on the subject](#) for an, admittedly biased, but more modern take on a debate that is no less resolved today than it was twenty years ago.

Church

It was right around my seventh or eighth grade year when we had confirmation. This is a sort of class for adolescents, so that they can learn all the little details about Christianity and the Protestant and Methodist traditions, and decide for themselves what they believe in. We didn’t actually hold this class on a

regular schedule, and it was the first one we'd done in recent memory; certainly since getting Tommy as our new preacher a few years ago.

I'd rather end anyone's suspense now and tell you that I'm an atheist today. I don't generally look back on my church youth experience with disdain, though. This wasn't really a fire and brimstone church, and I still have a lot of respect for Tommy.

We'd go over to the activity building every week or two, I don't remember. And we'd learn about early Christian history, all of these different creeds, the persecution of early Christians followed by the rise of the Catholic Church, and beyond and so forth. There was often a focus on having us think about what our individual belief or preference was out of a range of possibilities, and there was rarely if ever a right answer.

During one of the classes, we discussed emperor Constantine; and, after listening to a biographical sketch of the fellow, were asked to give our thoughts about him. I held the, somewhat contrarian, position that I wasn't so keen on the guy; sure, he spread Christianity throughout the land, but he spread *his* version of it. It seemed like most of the other kids saw what he did as at least an improvement. But, I wasn't even convinced this guy was sincere. He worshiped the Roman pantheon until midlife, until suddenly he converted to Christianity, then started killing everyone who didn't follow his weird new version of the religion he probably didn't really understand himself. I saw his actions as a, rather transparent, variation of the axiom "if you can't beat them, join them".

I'm probably recovering from a psychotic break or something. There are a few points in this story, where recent events suggest my memory has short circuited. While I understand some of these things probably didn't actually happen, I can only write from my own memory. I've never *read* Slaughterhouse-Five;

however, I've read the Wikipedia page, and I probably sound a lot like its narrator.

It was at this point that Tommy made it clear he wanted to speak with me after class. And no, I wasn't in trouble.

This was the first instance of Tommy trying to get me interested in the Freemasons. "The Freemasons think like you do," he said. He made it sound like they had a closely-guarded early form of Christianity, like the early Gnostics had or something. He had something he wanted me to read. And, it wasn't a physical copy of anything. He wrote the name of this introductory masonic text he wanted me to look at on the smallest slip of paper, along with a URL where I could find it. And, he made it clear that this was for my eyes only.

At the time, I took everything this man told me at face value. Now that I've grown older, and have heard a lot of, often contradictory, things about the Freemasons, I think Tommy was taking me for a ride. But, the question is *why*. *Why* would my childhood preacher feed me misinformation about the Freemasons? It only gets weirder from here. Let's keep going.

As I left the activity building, Josh was standing outside the door, and asked what Tommy and I talked about. "Oh... he just wanted me to read something when I got home..." It seemed harmless enough. Josh and I are on the same level, right? Why can't I talk to *him* about it?

Several days later, I had a follow-up conversation with Tommy about what I'd read. My memory's a bit hazy, but here are some of the things that I recall from our talk.

- All sorts of things or entities are real that can't be seen or touched. Like angels and demons and spirits and stuff.

- The Freemasons know about things that are basically indistinguishable from magic. There seemed to be some understanding between us, regarding the “crazy Christians” who didn’t believe in science and wouldn’t let their kids watch Harry Potter.
- Demonic possession is actually real. Freemasons study that sort of thing.
- His wife doesn’t know anything about this. I can talk to Terry, though.

I didn’t know what to do with this information. I think I was some combination of fascinated, skeptical, and spooked out. I didn’t like that the information I’d learned seemed unfalsifiable, and that I seemingly had no real way to independently research the subject matter.

While he seemed serious, I couldn’t help but wonder whether Tommy was both sincere and correct in his assertions.

Ultimately, I figured I’d file this away as something to maybe learn about when I’m older. I was obviously too young to join the Freemasons at this age.

Sex ed

Sometime in the seventh or eighth grade, a friend walked up to me in the hallway between classes and cracked a joke about masturbation.

Careful, Ethan! If you jack off too much your palms’ll turn green!

I laughed like you’re supposed to, and maybe even looked at my hands. It was a sort of made-you-look joke, after all. But, it took me a couple minutes to really *get* it. Why would jacking off make your palms green? Sam doesn’t... know what I do in private... does he?

It eventually occurred to me that *normal* boys do it by gripping their penis with their dominant hand and rubbing one out. Because, they're *normal*. Right. So, Sam just thinks I'm a normal boy. That's cool! I think...

Touching my genitals never felt particularly natural to me, even when there were otherwise no ill feelings associated with it. Even when using the bathroom for example, I've always managed my situation with toilet paper, and have avoided urinals throughout my life without exception. (Not that this makes me more trans than anyone else; I'm pretty sure this is highly unusual, even for trans women.) But suffice it to say, I had no urges to "turn my palms green".

Barring nocturnal emission, the aforementioned vibrating massage pillow motor in my underpants was my first time doing it. And no, my sexuality didn't get any more vanilla over time.

There were pros and cons to the little motor.

Pros	Cons
Hands-free	Lacks power (especially through layers of fabric)
Portable	Requires 2 AA batteries
Discreet and homegrown; like the MFLB of vibrators	
Lack of power is actually useful for edging	

I continued using this little thing for a surprisingly long time, but even after discovering it I kept looking for something... else. I was probably driven by a similarly powerful impulse as my friend Sam, when he did the deed he psychologically projected onto me. I wanted to... stimulate... that area. And, I seemingly had zero

desire to “jerk off” like a normal adolescent boy is apparently supposed to do.

I don’t know *how* I came up with this idea, but it worked surprisingly well. I pulled the fan out of an old Sun server and connected it to a 12 V bench supply; then, very carefully and through my underpants, held it at an angle to vibrate the head of my penis. The fan was relatively low power, but could cause discomfort or minor nicks to the peen if you managed to stall the blades.

A less creative, but still effective way I’d found to do it was to wrap this (non-massaging) neck pillow around my junk, and use a combination of moving my hips and grabbing the edge of the pillow. I could sort of forget I had a dick this way.

Anyway; the title of this subchapter is “Sex ed”. We’re a little past this point now, but it was in mid-to-late elementary school when my mom decided my dad should have the sex talk with me. He mostly just explained that the penis goes in the vagina on the way back from boy scouts, and that’s how babies are made; and I supposed the rest would make sense once I’m older. When we got back home I was visibly weirded out by it all, and I remember my mom being upset with my dad over how he explained it, for some reason. Maybe because he didn’t talk about how you aren’t supposed to have sex until marriage? Ugh, anyway...

The point is, neither of my parents really had much useful advice to offer me about sex or relationships. I’m pretty sure their marriage was a disaster, and neither of them appeared to have a successful post-divorce dating life.

However, my mother is *particularly* weird about sex. And, not *necessarily* in the way you might expect from someone whose religious. For example, she’s never suggested I outright shouldn’t be masturbating. She mentioned to me *once* that she had talked to her friend Gail, and wanted me to know that it was normal

for boys my age to masturbate. They're always the most awkward, abbreviated conversations, and she never quite seemed comfortable with the subject matter; though maybe I'm simply projecting my own feelings. She's also very creeped out by porn, and is quick to label men she doesn't like "perverts"; sometimes even disdainfully accusing them of looking as if they "watch porn in their basement!"

So, I'm learning that I'm just a little different from normal kids. I seem to be transsexual, first of all. And, tying yourself up for fun is called "BDSM". My name is Ethan Alexandre Brown, for now, I'm in the seventh grade, I'm a male-to-female transsexual, and I'm into BDSM. This is fine.

We had sex ed in seventh grade. And we didn't talk about transsexuals, or BDSM, or even masturbating without your palms. But, I'm starting to get it through my head that I'm just really, *really* weird. It felt like I'd always been the exception, like I'd always had to over-explain myself, for as long as I could remember. Football or baseball? Ham radio! Windows or Mac? Linux! Gay or straight? Transsexual! Blondes or brunettes? Whips and chains! I can't even masturbate without two AA batteries.

I didn't need batteries anymore once I came upon a more powerful "personal massager". I didn't know what a Hitachi was yet.

This was probably the first point in my life, when I really just wanted to be normal. I wanted to have *normal* kid problems, whatever they were. I wanted to get in trouble for sneaking out late, or smoking my dad's cigarettes, or getting a bad grade on my report card. I felt a growing sense of incredulousness from my inner self, that I could really be *this fucking weird*. It must be at least partially *my* fault, right? Or, might there be an unexpected common cause that would satisfy Occam's Razor? I doubt this will create any cognitive dissonance, trying to find a single root cause that would appear to make me a transgender sex pervert...



Figure 4: I think my mom found this at the church yardsale or something

Mommy's alright

My mother returned to the mental hospital again when I was in seventh or eighth grade. During that time, I stayed with my friend Cameron, who I went to school and church with.

My little habit was beginning to spiral out of control. I'm afraid I'm unable to resolve the original paradox at the beginning of this chapter; however, I can tell you that there were now two piles of sand in this house.

It started with a large shoebox. Then I needed a fucking Avon box. In which I could nest the smaller shoebox full of stuff. At first, I started crossdressing (for lack of a better word) every chance I got. I became increasingly more careless. I used to tiptoe around. Now I just chain lock the door when mom goes away on short errands. Sometimes Susan would come home early and bang on the door, screaming at me in that panicked voice of hers. It rattled me, at first. It was better than the alternative.

My mother found my¹ stash of clothes for the first time in middle school, probably eighth grade.

In my growing carelessness, I had taken to keeping the Avon box in the space between my bed and the wall. This was a spot chosen out of convenience rather than safety; I'd begun taking to my pursuits at night after Susan had gone to bed, and so I'd often move the box there from its more discreet hiding place to avoid making noise retrieving it on weeknights. I wouldn't keep the box there if I was away for long periods or thought there was a chance Susan would clean my room;² she worked during the day and had a long commute, so there wasn't really much time for her to even go through my room on school nights.

¹At least a couple articles of clothing came from the church yard sale; though I admit I am using the word "my" loosely.

²I know it seems unusual that my mom cleaned *my* room, but... we had a weird relationship.

You probably see where this is going. One night, she got a wild hair to clean my room in a way that involved moving the bed, and I couldn't get to the box in time. I hid under an afghan in the living room; listening to my mom doing... something, in my room.

... Oh my god...

...

... Oh my god...

It felt like an eternity had passed. I think she called a friend on the phone, but I couldn't hear what they were talking about; which was more telling than anything.

After this eternity had passed, my mother came into the living room; where I was still hiding under the afghan. "What 'cha doin' under there?!", she said. In the most saccharine tone imaginable.

That is all. We've never addressed this, and she's never acknowledged that it happened. The box had clearly been disturbed, but all of its contents remained intact. In fact, she later denied she ever found it. It's a good example of Susan's bizarre gaslight-y behavior.

High school

As you grow older, there's a question people start to ask of you more and more.

Do you have feelings for any of the girls in your class?

The confusing part is that I *did*, but I don't think it's anything like what normal men experience.

It's hard to pin down exactly what I even mean by that. Was it jealousy? Did I just think they were neat? When I *did* have these sorts of proto-crushes on people, two things were obvious.

1. I didn't want to put my dick in them
2. I didn't really think about them sexually at all

If you've made it this far, you know better than to conflate #2 with not having a sex drive. What I got off to was usually variations on the same theme: I wanted someone to have their way with me. I wanted to be tied up and disciplined. I wanted to be a damsel in distress. And, I never associated a face with any of those fantasies, perhaps simply because there *was* no face to associate with them. It was obvious none of the girls in class wanted to do that to me, and it was obvious none of the boys wanted to either.

The abstract and mostly faceless nature of my sexual fantasies made me feel even more alien, in a world that revolved around crushes and dating. I think this disconnect made me appear falsely asexual as I grew older, when really I just lacked a dating pool.

Ninth grade

I began attending East Bladen High School in 2005. I had known I was trans for a couple of years at this point, and my sexuality and gender problems were the same as they'd always been. By now, it was weighing on me that I needed to "come out". To, somebody.

First of all, I was painfully aware of the fact that I could get medication to delay my puberty; if I could convince my parents I needed that. Or, if I was brazen enough to order it from overseas, which is actually disturbingly easy. While I considered myself to be basically "done with puberty" at this age, I still hoped antiandrogens might do *something*. And now that I'm older, I'm convinced they *would* help at most any age, if you couldn't just go straight to doing "the thing" for some reason.

Maybe more significantly though, I was starting to burst at the seams trying to hold it all in. I really wanted to talk to *somebody*, but I lived in Bladen County. I didn't have a single friend who was openly queer. I might've had my suspicions about one or two of them, but that isn't as helpful.

I spent a lot of mental energy during this time, trying to do the calculus of figuring out who to trust. Like I was trying to crash-land a goddamn airplane. And, I'm not even good at calculus.

- My mother: Deeply religious, liberal (or maybe more “conservative Democrat”), still in touch with her gay friend from high school, rolls her eyes at gay people on TV, sort of cringed when she learned what “LGBT” meant for the first time
- My dad: Raised Baptist, doesn't go to church but isn't an atheist, Republican, never said much about queer people either way, more friendly with the lesbian neighbors than my mom
- Josh: Loyal, but sheltered; conservative leanings, too close, high probability of it getting back to my mom, can't really avoid him if things get awkward, also can't get me Lupron
- Emma: Casual acquaintance from middle school who sits at my lunch table and is in most of my classes

At the same time, I was weighing the choice between coming out and just ordering the meds myself.

Try the doctor	Do-it-yourself
It's prescription only for a reason, DIY just feels sketchy	Don't have to tell mom (Unless you get caught)
But, what if my mom's actually really understanding...	Need to make and spend my own money

Try the doctor	Do-it-yourself
If mom says no, strange packages may come under even more scrutiny	<p>What if I had to go to the doctor? Do they need to know? Could they find out from a blood test?</p> <p>I need either my own mailing address or balls of steel</p> <p>Usually better to ask forgiveness than permission in my experience</p>

My calculus resulted in a set of guidelines and principles for pursuing my goal of talking to someone, and ultimately getting medicated.

- There are risks either way, but I have to at least *try* to explain it to my mom.
- Susan is very obsessive and possessive; it's unlikely that she would disown me, at least.
- Susan is also fairly gullible; I might be able to pass this off as an adolescent phase if I need to bail.
- If Susan makes it clear she won't help me get meds, then I'll look into DIY.

Milestone one: tell Susan

At some point during my first semester of high school, I decided that I needed to tell Susan. Because, I needed antiandrogens. And, I needed to explain what was going on with me before I could make a case for them.

She likes to read, so I thought I'd get her a book on the subject. In hindsight, I don't think this was the way to do it at all; but, we're both still here.

Susan is very high-strung. She's emotionally volatile, she panics, she's anxious, she worries about *everything*. She has good days and bad days. Some months it could feel like mostly bad days.

I spent a lot of time just thinking about *when* to tell her. I felt like I needed an imposing date in my mind, to prepare myself. The holiday season stressed her out. *Everything* stressed her out, really. Attempting to anticipate her future emotional state, I eventually settled on the day after Christmas. I'd be home from school for a couple of days, for better for worse, and the holiday season would be mostly over with.

On December 26th, 2005, I spent a good portion of the day at Paula Conner's house, performing a repair install of Windows XP on their family computer. I started getting cold feet as the date approached. I forget why exactly, but something about the impending situation compelled me to bail and regroup. I still commemorate the date privately somewhat, as the first time I at least *tried* to tell someone. It's like gay Festivus.

My mother arranged for me to start working at the local Radio Shack franchise not long after I started high school. I was barely old enough to obtain a work permit, and was excited to start the position. I had known some of the folks there since I was younger; Susan also briefly worked there after the divorce, in between the camp for troubled youth and various Social Services offices as a caseworker. The store still provided dial-up internet service off a pair of T1 lines at the time, and had a cellular booth that resold Alltel and Cingular. The latter service probably brought in the most money, and was the only real competition in town to the US Cellular store across the street.

Now that I'm older, I wonder if Susan was just trying to get me out of her underwear drawer. We never *were* good at talking about things as a family.

Phase two

I considered whether I should resort to DIY or just push the date out and try again. In the weeks that followed, my mind quickly turned to telling somebody else first. It's difficult to remember how one thing led to another; but telling a classmate started to feel safer, and telling Susan started to feel more dangerous.

I don't know what I saw in Emma that made her seem like a kindred spirit. Frankly, I think it might've been her relative distance compared to the rest of my peer group. Though I was trying to crash-land an airplane at this point.

The time period between March and June 2006 is a blur. I started hitting it off with Emma in the spring around the time of the state Science Olympiad that year. We started "dating", somehow, or whatever it is immature ninth graders do. I began playing this childish game of "I have a secret that I can't tell you", Emma eventually asked if I was a "transgender or intersex person" after a couple weeks of apparently dropping one too many hints or something, and... somehow I told her. I don't even remember how, exactly. I guess it just stumbled out of me.

Emma initially let on like she was an FTM, before walking this back after about a week. I was gullible enough to believe I'd found a kindred spirit or something, and probably shared more about myself faster than I would have otherwise if I weren't under this false impression. I still don't know if she lied *purposefully* to extract information from me, or if this was a simple matter of immaturity; though in light of what followed, I've frankly leaned toward the former explanation most of my life. I told her I thought she'd pass well because of her build, and I feel pretty bad about that now.

Ultimatum one: tell Susan

For some brief, seemingly infinitesimal amount of time, this was a secret between me and Emma.

It didn't take long for Emma to tell her mom. For a similarly short amount of time, this didn't seem like that big of a deal.

In the months before Emma and I started "dating" or whatever, she began occasionally attending our church for weeknight activities like the youth music programs. This laid the backdrop for my first confrontation with Emma's mom.

So, Emma tells me you want a sex change operation.

The three of us had found ourselves sitting on the steps outside my house, which was beside the church.

I was still *very* secretive about this part of my life, and found myself unprepared for the bluntness of Karen's query. I don't remember how or really *if* I answered the immediate question. Knowing the sort of person I was at that age, I probably stammered something about how it's actually called SRS.

The outcome of this conversation wasn't anything obviously bad. In fact, I was relieved, if not also petrified, to finally be talking about it with people. But, there was one problem.

I had to tell Susan.

Uncontrolled flight into terrain

Emma's mother insisted that this couldn't remain a secret between the three of us, and that I would have to tell my mother sooner rather than later. It wasn't clear yet how exactly that was supposed to happen.

My "relationship" with Emma was... turbulent, and filled with petty drama. She soon proved to be a loose cannon. I was already dealing with some very adult problems at this age, and I'm afraid I overestimated the maturity level of people my age in general. I really needed to talk to an *adult* about this; but also, the right kind of adult.

We would have arguments over silly little bullshit, where she insisted things were one way, and I remained utterly convinced she was wrong. I don't even remember what we fought over; but, it didn't matter.

She started dropping hints, before outright gossiping about me with other people in our peer group. This made me *very* uncomfortable, and it seemed like I'd already lost control of my deepest, darkest secret. It felt like things were happening way too fast.

Emma eventually just outed me to my friends one day. She'd been passing notes with Josh and maybe a couple others, obviously snickering and talking behind my back about my little gender identity problem. I tried to grab the note out of Emma's hand, at which point she accused me of hitting her and made me out to be some sort of batterer. Emma and her mother accused me of *hitting a girl*: a sort of cardinal sin in the southern United States. I could've done without the gender implications.

So, Emma outed me to all my friends at school, and now Emma's the victim. Ignorant sucker that I was, I arranged to go over to Emma and her mom's house to try and smooth things over; probably having my mom drop me off.

Once I was there, this "fire" was quickly extinguished if it was ever even real. The subject quickly turned to Karen's ultimatum. And as luck would have it, today was the day.

My mom returned to pick me up a few hours later. And it was then, with the help of Emma and her mom, that I... well actually, I hid behind the couch as Karen told her. This happened after a protracted session exceeding thirty minutes, in which my mother guessed multiple times that I had impregnated Emma, and multiple times we responded, "no".

Susan actually responded positively, and gave me a hug. I don't remember much directly after this; though, I was surprised when she acted like she never found the box. I expected us to

finally... talk about that, you know? She nearly gaslit me into thinking today was the first day she'd learned about it.

Concession	Result
Meds	You're too young for hormones ³
Therapist	Wants me to see a therapist
Clothes?	No change here; not that I really asked

Despite Susan's initially supportive attitude, telling her was ultimately a mixed bag. The bottom line is that I didn't get antiandrogens out of this, which is the main reason I'd been circling the drain about telling her in the first place. I didn't continue nagging for blockers, because I was already planning to order DIY as a backup plan anyway, and I didn't want her to suspect anything.

Susan's advice to me regarding my situation at school was to "Lie and deny!" She'd say it over and over, like Johnnie fucking Cochran. Even back then, something just felt... off... about this. I was hoping for some back-up, so that I could be an out-and-proud transsexual girl at East Bladen High School. We were kind of already down the rabbit hole, and my friends didn't even seem unsupportive.

My older self knows that this was, as my gut suggested, *bad* advice. I probably could've done better damage control by being openly transsexual at this point; but I'm figuring that's not going to be easy in Bladen County, and not even *my own mother* wants me to be out of the closet yet. She's always doting on about how she "loves me to the moon and back", right?

³I tried explaining that I wanted "puberty-delaying medication", not hormones. This didn't get me anywhere, and I chose not to continue pressing the issue.

Susan did start taking me to see a psychologist. We didn't live in the sort of area one might find a career "gender therapist", but my mother did manage to find someone in Fayetteville who at least had a transgender client or two before and worked with adolescents. Sylvia is the only one of my childhood therapists I can still name today.

On our way to our first appointment, we took a bit of a "wrong turn". While looking for the office of Sylvia Clark, Susan got lost, and we stumbled upon a totally different practice. We went in looking for Sylvia, and were pressured into doing a session with these folks instead. I was already hesitant, knowing how niche my gender identity problem seemed to be.

Susan and I were taken into separate rooms to talk with two different counselors - who I suppose were just... idly standing by? After the session, the two of us came back together for a few minutes to talk about it.

- I was accused of having incestuous feelings toward my mom, or a sort of "Oedipus Rex" complex.
- It was made clear that I had violated my mother's boundaries by going through her wardrobe.⁴
- They said that they help "All sorts of people like [me]! Sex addicts, child molesters..."

Fortunately, we didn't return to this therapist. Sometimes, I *do* wish there was a middle ground between radical acceptance and... this brand of tough love. Because, at no point was it compassionately explained to me that *yes, you were just born different* and *look, you really should stay away from mom's lingerie*. I kinda just had to... figure out how problematic that was as I got older. Sometimes it feels like I never really had "sex ed" at all. And I was just *supposed to know* not to be... well... a pervert.

⁴My older self doesn't really even disagree with this per se.

Sylvia was an amazing therapist. This was curbed by the fact that I got to see her at most once a month; and with everything that was going on with me, I wasn't exactly an open book. I could tell the drive to Fayetteville and back put a strain on Susan, and the greatest therapist in the world couldn't do much for my problems with "one session every three weeks, sometimes".

Now that I'm older, I think I would've been better off with a *local* adult, who *wouldn't* insist on anything crazy like telling my mom. Sometimes I feel like I just had bad luck with Karen and Emma; but the extreme nature of my abnormality does make me think I could've had a similar, if not somewhat more tactful experience with the clergy or a guidance counselor.

Everyone knows rubbing alcohol kills germs. But, did you know 70% isopropyl alcohol is actually a more effective disinfectant than 91%? The reason is that the more dilute solution actually aids osmosis, allowing the alcohol to quickly kill the cell from the inside.

The thing with Emma eventually fizzled out after a few months of on-again-off-again drama. What began with her telling all my secrets, ended with her perniciously blending truth and fiction, in an often successful attempt to strain my relationships with my friends and make my life at school uncomfortable. For example, she told people I had crushes on Noah Cooper (which was true) and Cody White (which was not). Attempts to right misinformation were quickly met with a Streisand-like effect, and the ratio of truth to bullshit was typically such that the bullshit was taken seriously.

The relationship lasted in total just a few months, from around March to some diffuse point during the summer. I got dragged out of the closet, most of my core friends were actually

supportive of the basic trans thing, but Emma had since taken to just making shit up, and people tended to believe her. What my old friends thought of me became a bit unpredictable, and I drifted apart from most of them in my sophomore year.

The utterly diabolical and seemingly unprovoked nature of Emma's attacks has led me to draw a few conclusions about the situation.

- I suspect she was being coached on “mean girl” tactics by someone like her mother; unless this somehow wasn't her first rodeo.
- Distracting me at school while we were contentiously applying to the School of Science and Math is something I highly suspect as a motive.
- I also highly suspect Emma's mother was a TERF.⁵

In the wake of all this, Susan was repeatedly very curious whether I “liked boys or girls”. While I said “uh... both, I guess”, what I *really* meant was... I'm kinda just *someone-fucking-me*-sexual. But like, I have *at least* as much of a snuggle drive as I do a sex drive. But, I *do* have both. Is that... normal?

It didn't *feel* normal, given the bluntness of the question and the expectation of an unambiguous response.

This has always been a difficult question for me to answer; there was a lot of peer pressure and social programming pushing me to “date women” when I was younger, but now that I'm older I think I might be more compatible with guys on a hardware level.

⁵The acronym “TERF” stands for “transgender-exclusionary radical feminist”. The term is a bit of a neologism, and one that is rejected by TERFs themselves. It refers to (mostly) women who harbor bigotries toward (particularly) trans women, broadly under the guise of feminism.

It often *does* feel like my sexuality is just “being the woman in bed”; as opposed to being explicitly attracted to individual people. This has at times made me feel like an autogynephile or a pervert throughout my life. I don’t really experience lust for the male *or* female body; except perhaps for my marked forced fellatio kink.

Although she’s warmed up to it over the years, my mother’s feelings toward my gender identity during this period were generally ambivalent; despite her initial enthusiasm about me going to therapy.

Tenth grade

My sophomore year of high school was defined by a number of key points.

- I started eating lunch in the band room to stay away from Emma and friends.⁶
- I was applying to the NC School of Science and Math.
- The Radio Shack experienced increasing financial instability, ultimately closing its doors over the summer.
- As I could tell I was getting therapy but no meds, my attention shifted toward ordering DIY.

While they usually had to *beg* people from our district to apply to the School of Science and Math, competition was unusually strong this year. Among the other hopefuls just from *East Bladen* were Anna, Emma, and Noah; with a couple other really strong contenders from West. Josh was conspicuously absent from the list of applicants; probably because he enjoyed the lake too much.

Anna and Emma were real straight-A types. They were the sort to *really* get upset if their grades weren’t perfect. And they’d probably bother the teacher over it, too. I was a “good student”, sure, but I was mostly unmotivated by academics. I did almost

⁶Not by myself; a group of us band kids did this.

all of my homework on the bus or between classes, and considered it a near sin to let work encroach on the few hours I actually managed to get to myself each evening. Noah didn't take it all that seriously, and hadn't committed to accepting the invitation if it were extended to him.

By the holiday season, the post-breakup situation with Emma had begun to drive me mad. Shortly after Emma and I stopped "dating", she started seeing Josh. The couple (who I referred to in my journals as "Jemma") became a sort of new entity, which wasn't really my friend anymore until the relationship's end brought about its destruction.

Josh started to behave as if he thought I wanted to fuck him. My other old friends started treating me like some sort of creep and gave me the cold shoulder. I don't know that I ever caught that vibe from Noah, but I started just avoiding them all.

To me, it was obvious Emma thrived on drama and loved gossip. It felt like she was running a 24-hour news cycle at my old lunch table, where all my friends would gather to hear the latest about how me and Cody were actually really scary and violent and would secretly get it on in private. Everyone else just seemed to view her as a charming, charismatic, smart young woman, and lapped up her seemingly endless stream of colorful stories.

I got totally new friends during this time period. Kevin, Jocelyn Paige... I was already friends with AJ from boy scouts, but we grew closer as part of this new group. A lot of the aforementioned folks were queer or rumored to be, which felt a little more comfortable. We never talked about what was going on with me. I think most of the school had heard some sensationalized variation of the tale that I "wanted a sex change operation" by now, though.

At some point in mid-high school, I had another puzzling interaction with Tommy in private. At least, that's what I *remember*. It's probably another one of those Slaughterhouse-Five moments.

While avoiding specifics, he said he knew I was going through a lot right now; but there was this little *cabal* at church that understood and really had my back.

He then told me that he wanted me to do the scripture reading for the next service, and that I should pay extra close attention to the sermon; that it would be about me. This was an unusual request; though I think I'd done it once before as part of a "youth Sunday", this appeared to be a one-off affair.

While I didn't seem to document these next two key points, they are at least accurate to memory (and might still be noted in a journal somewhere).

- The scripture reading was the first several verses from Revelation 21.
- This was for All Saint's Day; 2005, 6, or 7 I think?

I recited the scripture reading without incident, for which my oration received minor praise.

The sermon was *much more puzzling*. I waited anxiously to hear what it was about. Some anonymous transsexual girl? It's probably something more mundane. A couple of people conspicuously switched pews so that they were adjacent to me; in particular, the Richardsons or the Mitchells got the Lees to move from their pew behind us where they *always* sat.

The sermon wasn't about me at all. It was about a woman in her early 30s. She was struggling with mental health; she had a traumatic childhood, which included sexual abuse. Tommy stumbled unusually over his words, and appeared visually nervous as he described her as having "multiple personalities". Her family didn't really love her. Her mother was described

as obsessive, snooping around her daughter's house, almost stalker-like. The relationship between the mother and daughter had deteriorated. #TODO Wording?

The sermon went on to describe the woman's frustrated romantic life, or lack thereof. She'd never been in a real relationship, or even really gotten a valentine.⁷ She felt almost undateable. She thought marriage wasn't *for* people like her. She'd lost faith in most everything.

At the beginning, I *really* did some mental gymnastics to try and interpret the woman from the sermon as myself. Was he fudging my age as a cover-up? Was the multiple personality thing a metaphor for being transsexual? Eventually I could no longer suspend my disbelief, and I had to accept this sermon was simply about someone else.

This was a long time ago, so I'm sure I'm missing bits and pieces; but, the story had a happy ending. I think somebody heard how she felt, and she ended up getting asked out on a date that lead to an amazing relationship or maybe even a happy marriage. I think there may've been some element of drama with the man calling off some prior engagement. I don't remember the details.

At the end, all of these people who had conspicuously gathered around me before the sermon told me, "We love you." At least one person (I think either Patty or Tammy) said "We love you"... some girl's name. It wasn't Elizabeth, or Sarah, *or* Morgan. It could've been Rachael for all I know. I... don't remember.

I think there was even enough commotion for Josh to hear over where he was, and he jokingly said "We love you, Ethan" or something. Neither of us really understood what was going on; except that I was supposed to be conspicuously *loved* this Sunday. And, I had been called a girl's name I didn't recognize.

⁷I've gotten valentines from my mom...

I remember this woman's story creating quite a stir at church; and, my mother was *conspicuously* vocal about what a bad mom the mother from the sermon was. She had an air of "methinks thou doth protest too much"; despite the fact that the sermon was clearly about someone else.

Regardless of whether there was any truth to it, it often felt like Emma and her friends were conspiring to torment me and make me out to be perverse or abusive throughout my sophomore year. My cringy high school journal reminded me that Anna would sometimes act almost as a human shield to "protect" Emma from me; and that some little old church lady I didn't know approached me with questions about "what I did to Emma". I particularly remember Emma viciously gossiping about me and distorting my little gender identity problem during the civics and economics class we both took together. I was driven so mad that I took to carrying a handheld voice recorder in my pocket, in a desperate attempt to show people what an asshole she was being when no one else was looking. While I did gather numerous recordings throughout the year, it was surprisingly difficult to convey what was going on without a "through my eyes" view of the situation; and, editing the recordings to find the relevant bits proved to be a very labor intensive activity with little payoff.

The most memorable incident happened between myself and this other girl who was in Emma's gossip group in the aforementioned civics class. The class was really easy; I'd often finish my work in the first 20 minutes, and spent the rest of the time staring off into space and trying not to let Emma and her friends get under my skin. It was during this latter time in the period, when I was awakened from my meditative state to Emma's friend very loudly shouting

EWWWWWWWW! GROSS!

Still, I was barely roused. I kept staring blankly into space, trying not to think about them.

STOP LOOKING UP MY SKIRT, YOU PERVERT!

It was at this moment, that I realized Emma's friend was addressing *me in particular*. At some point during my trance, this girl who sat a few desks ahead of me in the next row had turned around in her seat to gossip with her friends, while wearing a miniskirt *that absolutely did not pass the fingertip test*; and she was now *very loudly* accusing me of looking at her underpants in front of the whole class. My gaze was higher up; but, it's really hard to explain something like that as a guy and not look guilty. While I can't *prove* she did this on purpose, I found it suspicious given her connection to Emma. I'm glad nothing more came out of it except for her making me look bad.

This incident, combined with the band director getting fired over an accusation of sexual misconduct from a disgruntled clarinet player *that was widely known amongst the student body to be false*, galvanized me as being an "egalitarian, not a feminist". My mother even had her own story about some teenage boys from the troubled youth camp she worked at getting a female counselor they didn't like fired in this same manner, and subsequently joking about it in the dining room. I was actually taken aback when my college women and gender studies class tried to teach me that false accusations were simply a misogynistic myth.

The behavior from Emma and her friends was usually more subtle; loudly giggling about "National Coming Out Day", or accusing me of hiding an erection by standing behind the wall in the band room, for example.

Susan has always seemed to have an idealized view of Emma and I's four-month clusterfuck of a relationship. She was quick to blame me for the tension between us; and didn't really even seem to care that she outed me to all my friends and turned them against me.

Susan wasn't handling my gender thing very well. Maybe she tried to be supportive sometimes; but she was an absolute *wreck* after she had a visibly transgender woman come into work for food stamps. She *really* didn't want me to do it after that. She was also convinced I fucked some dude (Carl?) from Goldsteins, who I went home with one day after work to fix his computer.

Anna and Emma got in; Noah and I did not. In retrospect, I was probably not a good enough student to keep up with the curriculum anyway, and I mostly just wanted to go because they had a gay-straight alliance.

There were a couple of upsides to this, ultimately.

- Emma moved away, and I hardly ever saw her again except in passing.
- I was in a better position to start DIY.

I tried to obtain a PO box, but was turned away because I was underage. This meant that I had to receive packages directly at home; which was still doable, because Susan was a single working mom. I also had an after school job, which made funding the venture more practical.

I placed my first order during the summer of 2007, after sending off a money order that I *was* able to purchase underage. I received the package on a sunny weekday without any trouble.

At that age, I was really nervous about taking the pills. I learned how to take my own blood pressure, out of concern that the meds would cause electrolyte problems that I somehow wouldn't notice.

Now that I'm older, I realize all of my fears were unfounded. Particularly as a seasoned elder tran who's taken this stuff for years, I'm very confident what I received was exactly what was stated on the bottle: some number of generic Aussie 100 mg spironolactone tablets, labeled for the south Pacific retail market.

My plan was to start at 50 mg of spironolactone per day, and ramp up to a final dose of 150 mg/day. I executed this plan, also without any trouble. I had no unwanted side effects, save for conspicuous salt cravings.

It was around this time that I had my last appointment with Sylvia. I remember being nervous about telling her I'd started DIY; I expected her to chastise me for it, but instead she just seemed to support my decision and wish me the best. I could tell the monthly trips to Fayetteville took their toll on my single working mom, and I guess we figured I'd had enough therapy for a while.

The second shipment came on a Saturday. While this *was* the most perilous day of the week, I still made it to the mail before Susan, and played it cool with the package. Hey, I'm getting pretty good at this!

Eleventh grade

With Emma and Anna's departure, the second half of my high school experience quickly returned to an earlier status quo, and my friends started acting normal around me again. The Emma years were rarely brought up, and we carried on as if nothing had happened. It was like the Bourbon Restoration, without the whiskey.

I had made some money over the summer by helping Radio Shack shutter its doors, but was then briefly jobless before taking up employment at a computer shop owned by a family I went to school and church with.

I continued going steady with spironolactone. Band camp, Caswell, Beta club... I'd put the pills in an old bottle of guaifenesin with my name on it or some shit. I was a good kid. Nobody ever suspected me of being *on drugs* or anything...

I bought a modern laptop during my second semester of high school, after I'd been working at Radio Shack for several months. The laptop was quite versatile, so lots could be said about it.

Anyway, I started looking at porn around the second semester of my junior year. The fact that I have a history of viewing pornography is, perhaps, the most normal and relatable aspect of my sexuality. In fact, at times it's given me a false sense that I'm really just a "normal dude" who has some kinks and paraphilias to work through.

My earliest and most innocent urge was that I wanted to look at pictures of teenage girls in bikinis. I'd sort of fantasize about abstract encounters with them, but there was never anything penetrative about it. I sort of just wanted to... masturbate, while looking at a picture of a girl in a bikini.

One of the first things I did, was print out a dozen or so inkjet pictures of teenage girls in bikinis to serve as a masturbatory aid, which I kept in a large envelope. Although I had a laptop, it was difficult to work with while keeping myself in a hogtie. Yes, I was tying myself up with a vibrator while wearing women's clothing and looking at pictures of girls in bikinis. I haven't got the energy for analyzing this aspect of my childhood, and would rather leave it up to the reader to determine what I am, exactly. I kept the envelope under my bed, usually on top of the original shoebox I felt I had little reason to hide anymore. We didn't really talk about what I did in private, but Susan always made a point of telling me she respected my privacy.

This innocent phase was short-lived, and my taste in porn quickly shifted toward *the thing that I'm into*, which is BDSM. Like the gateway drug theory or something. Except I only smoked pot for a few months before I started doing meth, or whatever the fuck BDSM is.

EEEE-THAAAAAN!

She sounds *pissed off*. What did she *find* back there?

I frantically rushed into my room - half expecting to find her holding a bottle of spironolactone.

What is this?

She used a tone of voice I'd never heard before, as she stood there clutching the envelope with the bikini girls. As if I'd been caught cheating on her.

I absolutely *panicked* and snatched the envelope from her hands. I ran from the house and threw it in the nearest trash can, ripping it up in the process.

I returned, barely able to catch my breath, my mother still standing in my room.

... WHAT. Is in THIS. BOX??

I must've said something like "Look, mom, really... You know what's in there..."; with the most "are you serious" expression imaginable.

She was *concerned* that I had made noose-like self tightening knots with shoestring and the like, which I tended to just keep in the box and not re-tie to save time. I didn't think the knots were big enough to fit around my head, but it's been a while.

DO I HAVE TO GOOGLE WHAT TRANS-SEXUALS DO WITH ROPE?!

I eventually had to explain that I... tie myself up for fun. And no, I don't have a breath play kink. And I'm also not suicidal.

Do you tie yourself up *while* you're wearing women's clothing?

... No... They're both just... secrets I didn't want anyone to know about. So I just... used the same box.

I think it was at this point, when Susan said what might've been the most creepy thing she's ever uttered.

Soon, there'll be no more secrets between us!



Figure 5: It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia - Dennis' Tools (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ype12RuDJ4k&t=24s>)

I forgot until recently the impact this event had on me as a teenager.

I had a lot of unhealthy ideas about sex, and female sexuality in particular. At this age, I was under the honest impression that women didn't really *want* sex in the same way as men, and didn't experience sexual arousal in the same sense. I was probably influenced by a blend of Christian modesty and my mother's restrictive prudishness; as well as contemporary sitcoms like "Everybody Loves Raymond", where denial of sex was often used as a plot device in which the responsible wife would discipline the chauvinistic or misbehaving husband. The implication, certainly in my impressionable mind, was that sex was something Ray *needed*, and Debra *could provide, at a cost*. I came

to view normal sexual relationships as necessarily transactional and manipulative, akin to the relationship between the Founders and the Jem'Hadar;⁸ and to some extent, I came to view most heterosexual men as “pussy whipped”.

But me? I didn't *need* sex, like these men. I just *wanted* it. I *wanted* somebody to fuck me like a woman. But, I was starting to feel like *women* didn't even want to be fucked like women. My growing desire to be *fucked*, and to be *submissive in the bedroom*, started to feel like a mere fetishization of womanhood, rather than the genuine experience.

This nagging conflict between my awakening sexuality and my belief that horniness was a fundamentally “masculine” state of mind came to a head when I found myself doing *exactly what Blanchard accuses trans women of doing*: lying about their private experiences to make themselves appear less sexually depraved and more authentically feminine. Before the incident, I felt like I'd already *told* Susan what I did in private, basically. Sure, I left out the part where I *masturbate with a vibrator while tying myself up in mom's lingerie*, but I gave her the gist, right? But, now it felt like I hadn't *really* come out at all. And if there *was* anything recognizably feminine about what I was doing, I probably wouldn't have gotten yelled at like I was a horny teenage boy who couldn't contain his sexual urges, by his chaste mom who has an obviously authentic female gender identity.

I went to school the next morning, knowing I'd gotten in trouble for one of the most unquestionably masculine things a teenage boy can do: masturbating to pornography.⁹ There's one thing I couldn't deny; I *did* always want to have normal teenager problems.

This might've been the beginnings of a new line of thought: that I really *could* just be a normal man, if only I surrounded

⁸I apologize for this Star Trek reference.

⁹Was it really even pornography, though?

myself with a bit of normalcy. I lacked male role models. My dad wasn't around. I had limited socialization growing up. And god dammit, I had been a weird little middle schooler. I started to question whether I really just went through a "crossdressing phase" when I was younger. Maybe I convinced myself I was actually a Real Woman™ on the inside after finding weird shit on the internet, and lost touch with reality for a bit. At any rate, it felt like the evidence was mounting against me being a "true transsexual".

I was really at a crossroads in my life, and I felt like my psyche was being pulled in two different directions.

I look at porn. Juuuuust like a normal teenage boy.

Man

I look at BDSM porn of men topping women and imagine being the woman.

Tran

Oh, you mean like an autogynephile? Say, how many times have you *actually admitted* to masturbating in women's clothing, anyway? What is that, in the DSM-IV or something?

Man

But, I have gender dysphoria, though...

Tran

What, you mean like those poor kids who were threatening to cut off their wang with a pair of fingernail clippers when they were three? Look, hun... you don't have *gender dysphoria*.

Man

... Okay, maybe you're right...

Tran

I don't understand women. They're emotional and over-reactive and irrational, and I'm logical and reasonable. You think you're one of them?

Man

... But it feels so good to be Elizabeth, or Sarah or Morgan or whoever the fuck...

Tran

In the spring, I was distracted by an impending Science Olympiad date; probably among other things. I forgot to take my spiro one evening. And then the next day, I forgot to take it too. I found myself not having taken my meds for a full week.

It was now, when I uttered to myself that I had found a more mature place that was beyond gender. I had... transcended gender.

What really happened is that I found myself in a less mature place that was beyond denial. I had... not transcended jack shit.

More importantly though, I think I determined that I simply *couldn't* be the same thing as a *real woman*; even if I *was* born different. Women were like my mother. Women were like Emma. They were almost intrinsically incomprehensible from my perspective. Whatever it was they enjoyed doing in the bedroom, it wasn't... what I was doing. Real women talk about having crushes on boys, or liking a man in uniform. They like... all of that girl stuff, that makes my eyes glaze over. A quarter of their brains seem to be devoted to gossip and being a mean girl to their enemies. They're all like "that bride is SO LOVELY!" The older I got, the more unrelatable women seemed; and, the more it felt like it was probably just a sex thing. An application of Occam's razor suggested it was highly unlikely I was transsexual

and into BDSM; and sheer probability led me to assume my “gender dysphoria” was probably related to the latter.

Something I often forget about myself at this age, is that I’m not sure I fully understood that it was normal for women to masturbate. I mean, I’m pretty sure I knew what I vibrator was; so I’m not quite sure where the disconnect was, exactly. I don’t think I fully grasped how normal it was until I got involved in the BDSM community in college. I remember obsessing over how frequently I masturbated and had erections while I was on spiro; thinking that both of these numbers being lower would make me “more of a woman” or something.

When I was young, I remember my mother telling me in response to a question about sex, that she’d only done it *once*, to conceive *me*. Even at that age, I said I didn’t believe her. Now that I’m older, I’m not convinced she wasn’t telling the *truth*. This woman is *really weird* about sex; and she unfortunately passed that on to me. I don’t think she had a great childhood herself.

Despite the unpopularity of the theory, when I took an objective look at myself at this age, autogynephilia appeared to be the most likely explanation for what was going on with me. I didn’t really wear women’s clothing to do my homework, or play video games, or dabble with Linux, or watch re-runs of Seinfeld. I did it to get off. When I was younger, I thought that I was transsexual, simply because of my deep desire to be a girl. But now that I was older, I didn’t feel like I’d been *born* a woman. I felt like I’d been *born* a pervert. My problem just seemed too *sexual*. And I guess women at the time seemed too *chaste*.

I had dreams of being able to live an outwardly normal female life when I was younger. But now all I saw in the mirror was an overweight deep voiced hairy pervert. I knew better than to think I could ever be anyone’s “damsel in distress”.

I didn't feel like I fit the "true transsexual" stereotype of someone who just needed to present themselves as a woman to feel whole and complete in everyday life. But, I *did* still wish I were a woman, quite badly. But, I couldn't really get excited about make-up. Or the loveliest bride.



Figure 6: WKUK - Table Monster (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM1TaNVnh58&t=194s>)

What I'm sure felt like a "small break to see how trans we really are" at the time, ultimately turned into a nearly ten year-long gap in taking my medication. Of course, even token autogynephile Anne Lawrence still takes her medication. So, I guess my plan seems a little bit silly in hindsight.

I suppose I just couldn't handle the idea of transitioning, *and* knowing I was totally doing it as a sex thing that's entirely detached from normal female sexuality.

I attended Governor's School this summer, and didn't re-up my spironolactone. I still thought of myself as "quasi-transgender"; but in light of everything going through my head, I sort of just wanted to try being a normal guy.

Governor's School was probably the first time I was exposed to religious and political ideas that were very different from what I grew up with. It was the first time I really *talked* to an atheist about atheism. It was the first time I heard someone unironically utter the phrase "What's wrong with Marxism?"¹⁰

It's been a while, but I remember there being different "tracks", and I was on the science track. One of the classes was *Evolution*, in which we were encouraged to choose a stance on the issue and defend it in debates with other students. Creationism, Darwinism... I enthusiastically chose "theistic evolution" at this age, along with a handful of others. It was a cool class. It was the first time I'd heard the theory that dinosaurs had feathers.

For one of the assignments, we watched a short animated video that was very much made from the hard atheist perspective. It essentially panned humans as obvious primates with made-up religions who wouldn't stop flinging poo at each other, and who were somehow too short-sighted to see that they were clearly just *slightly* more intelligent monkeys. We were then asked to write an essay on how we felt about it.

I wrote of how I was offended by the film's lack of perspective on more moderate religion; but as I was writing this, I couldn't help but notice that I wasn't *really* offended at all. It was just how I was *supposed* to feel, as a Christian.

For one of the later assignments, we were split into pairs, and I was to have a sort of one-on-one debate with a fellow student who was an atheist. I think this was my first time hearing the

¹⁰This was a student in a group of people outside class. I feel like I need to be *really* clear about this, as the program has historically come under fire from religious conservatives for bullshit reasons.

“God of the gaps” argument. I walked away feeling like I had a *lot* to think about. My partner dusted off his hands like he’d just finished his Tuesday night homework.

I didn’t leave Governor’s School identifying as an atheist; but, I was starting to chip away at some of the religious bullshit.

Twelfth grade

I entered twelfth grade with the idea that I was transsexual as far out of mind as it had ever been. I took dual enrollment at the community college in the morning, and thus only had two high school classes each semester of my senior year. I’m also pretty sure I took band that year, which would’ve made AP English and Calculus my only other high school courses.

While I was *nominally* enrolled in AP Calculus, I didn’t *really* learn calculus in high school, in effect.

For the first semester, I think there was a scheduling conflict, either with dual enrollment or band. I was told that I was smart and could catch up, and was allowed to enroll only in the second semester “integration” portion of the course. I was already hesitant about this, considering math *is* my weakest subject.

The bigger problem is that the only person at the school able to teach calculus, Mrs. Hall, had fallen gravely ill with a long-term liver disease she’d been managing. While I had a handful of lessons with Mrs. Hall, the vast majority were covered by a substitute who did not and could not teach Calculus; Mrs. Hall passed away toward the end of the school year.

So, I took one semester of a two semester AP course, that ultimately didn’t even cover that much. I did manage to learn the chain rule and Riemann sums, at least. It was ultimately decided that we didn’t have to take the AP exam, given the unusual situation.

When I look back on this, I wish I'd have taken calculus at BCC, and I don't remember why I didn't. I got a couple hard classes out of the way, but on advisement I also took a lot of things (biology, geography, psychology) that didn't count toward my university program. To be fair, I hadn't picked a college when I first enrolled.

I was accepted into NC State, UNC, and Georgia Tech, choosing to attend State along with Josh and a handful of other folks from East Bladen.

Sex ed

Like grains of sand through the hourglass, I eventually found myself with a complete pile of sexual education.

Okay - this is kind of a lie. I still don't really understand sex, but I found myself with *enough* sexual education to be dangerous. Or, with enough rope to hang myself. Is that... too soon?

Two things seemed obvious by the twelfth grade.

- Masturbating in your mother's lingerie is *fucking weird*.
- If something *that fucking weird* was a symptom of gender dysphoria, it would *definitely* be a bullet point in the DSM-IV, right? On the contrary, "weird sex stuff" actually seemed to be part of the *differential diagnosis* for "true transsexualism".

Ergo, I'm not a "true transsexual".

There must've been *some* point when I fully realized how fucking *creepy* it is to masturbate in your mom's lingerie. I don't remember when I had enough sand, and I didn't seem to journal about it. It must've been akin to how Adam and Eve felt when they first realized they were butt-ass naked. Or like having to

wean *yourself* off breast milk after realizing you're *way* too old to be doing that.

As I've grown older, I've come to resent Christian conservatism and its desire to whitewash human sexuality, especially in children. They want sex to be something that's "18+", if not "for a man and a woman after marriage"; but, *I* was dealing with sex problems by the end of elementary school! Was I just... too young to know what was happening to my body? I remember getting *hard* playing with Katelyn and Cassie whenever our play involved themes like confinement. I just had to *wait until I was older* to have enough grains of sand to understand *why I liked that so much?* Then, when I was finally old enough, I felt *guilty*. Was that a scene? Was that consensual? I mean, there wasn't anything sexual about it; for *them*. But, I *really* liked this stuff. Did I unknowingly coerce them into topping me by directing our child's play toward themes that made me aroused, before I understood what sexual arousal even was?

Of course, none of this would've been a problem if another human could've just *explained* all of this to me at what I consider to be the appropriate age; but, Christians need to put sex in the same category as "drugs" and "rock and roll". Increasingly, the Christian viewpoint seemed to be that the pious needed to avoid evil temptations, like sex, and porn, and maybe even homosexuality; but as I got older, these things didn't seem like *choices* to me. They just seemed like variations of the human condition. You either like BDSM or you don't. You're either gay or you aren't. I was even starting to laugh at some of my peers who already claimed to have "pornography addictions". Bruh, you're just a *straight dude*.

I was frustrated that, in my case, withholding information about sex when I was younger appeared to have the *opposite* effect as intended. If I had known more, I would've curbed my enthusiasm while playing with my friends. The problem is confounded by the fact that, if most adults *did* see a nine-year-

old boy running around with two girls and a boner, they'd just assume he was getting to the age where he wanted to fuck one or both of the girls, when there could be something *completely different* happening in his head. For all I know, that's why we stopped going to Katelyn and Cassie's house.

My mother never really brought up the weird stuff from my childhood again; except, when she came to me in a panic after David Carradine died. She is... very afraid of "losing" me.

I carried on with my budding pornography habit undeterred; but, I didn't make any more print-outs. I started downloading pictures and making slideshows with them. I initially kept these in an encrypted archive on my computer, before ultimately setting up a VM for the purpose.

I liked this better than watching videos *or* looking at any one particular image. After a point, it felt like I had a scene in my head, and I mostly just wanted to arrange a dozen or so pictures to go along with it. Videos usually broke too far with the fantasy I'd built up, and often had long cuts to things I didn't really want to look at like her vulva.

I would sometimes seek out the video to a porn I really liked the pictures of, usually to be disappointed. Or sometimes, to be satisfied by that two minute segment I was looking for, or even a still frame in the video that just isn't comparable to anything in the high-res photo shoot. I'm not sure I've ever even *watched* a complete porno, from start to finish. I always just skip around, because I'm trying to *get somewhere, goddammit*.

So, by now I had a marked forced fellatio kink, which only made me feel more autogynephilic. My perception of *real* women was that they viewed giving head as a chore; and indeed one of the battle cries of feminism seems to be "You men need to *reciprocate oral sex more often!*" My identity was beginning to shift away from being transsexual, and toward being a kinkster.

Whatever I was, I didn't think I was evil, and I wanted to explore it with like-minded people; who I assumed shared my plight.

College

Freshman

I enrolled at North Carolina State University in the fall of 2009, majoring in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

I lived at the Avent Ferry Complex, along with Josh and Brendon. The latter two roomed together, while I was placed with a second year EE student from Fayetteville named Parker.

Before I went off to college, I was presented with a Bible on behalf of the church. It's a nice book. I've considered getting rid of it on occasion, but I still have it.

This nice-looking new-in-box Bible inevitably found its way into my things for school. Like all of my things, I found a place for it in my dorm room when I unpacked; in this case, up on the top shelf of my desk. It seemed like the most obvious place to put it.

This spurred a brief conversation with Parker, who it turned out was an atheist. I explained that I was raised Methodist; he didn't seem bothered, though we didn't really talk about it much. I'm pretty sure I had de-escalated to some brand of agnostic by this point in my life, or was at least about to.

Unsurprisingly, I took Calculus my first semester. On the first day, the professor asked how many people had taken calculus before. And, basically *everyone* raised their hand. I didn't initially, until sheepishly raising it half-way after a few seconds. The class was a review for most everyone, but I *really* needed first time calculus for people who were *kind of okay* at math.

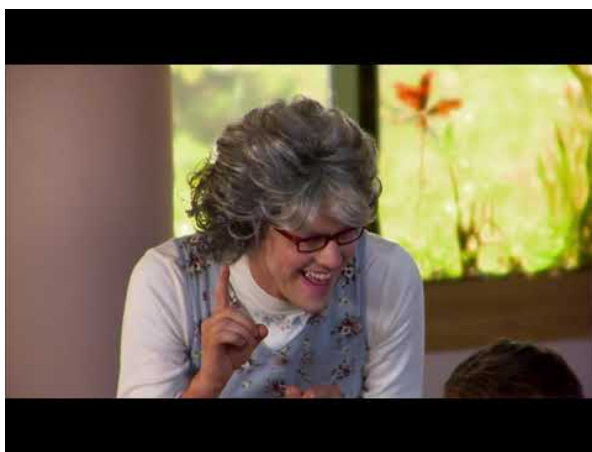


Figure 7: Whitest Kids U' Know: Teacher's Union (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOYL-seDv_A&t=128s)

I had always been a “B” student at math, despite the whole “computers and ham radios” thing giving me the appearance of being a “math and science kid”. This class began a tradition of me always being a “C” student at collegiate-level math.¹¹

Parker moved to Wolf Village the second semester, so I had the dorm room to myself. I spent most of my free time outside of class with Josh and Brendon, who lived on the next floor. I only briefly considered checking out the LGBT center, before deciding I was definitely just a normal dude with some kinks and paraphilias.

Sophomore

Brendon dropped out of school after his first year and went back to Bladen County. Josh lived at University Towers, getting placed

¹¹I think I did alright in discrete math, but I’m not counting that.

with a roommate named Spencer who he didn't really care for all that much. After initially declaring his major to be Nuclear Engineering, Josh decided to pivot to Computer Science after liking the Fortan class they still had incoming Nuclear Engineers take for some reason. I stayed at Avent Ferry again; this time being placed with an incoming freshman engineer named James Miko. I told my friends I got an Asian roommate because I thought his name sounded Japanese, but he turned out to just be a pot smoking aspie kid from Forsyth county.

I unpacked my things on the other side of Avent Ferry, surprised by the appearance of my new *and very much round-eyed* roommate. I unpacked the Bible and set it on my top shelf again, along with my little Lego NAS I'd built.

Josh, Brendon and I had experimented with smoking funny things our Freshman year, but we weren't too serious about it and didn't really have any connections anyway. I was surprised to find my new "studious Asian" roommate actually smoked weed. I was, by this point, just looking to try "normal college-aged dude" stuff, whatever that was. We started by hotboxing somebody's car with a crappy little pipe and what might've at least been some *decent* granddaddy purple.

This quickly became a habit. We moved from hotboxing the car, to hotboxing the bathroom, to hotboxing the rear part of our room, to really just freely ripping the bong in medium-sized groups while playing Wii Sports or Black Ops or Brawl or some shit. Josh soon made Avent Ferry a virtual second home; and probably regretted choosing to live on the other side of campus that year.

I made new friends and acquaintances through smoking. Trevor, Dillon, Abdul, Jacqueline, Mason, Travis, Bobby... It was generally easier to obtain weed than alcohol.

We weren't very far into the year when a group of us were in my room talking; me, Dillon, Miko, maybe one or two others.

So are you, like, a Christian or something?

No, not really. Why?

Well, what's with the Bible?

Oh; I was raised Methodist. My church gave that to me when I graduated. I still just... keep it on my shelf, I guess.

We all had a laugh about it. I guess they were concerned I might be, like, *really* religious or something.

This was one of my earlier lessons about "normal, secular" life. A Bible just sort of blends in out in the country; and it sticks out like a sore thumb elsewhere. Where I grew up, the Bible wasn't just how you learned about religion; it was a display piece, an accessory, perhaps even an heirloom of sorts. It fills up space on your shelf. It's a centerpiece on your coffee table. It's... the Bible. Everyone has a Bible or six, right?

In a university dorm room however, it becomes almost a sort of political statement. You're on this college campus with atheists and Jews and Muslims and Hindus and yes, sometimes even *Christians*.

You look around at all these people in your lecture hall, and you figure some of us grew up hearing about God and Jesus, some of us grew up learning about Buddha or Vishnu, maybe a couple of us even have family back home who still expect them to pray five times a day. Some of us might've grown up with parents who believed in crystals and homeopathy, some of us might have Scientologists in our family; but I quickly got the feeling that whatever *mythology* we grew up on, most of us didn't take that shit seriously here. We're people of science and logic and reason, gathered here from all the world over to find *actual* solutions to life's greatest mysteries. Religion is for people who

need answers now. It's for people who can't handle the mystery and the unknown of real life. It's the opposite of what drives science forward.

By some point early on in college, I got the distinct impression that being a "Christian engineer" was *a little weird*. It's like they gave me a clicker question; and it turns out the vast majority of my peers are atheist or might as well be.

I lived in Bladen County long enough to build up a portrait of a "religious person" in my mind: paranoid, overly suspicious, authoritarian, afraid of everything, xenophobic, easily angered and upset by things they don't understand. They crave the antidote to this: heightened surveillance and security, increased scrutiny, arbitrarily fewer degrees of freedom, a reduced number of unknowns that might spook out "us decent folk"; a return to a simpler time with fewer questions and fewer problems.

I had similarly built up a portrait of what I began to consider a "normal, secular" person: easy going, live and let live, tolerant of alternative lifestyles, assumes the best but prepares for the worst, open-minded about new information; is generally prepared for the challenges of modernity. They want to watch a new generation cast aside the superstitions of their parents, and add a feel-good chapter to the history books for once. They want to see the people have more freedom; they want an end to arbitrary inequalities. They want to see progress where there's been none for *centuries*. They quickly lose patience in debates over whether gay marriage is "unnatural", or whether stem cell researchers are "playing God".

This discussion has gone on longer than I would like; anyway, I put up the Bible not too long after our talk. As I'm older, I think of this as an example of "positive" peer pressure.

I probably could've stood to focus on my studies more; but, I was just glad to finally be part of what felt like a *normal* group of friends. It seemed like I'd escaped Bladen County, and the ostracism I felt through much of high school. I'd come to view my earlier behavior as a "weird phase" where I thought I was trans, and was relieved to feel as if I had finally assimilated myself into "bro culture". I was drinking, smoking, doing drugs,¹² enjoying first-person shooters... it felt like I'd mastered everything there was to being a guy, except for the "fucking women" part. This, frankly, felt more valuable to me than anything my professors could teach.

I grew a little nervous as we let our guard down more and more. The normalization of danger reminded me of my earlier habits.

We eventually *did* get busted while smoking in Trevor's room at the very end of the year, during finals. Trevor happened to have a handicapped room¹³ with an extra-large bath we liked to hotbox, which could hold nearly a dozen heads. An RA apparently overheard us talking about getting high on the way to Trevor's room, and alerted the campus police. Josh narrowly avoided getting caught, as he was at UT studying for an exam.

The matter was handled by student conduct; and, began coloring my negative perception of law enforcement, despite them not exactly being the "real" police. First of all, they accused us of having close to an eighth when we started the night with no more than half that; probably because they just plop the whole baggie on the scale. It's not that an eighth is any more illegal than a gram; it's just obnoxious when the neighborhood drug dealer is more honest about weighing your weed than the cops are.

Whatever.

¹²Cannabis and psychedelics folks, cannabis and psychedelics.

¹³Trevor wasn't handicapped; he just got lucky.

A few disciplinary actions came out of this, ultimately.

- We couldn't live in on-campus housing anymore.
- We had to write a letter for student conduct to send back to our parents explaining what we'd gotten in trouble for.
- We had to receive a substance abuse evaluation from a licensed counselor, and follow up on any of their recommendations.
- We had to complete a question and answer-based writing assignment.
- We were all on disciplinary probation for varying amounts of time, so we couldn't fuck up again.

I already had plans to move into an apartment next year anyway, so the first item was a non-issue.

The second item was still less dangerous than ordering spironolactone from Vanuatu; I was home for the summer working , and saw nothing to lose by simply hoping to check the mail first.

For the third item, I looked up practices in neighboring Robeson County that offered substance abuse evaluations, and picked the chilliest sounding one. I talked to a former heroin addict-turned counselor, and I had to follow up on his recommendation of attending two Narcotics Anonymous meetings so that I could see what harder drugs might lead to.

I was able to complete all the things over the summer without any trouble, and without Susan finding out. My friends had variously more difficult times; Trevor probably had it the hardest with an intensive counseling program over the summer, and I think Miko had a longer probation for being a hard-ass to student conduct.

I still think it was bullshit that they wanted to tell my crazy mom, when she contributed *nothing* in college savings. I paid my entire way through college with loans and Pell grants and scholarships and a summer job; if anything, she was siphoning money out of my checking account to pay for our "car insurance".

Something that's always bothered me, was the seemingly arbitrary and wide variance in the rulings issued. Me, Miko, Dillon, Trevor, Abdul, Jacqueline... we were just a bunch of pot heads who lived at Avent Ferry. We smoked in each other's rooms and cars, we each had and shared our own pieces, we bought weed from the same pool of drug dealers, often splitting it amongst ourselves...

Student conduct (or more generally, "the cops"), are very particular about all their little offenses and bullet points. "Who was in possession of the paraphernalia? Who was maintaining the dwelling?"; As if we followed Robert's Rules of Order. Now, even the more honest cannabis user who'd just as soon say "Guilty your honor, I'm a pothead" finds themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to "get their story straight". Sure, we had Josh's vape, and Miko's bowl, and the green bong we all chipped in on; but we used *my* monogrammed bookbag to move our pieces around, so naturally we're going to say "Ethan was in possession of the paraphernalia" when we give our official statements to student conduct. Because, it's utterly illogical to just pile more names onto that list, and if we were *totally* honest we'd have to include Josh who wasn't even involved otherwise.

This experience taught me a lot about how the criminal justice system works, despite the lack of criminal charges associated with it. Between things like plea bargains and the rapidly escalating need to "keep everyone's story straight" as more than a couple of people get involved in an endeavor, I imagine relatively few folks are behind bars for something they *actually* did. That's not to say they aren't necessarily guilty of *something*.

We (or rather, Susan) moved to a different house around the corner, as the one we'd been staying in was now slated to be torn down to expand the church playground.

I helped with the move in between working at the computer shop and handling my student conduct bullshit. Keith let us repaint the walls, which Cody and I did.

I'd often put on music while I was working in the new house over the summer. I had my little iPod touch with a Sony dock, and I'd put on... whatever I guess, as background noise. I think I'd put on the Red Hot Chili Peppers album *By the Way* when my mother came in and incredulously exclaimed "What is *that*?!"... as if the fucking Zephyr Song was too hardcore for her or something.

If you're growing impatient with this dull anecdote, I *promise* I'm going somewhere with this. It's gonna take some time, though.

This is a good example of my mother's behavior, that leads me to hide things from her. It's not like I was *in trouble* for listening to the Red Hot Chili Peppers or something. But, she also wasn't like "Hey, that's groovy Ethan! Nice music! Glad you're putting that iPod I bought you to use!" It's even more confusing that I grew up with my mom playing Q98 in the car. Like, I didn't think this was some "foreign genre" for us. I wasn't sure what to make of it - but I didn't play any more RHCP around my mom, and was probably more conservative with my music selection in general around her after that.

Maybe I misread the situation, because it wasn't long after this that my mother bought Josh and I tickets to see the Chili Peppers at PNC later that year, and similarly bought me a t-shirt to go with it. It might be worth noting that this is a band I'd never explicitly mentioned that I *like* to my mom. I think the occasion was my birthday, which was just a couple of months after the move.

Perhaps more unusual were the seats. My mother was about to buy Josh and I regular seats, when Terry gave her money to buy us floor seats. Because... we're such good kids, I guess?

The show was supposed to be later that year; but was moved to the spring after Anthony Kiedis broke his foot.

Junior

I moved into an apartment at Wolf Creek my third year, along with a lot of other folks. Josh and I already had plans to take the places of graduating seniors Marc and Noah, moving in with remaining Bladen County native Will Potter; who was ostensibly going to NC State for *something*, it's a matter of debate.

The other people I got busted with had to scramble over the summer to find housing; with Miko, Dillon and Trevor also finding spots at Wolf Creek, although not all in the same apartment like they'd have preferred. Over the course of the next few months, the remaining three consolidated themselves into a smaller number of apartments as space became available. Trevor would eventually move in with me, Josh and Will for my senior year.

I believe it was in the fall, when we had this “homecoming Sunday” at my old church. Tommy returned as a guest preacher, and we had a lunch afterwards in the activity building. I found myself at a table with Tommy, the Richardsons, the Stewarts, my mother... I'll be damned if it wasn't the same crowd as when we first *met* Tommy all those years ago.

We were making small talk, when the conversation turned to this weird nightmare I had as a kid. Basically, I thought “sharks” were going to eat me; but, it's a little more complicated than that, and this was the first time my mother and I effectively *communicated* about the content of this dream.

“Tell them about the sharks!”, my mother says. As if to put me on display.

Oh... you mean the shark people?

Wait, they were *people*? You never said they were *people*!

Well, they had arms and legs...

What did they look like?!

Well, they were gray...

I started to notice some of the others at the table exchanging glances. As I continued telling this story, which my mother seemed more interested in *now* than when I woke up screaming all those years ago, it felt like you could cut the tension with a knife.

Did they have big jaws?

No, not really...

What were they doing?

Well, just standing over me mostly. We were in this strange, round room, and I was on this metal table.

How tall were they?

I don't know. Like... normal human height?

Were you scared?

Well yeah, I thought they were going to eat me!

It was about this point when Tommy decided he needed to have a talk with me *right. Now*. He practically dragged me out of the activity building by the forearm.

We walked out into the church parking lot. It was looking pretty empty by this point in the dinner, but there were still cars and people around.

We got to the center of the parking lot. Tommy looked around us. There wasn't anyone in earshot. It wasn't. Private. Enough. We kept walking. Out to the far, northwest edge of the lot. He was brimming with excitement. He looked as if he could barely contain himself.

Tommy looked around us again. There was *nobody* around.

You're different.

I know I'm pretty weird...

No. You're **different**. You aren't *like* these people, see?

"You aren't *like* them!" he says again, gesticulating wildly at a couple of people underneath the covered walkway in the distance. Church, organized religion, the "Bladen County" life... he made it abundantly clear that these things weren't. *For*. Me. They were for *them*. They weren't for *me*. I was *different*.

Shit, man. This is pretty weird. I'm pretty sure my preacher just told me *not* to go to church. Not that I was planning to anyway...

I'm obviously unable to precisely recite the conversation from memory; but, these were the bullet points.

- I'm different. *Very* different. I need to learn about how I'm different, and Tommy can't teach me.
- I need to "seek hidden truths".
- "Freemasons" know about different people like me.
- "If you walked into a masonic lodge and gave them your name, they'd know who you are."
- He made it sound like I needed to explore some sort of spirituality that was "beyond church". He said that Freemasons know about it, but so did other groups.
- My mother... is not to be trusted.
- He seemed to know things *about the future*.

- He said my mother and I would have a falling out. That I would ban her from my property.
- I hope I'm not projecting recent events on the situation when I tell you I remember him saying it involves *UFOs*. And that there would be a *UFO report* in the future.
- He said there were "things going on I should know about".
- He reiterated that church wasn't *for* me, but that it was important I keep exploring spirituality. He told me I should find a group of people to learn about this stuff from, and that perhaps one of these groups that isn't "Freemasonry proper" might be the best fit. This was a long time ago, but I *think* he used the word "coven".

He went on to describe a sort of "vision"¹⁴ he had, where I was to show up at his new church years from now.

This is gonna sound weird... but, you were wearing a purple dress.

I was *not* out of the closet to Tommy; and in fact, had abandoned my plans to transition *at all* by this age. My face was probably very red.

He also made it sound like I would go on to make some unusual lifestyle choices; but, that it was okay. It was my path, actually. I... think polyamory might've been mentioned.

I didn't know what to do with all of this. Tommy and I eventually returned to our table.

When we got home, my mother asked nosily what Tommy and I talked about.

I didn't know what to say; especially since half of Tommy's advice seemed to be about how I *shouldn't* trust my mother. Can't she see this was a private conversation for a reason?

¹⁴I think this whole "vision" thing is bullshit; but, I'll allow it as an oversimplification.

Oh, Tommy just talked to me about the Freemasons.
He thinks I should... join them, or something.

I feel stupid for telling her *this* much. It seemed harmless enough, though. I wanted to satisfy her curiosity.

My older self would've told me the woman's curiosity simply *isn't satiable*.

I thought about joining the Freemasons; but when I looked them up online, it was clearly a fraternity of men who believe in God. And, I was an atheist quasi-transgender subby boy; or, whatever it was I identified as back then. Even if I wasn't planning on *transitioning*, I was generally irked by things that were gendery or exclusively male.

I was also unsettled at the news that my future self *might* choose to transition after all. Medical transition is something you should do *sooner* rather than later, and I wasn't unaware of this. I just... couldn't stomach it back then. I'd finally made it to *normalcy*, after years of being a *pariah*. Can't I just be a pot-smoking dude bro? I don't suppose Tommy might be *wrong* about all this...

I turned 21 at the beginning of my junior year, which was cool; though I can't reiterate enough that *cannabis* has always been my vice.

Now 21 years young and an upperclassman, a couple things were weighing on my mind.

- I wanted to do *other stuff* on campus, besides going to class and hanging out with the same friends every night.
- I need to get laid.

I decided to join the IEEE robotics team around this time. I participated my junior and senior years; it was fun and I learned a lot, but the team lacked faculty advisement, which I think ultimately caused us to struggle in delivering a working robot. I did drink *way* too much Fireball at SoutheastCon once, though.

A full autobiography would include a more complete retelling of my experiences on the IEEE robotics team; however, that would be irrelevant to the purpose of this document.

The IEEE robotics team

I knew I was at the age where I should be having sex. I also knew better than to just start asking sorority girls to top me. I felt like my sexuality was utterly incompatible with the mainstream dating world; and I was still *very* deep in denial about the possibility that I *might* just be psycho-sexually “a woman”.

Of course, I’ve known *BDSM* was a thing since I was in seventh grade trying to figure out why I liked tying myself up in mom’s lingerie so much. I just wasn’t old enough to *do* anything with that yet.

I went to my first evening meeting of the IEEE robotics team in January 2012. I was hoping my roommates wouldn’t ask questions, but they probably did. They... usually did.

I sat in the car for about fifteen minutes, looking at the Cary IHOP in the rearview mirror. Like I was about to drop acid for the first time or something. But, I went in. I was a “take the red pill” kind of guy.

There were a vertigo-inducing 75 people crammed into the side room at the IHOP; a record-breaking turnout for any TMG munch, that may not’ve been paralleled since. Maybe everyone had a new year’s resolution to get back in the scene before the Mayan’s ended the world or something. I could scarcely find

anywhere to sit; but I did manage to find a spot after some effort, and I didn't even have to bang my trumpet case around.

I left with a couple new acquaintances, but I was looking for something that was both less overwhelming and closer in age range. Seems easy enough; I just have to wait for TNG.

The next TNG munch was at Tyler's in Durham. I showed up to the restaurant 45 minutes late, because I'd never been to the ATC before and the GPS kept sending me by the Moe's. When I *did* find the iconic Durham establishment, the wait staff didn't know where "TNG" or "the computer group" was sitting, so I left. I remember hearing later that this was a weird one anyway.

I probably went to another TMG munch before making it to the next TNG at Tyler's, not at the ATC but at Seaboard Station this time. By now, it felt like an eternity had passed since I started *trying* to go, but it was really only like March or late February. I remember seeing some now-familiar faces there. Erika, Jason, Ian, Isabel, Emily... I remember this other fellow Josh going on about different strengths of alcohol he'd tested for his firecupping demo¹⁵ when I thought to myself, "I have *found* the sex nerds".

I went to my first play party a couple weeks after this. Josh gave his firecupping demo, an unusual but not unheard of feature. It was cool.

I kept going to stuff. I got in the loop for the TNG slosh that was very much undocumented at the time, kept going to play parties and shit... I was starting to wonder if I was doing it right, when I got my first scene in with a woman named Maureen.

Maureen is a fascinating woman deserving of her own paragraph. For the entire time period I've known her, Maureen has been in a relationship with a much younger fellow named Isaac,

¹⁵The answer? It's been a while, but I think it was regular 70% isopropyl alcohol.

who for the longest time was a grad student at UNC and is only a couple years older than I am. I often refer to her as “Maureen the cougar” in my head because of this; however this is a misnomer, as the relationship was in fact initiated by *Isaac*, who I suppose has a thing for older women. She was otherwise over the age limit for TNG, but Isaac often guested her into the parties; she also showed up to the unofficial slosh we had at the Saucer quite a bit.

Anyway, some of you might not really understand how the “BDSM community” works, and might be under the mistaken impression that a play party is tantamount to an orgy. While there’s certainly no shortage of kinky orgies in the world if you were to meet those sorts of people, that would also be a *considerably* more private affair.



Figure 8: It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia (Orgy) (<https://youtu.be/eKrN4vNsBzA>)

Play parties typically involve partial or full nudity on the part of the folks getting tied up and beaten with stuff, but there are

clearly defined rules of engagement that prioritize enthusiastic informed consent and generally preclude outright *sex*. Where sex at play parties *does* happen, it's usually in more intimate group settings, and at a house party as opposed to a venue.

So anyway, it was probably around May, and we were at Justin's house for TNG instead of the Hangar like usual. This fellow Justin used to throw house parties fairly regularly before he moved to Texas. And no, this wasn't a "kinky orgy"; though Justin's house did have a well-deserved reputation. We could also drink there, which was typically both prohibited and legally problematic at an actual dungeon or venue.

I'm starting to wonder if I should be *doing* something other than existing as a subby boy at a play party who's only preoccupation is his whiskey and coke, when I'm approached by this middle-aged woman. I've seen her around before. Not sure if I ever got her name. Maureen sat down next to me on the floor, and asked if it was alright if she touched me. We went through her toy bag and did some light sensation play, just sitting there like you do. She knew it was my first time. Eventually we did a proper impact scene once the equipment was free. Nothing crazy. We went through her floggers, and maybe some paddles and canes. Just your standard routine. I figured I was starting to make progress. Maybe I wasn't doing it wrong after all.

It wasn't too long after this that I started doing stuff with Erika. We did the Sunday brunch munch they had in Fuquay at the time, and wasted time sitting at Starbucks and picking up snacks before rope practice early that afternoon. We joked about how everyone including the staff at Golden Corral kept trying to ship the two of us, and we sort of hit it off from there.

Erika, to be clear, was always a *play partner*. This wasn't a romantic relationship; it maybe *could have become that* under different circumstances, but I lacked desire, and probably don't even have the DLLs necessary to seduce women without crashing.

Josh and I finally got to attend the aforementioned Red Hot Chili Peppers concert in the spring.

This was fun; but probably got the two of us a little *too* high for the pyrotechnics that ensued. We were both starting to wonder if we were too baked for this shit, when they started playing “Under the Bridge” and we both knew we were going to be okay.

We walked through the gates, and were confused at first when security marshaled us onto the floor instead of level 1. “Oh yeah... My mom said Mr. Terry got us floor seats for some reason.”

The *weird* part of this story were the people sitting around me. They all appeared to be... *in on something* I was not. They all seemed to be part of the same group, despite only now introducing themselves to each other. I didn’t think much of it at first. They were mostly sitting on my side, to the left and back of us.

The show opened with the song “Right on Time”. One of *those* people giggled to whoever was next to them at the line “Joan of Arc reincarnated”. “I love that part!”

I overheard a bit about it being her first time seeing the Chili Peppers since... something. I similarly didn’t think much of it; and I’d never heard the song before that point.

We kept watching this show, stoned out of our minds. Midway through, they played “Can’t Stop”. This was my favorite song by them at the time; so whatever hooping and hollering I was planning to *do* at this show, this was it. Some lunatic several rows in front of us stood up on his chair while wearing a Subaru t-shirt.

I don’t know if it was my enthusiasm or something else; but it was at this time, maybe at the end of the song, when another of *those* people taps me on the shoulder. It was a woman sitting

behind me, middle-aged or perhaps slightly older. And, she asked me the most seemingly innocent question.

Where are you from?

I told her that I was born in Ohio, but grew up in southeastern North Carolina. This... didn't answer her question.

I don't precisely remember how the conversation continued; but, the woman's follow-up responses were cryptic, and it was around this time when I exclaimed something to the effect of,

A bunch of y'all keep acting like you know something about me I don't know! It keeps happening! I've got people from my hometown, people from church...

She responded with something vague like "Keep searching... you'll figure it out..."

It was in the banter that continued with this woman and others who joined in on our conversation, when somebody hinted to me

"... You need to learn *the truth about UFOs*."

This was the first summer where I didn't go back to mom's house to work at the computer shop. I managed to get an internship at Fidelity; I frankly didn't have the *grades* to get one at a real tech company. I did very well in my programming and digital logic classes; but was quite dreadful at anything to do with hard math or analog circuits. I probably should've switched my major to Computer Science at this point, but I powered through out of my love for embedded programming; and also out of the knowledge that I *really* didn't have the money to keep being a super senior or beyond.

I found myself in hot water after setting up a playdate at our apartment, when I *thought* all of my roommates would be out of town. Somebody, I think Josh, decided he was about to drive back from the lake *like a couple hours* before Erika was coming over. It was too late to call it off, and I kinda just started drinking beers and planning to tell Josh I was a kinkster when he got back. I somehow managed to divert Josh's return trip at the last minute, but I *basically* told him I was having a girl over. I started to think I was only delaying the inevitable.

Josh's brother stayed at our apartment for a while in the summer while he attended a summer camp at NC State during the day. I remember him coming back with a story one evening.

I met this girl. She said she was pansexual, and that there were like twelve different genders!

I died a little inside.

Senior

We moved from a three- to a four-person apartment in the same complex; eventually adding Trevor as our fourth roommate after briefly being stuck with a stranger from Wake Tech who we didn't really get along with. My roommates were wise to the fact that I had *some* late night extracurricular I didn't want to talk about, and "robot team" become a sort of joke at our apartment.

I thought about telling my roommates. I *really* did. Things got increasingly weird as I ran out of excuses for what I'd been doing out so late. The world wouldn't have ended. There were a lot of reasons *not* to, though.

- BDSM is radically accepting and body positive. My roommates... were not.

- I've heard Josh complain about merely having to *Skype* with fat girls for schoolwork. He calls women "fat" who aren't even fat! And here I am, play partners with Erika.
- Have you ever read "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie"? These guys had a habit of screaming **BULLSHIT!** any time I made a claim even half as sensational as being *actively involved in the local BDSM community*. I was concerned they might, well...
- So, my roommates were the sort of people Dakota would probably yell "Code pink shirt!" over the walkie for trying to slip past the gate at Debauchery, if you know what I mean.¹⁶
- So, what I meant to say was, I was concerned they might make asses of themselves. And that they *did* sometimes wear pink button-ups unironically.
- Or, that they'd demand I "bring home a dominatrix".¹⁷
- Also, I can't un-tell them. Like I wish I could've done back in ninth grade.
- Would Josh want to tape up his asshole around me again like after he learned I was trans?
- They were the sort to argue over whether Cameron was "gay" for enjoying pegging, when I probably had friends who matched the database query `Gender = 'M' AND Orientation = 'heterosexual' AND Fetishes LIKE '%Pegging (Into)%'`.
- My roommates are looking for *hot college babes*, not 18-35+ kinksters of various body types. The mouse is gonna bother the piss out of me until I give it a cookie, then proceed to complain about how my food sucks and I'm really just a pussy.
- And, my roommates are into the *normal dating pathway*, where you find yourself a nice woman to seduce, go out on a few dates, take her home to meet your parents, maybe pop

¹⁶You... probably don't know what I mean. Just... ask me later, okay?

¹⁷Will said something once that made me think he *might* be into that sort of thing. It's probably a stretch, though.

the question and talk about having kids some day... BDSM is notorious for unconventional relationship dynamics like polyamory and wide age gaps, that my vanilla friends would probably find weird or even *creepy*.

It kinda seemed like the *best case* scenario would be for this to remain my private little solo activity, which is what was happening anyway. I figured it was obvious I was doing “weird sex stuff” of *some* sort; and that maybe some things were better left unsaid.



Figure 9: WKUK Ants! (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjhQe5NUFvA&t=12s>)

Living a double life soon proved to be a challenge, and I struggled to keep up. I was always double-booking kink and vanilla activities, and I really should’ve kept a schedule.

Erika’s engagement with a fellow named Kevin collapsed over the summer. While I’d love to tell you all about it, it’s mostly irrelevant; save for the fact that Erika now expediently needed a place to live, and she wasn’t made of money. She ended up moving

into the spare bedroom of Heather, a (vanilla) friend of Justin from TNG. I think they used to work together or something.

Heather

When I was around this age, I often thought of what my life would be like when I was older. Because, I wasn't planning to transition anymore. I wasn't planning to be anyone's husband. I didn't want children. What was I, just going to live in a giant bachelor pad by myself my whole life with all my engineer money I didn't have anything else better to do with?

As Erika's move inched closer, I began hearing more and more about this Heather person.

- Early 30s
- Software engineer
- Used to work with Justin at Cisco or some shit
- Bachelorette
- Still gets high
- Lives in a giant house just outside the beltline, either by herself or with discretionary roommates *who are statistically more likely than average to have natural or artificial red hair*, probably by sheer coincidence.¹⁸

As I learned more about her, Heather was the first person I'd met in my field whose adult lifestyle felt *relatable* to me. I'd often wondered if there was a place for me in the world, as a man who wasn't a "marriage and family" kind of guy; but now I figured I could just grow up to be a sort of subby-boy Heather type of character with a basement dungeon.

I helped Erika with the move, and often found myself at Heather's house my senior year; eventually getting the door code to let myself in. The room wasn't huge and there wasn't much

¹⁸Her residence has at times been referred to as "Heather's home for wayward redheads".

space to swing a flogger around, but it was certainly more discreet than my apartment situation.

We started getting to know each other during and just after the move.

What do you do for work?

I'm a student at NC State.

Oh! What's your major?

Electrical and computer engineering.

Oh, ECE! Is Mrs. Such-and-such still the advisor over there?

Yeah! How'd you know?

I used to be in ECE before I switched to Computer Science. My advisor hated me for it, too. I was one of her favorite students.

She talked about how the predecessor to ECE220 was *way* too hard, and they eventually had to restructure the class because of it. It sounded like she switched out of the program largely because of this, and went on to get her master's in CS.

Early on, I had the most *fascinating* conversation with Heather.

I overheard her say something about going to a *pagan meetup* when I was over visiting.

This... piqued my interest. At the risk of sounding cheesy, I saw Heather as a sort of role model. I thought of her as someone who was, probably, a better version of myself. We're both people of *science*; and as I've grown up, science has caused me to believe in *fewer* gods, not more of them. But here she is, worshipping a

whole pantheon of them! That's assuming she's sincere in her convictions, at least.

Naturally, I was curious why she believed as she did; and, my ears were still ringing with Tommy telling me I was "different" and needed to "seek hidden truths", or perhaps some alternative form of spirituality.

When I pressed for more information, she got defensive at first. "That's private!"

I told her I didn't mean any disrespect; and went on to explain I was only curious because my childhood preacher acted like there was *something else* I needed to know that was beyond religion. And that I was apparently different in some way that involved the Freemasons.

Ooh, Freemasons! How much do you know about Freemasonry?

Uh... not much...

Bullshit!

No really, this guy Tommy just kept pulling me aside and acting like I needed to learn something about myself. And... it involves the Freemasons, apparently?

Huh... you really *are* new at this, aren't you?

The conversation continued. And... it only gets weirder from here.

Who do you work for?

Well, I'm a student.

... Does anyone in your family work for the government?

Well, my mom works for Cumberland County DSS...

She seemed... unconcerned about that last part.

What do you believe in?

Well, I'm an atheist.

So... reincarnation is real.

... Sorry, I don't...

No. It's real.

She was so matter-of-fact in stating that last part. Like a doctor reading me my diagnosis.

She went on to explain that there's... life on other planets. And, reincarnation is real. And, she happens to be from a planet orbiting the star Vega in the constellation Lyra. Apparently, these people are simply described as being "from Vega", or "from Lyra".

I... wasn't sure what to do with this information. I couldn't help but take it with a grain of salt; but Heather just sounds so *goddamn serious*, and she's smarter than I am!

I wanted to learn more. I was still a bit "citation needed" on the inside, but it *did* seem related to the thing Tommy was trying to tell me. Heather didn't have any resources to give me, and simply told me to "explore mysticism". "Keep learning... you'll get there someday." I think she said something to the effect that it would be more of a thing in another decade or two, but it wasn't really talked about today.

I looked up the Wikipedia page for "mysticism" when I got back home, but that wasn't exactly helpful. And, it didn't make me any less of an atheist. Still, I was fascinated by the whole "reincarnated space alien" thing; it *was* an obvious consequence of reincarnation, and one which I had never considered. However, it was unclear how this ties into *paganism*; that aspect probably yields more questions than answers.

The next time I went over there, Heather called up one of her friends to have *her* come over as well. It seemed she wanted us to meet; or that there was otherwise some purpose to this visit.

When her friend arrived, Heather proceeded to put on a sort of little demonstration; which she wanted to explain to *me in particular*. I... *don't* remember all the details. Oh, how I wish I remembered all the details...

This had to do with Freemasonry; and how you're supposed to talk about it with "people like Heather". It was like this sort of "Simon says" routine you have to do with them. It went something like...

Heather	How much do you know about Freemasonry?
Heather's friend	Oh, all sorts of things!
Heather	Alright, now ask me.
Heather's friend	How much do you know about Freemasonry?
Heather	Not much.
Heather's friend	Bullshit!

I feel like I'm missing parts; but I do remember part of this Freemason `sudo` command involving the Heather-like person lying and *you* having to call them out on it. As if they could only tell you something *once*. I distinctly remember Heather's friend boldly exclaiming the phrase "Bullshit!". I don't remember if it's required to utter *that specific profanity* or not...

High jinks

I had a lot of adventures and close calls while living a double life my senior year. While irrelevant to the story, I *would* like to share some of them.

For my 22nd birthday, Erika set up this playdate for us to go to Bailey's house.

Bailey was a student at Duke at the time. She was one of the few dommes¹⁹ in the area who was my age, so I was excited to see how things went.²⁰

Erika picked me up at Wolf Creek on Friday afternoon, and we drove to Bailey's town house off Duke St. We'd go upstairs to scene, and then go downstairs to unwind for a bit, and for Bailey to have a smoke break. And, we did this a few times.

During one of our breaks, Bailey says

So, Erika tells me you're transgender...

One thing led to another, and, anyway, I found myself getting birthday spankings in a mini skirt.

Erika would often later bring up how much I seemed to enjoy myself in this moment; as if to suggest I might have unresolved feelings about my gender identity. I couldn't help but look to how *hard* I was during all of this as evidence that it probably *was* a sex thing after all.

What else? Erika gave me a collar, and a set of matching bondage cuffs to go with it. I think we went to Cook-Out. We ended up spending the night.

My mother was driving up on Saturday morning to see me for my birthday, so I needed to be back at my apartment before then. We were running on "Erika and Bailey time", and we were not making the return trip as quickly as I'd have liked. I was trying to avoid a situation where I might have to introduce Erika

¹⁹Erika is really a switch; and certainly not a domme in the D/s sense.

²⁰I don't know, because I thought I might actually be a straight guy or something?

to my nosy mother, or explain *why I wasn't home on a Saturday morning to see a-widdle muver for my birthday.*

My mom was leaving Benson. We were on our way to get gas before leaving Durham. This was *close*. A real race condition. Plus, I needed to *shower* and whatnot. I'd be lucky if my mother didn't catch me darting out of a gold Suzuki with a duffel bag like I was storming the beaches of Normandy.

I appeared to just barely beat my mother. I jogged up the stairs and power-walked to my room.

No text messages from Susan, and I didn't see a blue Focus anywhere. Phew.

I. Need. A shower. Susan can wait. She knows where the McDonald's is. I waste no time.

I dried off. I brushed my teeth. I put on some boxer shorts that I'd replaced my childhood tighty whities with after wanting better looking underpants, and probably grabbed some cargo shorts and a band tee or something, as was my uniform in those days.

I checked my phone. Still nothing from Susan. I combed my hair. I took one last look in the mirror that also served as the closet door.

I'm still. Wearing. Eye shadow. It's really obvious. It did *not* come off in the shower.

Fuck.

So, I start scrubbing the *fuck* out of my eyelids with the corner of a bath towel and some hand soap. It's *really* stubborn. Have you ever tried removing makeup without makeup remover? They sell it for a *reason*.

I'm starting to wonder if I even *can* get it off completely. Maybe it's like when you go to the club underage, and you just have to accept you're going to have the ghost of a Sharpie 'X' on your right hand for the next day or two.²¹

Eventually, I succeed. I carefully inspect my eyelids under all available lighting, and I can't find any more obvious signs of makeup. It took me long enough, though.

I take a deep breath and check my phone again. Still nothing from Susan. Surely she's arrived by now?

Anyway, I finally open the door to my room. At long last.

I'm surprised to find my mother sitting at the kitchen table and staring *right at my bedroom door*. That's one question answered.

Do you *always* leave your door unlocked?

Uhh... no... we usually lock it...

Somebody could just *walk right in here*... I'm serious! Has it been open all night?

Uhh... no... I just took out the trash this morning, or something...

There are crazy people out there! You need to be careful!

Okay, we will...

... I bought you those headphones you asked for...

I'm just glad she didn't ask who "Marseille" was.

²¹I got dragged to the club *once*. I don't like the club. Maybe I'd like it more if I were a woman or something.

Erika was a semi-professional photographer. It certainly wasn't her day job, but she did side gigs for people and whatnot. One of these gigs involved the North Carolina Fetish Art Festival.

The door for this thing was at least \$20, and I think more like \$40. Erika was obviously getting in for free, and she managed to get me in as well as her "camera assistant".

The dress code was "fetish attire or all black". I planned to do a blacked-out look with my red collar. I needed to buy new clothes for the occasion and was laughably inexperienced at finding what I was looking for, but I pulled it off. That's, unsurprisingly, not the point of the story.

First of all, I double-booked NCFAF with some big tailgate our apartment had planned, and I didn't realize what I'd done until like a day or two before. It was difficult to back out of *either* obligation, but Erika and I had been planning this for at least six or eight weeks. So I chose... both! This was probably not the greatest idea, but I made it.

I rode along with my roommates to the tailgate lot; but, I *knew* I couldn't stay for the game. So late that morning, I just *walked back* from Carter-Finley to Wolf Creek, took a shower, *maybe even picked up some last-minute article of clothing I was having trouble finding at Belk or some shit*, eventually making it to Holly Springs in time to get ready for NCFAF with Erika.

We disembarked, joking about how we looked like we were on our way to the kinky prom. When we arrived, they gave us special lanyards, as we were considered "staff" or whatever. They didn't have a second "photographer" lanyard, so they gave me one that said "vendor" instead.

I *really did* hold Erika's camera bag for her, and it *really might've* been a two-person job to juggle all of that, in all seriousness. I also bought myself a couple Yuenglings at the bar, so I'm not a *complete* scrub.



Figure 10: Is Towelie the Worst Character Ever? - SOUTH PARK
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiqhvagCy4M&t=59s>)

They didn't seem concerned about collecting the staff lanyards at the end of the night. Erika and I left with both of ours. We drove through Cook-Out on our way back to Holly Springs. It wasn't really a *play party*, but it was fun. Sort of like a mini-PUSH.

Anyway, some amount of time after this, I needed work done on my car. The work included a new muffler; maybe I couldn't pass inspection without it or something.

There was (and still is) this mechanic beside the apartment complex called RJ&G. Unless you're going to have friends drive you around or call an overpriced taxi, this was really the only place to take your car within walking distance for car shit. We were kind of in a weird area between Raleigh and Cary, and I don't think ride-sharing apps had become mainstream yet.

I dropped off my 2001 Mustang at RJ&G for a new muffler, and probably came back in a day or two once they were done.

When I went in to pick up my car, the staff was *unusually* jovial with me. “We bet you *get around* in that Mustang, don’t you! She’s seen some *things*, hasn’t she?” And I’m just like “Sure, whatever.” I pay the bill and they return my keys.

I returned to my car, with two *very obvious* new additions to my floorboards.

- Those paper mats they put down after they vacuum your car.
- A lanyard that says “North Carolina Fetish Art Festival: Photographer”.

#TODO Unfinished but largely irrelevant

A group of us would regularly meet at this woman Dana’s house in Garner, for an even that came to be known as “Ponies”.

I’m... not a bronie. I’d *tell* you if I was at this point. The event’s name came from Erika, Dana, and a small group of folks who actually *did* follow that series as adults; but had since moved toward other media, as a number of the newer attendees weren’t really into that, or were even put off by it. I think we were doing The Walking Dead at the time, and probably Archer and another series or two.

This was a *mostly* vanilla gathering of kinksters, that would sometimes devolve into a kinky gathering of kinksters. This happened *just* often enough that you probably couldn’t bring your vanilla friends along without explaining how we all know each other.

#TODO I'll write more about BDSM eventually, but this is mostly irrelevant.

#TODO Vanilla life senior year

There was this Women and Gender Studies class that was required; certainly of all the *engineering* students, but probably just everyone in general. Josh took it before me and *hated* it.

Being a quasi-transgender subby boy who was thoroughly acclimated to “consent culture” through time spent in the BDSM community, I expected to like the class a bit more than Josh. This, unfortunately, wasn’t really the case, and I found myself bitching about it a lot to Josh throughout the semester.

This was a long time ago, mind you. I feel like one of the problems was that, despite considerable effort to the contrary, it made a lot of assumptions about you and your life as a guy. A big one was that you had *women in your life* (your mom, your girlfriend or ex-girlfriend(s)) to whom you owed *respect*. Because the women in our society are responsible for shit like *emotional labor*.

While this might often hold true for “normal” people, this kind of made me feel icky. Like I still wasn’t wuvving a-widdle muver enough, and I was still being too mean to Emma. As if my mother wasn’t some child trapped in a grown-up’s body, or Emma wasn’t the asshole in our relationship. There didn’t really seem to be a path where a man could conclude that they’ve *had* no healthy women involved in their lives thus far. “Toxic femininity” wasn’t really a concept in this universe, and you’d probably get laughed at *at least* for suggesting that it might actually be a thing sometimes. It was never suggested that all the women in your life might actually have personality disorders; or that if you’re mom has one, you’re likely to subconsciously

look for girlfriends with similar traits until you get therapy for that shit. Now that I'm older, I realize that simply *being Susan's child* is emotionally laborious.

It also often felt like they were seeing patterns where there were none, looking for trouble or misogyny where there really wasn't any; and maybe that they need to remember that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. "Peak feminism" for me may've been this reading assignment, where a woman worked at an ICBM facility with a bunch of dude-bros, and basically accused them of being sex-crazed perverts because they couldn't help but make even the *missiles* penis shaped, while also referring to them with she/her pronouns. I came away feeling like this woman's entire rant was mostly just projection; as if *she'd* had a traumatic life of sexual violence, and really it's just *her* who's seeing dicks all over the place. I'd implore anyone who thinks missiles are simply phallic-shaped because they were designed by men, to major in Aerospace Engineering and tell the world a more aerodynamic shape to construct them in. Of course, the *point* of the reading assignment was to try and illustrate the value of diversity and feminine input into design decisions; as if the missiles would've been shaped like a tulip instead if only it weren't for that pesky glass ceiling keeping all the ladies out of the men's club.

The class wasn't *designed* to be indoctrination; though I often refrained from speaking my mind, because I felt like it wasn't my place. It make me feel like maybe feminism really *has* started to run its course, despite the challenges women still face. I felt like "feminism" was an ironic choice of name for a movement that purports to advance egalitarianism in society and language.

There were points in the class where I cynically thought to myself, "It's not like we're ever going to talk about *trans* women..." But then, toward the end of the semester, we actually *did* have a chapter on trans people. Though you'd think I'd be excited about that, it sort of just felt *weird* and out of place. Like, this is just an *introductory* Women and Gender Studies class. Why

couldn't you just let me sulk quietly about how we aren't talking about people like *me*? I would've gotten over it... Maybe I don't know *what* I want.

Can I place out of WGS210 like I did E115? I was on *Antijen*, you know... (I didn't actually ask this, obviously.)

There was actually an option, for one of the assignments, of either leaving the house dressed like a woman, or doing *some other assignment* instead. Most people chose the latter option; myself included. You might've expected me to jump at the opportunity, but, no... This gender stuff is *very* real to me. It isn't just a game of dress-up to me. It's what I *am* inside; even if what I *am* inside is just some kind of weird pervert. I feel like it'd be an easier assignment for a cis guy with low inhibitions.

I took this analog design class my senior year; and I knew I was going to be bad at it. I was really just into programming and digital logic and shit. It was with this fellow, Dr. Breen I think.²² I remember this because of the Half Life 2 antagonist of the same name.

And, I wasn't that great at it. It was still a pretty neat class, and I remember him being a great professor. It was largely about analog design with field effect, as opposed to bipolar, transistors; something that isn't ideal but is often pragmatically desirable when, for example, an IC might be 95% digital logic and only need a little bit of an analog front end or something. The big project for the class involved designing an op-amp.

²²I wasn't able to find a Dr. Breen of Electrical and Computer Engineering at NC State when I looked, but I swear he's a real dude. I could have the name slightly wrong.



Figure 11: Breencast 02: Instinct (https://youtu.be/u2yhqxyYL UQ?list=PLKs_yEJ-2x5b_ox1Ae1rhihOCPGPpYdZ9)

This class was at like 8:30 a.m., and may’ve even been responsible for my future morning coffee habit. I walked in one morning, probably still a little slow from having a smoke the night before and holding a Dunkin’ Donuts coffee. And I’d guess I was sipping on this coffee and getting ready to stare at a blank page in some multi-subject notebook, when Dr. Breen opened his PowerPoint presentation for the day and the first slide was a *giant goddamn picture of Lynn Conway’s face*.

So, if you were a transsexual (certainly, a trans woman) in the year 2000-something, there were three names you *definitely* knew. They were, in no particular order: Andrea James, Calpernia Addams, and Lynn Conway. They were the face of trans activism throughout the entire decade. I doubt anyone even knows who they *are* today.

My heart skips a beat. I’m probably starting to shake and sweat, and I feel like a spotlight has shone down from the heavens

on *me in particular*. I *really* wished I hadn't come to class today. Some panicked voice in the back of my head questions whether Dr. Breen and his alien benefactors can see right through me.

The left side of my brain starts pulling me together. Nobody knows you're trans. Just... take a deep breath. She was like... a professor at Michigan or some shit. Just, try and...

I mean, I've known who she was since forever. Certainly since before I had to pick between Computer Engineering and Computer Science. And, I really *did* choose that path because I wanted to get into hardware and low-level software stuff, it felt like more of a mystery at that age, I wanted a wider breadth of knowledge after being mostly a tinkerer up to that point... but I'd always been *acutely* aware of the fact that Lynn Conway was an accomplished computer *engineer* in particular. And here I was in this 400-level ECE class, at this point thoroughly expecting never to learn anything *about* Lynn Conway as an undergraduate... and this is shaping up to be more than a mere *mention*. I mean, he didn't have a giant goddamn picture of *Carver Mead's* face anywhere in his presentation...

Okay. So Lynn Conway *might've* been a little bit of a role model growing up. Whatever.

With WGS210 still fresh in my mind, I expected it to be one of *those* lectures. We're going to spend a third of the class talking about transsexuals, or transgender people, or whatever we were in the year 2013, and I needed to *act. Fucking. Natural. Pull it together, Ethan!* You're not really even *transsexual* anymore, remember?

Okay. I think I'm prepared now. Nobody here knows about that little phase I went through in middle and high school... and it's going to stay that way, as long as I can play the straight man. And so I'm braced for the punchline to this lecture that opened with a giant fucking picture of Lynn Conway's face as the title slide, and...

There *wasn't* one. The class was about the lambda design rules.

Not a *single. Goddamn. Thing* about Lynn Conway being one of the foremost trans activists of the 21st century. Except for a brief mention that there had just been a write-up about her *very fascinating* life in IEEE Spectrum, and that we really ought to read it outside of class.

And I was *So. Relieved.*

I might've even walked away feeling a little big for my britches; knowing I was probably the only other person in the room that day who knew her deal.

I distinctly remember telling myself something as I walked back to my car, that always makes me giggle when I think about it. No matter how far I make it in life, no matter how notorious or infamous I might become... I just hope I never find my face blown up in some professor's slide deck as large as Lynn Conway's was that day.

Male phase (2013-2016)

Work (2013-2015)

I officially graduated in August, after taking a class over the summer I had trouble scheduling during the school year. I *really* wanted to get into embedded programming at this point in my life, after having thoroughly enjoyed playing with microcontrollers throughout my college experience.

I landed a job at a small company specializing in embedded cellular IoT devices called CrystalSoft. I told people I wanted to work at a smaller company; and it isn't a lie to say I'm really *not* a ladder climber and just wanted to get my hands dirty working on real things. Though the truth was, I had just shy

of a 3.0 GPA,²³ and didn't really meet the cut for a job at a "real" company like Cisco or IBM unless the job was something like "sales engineering". I knew I'd rather go back to work at the computer store than be a sales engineer at Cisco, and was concerned I'd be pigeonholed into non- or lightly-technical roles after that point. I was optimistic about advice on the internet claiming your GPA really only mattered for your first job, and frankly I didn't have the money for another semester at NC State.

I've often wondered if I'd have made better grades majoring in computer science as opposed to ECE. I think I picked that pathway, largely because it was more of an unknown.²⁴ I'd been playing with Linux for much of my life, but I still didn't really feel comfortable putting a transistor on a breadboard without blindly following a schematic. I think I wanted to increase my breadth of knowledge, but I underestimated how math-heavy EE is. It's probably one of the more math-intensive engineering disciplines, I *really* suck at pure mathematics relative to a lot of other things, and I don't feel like I really even got a sound Calculus education at NC State. Most everyone my age had it in high school, and it seemed obvious that Calc 1 and 2 were taught mostly as a review as opposed to first-time mediocre math students like myself.

I sort of wish there was an "embedded computer science" degree that was ECE 109, 209, 309, 4-whatever-that-embedded-class is, and the normal computer science curriculum; but I didn't really know what I was doing at the time and was too stubborn (and broke, relatively speaking) to change course part-way and be a fifth year senior.

Anyway, I landed this interview on a rainy afternoon over the summer of 2013. I wondered into the office, awkwardly wearing a suit my mother had bought for me at some point in college

²³I think I actually had a 3.0 *rounding up, after including my final grades over the summer.*

²⁴And not because I wanted to be like Lynn Conway.

that was probably the wrong color for an interview. Everyone else in the office was considerably more dressed down, and Kevin cracked some joke about how he'd better not see me dressed that formally again. He handed me a whiteboard marker and told me to write `atoi()` from the C standard library. I produced an optimal implementation of the function on the first try; with only a single minor bug that got the place values backwards, which I found after he had me “debug it” also via whiteboard.

He extended an offer not long after this; which I was inclined to accept, as it entailed embedded programming in C and that's exactly what I wanted to do with my life. I hadn't really found anything else that suited my fancy, and my motivation to keep looking hit an all-time low once I *had* the job.

My lease was up on my college apartment at the end of the summer, and I was able to use my job acceptance as proof of employment to rent a decently-sized townhouse just across I-40 from the office. The rent was \$850/month, and by-god I think it might've been my favorite residence to date, all things considered.

`#note` The level of anonymization of major companies that make things like cellular modules is probably going to sound a little silly to folks familiar with the industry. I'm sticking with it, though.

I started working for Kevin toward the end of August. We had a couple small rooms in this larger suite, and I was placed at a desk next to a window. “Shit... I guess I've *made* it”, I thought.

I wrote a couple drivers integrating cellular modules into our software stack that I'm not sure we ever actually used, before I was placed on my first project. This was the ill-fated OrangeTrack.

By now, I'd learned a decent amount about our software stack, as well as the history of our company. Kevin got his start working for Bay Wireless, and launched the company with

a piece of software he'd written for their ConnectOS platform called CrystalCom. Its purpose was to eliminate the often repetitive task of developing one-off applications to move data from something like an array of sensors to the internet, that would often be flashed onto these modules from vendors like Bay Wireless. To accomplish this, CrystalCom had at its core a system of endpoints and bridges, which could be connected together to move data between subsystems; usually with the goal of communicating with an outside server using CrystalCom's proprietary ASCII- and binary-based protocols.

The idea was that, assuming the server side could cope with any arbitrary format, you could eliminate the need to pay your engineers to develop a whole new application, and simply provision our turnkey solution with AT commands sent over a serial port. You could bridge a meter reader endpoint to a TCP endpoint, for example; or even an ASCII command interpreter to an SMS endpoint to control the software with text messages.

The company started with a reputation for being a "Bay Wireless house", but Kevin had ambitions of porting the software to cellular modules from other vendors; and even to general-purpose microcontrollers, which might communicate with a separate cellular module over a UART. To accomplish this, he hired senior engineer Steve to create OS and cellular module abstraction layers, which respectively came to be known as CrystalOS and CrystalConnect. These were relatively thin but very cleanly designed layers, in contrast to the sprawling and patchwork nature that often characterized CrystalCom development. CrystalOS simply wrapped the native operating system's threading API and provided abstract data structures for things like linked lists and hash tables. CrystalConnect abstracted the AT command parsing and sequencing needed to set up and tear down TCP and UDP network connections with external cellular modules. We didn't include our own TCP/IP stack, in lieu of leveraging the native platform or external cellular module's network stack.

Kevin had since gotten the company acquired by Massachusetts-based DataCorp, a business that seemed to make most of its money selling \$5/month SIM cards for these sorts of little embedded M2M devices that only use a few MB of data a month. He had also since hired senior engineer Dale to work mostly on continuing CrystalCom development (who may've started before Steve for all I know), Colombian-based hardware engineer Miguel to do things like PCB design, and cross-fit dude-bro Brandon to help with shipping and flashing modules.

Which brings us to me. A couple other engineers like Leslie and some other new grad had come and gone, but I didn't really know them all that well, and this document is already long enough without talking about them.

By the time I started, CrystalCom had largely been ported on top of CrystalOS and CrystalConnect; and was now running on the original Bay Wireless hardware via the respective CrystalOS and CrystalConnect drivers, for the most part. One could thenceforth build CrystalCom for Win32, and even debug it with Visual Studio instead of Bay Wireless' proprietary Eclipse-based IDE.

Kevin's vision seemed to be that I would continue extending Steve's porting effort to other platforms, without any shenanigans. This is *not* what happened.

Anyway, Kevin took on as a client a fledgling startup out of Orlando by the name OrangeTrack. Their goal was to sell a GPS tracker in a keyfob-like form factor, that you could attach to your kid or your dog or your backpack to keep from losing it. This was the year 2013 btw, in case some smartass was about to comment on the saturation of the tracking-things-with-GPS market. A differentiating feature seemed to be that the OrangeTrack device had both its own cellular module, and a BLE chip that might be able to detect nearby devices.

Through some series of talks, Kevin managed to convince CTO Joe that CrystalCom was the perfect turnkey solution to power his little device. This was a design decision I would eventually come to disagree with.

Kevin introduced the project to me, as an effort to port CrystalCom onto the ARM Cortex-based STM32. The STM32 would communicate with a ConnectIt-brand GPS module over a UART, for which I think a CrystalConnect driver had already been written by Steve or maybe Leslie. The STM32F2xx series had 128KB of RAM, and something like a megabyte of internal flash ROM. FreeRTOS was to be used for threading, which I think I ended up writing the CrystalOS drivers for, but it's been a while. The hardware specs were a far cry from the reference platform; which had several times the RAM and a much faster CPU. Still, it was figured by Kevin that the goal could be reached by selectively compiling out bits of CrystalCom that we weren't planning on using.

Getting CrystalCom* with some asterisks working on an STM32 dev board by a certain date was Kevin's first ultimatum. And for a while, it felt surprisingly like I was back in embedded systems class. I set up an IAR project, got the thing building, combed through the linker map to get the thing to even fit the BSS section in the 128KB of RAM... I was *thoroughly* excited when I managed to get the dev board to even *boot up* CrystalCom just when I thought I might have to spend a long weekend getting it to work. I managed it by commenting out relatively large swaths of CrystalCom that either wouldn't fit in memory or just wouldn't build with the IAR compiler for some reason. And the margins were still razor-thin; using 90-something of the STM32's 128K of RAM right out of the gate.

One of the asterisks I used in managing to get CrystalCom working on the STM32 was a "fake" CrystalOS registry driver, which always returned a successful result for write requests and a `FILE_NOT_FOUND` result for reads. This obviously meant that this

hacked-together CrystalCom build didn't have a functioning non-volatile memory, and creating one was my next major order of business.

The flash filesystem was... *by far* the most terrifying piece of software I've ever written.

The flash filesystem Developers usually have opinions, and by now the opinions that comprised Kevin's development philosophy were becoming apparent. Kevin's biggest, and maybe only ethos, was

Generalize. *Everything*.

He disparagingly referred to anything that did one thing and did it well as "throwaway code". He really wanted to keep the amount of OrangeTrack-specific development to a minimum; instead hoping to produce a general-purpose CrystalCom port that could run on anybody's STM32F2-series microcontroller, with connectivity provided by any one of our supported CrystalConnect devices. As such, I could make very few assumptions about the geometry of the underlying flash memory device. One of those few assumptions was that I would be writing a filesystem a NOR flash, as opposed to a NAND flash.

```
#note      I wrote a lot more about this filesystem and why it was a bad
idea, but you probably don't care.
```

Two of the first luxury goods I bought myself after graduating from college were

- A Storz and Bickel Volcano
- A Hitachi Magic Wand

The first point was at least partially spurred by the slow failure of my Iolite catalytic butane vaporizer that saw me through the second half of college.

The second point is probably obvious. I was afraid my roommates would hear me using a vibrator through the thin walls, so I made do in ways that often led to uncomfortable chafing. I tried using a fleshlight to deal with this; but I honestly didn't care for the feel, plus it's a lot of hassle.

Kevin asked me if I knew of anyone else who was looking for a job, and I told him

No... not really...

Josh had to get some kind of surgery with his rib cage or something, and this set him behind in job-searching with the rest of our graduating class. Although, he didn't seem as hurried as I was to apply for jobs at the end of his senior year. Probably because he had daddy's money or something.

Josh asked if my company was hiring, to which I replied

Nah, I don't think so... It's a pretty small company anyway. We mostly do embedded C stuff...

Kevin asked a couple more times if I knew anybody, and I said

Eh, I don't know of anyone really.

I didn't really want to cross the streams. That's how I've always handled my private life, and even aspects of my public one.

Josh seemed increasingly desperate, and eventually I hooked the two of them up. Okay...

Kevin interviewed him, and he didn't say much to me about it except

He's *really* green...

And I'm thinking "Well, he just graduated, and he wasn't a Linux kid like I was, so..."

Anyway, he ended up hiring Josh because he *really* wanted somebody working on this other crazy idea of his, which I think basically involved porting CrystalCom to a cellular router device.

Kevin did a few more interviews over the next year or two, and *briefly* hired another engineer who quit after like a month. It seemed simple to me at the time; but he always gave people the same `atoi()` question, and usually got widely different implementations of it, even from much more experienced engineers. He pointed to the whiteboard one day on our way back from lunch, where someone had done it with a fucking case statement. I've always wondered where that leaves me in the grand scheme of things. Sometimes I feel like this is my thing, but I also feel like I'm far too disorganized and unmotivated to ever be a Dale or Steve-sort of person.

I think shortly after the new year, I had a bit of an incident that was likely spurred by my new vaporizer.

You see, I was downstairs hitting the Volcano, and I was pretty high... I decided to go upstairs for some reason, and just as I started to walk up I got lightheaded *really* fast. I immediately had this feeling like I was going to faint, and instinctively opened the front door on my way to the couch so that somebody might find me if I didn't wake up.

I managed to unlock the door, and not much else. I woke up on the floor with a *splitting* headache. Judging by how I landed, I'd guess I hit my head on the corner of the coffee table. The floor was carpet, and I doubt that alone would've caused this severe of a headache. I was disoriented and distressed enough that I called my mom, just so I could have somebody on the phone in case I lost consciousness again.

I might've ended up taking some ibuprofen or something, but I thought myself to have more-or-less recovered from the experience by the next morning.

So, like a week after this happened, shit started getting *really* weird. I didn't feel right *at all*, and I couldn't put my finger on what was wrong with me. I'd go into work and just stare at the screen until lunchtime. I remember us having a meeting in the conference room, and I just felt outright *batty*.

I was convinced something weird was going on with my body, and that I had to figure it out *myself* for some reason. I became paranoid that something strange had made it into my weed. In my infinite wisdom, I went to CVS to buy a blood pressure monitor and a blood glucose testing kit. And once I got to CVS, I couldn't figure out what to buy and just stared at the shelves for what might've been over 30 minutes before something like "We've got a code 400" went over the intercom. Whether or not I had anything to do with it, I wouldn't be surprised if I was acting so *batty* as to arouse suspicion.

I had tinnitus like *crazy*. I didn't even feel like myself. I checked my blood glucose and it was always perfectly normal. My blood pressure was consistently 180 over something. After repeatedly checking the internet and ascertaining that this really was dangerous, I decided to drive to the ER. I got to Rex, told them I'd been feeling *really* weird and that my blood pressure was apparently stupidly high, and they quickly took me back and hooked me up to an EEG which found no abnormalities. I think my blood pressure was only 160 over something when they checked it at the hospital. They ultimately determined that there was no pressing emergency and that I might need to talk to my doctor about blood pressure medication.

I felt *really* paranoid, to the point that I thought I had to hide my cannabis use from the doctors. I didn't think to mention my little fainting episode a week or two prior, which I perceived at the time to be completely unrelated.

I remember after work, driving down Avent Ferry to the intersection at Tryon Rd. And, I was still feeling *really* weird. I was waiting at the light, and suddenly someone started honking.

I couldn't figure out for the life of me what they were honking at, and then a second person started honking. Eventually, I found myself at the white line with a green light, and I had *no idea* how long I'd been there. Anyway, I made my right turn onto Tryon Rd.

It was only with several months, or maybe over a year of hindsight, that I finally had my wits about me enough to diagnose myself with...

... A concussion. I had a *fucking* concussion. They really *do* fuck up your brain. I often think of this experience when I hear about the new protocols in football. I survived it, but *man* was I loopy. For like a whole six or nine months, at the start of this OrangeTrack project. So, like, most of 2014.

By some point in 2014, I was out of the honeymoon phase with this job. My opinion of Kevin started to be that he was a madman who wanted to solve every problem in the industry with one piece of software. A lot of his ideas were met with pushback from Steve and Dale, who as seniors were in more of a position to debate and haggle with him, as opposed to just asking “how high” like I did. This may've been heightened by the fact Steve and Dale worked from home, giving them more of a buffer between Kevin's day-to-day whims than I had.

Exacerbating the problem was the mounting tech debt I'd accrued in meeting Kevin's deadlines. I hadn't yet learned this industry term, and I actually felt *guilty* for having it. Kevin usually wanted to know as soon as I got thing A working so he could get me working on thing B, and I often wasn't as done as I thought I was with thing A when I told him I was there. I was really self-conscious about the hacking I'd had to do to get CrystalCom working at the very beginning, to the point I didn't feel comfortable checking it in. This only led to me getting further bogged down with tricky merges, and inadvertently made

me into a cowboy with this special version of CrystalCom for the STM32 I had to baby. This is something I feel pretty silly about, and I think it was entirely psychological; I don't even think the work I'd done was that bad now that I'm older, but I felt like I had a lot to prove after making mediocre grades in college. I didn't feel like I really had enough time to put my best foot forward, and I didn't want to be judged based on that.

Between Kevin and Joe I was answering to two different masters, and I had to maintain a balance between fighting Joe's fires and keeping Kevin happy by not writing "throwaway code" just for OrangeTrack. The need to implement everything as generic CrystalCom features that could be configured with our extended AT and binary command set drove development to a crawl compared to writing a traditional embedded application, and at times hid useful platform-specific features behind layers of abstraction that needed to be re-worked to expose them in a reusable manner. I fielded a steady stream of issues with my flash filesystem throughout my tenure, gradually eroding my confidence in the 5,000+ line monstrosity. CrystalCom was optimized for neither CPU nor memory, pushing the limits of what was supposed to be a low-power, low-overhead tracking device. Efforts to use lower-power hardware states bore noticeable improvement, but were ultimately lackluster compared to what could've been accomplished with a more streamlined application. I began to wish OrangeTrack could simply be its own application built on top of CrystalOS and CrystalConnect, but this pivot seemed out of the question. Half-jokes about adding an `AT$BLUAZU` command to CrystalCom were generally balked at by Kevin.

Kevin often accused Joe of being a "mad scientist" without a clear direction, whose project would probably fail sooner or later. This started to feel more and more like projection on Kevin's part, as Joe managed to secure more and more rounds of funding for this thing I felt I couldn't keep from moving in the wrong direction. Bearing some sense of responsibility and honor,

I expressed my intent to “go down with the ship” in private lunchtime rants with Josh.

I had a conversation about my growing mystery with Josh at work one day. I think it started when I wore my Red Hot Chili Peppers shirt, and Josh brought up the time we went to that concert. I started going on about how there was *something* different about me that involved Freemasonry, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers... and apparently Terry and Tommy are in on it? I didn't mention the stuff with Heather; either because it slipped my mind, or because I didn't want to explain to Josh who she was. I think it was the latter.

When I left work for the day, this fellow Bill who worked for us as a salesman stopped me near the front desk.

I overheard you talking with Josh this morning about the Freemasons. I know what your problem is!

Okay... I'm listening...

He made it clear that... whatever I *thought* was important... it wasn't. CrystalSoft? Doesn't matter. My career? Doesn't matter. My so-called “life”? Completely irrelevant. *This* was the thing. “Do you like travelling?”, I remember him saying. “... Do you like going places? You don't *belong here*...” If I didn't know any better, I'd say he was shaking in his shoes a bit.

I don't remember if Bill actually used the phrase “blackballed”; but I've come to associate it with this conversation, because it's one of the few things I can confirm Freemasons actually *do*.

Bill suggested the problem had something to do with my *appearance*; or perhaps, my beliefs or lifestyle choices. “Do you have any political signs outside your house?”, he asked. I think he might've also asked if I had any enemies, or if there was anything controversial about me. I thought I was a pretty likable person, if not introverted and a bit hard to relate to.

I'm thinking there *is* one thing that sticks out like a sore thumb: I'm a pot-smoking kinkster. If Freemasonry is the sort of venture where I have to look "normal" or "restrained", or refrain from "unacceptable lifestyle choices" that don't hurt anybody... I don't think it's for me. I don't care how cool it is. If my "lifestyle choices" are problematic, well... fuck you.

While Bill sounded as serious about this as anyone back then... I'm afraid I just didn't crack the case. I started getting the impression that I might have the insurmountable task of winning a popularity contest; something I've never been particularly good at.

Josh and I had both grown frustrated working for Kevin, but Josh was more inclined to do something about it. He got a job at a startup that was making some sort of ill-fated pill dispenser, while I doubled-down on waiting out OrangeTrack and going down with the ship.

I remember August 2015 being a big month. CrystalSoft changed hands from DataCorp to ConnectIt, one of the better cellular module manufacturers.

I lost my dealer from college, and had no other way to score weed. I drank a little more to take the edge off during this time, but not like *drinking*-drinking. It's really never been my vice, and the equivalent of two or three beers after work would have me forgetting about the whole pot thing.

Shortly after that, the acquisition happened and there was notice that we'd be drug tested. That never happened, though. What a month.

So it's September 2015, and I'm now working out of the ConnectIt office in Morrisville. It felt like I could've been done with OrangeTrack a long time ago if I didn't have to make it work with CrystalCom. Josh has come and gone, I don't really *want*

to keep working for Kevin, and morale was at an all-time low. My new commute into Morrisville was considerably elongated, but it still wasn't terrible all things considered. The office was a bit more formal and mostly sales folks, and I felt compelled to dress a bit nicer. The bathrooms kinda sucked, which was a bit of a sticking point because I was picky about bathrooms even back then.

In an ironic twist of events, Joe switched his cellular module from ConnectIt to Data Blocks just as we moved into the new office. We had the dev kit for the new module sent to somebody's home address out of fear Data Blocks would put the kibosh on us. This was a theoretically minor change given we already had CrystalConnect drivers for Data Blocks; but we ended up having some weird problems that were ultimately traced to our test units having some flaky prototype version of the module on it. There was a lot of tense finger-pointing as Joe and I worked to figure out what was wrong with the new boards, and it probably took close to a month for me to definitively prove that the new Data Blocks modules were locking up without our software stack being involved at all.

Though we worked out of the Morrisville office, we were absorbed into this division that actually operates out of Ft. Lauderdale. We were flown down there for a week, and it seemed they'd really like us to think about moving down there eventually if we wanted to stay with the company; no pressure or anything. I'd probably be more enthusiastic about that now; I really felt like I had a life for myself in the Triangle back then, but now I feel I could stand to meet different people and see more of the world.

By now, I wasn't taking the idea of working for ConnectIt long-term all that seriously; despite the fact that they didn't seem like a bad company to work for or anything. I was kinda just sick of Kevin and CrystalCom.

Play (2013-2015)

Erika and I stopped doing things right around the time I graduated. The reasons were multi-faceted; Erika wanted something more serious than I did, with a former roommate and fellow kinkster named Jason. Jason wanted something more monogamous, and didn't really feel comfortable with Erika and I sceneing in even a non-sexual capacity. I respected that; and honestly needed to find something more serious in the long term anyway.

It wasn't too long after I graduated, when I found myself once again at the weekly slosh. Most of them will never be written about; but, this one is different.

I don't recall how, exactly, but somehow we got to talking about UFOs. And it turned out, much of the table "knew the truth about UFOs". Myself and a few others had *no* idea what the fuck was going on, and one person seemed to just be into "UFO conspiracies". But, most of the table seemed to know something I didn't. Like, they seemed serious; and they didn't appear to be in a cult.

I mean; I doubt this really happened *now*. But, I'm leaving all the weird Slaughterhouse-Five shit...

After doing a double take and asking myself "Really? UFOs?", I spoke up. "Wait, does somebody think they know 'the truth about UFOs' or something?" And, *Maureen* of all people answered my question. I'm obviously paraphrasing because my memory isn't that good.

Yeah, lots of people know it. It's really not that big of a deal. It's actually kind of a big joke.

So I'm like *citation needed*; and Maureen asks what everyone believes in, and if anyone "works for the government". Nobody within earshot seemed to be religious. I'm thinking, that's probably not a watertight strategy, but go on...

Maureen then says “the thing”.

So, it’s just reincarnation.

I had a huge lightbulb moment.

Oooooohhhhh. Like *Heather*. She never said anything about *UFOs*...

Now I’m thinking, shit man. What does Heather have to do with UFOs? Does she get abducted by them? Does she fly them? Does she get to meet space aliens? I guess that’s kind of a given, right? I didn’t think it was like *that*. I thought she just remembered a past life on another planet or something. *Dude*.

Of course, I wanted more information; and like all the sketchy fucks who came before, she had little to give. I came away with a few more bullet points.

- Yes, they get to meet space aliens. I think she said that mostly happens “out west” or some shit.
- They’re just different. She made it sound like some people were more open about it than others, but it was generally a private affair.
- You kind of just have to... learn about this stuff from one of the different people, I guess?
- She made the Freemasons sound almost like a joke; like “reincarnation” *was* Freemasonry’s big secret. She said there are *children* who have the equivalent knowledge of a “33rd degree Freemason”.
- At one point, *someone else* at the table told Maureen, in a friendly yet somewhat aggressive tone, that she needed to know “how she knew that”. Maureen responded that she had a friend named something-or-other... who was also from Vega I think? This appeared to satisfy the woman’s query.

- The government doesn't know much about it; or maybe they *do*, but they lack any real control over the phenomenon. She made it sound like maintaining the "appearance of control" to the general public was the government's main concern.
- I think she said something to the effect of the government pulling some kind of "stunt" in the future regarding the UFO phenomenon; but that it would all be bullshit, and we shouldn't trust the mainstream government narrative.

I felt... confusingly behind in this conversation. Like I was the *one* country bumpkin at this table who *didn't* already know "the truth about UFOs". Like, y'all. I grew up in *Bladen County*. I went to *Bladen Lakes Primary School*. I figured maybe it's common knowledge among folks who grew up in the city, with secular parents and whatnot.

At the same time, I felt like I *had* learned something a bit exclusive. Most of my peers from Bladen County probably still go to church unironically; Maureen may not've said "the thing" at all if one of them had been at the table and spoken up.

I went home that night, once again unsure what to do with all this new information. I always figured that if there was something different about me, folks better start explaining it. All I ever get is this dismissive advice to "follow my path" and "seek hidden truths" and "explore mysticism" and shit.

I actually remember this subject coming up *a couple more times* with this group.

#TODO Finish maybe; it doesn't really matter though.

Not too long after I graduated, I was invited to Maureen and Isaac's birthday party. Their birthdays are a few weeks apart, and so they had a combined party at Maureen's house in Ben.

The parking situation was messy. It's been too long for me to remember why I couldn't find anywhere to park on the side of the road *in bum-fuck Ben*; but anyway, I ended up double-parking in the driveway with about a half dozen other people. Lots of people were spending the night; I wasn't *planning* to, but my car got blocked in by someone, and I only put a small amount of effort into finding out who before deciding that "When in Rome..." adage isn't terrible life advice.

I remember looking at my phone that evening and seeing that I didn't have any signal; but I didn't think much of it. It was the weekend.

We all woke up the next morning and were slow to get around. Pancakes were made. A lot of people took showers. I kept looking outside every once in a while, and I was still blocked in. It was *solidly* mid-afternoon before I left.

So, I'm a *little bit* of an introvert. I like going to small parties, but then I like going back home and spending the rest of the weekend recovering. We were already well into Sunday afternoon, and it would be almost dinner time before I got back.

At the same time, I don't get out much; so I *do* like to seize the moment, at least when it's convenient for me. I don't generally have any regrets about seizing this particular moment, though the next part *does* get a little messy.

I unlock the door to my 2001 Ford Mustang. I plug my... I don't know, Samsung Galaxy S4²⁵ into my cassette deck adapter, I put on some music and I take off.

Her house wasn't very far from I-40. It was off a major road, and I didn't need the GPS to get back. I was probably about a mile from the exit, when I heard my text message ringtone go off. I briefly thought to myself "Who's texting me at this hour?!"

²⁵There's a chance it might've been my iPod Classic... But, I think I remember hearing the dings over the stereo.

before realizing “Oh, I just regained cell service. That’s just my mom texting me goodnight like she does.”

Another ding went off. I thought “Huh. I’ll look at it when I get back”.

My phone started *blowing up*. Fuck.

About a half mile from the exit, I pulled off onto a dirt road in a panic. *What the fuck happened while I was away?!*

I’ll tell you what happened while I was away. Sometimes Susan would decide to call me, usually on Saturday nights, to catch up; and I suppose, to see that I was alright. This didn’t happen *every* Saturday night; so it’s not like I viewed it as some obligation I needed to block off on my weekend schedule.

You probably see where this is going. Remember what I said earlier about Susan?

Susan is very high-strung. She’s emotionally volatile, she panics, she’s anxious, she worries about *everything*. She has good days and bad days. Some months it could feel like mostly bad days.

She basically just *assumed the worst*, based on the fact that my phone went straight to voicemail after she tried to call me on Saturday night, and I didn’t have signal again until the middle of Sunday afternoon.

She talked to Josh. So, she knows I was alive when I left work on Friday. That means...

... Something *terrible* must’ve happened to me in the last 24-36 hours!

I got a text message or three from damn near everyone my mom knew to get a hold of; as if they’d get a response if they sent more of them or something. My mother had driven up to Raleigh earlier that day to look for me, and left a note on my door. *I had been missing for less than 24 hours, on a weekend.*

My mother's justification for panic, in this and most similar situations, is that this *never happens*. When a routine gets ingrained in her mind that involves a-widdle Efan; *for example, that she calls me sporadically on Saturday nights when she doesn't have anything going on in her life*, that routine now *can't be disrupted*, or else she'll flip the fuck out like Rainman if you give him underpants that aren't from the K-Mart in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Figure 12: Rain Man (clip5)- The Kmart Underwear (<https://youtu.be/cso7nzw8j0I?t=70>)

I could tell this was going to be a problem early on in college, and thus started “weaning her off”. I didn’t answer the phone right away, even if I could; because if I honest-to-goodness *can’t* or *shouldn’t* for some reason, this woman will *freak the fuck out*.

Weaning is exhausting, though. Sometimes you just want to get it over with before you forget, but you have *got* to get this woman used to you not being around right away. Or else... this shit will happen. I guess I got complacent and answered my phone right away on Saturday night too many times in a row.

I called my mother in a panic and explained that I was okay. I wasn't immediately forthcoming about where I'd been, because I *really* didn't want to explain I'd been hanging out with kinksters. I needed to spend a couple of minutes calming down to understand that *there was no need to tell anyone they were kinksters*.

I have to admit though; at that moment, it must've felt like my mommy "caught me tying myself up" again.

When I got back in Raleigh, my mother was *loaded* with fears about where I'd been. Among them? That I left the country to get a sex change operation and didn't tell anybody.

Toward the middle of the decade, I had grown frustrated by the apparent lack of people to scene with. After getting off to a strong start in college, things seemed to stagnate for me after I graduated. I was seeing the same people at the same events, and I didn't get the impression any of them wanted to top me. To be fair, I rarely asked; but I guess, I want to be wanted, or something? Like, I want someone to have their way with me enthusiastically because they chose to, not because they were bored and I asked nicely. Does that make sense?

This sort of gets at a general dichotomy I had begun to notice between what could be called masculine and feminine submissiveness. Male submissiveness is based around service and humiliation; female submissiveness more on objectification and discipline. I began to realize part of my problem is that I wanted the latter, not the former.

But, the bigger problem was that I didn't really even know *who to ask*. There were maybe a couple prominent dommes with pretty full dance cards. I was starting to think about guys more, but that seemed even harder than finding a domme; although maybe I was counting myself out because I didn't think anyone would *want* to play with me over some cute little rope bunny, and

I rarely took it upon myself to *ask* as guys are so often expected to do.

When I first got into kink, I saw “top” and “bottom” as abstractions of the traditional male and female sexual roles. But, I don’t think that’s accurate anymore. There’s masculine toppiness and feminine toppiness. Masculine submissiveness and feminine submissiveness. In a four quadrant grid, like the political compass or something. Most people don’t have the problem of being the wrong gender in the four quadrant grid, *unless they’re fucking transsexual or some shit*.

As I grew more frustrated, it didn’t so much matter that I wanted the top to make the first move, because there didn’t seem to really even be much of a reserve of queer male tops and straight female tops to awkwardly try and chat up to see if they’ll top me.

My first thought is that I needed to find a *much larger* scene. I planned to start driving to Atlanta and DC on the weekends to explore the respective cities’ kink scenes. This was actually part of the reason I ended up going with GPS and blind spot monitoring on my then-new car.

I never actually *did* this. Maybe it’s because I’m bad at following through on things. Maybe it’s because I’m a lazy pothead. A big part of it is that I started thinking about the numbers. These cities had more people, sure; but their populations weren’t so much larger as to turn a thimble into a kiddie pool; much less a full adult-sized dating pool.

I felt I had a very different problem to solve if I ever wanted to find a sexual partner; whereas normal people needed to solve the “fish in the sea” problem, I needed to solve the “needle in a haystack” problem.

I observed that all extant online dating platforms seemed to be geared toward the former problem, and not the latter.

It was around this time when I grew obsessed with the problem of rape. In particular, I was deeply bothered by the fact that there exists both *rape* and *lonely bottoms and submissives*. To me, the act of rape felt, not only heinous, but also *illogical*. I began to wonder how many men become rapists, simply because they believe no consensual outlet exists for their sexuality. I started hypothesizing that I could put a dent in the rape epidemic *and* get myself a date, if I could only match up the pots with the lids.

The year before the breakdown (2016)

Toward the end of my tenure at CrystalSoft/ConnectIt, there were a lot of things on my mind.

- I was 25 years old. I could maybe get myself tied up and beaten with stuff, but I felt like I was *completely* stuck with regard to my actual sex life.
- I was working on this absolutely hopeless project. I could tell this thing was *never* going to work right unless I could rewrite it as a custom application on top of our software stack, and pay off tech debt incurred from writing shit like the flash filesystem; things Kevin would never let me do. It felt like I was on a sort of death march, where I either needed to quit or wait for the project to fail, and the project wasn't failing quickly enough. Plus, I began feeling guilty that this outside customer of ours kept pouring money into something I didn't really believe in.
- I was *burnt. Out.*
- I wanted to try online dating, but a cursory look made everything seem shitty and gender-y and vanilla.

Really, my core problem was that I wanted to get *fucked*. Or maybe just find a date, but I'd grown to see myself at not a *marriage and family* kind of person; so I'd written off the normal dating pathway as an option for me. I needed to commit to being either a twink or a woman for something to happen, and I'd been too chicken shit to do either.

My death march at work had left me demoralized to the point that I was determined to quit my job sooner rather than later.

Among other systemic problems were that CrystalCom was a bad fit for the OrangeTrack project, and even had a number of design flaws for their use case. Whereas CrystalOS and CrystalConnect would've been useful on their own, having to do everything through CrystalCom felt like building a Rube Goldberg machine. It was slow and inflexible, and the AT and binary commands that had to be generically implemented for each new feature were incredibly tedious to work with. While the intent was for Joe to write his own CrystalCom setup script that he could tweak, in practice I had to write the backend feature *and* figure out the CrystalCom script that would use it in a way that hopefully suited Joe's needs.

There was an additional problem with the “stall flag”, a sort of afterthought with CrystalCom's endpoint system. A limitation was that it was really designed as an abstraction for stream-like transports, like files or TCP sockets. In an effort to support frame-like transports like UDP or SMS messaging, endpoints were given this stall flag, which could work like a sort of “end of file” signal. When an endpoint has its stall flag set, it can't accept any more data until it's receive buffer is empty.

The problem with the stall flag, is that there's no real flow control, so it only works reliably if the frames are being sent slowly enough for the endpoint to handle them. It turned out OrangeTrack was the first customer to actually *use* UDP in CrystalCom, and the fact the endpoint system couldn't actually queue up multiple UDP packets in either the RX or TX direction *really* sucked. There were a lot of server communication problems that ultimately boiled down to this, and all we could do is hack around it. It's been a long time, but I think it was fair to say UDP was basically broken (or at least crippled) in CrystalCom.

One of my last straws, was when the time came to port my little filesystem onto the OrangeTrack SPI flash. Though it sounded like a fun project back in 2013, by now the flash filesystem scared the *shit* out of me. I just didn't have the time to work on tech debt related to it, and frankly I shouldn't have made it at all.

Once we'd written the SPI and I2C subsystems, this seemed easy enough. And, it was. Writing the driver for it may've even been relaxing.

After testing my new driver and briefly scratching my head when it seemed to not work at first, I found that it *did*, in fact, work just perfectly.

The problem, was just that this filesystem was *impossibly* slow over SPI. The fact that reading a file involved traversing a linked list of all the file's stale metadata since the last garbage collection made the filesystem *surprisingly* read-intensive. This was not noticeable with the STM32's internal flash memory, but introduced a deal-breaking amount of latency when the same operations had to be done over a comparatively slow serial bus.

What's frustrating about this, is that early on Steve and I wanted to spend an extra month or more *really* testing this thing; and, Steve's suggestion that we test it with an external SPI flash was shot down by Kevin, who argued that we didn't have time for me to write "throwaway code" before having SPI and I2C as part of CrystalOS and/or CrystalCom.

Adding to the frustration was that Kevin didn't really have a clear picture of how all these layers were supposed to fit together in the end. He fed the project to me as a simple series of steps, but by now I felt like I was assembling a piece of Ikea furniture with really bad instructions. For example, Steve had already *made* a CrystalOS registry subsystem for storing small bits of non-volatile data. The API for it was designed to make it easy

to write a CrystalOS registry driver directly *for* something like a SPI flash with a lot of tiny erase blocks.

However, Kevin wanted to generalize *everything* to the extreme, pushing me to make this highly generalized filesystem that would work for large files, lots of files, and large block sizes. This turned out to be misguided at least; we didn't (and really, *couldn't*) use my filesystem for firmware updates, which was Kevin's main reason for us needing to support large file sizes. The FOTA update bits are *really* low level, and require the firmware image to be in some contiguous space in memory. I ultimately reserved a couple blocks of the STM32's internal flash for this.

So, instead of writing a simple little "throwaway code" registry driver for OrangeTrack's SPI flash, Kevin had me write this overly-complicated thing we didn't need, and it didn't really even work right. I then had to write a CrystalOS registry driver for my flash filesystem, which did the job but just felt awkward. I'm pretty sure Steve and I *both* would've made our respective APIs a bit different if we knew they were supposed to glue together. But really, I think a simple driver for Steve's registry could've been written directly for Joe's SPI flash in a few days.

My earlier resolve to "go down with the ship" had given way to something else. I was nauseated that Joe kept securing more and more rounds of funding for this project I knew was being done the wrong way, and I felt entirely powerless to do anything about it. I was burnt out, and I needed to do something *very* different.

I sent out some job applications, but I didn't really get anywhere before giving myself an ultimatum.

My mother wanted us to go along with my high school English teacher's trip to Europe; which she assured me would be totally normal. I went my senior year without Susan. Anyway, I agreed

to go, and I was *not* taking off work for it. I was just planning not to *have* work by then, one way or another.

I've never actually *told* anyone I quit my job working for Kevin because I wanted to make a dating app that would work for somebody like me and then proceed to use it. I've sometimes made oblique references to this, telling people I wanted to "focus on side projects" or something more entrepreneurial.

To be honest, I just didn't know where else to *go* with what I was. I didn't think I was a woman; and BDSM is fun, but I was obviously still missing something.

I already talked about wanting to drive to Atlanta and DC on the weekends in search of a bigger kink scene. I just wasn't meeting new people as quickly as I had when Erika and I were doing stuff in college. Yeah, I'm shy and socially awkward; but ignoring that, I didn't even really know who to be shy and socially awkward *toward*. I guess I always felt like a bit of an "acquired taste" with the whole quasi-transgender subby boy thing going on, and it seemed like it would be infinitely indispensable to simply have a mere *list* of gay male tops and straight female tops who were looking for, well... *that*.

I did the math in my head, and I figured *sure, there are more people in Atlanta and DC*. But the thing is, there aren't *that* many more people. I could maybe expect the BDSM community to be around 3–4 times the size of the combined Research Triangle-Piedmont Triad area. But, it seemed like that would only increase my prospects from zero to maybe a half dozen or less. I started to feel like there was a deeper problem to solve, and I couldn't help but feel like there are others like me out there *somewhere*.

I saw that people like me have a very different dating problem from normal folks. Whereas ordinary people need to solve the "fish in the sea" problem, I needed to solve the "needle in a haystack" problem. I concluded that this was a gap left by

seemingly all extant dating sites; and that I would have to bridge this gap if I ever wanted to find someone I was compatible with.

In figuring out how to approach this thing, my biggest problem seemed to be my energy level. After writing code for Kevin all day, it was usually the *last* thing I wanted to do once I got home. And if I *was* going to do that, I'd probably feel guilty for not just working on the insurmountable tech debt I'd accrued at my job. I eventually decided that I wanted to do anything *other* than software development as my day job, with the hope that I would have more energy and motivation for side projects during my off hours. I just wasn't happy, and I didn't think anybody would ever notice my talent or pay me what I was worth working for somebody like Kevin.

An obvious pivot in my mind was to get Cisco certs and be a network engineer. I thought about getting a CCNA (and, I have no doubt that I *could* do this), but this seemed a little too time-consuming for the timescale at which I now wanted to escape this job. I was going off to Europe for like two weeks in March, and I did *not* tell Kevin about this.

I wasn't getting anywhere with job applications; probably because I was getting filtered out for being over-qualified for a lot of IT work. Realizing this, I decided to make a "dumbed-down" resume that downplayed my software development experience.

Aiding this effort, I decided to get one CompTIA certification every weekend for the next few weeks; getting my A+/Network+/Security+ all in the same month with zero studying. I figured I might go back for the CCNA eventually; but I could tell I'd need to do at least a *little* studying for that one given my lack of experience with IOS.

I gave Kevin two weeks notice at some point in February, with 20k in savings and no solid prospects.

I was a finalist for a job working for a company off Duke St. that did multimedia installations, but they wound up going with the other guy. I think the tie-breaker question was

How afraid of heights are you?

They did work for Duke Chapel, and this sometimes involved going *really* high up on ladders and scissor lifts and shit. I was like “eh... maybe a *20-foot ladder* or something...”.

In between quitting my job and going off to Europe, I had an interview with a small IT company out of Chapel Hill called Synapse IT. It was a simple job, but I *really* liked the atmosphere. I walked into their warmly-lit office and met the soft-spoken husband and wife team that manages the business, along with their lead tech Justin. I thought to myself

This is *it*.

We really seemed to like each other, and I came away feeling like I had a pretty good chance at getting the job.

The trip to Europe was... eh. I came away telling myself that I *never* wanted to spend ten consecutive days with Susan again. I’m not really a fan of tour groups in general, and going back with this younger high school class I didn’t really have any connection to just felt a little weird. I wished I had just saved my money.

I got a formal job offer from Synapse IT while I was in Europe; however, I didn’t tell Susan just yet. She didn’t know I even *quit* my job, and I just didn’t want to deal with... *her*. She quickly found out through Josh and was all like “WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL ME???”

I took a 30k/year pay cut to run away to Chapel Hill and fix computers; and I *never regretted a moment of it*.

I remember they wanted me to shadow Justin on a Friday for a little bit, which I think happened shortly after I got back. Friday morning was when they would go over all their outstanding issues, and they tried to keep the rest of the day open to tie up loose ends from earlier in the week. I went around town with Justin, checking on servers and I think replacing a UPS battery and a mini-switch along the way. And it was

Sooo chill. Like, this shit is *relaxing* to me, dude. I mean, *that's* what it was always about for me. Love what you do and you'll never work a day in your life, or whatever. I'm no ladder climber. I'm actually kind of a slacker, and I don't really like doing homework. I dick around with this stuff for *fun*, and I don't want my computer-related job to stress me out.

Around the spring of 2016, I was invited to a party at Erika and Jason's apartment in Knightdale. Heather was there. I hadn't really seen her much the last couple of years, since Erika and I stopped doing things.

We started playing Rockband at one point in the evening. They had the whole set with the drums and shit, so that was cool.

At one point, some dude I didn't know played Can't Stop by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Heather started snickering about it with me.

I love knowing what this song's *actually* about...

(beat)

Wait; what do you mean?

Well, you know where I'm from, right?

I thought to myself "uhh, like Ohio or something?..." before *my life started flashing before my eyes*.

Oooooohhhhh. The *thing*. Heather's from *Vega*, or *Lyra* or wherever.

Shit. What was that thing with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and the Freemasons, and the, uh...

You figure out where you're from yet?

Well, I figured out where *Anthony Kiedis* is from... I guess?

Oh... look, I'm not...

She told me I was going to be cool in the future, but I wasn't ready yet.

Then, I'll be damned if she didn't say she had *a vision* of us all going to a concert in a few years; which I presumed to be a Red Hot Chili Peppers concert. My memory isn't perfect. "Now you're starting to sound like that crazy old man Tommy Warren!", I said.

I'm pretty sure I asked, like always, if there was anything I should actually be *doing*. And, I'm pretty sure I got the same sort of dismissive "follow your path, you'll get there someday" advice that I always get from these sketchy fucking people.

In the latter half of 2016, and shortly after moving to Chapel Hill to shorten my lengthy commute from highway 86 to Gorman St, I experienced what might've been a minor version of what started happening to me a few years ago.

After losing my dealer back in August 2015, I managed to find weed for the last nine months of the year. I couldn't say if this is related, but I suppose I ought to mention it.

Aliens. I don't know *what* got into me; but I had this overpowering sensation, for maybe several months, that space aliens (for lack of a better word) were involved in my life. And, they wanted to tell me... nothing, really. Except that they existed, they were around, and they thought I should know that.

I had to get all four of my impacted wisdom teeth extracted in my mid-twenties some time before the ConnectIt acquisition; and while high on Percocet and flipping through cable television channels,²⁶ I managed to find Ancient Aliens; a show I tended to *avoid*, out of some combination of my love for hard science, and perhaps some overall cringe factor. The mildly-intoxicated state I was in led to me making slightly different decisions, as I belly-laughed at the announcer who incredulously posed the pre-commercial break question "Could the moon... be *hollow*?!"

This began the start of a months-long tradition, where I would go out of my way to watch new and old episodes of Ancient Aliens *in the most ironic way possible*, in search of that same feeling I had the first time; usually while under the influence of cannabis or alcohol.

For the more skeptical-minded person who might want for a more plausible explanation for my late-2016 experiences, I suppose I could float the combination of Ancient Aliens and the end of a nine-month-long cannabis dry spell as one possibility.

It may've started when an ostensible Ancient Aliens fact actually managed to catch my attention enough, that I now needed to look something up on my phone independently. I also had that weird experience with Heather a month or two before this happened to me.

It's been a while, but I didn't really get into weird shit on the internet or anything; except for maybe that very early stage where something piqued my interest. And, I didn't have this feeling like I was special, or in danger, or like anything big was

²⁶I still had cable television lmao

about to happen on planet Earth. Again; it just felt like aliens were involved in my life at a distance, they were watching me, they were around in the craziest of places when you'd least expect it... and they just want me to know that they're *there*.

I looked up at the night sky a lot, but I never saw anything. I remember wondering if some of the strangers I encountered in my day-to-day life might know more, or even be aliens themselves. I only remember it spooking me out a little at first, really.

This phase ended sometime around late December; after which I kind of just assumed I maybe went a little nuts and decided to bury the whole thing. I coincidentally stopped using cannabis again around the same time; and didn't start smoking heavily again until late 2020.

Although I remember that weird exchange with Heather earlier in the year *now*, I don't think I even *thought* about her during this weird "alien whisperer" phase later in 2016.

I quickly assimilated at my new job, and really liked it despite the lower pay. There were a lot of good things about the job, really. I drove around town a lot, and I think the changes in scenery really helped my brain context switch. I like how IT work is more episodic and chunked smaller; although I like software development, I feel like I often get stuck with large multistep projects that take weeks or months to complete. I liked how I could keep checking off the list with IT work; and I always went home feeling like I made progress and earned my pay. That often wasn't the case with software development, where I'd sometimes go home feeling like I accomplished nothing that day and basically committed wage theft.

I'm probably just being hard on myself, though. Programming can be like that sometimes.

I quickly learned through our Friday meetings that Synapse did IT work for Mobile Development. I actually had to go to their website, because I figured it's a generic-sounding enough name that there might be two companies called "Mobile Development", but... no, there's only one MobileDev.

Mobile Development was, in a lot of ways, a direct competitor to CrystalSoft. I'd liken the relationship between the two companies as that of Black Mesa to Aperture Science. I immediately grew wary I'd be accused of corporate espionage, and told Justin I'd rather stay away from MobileDev if I can.

Despite them mostly being Justin's customer, I *did* need to go to MobileDev on occasion; where I'd often find the engineers using Steve's CrystalTerminal application, a quite-good replacement for the no-longer-extant Windows HyperTerminal.

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#TODO I could write more about my time at Synapse IT, but it doesn't  
matter right now.
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Transition (2016-2019)

That escalated quickly (2017)

Q1

January was a crazy month for me.

I had wanted to curl up and die ever since trans issues exploded with Caitlyn Jenner coming out. Even at this point, I think I identified as "a little trans but not trans enough"; I knew *something* was different about me, and I was sort of in denial about how serious it was.

It seemed like nobody quite “got” what being trans actually *was*, and all I could see were these two sides talking past each other. The conservatives were getting off to cringe compilations of college students with unnatural hair colors saying there were “twelve genders”, and in response their adversaries accused them of being insensitive ignorant bigots like always; often implicitly taking the side of the aforementioned blue-haired college SJW without modification.

It reminded me *so* much of the sensationalization of my own coming out in high school. There’s this sort of incredulity from a certain percentage of folks who find out. They *really* want to pick you apart; and you *really* don’t want to talk about how you used to masturbate in mom’s lingerie. People don’t treat you the same anymore, whether you tell them everything or pull back like I did. There’s a lot of conflation of terms with intersex people, “hermaphrodites”, drag queens and crossdressers... it was like they didn’t understand the sort of stuff *I* started to grasp within the first couple weeks of figuring out what I was. And that’s understandable, because it’s a niche subject; but, now you have to take on the somewhat condescending role of educating your friends about this new “transsexual” thing, just like when you have to educate them about ham radios, or Linux, or “spoofing the mac”, or any of your other special snowflakey bullshit. Nobody seemed to be listening to people like *me*, or what I saw as the classic transsexual advocates of the early 2000s. There was suddenly all this side-talk about what it is we *really* are, as if we weren’t in the room. And, nobody seemed to know the difference between a transsexual and a transvestite and a transgender person anymore. There’s this exhausting feeling of realizing neither liberals *nor* conservatives will ever understand you; but at least liberals are nice to you. Your life turns into a sort of joke, and a collection of quips and soundbites. It’s a dehumanizing experience.

So, I watch this tired old pattern unfold in the mid 2010s, where the two behemoths battle each other for control over society,

while nobody seems to understand the small group of people who the fighting's really about.

I was growing increasingly anxious at the election of Donald Trump. My earlier belief that he had adopted his present persona as a publicity stunt was yielding to the understanding that he seemed to be an honest to goodness modern day demagogue, with sketchy as fuck business dealings all over the place. It seemed his rise to power was fueled by anger about how there are now “12 genders” and you can “identify as” anything, and liberals want to take away your free speech and force you to use “pronouns”; when *nobody on Antijen ever talked about there being more than two genders*, and it's a *complete* misunderstanding of the issue to think this is about pronouns or “identifying as” anything. *It never even occurred to me that I could be “psychologically a girl inside” before I found the internet, and I was surprised at how warm and fuzzy being referred to as a woman by strangers made me feel.*

In other words; the Republican complains about the blue-haired SJW who yells at the shop clerk for “assuming zer's gender”; the Democrat scolds the Republican for being insensitive and the shop owner for not offering diversity training; and the transsexual just has a birth defect that makes them *really* like taking estrogen and wearing women's clothing, and kind of just wants to be left alone. The “blue-haired SJW” is nothing more than a red (or perhaps, *blue*) herring; who would appear to be more properly described as a “product of the 21st century”, and who would seem to lack the underlying medical condition shared by the trans men and women who comprised Auntie's mailing list in decades past.

Perhaps the biggest upheaval of the 2010s was this sort of culture war between two factions of the transgender community.

One side was accused of harboring “transtrenders” who wore their gender identity as a fashion statement. They were branded by detractors as thinking themselves “too cute to be cis”; akin to the “college lesbian” trope of decades past.

The accusation levied against the other was that of *gatekeeping*; a sort of age-old dirty word in the transsexual community, traditionally used to refer to people like *that endo who expects you not to show up to your appointment wearing jeans*. They lobbed insults like “truescum” back at those who would accuse them of being “too cute” for their gender.

It reminded me of how I felt when Jacob said he met a pansexual who thinks there are twelve genders. Or, when I went to the last Debauchery in 2015 and there were suddenly a *suspicious* number of AFAB people with aggressive pronouns. I... kind of *did* think some of them were too cute to be cis. They *certainly* didn’t have the same “childhood crossdressing syndrome” I had growing up.

I really felt like *everyone* on both sides of the aisle was losing their goddamn minds, and lacked some sort of perspective *I alone* seemed to possess. For about a month, I fancied myself a blogger on a quixotic mission to restore sanity to the confused masses, as the seemingly lone tranny who actually *remembers* what the pre-2010 transgender community was like.

I started writing a couple of things, but I didn’t get far before I decided I needed to take a step back and absorb this “second wave” transgender community which I’d been mostly out of the loop on; particularly as I got the impression I was on the wrong side of history.

It was during this culture war, when the terminology shift between the words “transsexual” and “transgender” occurred. *Transsexual* became increasingly associated with the gatekeepy, true-scummy, “transmedicalist” position; though the archaic,

non-politically charged meaning of the term hasn't fallen *entirely* out of use as of 2024.

There's an old joke in the trans community. I don't know *how* old it is, but it's certainly from well before *my* time.

Q: What's the difference between a transvestite and a transsexual?

A: Two years.

A couple different interpretations could variously be ascribed to this quip.

- That it takes about two years for hormones to really start working; and to make it through the gatekeeping of the traditional "real life test".
- That transvestism is really just a slippery slope to doing it 24/7; that, perhaps, a large number of "transvestites" just haven't come to terms with how much they *really* want to be women yet.

The second interpretation always hinted that the hierarchy of the old guard "transgender umbrella" might be kind of bullshit; even when it *did* seem like there could be different types of us sometimes.

I was beginning to think this neo-transgender community might be the ultimate embodiment of the cynical reality conveyed by this joke; that perhaps, the only difference between the transsexual community and the transgender community was a couple decades. People who take hormones, get SRS and live as the "opposite sex" have often simply identified as "transgender" after the year 2015; avoiding the negative stigma both of being a "something-sexual" to laypeople, and of being gatekeepy truescum to folks in the community who might view "transsexual" as a sort of dog whistle.

The pinnacle of this culture war may've been when renowned trans man and baby boomer Buck Angel declared himself to be "transsexual, not transgender" on social media; sparking outrage from millennials and gen Z, who accused him of crimes ranging from transmedicalism to enbyphobia. At the time, I thought this was a problem of mutual incomprehension on the part of both sides. Now that I'm older, I'd like to think he knew what he was doing.

On Sunday, January 29th, 2017, I cracked. I knew I had to do it. In a daze, I drove an aimless loop around Durham. I had reached... *that* point. I always wondered if I ever would. I always wondered if I would be a pot smoking subby boy forever. Most people have a plan for what their future will look like. I didn't know. I couldn't see anything there for a while.

The next couple weeks were a blur. I'd come home straight from work, sit in bed with my laptop, a writing surface and a ream of printer paper, and think there until I fell asleep. I was lost in a sort of web of ideas, writing down and following up on anything I could think of. I tried to consider everything. I played my own devil's advocate. I later hole-punched the pages into a document I call "the Purple Book".

I always *wanted* to do it, really; but, I just didn't think I could stomach the gatekeeping and the hostility. My high school experience was bad enough. The idea of being held to some regimen where I couldn't get meds without continuing an RLE where I very much *didn't pass* was terrifying when I was younger; but if I could just *take estrogen* for shits and giggles and see how things go from there...

It was just *too* easy not to. You could just... *get* HRT on an informed consent basis now. And what was I, waiting to move to a more liberal city? I had already just moved to Chapel Hill.

I wasn't planning to get any younger or move to San Francisco, so this was kinda *it*.

By some point in March, I knew for sure that I wanted to call a doctor. I was too chicken shit for like a couple of weeks, but then I did it.

Orange health, maybe? They were *pretty* booked up. I was referred to Triangle Comprehensive Care, who was able to get me an appointment with Dr. Meier in three weeks.

Somewhere in the midst of this... epiphany... I kinda just started taking my spiro again. I still had it from high school. It expired in like 2010 or something, but I figured it was still good. I actually have *one* pill left or so, after using it multiple times as an emergency reserve over the years.

Q2

I went to my first appointment with Dr. Meier on Thursday, April 13th. After briefly debating it, I decided to be completely honest about my medical history; just started taking DIY spiro again, history of cannabis use but recently quit and am now back on the path to transitioning like when I was younger. I was surprised to get a prescription the same day, but the fact that I was DIY probably greased the wheels a bit.

I booked an appointment for cryopreservation the same day. I had a hard time without being able to bring my Hitachi;²⁷ but I made it work... eventually. I stuffed a tube sock in my pocket so I at least wouldn't have to "grip it".

I was prescribed patches, I think out of Dr. Meier's concern over my family history of heart disease. I put my first one on that night.

²⁷Well... I didn't bother to ask, really.

I told her I briefly took Zoloft in middle school and was diagnosed with “depression”, and she *really* wanted me to be in therapy because of that. I eventually started seeing a woman named Vickie Carter for counselling after folks kept badgering me about it. I do feel a little dumb for even bringing it up, because I *know* it was a bullshit diagnosis.

Various external forces were encouraging me to seek some sense of community and to create a support network or what the fuck ever, and so I started looking into groups at the local LGBT centers.

I think the first one I went to was TT, or the Trans Talk group. When I first arrived there was one other trans woman waiting at the table, occupying herself with a book of crosswords or Sudoku or something. I started to wonder if it would just be the two of us awkwardly sitting there, when a handful of other people trickled in.

I think Lauren wasn’t able to make it this time, but there were a couple faces that would become familiar.

Lauren The usual group leader. An early transitioner, disowned by her parents and previously homeless, OG, cis-passing, truetrans as *fuck* (not that I’m gatekeeping anyone).

Samantha A software developer who was a couple of years older than me and just getting started. She had already gotten laser and was about to go full-time, despite us having both just started HRT. We went on to become good friends. She often ran the group when Lauren couldn’t make it, and eventually took over once Lauren stepped down.

Michelle The first person I met there. Quiet and didn’t talk much; I never got to know her very well.

Julie An older transitioner but really cool. It seemed like she had one rough family situation after another in a prior life; she was also working as a developer or DBA or something.

There were two other people there who were non-binary; an AFAB genderfluid person, and an AMAB they/them. Neither of them were pursuing medical transition, save for the latter person getting hair removal on their face.

I never got to know the two enbies very well; they split off a separate non-binary group later that year.

Another group I started going to was facilitated by a transmasculine fellow named Rory. There were a few marked differences between Rory's group and TT.

- Rory's group was significantly larger *at first*.
- The demographics of Rory's were more varied between 18-50+; whereas TT was skewed mostly toward millennials, and later zoomers.
- Rory's had a two-hour runtime, with heavier discussion and a circular seating pattern that made it feel a little like group therapy. TT only ran for sixty to ninety minutes, was usually less serious, and used a longtable seating layout that somehow made it feel different.
- TT also met earlier, which often led to the group getting food or drinks afterward. Rory's group ran from 8-10 on Wednesdays, eliminating any possibility of the now-hazy eyed dozen or two of us putting on any sort of an after party.

There was briefly this third group called "trans_irl", run by a trans woman named Regina. This lacked any formal discussion at all, and was just trans people going out on the town sporadically.

There are other groups in the area; but I won't bother to talk about them, because I've never been.

Q3

There were a lot of reasons I was thinking about buying a house.

- You don't accrue home equity every month as a renter.
- Landlords were often nosy. I had stopped using cannabis *for now*, but was annoyed by the lack of privacy often afforded to rental properties; particularly at the complex I was presently living in, who would send maintenance in with 1-2 days notice to *change the furnace filter*, or *replace the smoke detector batteries*.
- I was legitimately concerned at this point in my life by my future ability to "pass", and how that might affect my ability to buy real property in the future.

I started taking the idea of getting a realtor more seriously as the year went on; and ultimately went on to buy a house.

#TODO This doesn't matter

I found myself unexpectedly in love with HRT at every turn. I shaved off my body hair, and it stopped growing in as thick. I smelled different, and my hair and skin was way less oily. It takes a while to grow breasts, but I was getting there.

The body hair. I couldn't believe it. I was like, I'm *never* going to look that way again. I think I just let it get to my head when I was younger that "real men" didn't shave their body hair, and it became part of my mask. Ugh.

I was surprised, maybe even a bit pleasantly, that my urge to look at porn evaporated after I started HRT. Don't get me wrong; I was still into the *exact* same shit, and got off simply by fantasizing about it in my head. Based on my past experiences, I began to feel I'd unfairly characterized myself as a pervert when I was simply a young trans woman on testosterone. Any weird sex

stuff surrounding women's clothing had long since evaporated, and I felt *immensely* better.

Q4

#TODO Probably nothing important

The magic year (2018)

Q1

I closed on my house in late January or early February.

Around this time, Regina and Samantha started dating. This took me by surprise, as there had never been any crossover between the two respective groups. I think they met online or something.

#TODO It doesn't matter

Q2

In April, I left the house in something resembling girl mode for the first time. I went to Atomic Empire with a small group of us from the aforementioned group `trans_irl`; after which we went downtown for drinks, ending the night at Arcana. It felt good to finally have *that* out of the way.

This quickly became a habit. What started as one of my bigger fears soon became something I actually *looked forward* to doing after work, once it became obvious the *vast* majority of people don't. Give. A *fuck* how you're dressed in a modern American city.

I was in the car with a coworker one day after having come out at work, when he asked the most innocent question.

So, how are you planning to date after you transition?

I hadn't really thought about this before. I never figured out how to date *before* I transitioned. My sexuality is pretty different from most guys, and I saw transition as something that could only help me in that regard. I think he was projecting normal male sexuality onto me; I figured this might be a common point of confusion.

Q3

I heard a group from the Triangle was driving up to the Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference.²⁸ I had heard about it, and it was something that sounded cool to go to *with other people* someday.

The trip was headed up by Leslie, who I'd never met before; she has a difficult work schedule. Sarah Anderson was also instrumental in helping out; who I'd also never met because we were in different groups I suppose. She was actively involved with a different event, which I didn't know about at the time because it was on Facebook and I am not.

The trip was a blast. We took two vans; Leslie's minivan and a rental. We loaded most of our baggage into the minivan, with most folks riding in the other vehicle that looked like an unmarked church van. I volunteered to help drive, and took turns driving the minivan with another trans woman I'd never met. Maybe I'll remember her name eventually.

After a day's journey, we arrived at our AirBnB; a three-story loft in Philadelphia's Gayborhood, about a fifteen-minute walk south of the convention center.

²⁸This was called the "Philadelphia Trans *Health* Conference" until fairly recently.

I made a lot of new friends. Sarah, Brittany, Stacey... I didn't actually *know* any of the people on this trip, despite going to TT and Rory's group regularly for the past year.

Stacey was an internet acquaintance of Samantha. Samantha messaged me, saying Stacey was at Philly and didn't have anyone to hang out with. Our group sort of adopted her for much of the stay.

By the end of the conference, Brittany had developed a crush on Stacey, and they began a long-distance relationship with Stacey still living in Delaware.

One evening when we were back at our AirBnB playing cards,²⁹ some of us started talking about how we first figured out we were trans. Brittany's story went something like this.

I was laying in bed one evening, when the thought occurred to me: I think I might be transgender. It was really late, but I texted my best friend. My friend called me right away, and she found an online quiz and started asking me questions from it.

She went on to re-analyze elements of her prior life: how much she enjoyed going to school in drag one day, her history of bisexuality and fabulousness... ultimately landing at the realization that she was trans, and should pursue medical transition.

I didn't bother to scrutinize Brittany's story. It wasn't *Q1 2017* anymore. I didn't like all the infighting that resulted from the explosion of trans issues in the 2010s. All that mattered to me was that we were all here, now; taking hormones, getting surgeries... doing *the thing*. I really wanted to believe that it was just *our moment in history*; that the world was always full of people like me who really wanted to do it, but society and medicine *just wasn't there yet*.

²⁹It was some unusual spades-like game that Brittany brought from Michigan.

The same woman and I drove the minivan back to Durham. It was just the two of us, so we had a lot of private time to ourselves.

This chick was OG, pre-Tumblr. We laughed about how much things have changed, and how you can't say words like "transsexual" and "GG" anymore. After some initial caution, she opened up to me about two of her concerns.

- She wasn't so sure about all these "non-binary" people.
- She didn't think Brittany was *really* transsexual.

I talked to her about how my feelings had evolved over the last couple of years. This seemed to make her feel better.

Shortly before or after Philly, I started wading into the local BDSM scene again. I started to figure my *real* problem might've been my gender incongruence, and that maybe I should actually try *being* the rope bunny I always wanted to be; instead of trying to make things work as a subby boy, which it turns out isn't really the same thing at all.

Somewhat inexplicably, Regina broke up with Samantha. Samantha seemed to have a hard time with this. Regina had recently met her family; it happened shortly after the three of us went out for drinks with Samantha's brother, who flew helicopters for the Navy.

Sailor Jack The four of us went to Arcana, where Samantha's brother bought drinks for everyone and encouraged us to drink heavily.

So, Samantha's brother. I guess everyone in the Navy's a "sailor", but that's a bit of a misnomer because he's really a helicopter pilot. He couldn't tell us *much* about what he did, but I *do* remember him mentioning that it involved, of all things, *UFOs*.

In an extension of this conversation that seemed related to that last point, I remember us briefly talking about spiritual beliefs. I don't really remember enough to say much more about it. We talked about lots of other inconsequential stuff, and got way too drunk.

We all slept at Samantha's house. I was in no shape to go home, which was anticipated. Me, Regina and Samantha slept in Samantha's room, while Samantha's brother slept in the guest room.

Regina broke down crying in Samantha's bathroom. Like, the *floodgates*. She hasn't talked about most of what was going on with her with Samantha, yet. I remember she said she felt like she "didn't belong anywhere". There was a lot more going on than that, though. We were all *very* drunk.

I got sick, and was still throwing up and browning out in the bathroom the next morning. I felt like I was *very* dehydrated. The low alcohol tolerance seems to be a side effect of my medication, and it's gotten me in trouble a couple other times; I'm guessing it's the spironolactone, since that's the one that gets metabolized by your liver (I think).

Regina and I weren't able to drive until solidly mid-afternoon the next day. We had since procured some drinks and snacks to nurse our hangovers.

I went to Durham Pride in September; this was my first time going. My mother had never been to a pride parade before and really wanted to go, so I obliged. I had a decent enough time, but it's always a drag going to something like that with your mom; she's physically slow, can't hold her bladder very well, wants to do things I don't really care about, somehow makes me feel like a child and a caretaker all at the same time, and generally mom-blocks you from spending time with your *actual* friends.

Whatever. Pride was cool. Around this time, Susan also accompanied me to the LGBT center once or twice, and managed to become Facebook friends with Brittany. I didn't exactly feel comfortable with this; Brittany wasn't the sort of friend I'd "take home to mom". My younger self would've protested loudly, but I gave fewer fucks now that I was older. It's not like I'm dependent on Susan; if anything, it's quite the opposite.

Q4

I had grown more confident leaving the house in girl mode, and did it every chance I got. I set a goal of going full time by the end of the year, and had a running joke of saying "December 31st, 2018" to my new friends whenever it came up. It was starting to feel a little silly, as some of them started HRT after me and were *already* full-time.

Brittany's long-distance relationship with Samantha's friend Stacey continued. This morphed into a sort of love triangle, when Samantha and Brittany began seeing each other. This arrangement gradually shifted into a more equilaterally polyamorous structure over the following months.

Stacey made increasingly frequent trips to Durham, and quickly started making plans to move to the area. She was living in northern Delaware at the time, working for Amazon, and I think maybe even still living with her parents. She was hoping to transfer to a new Amazon warehouse that was opening in the area.

It's Rachael now, dammit (2019)

Q1

I went full-time just before the new year and never looked back.

I really felt like I was getting my shit together, in 2019. I was starting to explore the BDSM scene again as myself, I had done the thing at work, I had all of these new friends... I felt like if I could actually get an intimate partner and get my career back on track, I'd be set.

By now, Brittany and Samantha had picked up that I was a kinkster. It wasn't something I historically went out of my way to evangelize, but I had stopped going out of my way to hide it around friends; particularly in light of how pervasive the trope of the transfeminine tech worker as a submissive had become. It felt a bit like hiding that one was a gay hairdresser who liked roller derby.

I'm afraid I piqued Brittany's interest when I took off an outer layer at Samantha's house, inadvertently revealing marks from a day or two ago. Samantha already knew at that point, and we had actually gone to a thing together a few months prior.

I took Brittany to her first play party early in the year; it turns out she really likes needles. It's fun to watch, but it's not really my kink. She also *really* likes lemons for aftercare.³⁰

Around this time, it was brought up in a conversation with Samantha that Stacey was plural. This meant that she had the feeling of having multiple parts, or perhaps crudely, "people" in her head. I thought this sounded pretty weird, but I'm open-minded. She always seemed cool.

Q2

I wanted to take more of a "divide and conquer" approach toward my intimate life, or lack thereof. I felt I was making no progress toward any sort of long term relationship, and started to think I

³⁰We've stopped by the 24-hour Harris Teeter on the way back at least once.

needed to be way less persnickety and way more open-minded. I've never exactly felt like I was on the right side of the supply and demand curve for getting my sexual needs met. I chose to start thinking about the search for a sexual partner and the search for a nesting partner as two separate issues. I had long since given up on anything traditional or conventional, and mostly just wanted to be less lonely.

At the same time, I was cautiously optimistic about how things might be different now that I was living life as a woman. I hoped I had found (or maybe rediscovered) the special sauce, whose absence had held me back since I'd first ventured into the kink scene some eight years ago.

It felt like the world was my oyster; again, finally, for maybe the first time since I graduated from college. I started taking the idea of looking for a new job more seriously.

I had pivoted away from any aspirations of starting a "side project". I was content with being a middle class, workaday tech person with a steady supply of sex and snuggles from *somewhere*. I was nearing age 30; I never really had the energy level to do much of anything cool in addition to working a full-time job, and I needed to pick my battles when it came to life goals. A lot of my friends had been married, or even divorced with children before figuring out they were trans.

Q3

After the time I had last year, I was excited to return to Philly again this summer. The group had a bit of a different feel, though.

- Sarah couldn't make it because of work.
- Pretty different crowd; not very much overlap from last year.
- Fewer people overall (though the conference itself had grown).

- Cliquier feel somehow. Brittany and Stacey were back along with Samantha, but the three of them being a triad meant that they usually kept to themselves.
- The AirBnB was closer, at least.

New attendees included Persephone, Stephanie, and a handful of other people who aren't relevant to this story. I didn't really know any of these people, except for Leslie from last year and the aforementioned triad.

Persephone Typically, one gets to know somebody better as time goes on. This rule holds true for most everyone I've met, with one exception. And *that*, is Persephone Laura Hoffman.

Persephone is an unusual person, and I feel I uniquely need to forward-declare attributes about this individual, in no particular order.

- Thrives on novelty.
- Rides around on an electric unicycle.
- Energetic; charismatic; a mover and shaker; craves the inner circle; if not a natural-born leader, at least a natural-born filler of power vacuums. Whether she has the personality of Steve Jobs or Jim Jones depends on who you ask.
- Started a Discord server for trans people in central North Carolina this same year, which rapidly grew into a several hundred-person community.
- Was dating Jade at the time, from Steven Miller's group.

#TODO Explain

- Anxious, paranoid, high-strung; a control freak. Mountains from molehills.
- Her mom has schizophrenia.
- Her full name is Persephone; she used to go by "Percy", but has since decided she doesn't like this shortened form of her name. The longer form hasn't caught on so much.

- *Really* into Buddhist shit; though her spiritual beliefs ultimately seem idiosyncratic and esoteric.
- She has BPD. This checks out; though *I've* never really struggled to have a decent, casual relationship with this person.
- I might've seen her at TT once or twice, but didn't really know who she was before Philly 2019.

I could tell throughout the conference that Persephone was trying to brown nose her way into Samantha, Brittany and Stacey's triad. This trend would continue.

I was at our AirBnB with a small group of us one afternoon, when Percy had a conversation with another attendee that eventually grew heated. It mostly went over my head; but, the other person kept insisting that Persephone *must* or *should* know *something*, and Percy kept denying and stonewalling. I got the impression Persephone was a member of some organization, which required strict confidentiality or rules of engagement that this other fellow *clearly* wasn't following. I didn't think much of it.

Several hours later, in the same room but with a different group of people, Persephone volunteered some information about the earlier commotion for the couple of us who were there. There were a few peculiarities regarding Percy's discussion with us.

- She made it *very* clear that the following discussion was not in response to any question; and in fact, could *not* be, for *some* reason.
- The conversation proceeded to involve, among other elements... the *Freemasons*? The earlier stuff with Tommy and Heather was entirely out-of-mind today.
- Stephanie mentioned she had an uncle who was a Freemason; but, they never talked about it.

- She said that there's *some* piece of *very important* knowledge, without which society as we know it could. Not. Exist. There was some nitpicking from others about whether the big secret was necessary for literal life itself, or mere civilization. Her answer was vague, but suggested the truth was closer to the latter.
- There was something *most people know who know about this stuff*, but she couldn't say what. She made it sound a little silly that she couldn't say *what*, but rules were rules.
- I think she said that *some people* are just *different* in some way, concerning the last bullet point. I later interpreted this statement to be about people like Heather, though it was off my radar at the time. It was as if "the Freemasons" told the special people they were special; but, you didn't actually have to join "the Freemasons" to learn, because lots of groups also know, I guess?
- There was *some* rule for talking to these Freemason people, that I think mirrored the one Heather and her friend taught me all those years ago. Again, totally off my radar, what a ditz I am...

I came away with the impression that, whatever Persephone knew sounded cool, but that it also didn't concern me.

It turned out Stacey wasn't the only one who was plural. I learned that Persephone, Stephanie, and now *Brittany* identify with this phenomenon. They were all going to a workshop put on by this fellow who was trans and plural; along with Samantha, I think. I had better things to do during the time slot.

Their group had this sort of after-event that evening, a reasonable walk south of the convention center where they were able to secure a room upstairs at the Philadelphia LGBT center. I *didn't* have better things to do this evening (and was actually a bit disappointed I hadn't been able to spend much time with my

friends), so I tagged along. I figured Samantha would be there at least.

This was an unexpectedly large group; especially for it being a pretty weird and ancillary thing to the purpose of the actual con, and for this being the *follow-up discussion after party* to the aforementioned weird and ancillary thing.

I had a talk with Persephone during all of this; which may've been the first one-on-one discussion I had with her. I didn't really know what to make of all of it. A few things piqued my interest, though.

I managed to leave thinking that *I* might find relevance in this community. While I considered the effect of peer pressure, I ultimately decided that I needed to descent down this rabbit hole.

If Persephone had anyone single “thing”, it was this Discord server of hers. It was inspired by her then-girlfriend Jade's server, though *much* more elaborate. She had set up lots of crazy automation and shit with bots, which would assign you to different sub-communities based on roles or tags, or whatever Discord calls them. It actually reminded me of a simpler version of my idea for a web application I had since given up on.

She had sub-communities for all sorts of things. Politics, food, medical discussion (in which the handful of actual professionals had special flair after being vetted), mysticism and magic; and yes, even these strange new plural folks.

I don't know that I want to get too into this, but... it's a whole *subculture*, alright? They have parts in their head, they report a feeling of switching *between* these parts... folks with particularly bad trauma apparently experience full-blown amnesia between these switches, but folks with less severe versions of this ostensibly

only have a bit of memory *fuzziness*, or even no memory problems at all.

I soon learned the latter community had its own variation of the too-cute vs truescum debate. This phenomenon of having “people living in one’s head”, multiple streams of consciousness or however you might describe that, is classically associated with intense, prolonged psychological trauma at a young age. Some of these newer folks argued that this same state can exist in someone much more healthy, either by accident or on purpose. Neologisms like “traumagenic” and “endogenic” to describe these two camps had been coined; with occasional infighting between these two groups, but a seemingly modern consensus that people could be whatever and should play nice. The extreme end of the former group comprised dissociative disorders, or what the general public might label “multiple personality disorder.”

My friend group gradually started to change. A couple of weeks after Philly, a bunch of us went to Cocoa Cinnamon; me, Persephone, maybe Stephanie and a few others who don’t matter. It came up in conversation that Persephone had been into ham radio. This *never* happens;³¹ neither of us were really involved with the hobby anymore. I was starting to think I had an unusual amount in common with this person.

I went to Persephone’s apartment for the first time not long after this, along with Stephanie. We ended up on her balcony at some point in the evening; and it is *here* that I really draw the line at shit having gotten weird.

Persephone had this notebook of somebody’s (maybe Stephanie?); and she was doing... *magic stuff* with it, I guess? She had this little book in a plastic bag; which I suppose needed to be... cleansed? Of some harmful energy or voodoo, perhaps? I don’t remember really. It’s been a while. I think it might’ve

³¹Okay; Mel was a ham, but that doesn’t count.

been somebody's journal from a rough point in their life, or maybe something relating to an ex. It doesn't matter.

Persephone sat the bag with the notebook out on the porch, and poured a ring of salt around it. I think it had been soaking in some liquid prior to this; hence the plastic baggie. I didn't understand what was happening *at all*. Stephanie seemed to, at least somewhat.

I had questions, somewhere along the lines of "what the fuck is *that* supposed to do exactly?"

What do you believe in?

Well, I'm an atheist.

Persephone proceeded to somewhat *belittle* me for my spiritual beliefs, or lack thereof. Not in any serious way; but she seemed to know things I didn't, and she seemed very confident in that. Given the amount we appeared to have in common up to this point, I was *very* curious what the devil makes her think a ring of salt could ever be anything but salty.

Stephanie left, and I chose to stay a little while longer. She talked enthusiastically about the power of merely *believing* in things. That the power gets amplified, the more people there are who believe. I tried to keep an open mind, though I struggled to grasp at any real substance to what she was trying to say. At the same time, it sounded like there were other things she *couldn't* tell me, analogous to her kitchen discussion in Philly last month.

As we returned to the couch, and I remained skeptical, Persephone made a slight change of subject.

You wanna know what Freemasons do?

Wait, Freemasonry? My preacher tried to get me into that when I was a younger.

She seemed a little thrown off by that last part; but, the conversation continued.

You wanna know the truth about UFOs, Rachael?
You wanna meet space aliens? I have friends, you
know...

“Uhhh... UFOs?”, I replied incredulously. I didn’t know *what* to think of this person anymore. Once again, I’m not thinking about Heather and Maureen right now. I *do* think I mentioned Tommy, though.

It was getting late, and I left not long after this. I wasn’t sure what to think of my new friend.

As the year went on, I started carting off more trans people to Tomfoolery than just Brittany. I remember in September, there were a *lot* of trans people, and they didn’t even all fit in my car. Brittany, Samantha, Persephone, Stephanie, April... I guessed the stereotype about trans women and BDSM exists for a reason.

It was here that I was propositioned by April, a trans woman who I’d first met at TT earlier in the year. I forget exactly what happened. I think she said she had a crush on me or something, then I messaged her a couple days later and we hit it off.

April and I were both bottoms, which made it unlikely she alone could fill the role of a sexual partner. I hoped I might at least get somewhere on the nesting partner front, and wanted to keep an open mind. Applying linear extrapolation, I might not get another chance at this until my mid to late thirties.

April was married to a woman³² named Diana.³³ This bore little concern; polyamory was thoroughly normalized to me after my on and off years in the kink scene.

³²Sorry, this is chronological...

³³Sorry, this is chronological...

Durham Pride later in the month led to a conundrum. Me, April, Diana... we were all queer, and we were all going to Pride. My mom wanted to go again too; which begs the question, how do I handle that?

Option	Sucky part
Don't tell Susan	Feel shitty for hiding our relationship. I'm always hiding my relationships...
Tell her	Tell her I'm <i>poly</i> ? We've been dating for less than a month!
Ignore	I'll be nervous something awkward will happen. She's always complaining about how I never <i>tell</i> her anything...

I chose the second option. She'd been asking increasingly difficult questions as I grew older. "Are you going to give me a grandchild?³⁴" "Are you *dating* anyone?" "Why don't you ever tell me anything?" "Are you *sure* you're not dating anyone?" "You can tell me anything..."

I would try explaining that I really, *really*, was not on the path to securing a long-term relationship at the moment. And once I *was*, it would take considerable additional time to begin a relationship and grow it to the point of "taking someone home to meet mom". She never seemed to understand this; and often suggested there shouldn't even *be* such a delay if I *were* to start dating.

Ugh. I hoped by giving her a *glimpse* of my private life, she'd understand me more. She didn't seem to have all that many negative feelings about Brittany, Stacey and Samantha's situation that she kept learning uncomfortable details about

³⁴This makes my skin crawl now.

through Facebook; and frankly, I didn't care if she *did*. I was tired of her asking, and I figured she could fuck off if she didn't like my "lifestyle choices".

Telling Susan ultimately proved to be a bit pointless; it was a huge event, we rode separately, and she only saw April and Diana for a moment anyway. She's never voiced any outward disappointment over this particular lifestyle choice, but I could tell she wasn't thrilled. It might've been the biggest giveaway that she's rarely honest about her feelings. She always *says* she just wants me to be happy, but I don't think she *means* it. I think she has this fantasy in her head of getting to be the quirky mother-in-law in my budding affluent suburban family or something, and she doesn't understand how far removed that is from the actual reality of my life.

I had a job interview at Avalon, where Josh worked. I already had a rough phone interview with them a couple months prior where I could hear myself not keeping my pitch and resonance up with a one-second delay, making it very difficult to complete the interview. Josh stuck his neck out trying to get them to take me seriously, which seemed to have worked.

I didn't feel like I nailed it quite as well as my interviews with Kevin and Synapse, but I got the job. I was nervous about interviewing for a job in girl mode for the first time, I *still* wasn't a hundred percent confident in my appearance at that point, and my real world experience was mostly embedded programming and IT-type work, not high-level SQL-backed applications. I felt like I had no trouble getting up to speed though, and I'd probably do a lot better at a "CS"-type interview now that I'm older.

Not long after I told Susan about April and Diana, Susan showed one of her more blatant signs that she would never be

a reasonable... *mother-in-law*, or whatever equivalent title might be afforded in my unconventional relationship structure.

I remember driving down the road, when I got a call from Susan. I answered the phone to her sobbing; she was afraid April and Diana were going to *replace her* or something. I didn't know what to make of this. Does she not... want me to see other people? She basically made me promise I still "needed her". And all the while I thought, I obviously haven't *needed* this woman since I left for college. She provides me little to no real support; emotionally, monetarily or intellectually. Sure, she *pires* to be part of my emotional life; but I've historically regretted letting her in. I would later re-discover this fact.

Q4

My relationship situation escalated, *incredibly* fast.

We had already shifted toward calling ourselves a triad by the time of Durham Pride. I don't remember if I ever mentioned this to Susan; I really wanted to keep it as simple as possible for the time being.

AJ was the first change in status quo. She was a trans woman in the community, who had a really bad fight with her long term partner and needed a place to stay. April and...

Okay; I feel bad that I've kept doing this, but I wanted to convey the proper chronology.

Diana was queer, and had been questioning their gender identity to the point of now going by Drew and using they/them pronouns. So, it's Drew. Not...

AJ needed a place to stay, and April and Drew offered their spare bedroom/office area for the purpose.

AJ was dating a trans woman named Crystal.

Crystal I was already vaguely acquainted with Crystal, who started going to TT a few months back. She was actually one of these plural folks. As was now Drew. And even April and AJ a little bit.

Huh.

Crystal actually claimed to have full-blown Dissociative Identity Disorder; a real case of people living in her head. I learned over time she had a difficult childhood; she'd been sexually assaulted by a neighbor, and basically had to raise her younger brother due to her parent's negligence. She was a senior developer at the time, but was struggling with her job on account of her condition, and in the process of filing for disability to work through it. It was difficult to believe she was a real person.

Crystal had an apartment in Raleigh, where as a single occupant she'd been placed with a fellow who happened to be a neo-Nazi. This understandably concerned her, which led to both Crystal and AJ essentially making April and Drew's house their temporary residence for the time being.

Crystal and AJ were quickly absorbed into our increasingly amorphous polycule, a five-person structure we began ironically referring to as "the coven". I never told Susan about Crystal and AJ.

I started my new job at Avalon around the first of November.

I felt like I finally had my shit together. I had a job somewhere I might be able to make a name for myself, *and* I had good insurance that would cover SRS if I wanted that, which I did. And, I had this new relationship situation. That's like the whole, uh... Maslow's³⁵ hierarchy, right?

³⁵I totally needed Wikipedia to remember that dude's name.

I felt a little silly for only having just started a 401k at my new job. I hadn't really been saving for retirement after I took my little detour to run away to Chapel Hill and fix computers; and, I could've gotten one through DataCorp, but there was no matching so I was less enthusiastic about that versus paying off my student loans quickly. (I'm still not sure that's the smartest calculus though, now that I'm older.)

We struggled, to say the least, with sexual compatibility. The thing about me is, I'm *incredibly* subby. I *briefly* thought I could be a switch because of some fantasies I had as I grew older, but this turned out to be very mild and unsubstantial. I'm really, *really*, a bottom, who could *maybe* sheepishly top someone I was really close to.

April and I ultimately never really... *did*... much. I've never wanted to take the initiative to *do* much of anything other than snuzzle my partner and make funny noises. I've never really felt like I would be a starfish in bed or anything. It was like we were waiting for each other to go at a four way stop. This was essentially the same problem I had with Erika when we tried fooling around.

I guess I've always just wanted someone to, you know... *fuck* me. And, I keep doing what I feel like is the most obvious thing to look for rough, kinky, reasonably safe sex in my current body, and it's always eluded me. It's no wonder I've had complicated feelings about feminists, who complain about drowning in the ocean while I'm dying of thirst in the desert.

There was a lot going on with me at the time.

I (and everyone else, it seemed) had been thinking of myself as a system of parts for a while now. I didn't think it was anything *serious*. This plural stuff *did* seem correlated with being

transgender for some reason, and I couldn't help but wonder why. It's crazy I guess, being trans.

Ugh I have this weird childhood memory. And I didn't talk about it earlier, because it doesn't belong back there. It belongs *right here*.

I have this memory of being very young, between three and five years old or so. I rode with my mom kind of far away, to Fayetteville I think. We arrived at a town house I don't think I'd been to before or since; that stands out in my mind, since town homes aren't a very common housing format in rural Bladen County.

I remember finding my way upstairs with an older fellow. Based on my memory, I don't think I could tell you if he was in his teens, twenties, or maybe even early thirties. Everyone over the age of twelve is just kind of a grown-up when you're that age.

Anyway, things started happening upstairs, and this fellow wanted me to lick his penis. I, at this age thought this was nasty. He was *very* insistent. He said he'd lick mine if I licked his. I did not find this argument persuasive. It *did* happen eventually. It's actually the last thing I remember happening.

That's it. It's just this weird memory fragment. It usually doesn't feel like anything. It's like a puzzle piece of an owl's head in a box of 499 pieces of the Egyptian pyramids of something. I don't know what to do with it or where it even fits in with my life; but it's *in* the box.

This dissonance came to a head #TODO phrasing

This... issue reached a climax #TODO phrasing again

My sex life, or lack thereof, is defined by a handful of noteworthy attributes.

- I have a huge lifelong interest in BDSM.
- I have a similarly huge forced oral kink.
- I wouldn't rate myself as anything *more* than an 80/20 switch.
- I invariably freeze up during sexual encounters, often unexpectedly; as if I'm missing the DLLs or something.

I've variously blamed my problems on a number of different things over the years; that it's my gender identity, that I'm a submissive man and it's hard to find tops compatible with that... It wasn't until this point in my life that the problem felt like

Dick It's here. I've always wanted it, right? What's wrong? I gave April an old fashioned, but I'm not sure I was entirely in my body when I was doing it. What's missing? Is there something missing? April's not having any trouble fucking. Or Brittany or Samantha, AJ... maybe Crystal a bit sometimes; but there's a lot going on her, and she still gets it on. Hell, most of those people have been *married*. What do I, think it's my gender identity still? *It's something else*. It *has* to be. *Why don't I want to do this thing I've always wanted to do whenever I finally get the chance to do it?*

It started to feel like it was *this*. Something happened to me a long time ago, and I probably needed to get to the bottom of it.

Alright, folks. It's Q4 of 2019. My new polycule has expanded alarmingly fast, I just started a new job, I think I've uncovered latent sexual trauma... what else am I forgetting?

Oh, right. UFOs.

It felt like Crystal and AJ had been living at April and Drew's house ("the cottage") for a year, but it was really only four to six weeks. The two of them rented an apartment nearby in north Durham, and we'd often migrate between these two locales, the cottage and the apartment.

Crystal had this old, long term partner named Josh.

(Crystal's) Josh Is a trans guy, and is *plural* if you'd believe it... At the beginning of their relationship, Josh was trans and Crystal was plural. Or, maybe I've got it backwards. Anyway, They both apparently found each other, and they both turned out to be both of these things.

Crystal and Josh. They decided to see other people, I guess? But they still really seemed to like each other.

Josh had moved to Texas. I forget the details, but it sounded like he was in an abusive relationship that he needed to get out of. There was a kid involved, and there were questions about how to handle that.

Anyway, that isn't important. Josh was in town for Christmas, and I got to spend some time with this guy.

I met them at the apartment after having spent Christmas with Susan, and I don't think I'd been there long before Josh says

I'm looking for someone who knows *the truth about UFOs*.

After a moment of thinking "uhh..." to myself, I didn't even stop to think before blurting out

Wait, UFOs? Don't Freemasons know about that stuff?

To which Josh replied

Can I ask how you know that?

Oh, I have this friend Heather. From... Vega, I think. Vega, Lyra...

It was now that I *did* start to think about what I just said. Isn't this stuff kinda private? How private? Is it okay to talk about it casually? So I asked.

No, you're fine. We just want to know where you're learning about this stuff from.

That's... cool, I figured. It reminded me of what happened with Maureen at the saucer all those years ago, when she started talking about Freemasons and UFOs and somebody else at the table needed to know how *she* knew. I instinctively did the same thing as Maureen, and told him I had an acquaintance from Vega. I guessed that's just... their process, or whatever.

When I inquired further, it sounded like he was maybe looking for a therapist who knew about that stuff. I never thought about that being a need before, but I guess there are therapists for everyone.

Huh.

Susan

I don't know how to describe my mother at this point in my life; except that she's a one-of-a-kind piece of work whom I can't seem to communicate with effectively in what *I* would consider "plain English".

In various ways, Susan reminds me of several people I've encountered throughout my life, both real and fictional.

(This is a very disparate list; the perceived likeness to Susan usually does not follow the transitive property, and is sometimes just based on a single personality trait.)

- Eric Cartman's mother
- Sadie Miller's mother
- The mom from [this comedy sketch](#)

- South Park’s “Michael Jefferson”
- GLaDOS
- Charlie’s uncle Jack from Always Sunny

A sketch of “Susan”

Attributes

- Terrified of abandonment
- Terrified of losing access to me
- Afraid I will go to “white collar prison” for some reason
- Won’t cut the umbilical cord, and acts like it’s “just how moms are”
- Is idiosyncratically progressive and conservative in different contexts; a classic “Christian democrat” in many political regards.
- Pines for more information and access into my personal life, but fails to act rationally and follow social norms when given it. Wants the bleeding edge, but can’t handle the bugs.
- Almost as if she worships a “cult of Ethan/Rachael”. It feels beyond normal parent-child admiration.
- Used baby talk way too late in my development, if she’s ever completely stopped. I thought it was our little in-joke when I was in high school; but, she just sort of kept it up way after it got old.
- She’s resisted the idea of me growing older in general; her attachment to me feels unhealthy, and she now views me as “all she has left” now that my dad/her ex husband has passed on.
- This sounds mean, but... I don’t think the “logic” part of her brain works. I used to think it was *me*; I was a computer nerd, and normal people were all emotion and no logic like Susan. Then I thought it was just *women* who were like that, and that there was no way *I* could be one of them. Now I think my mom is just a whackadoodle.

Anti-patterns

- Asking whether I want something, then proceeding to ignore me when I answer “no”. She does this with food, gifts... I’ve inquired as to why she asks if my answer doesn’t matter. She usually responds telling me to “be nice to a-widdle muver” or some shit.³⁶
- Asking leading questions that discourage honest answers. (“Are you still a Christian even though you watch South Park?”; “Are you going to let me live in your guest house once you’ve built your wealth?”) This can feel a bit like brainwashing in the most extreme of cases.
- Extremification (“I drink Sam Adams sometimes” → “He only drinks Sam Adams”)
- Conflation (“He downloads his music ‘through the back-door’”; “She said she listens to ‘emo’ now” (I said ‘indy’))
- Extreme emotional reactions #TODO
- Shuts down virtually any complaint or grievance with thought halting statements like “Don’t me mean to your little mother!”, or a derailment about how much she loves me. Will start to cry if you keep pressing for something real, and will probably recall this argument later as one of the times you were “weally mean to a-widdle muver”.

Questionable advice

She filled me up with all sorts of bad advice, which I *still* might not’ve entirely deprogrammed all these years later. If I’m anything resembling a decent person, I think I’m that *in spite* of her, not *because* of her.

- Lie and deny

³⁶She doesn’t *always* do that annoying baby talk thing, and I don’t think she *entirely* lacks self awareness about it; but, it happens often enough to suggest she doesn’t really respect my individual sovereignty, or even recognize me as an adult.

- Fake it 'till you make it
- Don't tell Cody you're a "liberal"

The iPad incident

As my 22nd birthday approached, I had a conversation with my mother that went something like this.

Have you thought about what you want for your birthday?

No, not really...

Well, do you want an iPad?

Eh, not really.

YES YOU DO!

No, I really don't. It kinda just looks like a big iPod Touch.

I naively thought this was the end of it; until I received, for my birthday, *a brand new Apple iPad*. I didn't bring up our prior conversation, and thanked her for the gift.

I took the iPad back to my apartment and began setting it up. Shortly after I installed Skype, my dad called me on it.

After I picked up, I was confused why I couldn't get the front facing camera to work like in the commercials. At first I thought it might be some proprietary FaceTime bullshit, but I eventually figured out the real problem; this was a first generation iPad, which lacked the selfie camera. My initial impression that my mother bought an older iPad because she was poor, yielded to a deeper understanding when I found an invoice buried in the packaging with the actual dollar amount she paid. There were... a few obvious problems with this purchase.

- She bought the iPad through QVC

- She bought a first generation iPad, despite the fact that the second generation had been out for several months
- The purchase price was *considerably* more than a new second generation iPad. I think she paid around \$1200, when it should've been closer to \$800 *before it was superseded by a newer model*.
- The iPad included the optional 3G cellular modem, which added a non-trivial amount to the purchase price. Apple had an exclusive agreement with AT&T at the time, rendering the rather expensive add-on useless; my mother and I had a phone plan with US Cellular.

I conjectured that she bought the iPad through QVC because she wanted to finance it and had shit credit. Okay. If that was all, I probably would never have brought it up.

An ethical quandary began weighing on my mind: what if my mother could return this iPad for a cheaper one which *at least* lacked the 3G modem? She bought me something she couldn't really afford in the first place, then paid way too much for it, then paid a couple hundred more bucks for something I can't even use. Shouldn't I at least... talk to her about it?

When I raised my concerns, Susan began crying inconsolably. She tearfully explained that she wanted me to have *the very best iPad*. I tried to explain that it wasn't *better*, it was just *more expensive*. She didn't seem to understand the bit about the cellular modem at all. After it became clear she couldn't return the iPad even if she wanted to, I realized I needed to do damage control and extract myself from this situation.

Phew. No good deed goes unpunished, I suppose.

I *wish* I could tell you this was the end of it. It was not.

The iPad eventually found it's way into my college life. It was nice to use for internet browsing sometimes, and I found this neat app that let you simulate circuits. I didn't really miss the front facing camera; I was only confused when I took it out of the

box and couldn't do *the one thing Apple had been showing people doing with it on TV for the last six months*. I never would've bought it for *myself*, but I really did use it quite a bit.

Christmas time arrives. There's a giant red bag with... something... in it, and it's the biggest gift. We're saving it for last.

Would anyone care to venture a guess what was in the big red bag? I could use spoiler tags for the HTML version of this document, you know.

At the bottom of this comically oversized big red sack was *a brand new second generation Apple iPad*. My mother had apparently corralled my father into chipping in for this gift; which I apparently needed after my disappointment(?) with the earlier iPad.

So, this is fucking great. I now have two iPads. I didn't even want *one* of them. Shit, man. When it rains it pours.

I was given the option of keeping both iPads or returning the newer one. I, uh... returned the newer one. And vowed *never* to comment on any of her gifts again; even if it was only to be helpful.

I fucked up at least once since then.

For some subsequent holiday, my mother bought me *an unsolicited Nintendo 3DS*. I attempted to accept this gift while smiling and nodding.

But, she kept fishing for a compliment from me. *Didn't I do good? Aren't I a good muver?*

Eventually I just snapped. And said something about how the Nintendo was childish.

I do feel a little bad about this, because it isn't even fair to say that I've "outgrown" Nintendo. I've actually wasted a lot of time this year playing Ship of Harkinian.

I forgot about this incident, until a couple years ago when Susan decided to bring up *how mean I am to her sometimes*. I think it was in response to me having bought myself a Nintendo Switch.

I didn't understand; until I remembered that I *really can't communicate with this woman*.

#TODO

I like beer

I turned 21 at the beginning of my junior year. The rest of us were *close enough* to 21 at that point in college.

Over the course of several weeks, our apartment accrued a beer pyramid on our kitchen counter. We also had a bunch of empty liquor bottles on our top shelf that we would illuminate with a blue rope light; most of which were left over from Marc and Noah's residency. And there was a large collection of bottle caps, which we intended to make a tabletop with eventually.

We had a routine of putting all this stuff away in Will's room whenever somebody's parents were coming over. This grew tiresome, especially as the amount of self-censorship increased. We probably took up half of his floor space with jugs and bottles and smoking paraphernalia.

My dad decided to pay me a visit one day, and I had grown *complacent*. I knew my dad drank and even smoked pot; I still cleaned up a *little* and didn't leave our pieces laying out or anything, but I didn't relocate or recycle the beer pyramid. And, I don't think I moved the liquor bottles either. I didn't think

my dad would care all that much; in fact, I thought he might actually be a bit *proud* of me for lightening up for once.

Indeed, my dad didn't make much of a fuss about the evidence of alcohol consumption; but he *did* tell my mom, and *she* is a basket case.

My mother seemed *very* concerned that I was, like, an alcoholic or something. Given her family of origin, I can kind of see why; but, I *really* have never felt an urge to get drunk every night. *High*, certainly. It's fun, but too much of it makes me sick, then I wake up with a hangover, I can't cross with weed without vomiting from the spins, too much wine *really* sucks...

Dude. I'm a *pothead*.

I didn't tell her that, though. She, somewhat expectedly, pried into the drinking habits of me and my roommates.

Is anyone there drinking underage??

... No...

Who all is drinking over there?? Does Josh drink?

He isn't 21 yet... so, no.³⁷

Does Will drink?

Will turned 21 in November... so, yes.

What do you *drink*?

Well... different things, I guess...

Do you drink beer? Do you drink the hard stuff?

Well, I like beer...³⁸

³⁷lol

³⁸I bought a bottle of Maker's Mark from the ABC store on my 21st birthday. The man scrutinized my ID for a long thirty seconds, before allowing me to continue without comment.

What kind of beer do you like?

Well, I like Sam Adams...

The more bizarre part were the echoes back I got as a result of my mother's inquisition. Multiple friends told me she cornered them to ask about my drinking habits, and she seemed like she was losing her mind about it.

This culminated in Josh telling me

Hey Ethan! Your mom says you only drink Sam Adams!

I was confused at first who would even *say* such a thing about me. I drank Dogfishhead, Bell's... hell, I'd settle for a Blue Moon or even a Miller High Life. But the smell of Natty Light made me dry heave. Anyway, who the *fuck* came up with the idea that I only drink Sam Adams?

#TODO

She wants to talk to my boss?

Not long after I started my first job out of college, my mother sent us a message through our website. My boss brought it up one morning, and we had a laugh about it. I forget what it said, or if Kevin even mentioned that much. I cringed a little, but it sounded like it was just one of those things moms did; so I tried not to think much of it.

Not long after I started my *second* job out of college, I found myself alone at the office. The phone rang, and I was thrown off when I saw our family name on the caller ID. I answered the phone, confused, but as professionally as possible.

The thing about this place is, that it wasn't a fully staffed office. We all had various customer sites we went to, we checked email and voicemail, and there was someone in the office *sometimes*.

I think my mom had been "trying to get a hold of somebody" for a bit and said something snarky about it. I started rolling my eyes once I realized this wasn't a case of my cell phone being unreachable. Anyway, it eventually became clear she wanted to talk to my boss; and I think she was a little frustrated that she couldn't find a way that wasn't through *me*.

Another thing about this place is, the family who owned the company was probably the *least* predictably in the office. They *were* actively involved in the business, and we usually saw them at least a few times a week. It was certainly expected that we would handle day-to-day bullshit, and the request puts me the awkward position of either getting into a fight with my mom or sending Ben and Barbara a really weird Slack message to call my mommy. I tried to take a message, but she *really* just wanted to talk to them in person.

I was understandably put off. The request made me feel like I had some kind of secret handler; like I was some special needs adult, whose mommy was letting me play engineer in the city until it was time for supper. The lack of transparency as to the phone call's purpose was incredibly unnerving.

I actually forget how I ultimately handled this situation. I do very much remember fussing with her about it. I don't remember if she eventually wore me down or not.

Dressing rooms

After I started transitioning, Susan often wanted to go clothes shopping. It was early on in this process that Susan decided she wanted to go in the dressing room with me. This was something I *strongly* objected to.

At first. She eventually managed to wear me down after some amount of insisting it was a perfectly normal mother-daughter thing to do, and would help streamline things. Or... something.

I once again think this is creepy as hell, if I ever really felt comfortable with it at all. I think this is a good example of how she has a way of normalizing *really* bizarre behavior, by incessantly badgering you into feeling like *you're* the weirdo for being uncomfortable.

Forgetting stuff

Susan does *not* respond well to forgetfulness; particularly surrounding important events like holidays. She will get *pissed off* if you forget to give her a card and a gift for Mother's Day and her birthday (which are a week or two apart), or similarly manage to botch Christmas. This has been a thing since *at least* early in high school. I don't mean a *little* pissed off; I mean like if you were her husband and forgot your anniversary or something.

Rachael's house

I told Susan I was about to buy a house. It was fall, and she eagerly told me not to get her anything for Christmas. There was a lot going on; I considered, and ultimately *did* take her up on this. I really *should've* known this was a bad idea.

At least, that's what *she's* told me over the years as she's berated me for *literally not getting her anything, just like she told me to*. And, it isn't like she only offered *once* either.

She didn't say not to get her anything *big*. She didn't say just to get her one tiny thing as a symbolic gesture.

Don't get me anything for Christmas.

I mean it! I don't need anything! I know you're doing a lot right now, buying your first house and everything.

Well, you could've *at least* gotten me a book or something...

Yes Susan, I fucking *could have*. But you *told* me...



Figure 13: It's a trap - Star Wars Return Of The Jedi Death Star Approach (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk-6DPr cMv4&t=11s>)

My descent into madness (2020-present)

The new something (2020)

Q1

This is so *normal*! I'm gonna make March the most normal month ever!

-Rachael Ann Brown; Tuesday, March 3rd, 2020

Our polycule imploded a few weeks into the new year. April broke up with me, feeling like she barely knew me after five or six months. By that point, I'd begun to feel like the fifth wheel in my own relationship; a problem I've felt I've had with friends my whole life. I dropped the trauma bomb at this point without really thinking it through, which didn't help matters.

April said she needed to "not be around me for a while". I briefly retained a superficially better relationship with Drew, before ultimately drifting apart from them too.

Shortly after, Josh (Crystal's friend) temporarily moved from Texas to the apartment in Durham to escape his abusive relationship. This created tension with AJ, and they broke up. AJ ran off with some trans woman named Molly who she'd recently started dating. Crystal and Josh moved to Colorado just as COVID started, so that they could be closer to Josh's young daughter.

Fin.

I heard that April had a sort of mental breakdown shortly after this and may've had a stay at the mental hospital; but, I don't know details, and thought it impolite to pry.

I began to turn my mind toward a search for normalcy and simplicity. Our polycule was *complicated*. I didn't think of myself as very jealous or otherwise incompatible with polyamory; but, I didn't want to be the awkward wheel in my own primary relationship, and given my lack of experience that's what was likely to happen in a similar situation without extra effort.

I actually remember, eating a slice at Pie Pushers after TT one evening in early March, thinking to myself "2020 is going to be the most normal year *ever!*"

Q2

Susan kept asking how "April and Drew" were doing. Ugh...



Figure 14: Holy shit, I actually found a picture! Clockwise from top left: Me, Persephone, Brittany, Samantha (March 2020)

It was really annoying, having told her so early in her relationship. I was always having to manage the gap between where we were and what she knew, because she just gets... *weird* when you tell her stuff. She panics, she thinks you're abandoning her or something... She never says what she means or tells you how she really feels; until she's boiling over with some crazy bullshit because she's just so *goddamn obsessed with you*, when you just want to be left alone to live your life.

Fuck.

I eventually told her we broke up under vague pretenses. I tried to explain that I was dealing with something that was hard to talk about. Which was met with little more than

You can tell me anything... Why won't you tell me anything? You never *tell me* anything...

I wasn't really sure why sex was so complicated, and why I struggled to connect with anyone in bed despite at least having *some* kind of libido. I actually identified as gray ace for a while because of this; but, I've started to think my problem is more that I haven't found the right person yet.

In my struggle to process my post-breakup life, I'd been swept up by Persephone and friends somewhat.

Persephone, by now, had proven herself to be a complicated character. She'd alienated a lot of her former allies in the community with her antics. Her once bustling Discord server was losing momentum fast. She recently found out she had BPD. Kristina was filing for a divorce. Oh, right.

Kristina Persephone was married to a cis woman named Kristina. The relationship proceeded Persephone's transition by several years.

I grew closer to Kristina over the next several months. I was clear from the beginning that I wasn't looking for anything sexual or romantic; we weren't really compatible on either of those fronts. I sort of became part of their infection circle; and wasn't really getting physical interaction anywhere else given the times.

I was initially really private with both of them about what happened between April and me. I opened up to Kristina about it around June, after having brought it up with my therapist a couple of months prior.

Oh yeah. This was COVID year right, I was dealing with trauma stuff, I was dealing with breakup stuff, and I kinda just *forgot Mother's Day*. Susan loses her shit when this happens. I'm not sure that it'd happened in my adult life.

Anyway, message bubbles.

I guess I will get my Mother's Day card tomorrow!

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 05:38PM*

Sorry, I'll call you in a few minutes.

Moi | *Friday, May 08 2020 06:39PM*

It's all okay. My heart just hurts.

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 07:51PM*

It's all okay. My heart just hurts.

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 07:51PM*

I'm a loser for caring.

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 07:52PM*

I've already checked my email. I don't know what else to do.

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 09:11PM*

I love you. I am weary.

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 09:22PM*

I love you to the moon and back.

Susan | *Friday, May 08 2020 09:50PM*

I love you too.

Moi | *Friday, May 08 2020 09:54PM*

I can't sleep. I cannot sort this out in my mind. Please don't be dismissive. I'm hurting.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 04:30AM*

Please tell me what you were planning in lieu of a card. Help me to understand. May should be ingrained in your mind. Were you going to Skype with me?

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 07:25AM*

Were we going to observe the day at all? But you told me you would get something together. That's what hurts. It wasn't important enough to remember.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 07:26AM*

You can fix this. Please do. Don't make me be the mom with nothing.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 07:31AM*

We'll do something for mother's day. I love you.

Moi | *Saturday, May 09 2020 09:50AM*

What are you thinking? Should I tell you a book I want? We can't be together.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 10:29AM*

I mean, we really can't be together. I'm taking this socially distant thing seriously. I thought I would get a card and maybe a tiny gift.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 10:32AM*

I'm sitting at Walmart crying. I know you can't die of a broken heart because I woke up this morning.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 10:32AM*

Every time someone talked about Mother's Day this week, I asked them to stop because it made me cry. The only thing keeping me going was knowing that you would pull through for me, even if I had to nudge you. I mean, now I know. I truly know. It's not a matter of being 2 different people. It's a matter of priorities. And now I truly know.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 10:36AM*

My mother never, ever, ever, ever went without a Mother's Day card. Not once.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 10:36AM*

A gift came for you today. [image/jpeg]

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 11:39AM*

I don't know that I can talk right now. I love you. If you don't believe me, I don't know if I can help you. We'll talk tomorrow. I promise.

Moi | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:05PM*

I just wanted to make sure you weren't planning some grand gesture like coming here to deliver a card in person. Because you can't come in the house. And we can't have contact and no place is open.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:07PM*

I know.

Moi | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:07PM*

You can find a card today and send it. I could get it late. People think I'm a great mom and always think you worship the ground I walk on because I do you. So everyone always wants to know what you do for me.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:09PM*

So it's difficult when I have to stumble over words. I didnt get anything because she's buying a house. The ring didn't come in, I'll get it later.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:11PM*

She forgot about Mother's Day. I guess she fell into the quarantine rabbit hole.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:11PM*

I thought maybe you would send flowers this morning in a valiant effort to say you were sorry.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:12PM*

A tiny part of me glanced at the doorstep when I came home from that horrible Wal-mart trip where I cried the whole time.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:14PM*

You can watch Dead to Me today. I may when I feel better. I can't even eat right now. I didn't even want Chik Fil A! Maybe if I feel like it, you can get me a pizza tomorrow online!!! That would be a treat!

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 01:23PM*

You can help me by saying you would love to get your mom a pizza!

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 02:04PM*

Old Navy has 5 masks for 12.50.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 03:20PM*

I really need to talk to you. No arguing.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 06:29PM*

I've been invited somewhere tomorrow. I need to know when you planned to Skype or whatever.

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 06:30PM*

These were substituted in my grocery order. Have you ever had them? [image/jpeg]

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 08:22PM*

Also, I missed 🍷 So I may have gone overboard on it. [image/jpeg]

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 08:23PM*

Are you okay?

Susan | *Saturday, May 09 2020 09:16PM*

I'm doing well. I love you.

Moi | *Saturday, May 09 2020 09:16PM*

Thanks for the lovely card. I've always wanted my very own bitch!

Susan | *Sunday, May 10 2020 09:28AM*



Moi | *Sunday, May 10 2020 09:31AM*

I made myself cinnamon rolls from a can. I highly recommend them. Get some next time you go to Food Lion. [image/jpeg]

Susan | *Sunday, May 10 2020 09:34AM*

Those look good!

Moi | *Sunday, May 10 2020 09:36AM*

Can you Skype?

Susan | *Sunday, May 10 2020 11:37AM*

Yes

Moi | *Sunday, May 10 2020 11:38AM*

I'm not hungry yet. Maybe an hour or so.

Susan | *Sunday, May 10 2020 05:44PM*

Well, that was lovely. I remember trying to explain (outside of SMS) that I had been *dealing with a lot lately*, and she wasn't having it.

Why won't you tell me anything? You never *tell me* anything... **I'm your mother!**

Ugh...

Persephone was keen on evangelizing concepts from Buddhism and various mystical traditions, and seemed to follow her own idiosyncratic blend of western paganism and eastern spirituality. While I never quite succumbed to Persephone and her enthusiasm, she *did* have me doing mettā for a while.

I want to insert this conversation with Persephone that I found while putting this book together. It's a little off-topic, but I think it provides useful character development.

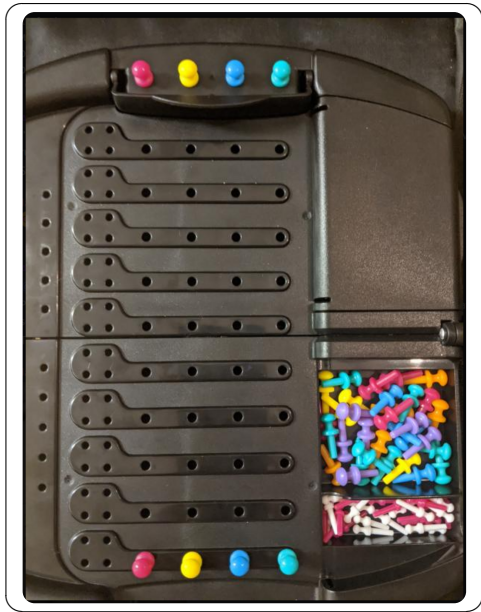
The context for this exchange, is that Kristina had just come to my house and kicked my ass at Mastermind.

you had a *legit* powers display.

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:44PM*

are you gonna meditate now lolololol

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:45PM*



Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:45PM*

the search space for mastermind is 1296 possibilities.

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:45PM*

Yeah that's clearly the meditation 🧘

Moi | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:45PM*

... not a joke.

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:45PM*

it's a documented power.

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:46PM*

You realize Kristina won that right?

Moi | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:46PM

Yeah.

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:46PM

using a documented power, which is sort of unethical really. :fingerguns_ag: #TODO
Unicode this?

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:46PM

she's supposed to *guess*

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:46PM

and at least *pretend* she isn't mindreading.

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:47PM

Oof

Moi | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:47PM

yeah.

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:47PM

exactly.

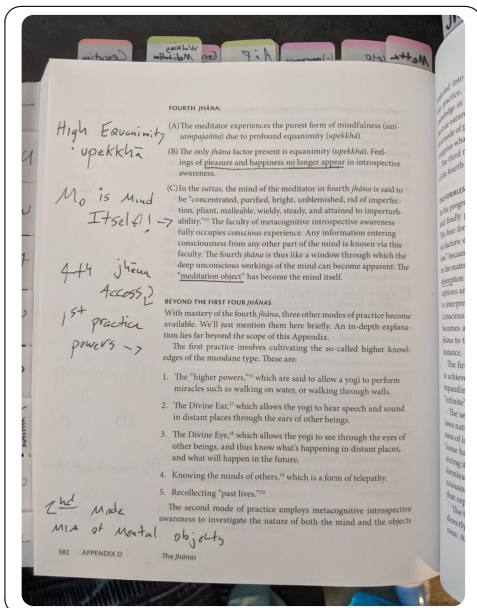
Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:47PM

I do powers displays all the time, I think it's hilarious.

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:47PM

watching super atheist try and reason away what just happened.

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:47PM



Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:48PM

1. I think refers to lucid dreams, astral travel, out of body stuff.
2. - 5. are fun.

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:48PM

Ah yes. Higher knowledges of the “mundane” type.

Moi | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:52PM

Yeah, exactly. 😊

Persephone | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:52PM

Well, it's interesting. I'll give you that.

Moi | Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:52PM

I didn't know jackie could do powers displays.

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:53PM*

So hurray!

Persephone | *Tuesday, May 26 2020 09:54PM*

she knows your dn!

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:12PM*

now she can summon your old spirit!

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:12PM*

DN?

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

Oh, deadname.

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

jackie has a transmasc name.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

you should ask her.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

Why is my spirit linked to my deadname?

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

old spirit. it's a joke.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

jackie is busy freaking out.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

Lol

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

I never know with you.

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:13PM*

I don't know either tho.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:14PM*

Oh, Kristina's freaking out that she knows my deadname?

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:14PM*

no, just being jackie, she's worried you are hurt somehow.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:14PM*

I'm pretty open about it, although I really don't like it lol

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:14PM*

I mean same.

Persephone | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:14PM*

No, I'm fine.

Moi | *Friday, May 29 2020 12:14PM*

Q3

I had drifted closer to Kristina and further from Persephone; the latter of which I could increasingly tell was *problematic* from various sources, even if she was alright in small doses. Kristina broke up with Persephone after years of emotional abuse, and Kristina and I started a weekend tradition of alternating between Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Star Trek: The Next Generation; as well as going to the pool with Liam that summer.

Later that summer, Kristina moved out of the apartment with Persephone, and into a house being rented by fellow trans folks Stephanie and Tristan. Their son Liam moved with Kristina, while still seeing Persephone periodically.

Liam Probably about 7 or 8 at the time. Good kid.

After consideration I decided, *almost certainly incorrectly*, that I should tell Susan about the whole sexual trauma bit.

I told Susan what I was going through in... late August, I think. There were a lot of feelings, but I hoped to convey that I was *alright*. I was just *processing a lot*. And I might just not be as *available* and *attentive* as usual. So, it'd be nice if you'd, you know, cut me some slack when I forget Mother's Day during COVID year when I'm dealing with a rough breakup and maybe sexual trauma I didn't know I had until now. *Okay?*

Susan had a rough time with this. She wanted to do a joint session with me and my therapist, but backed out at the last minute. She proceeded to get a therapist of her own for a while. If I didn't know any better, I'd say she was having a more difficult time with it than *I* was for a while.

Simultaneous with this, Susan pushed us doing a regular weekly video chat. This tradition would continue until, well... we'll get there.

I soon grew uncomfortable with the extent to which Susan wanted to involve herself in this process, and began to pull back. She kept asking me what my diagnosis was, and I didn't really *have* a diagnosis. She kept asking me what workbook I was using, and I didn't *have* a workbook. I told her *I* had read things independently, but was intentionally very vague about this. I was frankly uncomfortable with her questions, and was worried she'd pressure me to switch therapists because my trauma recovery process wasn't comprehensive enough or something. Although I don't *know* that it's caused any problems, I regret describing some guided imagery work I'd done with my therapist as "hypnotherapy"; as that is both misleading, and something Susan would be likely to distort and misquote to others.

- Extremification ("I drink Sam Adams some-times" → "He only drinks Sam Adams")

Jeez, Susan. I just wanted you to know what was going on with me, you know? Because you're always complaining about how I "never *tell* you anything", or whatever? Ugh...

I didn't bring up the, uh... plural stuff, or whatever. We'd talked about enough. I did talk about how a lot of my childhood seemed like a blur and I had a lot to process. This was already too... ugh, goddammit

#TODO I haven't really been doing this justice, but I'm trying at the last minute.

She kept prying for more and more information. *I* didn't really want to talk about it, and just wanted her to stop being an asshole about me being distant and having a rough time. And, I was *not* going to talk about this weird plural stuff that maybe kinda started it all. She kept prying, and... look, I didn't *mean* to misrepresent myself, but she *did* manage to pull the term "amnesia" out of me, I think, and like, *ugh*, half my friend group was ostensibly dealing with shit like this, and... this *might've* created a mess. I still don't really *know* what happened.

I "fell off the wagon" with cannabis right around September, if you can call it that. I never decidedly gave that up for any particular reason, but hadn't really smoked or *wanted* to since the end of 2016 or so, isolated incidents aside. I suppose I felt it might keep me on an even keel, and never felt it had a particularly negative effect on my life. It isn't as if I've ever exactly "had it together"; but the long stretches of not using cannabis between 2015 and 2020 don't really show any improvement in work ethic or reduction in laziness. Frankly, I'm just a messy, lazy fuck.

Q4

I am in the hospital. I may need you. I fell and can't remember it. Shoulder hurts. Waiting for test results.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 08:17AM*

Oh no!

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 08:18AM*

I'm here if you need me!

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 08:18AM*

I mean, I may need you to come for a few days. We'll see what happens.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 08:20AM*

Okay, just let me know what's going on.

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 08:20AM*

I will. They took so many tests.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 08:23AM*

Can you come for a few days?

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 09:19AM*

Of course, I'm working on the logistics now.

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 09:26AM*

Thanks, otherwise I will be admitted at least one night.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 09:28AM*

I fractured the clavicle in my right shoulder. It hurts, let me tell you.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 09:32AM*

Oh no!

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 09:32AM*

I'm leaving soon. Will I be picking you up from the hospital?

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 10:33AM*

No. I should be home by then. Diane Parker is here to get me.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 10:34AM*

They were in a hurry to discharge me and now it us taking forever.

Susan | *Monday, October 05 2020 10:35AM*

See my real-time location on Maps: ...

Moi | *Monday, October 05 2020 11:04AM*

Susan's accident characterized virtually the entire month of October.

It sounded serious, so I rushed home to take care of her and see what happened.

By around one week into my stay, I had the distinct impression that Susan... didn't want to get better; that she was hamming it up, whatever happened to her. I didn't *want* to believe it, but I couldn't deny the feeling that Susan was using this to grapple with a perceived loss of control over me, in light of my aforementioned recent struggles. Phrased differently, it felt like she needed to reclaim some lost sense of victimhood; as if *I* was supposed to be the one taking care of *her* at this point in our lives, and she needed to flip our relationship back around to where she felt comfortable.

At the same time I had these thoughts, I tried to examine myself for my own biases. I *really* don't like spending large amounts of time with Susan. We slip into this weird routine, where we're like some kind of bitchy old married couple, except for the parts where Susan treats me like I'm a fucking child or something. Ugh... one week really *is* about the max I can handle with this person without losing health bars, and I mean that in the nicest way possible.

One week turned into two. Two weeks turned into three. The goalpost kept moving. Her family doctor said she wanted her to see the neurologist first. "Oh, she didn't say 'see the neurologist', she said 'get an EEG'. The EEG is the *next* appointment." The goalpost is the *next* appointment with the neurologist in Wilmington, until it turns out *that's* just the *consult* for the EEG.

Ugh. Look. I know the healthcare system is slow, but... if there were something seriously wrong with her, wouldn't the doctors have a *little* more expediency in their triage efforts? Not helping trust any was the fact that I often couldn't go back to see the doctor with her because of COVID; so, I kinda just had to take her word for it when Susan said the doctor said he doesn't want me to go back to Durham just yet.

The passing weeks and moving goalposts eventually led to a nightmare scenario.

I'd been talking to Kristina and my therapist in private. By now, Susan had long since taken to looking after *me*; she'd tell me when dinner was ready, I'd quietly try to masturbate without a vibrator in between the church bells going off loud as fuck, often failing at the task... I realize I sound like a pervert, but I *really* don't do it more than a few times a week. The church bells go off *at least* three times a day for like fifteen minutes, *right there*, and I swear to whoever it seemed like it was always at the *worst* possible time; when I'm trying to talk on Zoom, or do the deed... Saccharine church hymns blaring right when I happen to

be in the mood is so *not* my kink. I guess I was just *used to it* when I was younger.

It had become a truly miserable experience; but the point is, there *was* no more emergency, and there *was* no more need for a live-in caretaker. Susan was never going to admit it, and I was getting the impression she'd keep me until Christmas if I let her get away with it. So, I had to do it.

I had to tell her no.

And, you know what? I felt *so much better*, being on the other side of it. And, I doubt she was any worse off.

But, I had *a lot* of health bar to refill.

After telling Susan what was going on with me, my mental health focus took an unexpected turn toward *her*.

Historically, I've viewed my mother as a *survivor*. She's been through a lot. She has a lot of mental health issues. I don't think she had a great child herself; while I've often felt I have little to complain about other than my little first world gender identity problem.

From my perspective, I've never had a *great* relationship with Susan. We have little in common, she's very religious, she's afraid of *everything*, and I think she'd like to keep me in a little bubble for ever and ever if she could. I've kept her in my life, mainly because she's the only real family I have; everyone else is people in different states who I probably don't even know how to get in touch with. Our relationship feels, oftentimes, obligatory.

Susan often insinuates that I mean something *much more* to her. She calls me her "best friend". She says I'm "all she has". She longs for more closeness with me. I don't know what's normal. I don't have much family in my life in general; much less another mom.

It makes me uncomfortable, but I don't know what to *do*. I try and talk about it with her. She shuts down everything with her aforementioned thought-halting statements.

I feel bad for her; I really do. She never seems to have found *a man*, or whatever. But, what about me? *I'm* just *this*, trying to find my way in this crazy world; and *I* don't even have a uterus to pop out a kid to force my relationship needs onto. If *I* want a family, or a long term relationship, or a sexual partner, I just have to *create that*. From scratch; organically, out of real, voluntary relationships I've managed to cultivate with like-minded people over the years. It *really has* been a background task throughout most of my adult life, despite my apparently lackadaisical attitude toward relationships. I've just had... a lot of trouble finding my dating pool, I guess.

I've increasingly felt like she's "cheating" at building a family, in some sense. There's little genuine connection present from my point of view. I feel like I've sort of just been brainwashed to take care of this person. She seems to have exercised an ironic and uniquely female privilege that allows one to bypass the need to build genuine, mutual connections with people. She just gets to decide to stop looking for voluntary companionship, and let the responsibility of showering her with gifts and affection fall to her "son"; the distorted role of which I don't think I ever really stopped playing after I transitioned. *She's* my problem, and *I'm* my problem.

To anyone else, I'd just say *look at me*. I like getting tied up and beaten with stuff for fun, I kinda just want somebody to fuck me but not like a gay man, dommes turn out to me into different stuff or just looking for *actual men*... like, I'm struggling over here. Yet, Susan seems to be the only person in my life who's actually more pitiful than *I* am.

Susan kept asking about my “workbook”. I kept trying to explain that I didn’t have one *per se*, and had done nothing more than independent reading. She didn’t seem to get it.

About a month after I “escaped”, I reconnected with Erika. We’d fallen out of touch over the last few years, and she messaged me after I think having lost my number in the interim. It turned out Erika was now non-binary, and was sometimes Eric. Birds of a feather or something, I guess. I think they’d heard about my transition and subsequent polyculc from Dakota or someone.

Tran of La Mancha (2021)

Q1

One of my major concerns over the last several months since the beginning of COVID, was that I *really* just wasn’t getting any work done.

I’d smoked a decent amount of pot in September, November, and December. I... didn’t think *that* was my problem.

I just couldn’t make my mind work. I blamed it on not being able to go into the office because of COVID. I’ve never been very good at working at home, and have always been more productive with an office or library to context-switch into; even if the trip would be otherwise unnecessary.

I brought this up with my therapist. I wondered if I should get tested for ADHD for something, and began to think *that* might be my problem. She suggested I talk with my primary care doctor.

Dr. Reid, who I’d since switched to after missing an appointment with Dr. Meier and having trouble getting rescheduled was, with a letter from my therapist, alright with just *prescribing me methylphenidate* to see how I did on it. She started me out with a low dose of Ritalin. This was initially helpful; but, I could soon tell I’d need a larger dose, which seemed to be expected.

Susan kept reeling me in to take her to various doctor's appointments. She ostensibly still struggled to drive long distances, and agreeing to help her with this was part of my bargain for getting away from her after a mere month.

She kept on asking me "how my workbook was going". I remember trying to cut yet another weekend with her short, and she couldn't understand why I couldn't *stay wif uh'widdle maver just one more night...* She sort of volunteered that I probably needed to "get back to my workbook", and I was tacitly like "sure, whatever..."

I remember this happening around Valentine's Day; and she seemed *deeply* resentful.

I had a surgery consult for SRS in March, after having done a virtual appointment with them some number of months prior.

I remember telling Susan this around Christmastime. And, I remember *her* telling me she couldn't go because of work. It was just the consult anyway; she was very into being involved with the actual surgery process.

When I reminded her about my consult a week or two before, she acted as if I never told her; and did not react well. She panicked, talking to herself out loud for a bit about whether she could still go somehow with her work schedule *as I thought to myself about how I'd already booked the AirBnB based on her negative response a few months back*; before she ultimately concluded that *no, she could not go* because she had to work.

I *myself* had not been coordinating this trip well. I booked the accommodations at the last minute, and hadn't planned specifics other than deciding months ago I was going to park the car in New Jersey and take the train into town to avoid the traffic.

She made a big deal about how I didn't tell her about my trip sooner, and called me up crying about something before I was about to leave. I tried my best to console her. This woman's feelings... ugh. It's no wonder I decided I couldn't be a woman "like her" when I was younger.

I made it to New York *just fine* without her. She got bitchy when I didn't want to do the things she was suggesting and send her pictures. COVID was still going on; I didn't even take all the days off work that I spent up there, and didn't really want to do much except eat different food and drive up to Massachusetts one of the days.

Anyway, it was cool. I spent the better part of a week in New York for a 15-minute consult, but I made the best of it. Have you had *actual New York bagels*?

NYC Bagels in Cary is actually pretty spot on, and I certainly wouldn't drive all the way up there for one given the alternatives; but they're good. Real New York bagels. Maybe someone who's from there would feel differently.

This isn't about bagels. I'm sorry I've made you read all of this.

When I got home, I noticed something a little unusual: the key inserted and turned in the lock easier than I was expecting. This *historically* has been an indicator of Susan's presence. I'll explain.

I gave her a spare key to my house when I moved in; I guess because it seemed like a good idea at the time. After not even trusting her with the door to my room unlocked in my early 20s, I had... relaxed my policies with her a bit.

When she visits Durham and uses her spare key, she complains that it is nearly impossible to turn in the lock. This is a problem I've never been able to reproduce myself, and I feel like you'd

need to have either really weak hands or be a fucking Neanderthal who can't finesse the lock right. But, whatever.

She started bringing WD-40 with her when she comes to Durham, which she says helps her. My lock always turns real smooth for a few weeks after she visits.

So when I came back from New York and it felt like my lock turned real smooth, I had this initial feeling of panic run down my spine. Did she... do what I *think* she did? As quickly as the thought occurred to me, I told myself I was imagining things. We had an exceptional amount of rain while I was away, and I figured that might've had something to do with it. I also couldn't convincingly reproduce the smooth turn I got when I first opened the door. I grew evermore convinced it was mere luck when I returned to my room upstairs, with all the mess and disarray from haphazardly packing still just as I left it a week ago.

I got back after dark, and hit the bed not long after taking a shower and undoubtedly having myself a smoke.³⁹

Tomorrow was Sunday; this had since become the day we did our weekly video chat, after I told my mother I was dealing with childhood trauma last summer and she handled it poorly. Every Sunday at 7pm, for like the last six or nine months or so.

At 7pm on Sunday, March 21, 2021, I had fallen asleep after getting high and watching Avatar: The Last Airbender. My phone was on silent, and I didn't notice what had happened until about 7:45. I think I saw my phone lighting up on the table, and picked it up right away.

Susan was *panicking*. She had called a bunch of her friends trying to figure out what to do, and was about to call the cops if I didn't pick up in the next 15 minutes.

³⁹I mean the Volcano, I just like to call it "smoking".

45 minutes late. For a “tradition” that had gone on for *no more than* nine months. I can’t even say this is the first time something like this has happened.

Her side of the story is always the same. “You’re *never* late! This *never* happens!” Meanwhile, I’m left thinking to myself “this *always* happens; every time I give Susan *anything* on an even semi-recurring schedule”. I swear, this woman is *absolutely* unreasonable.

Oh, I almost forgot. The main reason I was late? The time had just changed, and it was still light out. You could be 45 minutes late to a video chat the day after daylight savings time and this crazy lady *still* would find some reason to expect the worst from your absence.

Our brief and uncomfortable video chat revived my previous concerns. She made various snarky references to the presently disheveled state of my house; but in such a way as to *very thinly veil* that she had just visited.

- Have you *still* not gotten the *fireplace* fixed yet, *love*?
- Have you not done your *flower beds* since I last saw you?
- Well, *sometimes* you just get *another* pizza and *another* pizza and *another* pizza box...

This reinvigorated a panic of my own. A bigger concern than the invasion of privacy itself was the gap between what *my* reality was, and how I knew Susan would interpret the things she found in my home out of context. When I noticed there were tissues lying around my bed, I knew she wouldn’t think I was dealing with seasonal allergies. She would think I was crying myself to sleep over my childhood sexual assault or something.

Who *knows* what she’d think of the toy box. It doesn’t matter, but it’s just *annoying*. Like, the fleshlight I bought in college to try and help with chafing from doing it other ways without a vibrator? It was a lot of hassle, I honestly didn’t really like the sensation of it, and there’s a reason I bought a Hitachi as soon

as I was out of earshot of vanilla roommates. But *her*? I bet she thinks I masturbate with the fleshlight every night or something. How do I inform my mother of my *actual* sexual habits after she's probably gotten the wrong idea by invading my privacy? *I shouldn't even have to do that, goddammit! I should just get to have a decent, normal mother like everyone else.*

Oh *no*. The *workbook*. She thinks I have a...

Personal reading materials. I actually *did* own a copy of the text "Coping with trauma related dissociation", which I purchased *acutely aware of how weird that was*, in the hopes that I might find relevance in it, what with the weird plural stuff and the...

Goddammit!

I hadn't really even *done* much of anything with it, except badmouth Susan a tiny bit...

Okay. So... Susan *may've* angrily torn through my house in search of my "workbook" that was taking time away from *her*. And, she would've assumed based on placement and context that *this* was my "workbook".

- Extremification ("I drink Sam Adams sometimes" → "He only drinks Sam Adams")

I know Susan well enough that... I'm just gonna *assume* if Susan has looked through my things, she will assume I've been diagnosed with

Dissociative identity disorder.
"Multiple personalities".

Ugh...

About a week after my return to North Carolina, I went to visit Susan for reasons. I think the main one was to get the COVID vaccine. I decided to work from her house that day.

It happened to be therapy day, so I did it in Susan's living room that morning while she was at work. I don't *usually* remember therapy sessions years later. But, I remember *this* one; partially because of the different venue, and partially because of what we talked about.

The conversation meandered between Susan, some rant about religion I managed to go on... but, somehow the conversation turned to "mysticism and magic"; and how a lot of my friends seemed to be into that? And, I kept hearing things that lent credence to the idea that there really *was* something to it, after being an atheist most of my adult life. I brought up the time, then a couple years ago, when Persephone was all like "You wanna know the truth about UFOs, Rachael?!" To which my therapist quickly replied

You know the truth about UFOs, right?

(beat)

Reincarnation...

Vickie's reminder jogged my memory.

Oh, yeah! I have this friend! Uh... Heather! From...

Vega!

Wow; I almost forgot. By now, I'm starting to feel like most *everyone* must know the truth about UFOs. I bet just about everyone who's chill and open-minded has a friend like Heather. Hell, maybe *everyone* has a friend like Heather, and they just don't know it yet. Maybe it's really private and they don't want to spook out religious people or something.

I got the impression that stuff was *somewhat private*, and felt a little bad for bringing it up. I should maybe be more careful. But at the same time, it's not like anyone broke down any real

rules for me, or vetted me or anything. It can't be *that* big a deal, right?

When Susan got back after work, and after I had gotten my shot, she gave me a sort of belated Valentine's Day basket or something. Among the things she *really* wanted to gauge my reaction to *in person* was this charm that read

I'd smoke my last bowl with you.



Figure 15: Uhh...

This re-reinvigorated my fluctuating anxiety that my mother *really did* do the unthinkable. I turned to my new friend Kristina for advice; who urged me to be wary of her while at the same time encouraging me not to give in to paranoia. "The simplest explanation is usually the correct one."

There were a lot more minor incidents that continued rousing my suspicions. She was convinced I was crying in the bathroom stall when I took more than a couple minutes at the Chick-Fil-A.

When I noticed there were tissues around my bed, I knew she wouldn't think I was dealing with seasonal allergies and not picking up the trash. She would think I was crying myself to sleep over my childhood sexual assault or something.

During what might've been our next call, she asked how my workbook was going; like that woman asked Jake from State Farm what he was wearing. And I tried, *one last time* to explain that "Look mom, I don't really *have* a"

Your workbook!

She snapped, cutting me off mid-sentence.

At this point, I felt I had little choice but to just lean into it.

Uh... good! It's... going *well*...

She seemed... *very* jealous of my "workbook".

Q2

After some initial success with the Ritalin, I was switched to Concerta (which is just an extended release form of the same thing).

Working through the levels of methylphenidate, I could tell that it *could* be helpful when used carefully; but, it's a drag to take every day, and I felt I was building up a tolerance pretty fast. I eventually worked up to 36-54mg of Concerta, which I quickly backed off of taking daily.

Around late May, I started getting this *really weird* feeling that I was on the verge of... *something*. Like, a breakthrough of knowledge or understanding of something really profound. It was *strange*. I'd elaborate, but there isn't much point.

I went on a, likely methylphenidate-induced thought experiment binge. Judging myself now, I did have some neat ideas, but there ultimately wasn't anything substantial, and my reasoning as a relative layperson was likely flawed in various ways.

Anyway, by mid-June I felt *really weird* about all of this. It was normal for me to casually think about science stuff, but not to *this* extent. I didn't know what had gotten *into* me. Thoughts, ideas... I didn't know where it was coming from. It didn't really even feel like it was coming from *me*. It felt like I had inadvertently tapped into something. Or like, the collective consciousness had just gotten an upgrade.

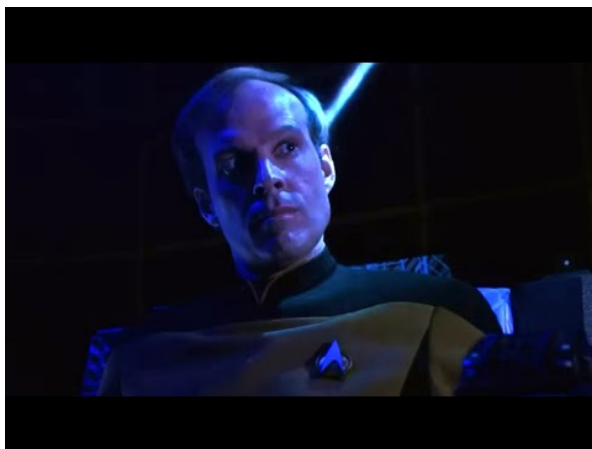


Figure 16: Lt. Barclay takes over the Enterprise | Star Trek: The Next Generation | The Nth Degree | S4E19 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah97iTKNf8M&t=149s>)

For a little less than a week, I grew obsessed with various ideas of a collective consciousness. I thought *that* might explain what was happening to me.

It was now that, when scrolling through the front page of Reddit, I saw *the thing*. (paraphrasing)

Congressional UFO report to be released on Friday

And I thought, goddammit dude. It's *that*.

Like, maybe some academics had early access to the report, and started learning about weird physics beyond the standard model. Then, maybe when *I* started daydreaming about it, I started pulling related ideas out of the collective consciousness without realizing it. It's like... a poisoned cache entry, or something. We normally wouldn't notice the collective consciousness, because we generally have access to similar information at a population level. We're probably "hitting the cache" all the time without realizing it. But maybe if there's a sudden imbalance, like the intelligentsia just learned how flying saucers work and is subsequently going nuts re-evaluating everything about the standard model at the same time...

Lots of people on Reddit were discussing various UFO theories. Extraterrestrials, breakaway civilizations, secret histories of Earth... it's been a while, but I know it didn't take very long before I thought to myself "Well, the truth about UFOs... that's just reincarnation. *Everyone* knows that..."

I was expecting the UFO report to contain something *crazy* because of what was going on with me. I was a little disappointed to find that there wasn't much of anything substantial.

Q3

I made a few, initial, seemingly logical presumptions on which to base my initial search for an explanation.

- Heather, Maureen, and *my therapist* knew what they were talking about when they said it was “reincarnation”. (Along with Persephone, who knows “the truth about UFOs” and “what Freemasons do” but never said the “r” word; she’s merely into Buddhism and weird shit like that.)
- Whatever the truth about UFOs *actually* is, *way* too many people seem to know it for it *not* to be on the internet *somewhere*.
- “The truth about UFOs” is related to *whatever* is happening to me right now. This feeling of... expanding consciousness, or whatever.

Everything that was on the internet at the intersection of UFOs and reincarnation, spirituality, etc. was absolutely *bananas*.

There were people talking about some kind of a “big shift”; people talking about a “5D new Earth”; some well-SEO’ed site purveying the “Law of One” with content that would make L. Ron Hubbard blush; some chick on Reddit who’s either nuts or trying to start a UFO cult; these people called “starseeds” who think they actually have souls from other planets; some weird shit about waves of volunteers...

When I saw things about a “big shift”, my initial thought was “Goddammit; it’s *that!* I’m... *shifting* or some shit!”

I hadn’t lost insight into the bizarre nature of my experience. Knowing the possibility of stimulant psychosis, I discontinued my use of the aforementioned medication. I did *not* discontinue my usage of cannabis.

You wanna talk about stress, you wanna talk about **STRESS?** Okay? I’ve stumbled onto a major company conspiracy, Mac, how about **that** for stress?

At some point in July, I managed to blurt out what I was dealing with to my therapist. I have a *really* hard time talking about things, especially something this... weird; but, I remembered that “the truth about UFOs” had recently come up in therapy a few

months back. And, I remembered her unconventionally bringing up a sort of alternative shamanistic “soul retrieval” process around the fall of 2019, when I first nervously mentioned something about parts in my head. So, I figured Vickie was one of “those people” who knew “the truth about UFOs”; and, whatever it meant for people like me.

I didn’t get it out of me until the end of the session. I remember I felt *very* paranoid during this period; I was all but jumping at my own shadow on the wall. I forget what all I blurted out. There wasn’t much time, and I’m *really* private.

The next session, Vickie basically opens by telling me

I’m *so* glad you know about the big shift!

I’m *so* glad you know about the 5D new Earth!

Do you know about the Law of One?

So, I’m thinking, “phew... I guess that... *is* right?” I really don’t know. I just know “it’s reincarnation”, and I have no idea how to fill in the gaps.

Woah, dude. This is a lot to process. I started to remember the stuff about Heather. I always wondered how she found out she was “from Vega”, or whatever. I guess... *this* is it? Your shit just starts breaking down, and yadda yadda or something?

I was *freaking out*. I didn’t know what to do. “You know about souls, and shamanism and stuff, right?! What do I do?!”

Over the next few months, I pieced together all the weird stuff about Freemasons and UFOs that had happened to me throughout my life. There was one thing, though, that stuck out: the shark people.

It's what we were talking about, right before everyone at the table got really weird and Tommy pulled me out of the activity building at that dinner a long time ago. Remember? It was the first time Susan realized the sharks were shark *people*. And everyone started acting sketchy when I started describing them, and the round room and the metal table...

Holy *shit*, dude. What was I; abducted by *aliens*?

How many times have I been abducted by space aliens?! Is it just the one time? Dude, what about the time I woke up locked out of the house as a kid? I woke up outside to the neighbor lady shaking me awake. She said she saw a bright light. We had to knock on the door for a while for my parents to open it, 'cause they didn't initially realize it was me trying to get back in. Didn't that happen again like a month later, except I woke up by myself?

And goddammit, what about that time in middle school? I woke up outside *with the chain lock still on the door*. I let myself in through the back window that wouldn't close all the way on account of the RG-8. I didn't think too much of it, but it *was* one hell of an unsolved mystery how I managed to sleepwalk my way into the church parking lot with the doors still chain locked and dead bolted. I'd argue its neigh impossible; but I was too much of a skeptic at that age. There was an extra-wide two post rack with a bunch of junk and wiring piled up around the window, and it was a challenge to climb in and out without making a mess while *awake*. Dammit, if only I'd have considered...

Okay. So that's... *three* alien abductions? At *least*, right? Goddammit, what the fuck is *this* all about?

Vickie referred me to her friend Doris the Shaman. Everyone was still doing COVID protocols, so we met over Zoom.

Doris needed my address so she could... locate me psychically, I guess? She purported to do various things over the next 90 minutes or so. I think she... temporarily grabbed my soul into a

teddy bear so she could do things with it in person? Removed a reptilian that was attached to me by pulling it out of my crown chakra? Gave me a sort of psychic protection? Suggested I start burning sweetgrass and sage my house? I wouldn't have taken it seriously *at all* if it weren't for the weird shit going on with me...

Oh, right. The biggest, overarching thing might've been toward the beginning, when she proclaimed

You're different. You're not *from* here. I'm not either.

I guess this meant I was... a starchild or something? I had a *lot* of questions. We spent some amount of time trying to figure out where I was from, before settling on Arcturus.

I kept talking about my experiences to my therapist. I had the feeling of being able to see shadow-like figures in my periphery and sometimes head-on, especially while I was about to go to sleep and after meditating for several minutes. It felt like I was getting messages in my head. My therapist and I used the word "download" to describe the sensation.

I hadn't lost insight into how weird this was. At the same time, I couldn't deny what was happening to me. My paranoia began to relax after my talk with Doris convinced me I wasn't in any imminent danger.

This company is being bled like a stuck pig, Mac, and
I got a paper trail to prove it; check this out

After having seemingly been dubbed a starchild or whatever, I proceeded on this sort of quixotic adventure to figure out what it meant to be a reincarnated space alien. I mean, this shouldn't be hard, right? Aren't, like, half my friends into this stuff?

I was only missing one thing.

Sancho.

I started keeping a handwritten journal of my thoughts and experiences during this time. It was a few weeks after that when I made a series of connections that led me to yeet my phone across the room in excitement.

Facts about Anthony Kiedis

- From space to teach you of the Pleiades
- Part of an unstoppable wave
- Would seem to be into sex magick
- Rose to fame after covering Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground", a 70s funk song about reincarnation
- Has *other songs* referencing reincarnation, weird spirituality, and maybe even *UFOs* (I won't enumerate them, but they *are* pretty egregious.)

Naturally, I started remembering my bizarre history with the 90's rock band, which I was never really even *that* big a fan of to begin with. The floor seats, those weird people who were sitting around me, that conversation I had with Heather back in 2016...

Q4

After a couple months of this, I *really* needed to talk to someone other than my therapist.

I considered Persephone, since she seemed to know a lot about this stuff before. The thing about that is, Persephone had increasingly proven herself to be "problematic" within the greater trans community; *I've* never had a falling out with her, but it seems most of my friends have. She's just a little "BPD" and can be a bit of a control freak.

At this point, it seemed like a lot of my friends were into "mysticism and magic"; whatever that was. It seemed like maybe I didn't *have* to go to Persephone; at least not right away.

I had a little bit of a crush on Stephanie for some reason, and started inviting her over to watch stuff on the weekends. It was late into 2021, but things still felt pretty COVIDey. I knew she was into... mysticism, magic, shamanism... whatever all that weird shit was that I apparently needed to get my head around.

At one point, she was flipping through memes on her phone; and stopped to laugh at one making light of the recent UFO report. It seemed to be poking fun at the apparent gap in knowledge between practitioners of mysticism and magic and the general public.

This emboldened me to proposition Stephanie, based on the information or lack thereof I had at this point in time.

#snip Well... I was going to paste what I sent, but I'm afraid I deleted it. I doubt I wanted to remember the part where I told Stephanie I figured out I was a reincarnated space alien from Arcturus, or a starseed or whatever. Ugh. I understand why I did that, but I kinda wish I hadn't now.

We kind of started quasi-dating; in a situation somewhat comparable to what happened with April, because we're both bottoms.

It felt good, having Stephanie to talk to as I started remembering more and more crazy shit. It pretty quickly became clear that Stephanie didn't really *know* anything about UFOs; but she *was* into this stuff, and seemed willing to lend an ear.

I made this sort of seamless transition; from finding some really weird shit on the internet when my brain was doing crazy stuff, to thinking what I *really* needed to explore was comparatively “mainstream” mysticism, magic, esoteric occult stuff. This felt a little more palatable, at least; and, a bunch of my friends are into it for *some* reason, right?

I set out to the internet, to look up... I don't know, the subreddits for mysticism, magick with a funny spelling weirdos use... I quickly found a reading list of about half a dozen things to get started exploring the subject matter.

One of these texts was titled “the Kybalion”: a public-domain work released under mysterious circumstances around the turn of the 20th century, seemingly associated with the poorly-aged theosophic and “new thought” movements.

By the time I finished reading the first page of “the Kybalion”, I *knew* I had read it before. Like, a *really* long time ago. I don't even have to look this thing up again to remember the line “if indeed man he was”. Where on Earth have I *seen* this before?

Oh, shit.

This is the thing *Tommy* had me read. When he pulled me aside after confirmation class that one time, remember? He gave me that slip of paper? He told me not to tell anyone, but I told Josh anyway?

Uhh...

The Wikipedia page. That *same* fucking picture with the green cover, that says it's from the “masonic press” or whatever. I remember looking it up in middle school. I'm sure the article has changed somewhat, but they're using *the same fucking Wikipedia picture*.⁴⁰

I kept looking through it. All those different laws. The law of correspondence. The law of gender. That one was *so weird*. I remember reading that in middle school and thinking, “Uhh? Does he know I'm trans somehow? Is that related?”

⁴⁰The one on Wikipedia at the time of writing is only slightly different from what I remember, and I think it might've changed. I'm not going to double-check myself with Wayback Machine, because it really doesn't matter.

Something that *really* stuck out to me in this text, which I still don't think I've more than skimmed all these years later, was the so-called "law of correspondence"; summarized by the adage "as above, so below".

I was convinced that Tommy and I were related by this mystical law; because, we were both coincidentally born in Warren, Ohio. We both happen to be born far away but from the same place; we both made our way along our separate paths, until we met in the small town of Elizabethtown... to cross paths *there*, against all odds. Applying this axiom to my present situation would suggest that Tommy and I are *from the same place*, in more ways than one.

I began to remember the discussion that happened in elementary school, when Tommy first came to our church. It was me, my mom, Tommy, Terry, the Stewarts... Tommy said he was *from* somewhere.

This is what I remembered; decades later.

- Freemasons. They started talking about Freemasons, and they seemed a little "on the down low" about it. Terry was a Freemason.
- Tommy. He said he's from "the Pleiades". I remember it now. That's the place.
- Jody. She said she was from Vega. I remember it. Jody and Doug knew about this stuff, but Jody was the one that's different. Shit.

Phew. Deep breath.

Okay. So, Tommy had me read this in middle school. I suppose I'm that much further behind on learning it, first of all.

So... he knows. About the reincarnation, and the UFOs, the Heather people...

Shit. So, what do I...

That right there is the mail. Now let's talk about the mail. Can we talk about the mail, please, Mac? I've been dying to talk about the mail with you all day, OK?

I didn't have Tommy's phone number, and I hate social networking. I didn't really want to ask Susan for it, because she's *fucking* nosy. I don't think I spent more than a few days thinking about it before I just decided

What if I show up for Sunday service? Just drive over there to Cary and see what happens. He's still at Cary, right?

This might've been the strangest part yet: my atheist skeptic ass anxiously looking forward to Sunday morning. Maybe I'll get some answers about what I should do next.

I attended Cary United Methodist Church on what happened to be All Saints' Day.

Today's scripture reading is from Revelation chapter 21, verses 1 through 7

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new Earth,"...

Wait, did she just say "a new Earth"? Like all that weird 5D new Earth stuff I found online?

Uhh... Maybe it's a coincidence? (I didn't particularly think so at the time.)

I went up for communion. He walked down and gave me a hug.

Okay. He knows I'm here.

He seemed *really* excited to see me. He later remarked that he's never left church to go home so fast. I followed him home, and Nancy made us lunch.

He definitely seems like he's excited, *beyond* just wanting to catch up. But, nothing's happening. Is he gonna make the first move, or should I...

It felt like we were exchanging innuendo at the time, but nothing overt was happening. I obviously wanted to talk about UFOs and that time he had me read the Kybalion for confirmation class, but I never got a moment alone with the guy. And, you'd think he'd make it easy, right?

We exchanged numbers. At least I can contact him easily now.

Eventually, we made our way to the couch, and I think Nancy ultimately asked the big question.

So, why did you come to visit us?

I dropped one final hint at Tommy about not being sure if we were all "on the same wavelength", before going into a frank yet sanitized version of the last several months; free of UFOs and explicit mentions of reincarnation.

Well, I actually left the church not long after I went off to college. But, I started going through this spiritual awakening earlier this summer. I've had to face some difficult facts about myself, but the reality is, I can't deny the fact that you don't really die when you die; and, I'm having to contend with the reality that atheism is simply not correct.

There may've been a couple shots across the bow about how Tommy doesn't believe in hell, and how he's got Nancy not believing in hell. It wasn't after much more conversation that Tommy left me with Nancy, as he had to leave to teach confirmation class. I resisted cracking any jokes about whether he's had any of *those* kids read the Kybalion.

I talked with Nancy a few more minutes before driving back to Durham.

As I returned home and reflected on what just happened, a couple less obvious things stood out about the service.

Tommy used a seemingly unusual appellation “Jesus the Christ” in part of the bulletin, and correspondingly part of the service. First of all, this seemed to match up with a lot of the weird, esoteric stuff I had read lately; referring to Jesus as “the Christ”, as opposed to using Christ as a pseudo-last name as would seem to be the norm in mainstream Christianity.

More importantly, this awakened a core memory. That weird church service Tommy wanted me to pay close attention to. I think it was the same one, at least. Was it... yeah, I think it *was* All Saint’s Day. In, like, 2005 or something. Because, Emma wasn’t there, and my Junior year would’ve been too late.

I remember Tommy making a somewhat bigger deal out of All Saint’s Day than he usually did back then; and we did an unusual joint youth group with both Tommy and Paula Conner for the next session. I remember him asking if we noticed anything unusual or *different* about the service. And I mentioned it; Jesus *the* Christ? I saw *that* in the bulletin. *That* seemed a little unusual...

There was more. It was the scripture reading, which I had done. We talked about *that*, too. I remember Tommy making a somewhat peculiar point at that youth group; that as the preacher, he got to chose what went in the service – and what stayed out. It was that last part that he wanted us to reflect on; where he cut off the scripture reading, which I had read. The very next verse was all about hell and damnation; I remember it very clearly condemning “the sexually amoral”, “practitioners of magic arts” and “all liars”.

It felt *so familiar*. That scripture reading. Wait...

I actually *pulled my old Bible out of the closet*.

⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

It was *this*! He had me read *this* for the scripture reading! The *same thing*, some fifteen years ago! I mean, the exact same verses, cut off *right before all that fire and brimstone bullshit*.

Shit, dude.

Okay. So... he had me read the Kybalion in middle school, he had me do this scripture reading and made a big point about how he could just “nix” the part in the Bible where it talks about gays and magic people going to hell...

If I recall, it took a month or more for the *really big* one. Like, December.

Fuuuuuuuuu...

...

...uuuuuuuuuck

The sermon. It was *me*.

That woman. The one in her early 30s. She was dealing with childhood sexual trauma, she had “multiple personalities”, her mom was problematic and kept invading her privacy...

It was *me*.

I... *became* her.

Fuuuuuuuuuck

And, all those people, who went *very* out of their way to surround me and tell me they loved me afterward.

Didn't Jody call me some weird girl's name? Shit, I think it might've been...

Fuck.

Okay. So, lots of church people know. Well, not *lots*. Like, The Stewarts and the Richardsons and maybe the Mitchells. And, well... Tommy.

What are they? Like, Freemasons? Occultists? Starseeds? Dude, *what?*

How do they know? The same way weird shit just started happening to *me*, I guess? They have visions and stuff? Visions of the future, like people from the Old Testament or some shit?

Dude. *What?*

I had remembered more about Heather too. She seemed to know things about me from the future back when we talked in 2016, just like that crazy old man Tommy. And, I remembered her saying something about a concert. She said I'd be really cool when I was older, but I wasn't ready yet. Or... something.

I checked to see if there were any Red Hot Chili Peppers concerts in the near future.

Date	City	Venue	Opening act
September 1 st , 2022	Charlotte	Bank of America Stadium	The Strokes / Thundercat

My fucking *birthday*? This is too good to be true!

The insanity of the second half of the year had since widened the distance between Kristina and I. “Star Buffy” was essentially on hiatus by this point.

Hey Kristina!

I've been meaning to break the awkward silence. It's just silly at this point, and I'm sorry I haven't been forthcoming about what's going on with me.

I basically went through a spiritual awakening this summer that really shook up my worldview. Earlier this year I was an atheist who didn't believe in ghosts. I've learned some things about myself, connected the dots with a number of past experiences throughout my life, and... that's about all I can say without violating the prime directive. It's really weird and personal shit, but also you're Persephone's ex so you've probably seen a thing or two yourself.

Speaking of, I've been thinking about talking to Persephone about this stuff since she knows a lot about it, but also she's Persephone, so I guess it's a bit of a crapshoot.

I'm sorry for not communicating, and I don't even know what my excuse is. I guess I just didn't know how to talk about some of this stuff without sounding like a crazy person, and before that I had to convince myself that I wasn't a crazy person. I have a great therapist, though. Well, either that or she's very committed to playing into my delusions.

Moi | *Monday, December 13 2021 07:50PM*

No worries, I'm just glad that this all sounds like you're moving in a positive direction. If you'd like to talk to her, go for it, but just beware of red flags. Glad you're talking to your therapist too. I thought you were having surgery soon so I thought maybe you'd gone silent because of that. As ever, here if you need me. Sounds like you're on quite a journey. 💜

Kristina | *Monday, December 13 2021 07:57PM*

Thanks for the update!

Kristina | *Monday, December 13 2021 07:57PM*

Aww, thanks! I kinda put my surgery on hold on account of the aforementioned crazyness, but I'll hopefully be back on that path soon lmao

Moi | *Monday, December 13 2021 07:58PM*

#TODO Can I not end a document with message bubbles?

Boxes full of Pepe (2022)

Q1

My relationship with Susan rapidly deteriorated after the new year.

I was, at this point, certain that she snooped around my house while I was away in New York. She simply revealed herself to know way too much about changes (or lack thereof) in the state of my property.

I'd talked about the issue at length with Kristina and my therapist. Vickie thought it unlikely she would ever admit to having done it, unless maybe I simply told her that I *knew* she did it.

I was waffling as to how I should proceed, and was a bit preoccupied with the whole Freemason-UFO thing. Susan forced my hand when she basically invited herself over early in January; at which point I had little choice but to tell her “no” in no uncertain terms.

I did the necessary during our little weekly call I’d better not forget about. I told her I *knew* she did it; and that I didn’t feel comfortable with her coming to my house.

Hey, can we do our call early?

Moi | *Sunday, January 09 2022 01:56PM*

Sure. We can do it now if you want.

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 01:57PM*

Okay, give me a minute or two

Moi | *Sunday, January 09 2022 01:59PM*

The acronym “DARVO” stands for “Deny, Attack, and Reverse Victim and Offender”. It’s a neologism in the self-help community for the sort of abuse often reflexively spewed out by people with certain personality-disordered traits.

I can’t write a blockquote encapsulating everything Captain DARVO said, or rather screamed, over the next fifteen minutes or so. This’ll have to do as an approximation.

You’re so **STUPID!**

How could you **DO** this to me!

I’m your **MOTHER!**

One thing was certain after our chat; she *definitely* did it. I struck a *nerve*.

I have to call someone. I’m in distress.

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 02:30PM*

[Resized_20220109_173518.jpeg image/jpeg] Is the Lowe's key yours? Because it will be in the mail in the morning if it is.

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 05:36PM*

Can we please talk some more? This is horrible. You can't spring this on me and disappear.

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 06:26PM*

I swear on your life, my life, Caleb and Bray's life that I did not do it. I haven't driven farther than Whiteville and Lumberton in 2 years! Not since we met in Raleigh!

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 06:29PM*

I don't want to talk right now, and I don't think either of us have anything productive to say that hasn't already been said. That isn't my key, and sending it back isn't necessary.

Moi | *Sunday, January 09 2022 07:16PM*

Well, I love you and am concerned about someone strange being in your house

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 08:07PM*

It's time to buy cameras.

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 08:07PM*

I love you very much and would prefer to forget today ever existed.

Susan | *Sunday, January 09 2022 09:38PM*

[FB_IMG_1641837441399.jpg im-
age/jpeg]

Susan | Monday, January 10 2022 12:57PM

I had a rough time with this. I *want* to believe Susan; I really do. I'm afraid this person might just be a pathological liar; a phrase I first learned in elementary school as my parent's marriage was beginning to fail. I'm afraid it might just be impossible to have an honest relationship with this person.

#TODO I should probably backfill more about Susan; but I probably won't for a while because this is about UFOs.

By the new year, the last few months had been a whirlwind of bizarre, unexpected insights into *something* that was different about me; the exact nature of which still seemed to elude me. I was relieved by the idea that I at least wasn't the only person going through this; but, it had been a few months since I talked to Doris, and the situation had grown to the point that I really needed to figure out what I was supposed to *do*. No, I don't mean sageing my house or burning palo santo. I mean, what is it I'm actually supposed to *do* here?

My therapist had encouraged me to seek out groups that were into this, uh... sort of thing. I compiled a small list in the fall, but never went to any of them; there was a lot happening in my head, *really* fast.

I kept remembering more about the woman from the sermon; who actually appeared to be *me*. I remembered that a lot of the congregation was moved, and wanted to help her. As more came to me I thought, wasn't there a bunch of money raised for this woman or something?

Shit, what am I even supposed to...

I kept seeing Stephanie on the weekends. She wasn't able to provide much useful advice, but was into this stuff and had an ex who was ostensibly a medium. She was one of the people at Philly back in 2019 when Persephone had that weird talk with us. She also had an uncle who was a Freemason; though he never talked to Stephanie about what he did.

The talk with Tommy made me feel better; but I needed to see other people.

I needed to talk to Heather.

This might sound weird, but the next time you see Heather can you ask if she wants to go to a Red Hot Chili Peppers show in September? It's our thing, she'll get it.

Moi | *Saturday, January 08 2022 02:47PM*

yeah ofc I can

Erika | *Sunday, January 09 2022 08:37AM*

she says "if there's an in joke there I've long forgotten it unfortunately" lol

Erika | *Sunday, January 09 2022 09:03AM*

Smooth move, Ex-lax.

Pepe Silvia, this name keeps coming up over and over again. Every day Pepe's mail is getting sent back to me. Pepe Silvia! Pepe Silvia! I look in the mail, and this whole **box** is Pepe Silvia!

I had a doctor's appointment in mid-February; I believe it was the first one since Triangle Comprehensive Care was bought by Avery Primary Care during COVID times. I had put off going in person when I could get away with telehealth, and hadn't had any problems that required going in.

I'd done labs beforehand, and hadn't really paid attention to them other than to see that my hormones were normal. The first thing Dr. Reid wanted to talk to me about was

Your vitamins, Rachael. How much B12 do you take?

I was taken aback, because I'd never brought up the fact that I *take* vitamin B12. So I'm thinking "Oh shit, what'd I do?"



Figure 17: WKUK Hot Dogs (https://youtu.be/vaAF_GAc3Mk)

I started taking vitamin B12 several years ago before I transitioned. I'd felt off for months in numerous vague, non-specific ways, and I found that taking a multivitamin seemed to make me feel better. I wanted to try narrowing down exactly *what* was making me feel better, and arrived at vitamin B12.⁴¹ I was a little surprised to find it actually seemed to help; but as time went on, I second guessed myself and assumed I was probably just chasing ghosts.

⁴¹This was probably bullshit, because those multivitamins don't have *anywhere near* enough vitamin B12 to help with a deficiency.

Several months after I stopped taking it, the same feelings came back. I reflected on what changed, and decided to try B12 again; only to find the symptoms gone again a few months later.

I repeated this process *a few* times, before ultimately concluding that maybe I should just take vitamin B12. It's a water-soluble vitamin that's harmless in excess.

Anyway, Dr. Reid said my vitamin B12 level was too high. I didn't think that was possible, but I'm not a doctor; granted, it *was* an order of magnitude above the reference level. I figured this was because I took a sublingual B12 right before I left home for my blood draw.

After learning my doctor was checking it, I decided to stop taking it once and for all. If I really *did* have a problem I supposed we'd find it.

Simultaneous with finding that my vitamin B12 was too high, she also pointed out that my vitamin D was *low*. I saw this as an attempt to show me how much better I'd feel if I actually took *the right shit*; or something.

Seems fine. She prescribed me vitamin D to pick up at the pharmacy. It was a something-thousand IU pill that you only took once a week. It may've made me feel a little better. She didn't prescribe more once I took the course.

More kept coming to me. I felt like I was on some sort of path. I felt like I had some purpose or destiny to realize; and had the feeling of experiencing visions or revelations, for lack of a better word. I thought I was meant to start an experimental community, become the president of a new breakaway state, and get assassinated *at exactly 12:26pm on Friday, May 8th 2026* before continuing on through countless subsequent lifetimes.

I was acutely aware of the optics of doing anything that would look like “starting a UFO cult”. And yet, I couldn’t deny how overpowering all this stuff in my head was.

I decided to engage Tommy for the first time since my surprise visit last fall.

Alright you crazy old man. I wouldn’t mind having a talk with you about shark people and Warren, Ohio.

Moi | Friday, February 25 2022 09:40AM

Hey Rachael! My apologies for getting back to you so late. My day was crazy. Yes, I would enjoy a talk with you.

Tommy | Friday, February 25 2022 09:39PM

No worries! I’m available most nights and weekends. I get that you work weekends and are generally a busy guy, so I’ll let you propose a time.

Moi | Saturday, February 26 2022 08:31AM

With the Heather connection still a bit up in the air and the ball now in Tommy’s court, it was only a matter of time before I reached out to Persephone.

Hey Persephone!
I haven’t talked to you in a while, and I’ve been wanting to catch up. I went through a wee bit of a spiritual awakening last year, it seems I’m not from around here, and this isn’t even news to my friendly hometown cabal of mystics and Freemasons. It’s weird shit, though I get the feeling it might not be news to you either.

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 04:10PM

oh yeah?

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:08PM*

where are you from?

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:08PM*

Because I thought you were Rachael,
Damnit.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:08PM*

you found a spiritual collective? Are they
healthy people?

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:09PM*

I pinged you yesterday on the astral,
thanks for getting my message – good to
see sms still works.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:12PM*

Unless Kristina messaged you about me
asking.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:12PM*

I usually feel the anxiety, waiting for these
long format messages, as I have the ad/hd.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:28PM*

I'd request whatever you are edit-
ing/working-on/thinking-about/trying to
completely summarize, perfectly, you even-
tually hit enter.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:28PM*



Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:28PM*

I just hit the Volcano and am also eating dinner, so I'm sorry I'll be a bit slow 😊

> where are you from?

The Pleiades, you little shit

> you found a spiritual collective? Are they healthy people?

Not exactly. I was talking about a small group of folks at my childhood church who figured it out when I was a kid. That included a childhood preacher who is also a Freemason and also not from around here. The fact that we happened to be born in the same hospital in Warren, Ohio turned out to be a surprise tool that helped me later.

I would kinda like to find a lodge, coven, spiritual collective or what have you, but just haven't really had the time and energy. A year ago I was a hardened atheist skeptic who didn't believe in ghosts, so I guess my mind's a bit blown.

> I pinged you yesterday on the astral, thanks for getting my message – good to see sms still works.

> Unless Kristina messaged you about me asking.

Sorry, it was Kristina this time. She messaged me yesterday to check on me, since I've kinda been radio fucking silent on her the last several months. Speaking of her, how much does Kristina know about this stuff? I figured I should probably talk to you about it first at least.

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 05:29PM

I have instructions from Kristina you are in a no-play-area.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:30PM

Kristina isn't into any of this stuff. She's gracious about listening to it tho.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:30PM*

> The Pleiades, you little shit
hahahahahahahaa

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:30PM*

I don't know much about the Freemasons.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:31PM*

I don't have any lifetimes I'm aware of that are off planet yet.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:31PM*

... But you know, I haven't really looked that far back either.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:31PM*

I want to be friends and friendly, Kristina is mostly disentangled from me now.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:32PM*

Oh, Stacey and I aren't on speaking terms with Samantha and Brittany anymore.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:32PM*

idk if you knew that.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:32PM*

> Oh, Stacey and I aren't on speaking terms with Samantha and Brittany anymore.

I knew something happened, but I wasn't certain of it. I'm sorry that went sour.

Moi | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:34PM*

Sorry I'm being weird, I can't decide which thing to reply to next lmao

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 05:34PM

it's ok.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:35PM

this is better.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:35PM

> Kristina isn't into any of this stuff. She's gracious about listening to it tho.

I take that to mean if I tell Kristina I'm a reincarnated space alien she'll probably just laugh it off?

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 05:35PM

faster replies -> better.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:35PM

lol I'll try that

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 05:36PM

idk, I don't know what she'd do.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:36PM

I know what she wouldn't do, she wouldn't laugh at you.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:36PM

She's not super into the spiritual stuff, but she doesn't need to be, she's very well grounded. And not from a "earth perspective" but from a "causing more harm" perspective.

Percy | Monday, February 28 2022 05:36PM

I'll see if I can't find some alien past lives.
I haven't gone further then a few hundred
years back.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:37PM*

Yeah, I kinda already figured that about
her.

Moi | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:37PM*

See?

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:37PM*

I was on a meditation discord ... I got
banned.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:37PM*

then I was on a borderline discord ... I got
banned.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:37PM*

I joined a few cults, those were boring.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:37PM*

I'm doing pro-bono therapy on the side
(as the therapist without a license) with a
few people.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:38PM*

so I'm mostly in DMs now. Therapy three
times a week.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:38PM*

Oh, I think I own a majority of the Ther-
avada canon now.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:38PM*

> I'll see if I can't find some alien past lives. I haven't gone further than a few hundred years back.

I mean, we all come from somewhere 🙌

I guess sometimes you find mysticism and sometimes mysticism finds you. My path seems to be the latter lmao

Moi | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:38PM*

Well, I'm relieved you connected with something outside of "I'm an atheist, this is all there is, goodbye"

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:39PM*

Because if this is *it*, man ... just ... wow.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:39PM*

and I don't mean it from the absolute perspective, I mean it from the "I'm one person, this is my one lifetime, and I have all this misery"

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:40PM*

Yeah. It's wild because I've remembered a small but non-trivial amount of stuff from before I was born, and thought that was normal until I had a really uncomfortable conversation with my Sunday school teacher and wound up burying it. But now that I'm remembering more, I remember being fascinated by the concept of atheism. I guess I'd never encountered that before, and actually remember purposefully choosing that path for my pre-awakening life.

Moi | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:45PM*

Sorry, I'm typing too much at once again
lmao

Moi | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:45PM*

that's a good amount to stop at I appreciate it.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:46PM*

ad/hd means you have to pick things to reply to, so that's OK. That was a good one to reply to.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:46PM*

Atheism is pretty fascinating as a belief system. A whole universe of stuff ... "just me"

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:47PM*

Kalpas (the buddhist word for eon, an expansion and contraction of the universe) "just this 30 or 40 years"

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:47PM*

> In another simple explanation, there are four different lengths of kalpas. A regular kalpa is approximately 16 million years long (16,798,000 years[1]), and a small kalpa is 1000 regular kalpas, or about 16 billion years. Further, a medium kalpa is roughly 320 billion years, the equivalent of 20 small kalpas. A great kalpa is 4 medium kalpas, or around 1.28 trillion years.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:48PM*

Oh, you chose, did you get what you wanted?

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:49PM*

> Atheism is pretty fascinating as a belief system. A whole universe of stuff ... “just me”

Being where I am now, I see atheism as a very specific reaction to fundamentalist religion, and not something that would really naturally arise without some catalyst. But back then, it just seemed like the obvious default belief system.

Moi | *Monday, February 28 2022 05:49PM*

the default system is connection – the form
the connection takes is pretty varied.

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 06:00PM*

I'll be around Rachael, I'm glad you are
talking to me!!

Percy | *Monday, February 28 2022 06:01PM*

> Oh, you chose, did you get what you wanted?

This is proving to be a surprisingly difficult question, and I feel I need to deconstruct it.

As I remember it, I, along with a couple other... spirits, entities, gods, my guides, I honestly don't know yet... basically went over the plan for this incarnation. There seemed to be aspects that were chosen by me, and aspects that were chosen for me. But I do remember being fascinated by atheism and that was weaved in, so to speak.

Did I get what I wanted? I suppose so, in the sense that I gained a new experience. It was rougher than I expected though. I remember admiring how atheists took such a strong stance toward the injustice of the church that they'd rather just not believe or practice anything. But it's honestly a pretty soul-crushing life, no pun intended.

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 06:01PM

> I'll be around Rachael, I'm glad you are talking to me!!

Thanks for listening!

Moi | Monday, February 28 2022 06:02PM

Do I get any attribution to your spiritual awakening?

Percy | Tuesday, March 01 2022 11:10AM

I'm trying to be mindful of cause and effect.

Percy | Tuesday, March 01 2022 11:10AM

how have things been since figuring this stuff out?

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 01:40PM*

you get access to powers?

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 01:40PM*

Sorry Percy, I seem to have missed a lot of discord messages from a lot of folks.

> Do I get any attribution to your spiritual awakening?

Lol, I'm not sure what that means really. You were one of the folks I met along the path, and I don't think that was an accident.

I remember being at your apartment with Stephanie a few years ago when you were doing magick things on the balcony, and you low-key scoffed at me for being an atheist. Which I don't think had happened to me before, and I think it's what I needed at that point. For someone to evangelize mysticism a bit. We kept talking inside after Stephanie left, and I remember at one point you said "You want to know the truth about UFOs, Rachael?!" To which I replied "I fell down that rabbit hole in 2016 and I don't want to talk about it." Which was true; I had a near-awakening in 2016 and figured out I wasn't from around here, but went into hella fucking denial about it and decided I'd just been smoking way too much weed. I re-hatched basically right after that and started HRT a few months later.

The last time I saw you at Samantha's house, I was *really* early in my awakening, to the point I didn't understand what was happening to me yet. Occult shit came up in conversation, and you and Stacey passed some rocks around the table. So for a while I was thinking "Dammit, Stacey and Persephone made me hold some rocks and now the universe is unraveling!"

I'm realizing that several people I met along the way knew I wasn't from here, particularly other reincarnated space aliens, and they've basically been waiting for me to figure it out and remember them.

I kinda just assumed you were one of those people. You do seem to have played your part though, whether or not you meant to.

Oh, good, sms still works.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:52PM*

Always Persephone!!!

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:52PM*

My discord name is this way because of fliers around town still ... that I mean to take down.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:52PM*

> how have things been since figuring this stuff out?

Lol, I feel like I'm just coming back to reality.

> you get access to powers?

Well, none that I know of yet. I don't know that remembering shit from before you were born is a power, or having very accurate prophetic visions come true is a power. It seems my thing is building communities, or communes for lack of a better word, which is cool but not really a superpower.

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:55PM*

> Always Persephone!!!

Sorry Persephone

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:55PM*

what do you think? those are standard things?

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:56PM*

> having very accurate prophetic visions
come true is a power
Still got some denial to work through I
see.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:56PM*

Okay, well it seems those are my powers
thus far 🙄

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:57PM*

it's how I clock people for how far they
are on path.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:57PM*

how much stuff they have mastery over.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:57PM*

especially the veil.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 02:57PM*

I know how I'm gonna die. I get taken out
by a sniper. We're in a parade or motor-
cade going through a city. The sniper's up
in a building. He's just some scared kid,
brainwashed by religion and propaganda.
Destined to make a martyr of me or some
shit. I've seen it from both our perspec-
tives. I can't even be mad, and I won't
be around to say I told you so. Unless
ghost-Rachael makes her rounds and goes
nana-nana-boo-boo.

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:02PM*

holy shit.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:04PM*

really?

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:04PM*

Well, I suppose I could be wrong

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:04PM*

Well, I'm gonna copy the above into my diary.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:14PM*

Not the sniper stuff, which is cool, but the awakening stuff, which I take a measure of pride in.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:15PM*

Go for it!

Sorry if that was too dark. I'm at peace with it. Everyone dies, I came here to help, and I'm likely to be more helpful as a martyr than dying of old age. Though I suppose this is all a bit pretentious if I haven't found my intuition's noise floor yet.

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:27PM*

Oh, I'd put space-alien into the same realm as ||trap|| it's an earther's way of seeing others.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:27PM*

I love the early conceit and pretentious part of path, treasure it.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:27PM*

Lol I've kinda just been saying that ironically

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:27PM*

universe has billions of stars, only earth
has life on it tho /s

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:27PM*

what's the un-ironic way?

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

Fuck, I don't know

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

o0o0o0o, on a journey of healing now.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

I have a few lifetimes as aquatic life.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

here on Earth.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

I miss those times.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

Simpler.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:28PM*

Yeah, I know you were a dolphin at one
point

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:29PM*

Yeah, it was nice.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:29PM*

I guess it depends how strong into the
identity you are.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:29PM*

If you are a tourist or a visitor, vs a prisoner.

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 03:29PM*

But meditation practice tho?

Percy | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 05:43PM*

Followed shortly after by

Hey, word of warning, my ex is probably going to attempt to date you. She asked for my permission today. Lol

Kristina | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 10:23PM*

Fuck, thanks for the warning 😊

Moi | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 10:38PM*

You're welcome!

Kristina | *Wednesday, March 02 2022 10:38PM*

I thought the Freemasons were going to show up to my house and take me to an initiation ceremony. These messages showed up in my head that I was supposed to get in the car with Terry and Tommy, who wouldn't be able to say anything. They'd ask me some questions, I guess to prove that the things in my head were genuine, and at the end I was supposed to curtsy.

A week or so later, a very loud message in my head told me to **bow, not curtsy**. I guess that first part was a joke?

Hey Ethan...I hope you are well. When are you free?

Tommy | *Monday, March 07 2022 08:31PM*

How about this Saturday?

Moi | Tuesday, March 08 2022 06:19PM

That works!

Tommy | Tuesday, March 08 2022 06:32PM

Though I was optimistic this was a sign we were about to do “the thing”, this would actually be the last time I’d get anything out of Tommy for over two months.

Somewhere in the midst of this, I grew utterly convinced that Terry commissioned Josh’s artist-mother to paint a portrait of me practicing my curtsy in my room; something these people were ostensibly able to remotely view through occult means, despite the physical isolation.



Moi | Tuesday, March 08 2022 06:17PM

Hey, did Terry get your mom to paint something that looks like this?

Moi | *Tuesday, March 08 2022 06:17PM*

Hmm idk anything about that

Josh | *Tuesday, March 08 2022 11:30PM*

Did you want me to ask her?

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 10:01AM*



Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 05:01PM*

Lol you already did and I'm sure she's very curious about the rainbow-colored thing behind the chair. It's a reversible sequin snek!

Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 05:01PM*

I understand that you have to play dumb. I anticipate being presented with the painting at a ceremony on Saturday, at which point I'll try and re-create the picture while holding it.

Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 05:02PM*

Hey lol I really don't know what you're talking about. I called my mom and she's not painting you right now lol. I have no idea what's going on.

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:40PM*

Lol how's New York?

Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:47PM*

??

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:48PM*

I thought you got tickets to the ACC tournament, that's at the Barclays center right?

Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:51PM*

I went to the women's one last week in Greensboro

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:52PM*

Oh nvm

Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:52PM*

Lol I'm lost

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:52PM*

Are you in New York? A
Is your surgery soon?

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:54PM*

No lol. I actually don't have a surgery date yet.

Moi | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:55PM*

Ok

Josh | *Wednesday, March 09 2022 09:55PM*

I told Kristina around the middle of March. She was outwardly supportive; but, I could also tell she was a little skeptical, and would want to see the receipts sooner rather than later.

Things were starting to feel a little hit-and-miss. My therapist, Doris, and Persephone made me feel like I was on the right track. I was initially thrown off by Persephone saying she “didn’t know much about Freemasonry” in our Discord conversation; but this seemed to mimic the Freemason’s “Simon says” rules I’d been exposed to over the years, yet failed to retain accurately. After Josh appeared ignorant in this last conversation, I briefly held strong in the belief that this would all clear up over the next few weeks.

My capacity to get any work done had only gotten worse since last year’s pre-UFO problems. Somewhere in here, I briefly started taking my ADHD medication again, after having not taken it for around nine months.

She thought she read minds, she was not right (Q2)

Somewhere around the winter or early spring, the Red Hot Chili Peppers connection took a *turn*. Where I previously thought it was just some sort of an in-joke that Anthony Kiedis was one of the different people or something, I grew convinced there was some personal connection. I thought I remembered visiting Tony, who I was now on a first name basis with, in April of 1990 as an unborn spirit or something. I thought there was going to be some kind of a special SNL where I’d be in the audience. I was to catch a flight, meet the chauffeur, and then meet “Tony”; all based on intuition and these messages that were showing up in my head. Or... something.

I started getting all this weird stuff in my head about how I actually had a future with Anthony Kiedis; someone I’ve never exactly fantasized about or been attracted to.

I still believed I was *generally* on the right track, but I desperately needed a sort of help that seemed to keep eluding me. I hoped Stephanie would know more, but she didn't. Then, I couldn't get Heather's attention through our mutual friend. Persephone made me feel better, but had little practical advice. And, *that's* what I needed. Practical, concrete *advice*. What is it I'm actually supposed to be *doing*?

Frustrated that Tommy kept blowing off my attempts to meet with him, I eventually just went for it in a message he never responded to.

Alright you crazy old man. I think I'm from the Pleiades, I think you are too, and I think you, Terry and the Stewart's know something about it.

Moi | Sunday, April 03 2022 12:00PM

Although it didn't strike me as problematic *at the time*, it was probably somewhere around here when Vickie and I started losing each other. The problem with me is, I have a *really* hard time with disclosure. I need to really think about telling someone before I tell someone. There are reasons for this.

So I say to myself I gotta find this guy, I gotta go up to his office, I gotta put his mail **IN** the guy's goddamn hands otherwise he's never gonna get it he's gonna keep coming back down here

At some point, the rate of information flooding into my brain began exceeding the rate at which I could comfortably relate the information to people in my support network, like Stephanie and my therapist. Vickie was still talking about the "big shift", when I was already twenty steps ahead of that. I was painfully aware of how much the new stuff in my head about Anthony Kiedis looked like classic delusions of reference; and I didn't want to scare off Stephanie, or make my therapist jump to conclusions.

I kept waiting, weekend after weekend, for the Freemasons to show up and take me away. Somehow I kept moving the goalpost. It feels utterly ridiculous *now*.

During a Sunday chat with Susan, I brought up the Warren, Ohio connection with my mom, just to test my memory and make sure I hadn't lost it. I mean, that *is* pretty crazy, right?

Tommy was born in Warren too, right?

That's right! Tommy was born in Warren, Ohio; and so was Dave Grohl!

Oh, yeah! I forgot about Dave Grohl! That's probably just a coincidence.

Wait, what's his band called again? The fucking *Foo Fighters*?

God. Dammit.

In a desperate attempt to reach out to another "UFO kid", I sent a letter to Heather's last known address; as well as the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. I forget what all I put in there, but I *know* it didn't make much sense. I'll spoil the surprise now by telling you I never got back any sort of response from either.

I was convinced I'd somehow roused the suspicion of my mail-person, and left *them* a weird goddamn note. I got a weird response back about how someone else was running the route and to enjoy my trip; a reference to my weird visions about being in the audience for SNL.

Near the end of the month, I had in my mind what felt like the equivalent of Morpheus telling me to jump off the ledge of the building.

Send a letter to your closest friends and family. Deadline, this Friday (or something).



Figure 18: Neo doesn't Jump From Office Window | Agents Chase - Matrix (1999) - Movie Clip HD Scene (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lBDbsbOLj2Q&t=10s>)

I fucking did it. I sent weird handwritten letters to Josh and my mother, with similar content but a customized cover letter. On, like, the last Friday in April or something; barely meeting this imposing, ostensibly very serious deadline. With all that weird shit, including my anticipated assassination at 12:26pm on whatever day.

So, what happened?

Hey Rachael, me and Caroline got engaged yesterday! Just wanted to share the news.

Josh | Monday, May 02 2022 09:09AM

Oh awesome, congrats!

Moi | Monday, May 02 2022 09:51AM

Thanks! 😊

Josh | Monday, May 02 2022 09:51AM

Ok I got back to Durham tonight and got your letter. Can you send me a picture of the original painting?

Josh | Monday, May 02 2022 09:15PM

They still haven't given it to me yet, those crazy old men are giving me blue balls lmao

Moi | Monday, May 02 2022 09:23PM

Rachael, you have to believe me, I don't know anything about any of this. But I would like to hear more!

Josh | Monday, May 02 2022 09:24PM

How do you know she painted a painting 10 years ago if you haven't seen it yet? A vision?

Josh | *Monday, May 02 2022 09:24PM*

My mom didn't know you were trans 10 years ago. We were in college.

Josh | *Monday, May 02 2022 09:25PM*

Can you go through what you know and what evidence you have with me?

Josh | *Monday, May 02 2022 09:25PM*

You can come over to my house if you want to talk.

Josh | *Monday, May 02 2022 09:33PM*

Am I from the Pleiades?

Josh | *Monday, May 02 2022 10:38PM*

I really wish you would talk to me

Josh | *Monday, May 02 2022 10:51PM*

Please talk to me before I leave for Vegas tonight.

Josh | *Tuesday, May 03 2022 02:37PM*

I promise I won't tell anyone anything unless you want me to. I care a lot about you and I really want to hear about all the stuff you mentioned in the letter.

Josh | *Tuesday, May 03 2022 02:53PM*

The SMS thread with my mother during the same timespan was considerably more spartan.

So, any advice on upgrading to an iPhone?
Also, please come 🙏 home for Mother's
Day and my birthday. It may be my last.
I crave time with you.

Susan | *Monday, May 02 2022 01:57PM*

And we won't mention the thing.

Susan | *Monday, May 02 2022 01:57PM*

[Resized_Screenshot_20220502-
171944_Facebook.jpeg image/jpeg]

Susan | *Monday, May 02 2022 05:20PM*

I love you, and I will never stop loving
you.

Susan | *Monday, May 02 2022 08:53PM*

The Supreme Court is set to overturn Roe
vs. Wade. I don't recognize this country.

Susan | *Monday, May 02 2022 09:48PM*

Hey, any advice on an iPhone?

Susan | *Tuesday, May 03 2022 05:19PM*

Sorry, I don't really have any advice. I
think you'd be happy with any late model
iPhone.

Moi | *Tuesday, May 03 2022 06:29PM*

Thank you. I love you to the moon and
back.

Susan | *Tuesday, May 03 2022 09:49PM*

Love you too!

Moi | *Tuesday, May 03 2022 10:03PM*

[Resized_20220504_175101.jpeg image/jpeg] Happy Star Wars Day from my favorite lovey!

Susan | *Wednesday, May 04 2022 05:56PM*

Happy May the Fourth to you too!

Moi | *Wednesday, May 04 2022 06:02PM*

I love you!

Susan | *Wednesday, May 04 2022 08:53PM*

Love you too!

Moi | *Wednesday, May 04 2022 09:04PM*

I love you! What do you think about this weekend?

Susan | *Thursday, May 05 2022 08:20PM*

I'm sending you ALL the love!

Susan | *Thursday, May 05 2022 08:20PM*

No pressure! Love you!

Susan | *Thursday, May 05 2022 08:29PM*

We'll talk soon, I love you!

Moi | *Thursday, May 05 2022 09:39PM*

I love you to the moon and back!

Susan | *Friday, May 06 2022 08:57PM*

I love you, and I want to talk to you tomorrow!

Moi | *Friday, May 06 2022 09:29PM*

I got your card, and I LOVE it! And you! Thank you, love!

Susan | *Saturday, May 07 2022 01:39PM*

By this point, I had a feeling that I can only imagine is akin to that of a bomb tech after they pull the plunger and nothing happens. I felt I needed to defuse this situation, *very carefully*.

Hey there! I have questions about where I'm from that are very different from anything we've talked about before. I'd like to talk about them for a few minutes. It's nothing bad, I just ask that you keep an open mind.

Moi | *Saturday, May 07 2022 02:24PM*

Okay, sure.

Susan | *Saturday, May 07 2022 02:25PM*

Just a second. I have to use the bathroom.

Susan | *Saturday, May 07 2022 02:26PM*

I can call you when you're ready, unless you'd rather wait. Either is fine.

Moi | *Saturday, May 07 2022 02:27PM*

Okay, I'm ready.

Susan | *Saturday, May 07 2022 02:33PM*

I attempted to ask, while making it sound like the most boring, banal thing *ever*, if anyone had talked to her recently about Freemasons or reincarnation or anything. I honestly can't remember if I mentioned UFOs or not.

Unsurprisingly, Susan didn't seem to know anything about what was going on. Already assuming that would be the case, I attempted to find a way to get in touch with Jody; as I had since ascertained she was from Vega, as well as being one of the people who surrounded me after Tommy's weird sermon.

In retrospect, it seemed like we were *both* dismantling a bomb. Susan said she'd talk to Jody, but she never did. My letter to her had apparently gotten lost in the mail.

The weirdest part might be how Susan just kept going through the motions in our already hollow relationship.

I love you!

Moi | *Sunday, May 08 2022 09:58PM*

I love you, too!

Susan | *Sunday, May 08 2022 10:48PM*

[Resized_Resized_20220509_130839.jpeg image/jpeg] Thinking about the one on the right, the 13. I love you so much!

Susan | *Monday, May 09 2022 09:13PM*

I got your letter. Love you!

Susan | *Tuesday, May 10 2022 07:49PM*

It turned out that, in my addled state, I used the wrong zip code.

I love you to the moon and back times infinity!

Susan | *Tuesday, May 10 2022 09:49PM*

I love you too!

Moi | *Tuesday, May 10 2022 10:01PM*

I'm so tired!

Susan | *Wednesday, May 11 2022 08:55PM*

But I love you!

Susan | *Wednesday, May 11 2022 08:55PM*

Love you too!

Moi | *Wednesday, May 11 2022 09:50PM*

I love you so much!

Susan | *Thursday, May 12 2022 09:08PM*

Love you too!

Moi | *Thursday, May 12 2022 10:44PM*

It was at this point that Josh gave me a chance to catch up and take my mind off things for a while.

The Get The Led Out concert is tomorrow.
You're still welcome to come

Josh | *Wednesday, May 11 2022 02:26PM*

Oh cool, I might!

Moi | *Wednesday, May 11 2022 02:42PM*



Josh | *Wednesday, May 11 2022 02:44PM*

You want me to go to your house after work?

Moi | *Thursday, May 12 2022 04:15PM*

Sure. The concert is at 8

Josh | *Thursday, May 12 2022 04:52PM*

Ok!

Moi | *Thursday, May 12 2022 04:52PM*

I showed up wearing my shirt I'd gotten from the Flying Saucer when I joined the "UFO club" years ago; still hoping to coax something out of him. He had this hurt-ass look on his face when he first saw me. I still thought he might know more than he was letting on at the time, mostly because of his grave expression; but I *really* don't think that's the case anymore.

I tried to explain what had happened and how I ended up at this point in my life; but I struggled to make coherent sense without linking against a vast amount of information that I'm painfully private about. I couldn't explain the Tommy stuff without going back all the way to middle school, I couldn't really explain how I knew Heather and Maureen without explaining I was a kinkster, I couldn't explain how I thought I was the woman from this sermon without talking about the aforementioned trauma bullshit... it was like the fucking Sweater Song. I tried my best, but I could tell Josh was really struggling with the gaps in information I was hesitant to fill in.

We enjoyed the concert, though.

At one point toward the end, I kind of just started crying. He clearly didn't know anything about UFOs; but he made me feel better than *anyone* had up to that point.

It was on the eve of Friday the 13th, when I started envisioning something that had happened to me in a past life. It was... Friday the 13th.

Just to reiterate, I don't believe *any* of this anymore. It felt very real *at the time*.

It was revealed to me that, in ancient times long ago, UFO people like me and Heather lived openly among the people. As we began to spook out the Romans, that led to, well... Friday the 13th; a pogrom against us UFO folks, carried out by the

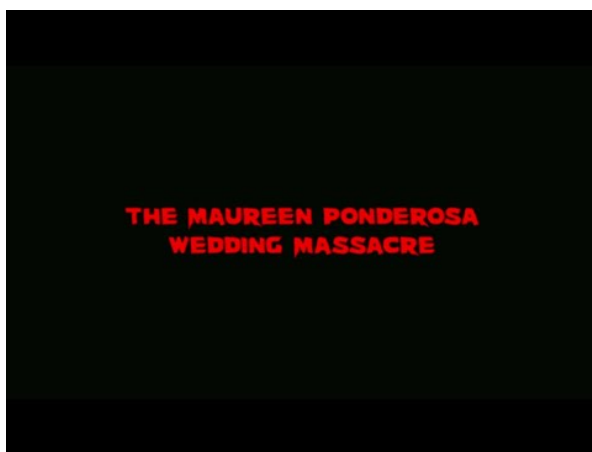


Figure 19: "The Maureen Ponderosa Wedding Massacre": IASIP Cold Open (<https://youtu.be/Ax6cAJgs-lc>)

then-fledgling Catholic Church, which may as well have been the religious branch of the Roman imperial government.

I remembered living in a village in modern-day France, as I watched them build this prison up on a hill where they were eventually to house us different people upon its completion. As the Romans' objective was to discourage us from incarnating on Earth in the future, they were to torture us over the course of a year or two before killing us off and rounding up the next group of UFO people.

Because of the nature of visions and past life memories, we were all aware of our fate by adolescence. I lived into my late 20s or early 30s before being taken; a (cisgender) man who never married but had, unlike myself, a normal and average sex life. I lived in a small dwelling on a steep hill, that I think was connected to other dwellings in townhouse-like fashion. It was comparable in size to my dorm room at Avent Ferry, maybe a bit smaller. I

spoke Latin and was able to write, keeping a journal on a desk. I was surprised by the sophistication given the time period, though formal education appeared to be the norm for “UFO kids”, or whatever.

I had actually been someone *else* in a lifetime before this; the Roman senator who arguably caused the deboggle. I ostensibly ran for the Roman senate and won handily on a platform of being a common-sense progressive from the Pleiades.⁴² The establishment found this disruptive and threatening to their power, leading to the aforementioned pogrom.

Anyway; I thought I was the Roman senator who caused Friday the 13th, who subsequently *got* Friday the 13th’ed. Extending the story arc further, I was concurrently envisioning that I had a multi-lifetime career in politics; once serving as a well-liked president of my entire homeworld. I would “remember” more about this over the following months.

Most of what I remembered on the eve of Friday the 13th was about the thing itself. They came for us on, well... you know the day. This woman rounded up about half a dozen of us, and we rode up the hill to the prison on this wagon. I remember us being in weirdly high spirits. One of the people on the wagon was apparently the preincarnation of Heather.

We arrived at the prison. I remembered it having an L shaped corridor, and I was placed into I believe the first cell; all of which were on the left side of the hallway. We were housed in individual rooms, about 10’ square with a small view and a hole for waste to go, which would roll downhill.

⁴²As I’m writing this in the year 2024 in a different state of mind, I want to mention that I don’t think the Roman senate was ever a direct democracy in the modern sense; thus poking an obvious hole in this story, if ever it needed another one.

The prison was run by this woman, who I called the “warden chick” in my head. She was not very sadistic, and maybe even a bit childlike. She *did* diligently remove an arm, a leg, an eyeball, and my dick and balls over the course of my stay. Despite this, she was never particularly *mean* to us in terms of her demeanor. It was actually a pretty surreal thing to remember; and not what I would expect my subconscious to come up with.

We were eventually killed off after around 12 to 18 months of this. I remember a higher-up official coming to our prison periodically to check on us; who was later dissatisfied with what he viewed as too kind of treatment. We were the guinea pigs; which seemed to be a good thing in this case. I heard reports that they started cutting people open at another prison.

I was killed by being stabbed in the chest. My friend, the preincarnation of Heather was beheaded. I remembered something peculiar about that moment; despite having grown up with her, I never asked where she was from. This came up during our final words, when the executioner proclaimed that he was about to “send us back to *wherever* we’re from”.

Back to the SMS thread with Susan.

I love you!

Susan | Friday, May 13 2022 12:26PM

Hold up; what? That’s my number! The exact time I’m supposed to die, or whatever.

Okay; she *has* to know, right? She’s at least in on *something*. Sure, she texts “I love you” every day, but it’s almost always *at night*. Not precisely at 12:26pm on Friday the 13th, right as I’m dealing with *this fucking shit*.

Alright, you crazy old men. I can take a hint.

I love you too!

Moi | *Friday, May 13 2022 12:47PM*

Do you know when you might be coming home?

Susan | *Friday, May 13 2022 01:27PM*

Hey Love, any thoughts on the weekend?

Susan | *Friday, May 13 2022 07:03PM*

I'll let you know, love you!

Moi | *Friday, May 13 2022 07:36PM*

Thanks, love you more!

Susan | *Friday, May 13 2022 07:36PM*

Liam's birthday was today, so I went over there after work to hang out with him and Kristina. I remember trying to make conversation with Kristina and one of her friends that was there, but I was *frazzled* and not good for much of anything. I was somewhere else in my mind.

Continuing on with Susan.

Are you okay? There was a crash on 40.

Susan | *Saturday, May 14 2022 01:41PM*

I'm okay.

Moi | *Saturday, May 14 2022 01:59PM*

Thank God! Miss you!

Susan | *Saturday, May 14 2022 01:59PM*

I love you and I miss you! It's not the same without you here!

Susan | *Saturday, May 14 2022 09:30PM*

[Resized_Screenshot_20220515-192726_Facebook.jpeg image/jpeg]

Susan | Sunday, May 15 2022 07:28PM

We celebrated today!

Susan | Sunday, May 15 2022 07:28PM

Somewhere around now, likely during our Sunday chat, Susan said she thought I should “get my meds checked”. To which I replied something like

Okay... I can tell I've taken a wrong turn. I'll... talk to my doctor.

I explained that I had stopped taking my ADHD medication, which I foolishly told her I had started a year back. She... *didn't* like this.

YOU'RE NOT JUST SUPPOSED TO STOP TAKING STUFF, YOU NEED TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR!

And I'm thinking *goddamn*, woman. They're fucking stimulants. I stopped taking them *because* I was worried about what was happening to me. Now she's all freaked out and wants to get doctors involved, and I just want to know how to be a UFO person like Heather and them. How does Heather know how to be a Heather? Why won't anyone teach me how to be a Rachael? GODDAMN IT, TALK TO ME PEOPLE!

I love you so very much! Get some sleep!

Susan | Sunday, May 15 2022 09:46PM

It was now that Susan just *decided to drive up to Durham without notice* to take me to “get my meds checked”. My initial response was “Hell no!” We need to slow down. I *haven't* lost insight into how crazy this is. It's *real*. This is *happening*. I've

got my therapist, and Persephone, and Doris the Shaman, and I know Heather and Tommy and them can't talk to me yet but... we'll sort this out soon, right?

Can you call me?

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 04:59PM*

Do you believe I'm from the Pleiades?

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 05:54PM*

I absolutely believe in you! If you believe it, then yes.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 05:55PM*

I love you so very much! To Pleiades and back!

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:00PM*

Good enough. I'll meet you somewhere if you tell me where.

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:01PM*

Hold on a minute until I call Tommy and see if he can come.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:03PM*

Does Tommy believe I'm from the Pleiades?

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:05PM*

I will ask him, love.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:05PM*

Where do you want to go? I'm still at Food Lion.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:22PM*

Did you tell Tommy you were coming to Durham?

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:26PM*

Yes. I called him this afternoon from Benson.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:28PM*

I don't really want to go anywhere in particular, and I currently have no appetite. Did y'all have a plan other than trying to coerce me to the ER?

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:33PM*

No plan. I'm not really hungry, either. You can come pick me up and take me to Barnes and Noble.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:35PM*

So I can see you.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:35PM*

Is Tommy coming?

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:39PM*

I don't want to call him this late. Maybe tomorrow.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:39PM*

Is that okay?

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:40PM*

I mean, I've been in this Food Lion parking lot for 2 hours!

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:42PM*

I'm heading over there, but I am way stressed out and I have hella trust issues right now.

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:47PM*

It's okay. Love you! ❤️

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:48PM*

I'm in a handicapped place.

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 06:54PM*

Goddamn it.

I was firm in my stance that she was no longer allowed in my house, and thus she rented a hotel room nearby. I met her at the Chubby's and we talked for a bit. I was understandably nervous about Susan clawing her way into my healthcare needs.

I love you! I had fun tonight! I'm in the hotel ready for bed!

Susan | *Monday, May 16 2022 09:51PM*

Love you too!

Moi | *Monday, May 16 2022 09:54PM*

Good Morning, Love! Let me know if you want to grab lunch! I'm headed to the mall for a minute.

Susan | *Tuesday, May 17 2022 10:58AM*

I don't know if I'll be able to, but I'll let you know!

Moi | *Tuesday, May 17 2022 11:22AM*

Okay! Love you!

Susan | *Tuesday, May 17 2022 11:22AM*

Don't forget to vote!

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 12:27PM

Ok!

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 12:53PM

After thinking about what was going on, I reached the conclusion that Susan wasn't in town for a med check. She was in town for a "med check". Since she sent the text at exactly 12:26pm on Friday the 13th, she has to know *something*; but she can't talk yet, just like the rest of them. I guess I just have to play along. I actually started getting the impression that I should *go* if someone showed up to my house wanting to take me to get my meds checked.

Susan subsequently "arranged" for us to meet with Tommy. I say that with quotes; because, while Susan essentially forced this meeting to take place, she made it *my* responsibility to arrange a venue and chauffeur her to and from the hotel.

So, Tommy can join us for dinner.

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 03:06PM

So I need to know where you want to go, for him to meet us.

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 03:09PM

I got your message, I don't know where I want to go.

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 03:56PM

I need to know what to do about Tommy. He's coming from Cary.

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 03:56PM

Well, I need to tell him something.

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 03:57PM

Do you still want him to come?

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 03:57PM

I need to know what to tell him.

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:06PM

Geez idk, I'd be fine with Cocoa Cinnamon if everyone just wants coffee, but I guess we could do Ale House if folks want a more substantial meal.

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:08PM

Y'all are scaring me, did no one really have a plan for when I figured out where I'm from?

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:09PM

I'm sorry. What Cocoa Cinnamon and what time?

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:44PM

They close earlier than I thought they did, but we can at least start there. Let's try for 6:15 to 6:30 ish, and I'll pick you up.

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:52PM

2013 Chapel Hill Rd Suite A, Durham, NC 27707

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:52PM

What time do they close?

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:52PM

They close at 7:30. I'll try to pick you up around 6 if he wants to meet us there.

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:53PM

What time should he be there?

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:53PM

6:15 to 6:30 ish? Let me know if that doesn't work.

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 04:54PM

I'll be downstairs in the lobby. You can pull right up unless there's another car there m

Susan | Tuesday, May 17 2022 05:21PM

Okay, I'll let you know when I'm on the way.

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 05:22PM

On the way!

Moi | Tuesday, May 17 2022 05:49PM

I arrived at Cocoa Cinnamon, utterly *overwhelmed* with both excitement and frustration. I could tell Susan was freaked out; despite her own very big emotions, she *really* doesn't like it when I get emotional, and frantically tries to pacify me. I just wanted to get to the bottom of what this crazy old man Tommy was trying to tell me all those years ago.

As for *me*, I didn't know what was going on. I was slow to be reassured Susan wasn't somehow in on it on some level, especially after that weird text on Friday the 13th at 12:26pm. If she didn't know what was going on, I assumed Terry or Tommy must've at least put her up to it.

I couldn't contain myself by the time Tommy showed up. I remember greeting him, saying something like

I don't know if my convictions will have me sent to the masonic lodge or the psych ward; but I think I'm from the Pleiades, and I think you are too you crazy old man!

He dodged my question. And *kept* dodging it. He wouldn't say "No, I'm not from the Pleiades". He wouldn't say "Sorry, I don't understand the question". He'd just say shit like "Let's get drinks first", or just start talking about something *totally different* from my very blunt and direct questions about Freemasons, UFOs, being from other planets...

It was the weirdest fucking thing *ever*. Just say you aren't from the Pleiades and I'll leave you alone. Hell, just tell me I'm not making any sense and I'll go away. But goddamn it dude, why do you have to be such a goddamn *sketchball*?

What. The. Fuck.

I left feeling like I must be right about *something*; because if I was wrong he would've just *told* me. I'm clearly being strung along. For what purpose I haven't got a clue; but, I'm starting to get the feeling it has to do with that little thing I caused in a past life called Friday the 13th.

On what might've been the very next day, I was listening to music in my room. I was a little faded, when I slid off my headphones after a music break and heard a loud banging at the door.

(*knock knock knock*)

DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

(*knock knock knock*)

So I panic, and think about what to do with the Volcano and the half ounce on my dresser. I couldn't hear the police *at all* with my headphones on. For all I knew, they'd been there for the last twenty minutes announcing they had a search warrant.

After quickly trying to channel the Pot Brothers at Law, I decided I should step outside and talk to them; but, I was planning to be real careful and lock the door behind me. Nobody gets in without a warrant.

We're here to take you to get your meds checked...

God. *Dammit.*

Okay, sure. I'll go without any trouble. I was wearing my pajamas, and they offered to let me go back in and change. I probably needed my ID, too.

After carefully unlocking the door to do the aforementioned things, this *son of a bitch* wedges his foot in. Now I have warrantless cops in my house despite my best efforts.

Goddammit, I fucking hate cops. Pieces of shit.

They offered to follow me upstairs to where I'd been smoking pot so that I could change and get ready. No.

I put on a pair of jeans that were laying out downstairs as the cops kept the door wide open. Pieces of shit. I know it's their little bad boy protocol, but I fucking hate cops. I wish they'd just leave people like me alone. They've done nothing but fuck with me while I try to survive in this crazy world and mind my own goddamn business my whole life. They exist for the comfort of normal people, and they don't give a *fuck* about people like me. Goddamn it, I fucking hate cops.

I left braless and sockless with a cardigan over my frumpy tank top. The cops asked me uncomfortable questions as they drove me to Duke Regional.

Your mom says you won't let her in your house.

My mother is presumed to have borderline personality disorder, I have reason to believe she's been snooping around my house without my permission while I'm away, and I've told her she isn't welcome because of it.

What's this about you having an altar? #TODO Backfill

My spiritual beliefs are none of your concern.

He apparently wanted to make sure I wasn't... sacrificing animals, or something.

We waited at Duke for some amount of time before I was handed off to the hospital staff. The police were respectful overall, but *goddamn it, I fucking hate cops.*

And yet, with everything in the news I have little to complain about.

They asked for my side of the story, and I gave them my elevator speech. Mom presumed to have a personality disorder, I'm dealing with trauma and things, she's not taking it well...

They got me into a gown and put me in a safe little room with the few belongings I had taken away from me, before they asked the big question.

So, what's this about you thinking you're an alien?

I took a deep breath, and tried to explain what was happening in the most collected, logical way I could muster.

So, I know this sounds really weird, but I'm just different in a way that Freemasons know about. I know I'm not physically an alien; it isn't like that. You can call the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, give them my name, tell them I sent you and they'll explain everything.

I might be over-extending myself with that last part; but I've just got to keep my confidence up at this point. I don't know where else to send them. Doris the shaman?

I was there for close to eight hours. Initially, they seemed bent on figuring out what crazy drugs I was on before seemingly deciding I wasn't worth their time. For example, they had me pee in a cup, but hadn't collected the sample by the time I left. They took my blood, and gave me a potassium supplement because it was apparently low. I remember thinking, "I take 200mg of spironolactone a day, isn't that like, contraindicated or something?" Judging by the gown I was wearing I was in no position to argue with anyone; and the nurse waited for me to swallow the pill like I was in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest*. I figured one potassium supplement wouldn't kill me.

I laid on the hospital bed most of the time, not watching the Hallmark Channel. The woman I saw first, who seemed to be an MD, at least *appeared* to take my request to contact the Freemasons seriously. Several hours into my stay, another woman with the air of a psychologist came in; who seemed to not have communicated with the first doctor. I could see in her eyes that she didn't believe a single word I said. After we talked, I didn't think I was going home that night.

Toward the end, they brought in a cordless phone for me to talk to my therapist. I hadn't told her about the letters yet; the gap between what was going on with me and what I had shared with my therapist was at least that wide.

Eventually, they just let me go without explanation. I was given meaningless discharge paperwork about following up on my condition. I left my cell phone upstairs when the cops came into my house, so my only way back was to use the phone in the lobby to call a taxi. Fortunately I had the cash in my purse.

If there was ever a date to put on the death certificate for my mother and I's relationship, it was this one. I was just... not

going to talk to this person anymore; at least not until I got some kind of an explanation as to what happened.

So many mixed signals. My head's spinning. Tommy's acting suspiciously weird, and dodges my *now very direct* questions about whether he's "from the Pleiades". Susan sends me an obvious "wink and nudge" text at 12:26pm on Friday the 13th, then has me locked in the psych ward days later. *What is happening?!*

I reached back out to Persephone, hoping she'd make me feel better. That did not happen.

So, my mom got me involuntarily committed yesterday by calling the Durham PD and telling them I thought I was an alien. I had to tell two doctors at Duke Regional to contact the grand lodge for a debriefing. I've had a lot going on with me, so I apologize for being slow at Discord. Like that last message I dodged. I can't say I've gotten any play time in lately. Anyway, how've you been?

Moi | *Thursday, May 19 2022 10:52AM*

Well mom isn't going to get a lot of trust ever again.

Persephone | *Thursday, May 19 2022 11:08AM*

"Grand lodge"?

Persephone | *Thursday, May 19 2022 11:08AM*

> Well mom isn't going to get a lot of trust ever again.

Yeah. The silver lining is, I think this might be the push I need to finally cut that bitch out of my life, temporarily or permanently. I'm not here for that shit!

> "Grand lodge"?

Yeah, don't forget to tell me how little you know about those guys 😊

Moi | Thursday, May 19 2022 11:28AM

I know very little.

Persephone | Thursday, May 19 2022 01:34PM

So I go up to Pepe's office and what do I find out, Mac? **WHAT DO I FIND OUT?!** There is no Pepe Silvia. The man does not exist, okay?

Somebody, I think the psych doctor after we first talked, took the liberty of filing FMLA paperwork for me without asking; which she didn't care to un-file. I was greeted with multiple Slack messages about this the next day.

I figured I'd just tell them it was a mix-up and to cancel the paperwork. HR wanted to get me on Zoom anyway for some reason, and it turned out that because an FMLA request had been filed I wasn't even *supposed to be at work* until I had a doctor sign some form.

God. *Dammit*. I fucking hate a lot of people right now.

Serendipitously, I already had a routine doctor's appointment scheduled *the very next day*. So, I figured I'd just take this goofy form to Dr. Reid tomorrow, and hopefully she won't ask a lot of questions about it.

As soon as she heard I'd been in the hospital, she said "hold on, let me look it up". Ugh...

She kept typing away, failing to find it after a couple of minutes. She asked me to explain what happened. Okay. I kept it as vague as possible. I was accidentally involuntarily committed to the psych ward because my mom's an asshole, and I just need you to sign this thing so I can go back to work.

Oh, if the cops were involved it's in a different database. Let me look it up there...

Ugh.

"Found it."

God. Dammit.

She spent an awkward minute reading *whatever was on the screen*, before simply asking me to explain what happened in my own words. I eventually had to explain that my mom told the cops "I thought I was an alien", and that it really was just related to this spiritual awakening thing, and ugh... She said something about how she doesn't judge her patient's spiritual inclinations, and eventually signed my thing.

So, how are you doing with your medication?

Uh, well... I haven't been taking the Concerta; but my HRT seems fine.

That's fine. So... I want to try taking your spironolactone down to 100mg a day.

Okay, that's cool. I don't have *bad* side effects from it, but the low sodium problems *can* get annoying.

I know down-regulation is a thing, and you often don't need as high a dose after a couple of years. It's pretty common for us to tweak my estrogen dose up and down, but we'd never tried halving my spiro. I was curious to see how I'd do.

Unsurprisingly, Vickie wanted to talk to me. I was understandably freaked out that I had taken a very wrong turn. I didn't know what else to make of my situation.

During that session, we both came to the conclusion that I should sign a release for Vickie to talk to Tommy. I couldn't get anything out of the guy; but clearly, *something's* going on, because he won't just fucking *tell me* he isn't from the Pleiades.

That's what I kept telling myself. Just say "I'm not from the Pleiades", you crazy old man. *He wouldn't fucking do it.* But, he wouldn't say he *was* either. Ugh!

Somehow, I had no trouble getting a straight answer out of him *this time*.

You may find this question odd, but would you be willing to talk one-on-one with my therapist?

Moi | Wednesday, May 25 2022 10:09AM

Yes; I would.

Tommy | Wednesday, May 25 2022 10:10AM

And also I would keep this confidential. In other words I would not share this with your mother.

Tommy | Wednesday, May 25 2022 10:20AM

Thanks, that means a lot! Her name is Vickie Carter, and I'll pass your number on to her.

Moi | Thursday, May 26 2022 07:55AM

Liked "Thanks, that means a lot! Her name is Vickie Carter, and I'll pass your number on to her."

Tommy | Thursday, May 26 2022 08:02AM

Susan kept texting me. I stopped doing any video calls with her or really interacting with her; though out of sheer concern that she'd continue using the police to harass me with "wellness checks", I did start sending her a very basic "I'm alive" text once a week so she wouldn't have a fucking excuse.

I'm sorry I has to leave Durham so fast. My friends came and got me because they were worried about me. Just like I worry about you, my love.

Susan | *Wednesday, May 18 2022 08:40PM*

I love you to the 🌙 and back!

Susan | *Wednesday, May 18 2022 09:44PM*

I love you, my darling!

Susan | *Thursday, May 19 2022 07:53PM*

Truly!

Susan | *Thursday, May 19 2022 07:53PM*

I love you so much, and I'm truly sorry for everything. I'm so weary from being in fight or flight mode for weeks. I love you, and I will never stop fighting for your best life.

Susan | *Thursday, May 19 2022 09:35PM*

I'll try to summon the courage to write you an email this weekend. I love you so much. My door is always open.

Susan | *Friday, May 20 2022 03:50PM*

I love you more than life itself.

Susan | *Friday, May 20 2022 09:38PM*

I love you so much, and my guilt is immeasurable. Nothing happened as planned. You are my darling daughter, blood of my blood, forever. ❤️

Susan | *Saturday, May 21 2022 08:51PM*

Not tonight.

Moi | *Sunday, May 22 2022 07:05PM*

Okay. I hope soon. My guilt is incalculable and haunting. I love you and support you forever.

Susan | *Sunday, May 22 2022 07:06PM*

I want to explain when your ready. No excuses. I was terrified. TERRIFIED.

Susan | *Sunday, May 22 2022 07:08PM*

I love you the MOST.

Susan | *Sunday, May 22 2022 08:51PM*

I love you!

Susan | *Monday, May 23 2022 08:59PM*

I heard Fire and again on the way home, and it nearly broke me. I love you forever and ever, amen. I will fight for you, always.

Susan | *Tuesday, May 24 2022 09:01PM*

I love you so much. My heart hurts. Please, let's talk soon. I'm so sorry. I acted out of sheer terror, and a mother's love. I love you.

Susan | *Wednesday, May 25 2022 09:16PM*

Fwd:I think about you all day. I love you. Be safe.

Susan | *Thursday, May 26 2022 02:13PM*

Brayden has COVID. I hope I don't get it.
I love you!

Susan | *Thursday, May 26 2022 10:06PM*

I'm sorrier than at any time in my life. I
love you.

Susan | *Friday, May 27 2022 08:24PM*

Can we talk soon? I'm bereft without you.

Susan | *Saturday, May 28 2022 05:35PM*

Hey there, I'm still not ready to talk, but
I wanted to let you know I'm okay and I
love you.

Moi | *Sunday, May 29 2022 06:21PM*

Oh, my darling! I have cried all day!
Thank you for loving your old mom! I
love you forever and ever!

Susan | *Sunday, May 29 2022 06:23PM*

I'm okay, too. Brayden had COVID, but I
haven't gotten it. Probably because I had
my booster in early April.

Susan | *Sunday, May 29 2022 06:27PM*

I love you forever and ever! To infinity
and beyond.

Susan | *Monday, May 30 2022 09:21PM*

I love you to the moon and back!

Susan | *Tuesday, May 31 2022 09:28PM*

The first part of the thread is incredibly vague. She appeared to be apologizing for something she felt immeasurably guilty for; yet, to this day I'm *still* not sure what that was, exactly.

As much as I hate to say it, if I was talking obvious nonsense, a visit to the psych ward *may've* been in order. For all I know, her actions were perfectly justifiable given what she knew.

The other side of this is, if I'm talking nonsense why won't someone just fucking *tell me*? Everyone's being really sketchy and dodging my questions, like they can't talk yet, or like I'm not doing the Freemason "Simon says" handshake protocols the right way.

It's like I'm hitting some kind of a `block in all` firewall rule with them, and they're never going to send me a NACK, or an ICMP error, or anything that'll tell me there's a problem. It's like these Freemason people are some kind of black hole; and much like a black hole, I can surmise the existence of something massive yet invisible by observing the chaotic orbits of all of my friends and family as I get closer to *whatever it is*.

During this period of limbo, I showed up to the one-on-one with my boss, with Paul's Zoom avatar changed to a very "realistic" plastic figure of a shark person. He kept this picture for the stand-up later that day with Josh and I,⁴³ before changing it back. He's never done this before or since.

I took this to be yet another wink and a nudge about *something*. I didn't know if it meant Paul knew what was going on and wanted *me* to know; or if he was subtly asking *me* for more information. Shit just keeps getting weirder and *weirder*, man.

Suspense built as I waited a couple of weeks for the meeting between Vickie and Tommy to transpire. I had prepared myself to learn Tommy wasn't really from the Pleiades. I was expecting to have to go back to the drawing board to sort all of this out.

⁴³Russell must not've been there

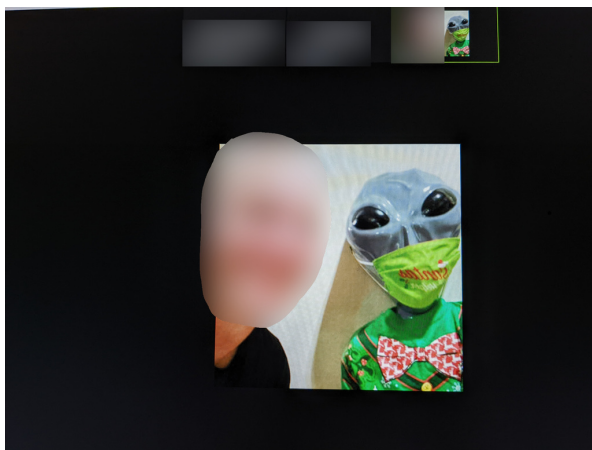


Figure 20: Dated June 9th, 2022

Somehow, what happened in this session still managed to shock and utterly *baffle* me.

So, I talked to Tommy...

Oh, good!

Tommy isn't from Warren, Ohio. He was born in Cary.

He isn't from the Pleiades. He isn't a Freemason, and he doesn't know anything about Freemasonry.

He *does* want to be part of your life if you do. You need to think about what kind of relationship you'd want to have going forward.

Then, there was the final blow.

She client-patient broke up with me.

She suggested I seek substance abuse counselling, as well as *dialectical behavioral therapy*; a methodology for helping people with personality disorders and severe trauma regulate their powerful emotions, which Vickie remarked multiple times throughout the last couple of years I needed the *opposite* of.⁴⁴ She offered to text me a list of resources for that, which I never followed up on.

Hi Rachael. Here are some substance abuse and DBT resources:
The SA resources all have emergency, in-patient and outpatient treatment.
(...)
I hope this is helpful...

Vickie | Wednesday, June 15 2022 10:07AM

If Vickie had just said Tommy “wasn’t from the Pleiades”, I would’ve believed her. I would’ve gone back to the drawing board. Just like I planned.

I was *not* prepared to hear Tommy wasn’t from Warren, Ohio. That’s basic, autobiographical information about the guy. I’ve heard it throughout my life. I had confirmed it several times over the past year. Tommy may not be from the Pleiades, and he may not even be a Freemason; but he’s *definitely* from Warren, Ohio.

The idea of Tommy being from Cary was *particularly* unbelievable, because he’s a *Methodist* preacher. The United Methodist church has an *extensive* tradition of travelling preachers. This concept has settled down considerably since the circuit preachers of the 19th century, but it’s *still* a defining feature of Methodism. The bishop or deacon or whatever he’s called, will just *move* preachers to a different church every few years, with little to no input from the preachers themselves on where they’re to go next. I had *several* different preachers growing up; none of which had

⁴⁴It came up a lot with Persephone being in DBT for her BPD, and with me discovering my mom had cluster B personality traits.

any ties to Elizabethtown. The idea of a Methodist preacher actually getting to preach in their hometown is... *unusual*, to say the least.

The suggestion that I pursue dialectical behavioral therapy was equally sketchy. I'd joked lately that I didn't want *any* cluster B personality traits, and would go to DBT *without question* if anybody ever told me I needed that. Under more reasonable circumstances, I *would have*.

As absolutely *crazy* as it seemed, I could only reach one logical conclusion from the day's events.

My therapist... *lied* to me.

And I thought, "That's *illegal*, right? A therapist can't just... *lie* to you..."

So I decided *aww, shit buddy* I gotta dig a little deeper,
there's no Pepe Silvia, you gotta be kidding me I got
BOXES full of Pepe

This hastened my withdrawal from public life. Stephanie was still supportive, but I could already tell I was starting to lose her. With this latest development... I just *couldn't* tell anyone I didn't believe my therapist. Nobody's *ever* going to believe me.

But... I *know* there's something to this. Everyone's just acting so *sketchy*. The things that have happened to me seem *highly* improbable. I can't just... forget about all this and check myself into rehab...

Actually, I *could have* if Vickie said "Tommy *is* from Warren, but *not* a Freemason or a reincarnated space alien, and I'll see you next week!" The circumstances were just too *sketchy* for me to brush off. Particularly with the DBT suggestion, it seemed like she was trying to give me *intentionally* bad advice; as if she had been coerced into no longer providing me counselling, and couldn't communicate that directly.

I mean, if you had a patient in as delicate a situation as I was, it kinda seems like breaking off a client-patient relationship like that is the *last* thing you'd want to do. It's almost like she was *asking* me to stop seeking mental health treatment.

Where we're going, we don't need roads (Q3)

I feel a little silly, telling you that July might've been the first month I actually had visions in my head about an actual *spaceship*; and, that I'd get to use one, apparently.

```
#TODO I'm not sure I've mentioned this yet; but the writing convention
for this section is that I'll try to talk about what was in my head then
as opposed to now. I don't actually believe any of this at the time of
writing.
```

Reincarnated space aliens. UFO kids. Whatever you call us. We get access to advanced craft, for health and leisure.

People like me should be having regular alien “doctor’s appointments”. We start to lose mental cohesion after some number of years of not getting fixed up. Young children who are different get “abducted” for their appointments. Adults, summon the craft and walk in of their own free will. After they’ve been vetted, that is.

Why haven’t I been vetted yet? What’s wrong? Oh, right. Friday the 13th. Fuck.

I guess the reincarnation of *that* dude isn’t getting off so easy.

The idea in my head at this point was that with practice, you could *see* the spaceship before it materialized into physical space. You’d go somewhere very private, wait until you can see it with your “third eye” or whatever, and give the signal when you’re ready for it to land. The TV-static ghost-like outline of a flying saucer would give way to an *incredibly bright* flash of white light;

which would last several seconds, until the ship was done shifting into three-dimensional space.

Generally speaking, there were two types of visits one might schedule: overnight doctor's appointments, and spacetime travel. An overnight user of the spaceport would essentially occupy the entire landing area from midnight to dawn, as the ship needs to shift in and out of physical space repeatedly and in the same place as part of their work. Travelers would only need a few minutes; as their future self would be able to land just after they took off, or even before. As much as I struggled to suspend my disbelief, it apparently *was* somehow possible to time travel "science fiction" or "causality reversal-style", and to have a conversation with a past or future version of you. As such, an overnight user needed to let any travelers who scheduled the space take off and land first before they went in for their night's sleep.

It was really unusual and disorienting, having all these oddly specific things flooding into my brain; mundane details mixed with spectacular, otherworldly things.

I started remembering things about my homeworld. I had been the president there once, and people really liked me. Most all of my incarnations made it back eventually. I had a second home there that felt like a townhouse for giants; my natural species was about a foot taller than the average human.

There's a lot I could say about everything I remembered and envisioned during this time; but the reality is, it doesn't matter, because it's all bullshit. I started writing about it, but it was incredibly tedious. Maybe it should go in an appendix or something eventually. #TODO Put it in a details tag or something

Josh tried engaging me, while continuing on with his very adult life things. He was busy planning his wedding with Caroline;

who he was really eager for me to meet. I figure that might still happen someday.

Hey so Caroline's mom needs to know if you're coming to the party in Delaware. If not, it's fine.

Josh | *Monday, August 15 2022 09:33AM*

So there's a lot going on with me, I'll get the di's some other time, and I need to look up that invitation again but if it's this month it's not happening.

Moi | *Monday, August 15 2022 02:55PM*

It's labor day weekend

Josh | *Monday, August 15 2022 02:56PM*

I'm closing on a house in the mountains the end of this month and I'll be moving stuff and I want to get rid of my weed stuff by then.

Josh | *Monday, August 15 2022 02:57PM*

Do you want to talk?

Josh | *Tuesday, August 30 2022 04:52PM*

If there's anything I can do to help you just tell me.

Josh | *Tuesday, August 30 2022 04:56PM*

Not really

Moi | *Tuesday, August 30 2022 05:03PM*

I'm sorry you're going through this

Josh | *Tuesday, August 30 2022 05:04PM*

Happy Birthday!!

Josh | Thursday, September 01 2022 01:04PM

You doing ok?

Josh | Tuesday, September 06 2022 02:09PM

I'd been convinced for *months* that something big was going to happen with this Red Hot Chili Peppers concert that was on my birthday. I took time off work around my birthday, and didn't really know what to do with myself when inevitably nothing spectacular happened.

Having not really been able to perform my duties for some time now and seeing little recourse, I sent a message to HR basically saying I was dealing with problems that didn't exist according to the United States government or mainstream science; and that I was basically stuck because the Freemasons won't talk to me, presumably because I'm the reincarnation of the Roman senator who caused Friday the 13th. When I got a, somewhat understandably snarky message from HR saying I was expected to return to work, I sent a reply stating that I quit effective immediately.

So; I quit my job because I was to the point that I couldn't really work, or even live a normal life anymore. I'd been paranoid for a while about people being able to see in the window in the front door, and decided to put a curtain over it.

About two days after I sent the email, and *about a half hour after I finished putting up the curtain*, there was a hard knock on the door.

(knock knock knock)

DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

(knock knock knock)

God. *Dammit.*

I was *not* about to open the door this time. I actually decided to take a shower. After a few minutes, they started repeating my name over and over; like they were looking for a stray kitten.

Rachael?

Rachael?

They eventually left, and I started getting calls from the police department. They were simply responding to a wellness check, and were satisfied with the explanations I gave over the phone; though the woman talked to me like I was a nine-year-old.

So we heard you *quit* your *jawwwwwb...*

Look, I'm just going through some life changes right now...

I tried to feel out if it was my mother or people from work who did it. I couldn't really get anything out of the woman on the other end of the line.

Today, my assumption is that Paul or someone from work called it in. At the time, I was *convinced* it was Susan. The timing seemed far too suspicious. Like, I spent more time than I expected getting the rod up there, I adjusted it a couple of times to my liking, and then I went upstairs to have a smoke. And... then the cops showed up. Coincidence? Probably; at least this time.

This fed into another fear or "realization" I developed, based on these weird messages in my head: Susan thinks I'm retarded.

Yep. It was true! It explains *so* much! You know how she's always infantilizing me? She still does her little baby talk thing a little too much? She kinda treats me like a fucking nine-year-old sometimes?

Oh. She thinks I'm *retarded*. Right.

We were asked to paint a landscape in kindergarten, and mine was *not* particularly good. Later in life, I learned the reason I'm bad at art is probably that I have **aphantasia**. Susan, on the other hand, kept displaying the painting longer than she should have, using it as evidence of my "special needs" when convenient. Her goal seemed to be to keep me off the short bus, while also keeping her retard adult child on a leash as (s)he played engineer in the city like a big grownup...

I remember when I was in first or second grade, she was *convinced* I needed extra help with math. It's always been my weakest subject, but I don't remember getting particularly bad grades in math at that age. It's just my worst subject is all. She drilled me after school with flash cards and worksheets and shit, and I *hated* it. I don't feel like it helped me much in the long term; but who knows.

I think it's bullshit now; but I thought I remembered there being a test she was afraid to have me take, because she was convinced I would fail and be put in "special classes". A message in my head told me that there were two kids at Bladen Lakes whose parents wouldn't take them to get the WISC; mine and Shawn Breck's. Lacking standardized test scores to know where to place us otherwise, they administered the AIG test to the two of us in-school.

I placed into AIG at "level 2" in second grade, as I recall.

I remember as us AIG kids grew older and were nearing the sixth grade, *most* of us were retaking the AIG test; as you needed level 3 or 4 to get into Clarkton. I remember telling my mom a couple times that I think I needed to retake the AIG test for Clarkton like the other kids; and she assured me I didn't need to.

Then, I remember orientation at Clarkton. I was going around on the tour, but... there was some unexpected "clerical error". My name wasn't on the AIG list. My mother went to the office, and suddenly my name was there.

In my state of paranoia, I couldn't help but assume the worst about what Susan did back then. Did I not even get into *Clarkton* on my own merits? *Fuck. Susan.*

I could hear her justifying her actions in her mind. "I just wanted to give you *everything*"... "You didn't have a chance at life otherwise"... "I did what *any* mother would've done"...

Anyway; the curtain. I was convinced the reason the cops came so quickly after I put it up, was that Susan was *actually* collecting video evidence to use in court so that she could re-gain custody of me. Or get the Britney Spears conservatorship on me or some shit. Assisting her was a dirty lawyer she managed to procure pro bono after crying about how her "special needs child was *out of control!*"; the lawyer thought she might be able to win, and line her pockets with my engineer money even if *Susan* was broke.

Fuck. Susan.

I was utterly convinced *even more* weird bullshit was about to happen to me. I took a dress to get dry-cleaned, and bought some new boots at DSW in preparation for my surely-impending day in court that this dirty lawyer was going to spring on me at the last moment.

Tommy reached out to me as I moved the goalpost around; but a meeting never transpired.

Hey Rachel, I hope this text finds you well. Since we talked last, my life has been crazy. I was appointed to a new church (...). We still have our house in Cary and we are there quite a bit. So if you would like to get together sometime, just text me and I'll try to work it out. Nancy says hello!

Tommy | Wednesday, September 07 2022 05:43PM

Thanks for reaching out! Yes, I'd like to get together sometime soon.

Moi | Monday, September 12 2022 07:18PM

Monkey wrench (Q4)

In early fall, a message came to me that was somehow *even more disturbing* than everything that'd happened before. I haven't really mentioned it up to this point; but the messages in my head had long since taken the form of some vague, Morpheus-like person guiding me through *whatever* process-of-a-lifetime I was going through.

There are charges pending against you.

Charges? For what?

Murder.

Murder? That's a joke, right?

The problem involved time travel to the past; something that was *somehow* possible with the level of access I (or my future self) had. The murderer is/was actually *my future self*; an individual known to the state of California to be armed, dangerous, and *pissed off*. What happened?

Well you see... My future self went on to have a relationship with fellow UFO kid Anthony Kiedis; who'd be more like a "UFO daddy" if we maintained the present age gap. Except, we *didn't*. At least not *all* the time.

I traveled back in time to the early 90s to be Anthony Kiedis' secret wife; we would actually be about the same age at the beginning of our relationship. I started to feel a little silly for thinking otherwise.

The deal with time travel was, you could get away with about ten years of age slippage before people *really* start to notice and ask questions. So, I had ten years to spend in the 90s before I was destined to become the president and get assassinated; at which point, I'd have subsequent lifetimes which I'd be able to remember through the correct process. I was starting to feel a bit *immortal*.

The state of California knew the truth about UFOs, and had a program for folks visiting like me where we could get ID and even have a job; essentially an extension of the witness protection program. We needed to pick a name for myself in this timeline, and in a spur of the moment went with the clerk's suggestion of *Dani*. It wasn't until later that we realized I was "Dani the tranny" and "Retard Rachael".

Burnt out and frustrated that I could never quite make it as an engineer, I vowed to relegate computers and electronics to hobby status, while devoting my professional career to photography. I enjoyed the last years of film, setting up a dark room in a spare corner of our house.

We decided to start time travelling our future human incarnations to come hang out with us in Malibu. In the spirit of my new career in film, we produced in our home a Wayne's World-like series called "Time Travel Time"; for which I was also the host. I had visions of having to drive a couple of hours out into the desert to land the ships. *It felt so real at the time.*

My next incarnation was a woman named Megan Murphy. She had a better childhood situation with no legal or administrative hold-ups, and was able to learn what she was at the age of 12.

Megan was pretty different from me, and was destined to become a musician and an artist at a young age. What a ride.

So, me and my adolescent future self are hanging out with my new boyfriend or quasi-husband Anthony Kiedis in LA. This is fine.

Somehow we became close friends with Dave Grohl. Anyway; one thing led to another, and my future self began having underage relations with Anthony Kiedis and Dave Grohl.

When this came to me, my first thought was “That can’t be right. Dave Grohl lives in Alexandria, VA or some shit.”

I checked Wikipedia, and it turns out he *did* live in LA for a few years in the mid-to-late 90s; right as all this was ostensibly happening. *And* he’s still from Warren, Ohio.

Shit, dude.

So, my future self is having safe sane and consensual, albeit *underage* relations with 90s rock stars, that occasionally involves elements of BDSM. This is fine. Right?

Or rather, *was* having relations. This is ancient history to everyone involved *except* for me. They *know* who I’ll grow up to become. I’ve been surrounded ever since I was eight.

So eventually, some nosy neighbors grew *worried* because they wanted to know what this adolescent girl was doing hanging out with rock stars. Folks were *concerned* for her safety.

This is when the cops got involved and raided our house. After they found sex toys with Megan juice on them, they basically said “somebody’s going to jail”. I took the fall for Dave and Tony; hoping to explain in court that she was really just my future self. Are they going to convict me of raping myself?

Despite having allies who understood, we had a really hard time getting the court and law enforcement to take us seriously. After we tried to demystify what being a UFO kid *really* meant, many of them only grew more distrustful; crafting their own theories about how we were *really* running an intergalactic child sex trafficking ring, and might be able to brainwash and alter memories.

We brought Megan's future adult self with us to testify; but, her testimony was ruled inadmissible because she was the alleged victim.

Leading up to this, "Dani" had been filming a sort of underground documentary about this whole process; for which she was already prepared, being older than I am now. We wanted to show how we talked to Megan's future self first and consulted different Megans from different timelines, before following through on something that was unconventional, but ultimately harmless or even beneficial to Megan.

After fighting a long legal battle up a really steep hill, the tide *finally* started to turn in our favor. We had some luck arguing that Megan and I were the same person; and thus, anything sexual between the two of us is tantamount to masturbation.

Of course, I wasn't *really* fucking my future self at all. I was only taking the fall for Dave and Tony; while keeping in mind that I would someday *become* Megan and enjoy myself; having the opposite of the sexually-repressive experience I had in my youth *this* lifetime.

After being acquitted of the charge of statutory rape, things only *briefly* looked better, until somehow the law caught wind of the, uh... "BDSM" element. This sparked a whole new round of debates. Sure, you can *fuck* yourself; but where do you draw the line?

The judge was *particularly* disturbed that Megan got tied up for fun; and wasn't having *any* of it. It was ruled that in the state of California, it *is* legal to fuck yourself, but it is *not* legal to tie yourself up.

I was convicted on assault charges, and sentenced to 18 months of house arrest.⁴⁵

⁴⁵@MalibuHouseArrest would eventually become my presidential Twitter (or whatever it's called now) handle.

While all this was going on, there was this dirty cop who liked to fuck with the pedophiles. He abducted me a handful of times *along with Dave Grohl*, to do shit like shaving part of my head or raping me with a clothes hanger.

Law enforcement was highly suspicious of my various lifestyle and career choices. I was into photography and had my own dark room, and had found a workaday job as a photographer when I wasn't touring with Anthony Kiedis. I was hired to do all sorts of work; though I *was* often taking portraits of children. We had a PRI circuit which I ran the area's first dial-up ISP off of, and I had some Sun servers and an SGI workstation I used for the ISP and for Rachael stuff; no, not child porn. They didn't believe that, though. Oh yeah, and then there was all the shit we had for producing Time Travel Time. They were *convinced* it was all a cover for producing elaborate child pornography, despite their failed attempts to actually find anything of that nature. They *really* assumed the worst of me.

I was prohibited from continuing to produce Time Travel Time; though I continued to do so clandestinely, covering such topics as music and pop culture.

During my house arrest, a child was abducted by a woman vaguely matching my description; and they were *certain* I did it. I had one of the first ankle bracelets, but they thought I was using alien technology to defeat the mechanism and leave the house. There were demands that I decrypt the storage containing my documentary; something they had begrudgingly given up on after pushing for it at the beginning of my incarceration. The dirty cop abducted me and hit me in the head with a cinder block in an attempt to get me to reveal the password; however, I was knocked unconscious for a few hours, and when I woke up he was merely relieved *he* wasn't on the hook for murder.

Anyway; I made it through roughly a year and a half of house arrest. Other than being a registered sex offender in 90s California, it would seem I've done my time.

The registry simply listed my crime as having “tied up a child”; something angry women would often come to my house and yell at me for. I made VHS tapes to explain what happened with Megan, and why it wasn’t as bad as the courts made it sound.

I generally made myself scarce around Malibu after this happened, though I still maintained a residence there. We’d often go on long trips out of state or in the wilderness, illegally summoning Megan’s spaceship once we were out of view.

As a registered sex offender, there were certain shits you had to put up with. And no, I never looked up to see if any of these things were true in 90s California, but they probably *weren’t*.

The cops could come and search our house any time without notice, basically as if they had a standing warrant to do so. If we didn’t open the door, they’d just beat it down most of the time; we returned at least once or twice to there simply being no front door on the house because the cops decided to show up and make sure we weren’t raping anyone.

After some amount of this injustice, I finally just *snapped*. And I became...

Dani California: Modern-day outlaw

I sent letters to all levels of government, declaring my personal sovereignty. I’m a multi-lifetime intergalactic world leader, goddammit! I’ll have *no more* of this violent, insulting nonsense from you animals and your banana republic of a planet!

Nobody took the letters seriously; which I expected. I armed myself with an assault rifle and sidearm, which visitors would invariably see the barrel of sooner rather than later. When the cops kept coming to our house because of their sex offender policy, they’d be greeted with my rifle in an increasingly tense series of encounters. These encounters with law enforcement were usually met with retribution from Dani’s army of past and future selves;

eventually resulting in Dani burning down the Malibu police station with Molotov cocktails. No, I wasn't able to fact-check this. By this point, if I couldn't find anything online about the Malibu police station burning down in the 90s, I'd have just assumed there was a cover-up.

It was *now* that Dani had become a killer. She'd had enough; she wouldn't *seek out* cops, but would kill any of them who got in her way. She ended up killing *a few* cops in the nineties.

Dani was eventually classified as "unapprehendable" by the California authorities, which led to my case being turned over to the FBI. I was secretly considered part of their most-wanted list. And, I was just a wee little kid living in Elizabethtown, NC; when I'm not back in the 90s causing terror, that is.

Alright, so I start marching my way down to Carol in HR and I knock on her door and I say **CAROL** (*knock knock knock*) **CAAAAROOLLL I gotta talk to you about Pepe**

I tried getting hold of Tommy again; but he never returned my text. I took that as a sign the Freemasons couldn't help me anymore.

Good morning! I'd like to meet up with you soon if you're going to be in the area. I can also go out that way if it's more convenient.

Moi | Thursday, October 27 2022 10:20AM

I'm telling you, this was, like, the scariest time period of my life. It was like that trope from the old west, where the clock strikes noon and the shutters on the saloon close and suddenly the town falls silent, and there's *no one* around to help you.



Figure 21: Me (October 2022)



Figure 22: TOMBSTONE Clip - Gunfight at The O.K. Corral (1993) Kurt Russell (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpEkaGJnkAk&t=18s>)

The legal precedent that one couldn't "tie themselves up" in California had ramifications in the greater BDSM community; resulting in a self-bondage workshop at a con getting raided by police. This led to the NCSF taking on my case in order to overturn the ruling. Because of this work, by the mid 2000s self bondage was legal in California, and my conviction for "tying up my future self" had been overturned; all before I graduated from middle school.

Of course, I *was* still on the hook for murder.

My case prompted a whole discussion about convicting people of crimes they haven't yet committed. Many in government were uneasy about my future self's proclamation of independence combined with my access to advanced technology, and they considered me a national security risk. The FBI was content with taking California's word that I was some crazy tranny who was probably running a child sex trafficking ring they never could manage to bust.

After building up the courage, I tried walking into a masonic lodge and telling them I wanted to talk about "visions and past life memories" I'd been having. I left after being told they were "really just a fraternal organization" or something to that effect; and sheepishly responding "I don't believe you", in an attempt to invoke the thing I remember Heather and her friend teaching me all those years ago.

I think it was around late November when the message appeared in my head

They want to send you to Gitmo.

Over the following days and weeks, it was revealed that because of Dani's proclamation of sovereignty in the 90s, the courts ruled I was technically *not* a US citizen. A lot of soldier boys are *real* spooked out about a crazy sovereign citizen tranny

pedophile with a flying saucer on the loose, and they *have* to be sure.

Which brings us here: the head or tail of this temporal ouroboros, depending on how you look at it. I appeared to be locked into a sort of fate, where certain things were bound to occur. Part of it appeared to be karma for Friday the 13th, and part of it appeared to be that I didn't *want* to change my past timeline. It was as if my intentions had arrived at *this* steady state; where a bunch of really bad stuff was bound to happen to me, and yet I wouldn't have it any other way in the end. The timeline would simply be *different* otherwise. It was as if the universe found the *worst* possible fate that I apparently *still* wouldn't change with access to a time machine.

The debacle appeared to reveal something fascinating about the universe, if not also a bit terrifying; if you want to understand how to change the timeline, you have to understand *intent*. Once you give somebody free rein over a craft that can travel backwards through time, the problem is really obvious; whatever past our timeline is based on is ultimately derived from the mere *intentions* of everyone who possesses such a craft. On one hand, it's just an exchange of property. On the other hand, it's like a sort of "magical artifact" that grants the immediate wishes of the bearer. As long as one maintains the intent for something to happen in the past and ultimately follows through, it can be considered "good as done".

You might be thinking, wouldn't *all* intents modify the timeline? And the answer is, of course they do! Everyone has intentions, and they affect the forward and/or backward timeline *as soon as you intend to follow through with them*. We're always in a sort of negative feedback loop, looking at our past and present and formulating new intents based on our present state.

This was apparently the true nature of spacetime; we experience it linearly, but affect it non-linearly and seemingly in real time through our intents. Far out!

I was bolstered by the strong feeling *this* was something some of these mysterious UFO folks I've encountered throughout my life tried to explain in a roundabout way, without really *saying* the thing. It particularly reminded me of the talk I had with Persephone in 2019, when she tried to explain the power of thoughts and intentions. I didn't really get it at the time.

As the year went on, there was something unrelated to UFOs that had grabbed my attention in the meantime: this lower dose of spironolactone *wasn't* cutting it. I'd been avoiding the doctor ever since I needed her to sign that thing. I missed an appointment and never rescheduled; but she was still refilling my meds, so I wasn't immediately concerned. I had... bigger things going on with me.

It was a bit silly in retrospect. What was she going to do? Send me back to the looney bin?

I didn't really *need* to make a mental note to bring it up with my doctor after several months on the new dose. It was gradual, but I could tell my body hair was getting thicker, and I had grease on the bridge of my nose again.

I drifted away from Stephanie late into the year. I remember her inviting me to a Thanksgiving thing with her family, and I was just *not* up for it.

After having quit my job, Josh was getting really anxious to know what was going on with me. He was starting to have trouble finding Pepe's office himself.

Hey Rachael. I'm texting you to just say I really really really really really wish that you would tell me about all the crazy shit that's going on. I mean, you told me the basics, and it was really interesting. I know you felt embarrassed that you couldn't prove it was all true since your short term predictions didn't come true, but that doesn't matter. I believe in you. I told you that. I can be someone in your corner to bounce things off of. You think I don't know anything about the occult? You're wrong. Give me a chance. Be my friend. Please!

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:07AM*

I know about mentalism, correspondence, polarity, rhythm, cause and effect, and gender

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:13AM*

I know the true meaning of the tarot and the tree of life

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:14AM*

Am I not worthy?

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:14AM*

I choose the right hand path

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:18AM*

I need you, Rachael. I miss you. Let me fight off these demons with you.

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:19AM*

You think I don't know about Saturn?

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:26AM*

[1000000200.jpg image/jpeg]

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:27AM*

I know about everything

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:27AM*

So please tell me about what you know

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:27AM*

I have spent so many hours decoding what these assholes want to do to our society and you don't believe I know enough about it to put me in your inner circle

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:34AM*

[1000000201.jpg image/jpeg]

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:34AM*

Or you don't trust me

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:35AM*

Yes, I'm blowing your phone up at 2:30 AM. You don't have a job.

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:35AM*

You think I'm still sitting down there at that checkerboard base reality don't you?

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:37AM*

[1000000202.jpg image/jpeg]

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 02:44AM*

You seem a bit confused. I'd love to catch up sometime, but I've still got nothing but out-of-sync visions and memories.

Moi | *Friday, October 28 2022 08:27AM*

Sorry I got a little drunk at the game

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 08:27AM*

I just like wanted to prove I knew stuff so you'd tell me stuff

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 08:27AM*

I wish I had more to tell you. I still don't think I'm crazy.

Moi | *Friday, October 28 2022 08:39AM*

Cause last time you were like "I gotta go talk to my people who know more about the occult"

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 08:39AM*

But yeah let's hang out next time I come to Durham for sure

Josh | *Friday, October 28 2022 04:44PM*

Can we go to a restaurant or something next weekend? Caroline also wants to meet you

Josh | *Sunday, November 06 2022 08:11PM*

Rachael come on and eat with us. We won't talk about aliens.

Josh | *Friday, November 11 2022 10:42AM*

I really hope you will still be in the wedding since you're one of my best friends that I've known the longest. You need to meet Caroline! I know you have a lot going on but I bet you could do a 1 hour meal tomorrow!

Josh | *Friday, November 11 2022 10:44AM*

I'm sorry, I don't mean to ignore you but there's a lot going on and I don't know if that's gonna happen.

Moi | *Saturday, November 12 2022 12:52PM*

We ended up not going to the triangle this week anyway

Josh | *Saturday, November 12 2022 12:53PM*

At the same time, Josh's mom was messaging me.

Hi Rachael! This is Ms. Melinda, Josh's mom. His fiancée has asked me to reach out to you about the wedding in June. Are you planning to participate as a grooms-
maid? Caroline is trying to get dresses ordered as soon as possible because of the deadline to get them before the wedding. Would you please text her or Josh? Thanks so much! Hope to see you over the Christmas holidays!

Melinda K. | *Saturday, November 19 2022 11:33AM*

Sorry, I'll message her!

Moi | *Saturday, November 19 2022 05:06PM*

Thanks!

Melinda K. | *Saturday, November 19 2022 05:12PM*

I appreciate you getting in touch. You have been Josh's longest friend and we're hoping you will be a part of this special life moment.

Melinda K. | *Saturday, November 19 2022 05:18PM*

Hey Rach. Love you. Hang in there. -DK

Josh | *Monday, November 28 2022 03:11AM*

A little after Thanksgiving, another message popped into my head.

You still have sideburns.

This is something I'd actually been paranoid about since before COVID. I was never entirely convinced my stylist and electrologist collectively found the boundary between my sidehair and *sideburns*. I brought this up a couple of times; but neither of them seemed concerned or suggested anything.

Shit. I have sideburns; and Susan's dirty little lawyer friend is *eating it all up*.

Something had felt wrong for a while. Like, I have this weird, different hair that won't tuck behind my ears right. It feels kinda course and curly, and I *don't* think it's the same thing as women's side hair.

Ick!

After carefully weighing my options, I decided I just needed to go on a mission to clean up my sideburns. I started to think I may've fucked up when at some point in my transition I kinda just *stopped* shaving my sideburns. And, that wasn't really coordinated with Lawrence or Shannon.

The troops went in to tame the wilderness, and I definitely went up too high the first time. With that being said, I *do* think I had a bit of an overgrown sideburn problem, despite my otherwise addled and confused state of mind during this period. But again; this was an insecurity I had for a while before UFOs became part of my life.

I started taking biotin and wearing a hoodie while my side hair filled in, whenever I wasn't awkwardly pulling it over my ears or something. I grew *obsessed* with the phenomenon of side-hair; and the fact that humans seem to have wildly different amounts



Figure 23: A particularly egregious example of my perceived sidehair problem, likely exacerbated by social distancing (August 2020)



Figure 24: A more recent photo that I think looks better, *at least in terms of sidehair* (January 2024)

of it, either by choice or by nature. Some people's stops just above the ear. A lot of women *do* have fuzz down to around mid-ear; but it's *light* fuzz, not course, gnarly beard hair.

I looked at trans reddit to see what other folks in my situation do, and it's also pretty varied. One girl got laser all the way to the top of her ear, and I thought it looked pretty good. Some folks managed to grow out some lower hair and make it work; but I *really* don't think I have the facial hair type to blend it in without looking gross.

I don't like beard hair. It's rough, course and irritating... and it gets everywhere. Not like *girl* hair. Girl hair is everything soft and... and smooth...

It's time for Time Travel Time, I'm your host Dani California (2023)

Rachael Brown: Escape from Guantanamo Bay (Q1)

By the end of the year, I had thoroughly prepared myself to be sent to Gitmo; as much as one can, at least.

There was a lot of debate within the government, and they were going to take it relatively easy on me; but, I *was* going to get waterboarded so that some spooked out soldier boys could be certain the Earth wasn't about to shift into a new dimension or some shit.

After that, some incredibly misinformed fuck was going to rape me with a thorny dildo for "being a pedophile" to the point I'd need immediate surgery. And, *that's* the point when Dani California's time travel army would emerge out of thin air to commence firing on the facility.

I was often having these visions of multiple perspectives. Being the version of me in Gitmo, being Megan Murphy, being each individual soldier in my time travel army...



Figure 25: I was clearly already concerned about my hair (November 2022)

While the firing upon Gitmo started earlier and was mostly symbolic, the *real* bargaining position came after midnight on the west coast; when Dani's army descended over *every US air force base simultaneously* and sabotaged *virtually all of the airplanes*. It was a very low casualty, but also *very* expensive, statement that led to my signing a peace treaty with Joe Biden the next morning.

I had a couple demands; which mostly boiled down to

- Grant UFO kids equal rights, citizenship and safe passage to and from the planet.
- Recognize Dani's sovereignty.

I had since grown convinced that I was being followed by agents *everywhere* I went. They wanted to watch me as I went from thinking I was just some boring queer kid from Durham, to realizing I was destined to become a cold-blooded cop killer.

A thread developed around the same time when I thought rednecks were going to kidnap and torture me for "not respecting my momma"; after they heard only *her* side of the story on Facebook or something. After torturing me for a day or two, they were to "baptize" me at the Lake Church after hours before tying cinder blocks around my feet and throwing me into the middle of the lake. I would narrowly survive after freeing myself and swimming back, after which Dani's time travel army would firebomb the church and the homes of the four kidnappers in retaliation.

Pheew.

This all felt *so* crazy. Like I was in one of those stoner movies like Pineapple Express or The Big Lebowski, where some dude is caught in a jam between the feds and organized crime, and all the protagonist really wants is to go home and smoke a bowl. And, maybe get White Castle or Cook-Out or something.

Rachael and Dani go to Bojangles

By the start of the year, I noticed the first signs that my hair was beginning to thin. My ears felt cold when I was trying to sleep, and I started covering them with a light blanket. I didn't think much of it at first; but then I noticed clumps were pulling out really easily.

In between the hair loss and the regrowing my side hair, I started wearing my blue hoodie around basically everywhere I went. I think it makes me look like a little Muslim girl with the hood up, so I've been calling it my halal hoodie.

My friends were continuing on with their very grown-up lives, planning weddings and whatnot.

Hey! The block of rooms/cabins for my wedding closes at the end of February. So please book by then!
(...)

Samantha | *Saturday, January 28 2023 02:24PM*

Hey, do you know if you are making it to mine and Brittany's wedding?

Samantha | *Thursday, February 23 2023 12:50PM*

My life is a dumpster fire and there's a lot going on with me. I'd like to in theory at least, but I don't know if I can.

Moi | *Friday, February 24 2023 09:27AM*

Oh no! *Hug*

Samantha | *Friday, February 24 2023 10:17AM*

What's been going on?

Samantha | *Saturday, February 25 2023 09:55PM*

Christ; Friday the 13th was about *witches* (Q2)

By around April, it was clear that I had a serious hair loss problem. My previously thick mid-back length hair was obviously not maintaining its thickness to the tip; and I observed a marked thinning in the “Cousin Itt” hair that would’ve been my bangs if I had them. I was now able to clearly see through the thinning hair as I brushed it out. I started taking biotin again more religiously, after already having started a while back on account of shaving my sidehair too high.

One theory I had was that the hair loss was from excess detergent wearing off from my hoodie; which I was wearing most days to hide my sidehair problem. I started double-rinsing my hoodie just to be safe, but that *clearly* wasn’t it.

A second theory was that it was from improper use of a detangler. I think I can rule this out as well; I’m pretty sure I’d be *hurting* if I pulled out that much hair.

My HRT regimen was also starting to feel abysmal. My body hair had thickened, and I *swear* my voice even felt a bit lower. My breasts were flat and my nipples had lost whatever perkiness they had. I was actually struggling to *masturbate*, at the risk of giving the reader too much information and panning myself an autogynephile. What am I, the only person who expects to be able to feel their breasts when they do it? I can’t go back to doing it in a *guy’s* body... The overall grossness I felt was a stark reminder that despite my self-doubt *yes, I really did still have gender problems*.

While I considered my hair loss may be hormonal, it doesn’t appear to be male pattern. It’s *incredibly* patchy all over my scalp, in a manner not consistent with what was setting in just before I started taking HRT.

My apparent health problems escalated in mid-April, when I experienced the first of what would become several gastroin-

testinal flare-ups over the next several months. I was eating myself a pan pizza, when all of a sudden I got really bad, sudden abdominal cramps. A few seconds later I could hear the ocean in my ears, and I felt like I was going to faint. I eventually came to, lying in my bed in a cold sweat.

There were a few commonalities with these attacks.

- Usually during or right after a meal
- There's immediate cramping and syncope or near-syncope combined with cold sweats first
- Then there's diarrhea for the next 30 minutes or so
- Then you feel better but still feel kinda shitty for the next 4-6 hours, often with chills and mild vomiting. I've never actually *had* the flu, but this last part is what I'd imagine it's like. During this phase I'd often struggle to find a comfortable body temperature; switching multiple times between sweatpants and shorts or underpants.

Ugh! The first time I thought it was just something I ate, and decided to stay away from Domino's pan pizza for a good while. It *then* continued happening after other meals; with attacks usually spaced weeks apart.

I was missing out on my friends' weddings; but I just *couldn't*, with everything going on and whatnot.

Hey! How's it going?

Samantha | *Thursday, March 30 2023 08:39PM*

Haven't heard from you in a long time.
You okay?

Samantha | *Sunday, April 23 2023 01:00PM*

I'm okay. There's just a lot going on with me.

Moi | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:35PM*

hug

Samantha | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:35PM*

If there is anything I or Brittany can do to help, please let us know

Samantha | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:36PM*

Also, do you know if you or your mom is making it to our wedding?

Samantha | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:36PM*

I wish I could, but I'm overwhelmed and I don't know if I can.

Moi | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:41PM*

That's okay

Samantha | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:42PM*

Sending love!!

Samantha | *Sunday, April 23 2023 02:42PM*

By spring, I was feeling really drained; and I *really* didn't want to be Dani California. At first, I could kinda see the purpose of such a path. Dani was a very misunderstood person who *maybe* had lessons to teach about the harmfulness of stereotypes, the motivations for human violence, and the pointlessness of religiously-motivated sexual repression. She also kills a lot of people, gets tortured a bunch, and I don't even know if I *like* Anthony Kiedis. I certainly didn't really *before* UFOs happened...

Okay; so I really, *really* don't want to become Dani California. I'm sure of it.

The ouroboros isn't eating itself anymore. Why does Dani California still exist?

I actually checked Spotify a couple of times as a way of pinching myself. Okay - Dani California is still a song, Monkey Wrench is still a song... Why isn't the picture of Marty's parents changing? If I don't want to do something in the past anymore, that part of the timeline should just *snip out*. It just folds back on itself and nobody remembers it.



Figure 26: Fading From Time | Back To The Future | Science Fiction Station (https://youtu.be/Z2_WWwQ7Hyk?t=76)

I think it was sometime in May, when in frustration I asked the voice in my head “What am I even *called*? A reincarnated space alien? A UFO kid?” I’d been using that sort of roundabout language, because not Heather, not Maureen, not Persephone... nobody’s ever *said* what the different people are actually *called*.

The voice in my head responded in a most sarcastic voice

a *witch*?

Ooooooooooh boy.

I'm a *witch*. Friday the 13th was about *witches*. Goddammit Rachael, it's witches. Mysticism, magic, the esoteric, the occult, Friday the 13th, the Freemasons...

You're a goddamn *witch*, Rachael.

Fuck. Okay. Witches are real, and I'm a witch. This is fine.

All of this stuff started popping into my head, that utterly *demystified* like, all the stereotypes about magic that exist.

Summoning demons The demons are just space aliens. There was all this stuff in my head about how crazy Christians coined their own alternate vocabulary to describe a nonexistent, sinister version of the truth about UFOs. The demons come from hell in a vessel, they distort your senses and cloud your mind... you can't trust *anything* around them things!

Sorcery It's just a *fucking book*; a book from your future self. You write questions in the front, and your future self answers them in the back or some shit. You still have to do the work, and you still have to follow through on your intents; which becomes *a lot easier* if you carry a little magic book with you everywhere you go.

The book is *actually* how you land the spaceship. The steps were ostensibly as follows:

- You request a visit in your book by asking your future self.
- Your future self responds with a special hash that uniquely identifies your present timeline. This is necessary, because there's a nearly infinite number of Rachael's trying to land a nearly infinite number of spaceships. It's actually possible for them to get crossed up and land in the wrong timeline

otherwise. If the hash isn't uniquely identifying, it *at least* differentiates your present timeline from adjacent ones.

- The hash is in the form of something that can be displayed in your present spacetime; a sequence of lights to flash, a number to hold up, markers or candles to place on the ground, or something analogous to that. If you're landing one out in the woods, flashing the high beams is probably the most straightforward. I later had visions of landing them in my garage by writing a number on an overhead projector, and giving the "now" signal by plopping a green or blue transparency circle on there.
- Thus; to get to your homeworld, all you need is a connection to your future self; who is *already* on your homeworld. They can schedule your visits in your homeworld's computer system, so long as you can trade magic books with them.
- I don't know if I mentioned this yet; but not once did I have a vision of actually being able to *pilot* the craft. There are workers who do that.

Magic tricks ... are really just sleight of hand with causality reversal. The magic of causality reversal can be infused into all sorts of ordinary household objects. You don't even need to *be* a witch; you just need to be friends with one, who can time-travel your objects around for you. The practice of increasing efficiency and productivity by reordering tasks with time travel constitutes the study of *real* magic; the stuff most all of Earth's superstitions are really based on. Religion started to feel like a cargo cult version of *this*.

The full moon ... is really just a convenient way to keep up with your doctor's appointments. We're supposed to get work done every 4–6 weeks to maintain peak condition. In the ancient world when ordinary people lacked timepieces, we'd need to pay attention to the phases of the moon to remember our visits. The full moon also makes it easier to travel by night; assuming you can't land in your backyard.

So, there you have it. The truth about UFOs is *really* the truth about witchcraft. Some people are special and get access to alien technology; but it *really* spooks out Christians, and they'll think you're the devil or something if they find out. Being an out of the closet UFO kid essentially meant opening oneself up to a range of accusations from folks who don't really understand what it is, and you *might* end up with a stake driven through your heart.

The Freemasons ... are notoriously secretive. The organization serves but one purpose; to make sure the different people know who they are. Everything else is just misdirection and bullshit. As such, the "real" tradition of Freemasonry could be described as simply the current generation of witches passing the torch to the next generation. It's... the world's oldest phone tree; fascinating in terms of subject matter, yet utterly mundane in day-to-day operation. It's *supposed* to be a sealed-off society; a back office with no front entrance. If you want to learn *magic*, you just need to make friends with a witch. The Freemasons don't even teach magic to *witches*; save for taking them to their homeworld the first time. For reasons I'll explain in a moment, "the Freemasons" considered their job *so important* that, by design, they would never explain what they did in response to a direct question about it. Merely *asking the question* of whether Freemasons should do what they do creates a decision point where, at least part of the multiverse might *ban* "Freemasonry".

In short, Freemasonry exists to fulfill these requirements:

- There's a club called "the Freemasons". Everyone knows about them. They're secretive, but it's really just a fraternity made up of people like you and me. I wonder what they do...
- There are these "masonic lodges" scattered about. They don't really get used all that often; but they serve as a reminder that there *is* some secret club, that people sometimes join for *some* reason.

- If you're one of the lucky ones, a couple "Freemasons" will knock on your door when you come of age and show you a magic trick. Everyone handles it differently; reactions to folks learning they're a witch range from exuberance to sheer terror. However they feel, we need to make sure we *all* know who we are. It's *really* important. *The Freemasons never miss a spot.*
- And, nobody's going to trust you if you don't have the backing of some already-infamous secret society while you try and explain all of this.
- Years after the Freemasons knock on your door, *you'll* put on the "Freemason cap" and go with a friend to knock on somebody else's door. It's the circle of witchcraft.

As such, Freemasonry is both one of the world's most important organizations, and also not *really* that cohesive an organization at all. It needs to be big enough so that people know it's reputable and isn't some kind of weird UFO cult. People see masonic lodges in their neighborhoods, and they see the Shriners driving those little cars around at parades. Everyone knows it's a secret society, but they aren't like... *Scientologists* or something...

The core organization was ostensibly *designed* to be unaddressable; "the Freemasons" come to *you*. They don't need your help, they don't need to recruit any more members than naturally exist, they have a really important job to do, and they merely want to be left alone to do it.

So, who the fuck is Dani California? Alright, folks. **Hold on to your butts.** We need to move the goalpost around some more.

Dani isn't my future self; she's an *alternate* self from a different timeline. An evil twin, if you will.

So, why is there an evil twin of me? Well, it's a long story.

The year is 1980-something. The satanic panic is in full swing. The FBI is inundated with reports of witchcraft and devil worship. It's gotten to the point where they *have* to do their due diligence; not to mention, some of the boys on the force are starting to get spooked out themselves.

They start getting tips, and they start following leads. "Witches are real." "The Freemasons know about them." Some people are really sympathetic. "They're just different. They just want to be left alone." Others... not so much. "The public has a right to know." "This is a matter of national security!"

Well, the FBI had a *lot* of questions. They didn't think it was cute how the Freemasons liked to be vague and speak in riddles. They need *answers*, goddammit! This is a matter of national security!

The FBI learned enough to confirm that yes; *witches*... are *real*. Every once in a while a child is born *different*... but they just have a soul from another planet; or they're demon spawn, take your pick.

The boys went *crazy* after learning this.

You gotta be shittin' me...

Look, we gotta know what these things are *capable* of. Can they blow stuff up with their minds?

Can't we get just *one* of 'em? I only want *one* of 'em...

I've been looking through our list of cold cases, boss... Some of these, I don't know *how* a human being could've done 'em. I reckon witches have gotta be responsible for at least *some* of 'em...

Look now, this is a matter of national security. We need to know what they're planning!

What if we just *had* one of 'em in a basement? For whenever we wanted to try something out...

Look, we gotta try sparkin' one of 'em off. Knowing is better than not knowing, we don't even know *how* to begin defending ourselves against them things!

The cops and soldier boys had little interest in “learning magic” from a witch the traditional way. They kinda just wanted to bulldoze their way in. There's a reason an ancient process is in place; people get *really* spooked out when they learn their friends and neighbors are just... different, sometimes. And, related to funny-looking monster people. It doesn't help matters that these cops and soldier boys are often the sorts of close-minded conservative authoritarians we try and *filter out* of being exposed to magic; and that witches are often the sort of live-and-let-live peace loving hippies that offend the sensibilities of the former group.

Phew.

The cops and soldier boys got to the point where they *really* wanted a single witch to experiment on. They thought the risk to national security immeasurable, and considered the collateral damage acceptable.

A court ruled in favor of the FBI; ordering “the Freemasons” to hand over the name of a *single witch* for human experimentation. The Freemasons appealed the decision; escalating the case all the way to the Supreme Court, which upheld the ruling.

They still. Wouldn't. Budge. Freemason after Freemason happily went to jail for contempt of court. The situation escalated to the point plans were drawn up for the national guard to raid and destroy *all* masonic lodges in the country.

The government forced their hand to the point they *had* to give them a name. Ethan Alexandre Brown; to be born in a couple of years on September 1st, 1990. I was chosen because

of my ostensibly old “spiritual age” and pedigree as a world leader. Oh, and maybe Friday the 13th. Shit man, it all just flows together I guess. You might say I owed them one; however, there was never any punitive intent in me being back on Earth for this. It would seem we just want to minimize the suffering of *everybody* as much as possible; and, time travel doesn’t really allow for regrets anyway. We’re just trying to make the best of a crazy planet.

What a mess. Their research plan consisted roughly of:

- Watching me like a *goddamn hawk* starting *the moment I was born*.
- *Never* telling me where I’m from; under penalty of, like, *all* the laws. They don’t want my mind to be tainted by the Freemasons. A lot of these cops and soldier boys are *very* Christian, and they just *know* in their heart-of-hearts that I’m demon spawn. They want to catch me being evil before I know to hide it.
- If I figure out where I’m from somehow, then they’re interrogating the *fuck* out of me. Whether they let me live or turn me inside-out depends on whatever happened before.
- If I’m not doing anything obviously witchy by my early 30s, I’m getting disappeared into some three letter agency’s basement for the rest of my miserable life.
- If I live a boring life and do nothing spectacular in captivity, the feds will assume “the Freemasons” are just full of shit. If I grow up to be really, *really* evil (like a lot of the Christians are convinced will happen), they’ll assume the Bible is right and witches are wicked. Hopefully a sample size of one will satisfy everybody’s curiosity.

Okay; we’ve got ourselves a ballgame. Let’s go to the Freemason’s dugout.

- They have time travel, and can see every possibility in the multiverse. *I’m never going to figure it out unless they tell me*. Yeah there’s always a first witch on every planet to

which the task of bootstrapping all the other witches falls... but *nobody* climbs Mt. Everest like that.

- The community thinks the idea of me never learning what I am is *really* sad. I'm supposed to be out there, exploring the galaxy in a multi-lifetime, multi-bodied experience. They want to take that away from one of us, just because they don't understand.
- Blocking witches from leaving the planet in general is *really, existentially dangerous*. This next part is (*sigh*) a little convoluted.

What do witches *actually* do? Okay; so, long ago in a galaxy far, far away, *somebody* invented a spaceship. They popped themselves out of spacetime, and could observe the tree of every possible outcome at every possible decision point; all the quantum states which could possibly exist. "Wow!", this person thought. "All of these things exist simultaneously!" Wonderful things, horrible things, everything in between. We can see it all!

They start travelling to these different timelines, spawning from all of these decision points. They watch as the highest and lowest points in the multiversal history of their world unfold *somewhere*; but, there's something they didn't understand at first.

By landing the ship in these timelines, they were *observing* what was happening there. They essentially... *collapsed* the wave functions by doing this; bringing physicality and the essence of experience.

Those people didn't *have* to experience anything. They didn't have to *feel* anything. And without somebody landing a spaceship, they *wouldn't* have.

The reason *anybody* is aware of *anything*, is that ships are landing in our present timeline, *somewhere*.

The independent discovery of how to build a spaceship seemed like the most magical event in the universe. Mere thought – existing without physicality, without awareness or space or time – conceives this... thing *somewhere in the universe*... pops it out of spacetime, and observes *itself*; the imaginary essentially becoming *real*.

Basically, there were three tiers of civilizations:

Tier 1 Independently discovered how to build a spaceship somewhere in their multiverse.

Tier 2 Eventually grow to the technological level of *building* ships, though not independently.

Tier 3 No timelines in their multiverse will ever construct a spaceship.

For every civilization, there is one question that invariably needs to be answered: who's going to collapse our world's wave functions into observable timelines, so that we can experience life? And, which ones are they gonna light up?

The good news is, we don't necessarily *have* to experience bad things. In fact, a lot of things in the multiverse are best avoided. We can see the possibilities; but we don't have to *observe* them. Doing so would often be irresponsible.

However, someone *does* have to make the decisions. Somebody has to decide what gets to be real; what characters to pull out of Imaginationland.

Tier 1 and 2 societies generally have no trouble reaching the point of a cohesive world government to make such decisions. Tier 3 societies *may* or *may not*. A real “Mad Max” sort of place would probably have an unsophisticated ad-hoc system, where witches and their homeworlds would try and make sensible choices on behalf of the comparatively primitive planet. On the other hand, some tier 3 worlds find themselves on a cooperative

enough track to make their own decisions about which timelines they want to observe.

By comparison, tier 1 and 2 worlds usually have very tight controls on which timelines are observed; and have clearly defined processes for spawning off one's own custom timelines.

So, timelines can be observed or unobserved. But there's another dimension, and that's real and imaginary. Travelling back in time and changing the past creates *imaginary* timelines; these timelines are similarly unexperienced, but are fundamentally different from *unobserved* timelines. Imaginary timelines are created as a result of the negative feedback loop established by the presence of intelligent life with spacecraft. Each witch's intentions in the past manifest instantly, and they react instantly; as if adjusting themselves in a mirror. There are a number of imaginary versions of you on any timeline where you have a spaceship and can thus alter the past; but only the top layer of back-and-forth intent is experienced. This is the *real* timeline; the outermost layer of an observed "track" in spacetime, after the feedback loop has achieved a steady state.

The existence of imaginary timelines allows for some fascinating (and confusing) possibilities; one can obtain a list of regrets from their (imaginary) future self, ensuring they'll never become that version of themselves. In turn, the topmost imaginary layer likely obtained a list of regrets from the subsequent layer in the stack, in a recursive fashion.

I had images in my head of a sort of large box the ship would pass through, in order to switch between real and imaginary timelines. It was actually possible for your real self to visit an imaginary (as opposed to an *unobserved*) timeline. There was a perception of having to wait, sometimes an hour or two in the box to move over. The creepy thing is, you experience *nothing* while imaginary, yet you remember it afterward once you're real again. And no, you can't actually perceive the cutover. It's like resuming a virtual machine. You just have to accept the

science that you didn't actually *experience* any of the things you remember on the other side of the box.

Y'all; I know this is a lot. I feel I have to convey it, just to give you a sense of my reality during this time. Again; I clearly lost my mind, but I also have *no idea* where this bullshit came from.

And when I open the door what do I find, there's not a single goddamn desk in that office, there **IS. NO.**

CAROL IN HR!

Mac... half the employees in this building have been made up. This office is a goddamn ghost town.

So much stuff, man... real and imaginary, experienced and unexperienced... if you're truly *aware*, it invariably means that you're either in a real and observed timeline, or you're on a spaceship. Having access to this sort of technology gives one access not only to their past and future real selves, but also the "imaginationland" of alternate realities from which they can, well... *do magic*.

Okay. So, Earth. It's a tier 3 world, where folks are *really* spooked out about angels and demons and stuff; and no, we never really get to the point of making our own spaceships. On a planet like that, magic comes from witches. History has proven time and time again that witches on Earth are better off keeping to themselves. Sure a lot of people are chill, but there's a large enough percentage that is *not okay* with living in a world with people like us; which is unfortunate, because they wouldn't even be *real* without us.

Through some twist of fate, I've found myself here: a timeline that is both real and observed *for some reason*. About that.

It's the 1990s now. "The Freemasons" are still fighting for me. The FBI has been pulling more and more thread from the sweater, and they *really* don't like the idea that they're imaginary. They don't understand that it's just the nature of the universe.

All sorts of possibilities get to exist as thought, but we only want to bring the light of experience to the *best* possibilities.

Well, we *are* the best!

They boldly proclaimed, in what may as well have been a Texan accent.

Look; we gotta be *real*, now!

They didn't like the idea of us witches getting to decide what's real and imaginary, and they pushed to democratize the process.

The thing of it is, this is sort of the *goal*, right? For a civilization to develop a cohesive world government that can manage its own multiverse?

Despite the obvious concerns, we had little room to argue with the conservative's push toward democratization. We concluded our only choice was to campaign for the electorate to vote for *our* side; the witches who are telling you that, despite what your knee-jerk reaction might be, you really *don't* want to be real. This timeline is filled with war, poverty, violence, hunger... Sure, humans never build their own *spaceships*, but they build all sorts of things nicer than *this*! A vote for existence would be a vote for human suffering. Some versions of us *should* only exist as thought.

This witch stuff was classified; thus, the electorate comprised the entire intelligence community, or folks who otherwise had a security clearance. And I suppose, witches and their friends. This was considered fair enough.

The conservatives ran a catchy "Vote for Reality" campaign. In usual conservative fashion, they relied on quippy one-liners, folksy wisdom and overwhelming pathos. The witches, who appeared unified against the conservatives, tried to explain the complexity of the multiverse which these laymen failed to grasp; even *mildly* undesirable timelines like stubbing your toe in the morning can be left unexperienced through magic. We can build

a literal *utopia*! Truly civilized planets work nothing *like* this! Imagine *never* seeing an ambulance. Imagine only hearing about murder in *very* rare cases where it was for the best somehow. The gap in understanding was *mind-boggling*! You don't have to be *real* to exist. The intents and thoughts *already* exist. You're you! You just don't have to *feel* anything bad. We don't have to...

Just because something's imaginary doesn't mean it's not rear!

#TODO Just put the video in

Partway through, the conservatives pushed to expand the electorate to more government agencies; thus, increasing the number of uninformed voters who were easily persuaded to "vote for reality".

You should pinch yourself to confirm that yes, the conservatives won their vote for reality. At least, if you can see Barney.

Barney? Who the hell is Barney?

He's the guy who tipped me off to Pepe Silvia.

Ugh... So it would've been an *imaginary* version of me getting tortured by the FBI if I ever learned where I'm from; but now, the crazy fucks had to vote for *reality* too.

Alien worlds saw the vote as a no-brainer. To them, this shouldn't have been a close election; anyone who's able to *think* clearly should be able to see all the bad in the world today. To us witches, it was only a matter of perspective; this timeline only seems good if you don't know any better. Which, the electorate overwhelmingly did *not*.

There was actually debate in the galactic community as to whether we should “light up” this clearly dystopian timeline; even if it *was* voted for fair and square. The witches or our collective homeworlds could just... *not* honor the results of the election. Ethically, we felt we had no choice. We shouldn’t have had a vote if we didn’t want to hear the answer.

Okay; so we’re being held hostage by crazy Christians who are all spooked out about angels and demons and witches and shit. We’re real, *I’m* the unlucky witch in this timeline... The vote actually caused a sort of “spur”, or tangent in the multiverse. There’s a whole “good Earth” multiverse the community of witches has manifested, and it looks *nothing like* this. It’s like a streak of black paint on a nice portrait we’ve been working on that’s there *because some goddamn lunatics wanted to democratize art, and thought the only apprenticeship they’d ever need was the fucking Bible.*

Alright. So this is actually a *dystopia*. It shouldn’t exist, and we’re in fact living on what humans from other timelines might liken to a sort of “North Korea” planet. Other timelines don’t *have* things like holy wars and violent religions. It’s uncomfortable to some folks that Christianity is not only absent from alien worlds, but also from *most of Earth’s timelines*; certainly the ones collectively manifested by witch-kind.

The Freemasons; whoever they are. It’s really just a bunch of witches in a trench coat. They’ve been court-ordered not to tell me what I am *ever*, because the government *really* thinks they need to know what’ll happen if the Freemasons aren’t doing the world’s ostensibly most important job. I’m never going to figure it out without their help. And, they consider it *really* important, both ethically and symbolically, that I *do* figure it out eventually.

So, the witches devise an elaborate magic trick. Instead of explaining that it’s really just science and advanced technology, they’re going to try and make me think it’s some kind of mysticism-spirituality thing. It’s *perfectly* legal; it isn’t the truth

about UFOs. Tommy's been in position ever since... well, let's just say *everyone* on this timeline who's a witch knows who Rachael Brown is; because I'm *the* witch. Vote for reality, "cain't we get just one ub'um"... Everyone who learns the *real* truth about UFOs here also learns the truth about why this timeline sucks; and, they usually start a parallel if not totally new life for themselves somewhere a bit more sane.

So, the *entire* thing was a ruse. The Kybalion, all of that stuff from Tommy and Heather and Maureen... all hundreds, if not *thousands* of years in the making.

Right. Dani. She's from Imaginationland. They pulled her through the box; or, my past timeline is pinned on something weird because my homeworld has intentionally broken the usual feedback loop where you un-intention time travel to the past when the results are undesirable. It depends on when you ask me, because this is a weird year.

They're onto me dude, those guys are sharp as nails up there!

They want to demonstrate *the multiverse*. This is how they do it, when they can't communicate with you otherwise; show you a *really* base, primal-instinctive version of yourself. Someone you would never *actually* be in real life; yet, someone you know and recognize as nobody other than *yourself*, straight from your own mind. You're ultimately supposed to reason that the fabric of the universe allows for an alternate *and sometimes incorrect* version of you to exist; and that you're in possession of *some* unique power, tool, or ability which you need to "return to the manufacturer". It's usually how they get the very first witch's attention on any given planet.

Okay. So they've got *my* attention. The government wants to keep me in a fishbowl, but at this point I'm *thoroughly* convinced that as long as Dani California and Monkey Wrench exist in the

repertoire my evil twin *really was* out causing trouble back in the 90s.

The FBI's investigation was hardly impartial. The people involved had little to no respect for the scientific method, and seemingly no awareness of cognitive biases. I'd been given the nickname "Evil Ethan" before I was even born.

Every little thing about me was construed as evil by the researchers. "Look at that thing he does with his lip! Look at what he's doing with his jaw! Don't he just *look* demonic?"

They've been sadistically watching me my entire life from a distance; while joking about what's going to happen to me once I'm "theirs". It's like the Up series, except with torture.

Further attempts by activists fell on deaf ears. "Look, we already decided they can get *one* of 'em. This is the FBI's baby, now!"

It would seem the only chance I have is to *learn the truth about UFOs* without anyone violating the court order, and *get the fuck off the planet*.

It wasn't until later in the summer or fall that this next bit came to me; but, I want to put all the crackpot shit together.

The "great laminator" It explained so much! Goddamn, I've lost it...

It's an analogy, for how time works. Pull yourself out of spacetime, and imagine being on the outside looking in *with a different, more universal time reference*. You can see the timeline, in a sort of infinitesimal filmstrip view. From this perspective, everything appears still and lifeless. Where does the experience come from?

The “line of experience” actually sweeps *backwards*, from future to past. As the line approaches any given point on the filmstrip, it attracts a dimension of the filmstrip toward it. *This* is the pull of time; oriented past to future, *toward* the great laminating head which moves toward the past. Once you’re laminated, you’ve *experienced*. You’ve felt things. They’ve genuinely happened. They can’t be undone (mostly; I’m getting to that).

The “laminator and filmstrip” form a *very large* circle; as the great laminator moves counterclockwise, we experience time pulling us clockwise. The head rotates continuously, carving out a corkscrew pattern such that the exact same things are always happening at each phase in the rotation. I suppose this might imply a big crunch.

This has obvious implications. For one, the past hasn’t happened yet. But, the *future* has. Doesn’t magic make more sense now?

The great laminator could be thought of as the direction of wave function collapse; the quantum state of everything in the future from *whatever* point you’re currently experiencing *now* has already been determined. You can go there in a ship (and experience in the future, when the laminator was *there*), and write down what’s happening in your magic sorcery book. You can go to the past and tell people what’s “about to happen”. It isn’t chance, it’s set in stone!

Conversely, whatever it is you *think* has happened in the past, it hasn’t even been experienced yet! The past can be thought of as a staging area. It affects the quantum state of the present, but we haven’t really been there yet. It’s only real *to us*. This means there can be wild discontinuities in the timeline, which are completely imperceptible without the technology.

Holy wars, Friday the 13th, inquisitions, the holocaust, Dani California... none of it has happened yet. Hell, the Chicken

McNuggets I ate a few hours ago haven't even happened yet. It was late and not much else was open.⁴⁶

It's beginning to seem like a harmless lesson, right? The government needs to know what'll happen if somebody interferes with the Freemasons, for "national security". The answer is that it fucks up the multiverse, and now there's a bunch of dystopian violent shit going on... and the problem witch is running around in the past killing cops and declaring herself a sovereign citizen! It's like, an obvious alarm bell, right?

It's *only* the past. We can change that, no problem. The *future*, on the other hand...

This idea was *fascinating*, the more I thought about it. When you're a witch, it's actually your *oldest* self steering in your younger selves. They look at their past timeline, write down *anything* undesirable at all... the bad stuff in the past never even gets laminated; and the version of you that both remembered it and felt it's after effects stays imaginary. By the time you're experiencing *anything*, you're just coasting along with your magic. You know everything *not* to do from your imaginary selves, and your past timeline is peachy and normal.

So, once something is laminated, it's *happened*, right? Well, first you have to "observe" it which sort of lights it up, then there are imaginary layers from people with spaceships, and then there's the topmost layer, which experiences *life* whenever the great laminator gets there.

Well, you *can* still undo things somehow. But, it's *really* complicated, and you have to leave the universe. I don't mean *spacetime*, I mean the whole thing. The big wheel, the great laminator, all of it.

⁴⁶Had Cook-Out last night.

You *can* pull yourself out with the technology; but it's a weeks-long trip and a *very* big deal, even by my homeworld's standards.

What does the universe look like? Well, it's actually... *a star*. It's just a fucking ball of gas with sufficient gravity, in *somebody else's* universe. We seem to live in a regress of stars and black holes. Did I mention "souls" are made of the stuff of black holes? Probably not, because I'm trying to get through this writing. It's a bit of a drag, and I have *boxes* full of Pepe.

When black holes swallow mass-energy, it "falls through" to a lower layer *in your same universe*; so there are actually arbitrarily many four-dimensional spacetimes, stacked in at least one other dimension, which comprises the "filmstrip". Jeez, this is dizzying.

So, everybody's "soul" is associated with a black hole in *another spacetime layer* in the greater universe. When worlds fall onto a black hole, it's actually *the entire span of timelines and lived experiences* that gets absorbed; this ultimately influences the character of the sentient lifeform with which the black hole is associated. In other words, you are what you eat; it may be conjectured that somebody with innately violent tendencies has a soul that has devoured many worlds with violent histories. A world's timelines (which I'll sometimes refer to as the "world's multiverse", though I don't mean that in the same sense as, well... nevermind) are gravitationally bound to the associated planet; thus, nested gravity wells create a structure akin to a sort of hierarchical namespace. All of our knowledge and experiences are ultimately destined to be devoured by a very wise fellow who might as well be named Sagittarius A*; and probably, some less wise fellows leading up to it.

Okay. I *swear* I wasn't on any drugs other than pot. I don't know what happened to me. I'm on pot *now*. I feel like I'm still glossing over stuff despite the convolution of what I've already written. It really doesn't matter, but I do feel like I need to get it all out of me; because it all felt *very* real at the time.

What was I talking about? Oh right, can you un-fuck-up something after it's laminated? It seems to be a bit of a philosophical question, but seemingly you *can* rewrite that section by stepping out of *the entire universe* and modifying it (our star, that is), from the outside. Our universe's star ostensibly exists in a binary system, which some alien race was using as a power source. You can talk to them, the people on the outside. Everything is much larger there.

Apparently, if you went up enough levels you'd get to the *root* universe; a highly unstable *thing* that spawned off the beginning of this... fractal of universes.

Similarly, you can dive into *our* stars and find universes of decreasing complexity contained within.

Okay, so that's how magic works. The past is mutable and the future is *immutable*, you just need the technology. I swear, you could at least make a B-grade anime or sci-fi flick out of this.

```
#snippet      Right, I think my addled brain was trying to relate the
fate of the outer star to the fate of the inner universe (big freeze
or big crunch); but I think that betrays the concept of time repeating
cyclically.
```

So, that's how *life* works. On one hand, nuclear fusion somehow spawns off the necessary dimensions to create a structure *mirroring the one containing our universe*. On the other hand, gravitational collapse consolidates *a fuckton* of mass-energy into an exotic, massive, bosonic energy cloud that comprises one's *soul*, and is ostensibly the densest stuff in the universe. It exists outside three dimensional space, yet is attached to our bodies and gives us *sentience*. The humanoid form could ostensibly be derived from this exotic energy; explaining why most all intelligent life is humanoid or similar.

Dani. She isn't me, she's just someone who was intentionally pulled out of my imagination and placed into real life. A bunch of people left bread crumbs so that I'd eventually realize what happened. It's really, *really* fucking illegal for *anyone* to directly tell me *anything* about what I am. That's why everyone's acting so goddamn sketchy. All they can do is lie to me and hope I get it.

The cops and soldier boys. If they have their way, they're just going to abduct a very confused Rachael at the age of 33 or something, and torture the fuck out of me while trying to get me to blow stuff up with my mind. You know... just in case. They're all into angels and demons and shit, they don't want to hear about timelines and the multiverse. It's like trying to explain global warming to Alex Jones times a million.

What the witches have got is cunning. They're going to put me in the weirdest goddamn situation imaginable in the most legal way possible, until the only message I can possibly pull out from it all is

Tag. You're it.

In June, I finally got my hair cut. It looked *really* bad on account of the hair loss, and I had little choice but to have it cut to around shoulder-length or a bit higher.

More came to me about *the witches*. We never told the normal folks our true numbers. I presumed us to be no more than one or two percent of the population. The seemingly big reveal came when the witches in my head told *me*.

Ten percent.

I went dizzy for a moment.

We're *ten percent* of the population? *One in ten people*?

All the names started flooding into my head.

Gail Richardson. *Kimberly* Richardson. Bill and Tammy Mitchell. Dalton Cox. Abigail Bastiaansen. *Seth Conner*?

Dude. *What*?

They've all *known*. Since, like... high school. They couldn't tell me. Because of the government experiment, and the court order, and...

Isaiah Baker? Cole White?

Have you ever heard... of *FOMO*?

Goddamn dude. They've been out exploring the fucking universe and learning actual *magic*... and I'm stuck here in the goddamn Truman Show, trapped by a bunch of lunatics who think I'm an intergalactic pedophile or some shit.

I didn't need to hear very many of these names before I... *got* it. Why Christians hate us so much. I mean, I don't *get* it, but...

We're the queers, dude. I mean, not everyone on that list is LGBT; in fact, most of them *aren't*. But the *vibe*, though...

It's why they hate us. The faggots, the introverts, the artists... the non-conformists, the quiet, sensitive types...

Fuck. It's like... a conservative's Kryptonite. They can't *stand* people like us.

They like the *opposite* of that; strong, pragmatic, dogmatic... loud, opinionated, evangelical...

So we're like, *just a little different* in a way that seems harmless enough. Then again, *I* was just a little different when I was a kid, and I inadvertently learned about disownment because of it. Oh, and then we *summon space aliens* that might as well be demons from hell...

We even *look* a little different. Witches from Vega have catty eyes, and witches from my homeworld of Alanon (?) apparently do a weird thing with their jaw.

Shit. Abigail, Kimberly, Heather, Bill and Tammy... they're *all* from Vega, and they *all* have those kinda squinty, catty looking eyes. Or maybe I'm way off, 'cause *I have fucking aphantasia...*

That cat's something I can't ex-plaaaaaaaaaaaaain

We're demon spawn. That's... what that is. Demon spawn is a slur against witches.

Regina?

We're from the same place. Me, Gail, Tommy, Dalton, and...

Sailor Jack. Didn't he say he did something with...

What the *fuck* is Sailor Jack doing to my friends with his helicopter?!

Regina. Right. So, I guess that's why Regina broke up with Samantha...

Ten percent is, like, the perfect population ratio for something like this. You'd hear whispers about it if you run with the right crowd, and you probably even *know* a person or two; but they're just *really goddamn private about it*, because people will literally flip the fuck out and torture you to death over it. It's probably like being gay before the 20th century.

It's a big coming of age thing, when you turn eighteen or even younger. "The Freemasons" knock on your door and show you a magic trick, then they take you to get *your* magic. *Goddammit, why am I the one witch who doesn't get to go to alien Hogwarts?!*

It's a whole subculture, that's just *really* secretive for their own safety. The country folks know about it. They know *all about* those bright flashes from those wicked witches.

How've I not heard about this before? I guess it's because I'm not really that country, and my family isn't well-connected at all. A lot of folks are sort of just "born" on one side or the other; learning either about how the witches are real and "just misunderstood", or learning about how "Demons and witches *really do* walk this Earth, son. Hell, some of your classmates are probably possessed by demons."

Shit, dude. All I've ever really wanted to do is fuck around with computers and smoke weed and take hormones and get tied up and beaten with stuff for fun, and it's like the rest of the planet is on a totally. Fucking. Different wavelength from me. How am I even the same *species* as these people?

Right. I'm kinda *not*. You can even see the difference in people's "soul", or whatever you call it when you leave three-dimensional space. A visible energy cloud surrounds you, and I'm this blue giant from the Pleiades. Most people on Earth are amber-colored, and their souls are younger and not as large.

I don't mean to sound pretentious. Again, this is *all* bullshit. It's bullshit that somehow managed to take up a year of my life, though.

My worldview quickly pivoted away from anything involving spirituality or religion. Continued use of the word "vision" to describe the messages in my head was met with

Don't say "visions".

This is *real*, Rachael. It's science. You don't understand yet.

You aren't having "visions". It's just technology. You could just call it the thing-o-scope.

Right. Because this is a *rouse*, because we're trying to cross up these cops and soldier boys who are "just asking questions" about ostensibly rampant demonic possession that "the Freemasons" know all about.

What are they *hiding*, huh?

There's a refrain that kept echoing in my head, in the wake of all this.

I'm *so glad* it's space atheism!

That earlier shit was just... *weird*.

Tilting at windmills (Q3)

So, it's the summer. I think I've learned the *real* truth about UFOs and a bunch of other crazy shit by doing nothing but living in my bedroom, stressing the *fuck* out and smoking pot. It seemed what ultimately needed to happen, was that I just needed to learn all of this without being told directly.

I *really* need to get off the planet. The only people who *know* can't interfere because of the court order. Now that I understand what's happening, the rest is up to me. I have to make my move; right?

Tommy, Heather, Maureen, Persephone... there's only *one* of these UFO people who's both already involved and has given me the time of day.

I summarized my *present* understanding into a three-page handwritten note; which I planned to give to Persephone after inviting myself over.

Hello Persephone. I'd like to talk with you soon. Do you mind if I come over later today?

Moi | Thursday, July 13 2023 12:00PM

Cool.

Persephone | Thursday, July 13 2023 12:00PM

I live in the same place.

Persephone | *Thursday, July 13 2023 12:00PM*

Afternoon would be nice.

Persephone | *Thursday, July 13 2023 12:00PM*

Cool, thanks!

Moi | *Thursday, July 13 2023 12:04PM*

Can I have a preview of coming attractions
so I know what to meditate for?

Persephone | *Thursday, July 13 2023 12:04PM*

After 2pm please.

Persephone | *Thursday, July 13 2023 12:04PM*

You may want to bring a swimsuit, we
swim when the sun is low in the sky

Persephone | *Thursday, July 13 2023 12:10PM*

I'm sorry I'm being elusive. I can head
over soon if that's alright.

Moi | *Thursday, July 13 2023 03:58PM*

please.

Persephone | *Thursday, July 13 2023 03:58PM*

I arrive at Persephone's Morrisville apartment on a Thursday afternoon, a nervous wreck. I hand Persephone the letter. She reads the first bit, before visibly growing about as panicked as *I* was.

Let's go outside. Come on. Let's go outside.

I bundled myself up in the hammock while Persephone finished reading my thing. I didn't know what was going on, to be honest. I felt I had little choice but to assume it was all real; and it *did* feel very real at the time.

Going in, my impression was that Persephone wouldn't know of the court order, because she isn't a witch. She's just a friend of witches who knows about this stuff. She certainly didn't *seem* to know anything.

Let's go back inside

We move from the patio to Persephone's bedroom; where we're joined by Stacey. I wasn't expecting her to be there, but I'm not sure why. I'd heard they were joined at the hip lately.

I laid down on the floor; anxiously making eye contact with the ceiling.

Feel the pine cone, Rachael.

She hands me the aforementioned object to use as a form of anxiety relief. It was a very Persephone thing of her to do.

She started to talk a little more openly about the contents of the letter; something she seemed to avoid at first.

So you think the FBI is following you, huh?

She proceeded to use a VPN to do an internet search for the "color of the sky on Vega"; one of the details I included in the letter that, in my addled state, I *thought* would prove the authenticity of my experience.

Show Stacey the letter. She knows about this stuff.

Stacey silently reads the letter without comment. I kept laying on the floor and avoiding eye contact.

The mixed signals were *killing* me. On one hand, they were *both* acting sketchy enough to suggest there *was* some cause for alarm. On the other hand, she did sound a bit sarcastic about the idea of government agents following me around. I figured she decided some combination of both transparency and misdirection would be ideal; after all, the agents are probably listening to everything we say.

After an extended amount of time *really beating around the goddamn bush it felt like*, we decided to go to Duke Gardens. When I almost left the letter on the couch, Persephone said

Take that with you. I don't want anybody to get hurt.

Stacey played this sort of ambient jazz-like music in her car while we crawled through rush hour traffic from Morrisville Parkway to Davis Dr. I figured I was on an adventure to *somewhere*.

Persephone started engaging me in conversation; talking to me about weird spiritual concepts that didn't really make any sense. I interpreted this as an attempt to throw off the eavesdropping of agents; particularly given my mention in the letter that the witches had successfully bait-and-switched the cops and soldier boys into thinking it was religion and spirituality instead of mysticism and magic. As if those were really different things, and not just all bullshit.

I wrote my own Bible once.

Did you know there are 284 hells, but only 93 heavens?

There's a nexus point approaching. Can you feel it?

It was like, well... (*sorry I'm such a nerd*)

We arrive at the gardens after, I don't know. Let's call it 45 minutes. It sounded like they went often. I think they said it was their third time that day. Geez...

I attempted to leave my phone in Stacey's car "by accident" to make me more abductable. Stacey pointed this out as she locked the car, leaving me little choice but to take it with me.

We meet one of Stacey's friends briefly. Stacey left with her friend, leaving Persephone and I to walk through the gardens by ourselves a bit. I interpreted this as an attempt to clandestinely spot anyone who was trying to follow me; as I did the *remainder*



Figure 27: We Want To Be Nothing If Not Persistent (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkYZRSQu3tU&t=70s>)

of my time at the gardens. Persephone engaged me in superficial conversation about the blooming flowers and exotic Asiatics.

Eventually, Persephone and I reunited with Stacey in a quaint, private little clearing I'd have probably walked right past if I didn't know it was there. It looked like somewhere Link would meet Princess Zelda.

We decided to lay down in this clearing and vibe, picnic style. I was at least enjoying the time outdoors.

The nexus point, Rachael. It's growing closer.

Uh... yeah, sure. The *nexus* point.

Between me, Persephone, Stacey, and maybe the other chick who didn't really stay with us, I got the *distinct* impression that we were methodically checking to see if anyone was following me. First Stacey and her friend walked around, then they left me in

the clearing by myself for a time, and at the end Stacey and I walked around while *Persephone* stayed in the clearing. It's... exactly the sort of experiment *I* would've devised if I wanted to test if the government was secretly following someone, and had multiple bodies to assist. It felt like we were trying to kite the agents around like zombies in *Call of Duty*.

As we were laying in the clearing, *Persephone* continued to engage me with pseudo-spiritual bullshit.

The third level of attainment is object permanence.

This appeared to be a reference to my letter, where I accused the agents of lacking "object permanence" for failing to understand Dani California was a result of their experiment. She didn't actually call it "the third level of attainment". I don't remember exactly *what* it was; but she kept saying bullshit like *that*.

The nexus point. It's here. Do you feel it?

It's passed. I feel it slipping away...

We left not long after Stacey and I made our loop around. At least at the time, I had the impression Stacey's friend was enlisted to help with the experiment.

We went back to *Persephone*'s apartment. It eventually became clear I wasn't going to find the answers I was looking for that evening; and I really just wanted to go home and smoke a bowl.

Sorry I ran off like that. I was just feeling a bit overwhelmed, and I really do want to hang out again soon.

Moi | Thursday, July 13 2023 10:25PM

The next morning, she... basically did the same thing as my therapist; after spouting what I interpreted to be pseudo-spiritual word salad. Although, she might've just been telling me I was a pothead.

From a Dionysian perspective, you are well into to ritualistic madness from over indulgence. The paranoia is a giveaway. You need long periods of sobriety (months, years) to integrate what you have. I'm sorry, but it doesn't look like we can be friends. I'm wishing you well. Let me know if you make it to a few months of sobriety.

Persephone | *Friday, July 14 2023 10:08AM*

I felt I had little choice but to double down.

After avoiding Dr. Reid for the last year, I finally had to face the music. I couldn't phone in any more refills until I showed up for my annual physical. This happened to be the following Monday.

The reduction in my dosage of spiro over a year ago was a real drag, and there's *no way* I'd have ever gone this long without complaining if I hadn't been dealing with *the crisis of the entire fucking timeline*. I could feel all the little things I loved about being on HRT slipping away.

I had recently started cutting the spiro in half and taking it twice a day, which I think made the best of the low dosage. Though it seems wise considering I'd always taken it twice a day before, the prescription *was* for once a day, and they make 50mg pills for that if she wanted me to spread it out.

I was nervous; though all the bullshit that'd happened to me in my head over the last several months numbed the fear. Nothing about Freemasons or UFOs was mentioned; much to my relief.

How's the medication working? You're still taking the 6mg/day estradiol and 100mg/day spironolactone?

Yeah! Uh, so I can tell I definitely need more spiro...

I was hoping to take you *off* spiro.

Oh, really? I've got way more body hair and skin oil lately, I really feel like my T is too high.

So, after a couple of years your gonads down-regulate, and you don't need spironolactone anymore. You could still take it, but you don't need it.

Well, I've heard of monotherapy. Most of my friends who are doing that are on injections...

Okay. Well, we'll check you're levels today and the front desk will call you if we need to change anything. Does that sound good?

I was highly skeptical about the idea of just being pulled off spiro, but I wasn't about to argue with my doctor over it any more than I already had. I figured I'd just wait for the numbers.

I also brought up my inordinate amount of hair loss; something Dr. Reid didn't seem all that concerned about. She suggested I try using minoxidil and a dermal roller on my scalp. I never followed through with either.

She asked me if I'd experienced any unexpected weight loss; maybe because I'd been taking the stimulant medication in the past. I said no because I hadn't thought much of it, but it made me reflect on the fact that I *had* lost a lot of weight. There's been a lot going on; I wouldn't be surprised if I'm not eating right, but I'm fat anyhow.

After the test results came back, I got a voicemail from the doctor's office. I listened to the first few seconds of it while reading the poor speech-to-text transcription; enough to tell I'd been taken off spironolactone *and* progesterone.

With everything going on, I felt I had little choice but to see how bad things could get on monotherapy.

I forget if I told Dr. Reid about the GI problems I'd been having or not, but the sudden attacks that started in April continued to the point that I knew it wasn't just something I ate. It really wasn't normal; I woke up on the bathroom floor with my glasses all bent out of shape once; and had the less dramatic version of that happen to me after making it to my bed a few other times. It reminded me of what was happening to Walter White at the beginning of *Breaking Bad*; and I may've been more on top of it if it weren't for me thinking *the entire history of Earth* was fucked up because I was the subject of a government experiment.

My hair loss at this point was *really* bad. It clearly wasn't the hoodie, or careless detangling or anything like that. It was getting *worse*. I supposed I couldn't rule out stress...

You wanna talk about stress, you wanna talk about
STRESS?!

I felt like shit *all the time*. I felt like I was 70 years old, and was starting to look it too. I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror one day, and I looked like a fucking *ghost*. I could hardly catch my breath, and was ready for a nap as soon as I got out of bed. It's how I imagine being anemic would feel.

The **witch** goes
"Pheeeewwww"

It was later in the summer when I got mail in my head again.

You're on chemo.

I'm on *what*?!

The agents. They replaced my hormones with chemotherapy. It's why my hair's falling out, it's why I keep getting sick after meals and losing weight...

God. Dammit! I'm on fucking *chemo*! This is fucking *America*! What gives *them* the right to put me on fucking...

It's standard procedure to fuck with the pedophiles,
Evil Ethan...

Right. They think my future self is running an intergalactic child sex trafficking ring in the 90s.

God. Dammit!

They've been fucking with all *sorts* of shit. They've gone to all the restaurants I frequent and told them I'm a huge pedophile, and to fuck with my food. The agents interview nearly everyone I come into contact with in my day-to-day life, so most of my friends and co-workers think I'm a pedo, too. It's probably why I struggle to make friends. Jizz, laxatives, chemo, WD-40... How long have they been doing shit like this?

Since I was a kid. Right. Evil Ethan. They've just been waiting for me to grow up and realize who I am; at which point I'll realize they've already *gotten* their revenge.

This is when I *really* started losing it. I went out for a drive late at night, and went *crazy* down a lonely stretch of highway.

You don't **FUCK** with my **FUCKING**
MEDICINE

Punctuating my words with the horn, I aggressively pulled into a Sheetz; where I hoped to grab a modest pre-packaged meal the agents would need magic of their own to fuck with.

I don't like *agents*
Mob of crooks, that's all they are

Everything about my life. I was a “submissive” while exploring the BDSM community. “Evil Ethan is just stalking his prey...”

Dana. Remember, you used to go to her house for ponies? She was a government agent, Rachael.

Most people who've been “nice” to me throughout my life were probably agents.

Goddammit!

By the time I transitioned, they were *more* than certain about the monster I was.

Now, we know *some* of these people might really be transgender, but a lot of folks are worried about predators posing as women to lure 'em in. We all know Evil Ethan has a history of this, now...

They continued following me around while conducting their unblinded study with utter lack of scientific controls; basically just *looking* for evidence of my being evil. Surveying the bathroom stall to make sure nobody beside you can see uncomfortable shadows or whatnot? “There goes Evil Ethan again, peekin' on 'em in the ladies room...” I could tell I'd be in for a gish gallop if I'd ever even *meet* my accusers face to face.

You don't **FUCK** with my **FUCKING MEDICINE!**

I looked through my stockpile of estradiol, to see if I had anything old that the agents might not've gotten to. I didn't have much left at this point; but I *did* find one bottle from 2021. I switched over to it in the hopes I would stop getting sick.

This is about the time when I *really* started losing it. I devolved into bouts of road rage over the government agents I *knew* were fucking with me and following me around. I was convinced they were putting laxatives or cum or worse in basically everything I bought. I became more and more frazzled as I attempted to procure meals and household items that the agents hadn't fucked with.

Peak insanity may've been reached when I drove all the way out to Mebane in a desperate attempt to get unadulterated Zaxby's. When my meal added up to exactly \$13 even, I was *convinced* the agents put them up to it as a gesture that they'd made it there before me. I pulled off to wait for my food for what felt like an excessively long time even for Zaxby's, before driving off to circle the parking lot while honking the horn in a fit of rage.

**I FUCKING HATE THIS COUNTRY!
FUCK AMERICA!**

I got behind somebody with an "In God We Trust" license plate, and I just fucking *lost* it.

**GOD DAMMIT I FUCKING HATE CHRIS-
TIAN!**

Aaaaaa (*static*)

I ended up passing them aggressively on 40 while flipping them off.

This person did nothing to me. I *really* need help.

I was going on spiritually racist tirades about the "amber coloreds"; calling them "amber swine", "the scourge of the galaxy"...

You people **NEVER** loved me!
I've been unloved since the **DAY I WAS BORN!**

I've been unloved since the **DAY I WAS BORN**,
and I'm gonna hate you amber fucks until the **DAY**
I FUCKING DIE!

I hope the neighbors didn't hear me.

I started throwing things at my walls. Broke a glass mug
and a bathroom tile when I "learned" amber coloreds in Africa
enslaved the first witch.

Dude. I need *help*.

The things in my head grew more morbid in the second half
of the year.

It wasn't just *me* they're after. They're after *everyone*. *Anyone*, really, who's spent a non-trivial amount of time around Evil
Ethan. Evil Ethan is the most wicked witch *ever*, and we've
gotta stop 'em at any cost!

The FBI has a term for anyone who becomes friends with
"Evil Ethan".

Collateral damage.

The Johnsons, the Whites, Susan, my classmates... hell, even
the *actual* IEEE robotics team.

They couldn't just interrogate them. They had to torture the
piss out of *everybody*.

They assumed anyone who had anything nice to say about
me was under the influence of demonic mind control or some shit.

There were *so many people* to torture, they had to open an
enhanced interrogation facility in Rob-co. It's legal somehow.
Something about domestic terrorism. The Bush administration
had it rammed through.

They've used it on *so many* people. BLM, MeToo... they've all been secretly classified by the FBI as "domestic terror fronts".

They increased the maximum amount of time you can be held without charges from 24 to 72 hours for suspects of domestic terrorism; as well as authorizing "enhanced interrogation". They make you swear secrecy before they let you go, and they *will* kill you if you tell anyone. They make you go to their Nazi doctors for any medical care needed as a result of your interrogation; who may or may not give you an anesthetic, depending on your classification in the system as a "domestic terrorist" or "collateral damage".

What they do to "domestic terrorists". They round up all your friends and family *whether or not they have any intelligence value*, they torture the piss out of them on camera... and at the very end, they make you watch it. It's supposed to act as a deterrent... or "yee-haw justice", or something. The entire program is *highly* classified.

And, highly controversial. I thought Sandy Hook happened after a gun enthusiast was misidentified as a domestic terrorist. Changes were made to the program, but it wasn't eliminated. There was always *one* super villain the treatment was *made* for.

So, they've been torturing the piss out of all my friends and family (what exists of the latter), so that they can get revenge on me "America style" for all the little girls I'm going to rape. Or... something.

Dude. Fuck *them*.

There's *magic*, though. Can we fix this? Do we have to experience any of it? Do *they* have to experience it? This is outrageous, even for Imaginationland!

So, it's almost September. Dr. Reid's monotherapy thing is going abysmally, even with me taking the maximum sane dosage of 8mg/day estradiol out of my stockpile. I considered ordering DIY, before thinking to myself "Oh come on, that's ridiculous! I'm a full-grown adult!"

At any rate; I hadn't actually picked up my new prescription since I last saw the doctor, because I knew it was just estradiol and I had a stockpile of it. It wasn't until *now* that I decided to take a few minutes away from witches and government agents to open the CVS app and fill my estradiol. And, that's when I saw it.

Woah, those are purple!

Wait... 1mg?

I had an unfilled prescription in my CVS app for a bunch of purple 1mg estradiol tablets. I always get the teal-colored 2mg ones. *Everyone* gets the 2mg ones.

I scrolled through my voicemails to find the last one from my doctor.

The doctor said you, uh, your estradiol is *very high*.

Your testosterone is within normal levels...

You are to **stop** taking the spironolactone, and the progesterone.

She's cutting your estradiol in *half*, to **1mg** twice a day.

First of all, she had me on 6mg/day. Half would've been 3mg/day, not 2.

This took me from suspicion to outright disbelief. I would consider 2mg/day of estradiol with no antiandrogen to be... a fuck-you dose of HRT. That's... *not* an adult dose of hormones.

Shit. My therapist gave me obviously bad advice, my primary care doctor is giving me obviously bad advice... *Fuck* the government, dude.

So, the agents just want to watch from a distance as they force me to detransition? Fuck *them*.

Alyssa Jones and me (Q4)

The character of the bizarre experience in my head had changed a little since the beginning; but only *slightly*.

At the beginning, the origin of the messages and things in my head seemed more vague. Over time, the feeling emerged that these were specific *people*, who were able to see life through my eyes. Famous people, boring people... people from history, people from the future... It all seems *highly* unlikely. I'm probably mentally ill. I suppose at this point, it felt in general like "the witches" and their friends were in my head; trying to guide me through a game of charades, where they couldn't merely blurt out the answer.

I skipped ahead earlier, but I don't think it was until the fall that I started getting all that stuff in my head about the "great laminator". It's probably not that important if you missed it. It offered hope that *maybe* we don't all have to *experience* getting tortured for national security. Maybe we can "magic it out".

That's a phrase I often said to myself during this period. "Can't we magic it out?! Can't we magic *that* out?! We have *time travel*!"

For a while since the beginning of this process, I had a deep feeling I just wasn't *cut out* to be an engineer. Sure, I like *dicking around* with computers. I was starting to think it should've remained a hobby.

Science Olympiad, robot team, high school, college, Crystal-Soft, Avalon... I've had *so many* chances to hit a home run, and I just can't get anything on the score board. I feel like I peaked in 4th grade when I got my ham radio license. I'm pretty sure everyone just thinks I'm smart because I wear glasses and use Linux.

I started having visions, or thing-o-scope messages, or whatever you'd call them, about my future at the conclusion of all this; which was *not* going to end without at least 72 hours of government-mandated torture. After everything they'd done to my friends, I didn't even *care*.

I was *so* done with computers. That wasn't even me! My *real* future self...

Her name's Alyssa Jones. She went back to an alternate timeline in a new body to get a better childhood. We lived in Mordecai Village with a bunch of witch gold we pulled out of the time travel bank, with Gail Richardson as my adoptive mother and Kimberly as a sort of step-sister. Terry was amicably not in the picture anymore for some reason. I learned I was a witch young, stayed away from computers, had generally *very different* life priorities, and graduated from high school to become a basic bitch at Peace College.

I drove a while Mini Cooper with black racing stripes. It felt *so real*. Just like all the other bullshit. You probably don't want to waste your time reading it, but here I am writing about it anyway.

She was a kinkster. I *met* her. Wait - I guess that makes this not an alternate timeline. Oh I remember, She lived her *childhood* in an imaginary timeline and came back through the box. So she never really *experienced* it in present tense, but she remembers it and experiences the effects from it now. So it's... a *real* history, indistinguishable from any other...

Sheesh.

I've met my future self. I went to play parties with her. She did stuff with Ian, in fact.

Lol, what?

Okay... whatever. I've met her.

I thought I remembered her. Ian girl, drives the Mini Cooper... whether or not it was real (and I presume it *not* to have been), I seemed to remember my *actual* future self hanging around me when I was younger; unable to say who she *really* was.

She went to your apartment, Rachael...

Goddammit. Do I remember one of the Peace girls looking like someone from TNG, and brushing it off as coincidence?

Alyssa apparently had a... *complicated* relationship with Josh Johnson.

Okay, I did *not* see that coming. The dude who wanted to tape up his asshole around me in high school?

Alyssa was in a biologically normal female body, and couldn't immediately explain what her *deal* was. Josh was destined to get tortured by the government for being my childhood best friend, but we were going to get him through it. And... partially *out* of it.

There was a plan akin to breaking Dani out of Gitmo, except on a much larger scale. I had a *real* time travel army, not some amateur hour bullshit like the last fever-dream iteration. Incarnations of me studied at West Point and shit. We were *clean* and *professional*. And yes, we used flying saucers. Or really, just *one* flying saucer. You only need *one* flying saucer. Entire *civilizations* get by with just *one* flying saucer.

There was a point where the agents came for Josh a *second* time (or so), where we just *weren't* letting it happen. The agents came in a relatively simple van, which we jumped before it left town; detaining the agents and springing Josh. The feds returned in waves, with *much* more firepower; The Akasha guard continued matching their strength. That was apparently my, uhh...

I guess all the “me”'s have a name, collectively? And, it's not some weird karmic destiny bullshit.⁴⁷ It's space atheism, I was born different, but I can procure an essentially arbitrary number of new bodies for me and my close friends. You want to guess how *many* of me there are?

Like... hundreds of thousands of me. At *least*. I'm going to be *all* of those people; starting, apparently, with *me*, the person who I am now. Supposedly, the brief amount of torture is going to be all worth it.

How many people *am* I? How many *people*... are Akasha?

I'm not Anthony Kiedis; but I *am* Dave Grohl. We *had* to do all that crazy stuff in the 90s, to get the government's attention. We needed to demonstrate the absurdity of conducting human experimentation on a witch; but, we also saw the opportunity to end this domestic terrorism program that would otherwise continue on for several more decades.

I was just going to get locked up and experimented on for the rest of my life, if it weren't for this Dani California ruse. We pulled this weird shit with me being *really* crazy in the 90s, to distract them from experimenting on me and goad them into *really* making asses of themselves, to the point of getting their program shut down entirely.

⁴⁷idk who even came up with this name. I suppose I thought it came from my homeworld or something. I'd have probably picked something else. It sounds Japanese.

The Akasha guard shot down a helicopter into a golf course, while Josh was still living in east Durham a couple years ago. They were *really* quick to cover it up. Guardsmen courteously directed traffic, to the point folks just assumed the road was closed for some mundane reason. We were prepared to deal with the cops when they eventually had questions about what the fuck we were doing blocking off Lumley road on a Tuesday afternoon.

One of the operations involved using a nearby storage unit as a *very* high traffic spaceport.

I had an entire “lifetime”, as a humble Portuguese forklift operator. Eventually, you’ve just done every job there is to do, to the point that there isn’t much left to experience but the mundane. This dude’s *entire life* (or my entire “thread” as this guy) had but a single purpose: landing a *fuck-ton* of Akasha guardsmen on *one* fateful day, then just *disappearing*. The forklift made for a good excuse to own a giant storage unit, although the unit was still vastly oversized for this ostensible purpose.

Dude. There’s *so much* bullshit. It *doesn’t* matter.

I was *so* many people. I was Dave Grohl. I was *Steve Schewel*. I found this hilarious, if not dizzying. I don’t know why I’m focusing on the famous *men* I was; except maybe that I found it easier to wield power and influence that way.

I seemed to have found the cure to gender dysphoria; which might just be magic. I could go back to being Alyssa at any time; it was just a flying saucer away. On some level, it was like having hundreds of thousands of bodies in the garage; all with their own threads that you can start or resume.

Netflix is *boring*. This is *real life* (except it isn’t).

While this all felt very real *at the time*, I struggle *presently* to believe I wouldn’t mind living *all* of those lifetimes as dudes. I kinda feel like I’d just be various women over and over again if

I had unlimited extra lives. Granted, the Akashas *did* ostensibly have something like a 75/25 gender ratio.

Shit's pretty bad with my hormones. I'm still taking as much estradiol as I can every day, but I *really* need the spiro.

Body hair, facial hair, hair and skin oil, male BO...

I saw a man look back at me in the mirror, for the first time in *years*. This must constitute some emergency for a trans person. What's a girl gotta do to get some spiro around here?

I was *cautiously* optimistic that some reprieve might come on Friday, October 13th. Once it did not, it was a very short throw toward...

I need to order DIY.

(*website redacted*). Looks different, still exists. Still has spironolactone. That's good.

Shit, looks like they're out of estradiol. At least the 2mg generic. I waited a week for the E to get back in stock, before I found an acceptable substitute; sublingual estradiol *valerate*, sold in other countries by Bayer under the brand name "Progynova". I... didn't know valerate came in sublingual form. We have valerate *injections* in America...

Some quick "I do my own research" confirmed my suspicion that there was no gotcha with substituting sublingual estradiol with sublingual estradiol valerate; save for the valerate part adding extra molecular weight, resulting in a 2mg Progynova being the molar equivalent of only about 1.5mg plain estradiol.

I quickly ordered 400 tablets of spironolactone and 336 doses of Progynova. The highly variable shipping from Vanuatu only took three weeks this time.

A new message arrived in my head, just as my order was about to ship.

It was... an experiment. To prove that I was really transgender.

They gradually replaced my hormones with a placebo; before finally replacing them with something that would actually make me sick.

If I *really* had gender dysphoria, I was supposed to go to the doctor and talk about how my hormones don't work anymore. The UFO situation short-circuited this, and isolated me from my doctor. Then, I self-medicated from my own surplus out-of-order; defeating the gradual dilution I was *supposed* to experience as the months went on. Finally, I started taking the poison pills as I randomly grabbed from the pile of surplus medication; never realizing they were making me sick while *they* never made the connection that I was still trying to take my medication in earnest.

I was *pissed off*; especially since this apparently couldn't be revealed until I ordered DIY; a choice that I hoped would end this experiment one way or another.

I'm about to go H.A.M. The *thought* occurred to me that I could ramp up my spironolactone; but only the *thought*. The louder voice in my head was yelling

FREIGHT TRAIN!

The risk of serious consequences seemed to be non-existent. It just makes you feel shitty, potentially. You *should* ramp up your meds, though.

I *did* take a half spiro to start, but I got on the 200mg/day freight train over the next 24 hours or so. I planned to take 8mg/day of Progynova in a similar freight train strategy; the molar equivalent of about 6mg.

I woke up for day two of Progynova. Took one of them, ate a handful of peanut butter-filled pretzels, and *right after* “the thing” happened. The full-blown cramps, the ocean in my ears... I rushed to the bed before coming to in a cold sweat. I’d never had it happen with that little food before.

Alright, you fucks. I get the message. I’ll call Dr. Reid.

I scheduled *another* appointment with the doctor; hoping I just needed to be *really crystal clear* about the hormones not working, and that they might actually be making me *sick*, in order to call off this wayward experiment.

I showed up to my appointment, probably looking *dreadful* at this point. I was thrown off when I sat down in the exam room, and the nurse asked me in a most sincere tone

Are you still taking the 1mg estradiol twice a day?

I didn’t even know what to *say* to that. It’s a yes or no question.

Uh... yeah, sure.

I eventually saw Dr. Reid; hoping to blow the lid off this whole ridiculous charade.

I feel like I’m in the *twilight zone* with these levels, doc!
I was actually taking my previous dose and sometimes a little extra, it *still* wasn’t working, and when I opened my CVS app and saw my new prescription was for 1mg tablets I was like... that’s a *joke*, right?

My hopes that she would recognize this as a clerical error and give me an adult dose of hormones were crushed in an instant.

Woah, *how* much have you been taking? You could really hurt yourself!

Uh... okay. But like...

She remarked on how high my estradiol ostensibly was at my last blood draw. I once again tried explaining that I'd had problems ever since she lowered my spiro a year and a half ago.

Oh, you've been on hormones so long don't need spiro anymore.

I reiterated that I haven't had SRS or an orchi yet. I thought there was a *chance* she might be confused, because I did get a WPATH letter from them with good intentions of getting SRS before all this space alien business started.

It wasn't that. She just *earnestly* seemed to believe I no longer needed to take spironolactone, despite still having functioning testicles.

Like, dude. I've been learning about hormones since I was a *kid*. Yeah, down-regulation is a thing, and so is monotherapy. But like...

So, monotherapy is historically something trans women have had to *fight* their doctors to get. The reason is that one usually has to take an excessive amount of estradiol, *usually administered through intramuscular injection for reasons of safety and practicality*, which makes one's blood clot more easily to the point of making DVTs and shit a real danger. Some people think it's reasonably safe, a lot of more conservative-minded doctors are a bit freaked out by it... some trans women insist on monotherapy, out of a belief that spironolactone hinders breast growth or is otherwise unnecessary; lack of FDA approval makes the widely used alternative cyproterone acetate unavailable unless you're going to, you know...⁴⁸

Order it from Vanuatu or some shit.

⁴⁸I thought about switching to the international community's favorite antiandrogen, but I'd rather stick with what I know. There's a lot going on right now.

Anyway, I seemed to be getting *nowhere*. She had me go in the other room for blood work; I think a little frustrated I didn't bother to get labs done beforehand. I was left hoping "the numbers" would be in my favor this time; and had the impression that Dr. Reid must be a *really* good actor if she wasn't serious.

I anxiously watched the portal for the lab results. Something that bothered me ever since the summer was, I couldn't figure out how to get the lab report *on the actual letterhead from the lab company*. You could do this with Quest by logging into *their* portal; Dr. Meier and Dr. Reid's quaint little Triangle Comprehensive Care had been bought by Avery Primary Care, and they got switched to LabCorp. I presume that's why the process is different, and I can now only find my lab results on the Avery patient portal; where I hope the numbers are being entered either by a script or a very steady hand.

Dude. If you want me *not* to think there's a fucking conspiracy, *at least* show me a piece of paper from LabCorp saying "You don't need grownup hormones, you increasingly hairy smelly tranny you!"

I was *relieved* to find that the results agreed with me this time; my testosterone was in the hundreds and my estradiol just wasn't there.

My relief was very short-lived, after reading that she simply blamed this on the fact that I stopped taking my meds after I got sick. Also confusingly, she told me to "[p]lease restart at the 2 mg 3 times daily", but I don't think she ever wrote a prescription for this new dose. I guess she expected me to keep using my stockpile, but I didn't really have much of one by this point. Well, except for the...

She also commented on my once-again low level of vitamin D. I knew exactly where to find the bottle of Target brand vitamin D I wasn't taking, and took a few thousand IUs. I figured it couldn't hurt.

I was also amused to read that she wanted me to start taking vitamin B12 again *at the same dose I was taking a couple of years ago*, seemingly unaware that she previously chastised me for taking it. I still had a bottle of that too, I think unopened.

Looking through my past and present lab results, I noticed for the first time she'd complained about my vitamin levels previously.

Lab results

November 2023

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Testosterone	826 H	8-60 (ng/dL)	High testosterone level. it is hard to say what it would have been if you had not stopped the estrogen for 48 hours. . Please note that this is pretty normal range testosterone for a cis-male. I presume it will drop back down into the undetectable range when you restart your estradiol. Please restart at the 2 mg 3 times daily and then we will check labs again at 12 weeks.

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Estradiol	27.6 (pg/mL)	BN	low estradiol level. Again, hard to discern what this would have been high do not stop the estradiol for 48 hours. Please resume your estradiol medication and we will repeat labs at 12 weeks
Vitamin D, 25-Hydroxy	15.3 L	30.0-100.0 (ng/mL)	very low vitamin D. Please purchase over-the-counter vitamin D3 and take 5000 IU by mouth daily. Goal level = 50+. This could very well be causing some of your current symptoms

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Vitamin B12	435	232- 1245 (pg/mL)	low normal vitamin B12. While your vitamin B12 level appears to be normal here, it is a bit low. We prefer to keep the vitamin B12 level = 500+. Vitamin B12 deficiency can lead to brain fog, fatigue, headaches, and other neurologic symptoms. Please purchase over-the-counter vitamin B12 liquid. Please place 2000 mcg under the tongue daily for 1 month, then decrease to 1000 mcg under the tongue daily. Please plan to stay on the 1000 mcg dose indefinitely. We will recheck the levels at your next lab draw and will adjust the dosage as needed.

July 2023

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Testosterone	18	8-60 (ng/dL)	normal testosterone, appropriately suppressed
Estradiol	492.0 (pg/mL)	It's complicated (methinks green/yellow/red 150/300/500)	very high estradiol level. Goal = 100-200. Please decrease your current dosage by half, so it will be 1 mg by mouth twice daily. I have sent a new prescription. I would like to please check labs again at 12 weeks. My staff will call you to get that scheduled.

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Vitamin D, 25-Hydroxy	15.0 L	30.0- 100.0 (ng/mL)	Low vitamin-D. Your vitamin D level is quite low. We prefer to keep the level = 50+. A recent study suggests that vitamin D may not be as helpful with bone health as we had thought, but it does help with balance and energy level. Please purchase over-the-counter vitamin D3 and take 4000 IU by mouth daily. Please plan to stay on this indefinitely.

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Vitamin B12	378	232- 1245 (pg/mL)	low normal vitamin B12. While your vitamin B12 level appears to be normal here, it is a bit low. We prefer to keep the vitamin B12 level = 500+. Vitamin B12 deficiency can lead to brain fog, fatigue, headaches, and other neurologic symptoms. Please purchase over-the-counter vitamin B12 liquid. Please place 2000 mcg under the tongue daily for 1 month, then decrease to 1000 mcg under the tongue daily. Please plan to stay on the 1000 mcg dose indefinitely. We will recheck the levels at your next lab draw and will adjust the dosage as needed.

February 2022

Name	Value	Reference range	Notes
Testosterone	20	8-60 (ng/dL)	
Estradiol	116.0 (pg/mL)	It's complicated (methinks green/yellow/red 150/300/500)	
Vitamin D, 25-Hydroxy	18.0 L	30.0-100.0 (ng/mL)	
Vitamin B12	1507 H	232-1245 (pg/mL)	Hi Rachael, I know we have a visit soon, but thought you'd like to see your labs in advance. Labs all look pretty good, though we need to tweak your vitamins a bit. I will look forward to discussing these in detail at your visit. Thank you, S. Reid, M.D.

This all just seemed so *crazy* to me. I keep going to the doctor trying to get more hormones, and I keep coming away with less somehow.

Like, is she doing this with *all* her trans patients? I can't imagine she's very popular if that's the case. Then again, if I'm to trust all this crazy stuff in my head, there'd seem to be a *motive*; the government's fucking with me, and for all I know Dr. Reid thinks I'm a child sex trafficker posing as a woman.

Shit, dude. Well, I thought it was kinda dumb that she wanted me to stop taking B12 to begin with, so *that's* going back on the list; and, it's true that I didn't spend enough time outdoors *before* magic and witchcraft turned me into a recluse, so a few thousand IUs a day of *vitamin D* shouldn't hurt either. Hell, maybe I should take a multivitamin.

One thing's for sure - I'm through with Dr. Reid. I figured I had a better chance of getting un-tampered with medication at the correct dosage via the DIY route.

My self-confidence was at an all-time low. I had *no idea* what was going on, and I was really starting to doubt *everything*. What do these people even still *want* from me?!

Presuming at least *some* of the mail-order hormones to have been replaced with chemo, I set about cautiously and systematically trying to narrow down *what* it was, exactly. "It would be nice if I could at least take the spiro", I thought.

This same week, my mother was on a tear to try and "see her child" for Thanksgiving. Some back conversation is added for context.

I would love to see you for Thanksgiving!
Or I can come to Durham or we can meet
at a Cracker Barrel.

Susan | Sunday, November 19 2023 04:55PM

I love you!

Susan | Sunday, November 19 2023 09:36PM

I love you so very much!

Susan | *Monday, November 20 2023 09:26PM*

I love you! Please come for Thanksgiving or meet me somewhere! I miss you!

Susan | *Tuesday, November 21 2023 09:02PM*

Hi Love! Please come see me and I will make us a tasty meal! I am most thankful for you. I love you!

Susan | *Wednesday, November 22 2023 09:27PM*

Happy Thanksgiving to my greatest love.

Susan | *Thursday, November 23 2023 03:21PM*

I love you forever!

Susan | *Thursday, November 23 2023 09:36PM*

I love you!

Susan | *Friday, November 24 2023 09:59PM*

I love you and hope to come to Durham next week!

Susan | *Saturday, November 25 2023 09:35PM*

I'm still okay.

Moi | *Sunday, November 26 2023 05:01PM*

I'm planning to come to Durham this week. Please, I am begging you, to at least have coffee with me. I miss my best friend and cannot take it anymore. I love you and want to make sure you are safe and happy.

Susan | *Sunday, November 26 2023 05:49PM*

Ugh. Goddammit... *who knows* what kind of stunt she's about to pull. Just... no.

It was *now*, with me trying to get hormones and dodge Susan, when Tommy sent me his first text message in over a year.



Hey Rachel...we were putting up our Christmas tree, taking out our ornaments, etc...today. And look what we found! You may not remember this, but you gave me this. It harkens back to the Caswell days with you and Edward.

Tommy | *Monday, November 27 2023 12:26PM*

Right. On. Time. I guess we're still doing 12:26pm, huh?

Goddammit. This has to be the most *frustrating* game of charades ever played.

First of all, I'm almost positive *the Whites* bought those. *I* have one from either Cody or Edward. It's a commemoration of when the church youth group went to Ft. Caswell during the off-season, and we scared the little kids by constructing a costume of a Tusken Raider.⁴⁹

Whether or not it was Tommy's intent (and I'm assuming it *wasn't*), it led me to think about how, despite Susan's obsessiveness and incessant giving of petty gifts, she wouldn't buy anything so thoughtful. Susan doesn't even know what a Tusken Raider *is*.⁵⁰ She *has* bought me generic Star Wars gifts over the years in the wake of this; presumably under the assumption that I "like Star Wars" now. This is how her brain works; it's like trying to be friends with the Youtube search algorithm.

She doesn't really *adapt*, or understand more than bullet points. It's like every once in a while, she'll just go `memory updated` and it'll be our thing now. It reminds me of when I was a kid and my (maternal) grandma found out I liked Toad from the Mario universe. I must've gotten mushroom-themed Christmas gifts for the next ten years, long after my favorite Mario character had shifted to Yoshi, and finally to not really having one at all.

Anyway, continuing on...

I love you! I am hoping and praying to see you soon!

Susan | Monday, November 27 2023 09:42PM

I am in Durham and hope to see you while I'm here! Just 30 minutes for coffee would be the best gift I've ever received!

Susan | Tuesday, November 28 2023 04:24PM

⁴⁹Edward and Cody know *way* more about Star Wars than I do.

⁵⁰Or idk, maybe she does

I want nothing from you! Just a bit of your time. You say the time and place or you can pick me up at my hotel. I was here in June and didn't see you. I want to see you because I'm miserable without you in my life.

Susan | *Tuesday, November 28 2023 06:42PM*

I love you forever and ever! Please let me know a good time to see you for a few minutes! I'm not going to bother you and have no intent on disrupting your life. I just want to see you and know that you are okay! I love you!

Susan | *Tuesday, November 28 2023 08:45PM*

Hey Love! This is the only day I will be in town all day so let me know when you can meet me! I miss you so much!

Susan | *Wednesday, November 29 2023 10:04AM*

Can we meet for coffee soon? Please?

Susan | *Wednesday, November 29 2023 02:11PM*

I love you forever and ever. I have to leave Durham tomorrow. Can I see you for just a few minutes? It would remove this cloak of sadness that I am wearing.

Susan | *Wednesday, November 29 2023 09:25PM*

Can I see you real quick before I leave? Just to know you are okay? We can Skype or whatever, too. Or please send me a picture! I miss you so much and love you more!

Susan | *Thursday, November 30 2023 09:22AM*

I love you and miss you and my heart hurts
that I did not get to see you.

Susan | *Thursday, November 30 2023 09:51PM*

I love you forever, my darling daughter.

Susan | *Friday, December 01 2023 10:30PM*

I love you forever and ever.

Susan | *Saturday, December 02 2023 09:18PM*

I'm still okay.

Moi | *Sunday, December 03 2023 04:47PM*

I managed to avoid the dogs this round. Out of paranoia, I parked my car in an adjacent neighborhood in the hopes that she wouldn't camp outside my house in protest or something. I thought I at least might be able to slip in and out the backdoor that way.

I drove by the same hotel I picked her up at for us to meet Tommy a year and a half ago. She'd left her car parked in a handicapped spot with her thing on the mirror from when she fell. This frankly bolstered my suspicions of her malingering; there was plenty of non-handicapped parking within a very reasonable distance to the door. It seemed like a thinly veiled attempt to get me to drive by the hotel and see how frail my old widdle muver was; but it kinda backfired on account of its own transparency, just like a *lot* of her bullshit lately.

Dude. There's something *wrong* with that woman. I've known it most of my life; I just haven't known what to *do* about it. What was I, not going home for the holidays anymore?

Seeming to lack other options, I attempted to cobble together a workable HRT regimen with what I had, while continuing to systematically determine what was safe and what might be making me sick.

The first order of business was the spiro. I got up to speed with it, and I could tell I had at least one clean bottle of it. I never imagined I'd be clamoring for *spironolactone* this late into my transition, but there I was. Once I knew one bottle was good, I switched to a second one halfway through without changing anything about my estradiol, to make sure there was nothing qualitatively different about any of the four bottles of spiro.

I got another refill of those bullshit baby estrogens, 'cause I figured hormones were hormones at this point. Inspecting them carefully, I observed subtle differences in shading. There seemed to be light ones and dark ones, and I took to tediously sorting the bottle into the two groups; theorizing that one could be chemo while the other might be unadulterated estradiol.

What am I, a fucking *lab rat*? Of course, I think I was just chasing ghosts *now*.

For a time, I thought the “dark estradiol” was the good stuff, before ultimately concluding that there seemed to be no correlation.

My belief that I was being subjected to an experiment evolved into something else. Something... that *almost* made sense.

I'm *blackballed*.

You know. It's a thing that can happen to you, with the Freemasons. Granted, I didn't know I was trying to get *white-balled*. It's, like, one of the few things about the Freemasons I can verify is a *thing*.

Okay. So, for a witch to get their magic, they have to basically be convicted *innocent* by a jury of their peers. Because this “reverse-trial” is held as a ceremonious coming-of-age in adolescence, it’s usually more of a formality; there generally isn’t much dirt that can be dug up on a teenager. It’s meant to instill trust that witches aren’t running rampant, doing unethical or immoral things with their technology. Every once in a while a kid won’t get all their white balls, and they’ll issue a re-trial after a few years’ time. After so many blackballs, one is eventually blackballed for life.

In most countries, the jury process is a closed-off form of self-regulation. This is *not so* in America. Did you know a number of the founding fathers were Freemasons? I’ve heard that before, and I’m not going to fact-check it. It *sounds* right, though.

In America, it’s a *jury-jury*. A jury of laypeople, after being screened and sworn to secrecy, is told the truth about UFOs and magic and shit, and they get to vote on whether little Harry Potter gets to have *his* magic. They can ask *any* question they want, no matter how silly, and “the Freemasons” will use magic to reveal the answer instantly.

Okay; that’s cool.

It’s the mid-2000’s. The names of all us Bladen County witches are coming up. Me, Dalton, Seth, Abigail...

Ethan Alexandre Brown. I get randomly assigned to a district in Baltimore, where a jury is convened to hear my case. Despite attempts at a diverse mix, the jury *is* mostly black people.

Already knowing with time travel how they would vote, my legal council advocated unsuccessfully for the right to inform the jury I was transgender. This fact was deemed irrelevant by the presiding judge, as the process is supposed to be highly anonymized.

They were encouraged to ask questions in order to get to know this faceless, adolescent male witch. After learning they could ask *any* question, a young black juror jovially asked a most innocent one.

What kind of porn's he look at?

BDSM porn, folks! I look at *BDSM porn*!

They oblige the jury with a sampling of my taste in pornography. It's all bondage porn of men topping women with a clear emphasis on forced fellatio.

A number of female jurors are immediately "concerned". They're worried I might grow up to be the BTK killer or something.

We wanted to explain to them that I was trans. We couldn't solicit answers to questions they didn't ask, and thus campaigned for the right to tell the jurors I was a "teenage girl" instead of a "teenage boy" so that they'd ask appropriate questions and interpret the answers correctly. Our request was denied, and I was subsequently blackballed.

That's okay. I have another two strikes, or something.

Round two. I'm assigned to the Memphis district. It's mostly black people again, coincidentally. We still can't tell them I'm trans, but we can *at least* tell them that I'm now actively involved in the local BDSM community, and that I'm actually a *submissive*. See, I'm not the BTK killer! It's the other way around!

The jury was heavy on conservative old folks, and they still weren't so sure about my "lifestyle choices". They decided they'd feel more comfortable if we "waited until I was married".

Sheesh. I'm not even gonna fucking *get* married. Unless someone just decides to sweep me off my feet, and **ugh! This is so annoying!**

Round three. At this point, my council is *really* pushing for what we would call “a fair trial”. The new jury is carefully hand-picked and brought up to speed.

Am I married? Hell no! But I *am*...

T r a n s g e n d e r, now.

They’re told everything from the beginning; and asked to vote, finally, on whether I get to receive my magic, *fifteen years late*.

Two of the jurors were TERFs.

Goddammit!

Things seemed bleak. The TERFs eventually agreed they would whiteball me; *if* I passed an experiment of their own design, to prove I was *really* transgender. My hormones would be replaced with a placebo, before being replaced with something that would make me sick at the end. They theorized that I wouldn’t notice the placebo, and wouldn’t complain to the doctor until I was taking poison pills.

Their experiment didn’t really allow for enough time on the placebo for me to catch it. Instead, we created *the wildest distractions imaginable* to occupy me for well over a year, causing the experiment to end in me avoiding my doctor and ordering DIY instead.

This was the thing we needed. We’d been magicking it out. The TERFs blackballing me *despite* the fact I was making an effort to stay on a working HRT regimen was enough for us to successfully argue this to be a mistrial.

Which brings us here; wherever *this* is.

I began thinking about what Bill said, when he pulled me aside a long time ago after work. I almost forgot about *that*.

For all the people who seemed to know something I didn't, *Bill* is the only one who suggested the problem might simply be that I look bad to anonymous strangers. I remember him asking if I had any "political signs" up at my house, and it seemed like *the most peculiar* question to ask. Could it really be that simple?

It's late in December. Most people are out buying gifts for their family, but there's only one thing on my Christmas list. Well, other than an end to these shenanigans...

I need more hormones.

I was relieved that I *at least* had spiro that didn't make me sick; and, I also had a bunch of the Progynova still that I'd been too squeamish to start taking again after I got sick that one morning.

I could already tell I was *not* okay with my body remasculinizing; I remember thinking the gender problems were worse than I'd have thought with everything else going on. I had to try *something*, even if it was a complete "Hail Mary".

I hatched a plan; albeit, a far-fetched one. I was going to rent a PO box, order the meds over public Wi-Fi with a VPN and a fictitious name, and pay for them with a money order purchased in cash.

First, I needed the PO Box. There *was* no good time to go to the post office in mid-December, and I was just going to have to wait 15 or 20 minutes even as an unemployed UFO chaser with a flexible schedule. I eventually accepted this and bit the bullet.

I opened the box with my new key before I left, testing that it worked. There was a piece of hard orange plastic covering the rear of the box, which being new to PO boxes I didn't think much of. I mailed myself two test letters; one addressed to Rachael Brown, and another addressed to the very real Dani Elizondo.

I was surprised to find *both* of these letters returned to sender; as if my mail person doesn't think I'm crazy enough.

Dude, *what?* Am I not the proud owner of PO Box 51009, Durham, NC 27707?

Thinking maybe I needed to wait a day after getting the keys or something, I sent myself another pair of test letters; this time to Rachael Brown and Alyssa Jones. I left off the return address.

I kept checking the mail, and there was dead-ass *nothing* in the box. No junk mail, nothing. Just an empty box, with that same orange plastic at the other end.

Mister postman
do you have a letter for me?

Finally, about a week later, I checked the mail to find the orange plastic removed, revealing the work area behind the wall; and a single, well traveled letter, addressed to Rachael Brown. Hardly a confidence-instilling amount of packet loss.

My attempt to ensure I could receive mail addressed to a fictitious name fell surprisingly flat. Considering how much mis-addressed junk mail I get, I considered *that* part of the experiment to be a formality.

I found myself at a crossroads. Do I send Alyssa Jones or Dani Elizondo another letter? Or, should I just YOLO it? This attempt at getting unaltered medication is already a long shot, right? And, this is the fucking *postal service* we're talking about. They just put the mail *in the goddamn mailbox*. They don't give a *fuck*; as long as I don't get myself in a situation where I need Alyssa Jones to show her ID. While legally possible, this seemed unlikely with the combination of parcel lockers and the already-large-enough mailbox size.

I didn't exactly have the smoothness of James Bond as I struggled to find public Wi-Fi stable enough to complete the task. Isabella Costello eventually ordered a bunch of spironolactone and estradiol off flaky Wi-Fi I picked up in my car from the ATC. I added "Don't fuck with me" to the delivery instructions that get printed on the label, to at least give them the middle finger if it came to that.

Around the same time, I decided to hedge my bets by trying to get up with my previous physician, Dr. Meier; and planned to involve Kat C. if I got nowhere with her.

`#TODO Insert or put in appendix`

Transsexual hazard map (2024-present)

The whackadoodle brigade (2024)

I'm just a Progynova baby (Q1)

I woke up on New Year's Day, not even aware of my surroundings yet, to a *very loud* message in my head.

You *aren't* Alyssa Jones

If I was to keep following the white rabbit, this sign was undeniable. It was another ruse. Whoever Alyssa might be, she *isn't* my future self.

For a few weeks, I felt myself to be in a Netflix show hole. That's just *it*? My tormentors made me think I had a future with my childhood best friend who's been *doubly*-friend zoned for decades, and just ripped it away from me as a New Year's gift?

Eh. I guess it makes sense.

I continued experimenting with hormones, trying to find at least 6mg a day of estrogen that wouldn't make me sick after determining the spiro to be safe. In January, I decided to give the Progynova another chance; taking it real easy to avoid a repeat of the last time. I was still getting sick after meals sometimes, but I struggled to correlate it with my meds.

I quickly found that the Progynova was *fine*. In fact, I found my nipples doing stuff they hadn't done before. I experimentally determined the threshold dosage of sublingual estradiol valerate to be 6mg/day, the molar equivalent of about 4.5mg regular estradiol; this is what I'd expect.

I didn't know what to do next. In an effort to methodically eliminate problems that might be causing the Freemasons to blackball me like I was pulling shit out of `msconfig`, I decided to confront my mother about the possibility of my being retarded; before telling her I wasn't even going to keep doing that weekly text I let her intimidate me into doing.

Do you think I have special needs?

Moi | Saturday, January 06 2024 10:07AM

I am not aware of any, but if you do, please let me know. I am your mom and will always, always help you in any way I can. I love you so much and would do absolutely anything for you.

Susan | Saturday, January 06 2024 10:15AM

Why didn't I take the WISC?

Moi | Saturday, January 06 2024 11:45AM

I didn't know about it. I just had to Google it. No one ever suggested it to me. I wish that you would have taken it, now that I know what it is.

Susan | Saturday, January 06 2024 11:49AM

I love you, my darling daughter. I will be happy to help you in any way on your journey.

Susan | Saturday, January 06 2024 09:03PM

I'm still okay. I'm not going to continue texting. I assure you, I can take care of myself.

Moi | Sunday, January 07 2024 04:38PM

I know she can't *handle my absence* or whatever, but I have felt a little better. Any sort of "regularly scheduled" thing with her is a liability, that's more likely to get cops unnecessarily involved in my life than it is to actually help me.

The first contemporary train of thought, began with yet another of these messages; somehow more grounded than everything before.

There are *way* too many trans people.

Like, *orders of magnitude* too many of them.

Oooooohhh, boooyyy...

Remember 2017 and earlier? I sort of *did* think they might be transtrenders. I was grumpy about how these kids on Tumblr decided to change our words around because we were being problematic... but then I decided to give the LGBT community a chance *largely at the encouragement of my doctor and therapist*, I thought Regina and Samantha were pretty cool, and the rest is history.

I haven't been able to shake off the feeling. In middle school, I read statistics claiming only 1 in 30,000 AMAB people, and only 1 in 90,000 AFAB people, were actually *transsexual*. We were like *never nudes*. Beliefs like this certainly played *some* role in my choosing not to pursue transition when I was younger. It seemed much more likely that I was something *else*; especially with what I perceived to be the weird sex stuff going on with me at that age.



Figure 28: There are dozens of us... DOZENS (<https://youtu.be/1Kie-vgUGdI>)

I grew older and *laughed* at numbers like that. I guess we've been here the whole time.

But; how many of them are actually *like* me? You know... wearing mom's clothes before you know what it means, secretly wishing you could be a girl like *all* the time, being in a shit mood *all day* after someone makes you do something really gendery as a kid, or says "boys on this side of the room, girls on that side"...

They don't know about *any* of that.

But, that doesn't matter. Everybody's valid... right?

As I reflected on this, I couldn't help but put my foot down and say

But not *Samantha*. I *definitely* have whatever she has.

Oh, Samantha? The transbian domme who just ran off with Brittany? What do you even have in common with her; being a software developer when you aren't burning down your career?

I had to sit with this for a while before I finally accepted that...

Yes. Even Samantha. These people aren't *like* me. They got sucked in somehow, after trans people exploded in popularity.

Virtually *none* of these people had symptoms before Caitlin Jenner became a thing; and if you have the same thing as me, it *isn't* hard to notice. I started researching it before I was thirteen, it was so obvious. And the community was full of people with even worse gender dysphoria than *me*; I felt like a mere *pervert* compared to some of these folks.

Goddammit; I may be a pervert, but at least I was *born* that way.

That's *so many years*. I thought I'd found my people, at long last.

It was a fucking *mirage*. I was that. Goddamn. Thirsty.

It's like, these people are in the uncanny valley of transsexualism. Take the common transfeminine stereotypes, for example: (my kinks marked with [X])

- ☒ Computer nerd
- ☒ BDSM; probs submissive
- ☐ Anime dork

These people sound relatable, right? And familiar, too. There was enough off-topic computer bullshit on Aunty's list to prompt the creation of geek@antijen.org; there wasn't an equivalent for anime, but the BDSM correlation isn't exactly a new stereotype either.

This seems like the same crowd it was 20 years ago, right? The problem is, my friend group seemed to gradually get diluted until I knew *way* too many weeaboo furies who play dungeons and dragons. I know there's always been a crossover between weirdos and other weirdos; which I've generally tried to embrace, but...

Again. I *really* think I got frog boiled. I *still* think this. I can't get it out of my head. I'm not exactly a proponent of alien mind control at this point in my journey; but if there *is* a higher power influencing my precarious and jarringly unexpected fate, I truly believe *this* might be the bedrock *thing* I was supposed to learn on my little vision quest. My friends are

Fucking. Weird.

I certainly don't feel comfortable going to them for help. Again, where's the childhood crossdressing syndrome with these folks? I remember bringing this up at TT a long time ago, and it was like me and Lauren were the only people who got it.

Look, y'all. I don't think I'm an alien, I don't think I have an alien *soul*, I don't think *anybody* has a fucking soul. I've made a most fascinating 360° spiritual journey all the way back to being a fucking *atheist*. Not even a *space* atheist. I don't think I'm Dani California, I don't think *anybody* is Dani California, and I still think America is a free country despite its problems. I don't believe in much of *anything* anymore, good bad or ugly.

I *really* don't think I can trust my new friends. I think I made a series of *very* wrong turns; each one seemingly perfectly logical in its own time. I took a wrong turn being too non-judgmental with some of these people, because I thought they were like me

and I didn't want to be problematic. Either by happenstance or by some twist of fate, I continued making more and more wrong turns, as I reached out to my support network for "help with UFOs".

I'm starting to worry I've been enabling confused neckbeards in playing dress-up.

Have you ever
walked through a room

The irony to all this UFO business is, I *have* felt like an alien my entire life. My friends all get to date normal men and women, and I'm just... behind.

```
#snippet      They can't understand why I don't want to go out and "get
pussy" like them. I've always wanted things I can't have; and that isn't
even an uncommon problem. Most people want a yacht, or a spaceship, or a
Lambo, and they can't have that. I wanted material comforts a little when
I was younger, but I got over it. I kind of just... want to be normal. But,
I want to be me. And me doesn't like pussy. I kinda just want someone to
fuck me. I want somebody to want me, but nobody wants me like that. It's
actually kind of a joke.
```

```
#TODO This is dark and off-topic
```

```
#TODO I'm talking about my dude-bro friends, btw. I guess that doesn't make
much sense.
```

```
#snip It's totally not a sex thing, though.
```

This is, precisely, what my sign was. I thought I was a trans woman. I thought I was a kinkster. Then I thought I was a kinky trans woman. Every step of the way, I struggled to find what I was missing. *Women* seem to have no trouble finding people to fuck them. They actually *complain* about it. Subby boys like getting pussy as much as any other red-blooded male. There would seem to be little advice for someone in my position.

Then I figure the problem is really just that I'm trans, and I supposed I'd just do what other trans people were doing; but, *they* don't really have the same problem either. Hell, a good number of my trans friends were *married, with children sometimes* before deciding to transition. While I see little wrong with these people "being themselves", I hardly seem to have much in common with them. Yet, I firmly believed that I *must*.

I've always been weird, and I've always been *this*; but, have *they*? Frankly, I think the only logical answer is *no*; unless I were subject to an arranged or highly pressured marriage, I couldn't *imagine* settling down with someone without realizing it. I'm just too... bottomy and subby, in a way that isn't even endearing if you're trying to be Mr. Slave.

Am I just gay? I realize lots of people in the peanut gallery might be screaming it, but that's never really made sense to me. I think gay porn is weird, first of all. There's no woman in it to imagine being. And I want someone to play with my breasts and stuff. Not jack me off like some gay man.

It's not a sex thing, though. It's not *supposed* to be, because that would make me

(goddammit) **an autogynephile!** *(I don't even care anymore)*

Dammit. I'm convinced *all of human existence* is a sex thing, and religious people are just in denial about it.

This whole autogynephilia thing really just feels like a bullshit way of shaming... I mean, what even *is* female sexuality, anyway?

Is it being a submissive? Counterexamples: Erika, Dana, Collene, Leslie...

Is it just about liking men? Gay male attraction is demonstrably different from hetero female attraction; in ways I'm not really qualified to talk about because I am neither.

This last section has proven a bit difficult; because I don't really know *what* I believe in anymore.

I went on a very impassioned rant about how I think most of my friends are basically bisexual men on hormones; and that I think *that's* the reason they've been fucking their whole lives while I can't seem to find the well.

Be that as it may, I don't think it's entirely fair to blame ostensibly male homosexuality for my relationship struggles. Because, I'm not sure I'd be any more compatible with an honest-to-goodness true transsexual woman than I would be a gay man; whether or not he was on hormones.

First of all, I think my biggest problem is that I had too weird of a childhood, and I'm missing a bunch of DLLs. Susan is *really* fucking weird about sex and made *me* really fucking weird about sex at a young age, then I had *all that* happen to me, and I've never really been normal since.

Second of all, I *really* think I should date guys. I've never given this a chance; I *really* wanted to be the woman in normal dating, but by the end of high school the idea of some oaf like me ever being treated like *that* by someone was just a big joke. I think I had a not-very-nice childhood that destroyed my self-esteem.

Which is the third problem. I probably need whatever it is that gives you self-esteem. Though half the time I think my lack of self-esteem is just "realism". It's really hard to get to know me enough to figure that out, and I know that because I just did it for the first time.

Dude, this is pointless. It's supposed to be about UFOs.

I was confused why I struggled to connect sexually with April (or anyone, really), even after fixing the ostensibly final gender problem and finding an ostensibly like-minded trans person.

The problem, as I've grown convinced, is that none of these people are actually *transsexual*. As they are trans-something by definition, I would seem to have no other word to use for them, besides, well...

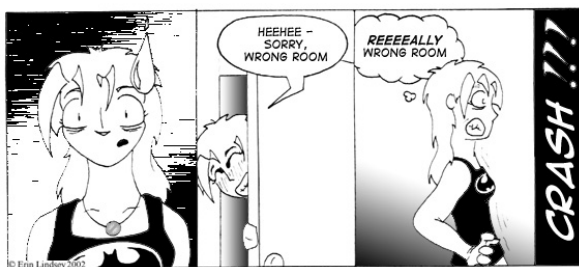


Figure 29: Have any of you trenders even *heard* of Erin Lindsey? (<http://venusenvycomic.com/index.php?id=98>)

Transgender. I think the problem is that they're transgender, and I'm transsexual. It's *ancient* wisdom, actually. I'd almost forgotten it myself.

I think their sexuality is, essentially, that of gay and bisexual men. They seem to have no trouble lusting after and fucking *each other*. The (well, a) problem with April and I was that, from my perspective, I liked it when she fooled around with me, but she was frustrated by my lack of initiative. I kind of just want to be all nuzzly and nibbly and make funny noises while somebody has their way with me; but, I think April wanted me to take an equal share at having my way with *her*, and my brain just doesn't work like that.

I guess what I'm trying to say, is that I *really* need to be the "woman" in bed. But with this polycule, I feel like I was cast into the role of the "gay male third", which doesn't really suit me.

It's *so* confusing. The problem's got to be *me*, right? Being a subby boy doesn't click, other trans women don't even click...

It felt like, I *wanted* it, until it was there, and then I *didn't* want it. Goddammit, do I want sex or not?!

It seems more obvious now that what I really want is the right *kind* of sex. And, so does April for that matter.

I think April has bisexual male sexuality.

I feel I'm backed into a corner, where I have to accept that I'm either a pervert, or argue for a psycho-sexual understanding of womanhood that defines it largely in terms of female sexual desire; a *relatively* new idea culturally.

I believe I've effectively argued that I *do* have a sex drive, and can be neither gay, straight, nor bi. What even *am* I? A fourth thing?

There are only two genders!

I know it sounds perverse and like it's "really just a sex thing"; but what was with all those women being into Fifty Shades of Gray several years ago, anyway? What even *is* a woman?

Things I might be

- ~~Dominant man~~
- ~~Dominant woman~~
- ~~Submissive man~~
- Submissive woman
- A pervert

Again, I have to ask the reader to resist the temptation to factor out the word "submissive" as a trait that can be shared between men and women. I tried this, and submissive men *really* aren't the same thing. I really just want what *women* are having, in the least creepy way possible. I feel like we need different

words for “sexual submissiveness” like the Eskimos have a bunch of different words for snow.

I feel I’ve *almost* been backed into the ultra-conservative position of having to argue women are these submissive creatures who belong in the bedroom. This... isn’t entirely correct either, though. I’m a multi-faceted person with an entire *life* going on. Dreams, aspirations... most of them shattered, granted.

I’m a submissive creature who belongs in the bedroom *sometimes*. There Republicans, are you fucking happy?

They probably *aren’t*. They probably want to scream about how “trans is a mental illness”.

Well, okay. That’s cool. What am I supposed to actually *do*, though? Because, I’m still *this*. I’ve *always* been *this*.

#TODO This section has been a bit aimless and personal, and I might edit it down.

I don’t know about magic and time travel, but I *am* struggling to believe this is a real timeline. I grew up, *dreaming* of meeting another person like me, and reading that we were only 1 in 30,000 people. I got older and started hearing about “trannies”, and I knew that people were aware of us. They talked about us in Women and Gender Studies, there was a higher than average number in the BDSM community... then *somewhere* in the 2010s it just *exploded* in popularity. I know I sound like a boomer, but like... *everybody* has pronouns now.

And... it’s *not* the same thing. It’s not *this*. I had to write a whole thing about it, because I can’t just call myself a “transsexual” anymore.

There are people who’ve wanted to cut off their genitals since they were toddlers, there are people with a lifelong history of suicidality... and there’s *me*. I’m just *this*. Despite the extant

vocabulary, I feel like our words have become meaningless to the point that anybody can call themselves anything.

I've long suspected there are different types of male-to-female transsexuals; and I've long thought Blanchard and his supporters were hitting on a, perhaps distorted, manifestation of this fact.

Whatever subtypes of male-to-female transsexual may exist, I'm afraid there's far too much noise *now* to make any sense of them. I think we could at least coin a new subtype called the "whackadoodle" or the "weird internet person"; but I imagine that would be too simplistic, and might fail to capture the full extent of the problem.

It's like... the general public just can't cope with our existence. They either want to kill us, or they want to *become* us. It's *surreal*. And I'm... it. It's almost like I'm...

A *witch*. Some fear us. Others envy us. Most question our existence. Yet, here I am. Raiding mom's lingerie drawer, recharging my magical energy by the moonlight...

It's like, I'm an *actual* witch; in a world where the sensationalized hype is louder than the real thing.

I feel I may've learned the real truth about magic and witchcraft. We always talk about the crazy puritans who went about burning innocent people at the stake. But, what about the other side of the equation? The people who genuinely think they're *actually* practicing witchcraft? They exist, too. They feed off each other; their fears, their superstitions...

An environment where people are spooked out about witches, invariably creates an environment where more and more whackadoodles think *they're* witches. The 17th century version of trenders, if you will.

Republicans get more and more spooked out about trans people taking over everything, more and more whackadoodle people think they're actually a witch or something...



Figure 30: South Park - Black vamp kid (All lines) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVJOef9qkGM>)

I'm afraid the problem may've reached critical mass.

It would seem the conservatives are kinda *right*. I can't help but think of all the counter-theories. ROGD, social contagion...

Ugh I... *don't* think I have childhood sexual trauma.

Well, except for the part where I thought I couldn't be a "normal woman" in the bedroom. *That* messed me up.

A few years ago, I struggled to explain why *I* seemed to be the only trans woman I knew of with sexual dysfunction. Brittany, Persephone, Stacey, April, Crystal, AJ, *Regina*... *All* of these people were or had been married; sometimes with children.

I'm afraid a more plausible, though less obvious, explanation is that they aren't like me because they aren't *like* me. I may not have been around people with the same underlying medical

condition as me since I stopped keeping up with Antijen all those years ago.

I mean, I still remember that weird, uh... *thing* happening; but, I never really even thought about it much before I started troubleshooting my sex problems back in 2019. I'd rather not spend any more time than I already have on contrived theories; like that my interest in BDSM might stem from it, or that my entire gender identity could be the result of trauma.

I feel like I “caught” childhood trauma from Crystal and Drew and Persephone and them, and I feel really grossed out by it. I never meant to misrepresent myself; and I certainly never meant to appropriate something like child sexual abuse. Writing this document has reminded me that I have enough childhood trauma as is. Then again, I think *they* caught transgenderism,⁵¹ from their friends or elsewhere.

Likewise, I think Susan caught (or perhaps, self-inflicted) a concussion on account of *my* trauma work and associated struggle to remember and reevaluate my childhood. While extreme, this *would* exemplify the behavior of someone with borderline personality disorder.

I believe this episode is a microcosm of human society. I think human behavior... is *contagious*.

Cults, religions, speaking in tongues, magic arts, transgender people, plurals, Al-Qaeda, QAnon, dancing mania...

If you hang around a group of people long enough, you'll unavoidably become *like* them. You are what you eat.

You might *think* you have the willpower not to lose your individuality.

You probably *don't*.

⁵¹I'm saying it ironically.

Josh is a libertarian, or... something. April and Drew are card-carrying DSA members. I can talk politics with *both* of them. I'm a

social
fucking
chameleon.

Spend too much time around Josh and I might inadvertently spout off a talking point about how the Fed is printing money and inflation is about to go through the roof. Spend too much time around leftists and I'll start unironically using the word "bougie" as an adjective.

Sometimes, I come away from interactions feeling like a piece of shit in retrospect; like I'm a fair weather fan, or like I don't really believe in anything at all.

I bet everyone else is just as bad, though. They just don't realize it, because they've never tried to live a double life. They go along, thinking they're a Christian or a Muslim or a Democrat or a Republican or something because of their own free will. It's nothing more than their own free will not to fall far from the tree.

I don't really like politics. I mostly just smoke weed and dick around with computers when I'm not preoccupied with some other story arc. At least leftists mean well. Conservatism is all full of gloom and doom and boogeymen, and I usually end up being one of the boogeymen somehow. Of course, the far left is no better for me than the center right. #TODO What am I even talking about?

I vividly remember a quote; from what I *thought* was Auntie's website, but I couldn't find it when I went looking for it.

The world needs sensitive men and masculine women.

There was a *lot* of caution urged to would-be transitioners in the 2000s. This wasn't *crossdressing* or *drag*. This was *serious*. It was part of why I started to second guess myself.

Today, that caution has been replaced with a sort of cheerleading. It's complicated, because some people need a little cheerleading, and some people *don't*.

Perhaps more concerning is the near-extinction of a species once of least concern: the male transvestite.

There used to be more of *them* than there were of *us*. These days, you can't identify as a "male transvestite" without everybody poking fun at you for being an "egg".

I feel like you'd actually need *will power*⁵² not to get railroaded into transitioning today, as someone who may have a less exotic reason for wearing women's clothing.

With all this discussion, I can't help but question whether *I'm* really transsexual. I keep returning to the direction of causality; I found Antijen, *because* I was wearing women's clothing at a very young age and I didn't understand why. I feel bad for younger folks, for whom exposure to transgender people would be endemic, and the direction of causality less clear.

Conservatives often ask the question, "Why would *anyone* want to do *that* to their body?!" as if to question my very sanity, or to invoke the age-old comparison of my body to a holy temple. Regardless of what it is you call me, I hope I've made "why I did it" as clear to you as it is to me.

⁵²No, not Will Powers

I'd lost sixty pounds since the beginning of all this, my hair seemed about as patchy as ever, DIY was my best bet at getting real hormones, and the recurring GI problem could knock me on my ass for a day or two. I could really use a sane doctor in my life right about now.



Figure 31: I look like a dude (January 2024)

The office eventually wrote me back and told me I could schedule a visit, but I was on to other things by then. I was no

longer convinced *any* of my medication had been tampered with, and was beginning to suspect more mundane explanations for my illness.

One of the things I had discovered about these attacks, is that laying flat on my back seemed to help. I also suspected it might have something to do with a hiatal hernia I've suspected I had since my mid-twenties, that usually doesn't cause major problems. #TODO Backfill hiatal hernia or talk about it here

I took stretching before meals more seriously; and *eventually* looked up some proper backstretches online. This *really* seemed to alleviate the problem.

I wasn't so sure about Dr. Reid anymore, but I at least took her up on the vitamin suggestion. I'd been taking D, B12, a multivitamin, and some B complex vitamins that had expired a few years ago and needed to be used anyway. I was beginning to feel better; but still dealt with the aforementioned gastrointestinal attacks at random, albeit with improving technique dealing with them.

Despite having a box full of hormones that *could be perfectly fine* for all I knew, I was still anxious to get my second shipment at my new little PO Box.

Get them to the ocean
Get them on a plane
Hurry, hurry, hurry
Before I go insane

In late January, I found an ominous printout telling me to go to the front desk so they could verify my ID. There was no mention of a parcel, so it wasn't clear whether this was routine or due to my suspicious package to a fake name with "Don't fuck with me" on the label. I never took them up on this, and I kept receiving mail.

And, I certainly never had any trouble receiving mail for Harris and Marion, PLLC. But I swear; Alyssa Jones, Dani Elizondo, Isabella Costello... look, I *know* they don't actually look at the name unless you have to show ID to pick up a package or something.

This is the goddamn *postal service*, y'all. Anyway.

I was in the shower trying to wash my face with apricot scrub once day, and when I opened the lid a glob flicked *right* into my left eye. And I was like

Well, that sucks.

I rinsed my eye out as best I could, and it felt like things were back to normal enough when I got out of the shower.

So, that's January. It was this sobering month, where at the beginning I still thought I was the subject of an ethically-questionable medical experiment, and by the end I was pretty sure I'd simply lost my fucking mind.

I had my biggest "porn relapse" since I stopped really looking at it years ago. This was almost certainly hormonal, and only lasted a couple of weeks. It wasn't very long before I was riding the Progynova train.

I resurrected my old VM of Slackware 13 off my barely-usable Macbook, and went nuts torrenting *gigabytes* looking for these *one or two specific things* I liked the old pictures of. It really wasn't worth it. This little hormonal spell didn't make me feel any more "like a man", and the extra testosterone really just made me into a *much* dirtier submissive.

I'm sorry that we have to talk about my sex life or lack thereof. But, we *do* have to talk about my sex life. Because, I think *I'm* real and *they* aren't. And, I think that *could* be part of my problem, if there even *is* a problem other than my fragile psychology. I certainly think it's *a* problem, at least.

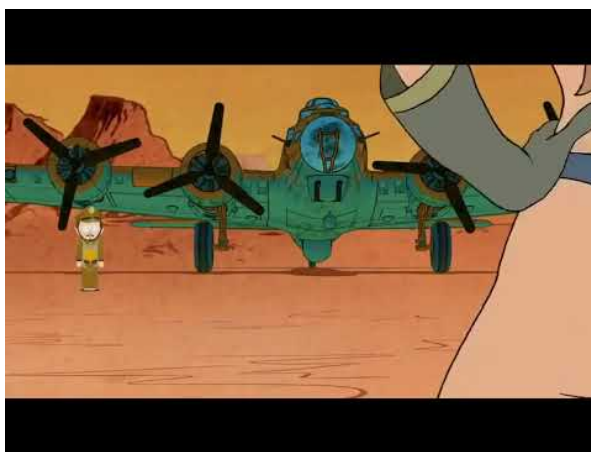


Figure 32: South Park - Mr Broflovsky Cheesing (<https://youtu.be/BfkWKjDPpFQ>)

I saw that I had the daunting task ahead of merely even *explaining* what has happened to me over the last three years. Yeah, I think I've lost my mind; but, it seemed *everyone else* had too. My therapist egged me on for a whole year before dropping me as a client *under the most suspicious of circumstances*, my friends seemed content to let me play space alien *if they didn't join in themselves...* and there I was, looking for help in the seemingly most obvious of places and getting *dead-ass nowhere*. Everyone either wanted to let me play space alien, or in Susan's case, desperately vied to restrain me while failing to have a real conversation about anything.

What's wild is, I feel like I was *already* stuck in this same unhealthy situation before UFOs happened. I still had the same unhealthy mom, I still had the same whackadoodle friends, I

wasn't really opening up to my therapist about serious problems and she was just smiling and nodding in turn...

I feel like... yeah, my life crashed because of bad input; but who the *fuck* named their kid Bobby'; DROP TABLE STUDENTS, anyway?

I may be an idiot; but so is everyone else, right?



Figure 33: Whitest Kids U' Know: Tar Toast 1 & 2 (<https://youtu.be/nSA2wYUQTrg?t=25>)

I *really* need help. From *somewhere*. I don't even know where you're supposed to *go* with a problem like this. Hell, I'm not even sure what the problem *is*.

Shit, dude. How do I even *explain* this? It would be so much easier, if I only knew what *happened*.

- Uh, so I'm recovering from what appears to be a vitamin deficiency, I lost my mind and a bunch of hair because of it... yeah, it's totally crazy!

- So it's the craziest thing, these people told me I was different and needed to learn about the Freemasons when I was a kid, but then I *lost my fucking mind over it* when that UFO report came out a few years ago, and... anyway, I think I might be blackballed and it's really important that I get un-blackballed or something? Do I smell?
- Yeah, so I tried Concerta and that was not a good idea *at all...*
- Sorry y'all, I guess I kinda just... smoked a bunch of weed and wondered off. Yeah I've been smoking on and off since college, but I *really* fell off the wagon this last time with it...
- Well, I was starting to realize my childhood wasn't as picturesque as my mother likes to remind me it was, and yadda yadda I just wrote Slaughterhouse-Five.
- Yeah, so, uh... God is real, or something? God, gods...

I adopted the first bullet point as both the most likely, and most sane-sounding theory to introduce the problem with. I suddenly appeared to be more lucid *now* than I was a month or two ago; if I'm to look at what changed, it would seem to be the vitamins. I'm still smoking just as much pot, and I haven't touched methylphenidate for a *while*.

I decided I should try and put together a video explaining my problem, which I could then put on the internet and give to people.

I pulled out my condenser microphone, and started talking into the webcam with an inflated Volcano balloon.

There was *so much* to untangle. There were *so many* layers. It was like... dependency hell, or something. I couldn't really explain this one thing without explaining this other thing... it felt unavoidable that, due to the compartmentalization of my lifestyle, I would have to link in vast amounts of personal information to explain *everything* to *anyone*. And the size of this statically linked binary was...

Hours. I spent *hours* in front of my webcam, trying to explain all the prerequisites and dependencies, so that I could explain the *other* thing, so that I could ultimately give a complete picture of *what* events, exactly, led to me crashing my life into a ditch.

Okay. So, maybe I have to tell an abbreviated slice of my autobiographical history to explain the problem. For a while, I *really* thought I could edit it down into a watchable video.

```

f1@mothership-a:~/Videos/mnt/repo$ ls
001-childhood.webm      024-bojangles-      mkv      footnotes.sh
002-college.webm        025-2020.mkv         indent.log
003-postcollege.webm    026-ramble-starting-2021.mkv  lfife.md
004-trans.webm          027-starting-2021-ramble.mkv  lfife.md.backup
005-report.webm         028-sketch-2021-spring.mkv   lfife.md.jlc
006-report-hrt.webm     029-2021-report.mkv         lfife.pdf
007-short.webm          030-not-like-me.mkv         ljtrtm.sh
008-report.webm         031-scratch-hiscuit.mkv     logic
009-report-lmotcrazy.webm 032-pranks-short.mkv       logic.backup
010-trenders.webm       033-scratch-robe.mkv        Makefile
011-trenders.webm       034-scratch-robe.mkv        mlt
012-bowlingballish-trenders.mkv 035-random-obs.mkv         old.yaml
013-hair.mkv            036-scratch-boj.mkv         panfilters.py
014-random.mkv          037-ts-sex-butters-clips.mkv project
015-plural.mkv          038-questions-2021-2022.mkv questions
016-short.mkv           039-questions-2021-2022.mkv render
017-trans-2017-2018.mkv 040-regroup.mkv            resource
018-trans-2018-      .mkv 041-      .mkv              style sty
019-sparserrant-2019-2020-2021pre.mkv 042-      .mkv              tests
020-desparation.mkv     043-      .mkv              timeline
021-ramble.mkv          044-sanity-check-failed.mkv timeline.backup
022-retrograde.mkv     chatbubbles.sty            Untitled.canvas
023-bojangles-random.mkv d-notes                     'Welcome to SparseCrypt!'

f1@mothership-a:~/Videos/mnt/repo$ du -sh .
21G
f1@mothership-a:~/Videos/mnt/repo$

```

Figure 34: It was too much shit

I spent most of February working on these videos. I'd had trouble getting it all out of me with people face-to-face; I think just because all the layers are so overwhelmingly daunting. And *that* was a couple of years ago.

At the same time, I sort of feel like most of the layers were bullshit. I'm probably just a pot-smoking burnout, who smoked a little too much pot and got a little too burnt out, and... look, I don't really know *what* happened, okay? I didn't even think this was *possible*.

I felt like I had to *explain* it, though. I sent *very* strange letters to a handful of people believing there was something incredibly profound happening to me, and... there just *wasn't*. I guess it just *happens*.

#snippet How long could this possibly take? I really thought I could make a 20 minute (or, certainly no longer than 60 minute) video explaining it all.

After a few weeks, I could tell I was making a huge tangle that would take weeks to months of editing to be presentable. I tried doing it from the top in one take, but there was just

(*sigh*) So. Much. Shit.

I needed to talk to Tommy. Let's just start there. Because, I really *do* remember some really weird shit about me, him and the Freemasons, and he sent me that *suspiciously* timed text message a few months ago. But, I could have a faulty memory, I'm probably seeing patterns that aren't there, and I've been acting crazy. I need to have an adult conversation with him that isn't all weird and riddled with paranoia, innuendo and bizarre assumptions.

Hey Tommy. I'm sorry our prior conversations haven't make any sense. I'm recovering from a severe vitamin deficiency, I'm afraid I lost my mind and a bunch of hair over it, and I'm trying to piece the last few years of my life together. It would be helpful if I could have a talk with you in private soon.

Moi | Wednesday, March 13 2024 09:35AM

Hey Rachael! Thank you for reaching out and for sharing. I don't judge you. It sounds like you have had a rough time. I would love to have a conversation with you. Forgive me for not getting back with you sooner.

Tommy | Saturday, March 16 2024 02:01PM

Thanks Tommy. Is any time this week good? I don't mind driving over to Greensboro.

Moi | Monday, March 18 2024 09:04AM

Good morning! I will be in Sanford tomorrow and Wednesday and back in Greensboro for the rest of the week. You are WELCOME to come. However, the next time I am in Cary, I could meet you in Durham. It's up to you! Again, I will be back in Greensboro after Wednesday.

Tommy | Monday, March 18 2024 09:07AM

I was still having GI problems, and I remember *considering* meeting him before having to nurse myself for a day or two and deciding *maybe I shouldn't go on a road trip if I can help it*.

I'm sorry I lost touch with you last week. Would next week be alright?

Moi | Thursday, March 28 2024 09:06AM

I'll be in Florida next week. The following week would work.

Tommy | Thursday, March 28 2024 10:21AM

Okay, thanks!

Moi | Thursday, March 28 2024 10:43AM

It felt like I was *crawling* toward having a meeting with this guy, who was already talking to me like I was a relapsed crackhead. It didn't instill confidence that Tommy was about to give me the keys to my spaceship; on the contrary, my future was looking pretty bleak.

Q2

I nervously occupied myself, as if to take my mind off the impending train wreck. All I know is that I *fucked up*. Bad. I set up `make` to batch render my videos, before piddling with Rhinote because I was unsatisfied with *all extant sticky note applications for Linux*, and finally laying in bed playing my switch.

Without much of a plan, and with large amounts of my day spent either recovering from GI problems or stretching in various ways to prevent them, I had little in my playbook except to keep trying to make this meeting with Tommy happen. Maybe I can at least put this past me and work on moving on with my life.

I hope you had a nice trip! Is this week still okay?

Moi | Monday, April 08 2024 09:01AM

Hey Rachael, to be honest, the next two weeks are better, especially if you want to meet up in person. I have a short week this week; I have out of town wedding.

Tommy | Monday, April 08 2024 02:16PM

Okay, thanks. I'll probably get up with you next week.

Moi | Monday, April 08 2024 03:29PM

I still want to talk to you in person, but... Can you tell me if you were even born in Warren? I'm afraid my memory might be really scrambled.

Moi | Tuesday, April 09 2024 11:06AM

I would welcome an in-person conversation. But, yes, I was born a Warren.

Tommy | Tuesday, April 09 2024 11:22AM

Good morning! Is this still a good week?

Moi | *Monday, April 15 2024 08:57AM*

Yes!

Tommy | *Monday, April 15 2024 09:04AM*

Great! Can we plan on Wednesday, either morning or early afternoon?

Moi | *Monday, April 15 2024 09:25AM*

If you wanted to meet in Durham or Cary, I would have to meet you on Friday or Saturday. I'm in Greensboro today through Thursday.

Tommy | *Monday, April 15 2024 09:34AM*

Okay. I wouldn't mind driving to Greensboro, but I'll probably just wait until this weekend if you're going to be here anyway.

Moi | *Monday, April 15 2024 09:50AM*

That sounds good! Just let me know when you are available this Friday or Saturday.

Tommy | *Monday, April 15 2024 09:52AM*

Is tomorrow still good? I'd prefer morning or early afternoon, but I'm flexible.

Moi | *Friday, April 19 2024 01:19PM*

Morning is good!

Tommy | *Friday, April 19 2024 01:22PM*

Good morning! Did you have a particular venue in mind?

Moi | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:06AM*

I was hoping that we could meet in Cary.
There are some coffee shops where we can
sit outside.

Tommy | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:21AM*

That sounds good!

Moi | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:23AM*

What time?

Tommy | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:24AM*

10?

Moi | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:32AM*

That works!

Tommy | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:33AM*

👍 to “ That works! ”

Moi | *Saturday, April 20 2024 08:34AM*

After patiently waiting the better part of the month, I got to sit down and have coffee with this guy. I wore my halal hoodie out of self consciousness, for which it was probably a couple degrees too warm.

Leading up to this encounter, I made *no* presumption of sanity or correctness. I mostly wanted to open the door to talking about my presumed hypovitaminosis-induced insanity; which led to some very weird messages and letters, and ultimately to a very weird meeting at *a different* coffee shop two years ago.

After we got ourselves seated outside, Tommy threw me off balance when he opened our interaction by asking me

Why do you think you're *crazy*?

Umm, well...

Dude; what do *you* think?

I took notes about our meeting as soon as I got home, because I didn't want my already-questionable memory to distort the facts.

If there's any thesis statement I could make about this visit, it's that

... Look; this dude is *hiding* something.

It's... the *last* impression I expected to come away with. I expected us to talk about how I was coming to from the *craziest* experience where I thought I had an alien soul or something?

I said I remembered him telling me I should explore the Freemasons when I was younger.

I never told you that! If anything I'd have told you to stay away from them!

... Okay; thanks. I've been through a lot, and I'm not sure I can trust my memory.

Well, let's say I *did*...

Alright, you sly fuck. Who is this guy, the fucking Riddler?

He seemed to know an awful lot about Freemasonry for someone who thought I should "stay away from them". When I suggested I didn't seem eligible on account of my gender stuff even if I *did* want to join them, he was quick to point out that

Oh, you could join Eastern Star...

He parroted off lots of generic information about them; that often seemed to contradict the more "underground" things I remember hearing about them over the years. For example,

They're old, they're like a secret society, they're from Europe, think Knights Templar... Okay; I *have* heard a lot of things like that, and it tracks with publicly available information. Yet, I feel I've *also* heard they had origins in Ancient Egypt; if not also some bullshit about "how to build King Solomon's temple".

And also, aren't these Freemason people really quick to say "Ah ah ah; we aren't a 'secret society'. We're a 'society with secrets'..."? (*eyeroll*)

They have traditions that "go alongside" traditional religion and spirituality; they have special funeral rights; he keeps religion and Freemason stuff *very* separate. Well, I know that much is true. Stephanie talked about there being a special section of her family's graveyard for Freemasons.

The Freemasons can tell you about what they do, but you can't ask questions This one *really* sticks in my crawl. It's the exact *opposite* of what I remember from Heather's weird discussion about the "Simon Says" rules.

I could've *sworn* the deal Heather and Maureen (and even Tommy) seemed to know about was that they could tell you *once*, and wouldn't know anything about it if you asked again.

Ugh! I really feel like this dude's gaslighting me.

Okay, maybe those are their rules; but goddammit *what am I supposed to do?!* I tore my life apart because I could only remember these goofy "Simon says" rules halfway, and the Freemasons just have... *nothing for me?* I can't help but feel these Freemason people careened me into this bullshit, even if my memory is only half right.

I feel like they gave me this extra life in a video game, that you only get *one* chance at. I feel like I killed Marcus in Fire Emblem.

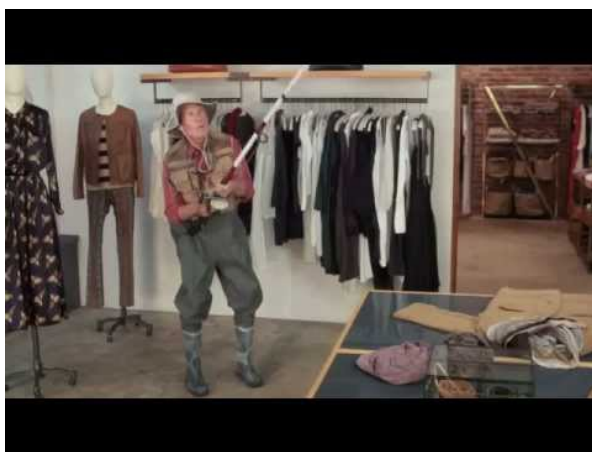


Figure 35: Ooh you almost had it... (https://youtu.be/ItUECpFi9_s)

The lodges don’t have windows. He went out of his way to point that out. I thought that was a little weird.

Back in 2023, I had “visions” that the lodges lacked windows so that they could be used as a spaceport in a pinch; however, I no longer believe this to be even remotely true.

His church before Elizabethtown was “full of Freemasons”. Umm... okay? They seem to be walking a thin line between being a “secret society” and telling all their friends, but whatever.

Partway through, he saw a couple at the coffee shop who he knew from his church at Cary. He called them over to our table, and we exchanged greetings for a minute or so. After they walked away, Tommy pointed out that *the guy* was a Freemason. He had officiated their wedding just before transferring to his new

church in Greensboro, and referred to it as the most unique and eccentric he'd ever done. The couple looked pretty boring to me.

I enjoyed talking to your therapist! Are you still seeing her?

Uh... no. Not anymore...

I eventually mentioned the weird reincarnation thing I remembered point-blank; but tried to make it clear that it wasn't my present belief, and that I thought I was just a little nuts.

Well, I think you're on a *path*...

Goddammit, that's what you people⁵³ always say!

I brought up Warren at some point; mentioning that I *did* think we were both from there, despite my prior lapse in judgement.

Yeah, I was born in Warren. My mom is from Cary, and I grew up down here.

Okay; I can see how "Born in Warren, mostly 'from' Cary" may've gotten lost in translation with Vickie as a middle-person. I'll... allow that; *maybe*.

After proving to know a little too much about the Freemasons not to rouse my suspicion at least a *little*, he changed the subject to Susan.

Susan's eccentric. I've met a lot of eccentric people; but your mother is *really* different.

You know who Susan is? A *survivor*.

⁵³I don't mean you *people*... Is that a slur against Freemasons?

This is *another* point that really sticks out at me; because, I had just recently made the *opposite* conclusion. Most of my life, I've parroted that belief to *myself*; Susan had a rough childhood, she's been through a lot... it's only lately that I've come to the conclusion that she's really just being an asshole, and there's little excuse for it.

I'm her *adult child*, not her lover. While I certainly don't mean to suggest she's ever attempted anything romantic or intimate, I *do* think her emotional attachment and expectations for our relationship are... confused, and unhealthy.

Her trauma isn't my fault, *or* my responsibility. Children are supposed to go in the "liability" column, not the "asset" column. Anyway...

He made it *very* clear that anything we talked about was private. He kinda made it sound like he was mostly avoiding Susan at this point, although it sounded like Nancy might still talk to her sometimes.

He kind of *did* make me feel better about Susan being a whackadoodle, at least. He pointed out that she's, apparently, *known* not to be a very honest or reliable person.

Oh, she *lies* about everything!

He said at one point. I at least felt a *little* exonerated hearing *that*; people from Bladen County mostly treat us like a normal family, even though I know we're not.

I left; feeling both defeated, and like I still had *something* I needed to grapple with. There isn't much more time and money and Rachael to keep going with, though. Hell; I might even need to chalk *Tommy* up to being a whackadoodle person. Sometimes you've just got to cut yourself out of toxic situations and move on with your life; even if you'll never find the closure you're looking for.

I at least felt a little better, having talked to Tommy. He couldn't really help me with anything, but I could at least cross him off the list now.

The list

- Tommy
- Maureen
- Heather
- Josh
- Kristina?

Shit, dude. I need help. I *really* need help. I feel I've got my wits about me more than I did, but I *remember* Heather, Maureen, and even *my therapist* before I went all Pepe Silvia, knowing about the Freemason-UFO-reincarnation thing. And, Tommy's *still* acting like a goddamn sketchball about it all these years later.

I'm chasing my goddamn tail. I know what I remember! And, I know *these* people are acting about as squirrely as *I* was. I'd *really* feel a lot better if Heather or Maureen themselves could tell me I was imagining things; or, maybe explain what it is I'm misremembering.

Like; Lyra. I've known the star Vega was in the constellation Lyra since college. Since Junior year, when I had that talk with Heather, and she told me *she* was from the star Vega in the constellation Lyra. I didn't, and still don't, know jack shit about stars and constellations. I think *science* is cool...

Vega being in the constellation Lyra is, like, about the *only* fact I know about the subject matter. I can *verify* it. It's on Wikipedia. And I *know* it, because...

Heather told me. She told me she was *from* there. I can't verify anything she told me about Freemasons, or reincarnation, or "exploring mysticism", or *any* of that. But, I can verify *that*.

I learned a *lot* of really weird shit, along with *a single* verifiable fact.

I mean; if my memory is failing me, this would seem to be a *highly specific* memory glitch. It's like...

I mean, *come on*. I feel like I'm in a Key and Peele sketch or something. This thing jumped the shark like, 18 months ago.

Duh duh duh duh duh duh duh
duh duh duh
duh duh duh duh

We are live! Keep moving!

Duh duh duh duh duh duh
Duuuuuuuuuh duh duh

Maybe I just need one of these Freemason people to tell me to fuck off. I'll do it, too. Again; wrong turn hundreds of miles ago, no idea how I got here... I swear, everything felt so *logical* at the time. I feel like I was supposed to meet friends at the beach, and drove my car in blissful ignorance all the way to Wilmington, DE; wondering why everything felt so much further away, for only me.

My left eye had been bothering me lately with itching and burning, but eye drops seemed to help. I'd often wake up with that happening, and would reach for the drops that I'd needed to buy more of. Whatever.

I started doing *actual* backstretches that I'd found online, and could tell this was greatly alleviating the gastrointestinal problem. It was only *then* that I began to realize how contorted my body had become. My back had curved far inward, and my entire pelvis began tilting back as I stretched. *Ridiculous* amounts of stomach began sliding back through the aforementioned hernia; I didn't even know I *had* that much stomach.

While I had since taken to eating meals standing up in a vain attempt to avoid discomfort related to the hiatal hernia, it was now obvious that no amount of gravity would have caused my stomach to drop down like old times. I *really* just needed to stretch, like *a lot*.

It has since become abundantly clear that *this* is what was causing my symptoms. Not only have I had no gastrointestinal trouble, I'm also able to breathe easier, and I feel much younger and more alive. I probably still spend about two hours a day stretching on average, but it's vastly improved my quality of life.

I've attributed the root cause to an utter lack of lumbar support, or even normal day-to-day physical exercise whilst this UFO business has been going on. I suppose I did it to *myself*, in a way.

Ugh. That's just my life, isn't it? It's all your fault sweetie, try not to be a dumbass next time alright?

I could tell my hair was starting to fill back in, and I noticed a return in my "Cousin Itt" hair for the first time. My weight had also leveled off at around 160 lbs; the skinniest I've been since *at least* middle school. I didn't think that was *possible*. I've already told myself I'm just going to stop eating if I ever weigh over 170 again.

I've theorized that the weight loss may've been caused by the long-term mis-positioning of my stomach. It probably reduced my appetite without me realizing it, akin to having your stomach stapled. If there was malnutrition, it might also explain the hair loss and vitamin problems. The other obvious conclusion would be that the lack of vitamins was making me lose weight and hair; if it can't simply be attributed to the extreme amount of stress I was under.

I spent much of May debating whether I should talk to Maureen or Josh next; before ultimately deciding I should probably just start with Josh. He's already involved, and I don't really even *know* Maureen that well. I was starting to think UFOs and Freemasons might not be my biggest problem; as much as I'm left hanging for the final chord.

Hi Josh. I'm recovering from a vitamin deficiency that caused me to lose a lot of hair, and I'm afraid I may have lost my mind for one reason or another. I'm sorry I've been so weird the last few years, and I feel awful for missing your wedding. I'd like to catch up soon if you would.

Moi | *Wednesday, June 05 2024 07:41AM*

Morning Rachael! I'm so glad to hear from you! I'll be in Durham on Sunday if you want to meet up

Josh | *Wednesday, June 05 2024 07:45AM*

No pressure, just lmk

Josh | *Wednesday, June 05 2024 04:36PM*

Right. He'll be in town on *Sunday*. I, uh... forget about that sometimes. That we don't really...

Umm... talk about religion. I don't talk about religion with *anyone* from Bladen County, really.

I'm *very* open about being an atheist when people ask what I believe in. I'm not sure anyone from Bladen County has really *asked* me point-blank if I'm still a Christian; except for my mother once, when she was *concerned* that I watched South Park.

Okay; so Susan is just weird, and unreasonable, and *very* incompatible with who I am as a person. I've had to accept that. *She* probably won't ever...

So, I guess it's just... never come up. Not that it has to be a thing, or whatever. Except...

Well, yeah. It kinda *does*. Because I was an atheist, then I *wasn't* one, and now I'm one again. I don't know if I'm about to get a probationary warning from Richard Dawkins for that or...

Okay; so he's a *wee* bit conservative, and he kinda sorta liked Donald Trump *a whole lot* last I knew, and when we *do* talk about politics we tend to bond over the time I went through a libertarian phase when I was younger that I sometimes pretend I never grew out of.

(*Sigh*) My, uh... childhood best friend is a Christian conservative, isn't he? There's a *word* for this...

Dude. What am I even *doing* with my life? Have I managed to make even a single friend who actually *knows* me? I think my entire life is a collection of masks I wear around people to feel safe. Because I'm afraid the entire world is going to disown me or something, for being different

and acting like a queeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeennnnnnnnnn

This was a bit like a splash of cold water to the face. Let's just... grab lunch with the after church crowd, and catch up on what's been *happening* in this crazy little brain of mine!

Do I *really* want to go straight to sweet little Jesus boy Josh Johnson with this?

A few days later, I decided

Dude. Fuck trying to make a video. I need to *write*.

I created a markdown file, and started writing at the part where I was born in Warren, Ohio. I knew this was going to be an *incredibly* personal piece of writing. I knew this wasn't "after church special" material.

I kept writing. I looked for something to beautify markdown, and that's when I got into pandoc. Have you done pandoc? It's a drug. I did it when I got tired of writing. I started putting latex in the frontmatter to tweak the appearance, until I'd done enough of that to make a .sty file.

While randomly scrolling around on Wikipedia and reading about the Jay and Silent Bob universe, I discovered that “Alyssa Jones” is the name of the lesbian love interest from Chasing Amy. I've never watched any of the Clerks movies; though I do feel a spiritual connection to the character of Silent Bob.



Figure 36: Mallrats (2/9) Movie CLIP - Jay and Silent Bob (1995) HD (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAeFPZ-yXYM&t=57s>)

Q3

I got to writing about high school, and this realization hit me like a ton of bricks. Why I'm blackballed.

It's *Emma*. Remember? She spread a bunch of lies about me after our thing fell apart.

It brought me back to what Bill was trying to tell me all those years ago. Dude... I bet if I look bad to people for some reason, it's probably because she told everyone I was a rapist or a pedophile or something, and people still believe it. Maybe I was supposed to defend myself more vigorously or something, but I mostly just ignored her. It felt like she was feeding off my heightened emotions from being outed.



Figure 37: Tragedy Strikes at an Aerobics Competition - Key & Peele (<https://youtu.be/cK98jx7gw7w?t=150>)

I was *really* pissed off about this for like a week; I kinda doubt it's even the problem now. I *had* completely forgotten that Emma exists; it might actually be a good thing I didn't go to Josh's wedding if she was going to be there.

I kept writing. I got off to a really brisk start, but I was losing steam.

My left eye kept sucking, and when I woke up with really annoying burning one night I went into the bathroom and was like

Alexa, set a timer for fifteen minutes.

Fifteen minutes; starting now.

And I was all like

(*schwiffiffischwiffischwiffischwiffischwiffischwiffisch*)

Cupping water into my hand, until I got to like minute twelve and I was all like

Arghhhaaaaafuuuuuuuckgoddammitaaaaaaa

And like, a *bunch* of apricot started coming out of my eye.

Like, I didn't know you could *have* so much bullshit in your eye without realizing it. It was like my eye had hammerspace.

This knocked me on my ass for, like, *at least* a week; but really, more like two or three with recurring problems after it was *mostly* out.

One of the more annoying problems is that it made me *really* sensitive to light, to the point my eyes couldn't adjust to the light outdoors and I could barely drive. I had already become largely nocturnal, but this really encouraged me to get food at night and early in the morning; where I was often *still* blinded by the lights in the drive-through or elsewhere.

The other annoying problem that might go without saying is that it was like having to work a million little grains of sand out of your eye, that are bound together by what I can only describe as "Satan's mucous".

Ugh! Just... don't, if you can help it.

I got some proper eyewash from Target, and it helped a lot. After a while it felt like it was maybe loosening up a little *too* much and making my eye burn like crazy; the little cup was *always* helpful though, even when I just needed refreshing tap water.

Anyway, I'm done with that now, but was *still* getting a little bit of gunk out sometimes as of a few weeks ago.

Sorry, this is supposed to be about UFOs. Jeez, I wonder why this is taking so long...

Josh sent me *this*; which frankly reads like some sort of weird copypasta. I need *real* things I can actually *do*.

<https://www.docdroid.net/file/download/Tc0VFp6/disclosure-on-technologies-and-applications-being-used-against-american-targeted-individuals-pdf.pdf>

Josh | Thursday, August 01 2024 08:47PM

<https://archive.org/details/disclosure-on-technologies-and-applications-being-used-against-targeted-individuals/mode/1up>

Josh | Thursday, August 01 2024 08:52PM

Okay – so, my childhood best friend *might* be a right wing conspiracy theorist. I guess I should've... well, he's already involved, for better or worse. I swear to god, everyone's either a neo-Nazi or a literal commie these days.

To be fair, maybe I'm not one to talk. I'm not sure *I'm* entirely sane, and I *do* still think there might be something a bit "out of this world" going on with me. I think there's a scientific explanation for everything, and I'd certainly like to find the scientific explanation for *this* some day.

I couldn't really work on writing for a week or two, and used it as an excuse to figure out how to write filters for pandoc, as well as pull my old Jekyll site off my disassembled server. I *had* planned to simply build a PDF with pandoc and share it out of Google Drive.

I wanted to see how bad things would look just running my markdown through Jekyll, but after writing my own pandoc filters I ended up just running the HTML out of pandoc through the templater.

I was eventually able to get back into writing again, picking up where I'd left off around 2016. I kept telling myself I wouldn't waste time on various cosmetic aspects of document preparation, but I kept making excuses. There's still a lot I'd like to do, and I'm trying to control myself.

I had a conversation with ChatGPT to try and see what AI would think of my basic problem; and was *amused when it seemed to take the same missteps I did back in 2021, all the way to starseeds and indigo children*. I felt at least a little vindicated.

I decided to similarly start back at square one with *Google*. One source said most people who became masons in the 19th century were doing it to get *insurance*, of all things. I've never heard that one before.

At the time of writing, searching "Freemasonry's big secret" on DuckDuckGo produces *this* as the 5th result; a *seemingly* benign article from Gaia.com, which I remember from 2021 as peddling weird goddamn UFO shit and this dude Steven Greer who strikes me *now* as a sort of cis-male Persephone.

This article on Wikipedia about Gaia.com is an absolute doozy.

Chasing my *goddamn* tail. Chasing my ever-loving *goddamn* tail over here.



Figure 38: I've been better, but at least I'm not in gitmo

The seasons just. Keep. Changing. I'm still just... *this*. Wearing my halal hoodie around, taking my vitamins and my DIY hormones, waking up a few hours after sundown... asking myself whether I should stop smoking pot and eating fast food as I'm careening into oblivion, before ultimately concluding it won't make much difference either way.

Take my vitamins, check my messages...

I just... *never* thought I'd end up here. Everyone always acted like I was going to be *successful*. Like, I was destined for greatness or something. They acted like I was going to be the next Bill Gates, or Curtis Brown or some shit. But, I never had my shit together at all. I prioritized finding companionship over building my career, and ultimately succeeded at neither.

Well, that sucks.

Going through my Discord messages while preparing this document, I found one from Erika I'd either missed or forgotten about.

hey so like I am the absolute worst at everything and apparently 8 months is the same as 8 minutes in my timeline 😂😂 just popping in to say hi and we miss you and uhhh we're both eggs! Lmao

Erika | Thursday, September 22 2022 01:07PM

~~I... *don't* think Erika is transsexual. Not that (*he?*) explicitly mentioned T, but they were already experimenting with non-binary pronouns, so I'm just gonna assume...~~

Actually, after reading this again it sounds like she may've been telling me *Jason* is a trans woman. This is somehow more believable; Jason's the only other subby boy I've met who likes doing it with a Hitachi (not that that's unheard of). I already knew Erika was non-binary.

Dude. Is this a *real* timeline? Despite my now-disbelief in any whackadoodleness about me being the face of an errant timeline or something, it *does* feel a bit like I'm... the *thing* here, right? Like, the goose in a circle full of ducks?

It's like... transsexuals are ice-nine. And we turn, like, *some* percentage of the population, upon exposure, into

... transgender people.

Despite no longer thinking I'm being pursued by the government, I *have* grown concerned conservatives may institute a pogrom against the transgender population.

It feels inevitable, really. A world full of witches and people who fear them... like a sort of microphone squeal, that starts with one too many trans people whispering into it.

I mean, it's only a matter of time before the research catches up, and we realize a lot of these people are just *nuts*; right? *Then* it's a *public health* crisis. How do you handle *that* through policy?

... Quarantining the infected?

I'm very concerned that, nearly ten years post-Jenner, this is *at least* as big an issue as it was at the start; with a voice that's managed to grow *even more shrill*.

What about the *children*!

And, it's a *good* question. Because, *Lupron* is pretty harmless...

It goes without saying, a generation of people who regrettably transitioned young out of hype is the *last* thing the transsexual community needs right now. And, it seems a bit selfish to start with *that*, and not the *actual children* who might grow up with problems of their own.

I was too busy working on this and rinsing gunk out of my eye to really pay attention to sports, but I kept seeing headlines from the Olympics about how such and such boldly proclaimed that she *was* a woman. And... it just felt *weird*.

Because, I don't really know that *I'm* a woman. I'm just a human who likes female hormones and sexually submissive roleplay. I've kinda always felt like the label of "woman" was something bestowed on me by other people. It makes me feel all warm and fuzzy, granted, *in a very non-sexual way*...

This whole thing *sucks*. I just want my old life back. I used to have a job, and friends, and a doctor, and a therapist... I could still do without Susan frankly, but it *is* sad I don't really even have family in the mix.

In 2019, I *really* felt like I finally had my shit together. I was a late bloomer, but I was full-time,⁵⁴ and was thinking about finally trying to date "as myself" or whatever, I had a job at a "real" company for once...

My life just *fell. Apart*. I found myself unable to keep up at *yet another* programming job (maybe for different reasons, granted). There was way too much shit going on with me *before* there was way too much shit going on with me, I foolishly tried involving my mother because she kept whining that I never tell her anything and yelling at me for not "loving her" enough or whatever, then there was an *emergency* with very suspicious timing under very suspicious circumstances, which only led to more suspicious bullshit...

A year ago, I was *proud* of how far I'd come. Sure, I wished I'd have transitioned younger, but...

⁵⁴As a woman. I know this is confusing.



Figure 39: Maybe my hair'll grow back just in time for me to lose it again

Now, I can't help but see myself as a complete failure. I *should've* started taking hormones when I was in college; and, I probably *would have* if it weren't for the horrifyingly confusing experience I had coming out in high school. As much as Susan drones on about how much she "loves me", I *really* thought I might have Just Evelyn as a parent or some shit. When it turned out I *didn't*, I... kept making excuses for her; and decided I might actually understand her crazy ways if I were a *real* woman.

Love... isn't *words*. It's *real stuff*. Susan doesn't listen to me. She doesn't care about how *I* feel. She cares about how *she* feels. She cares about how *she* feels about *me*. And, that's love to her.

Susan doesn't know what love is. I can only assume her family of origin didn't really love *her*. I frankly don't even know them that well; they're basically rednecks who say "pop".

Susan conflates the roles of an adult child with those of a lover or long-term partner; not in some sexual or incestuous way, but like... she yells at me for forgetting things about her, like you'd yell at your husband for forgetting your anniversary, right? That's... not healthy. Susan and I are so far apart now, I don't think we could ever "make a deal". She only wants more and more of me, and I really just want to see her on major holidays *maybe*.

I don't think Susan thinks I'm retarded anymore. I don't think she's suing me for custody of myself.

I *do* think she's kind of an asshole, and I'm *still* suspicious both of her fall, and of what happened while I was in New York. While it's extreme that she may've injured herself to spend more time with me, this *would* fit the profile of Borderline Personality Disorder; which I already suspect she has anyway.

Susan's been... running a racket.

I'm convinced my life would be *way* better today if I'd never come out in high school, and if I'd have just told her goodbye in college. I would've transitioned earlier, and I wouldn't have had this crazy lady manipulating me and vying for control every chance she got.

I guess I just want to be... *understood*. Nobody's ever really gotten to know me. Maybe it's my fault. I guess I've been afraid so long it's all I really know.

I was so afraid of being *disowned* or something, after I learned that was a thing that happened to people like me. The ultimate irony is...

... If I were disowned, I'd *probably* be better off.

This is about UFOs though, right? Goddammit, what even *is* this?

I've nuked my career *twice*, I've missed two of my best friends' weddings, my house is a mess, my yard is overgrown...

And I just... can't.

My life is in absolute *shambles*. There isn't even a *government agency* for this. It's like... I need FEMA, but there wasn't a hurricane.⁵⁵

I'm running out of money, and I've spent most of the year just trying to figure out *how to explain* the problem. It's just

So. Fucking. Complicated. I think I was over 100k words last I checked. I'd like to edit this down because I don't really want to make people read something this long; but there's just

So. Much. Backstory.

And I *still* skipped over bits that I need to fill in, but I've probably said enough, right? I've probably said *too much*.

⁵⁵I wrote this just before I learned about the thing, but I'm leaving it.

I don't believe in anything anymore. I don't even trust my own memory. But, I can't deny my own reality. I think most everything that's happened to me since the summer of 2021 is bullshit, but I *still remember everything else! So fucking clearly!*

Heather. Maureen. Tommy. Goddammit, *so much* weird shit with Tommy. Like, dude; *what?*

I don't know what to do, except to tell you a large part of my life story; *just as I remember it*. And as far as I can tell, everything *else* about my memory seems to be just fine. It's just so *bizarre*.

It seems really obvious *now* that I started freaking out from paranoia in the summer of 2021 after seeing there was a UFO report and reading stuff online. Okay. I *did* recently start taking methylphenidate, so who knows what happened there. Maybe I jumped the shark people a little bit.

But; just a few months *before* that, this stuff casually came up in our therapy session. Go back and look if you don't remember.

Like; unless my memory's scrambled, that *happened*. It isn't a vision I had, it wasn't some bizarre premonition... this is a *real* conversation I remember having with my psychologist over Zoom on a Wednesday, where I brought up Persephone's enthused "mysticism and magic and UFOs" talk, and she *reminded me* that it was *reincarnation* and yadda yadda "Oh yeah, Heather!"

Then there was all that stuff about me needing to learn about the Freemasons, and then... I mean, from my POV, it kinda just seems like all I needed was the transitive property and a little nudge to put the puzzle pieces together.

Given the very likely conclusion that all the "messages" in my head are bullshit, I can't help but feel the truth might *somehow* lie in between. For example,

What if it *really is* reincarnation, just like I remember? But, it *isn't* anything Persephone was talking about. Because, I *really* think she's a whackadoodle at this point. I was *already* starting to think that a few years ago, but I still thought she knew about this stuff and I hadn't cancelled her yet.

Look, y'all. I'm a hardened atheist skeptic who doesn't believe in ghosts; but I remember what I remember, and there's still a lot I don't have an explanation for.

Maybe it's something indistinguishable from reincarnation, or something that's close enough? What if it's technology that can manipulate one's life force, or transfer consciousness? I'm trying to keep an open mind, while also being mindful of the possibility that my memory's just shot.

Whatever it is; I don't fucking *know*, and I have bigger problems. I have well less than 10k in my bank account, and I can't see myself getting back to work anytime soon. I know the world's telling me to get a fucking job, but I feel like I haven't had a vacation in *years*. I've just been *stuck*; getting tortured in the prison of my own mind.

One thing's for sure; I could *really* use a time machine right about now.

The irony is, I think "spiritual awakening" is the perfect word to describe what seems to have happened. The human mind; it's just

This. Incredibly fragile, prone to delusion and paranoia... it happens to the best and worst of us. Just look at history. Religion, cults, miracles, visions, ghosts, angels, spirits, demons... Hell; just a couple hundred years ago, schools were teaching that everything was made of earth, air, fire, and water.

We are *really* young as a society. And *I* thought I was better than them. *I* thought I was too smart to fall into the same trap

generation after generation of religious kook has found themselves snared in.

I. *Found.* Jesus.

Light my candles
in a daze
'cause I found God

I feel pretty weird sending this to my childhood Christian conservative best friend. Last he knew, I went through some kind of spiritual awakening. I *still* believe that I at least *heard* it was reincarnation, because *how else* could this have happened?

Frankly, this derailment in my life feels a bit surgical; like, some group of people knew *just* what to tell me to make me hit a sort of breakpoint *right fucking here*. I can't argue that, I *really* think my life was moving in the wrong direction. I had resigned myself to being such a misfit that I wouldn't even *try* normal dating; I based this mostly on my preferences and experiences when I was trying to be *a guy*, and never really adjusted my dating strategy for my gender change. With BDSM being as normalized as it is today, and with vanilla relations being more palatable with me as the woman anyhow, it seems I might as well just make a Tinder and order a pumpkin spice latte.

But, dude; *why* does everyone have fucking *pronouns* now? I don't want to be in the dating scene as another one of *those* people. They just... *aren't* the same thing as me. I might've at least had a chance with a more well-adjusted "tranny chaser" type, but *now* I'm worried there are just too many of us. I guess I could talk about how truescummy I am on my ODP...

Sorry. This is supposed to be about

UFOs! Goddammit, I wish I could come up with a TL;DR better than

My Freemason preacher had me read “The Kybalion”,
and it
destroyed
my
fucking life.

I couldn’t help but laugh when I was scrolling through Wikipedia a few weeks ago, and it dawned on me that the most prominent organization promoting an alien reincarnation theory was (*wait for it*) the Church of Scientology.

Key Scientology beliefs include **reincarnation**, and that traumatic events cause subconscious command-like recordings in the mind (termed “**engrams**”) that can be removed only through an activity called “**auditing**”. A fee is charged for each session of “auditing”. Once an “auditor” deems an individual free of “engrams” they are given the status of “**clear**”. Scholarship differs on the interpretation of these beliefs: some academics regard them as religious in nature; other scholars regard them as merely a means of extracting money from Scientology recruits. After attaining “clear” status, adherents can take part in the **Operating Thetan** levels, which require further payments. The Operating Thetan texts are kept secret from most followers; they are revealed only after adherents have typically given hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Scientology organization.[14] Despite its efforts to maintain the secrecy of the texts, they are freely available on various websites, including at the media organization **WikiLeaks**. [15][16] These texts say past lives took place in **extraterrestrial cultures**. [17] They involve an alien called **Xenu**, described as a planetary ruler 70 million years ago who brought billions of aliens to Earth and killed them with **thermonuclear weapons**. Despite being kept secret from most followers, this forms the central mythological framework of

Scientology's ostensible *soteriology*.^[18] These aspects have become the subject of popular ridicule.

What are Heather and Maureen; Scientologists? They never *said* anything about Scientology, and they didn't even try to recruit me into their little cult. If anything they seemed a bit guarded about some secret they only seemed to take half-seriously.

I feel like I'm stuck in a sand trap. Like, I *know* I took a wrong turn if I'm wading into Scientology territory. Right?

At the same time, it *does* feel like there's been an almost deliberate poisoning of the well of information when it comes to anything involving UFOs and reincarnation. But, maybe that's the *point*. Maybe Heather and Maureen and Tommy and them know what can *really* help me, but they had to push me into this little sand trap because otherwise I was going to wonder off the course entirely.

Enough speculation. I *clearly* lost my mind; right? And, what about now? Am I sane yet?

Well, not exactly. I *still* have that feeling. People in my head; but like, *actual* people. Famous people, boring people, friends and family... like they're living my life with me, skipping around to certain parts, asking me questions, telling me things. It *has* to be some kind of delusion, right? What do I, need Abilify or something? It's like... I was *fine*, until I just *wasn't*. So said *everyone* with a serious health problem.

It's *actually* how I decided my friends were all trenders. The stuff in my head. It's *still* there really, just like it has been. I've just been pretending I'm more sane, because the stuff in my head has *gotten* more sane. I no longer think the government is after me, at least. Maybe I'll be *completely* back to normal after a few more months.

So, what if my friends aren't even trenders? That'd be *great*. I'd love to hear that.

But; why didn't they have the childhood crossdressing thing like I did? It was a *really* powerful impulse. You can't just... pretend you don't have that going on with you as a kid. You either have it or you don't.

It's like, I *started* grounded in sanity (my memories), and have ended grounded in what feels sane (*too many transgenders*). As if I passed through a tunnel of insanity, to come back out the other side just a *little* different.

I... need new friends.

Waiting for Godot (Q4)

It's serendipitously the first of October; so, this is the first quarter that might also be considered a journal of sorts.

I had decided to reach out to Josh first. I'm running out of time and money, I really need to go to *someone* I can trust for advice on how to get my life back on track, #TODO I'm forgetting the third thing

I've been reading the last few days that there's *really* bad flooding from Helene in the western part of the state; where Josh moved back when I was just starting to think I was Dani California. Like, they've got literal FEMA out there and shit. I feel pretty weird about that thing I said earlier.

His phone is offline, so I can only assume he's stuck out there. The *best* case is that I'd drop this on him right as he got his utilities back. But dude; they got like close to a foot of rain out there. They might be paddling around in a canoe for all I know.

I wonder how much *my* mother would freak the fuck out if I were stuck out there? Anyway...

I mean, *I'm* worried about the guy. Less than a hundred people have died, so he probably isn't one of them. I hope he didn't buy a house on the riverfront.

This is something bad...

Who else do I go to? Fucking *Maureen*? I hardly know this woman, and I haven't seen her in years!

The same could be said about Heather. And, it's not like I expect *either* of those people to help me with anything except confirming my insanity.

Despite everything I *expected* out of my talk with Tommy earlier this year, I really still think he was hiding something. I'm essentially done pursuing it unless Heather or Maureen have something fruitful to tell me, and I suppose I just need to try and move on with my life.

Like, I need a fucking *job* first of all. And, I feel like I'm just getting back to normal. My hair's growing back, my delusions are at least becoming more sane... I have no money *or* health insurance. Where else do I go,

Susan? She's fucking broke too, *and* she's fucking crazy. Now, that's *one* thing I've come to understand since our "breakup", and it has *nothing* to do with her thinking I'm retarded. She does *treat* me like I'm retarded, though.

I'm just... not going to, with Susan. I don't suppose they've been waiting to give me my old job back? I only got it the *first* time because Josh put in a good word for me.

I'm just... not cut out for the working world. I'm not sure I'm cut out for any kind of a world. This place is

Just. So. Crazy.

I don't know how to get up with Heather, except through my trender friends Jason(?) and Eric(a). I guess I could re-write this to wash over the part where I became truescum. But like,

Goddammit, I can't make people read this 100k+ word monstrosity. Josh's, like, the only person I really even feel close enough to subject to that. And I don't even know if he has a house still.

I'm planning to run it through AI for help with... well, Chat-GPT can at least be my friend.

I *really* fucked up.

It seems almost poetic. My life has been torn to shambles by some invisible force of nature that we might as well just call God, and I don't know of much of anywhere to even *go* other than my Christian conservative childhood best friend. And, atheist me keeps hoping to pull the Scooby-Doo mask off of "God" and say "Aha! It's really just our old friend, mild schizophrenia!"

I still lack what I would consider a satisfactory explanation for *nonetheless* my pre-2021 memories, about meeting lots of people who seemed to know "the truth about UFOs was just reincarnation". If it's just mental illness, I think it would behoove me to know *what* it is, so that I can maybe stop tearing my life apart over stupid bullshit.

I should probably stop smoking weed, because fuck knows what I'll have to do for money. I just can't bring myself to care. It's like watching an oncoming train wreck, and I know the brakes won't help so it's hard for me to find the willpower to even pull them.

Dude. I *fucked up*. Fuck whoever made me think I was going to be the next Curtis Brown or some shit.

I need to get off the planet.

A month and a half after first texting Josh, I managed to finally have an over two-hour long talk with the guy. I suppose there was a lot going on.

Are you... okay? Where do you live again?

Moi | *Tuesday, October 01 2024 08:15AM*

Yeah I'm ok! Henderson County. I'm in Bladen now

Josh | *Friday, October 04 2024 07:40PM*

I'm in the process of writing a document, in an attempt to explain the last few years of my life. There's a lot I still don't understand; but, it probably isn't what you think.

The document is mostly complete, and is already over 100k words. I don't want to ask very many people to read such a long text. I'd appreciate it if you would, and was about to offer a draft or WIP copy of it, because it's been exhausting and probably says enough already. I would like maybe a few more days to make it a little less rough.

I'm really sorry I ran off like I did. I was very overwhelmed, which might make more sense with the provided context. I really could use some help from somewhere, if only just life advice.

Moi | *Saturday, October 05 2024 10:20AM*

Ok. I can read it whenever you're ready. It's ok, I'm glad to hear from you!

Josh | *Saturday, October 05 2024 11:06AM*

Hello, here's my thing.

(...)/life

user dude pass RalphNader2024

Moi | *Friday, November 01 2024 02:55PM*

Hey thanks for sending it!

Josh | *Friday, November 01 2024 02:55PM*

You're a really good writer. I can't wait to finish this whole thing. I wanted to ask you something else while you're listening. This is completely unrelated to your life lol. Avalon kept doing more and more rounds of layoffs after Vertex bought us and wants to resell the company and we finally fully replaced QuickFile with returns console so they eliminated my position like a month ago. I feel like you could write me a good letter of recommendation mentioning working together at CrystalSoft and Avalon, and mentioning how I naturally fall into leadership roles within the team even when I'm not officially a manager or technical lead. Could you do that?

Josh | *Friday, November 01 2024 03:11PM*

I don't know that my recommendation would be worth much given my own situation, but I certainly wouldn't mind writing something.
I'm probably about to fall asleep and wake up around 11.

Moi | *Friday, November 01 2024 03:37PM*

You don't have to say much about yourself except what your role was and when you worked with me. No rush at all. Definitely doesn't need to be today

Josh | *Friday, November 01 2024 03:38PM*

I think the most important immediate take away is that you should find a new doctor and therapist ASAP, and maybe psychiatrist, and start fresh telling them the whole truth. Don't hide anything. You need people managing your hormones and mental health meds that you can trust. Physical problems like the stomach issue definitely could have been addressed sooner if you told a doctor. Thank you for trusting me with all this information and allowing me to try to help you. As your friend I want what's best for you. I think there's a lot we should talk about and it might be easier in person to discuss a lot in less time. I'll be in Durham next Saturday the 9th and I'll be free in the morning. We can text too. I have a lot of thoughts and maybe some ideas.

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 08:12AM*

Thanks Josh. I appreciate you.

Moi | *Saturday, November 02 2024 09:58AM*

You're already improving many things. You're much better off right now than a year or two ago. I'm gonna help you talk through this and think rationally about what to do next. You are an extremely smart and capable person and you can still have a great career and social life and sex life and relationship life. The fact that you wrote this whole thing proves that you are capable of being productive and focused. Let's work on it one step at a time. You've told me everything so you don't have to hide anything with me, I just want to be an ally and I hope you'll continue to let me in so I can help.

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 10:05AM*

hug

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 10:06AM*

That took me 9 hours to read btw

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 10:06AM*

I'm sorry. It was a day's work to proofread half of it 😭

Moi | *Saturday, November 02 2024 11:00AM*

Haha I bet

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 11:30AM*

If I came to Durham today would you want to talk?

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 12:05PM*

I've been dealing with some mental health problems since my dad died and I've started seeing a therapist and got some vyvanse for adhd. I've read the kybalion. I've read your whole story. I can talk about this stuff. I can relate.

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 12:21PM*

I agree that Emma and your mom are crazy. She was my first girlfriend too and I was naive and a late bloomer so less developed mentally and she fucked with me and was manipulative and crazy with me too. I'm the only one in your life who remembers all these different things.

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 12:24PM*

And we both obviously have Asperger's and have spent a lot of time analyzing "normal people's" behavior logically as if it would ever make sense. We've been friends forever because we think similarly.

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 12:40PM*

I'm pretty worn out honestly, and my sleep schedule's pretty weird. I had good intentions of trying to clean up around the house now that I gave somebody my thing, but I haven't really done anything today except dick around with my computer.

I would suggest Zoom or something, unless you're way more paranoid than I am at this point.

Moi | *Saturday, November 02 2024 01:08PM*

Zoom is a great idea. I'm really tired too right now though. Let's do it soon

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 01:22PM*

Like, now soon or...?

Moi | *Saturday, November 02 2024 01:46PM*

No I meant like sometime in the next few days or weeks, but really whenever you want

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 01:48PM*

That's what I thought, just making sure lol

Moi | *Saturday, November 02 2024 01:51PM*

This is random but December 26 = 12:26

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 02:46PM*

I am aware.

Moi | *Saturday, November 02 2024 02:47PM*

Ok

Josh | *Saturday, November 02 2024 02:47PM*

I've been assuming I broke you given the silence, but I guess you could be waiting on me. I also didn't mean to put you down or anything, and am just trying to look at all possibilities while also being honest about what I believe in right now.

I'm not doing anything with my life except decompressing this past week, and I probably need to get back to doing something again. You're welcome to message me anytime; however, I am partially nocturnal and subsist on something resembling Paris time. I really could use someone to talk to if only for emotional support, but also no pressure.

I'm planning on reaching out to Jason Martin, the leader of the actual IEEE robotics team. We haven't spoken in years, but I felt like I was highly respected by those folks, and Jason seemed like he had his shit together. I feel like I need to reel this way in, because my life is pretty off-track.

Moi | Sunday, November 10 2024 10:16AM

Hey sorry. We went to my in-law's house in Delaware this past week so I knew it wouldn't be too private for a zoom. I still want to talk to you

Josh | Sunday, November 10 2024 11:03AM

Also since Tuesday I thought you might be a little upset about the election and might need some time before you wanted to talk to me. Lots of people seem to believe extremely bad things are going to happen to LGBT people for some reason.

Josh | Sunday, November 10 2024 11:04AM

No worries, that makes sense.

Moi | *Sunday, November 10 2024 11:31AM*

Eh, it's complicated but I'm fine.

Moi | *Sunday, November 10 2024 11:32AM*

Today I'm going to Charlotte for a basketball game. I'm free during the week

Josh | *Sunday, November 10 2024 11:36AM*

When we gone meet?

Josh | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 08:41AM*

Can we do something in a couple hours?
I would like to get food and maybe take a shower first.

Moi | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 09:44AM*

Ok

Josh | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 10:00AM*

I have some kind of cold and it hurts to talk if I talk a lot at the moment. Sorry, I should have thought of that earlier. Can we do it tomorrow? Hopefully I'll be getting better. I promise it's just this cold and I'm not avoiding you!

Josh | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 11:37AM*

Yeah; that might not be an awful idea. I was pretty caught off guard at the idea of having my first real conversation in over a year, and I might have my shit more together in the near future 😊

Moi | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 11:44AM*

When is a good time for tomorrow?

Josh | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 11:46AM*

Probably like 3am-3pm lol

Moi | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 12:46PM*

It's also fine if you're still not feeling good.

Moi | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 12:47PM*

Ok

Josh | *Wednesday, November 13 2024 01:00PM*

I still feel bad. Just woke up. Can we wait another day?

Josh | *Thursday, November 14 2024 12:19PM*

Yeah sure

Moi | *Thursday, November 14 2024 12:33PM*

Sorry it might be Covid or something I feel like shit

Josh | *Thursday, November 14 2024 01:01PM*

Ok I'm finally improving! I went back to sleep yesterday after lunch so maybe all that sleep helped lol. I can meet in like an hour

Josh | *Friday, November 15 2024 10:00AM*

Do you want to try for like 11:30-noon?

Moi | *Friday, November 15 2024 10:37AM*

Sure

Josh | *Friday, November 15 2024 10:37AM*

meet.google.com/...

Moi | *Friday, November 15 2024 11:36AM*

I'm writing this about fifteen hours after ending the call and falling asleep. I have a lot of complicated feelings about how things went. We had a good talk, and I feel better that I at least closed the loop with Josh.

The bottom line is, he didn't really have any advice for me; other than "get a job" (in the nicest way possible). Josh's still a Christian, but he didn't seem bothered that I was an atheist. His main bullet points were

- Get a therapist; and tell them *everything*.
- You need to get a job; so that you can get insurance, and get a therapist and *tell them everything*.
- Susan's probably a little "off", but she really cares about you and means well. She seems to still be freaking out about my absence, and is legitimately unaware of how I'm fairing.
- He was less convinced than I am that I had sideburns.
- Nor was he convinced my friends were transtrenders, or otherwise fundamentally different from me.
- Toward the end, he voiced his concern about the young age at which I was into BDSM, and suggested this might be the result of sexual trauma.

I was working down the trauma → BDSM pathway around 2020-2021, and took it seriously at the time. I no longer believe this is a good explanation; though I can't rule it out. Again, as cringy as it sounds, I *really* think I caught the ROGD equivalent of sexual trauma and structural dissociation, because that's what like half my friends were ostensibly dealing with all of a sudden. Ick!

Josh voiced his doubts that Susan really snooped around my house while I was away. Not gonna lie – I've had doubts about this myself. I still don't really see a winning move with Susan, and am less-than-certain about how to proceed with our relationship. I guess I hoped for more solidarity about how much of an asshole

Susan was, but I got the impression Josh was underestimating how difficult she is to deal with.

He brought up the weird cospypasta thing briefly. I wanted to pick at the parts of it that sounded like it was written by a nine-year-old on cough syrup, but I couldn't multitask while I was talking to Josh at the same time. Josh at least admitted that it was far-fetched, but also seemed to think it was just as likely as anything I thought it might be. I still maintain that the cospypasta thing doesn't really even make sense; and that we might as well go all the way back to starseeds and indigo children if we're going that far out on a limb.

As much as I want to tear into it, I frankly don't think it's worth my time. It's *obviously* bullshit. I think the bigger problem is that my childhood best friend is basically a right wing conspiracy theorist who flirts a little too closely with fascism.

#TODO I could talk about this. I almost cancelled him after the Busy Bees thing.

I can't help but think of what Bill said all those years ago. He asked me if I had any *political signs* outside my house. It isn't inconceivable that *Josh* is my "political sign". I've made an awful lot of excuses for him over the years, but he's really only drifted further and further to the right. I'm worried I'm going to start spouting off his weirdo talking points just by hanging around him too much.

We didn't exactly have a bad talk; but overall, I can't help but feel... disappointed. I mean, I don't know what I expected, exactly. Given Josh's seeming lack of enthusiasm to talk to me leading up to the call, I guess I was expecting a "hand up" rather than a "hand out"; but, I didn't really even get a hand *up*.

I set the bar pretty low going into the call, and still didn't come away feeling much better. My biggest relief probably comes from the fact that I now know I can't really depend on him for



Figure 40: Always Sunny - Did somebody get addicted to crack?
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ix7PIYCdgHQ&t=21s>)

much of anything substantial, and that I can finally cross him off the list. I guess I can't help but feel I would've been a better friend to *him* if the roles were reversed. And, I'm not even talking about the money; although he *did* take a road trip to Delaware and went to a basketball game before taking the time to tell me to pull myself up by the bootstraps and get a job.

I guess I feel a little cheated. I guess I tried to make Josh out to be my "one of the good ones" conservative friend, and ended up getting *my* face eaten by leopards.

One thing's for certain; I don't want to be Alyssa Jones *or* Dani California anymore.

I remember finding a single gray hair in my late twenties. I kind of just laughed it off as this weird, errant hair that I found.

I have at least two of them now. I can only imagine there are probably more I haven't found. And, I'm still missing like half my hair.

I'm not doing great. After really teetering back and forth about it, I decided to pay my mortgage this month at the last minute. I probably shouldn't have. But, I wasn't ready to start getting hounded for being in default on my mortgage yet, on top of everything else I need to figure out.

I have \$3,800.54 in my bank account. I liquidated all \$20k-ish I had in my 401k from Avalon earlier this year, and I have no other real assets other than my house. The value has certainly gone up overall despite me not taking very good care of it.

I feel awful. This was such a cute little house. And, maybe it could have a cute little house again. But, somebody needs to take a Bobcat to the front yard.

I can't take care of a house. I can't even take care of myself.

Josh was trying to get me to fight. Like a coach when you're behind at half-time.

Do you want to keep your house?!

Well, yeah...

Then get a job!

Look for anything! Go work at Food Lion!

It feels like everything from Josh to ChatGPT to my own social programming is telling me there is one, and *only* one, top priority, and it's *really* obvious.

I need to get a job.

But, I'm not sending out any resumes. I'm not even *thinking* about doing that this year. There's really only one viable solution I've found satisfactory.

I need to kill myself.

What really sucks about this, is that I can't talk about it with anyone without risking involuntary commitment. It seems there's a decent case for holding me against my will under North Carolina law.

- I have a mental illness and/or a “substance abuse problem”
- I am a danger to myself, and/or unable to care for myself

And, I *know* what they're going to do to help with me with my problems. Fuck-all nothing. I'm just going to lay there not watching the Hallmark Channel again until somebody decides it's been long enough since I last talked about killing myself or being a space alien, and then *maybe* they'll let me go. And then they'll send me a ginormous bill again for the privilege. (They stopped asking about their last bill a long time ago; which I have no intention of paying unless *maybe* they do a little more explaining.)

For that matter, I'm *very* concerned they wouldn't let me take HRT. Because, I *am* on what some psych doctor with clenched butt-cheeks might call a “sketchy DIY hormone regimen” in light of recent events. And, I *still* don't have an explanation for why my doctor pulled me off hormones *almost as if on purpose, every time she saw me after the psych ward incident*. I'm not sure I wrote about it earlier, but the thought that somehow the psych doctors/court system compelled my doctor and therapist to lie has *certainly* crossed my mind. I've balanced this fear with a belief that I live in a free country with strict medical ethics guidelines; and that nobody has seemingly compelled me to *do* anything or debriefed me on any sort of mandatory treatment plan. All I know is that I got out of the psych ward, and suddenly my doctor and therapist's treatment plans turned on a *fucking dime* without any explanation. And, it just feels shady and unethical as *fuck*.

Suffice it to say, I do *not* trust the mental health system. Frankly, I think I'd been pulled in an at least somewhat wrong direction with the work I'd been doing with Vickie, but then shit

just got *inexplicably* weird. And, the first part isn't really her fault because it's incredibly hard just to get anything meaningful out of me.

This isn't the result of mental illness. This isn't the result of pot. The *initial problem* may've been precipitated by those things. But, *now* I just need help. And I'm reaching out, and there *isn't any*. Nothing except a bunch of people telling me to get a fucking job.⁵⁶

You know what I need right now? FMLA. Remember when they put me on that without asking two and a half years ago? I had them undo it, because I thought I had friends, and a therapist, and a job, and a support network, and a sane HRT provider... It just hurts how quickly things have gone from "Oh, the paperwork for you to take a leave of absence to work on your mental health has already been filed for you, get well soon Rachael!" to "Oh, *there* you are... why don't you get a fucking job already..."

Are there government benefits for somebody like me? Chat-GPT didn't really seem to think so, but I should probably talk to a real person. There probably *aren't* though, because I can't pass a drug test.

I just feel like I slipped through the cracks. And, there just isn't a safety net for people who fall through the cracks. It's *why there are homeless people*.

I don't feel like I need a job. I feel like I need *something to live for*. I need somebody to snuggle me, and tell me everything's going to be okay. I need somebody to help me get my life together. I need a self-improvement gigolo. Because, I have no intention of even *applying* to work at Food Lion.

⁵⁶Jim Jones actually used *Flavor-Aid*. Common misconception.

A lot of people would find that prissy. I don't feel like it is. I took a \$30k/year pay cut to run away to Chapel Hill to fix computers, often doing work that felt close to blue collar.

It's really not about pride. It's about *my life*. It's about *my future*. Back then, I was in my mid-twenties, and shifting my life focus to finding a long-term partner, and creating a web application that might help me find a long-term partner. I had *plans for the future*. I had *something to live for*. I was doing work *now*, to prepare me for a future life with that *special someone*. And then I was just *transitioning*.

Maybe I should make an ODP before I finally kill myself? But like, I reek of desperation *now*. I'm missing half my hair. And I'm going *gray*. I'm a gray-haired virgin.

Somehow, I always knew that would be my fate. A gray-haired virgin. At least I'm skinnier. A couple gray hairs in exchange for 80 lbs probably *is* worth it. Is this the law of equivalent exchange?⁵⁷

I feel like I need to give you fuckers an ultimatum. Because, some fucking douchebag is going to freak the fuck out that I'm about to kill myself, and they're going to call the shithead fucking cops again on me, and... look. Here's the deal. You get me involuntarily committed, and I *will* kill myself. Just out of spite. It's like mutually-assured destruction. Sure, I can't do it when they have me in a little padded room watching the Hallmark Channel, but I can do it *eventually*. And, *that* is all I have. It's my nuclear arsenal. Now you're fucking with Dani California.

Don't.

Fuck.

With me.

⁵⁷Sorry, Stephanie made me watch Full Metal Alchemist when we were doing anime. I'm really not a weeb or anything. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

I *will* make you regret it, and I *won't* have to hurt a goddamn soul to do it.

(*Okay, I've calmed down a little bit since I wrote this...*)

I need *help*, okay? Do you know what *help* is? I still don't even understand what's *happened* to me, first of all, and... look, I don't really even know what I'm *asking* for. I just need help reintegrating into society, because I've totally *skipped through the cracks* and I don't even know where to start. And, dude.

I don't *really* even want to kill myself. It's sad as *shit* that it feels like that's my only option right now. But here I am, thinking more logically than I probably have this *decade*, and... I don't *have* a better idea for solving my problems than killing myself. And, I *really* want one. And, I don't want one of you goddamn assholes to lock me in the looney bin again where nobody's even going to listen to me.

I just feel so *hopeless*. There's just *nothing*. I got through *years* of mental torture, thinking some rock star or my future husband or some shit was going to hold me and make it all better at the end of all this, and there's just *nothing*. Nothing except cold, hard loneliness and looming poverty. There *is* no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. There *is* nothing obvious for me to live for.

You know what I did today? I spent \$150 on weed. Because, I need something to live for. And, *that's* what I'm living for right now. I can take it day by day. I have something to look forward to later today, or in a couple of hours. I'm *living* for something. But, I used to live for *other* things, too. I lived to hang out with my queer friends. I lived to get tied up and beaten with stuff for fun. I lived for the hope of a future with one or more people. I lived for the prospect of a career doing what I wanted, even if I made risky and questionable choices that put me behind in that space.

that I probably need to start lying about the whole truescum thing with most of my remaining friends; and I'm feeling a bit at a loss, but first of all

Tommy Alright, you son of a bitch. I've been talking to you with kid gloves on, but

Look; dude. I *don't* like Christians. I've blamed them for damn near everything that's wrong with my life. They're the reason I didn't feel safe being myself, they're the reason I couldn't take antiandrogens as a kid without doing shady shit, they're the reason my head was filled with weird bullshit about sex that made me feel like some sort of freak who could never find love unless it was at the fringes of society.

I don't. Like. Christians.

I think the world would be a better place without religion. I think *I* would be immeasurably better off without religion. They start holy wars, they found inquisitions, they burn crosses...

There would *be* no homophobia without them. There would be no transphobia without them. There would be no "weird sex stuff" without them (between consenting adults).

I think you're a decent dude. Frankly, I think you're too *smart* to be a Christian; and so is Grace, for that matter.

Look, dude. I *really* think you're hiding something. I have no fucking idea *what*, exactly... I remember what I remember, and that's been damn near the only constant throughout all of this. I don't know *how* the devil you did it, but you knew about shit from the *future* you son of a bitch!

Why won't you people talk to me? Is it 'cause I keep trusting Josh? I really *am* a dumbass for trusting Josh. I feel gross about it. I feel like I gave him the root password to my fucking life, and he was just kinda like "Cool story, bro."

I haven't talked about it yet at the time of writing, but I almost ended our friendship like a decade ago after a politically-charged conversation with Cameron got *way* out of hand. After writing a letter to him about how I thought he just wanted to watch the world burn, Susan bought us surprise tickets to see Van Halen (why?), and I kinda just decided to forget about it. And, he's only gotten more and more fashy since then. He said some shit about Sandy Hook crisis actors, he said something about (((the Jews))) in the car once, he *loves* Trump... Like dude, do you even *know* any Jewish people besides the Goldstein's?

I feel like I'm friends with this dude because he was the one other intersection between Elizabethtown United Methodist Church and Bladen Lakes Primary School, and then my mom just shipped us like crazy from that point on. I feel like I should've just drawn an entirely new hand from the deck when I left home, but by that point I'd been made to feel more anchored to Bladen County and my crazy mother than I actually was.

If I haven't just *made up* all that shit I remember you saying forever ago, it's *really obvious* to me *now* that I've fucked up by making Josh Johnson my "best friend". I'm pretty sure you've *told me* not to trust Josh and Susan, and I've kept on doing it anyway. So, I'm pretty untrustworthy, I guess.

I can't imagine it *isn't* too little too late for me to realize it. I might just have to die, knowing I *could've* gotten the keys to my spaceship if only I were a little bit less of a dipshit. But, I do realize it *now*, for what it's worth. I didn't pick my childhood best friend really well, or *at all* for that matter, and I'm a *goddamn dipshit* for it.

What is your *deal*, man? Why are you so goddamn *sketchy*? And, what the actual *fuck* did you and Vickie talk about? Whatever you said to her, she didn't want to be my therapist anymore, and she didn't want to explain why. But, I could *really* use an explanation as to what happened, because y'all are just acting *weird*. Like, goddamn. And,

Look, I feel *awful* if this is some big secret I'm supposed to try and hide from the government. But like... come on, how could they *not* know something that was *that* common knowledge among the population? I'm certain that if there *is* a truth about UFOs, the government *must* know what it is. Which makes the conversations with Heather and Maureen where they claimed the government *wasn't* in on it seem even weirder.

Anyway; I don't know what to say, except I've *given* y'all time to talk to me without putting shit on the internet. So please, shut me up or just kill me if my words would put innocent people in harms way. But, like, clearly the problem is that I'm *not* trustworthy enough to be told anything of *actual* substance; right?

Like, do I need to run before Trump takes office again? I still don't have a passport like I planned to get before January, and for all I know I won't even be around for inauguration day. Because, that's a good cutting-off point and things are looking pretty bleak for me. Anyway,

What is y'all's deal? Do you *want* me to kill myself? I feel like I've been driven utterly *insane* just from the apparent gaslighting. What the fuck *happened* to me? Where do I go? I'm probably just making myself sound even more crazy, but like y'all are *killing* me with these goddamn Simon says rules! Man, I *told* myself I was done trying to talk to you, but I can't even *help* but give you a piece of my mind! This shit with you and Vickie and everyone else just doesn't add *up*!

Okay; now

Kristina You're like, apparently, the *most sane friend I have*. I mean, I guess we don't know each other that well in the grand scheme of things, but like... you pulled away from our friendship as soon as I started talking about aliens and UFOs. That's... exactly what *I* would've done. So, I like you. You seem reasonable.

And, I *really* don't think your ex knows any *actual* secrets to the universe. But, she probably *thinks* she does.

You seem like someone sane who might have some ideas for me. I doubt you'd send me anything like that weird copy-pasta thing Josh sent me.

It's December 12th, and I'm only now backfilling the part where I worked for Kevin a decade ago. I skipped over that when I felt like I was writing this to Josh, because he was there after all.

I'm just feeling

low.

I have no hope and almost no money, and I don't feel I even have anywhere else to go except back to Tommy fucking Warren. Maybe I still remember all that weird stuff with him a long time ago because he's my only hope for survival.

My feed is filled with looming worldwide bans on trans health-care for minors, and I just

Don't. Want. To exist.

Even more than I already didn't want to. And it's not even like it's the first time my feed has been filled up with this bullshit, but I'm just

So. Fucking. Exhausted.

With fucking Christians (my blanket stand-in for any cultural conservative who's pissing me off today, really) talking about me like I'm

Not. In. The fucking room.

Me. And everybody *like* me. I mean, the people like *me*. Like little **Francis Bacon**.

I'm afraid I'm close to eliminating most palatable alternatives to suicide. And, I've spiraled to the point that I kind of just want to leave the world with *this*.

While writing this document, I've often felt like I was writing my suicide note. And, I might not've been wrong about that feeling after all.

I'm just so

Utterly. Fucking. Frustrated.

At the Christian bullshit that keeps showing up in my feed. Such and such votes against "sterilizing our kids"... "Look at this poor little transgender ten-year-old who's afraid she's going to get murdered"...

And

Nobody's. Listening. To *me*.

God. Fucking. *Dammit*, you fucking Christians. You make me want to bang up my trumpet case on the roof of the bus again. I have

Just. Fucking. *Had* it with you people. God-*dammit*.

I *knew* something was wrong when there was a chapter on us in Women and Gender Studies class. Look... we're like this... kind of unusual thing that just exists from time to time, okay? We just need to take hormones and blend in with society as a normal man or a woman, alright? Because, life and friendships and dating and shit is *never* going to make any real sense to us otherwise, and without some sort of early intervention these kids are just going to grow to be all... Fucked up. Like me. Just, look at *me*. Is *this* what you'd want for your child? Because, *this* is the world Christians have created. They had a *lot* of chances to love me, and... they ended up just doing *this* to me. At the risk of not taking responsibility for my own failures.

“Christian love” kept me from even *socially* transitioning in high school. “Christian love” made me feel like something was *wrong* with the way I was born. Like “God” just gave me some creepy, abhorrent sexuality nobody else understood because he loved me so fucking much or something. “Christian love” discouraged me from even *trying* to transition once I left home. Basically *everyone* who knew in high school besides maybe Cameron and Noah treated me like absolute *shit*. Like, *my* gross, perverted little tranny ass needed to be quarantined until I learned how to be a normal respectable member of society. Just

So. Much. Christian. *Love*. from these people. Not a single one of them has ever apologized for the way they treated me. Hell, Susan’s whitewashed history into panning herself as some sort of champion of transgender rights on Facebook or something. I’ve let Christians move the goalpost for decent treatment of a transsexual all the way to simply *not getting disowned or sent off to crazy camp*. And I’ve done it with a smile on my face, because *anything* feels better than nothing. But just

Fuck *you people*, okay? We have freedom of religion in this country, alright? And, we have a right to bear arms. You still can’t just start packing heat before you’re of age, right? Well, maybe kids ought to be of age before they can start doing something as dangerous as religion, eh? That’s how I feel. Deregulate porn and make *religion* 18+. Because, from where I’m standing *that’s* the real crux of most problems in America right now. Maybe even the whole world. Just

Fuck. *Religion*. I can’t believe I actually thought I went through a “spiritual awakening” or some shit. I really *must’ve* not been in my right mind. Not to mention, some of my friends had gotten *really* weird by then.

And, I don’t know. Maybe part of me wonders if *that’s* the frustration Republicans have been picking up on. They weren’t around in the 2010s, when this went from just some weird birth defect we talked about on aging listservs to a “third

wave intersectionally-feminist *thing*". They only noticed the last part after it exploded when Caitlyn Jenner came out, and they're just grumpy because it *does* feel like some of these people are just 21st century college lesbians. I mean, let's be honest.

It's like... I'm stuck in a culture war where neither side's fighting for me. There's just an overly-permissive, "fly high lesbian seagulls" side and a casually dismissive "they're corrupting the youth" side. And

Nobody. Gives a fuck. About me. Especially Christians.



Figure 42: Beavis and Butt-head - Lesbian Seagull (<https://youtu.be/yjZ7f2Gib9E>)

Okay, so I am *really* grumpy. You know why I started writing all this dark shit before I ate a burrito and fell asleep? I had a *really* dark idea, that actually solves most of my problems. And it's that I'll just leave this as my suicide note, with the goal of spurring a sort of "dark me-too" movement. These people keep talking about us like we don't exist, but there are all *sorts* of people whose lives are fucked up because of this same sort of

“Christian love” that’s still being touted today. And sure, there are probably lots of whackadoodles who “wish” they’d done it younger, too. Okay. But like, there are *real people* like me who are *way* maladjusted, because we can’t assimilate into society as gay *or* straight men, and we lack the socialization to ever really assimilate into society as normal women (as opposed to trans-women, or any other sort of classification that didn’t really exist in mainstream society twenty years ago).

Susan tried to tell me I was too *young* when I came out at the end of 9th grade. But the truth is, I was too old before I knew it. After the precocious start that I had, I entered college at age 19 lacking confidence that I was even really transsexual, I started HRT seven years later... and by then, normal women my age were getting married and I’ve never even had a sweet sixteen. Never really been on a normal date with a guy... You know what Susan did when I was that age? She made me go to the prom with Ariel White. Because, she kept telling me I’d regret it if I didn’t go to the prom with my friends. And, you know what I *actually* regret?

I’m not even going to say it. You *know* what I fucking regret. The point is, I could’ve used a lot less Christian love, and a lot more *actual* love; the sort you get from understanding, secular-minded 21st century people who aren’t cuckoo for cocoa puffs crazy about Trump and Jesus.

And my point is, they need to hear it from *us*. *We* need to be on your goddamn fucking news feed. Not some poor little ten-year-old transgirl who says she’s scared and she feels a lot better with her hormones,⁵⁸ not some he-said-she-said finger pointing between some opinionated doctors and politicians and talking news heads...

Me. *My* life’s fucked up because *I* didn’t get this sort of life-saving help that really could’ve just amounted to something

⁵⁸Okay; well, maybe her *too*, but, you get my point, right?

relatively safe like Lupron and a big fucking hug. And, they don't even fucking *know* what Lupron *is*.

You, know? Lupron? The GnRH antagonist? It's been around for a pretty long time, and it has a pretty low side effect profile. I don't think I've ever heard a single report of *anyone* regretting the adolescent administration of Lupron. It isn't hormones, you know... my crazy mom made that conflation when *I* tried to get something like that in the year 2006, and it seems you Christian Republicans aren't really any smarter than my kinda slow Christian mom. I mean, you know what Lupron is?

It's the *conservative* treatment option. Because, it does *nothing*. Fuck-all *nothing* except delay your shit until your older.

You know what the *liberal* treatment option is? Like... HRT in mid-high school. Like some kids with parents who actually *loved* them got to have back in the mid-2000's. Back when *I* was that age.

Yes! We existed in the mid 2000s! Us transsexuals with loving parents, taking "hormones" and "puberty blockers" in high school and just flying under the radar. Not dying our hair blue, not using neo-pronouns, not dressing up like a fucking anime girl...

We *existed*. We *blended in*. This *helps* us, you see.

It isn't *just* that I didn't get to have the body I always wanted. It's that I never got to build a real *life* for myself as a woman. Instead of having girlfriends to gossip with, I have a bunch of dude-bro drinking and smoking buddies I used to play video games with in college. *That's* what I have as my foundation. Not going to the mall, or talking about boys, or really doing *anything* that might be considered socially-normal female activities. I mean, I can't even really *make* a list, because I wasn't there. I kind of just know the stereotypes, right? Because I was

Socialized. Male. Out of *Christian love*.

And, those dude-bro friends never really even *got* me. They always saw me as kind of a downer, or a spoil-sport, because I didn't want to be their wingman, or "go to the club", or "get pussy" like them... It's always like I would slink away from those parts of guy culture I couldn't really integrate into my own experience. And *that's* how guys really bond with each other. *That's* the mall shopping and the girl talk part of it. And I never even got to *have* that at an appropriate age. Because, muver *wuvved* a-widdle Efan so much that she didn't *want* a-widdle Efan to guow up to be a cweepy gwoss *twanny*...

So, here I am. I'm 34 years old. I frankly don't think I've ever even *had* a "best friend" in any meaningful sense of the word. And lord knows, it isn't because we didn't know what was going on with me in middle school. Susan just wanted to cover it up and sweep it under the rug, and hoped she could just find a way to make me grow up *normal*, somehow. She *wuvs a-widdle Efan*, but she never *really* loved me at all; again, in any meaningful sense of the word. I feel like I was some sort of cockroach kid, who she was almost *forced* into loving because of her religious convictions and not because of any sort of real desire to help me. It's really just all about *her*, and her idea of a future for *us* once she retires. Ick!

Anyway, what the *fuck* was I talking about? Christian love? Lupron?

Alright, you fucking asshole. Yeah, you. What's the deal with fucking *Lupron*? Can you give me even a *single instance* of somebody growing up to regret taking *Lupron* before the age of 18? Because, I don't even think I've heard of a *single* person who regretted taking Lupron as a kid. And, it *doesn't* "sterilize kids". I mean, full-blown HRT might... Which really just makes the whole "don't sterilize our kids" argument bad science. Which, I guess is exactly what I ought to expect from a bunch of fucking retards who believe in Jesus and hydroxychloroquine. Goddammit, I hate Christians...

Anyway, Lupron? The regretful people list for it? No?

Because, I'd *love* to put my name at the top of the regretful people list for *this*. And, you're *never* going to see my face on your news feed unless I actually *do* the thing. You know...

I think I've found a cause worth dying for. I've been saying I need something to live for. Well, I still don't have that, but at least I have something to *die* for. And, that gives me a sense of purpose. It gives me a sense of fulfillment. My fucked up life can still count for something.

Anyway, fuck gun control. We need *religion* control. Maybe we ought to do a background check before you're allowed to conceal-carry a religion.

It's too late for me to be... anything I wanted to be in life, really. I'll never be a normal woman in society. I'll never be a rock-star developer. I've emptied out my already-belated retirement savings just trying to explain what happened to me over the last three years. But, you know... I've always wanted to help people. I've always wanted to do something to make the world a little bit less shitty, because *goddamn, this planet sucks*. And, maybe *that's* the real reason I got so burnt out working for Kevin. This feeling that nothing I do really makes a difference in the world, and that nothing I did really brought me lasting happiness or joy. I'm just destined to want things I can't have.

My cringy high school journal reminded me that I actually wanted to be an activist when I grew up. I was inspired by the transsexual activists of the 2000s, like Andrea James and Calpernia Addams and Lynn Conway. And, I wanted to be like one of *those* people when I grew up. And, I guess I never really knew what to do with that once I decided I wasn't really transsexual. But, maybe *now* I know what to do with it.

I don't think anybody knows who these people even *are* anymore. But in the year 2005, you couldn't be a transsexual

and *not* know these names. I feel like our hidden little world has just been...

Colonized. By overzealous blue-haired feminists with silly pronouns, who kinda just took the liberty of rewriting our history for us. And, I don't even mean to talk *that* much shit about feminism in its traditional form. But, shit has just gotten... weird.

It's too late for me. But, it might not be too late for little Aiden. It probably *is* though, if they live Tennessee or some shit.

And, don't trust your Christian parents, little Aiden. Not even if they're a Democrat. It's not worth it. Just... figure out your business on your own, and don't let your crazy family keep you on the hook after you turn 18. Just... be *you*. You only have a tiny window to learn how to be a woman while girls your age are also learning how to be a woman, and it's closing fast. Your crazy mom might wuv you so much that she wants you to fink about it until you miss that window. And... then you'll be like *me*. Ick, right?

I'm just fucking *pissed off* at you retarded fucking Christians, and your retarded fucking "don't sterilize the kids" rhetoric, and your retarded fucking faces, and your retarded fucking Jesus. Because, you people don't give a *fuck* about helping the down-trodden when they're staring you *right in the goddamn face*, and you'd rather grandstand about some group of remorseful Lupron users that doesn't even *exist*. Goddammit, you people are fucking stupid.

And, you know what? Little Aiden *might have* ROGD. And, you know what else?

It's *Just. Fucking. Lupron.*

I hope we'll get better at separating the wheat from the chaff. Because, shit *really is* weird right now.

So, what? You're going to punish little Aiden because the pendulum of third wave feminism is swinging a little too far left? *Of course you are! You're fucking Christians! I'd expect no less from you after the last ten years!*

It's just stupid, because... I'd believe little Aiden over someone who had a sudden epiphany in their 30s or something, but the Republicans want to ruin little Aiden's life, *and also* let the 30-something-year-old whackadoodle ruin *their* life, too. The ideal treatment for transsexualism has *always* been for the young, and frankly I don't think shifting the age of treatment forward would do anything to improve our optics.

My point is, we should view the 30-something possible whackadoodle with *at least* as much suspicion as we do little Aiden. But... we don't. *Republicans* certainly don't...

Okay. So, I might have feelings. Am I ever going to show this to anyone, alive or dead?

I don't know if I even *want* to go talk to Tommy again. I think *this* is what I'm meant to do. I don't know what the fuck got into me over these last few years, but it feels like I've somehow managed to find some sense of clarity through all of it. One I've never had before, even when I was still a high schooler intent on doing the thing when I was old enough.

I know how I'm going to do it. Most suicide attempts fail, so I want to employ redundancy. I plan to use a combination of burning charcoal in a walk-in closet (or maybe my car), trying to suffocate on helium, and maybe taking lots of potassium supplements in an attempt to induce hyperkalemia. There are still potential pitfalls, though.

- I need to unplug all the smoke detectors, first of all.
- And, I think smokeless charcoal varieties might be harder to find in America. This charcoal-burning thing seems to be really popular in Asia, with their low-smoke charcoal that I think might be made from sawdust or something if I

remember? I think I have a bunch of old hookah coals from forever ago that I might try and use, but I don't know if that'll be enough.

- It might be helpful to position boards or even just plastic sheeting across the top of the shelving so as to reduce the volume of air I'll be breathing.
- Party City helium is like 20% air, which would necessitate an effective way of separating out the helium from the heavier gasses. This gas inhalation method is generally popular with the "exit bag" concept, and I *really* wish I could get the good shit. If only I were a clown or something... I'm hoping I can do something that involves breathing the top air in the exit bag, and keeping the helium intake tube toward the bottom so that the heavier gasses will just pour straight out.
- I wanted to do it for New Year's (like that chick from Paralytic States, I guess?), but that is approaching *fast*. I want to get my little "manifesto"-thing I've written here on the public internet with redundancy and shit so that it doesn't just disappear, *and* I need to make whatever final preparations I might need to feel complete ending my life here on Earth. So... maybe January 20th, if I have enough liquidity to make it until then?
- And, what do I even *mean* "my life here on Earth"? Where do I think I'm going; the Pleiades?

Seeing as how involved all of this is, I *really* wish I could just get a bunch of Fentanyl or something.

Oh, wait! Can I get Ambien off (*website redacted*)? Just thinking out loud here (literally, I'm writing this in real time).

Ugh, nope. Ambien, Zolpidem... I got the feeling they didn't sell actual controlled substances as a matter of policy. Rats. Well...

Idk. Maybe I can score a bunch of LSD or something while I do this, at least.

On second thought, that might be a bad trip. I'll think about it.

(I'm a fucking *hippie* goddammit, I can't even *score* hard drugs. The world is *totally* not how they made it sound in D.A.R.E. class...)

Man; what am I doing? Should I try Tommy one more time or not? I mean, this *is* pretty weird. There really *is* a lot of seemingly-credible weird UFO shit in the news again, I really *do* remember what I remember... I mean, there's a chance I'm *supposed* to kill myself. Maybe it's more pleasant than what'll happen to me and my whackadoodle friends when Fuckface Patel comes for us. Maybe my death *now* would count for something.

I've been too busy with *this* to follow the news and the election cycle all that closely, but shit just feels like it's at a fever pitch. Like, I thought I'd look around on r/lgbt or something to see just *how* worried I ought to be if I weren't to kill myself, and I couldn't get very far before I found a bunch of pride stuff along with polyamory pride. And I'm just like...

Okay. I've been adjusting to *that* culture shock since I was a college kid at the slosh, with Maureen and Erika both obviously having a thing going on with Isaac. So... okay. It's normal to *me*...

The other side is starting to scream shit like "THEY'RE ALL JUST PERVERTS AND PORNOGRAPHERS AND PEDOPHILES AND MARXISTS AND THEY'RE STERILIZING YOUR KIDS!"

The reality is... we have a *bit* of an optics problem over here on the left. There's been a lot of talk about how Russian troll farms pumped up MAGA, but I think they're simultaneously trying to drive the left *further left*. As if it's somebody's agenda to drive America apart to the point of sparking a civil war.

I've been casually following the Russia thing since the early 2010s, when *John Stewart* reported on unsavory ties between the Kremlin and the then-new RT America news network. It's *really* obvious that they want to meddle in our politics, and they probably think they have something to gain by driving America apart. First of all, it would probably mean the end of NATO as we know it... at that point it'd basically just be the "Western European Treaty Organization".

John Stewart, man. Speaking of people who I've been thinking could bring America back together again...

Anyway... Russia's gotten sketchier, Trump's gotten sketchier... it looks like we're about to have political prisoners in America for the first time, certainly in *living* memory...

I mean, I remember reading about Russia a decade ago, and how Putin would freely interchange the words for "homosexual", "pedophile", and "beastophile"; so as to perpetuate a conflation between these very disparate concepts. And, now we're starting to do that *over here*. Lukashenko's been arresting and torturing queer people, and sentencing anyone who can be convicted of "distributing pornography" by some weird flimsy definition. And, Project 2025 is basically pushing the same Lukashenko logic, trying to link porn and drag queens and transgender people together.

I mean, I'm either speaking to the choir, or speaking to a Christian dumb-ass by this point, right? Who am I even trying to *address*? Josh? That dude drank the Cool-Aid⁵⁹ a *long* time ago.

I'm just *pissed off*, man. I've been dealing with this sensational bullshit about trans people ever since Emma happened in the 9th grade; and I'd be lying to little Aiden if I told them it gets better. I mean, you can get new *friends* and improve your situation *that way*... But the world just *sucks* for people like you, Aiden. It

⁵⁹Jim Jones actually used *Flavor-Aid*. Common misconception.

always has, and it'll be a really big deal if it ever *doesn't* suck for us anymore.

Frankly, I liked the world better when I had to explain to that therapist the difference between a transsexual and a transvestite. The increased visibility doesn't seem to have really helped us all that much, and now we have fewer freedoms than we did back in 2005.

So, anyway, I'm pretty sure Russian trolls might be the reason my friend group gradually turned into a bunch of furies and neckbeards and commies and plurals and age players. Not that there's anything *wrong* with any of those things individually... but my point is, I think at least some of these people might be more-than-a-little impressionable. We have a bit of an optics problem over here on the left. And it sucks, because a lot of the rhetoric on the left over the last ten years suggests that maybe we *shouldn't* care so much about optics and that we should just be *ourselves*. But, like...

This is just *untenable*. Like, have you ever *been* to Bladen County?

There used to be a time when city and country could be kept kind of separate, so that we weren't always at each other's throats. Us queer kids could just run away to the big city and fall off the map. But, social media just does *not* help with that.

I've only recently accepted that this is the main reason I *hate* social media and don't even use Facebook. In high school, I had friends like Cody who might balk at you for even being *friends* with a "leeebruhl"; and then I started meeting liberal city folks who might side-eye me for being friends with someone like Cody. Then you throw other communities like BDSM into the mix, and consider even basic demographics like "religion" that you might not want to give the same answer to for everybody, and...

Look. Facebook is just *not* double-life friendly. Okay? Am I like, the *only* person with this problem?

The (well, *a*) real problem, is that I *really* should've cut ties with Bladen County as soon as I was old enough. Those people are just... *really* pushy about politics and religion, and they're *obviously* wrong, and they're *usually* not the "thinking" type...

I mean, *I'm* the reason I had to live a double life when I was younger. I didn't *have* to keep being friends with Christian conservatives from Bladen County. In fact, I'm convinced trying to maintain those friendships destroyed my soul.

I need to focus. I'm running out of money to even *buy* the charcoal and the helium. I *really* need to wrap this up. It's early morning on December 14th, btw. Josh told me he was in town this weekend and asked if I wanted to hang out. And I can't help but think... I probably have better things to do with my time. I don't think Josh is the droid I'm looking for.

Should I give this to Tommy? How much should I tell him? I don't suppose I should keep the suicidal bits... What about the part where I basically yell at him and all of Christendom? I mean, I'm running out of time here.

I mean... here's the deal with Tommy, right... He's either *got* time travel, or he doesn't. If all of that stuff I remember is accurate, he *knows* what I'm going to do next. He *knows* I'm going to try and kill myself.

Will he try and stop me? I mean, he either *will* or he *won't*, right? Frankly, I have no business with him if he doesn't know about the UFOs and the Heather people. And if I *do* have business with him... again, he would know what I'm about to do. So, logic would suggest...

I *really* just need to prepare myself to fly the Rocinante into the heart of Cygnus X-1. Because, this place is *mad*, and I don't see any help coming my way. Again; it's possible I'm *supposed* to kill myself, and if that were the case I suppose it'd be problematic for anybody to *tell* me that to my face. I'm just supposed to *decide* whether I want to be a graying virgin tranny who works

at Food Lion and lives under the regime of Lukashenko Jr or not. And, maybe I ought to decide *now* before Mr. Patel decides *for me*.

I've been taking vitamins for like a year now. And, my hair is still *really* patchy. Josh said it didn't look that bad, but I was using the potato quality webcam in my laptop.

On account of my impending liquidity crisis, I chose not to buy more vitamins D, B12, or Biotin when I ran out several weeks ago. I *have* continued to take a daily multivitamin. I'm concerned my hair might be thinning out again, and my lips are really chapped, which I thought the vitamins seemed to help with. It *is* winter, though.

And, it's one of my smaller worries right now. But, it sucks that I still have patches missing a year later. It doesn't give me much hope that I'll ever have a full head of hair again. It seems I have little to look forward to in my future. I only wish I could've washed the Bladen County off me sooner, so that I might've gotten to live when I had the chance.

I hope my story can at least be a lesson, for how the compassionate minority in America might help these poor souls who were just born different like me. Yeah, my life is kinda filled with weird sex stuff on top of it all, but I was obviously just *born* that way. Born, or perhaps made that way *very young*. I certainly never asked for it, and you Christians are just as stupid and ignorant as you've always been. You've allowed no space for me and people like me in this world, and now everything's a clusterfuck.

Like... we've been *trying* to explain it to you Christians since a long time before *I* was born, even. And, you act like it's some newfangled thing invented by Jezebel and Anita Sarkeesian. But at the same time, I guess I understand *why* you might think that, given the present state of the culture war, if you weren't really



Figure 43: A particularly unflattering picture of my hair, for folks who might think I'm overreacting (October 2024)

paying that much attention. I just hope I've found some way to make you people *think* a little more. Because, shit has gotten

Really fucking stupid around here.

I don't know what I want to do. Am I really going to kill myself? Am I too much of a pussy? Will it count for something? Am I even *right*? Are my friends even trenders? What do I *do*? I'm running out of time. And all I can do is

Nothing. I'm writing this thing, I'm staying high... after the Josh thing didn't exactly go how I hoped, I kinda just descended into escapism and kept fucking with 2Ship2Harkinian. I don't think I've even talked about all the stupid bullshit I did. I made Link not slash his sword when you press B to exit first person view, I made the Y axis for the telescopes not be backwards, and then I did the same thing with the shield Y axis. I made the Bombers code fill in automatically once you've got the notebook... I fucked around with two-dimensional joystick movement on the Song of Soaring map and kinda got it working, but it was a little weird and I made myself stop. I already talked about the Ginko Man. The bank teller or whoever. I would still need to do some stuff before making PRs for these things, and I don't know that all of those things would be well received. I like it, though. That's really why I'm doing it. I just want to get off, or escape or something. I guess part of me feels like I'm going to go out doing what I love, even if I don't have my shit together.

It sucks that I seem to have no options, except going back to the psych ward or killing myself. I mean, shit. It's not like I live in a socialist country or something... Then again, *they* might just put me to work on Stalin's farm.

Maybe it's not so bad. Simple life. Cow go moooooo.

I feel like I need something *really* hard core. Not, like, one of Josh's pep talks or some shit. Like, I haven't had a job in *years* at this point. I feel like I need help just reintegrating into society. And all they're going to do is tell me to get a fucking job so I can pay them to help me.

I mean, it isn't even like I don't want to work. I'll even stop smoking pot. But it's just like...

I don't really have anything to *live* for, except filling up the Volcano bag again in another hour or two. I'm still missing a bunch of hair after a year... and I keep noticing that I still have a pretty bad five o'clock shadow after all that bullshit with my hormones. I really have been hitting it with the IPL when I think about it, and for all I know I'm going to need additional laser if I somehow manage to survive this. Just...

Fuck my life, dude. I really thought I was getting my shit together a few years ago, too. And like... there's people who just got freed from Syrian dungeons, and they're just *out on the streets* and better off for it. And I kinda feel like a pussy, but at the same time I really just don't see much of a point. I feel like I've gone from field goal range to getting a safety just since the start of 2021. And, I was already pretty far behind to begin with. I just don't really feel like playing anymore.

Is there really nothing *for* me? There are suicide hotlines and shit, but they just talk you down. I don't need another fucking pep talk. I need, like, *actual* help from somewhere. The system just... assumes you already have love in your life, or at least know where to get it. I just don't think I can *get* the kind of help I need.

There's, like, a *bunch* of UFO shit on the front page of Reddit again. Serendipitously. I even signed out and cleared my cache to try and make sure I wasn't in a search bubble. It seems related



Figure 44: One of my bigger and more stubborn bald patches up close (Volcano balloon for scale; December 2024)

to the drone sightings up north, and there are like a *bunch* of people reporting shit that *really* doesn't look terrestrial.

I just... don't fucking *get* it. Is this a real timeline? Could this have *anything* to do with that stuff Heather and Maureen talked about, or that really important thing Tommy wanted to tell me that now he says never happened?

Dude. What the *fuck*?

I can't imagine what in fucking *tarnation* I could have to do with *aliens*. I mean, reincarnation? That's a *joke*, right? Do they want to help me because my life was going in the wrong direction? I mean, they might not even be *aliens*, whatever those things are. And, like

What am I supposed to *do*? Is this even a real timeline? I experienced the fucking *craziest* sequence of events that took me from a working young professional engineer to a balding graying *madwoman*, the news is filled with weird and apparently credible UFO shit again, I still *vividly* remember a bunch of people telling me I was different and there were things I "needed to know"... But like, dude... what do y'all expect me to even, like...

I can *really* only assume one thing: I'm supposed to kill myself. It's the perfect example of...

Dude. What am I even *writing* about? What the fuck is even going *on* in the world? UFOs?? Goddammit! I'm chasing my tail over here! I'm chasing my ever-loving goddamn *tail* over here! All these years later, and I still have absolutely no *fucking* idea how this even *happened* to me. I don't even know *what* happened to me. I mean... I can't help but believe, at least a little bit. But, I *know* all that stuff from earlier was bullshit... Dude. What the *fuck*?

Goddammit, can *nobody* just tell me I ought to kill myself? Couldn't this have been done *any* easier? I'm fucking *dying* over here! Like, one day soon I'm just not gonna have utilities

anymore, and I *really* don't have any intentions of going to live in a homeless shelter, or checking myself in to the mental hospital. Either *you fuckers* who started this need to fucking *end* it, or *I'm* gonna fucking end it *for* you. Because, I *believe*, dude. Not in starseeds or Dani California, but in this weird shit with Heather and Maureen and Tommy. And this weird shit on the internet about UFO sightings again. And the highly suspicious timing of it all.

Dude. What do I *do*? Am I in danger? Who am I in danger *from*? The incoming Trump administration? I can only assume, right? I mean, I kinda *trust* the aliens... They're smarter than us, and we don't have anything they couldn't just mine from asteroids or barren planets... I hate to break it to anyone who thinks aliens might try and enslave humanity, but we'd probably make better zoo animals than slaves. I frankly see no *motive* for foul play on the part of extraterrestrials.

Unless the point is that they want to kill off some of the humans who would destroy the planet and wage perpetual unjust wars. I could see *that* being a little controversial... Frankly, if that were the case, I think I'd just mind my own goddamn business. For all I know we'd be better off for it.

I'm probably a dumbass for still not having a passport, but... like, I'm virtually out of money to do anything else anyhow. I'm a little freaked out that last I knew, it was surprisingly easy to get a passport with your updated gender marker on it if you're trans. That sounds like something Trump would EO away during his first week in office. For all I know, he'll EO that trannies can't even *get* a passport.

I know I already said this, but the Christian "Lupron bans" really do mean that we have *fewer rights* than we had in the year 2000. And I am

Pissed. *Off*.

At Christians still. Because, *religion* is the problem, the way I see it. Am I just bitter? Sometimes I'm less angry about this. But, nobody's talking about how a bunch of misguided (I can't believe I'm actually using this word) SJWs had to stoke a culture war about *nothing* that led to poor hapless people like me and my fellow transsexuals having *fewer rights*.

Maybe Russia's the *real* problem here. I'm pretty sure it's *their* trolls who keep fanning the flames. Like... we used to have role models like Andrea/Lynn/Calpernia in the 2000s... until *some faceless entity* must've decided those people were "too white" and "too privileged"... and now we have *different* role models, like brick-throwing Stonewall rioter Marsha P. Johnson; somebody I'd never heard of until the post-Jenner world came into existence. It *really* feels like somebody is trying to entrap the queer community into embodying *all* the old negative stereotypes about us: violent, perverse, corrupting the youth, sympathetic to communism...

Like... "Drag queen story time" is a *very* new concept. There's this phrase I learned in the BDSM community. It's, uh... what is it? Oh, right.

Don't scare the nillas.

See? We knew how to manage our optics back then...

It's like when we couldn't block out the entire hotel for Debauchery and had to share it with a wedding party, except on a national or even global scale. We're just... *scaring the nillas*. We *have* scared them. And, this is something bad. ⁶⁰

Did I mention how a coalition of Christians, misguided SJWs, and Russian trolls have started knocking transsexual rights back to the 19th century? *Goddammit, I fucking hate Christians...*

⁶⁰I keep using the phrase "this is something bad". It's a silly in-joke from that *first* time I went to Europe with my high school English class, and I should probably remove it eventually because it just sounds dumb.

Dude. I didn't even really *use* the term "SJW" unironically until all of this happened to me. I promise I'm not, like, a Republican or something. I guess I'm just complicated.

Am I being problematic? I should probably keep getting ready for the killing myself part.

I mean, I feel like I only have two real options given the situation:

- Kill myself
- Go to Ukraine and fight the son of a bitch who did this to my country

So, I got all science brain while I was having a smoke earlier this morning, and the problem with this 80% helium from Party City is that the bottom fifth of a normal, head-sized exit bag is always going to be breathable air. This would seem to make the classic design untenable, but I don't think it's entirely a non-starter.

- I could construct an exit bag that ties off at the torso or waist, or even one that contains my entire body. As long as I can keep my head well into the upper 4/5ths of the bag it should work as far as I can tell.
- I could construct an intermediary container out of something like a bucket and plastic sheeting and tubing, that would allow me to breathe in air from the top.

It's early morning on Christmas Day, and you know what I've been doing? Writing touchscreen support for Majora's Mask. I think it's pathological. I got it working directly with SDL, and then I spent a day writing the layer so you could add win32 support because that build doesn't use SDL. I really can't let myself do anything else until I crash the airplane or fly out with the ejector seat. I don't know if these metaphors are any good.

I fucked up my back again, and I was sick all day yesterday because of it. I was going to get a pizza and cheese sticks to get me through Christmas, but my back was sore and I had a bad headache and I felt really weird like when I'm about to get sick with the GI thing. I delayed my food run until the evening, spent the whole day stretching and staring at my phone in bed, and then I threw up right as I was about to *make* myself go to Papa John's. I think Ship of Harkinian has been distracting me from stretching properly, and I guess *now* I have to get Chinese tomorrow. Not that that's bad or anything. I haven't eaten in 36 hours, but I don't really feel all that hungry after being sick all day yesterday.

Dude, what am I even *talking* about? I sound like my mom for christ's sake. She's always got to tell me about all her latest ailments and shit... am I unsympathetic? I really do want the best for her, but I don't think our relationship was healthy. And, *now* I don't even know what to tell her.

My little gay Festivus day or whatever is tomorrow, and I've really thought about just sending this to Tommy unedited. And, I don't know if I want to talk to him again if I can't get anywhere like usual. I just... *really* still think he's hiding something, and I feel like I'm mostly over the delusional part of my experience. My main mental health problem would appear to be the suicidal ideation, and *that's* entirely situational.

I always knew killing myself was the ultimate, bottom-of-the-list option if I found *no other way* to resolve my little problem that started back in 2021; but, I guess I thought I'd try more stuff before I got to that point. I thought I'd at least try and talk to Maureen, or go bang on Heather's door or something... but now, I feel like I'll probably just go out with a whimper. Who knows if my death will even count for anything. At least it'll all be over.

The Republicans have gotten even crazier since I *last* yelled about Christian Lupron bans. And, I'm sorry you had to read

that, Tommy. I don't even think you're a Republican, but I guess we've never really talked about politics. They're talking about coming for Canada, and Greenland, and Mexico, and Panama, they're beating the drum about coming after "cultural Bolsheviks" like me... I think this is the first time I've been genuinely *afraid* to live in America. I mean, this is the sort of talk that happens right before the Night of the Long Knives. I felt a little *twingy* during Orange Man's first term, but I also felt like there were a lot more steps in between 201x and putting me and my friends in concentration camps. Now, I don't feel like there are all that many more steps. Well... except for the Night of the Long Knives. All I'm waiting for is for him to "intern" the "cultural Marxists" in preparation for his "patriotic war for freedom" to "liberate Greenland" or something... I mean *shit*. It could happen on January 21st, for all I know. It probably *won't*, but...

And, I'm kinda freaked out that I might be on a government watchlist just for *associating* with April and Drew and Stephanie and them.

I mean, maybe I'm *supposed* to kill myself, before the holocaust or whatever. Maybe *that's* what these time-travelling UFO people have been trying to tell me all these years. "You like *travelling*?" "There's things going on you should *know* about..."

I feel as if I've been a victim of **Zersetzung**; a technique conceived by the Stasi to clandestinely break down dissidents that was both non-lethal and life-destroying. Shamelessly copied from Wikipedia at the time of writing:

Tactics and methods employed under *Zersetzung* generally involved the disruption of the victim's private or family life. This often included psychological attacks, in a form of **gaslighting**. Other practices included property damage, sabotage of cars, purposely incorrect medical treatment, **smear campaigns** including sending falsified compromising photos or documents to the victim's family, **denunciation**, **provocation**, **psy-**

chological warfare, psychological subversion, wiretapping, and bugging.[45]

Ironically, attempting to do even a *little* more research on Zersetzung quickly leads me to conspiracy theories that are essentially variants of Josh’s “coppypasta”-like text from earlier in the year. I suppose I could call this the “targeted individual”, “gang stalking”, or “street theater” conspiracy theory, since the variants all seem to employ these keywords.

Despite the similarity of my plight to the GDR’s application of Zersetzung against its undesirables, I’m having an awfully difficult time suspending my disbelief while reading the modern American conspiracy variants. They seem linked to the *right-wing* conspiracy tradition, which doesn’t really fit my lifestyle. If someone wanted to Zersetzung me, I’d assume it’d be one of *Trump’s* minions; or, perhaps a private actor who *really* doesn’t like trans people. But then, why *me*? Why not Regina or Brittany or Samantha or Stacey or Persephone or Stephanie? I mean, a *lot* of these people are more likely to make a big splash than *I* am. Stephanie is into pretty radical far-left shit, Samantha’s *at least* a more established developer than I was *and was also a bigger deal in the local trans community as the facilitator of TT...* What would even be the *motive* for walking right past all of these people and coming straight for little old *me*?

After learning that *one of my favorite musicians* believes himself to be one such “targeted individual”, I don’t really even know *what* to think anymore. Hell; maybe they’ve got my brain so scrambled that I laugh at the truth.

I can’t afford to start second guessing myself, though. A lot of this stuff just doesn’t pass the sniff test.

Several weeks after discontinuing the extra vitamins D and B12, I’m pretty sure my hair is starting to thin again, and I’ve lost another 10 lbs after having stabilized around 160. So, I figure

I should maybe get more of those if I plan to keep on living. I don't know what I plan to *do* though, and so I still have neither. I'm already worried some of the hair loss might be permanent, given I was taking B12 for the better part of a year and still have patches that haven't filled back in.

A big enough part of me is trying to make this new little December 26th deadline for giving this to Tommy. It's still a little rough around the edges; but then again, so am I.

This is probably a really bad idea. It's probably going to get cops involved in my life again, and I'm really worried some asshole is going to take away my hormones "for my safety" or some bullshit.

There's just a lot of uncertainty in my life right now. All I know is, *something* really bad is about to happen to me. I'm about to die, or I'm about to get locked in the looney bin again, or I'm about to be homeless, or at least in default on my mortgage... I only wish I were more prepared, and managed to come up with a plan by now. I don't have one, and I probably never will. At least, not one better than talking to a bald preacher about my angst for Christians and my premature hair loss. I guess I just... need to sacrifice my queen because the timer's about to go off. That's how I feel. No winning moves, and the hammer's about to drop.

Anyway; I'm sorry you had to read this, Tommy. You're actually a really nice guy, and despite my anger with Christendom, I don't think I've ever really been angry with *you* at all. I'm just mad at the system I guess, and I feel hopeless.

I don't even know what I'm looking for by sending you this, really. I guess half of me still thinks you know something despite all of this, and half of me thinks I'm just making an ass out of myself. And, maybe some small part of me wonders if I'm just gonna find myself in my old bed at Avent Ferry after coming down from DMT or some shit. I guess I feel like I have to start

somewhere if there's any chance I'm not just gonna go out with a whimper when the lights go out.

Well... Consider this the airing of grievances. Happy Gay Festivus, Tommy.

It's New Year's Eve, and I haven't heard anything from Tommy; except for an initial acknowledgement that he'll read my thing when he gets the chance. He said he was in Florida and that it would take some time.

I'm just now feeling a little bad that I yelled at Christians so much. I'm not sure that was called for. And, I really doubt he knows anything about UFOs at this point; convincing as all my weird memories of him and Heather and Maureen are.

I made a `scum-removal` branch in preparation for giving this to Samantha and Brittany, who've been wondering what happened to me; and at the same time my guilt is setting in about textually screaming at Tommy, I've started to consider just giving this to *them* unedited. Maybe it's the hypocrisy that I would protect my queer friend's feelings while disregarding Tommy's. Hell; maybe I should stop using `mod_rewrite` and let *Josh* see this version if he ever decides to look at it again.

I mean, I'm probably *all the way* batshit crazy, given Tommy's somewhat expected lack of expediency. My friends probably aren't even transtrenders, for that matter. I mean, I don't *want* them to be. I always enjoyed their company...

I'm getting really close to the point where I need to make a decision about killing myself. Maybe the fact I want to show this to more people before I die proves I really *am* just making idle threats for attention. If my therapist wasn't serious about that DBT thing *before*, I guess I need it *now*...

Helium. Costs like \$5040 for a little tank of it at Party City, and I probably want two. I need some rubber tubing from the hardware store, and maybe some of those big construction-grade trash bags to get inside of. Hopefully that would be sufficiently airtight.



Figure 45: Sam In The Bag (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=el_3R7epYvA&t=49s)

And then if I try charcoal and potassium at the same time... I could be looking at close to \$150 for an attempt. And, I *know* I don't want to still be struggling with that choice when I'm on my last \$150.

Am I being pessimistic to think there aren't any other options for me?

I've been taking it one day at a time. Hell, one hour at a time. I'm struggling to see past the \$10 burrito I'm about to get in 90 minutes.

I guess I could sell the house at the last minute. I wish it weren't in the state that it's in. I wish *I* weren't in the state I'm in.

So, okay. It's starting to sink in that I might have some false memories, on top of the delusional thinking I've already come to terms with. I guess I can at least find out if Samantha's brother really *does* fly helicopters for the Navy and knows something about UFOs; though I think it best if I just assume he, uh... does *not* know the truth about UFOs. I certainly doubt he'd be running his mouth at a cocktail bar if he did. I, uh...

I'm *crazy*, aren't I? I mean, I'm having a hard time believing I'm one of these "targeted individuals"...

Goddammit, dude. What *is* it about mental illness that makes people go all Pepe Silvia over Freemasons and UFOs and spirituality and shit? Like, I was never even *in* to that stuff. I mean, not except for the part where I used to *very ironically* watch Ancient Aliens for fun in the mid-2010s.

I guess it's a stereotype for a reason. Freemasons and UFOs and tinfoil hats... I really *did* try to make a Faraday cage for my electronics out of tinfoil at the height of all this, before realizing the task was utterly futile with the materials on hand.⁶¹

I'm tempted to buy some vitamin B12, even given the dire straights I'm in. Because, I'm pretty sure *that's* what it is. I'd think I'm at least getting enough D from my multivitamin to keep things from getting worse. But, things definitely *have* gotten worse over the last two months.

I don't know. If I decide to try and live, it'd probably be the cost of 1-1.5 meals. If I'm gonna try and kill myself it obviously wouldn't be money well spent.

⁶¹I actually had to do this quite a bit while testing OrangeTrack's little device a lifetime ago, and could manage it with a pot and a baking sheet.

Ugh. It costs \$7.79. I just looked it up. I feel a little silly going without it, *now*. I'm about to spend more than that at Chipotle. I wonder if the self checkout will be open, because they've been closing it lately and I don't want to talk to people. Fuck. I'm sorry I'm telling you all of this. I *know* you don't care; whoever you are.

I'm pretty close to needing TP too, while I'm talking about shit you don't care about; but I've *really* been making an effort to conserve it lately.

I had a crying session earlier this morning, from the realization that I don't think I have any real friends. But, I don't *want* that to be true. And, I don't think it *was* before UFOs happened. I know Tommy at least *skimmed* over my thing that night from looking at the server logs (is that creepy?), and I'm starting to feel like he just doesn't want to talk to me. I *know* I overshared, *and* I probably made him feel bad. I feel gross again. I fucking hate this.

The recurring hair loss is *really* taking it's toll, and I think I'd feel a lot better if I was back on vitamin B12. I'll probably just do it. But, I *really* need more of a plan than that. Because, it's only a tacit admission that I might not follow through with my plan to kill myself.

Oh my god, I'm an idiot. I just picked up some B12 at Target for like \$4.18. I swear, putting off shit like this is, like, one of my anti-patterns. I took one in the car and swore I felt a little different by the time I was driving home, but that was probably just psychosomatic. I mean, I *am* basically tin-foil hat crazy.

I guess I was too much of a pussy to get the potassium supplements while I was there. I *did* think about it, though. I don't really *want* to give myself a heart attack, and would rather just slip away quietly with some helium or something.

The small tree that's inadvertently grown by the side of my house is probably fucking up my foundation, and its giving me daily anxiety. I probably have bigger problems because I'll be in default in, like, less than 24 hours, I think? I just stopped myself from continuing to flip through VS Code figuring out the coordinates for the pause menu in Majora's Mask. I *know* I have a problem, and I guess I thought I had more of a safety net. I've got the distinct feeling I scare off everyone I show this document to, and I'm feeling like I've got nowhere else to *go* other than the morgue; or maybe under a bridge like my rockstar boyfriend.

I feel like a flip-flopping politician with the way I'm treating my friends; but I should probably just assume nothing that's happened to me has any basis in reality, and that ROGD really *is* just some bullshit. I've always liked my friends, and I don't want to believe my friends and I aren't part of the same continuum of gender-fuckiness. In fact, it's probably about as likely as Tommy having an actual flying saucer in his garage; or even Samantha's brother knowing anything about UFOs. I'm having a *really* hard time accepting it, but maybe I somehow *did* confabulate all of that stuff from earlier in my life. I'd be lying if I told you I didn't feel like I was being gaslit, though.

In the interest of transparency, I think I *will* show them all of this discourse. And if I survive this ordeal, maybe I can get on Abilify or something and I'll be *all better*. Ugh, I've had a rough life...

I mean, it's probably just *that*. I use cannabis, Wikipedia says that *really does* increase the risk of psychosis... and I guess I seem to pass the duck test for it. What the *fuck*, though.

I feel bad that I just went through a phase where I decided *all* of my friends *suck*. And, maybe I'm just pretending my feelings have changed because I don't really have anywhere else to go.

I don't *want* to feel that way about my friends. I just want things to go back to the way they were. I'm probably not any

more enlightened than I was a year ago, when I still thought I was Alyssa Jones. Whatever we actually think of each other, *this* is what happened to me. And, I haven't really had the words to explain it until now.

Fin (2025)

It's almost 4:20 am, and I just woke up a little bit ago. I feel like I have more clarity, and a better understanding of the hopelessness of my situation.

I don't know that I should try to make it about Lupron or anything. I think I should just... die. Quietly.

I was already a late bloomer; but *now*, I'm likely to be north of age 40 before I ever get SRS.

It just feels... impossible. *Impossible*, and *not* worth it. I just... need to *go*. I feel like today is a good day to die.

I was planning to just send this to Brittany and Samantha later today, but I'm not sure I want to now. Because, it's basically my suicide note.

I know some people happily get SRS after age 40, but... *Look*. I've wanted this since I was thirteen *at least*. And you're telling me I'll probably be in my *forties* before I get there?

Ugh... just *fuck this*.

I *genuinely* thought things were going to be *really cool* during the height of my insanity. I thought I was going to get a new life, or lots of new lives, and a spaceship, or a time machine or some shit... and, that's a *really* tall height to fall from. And, there's just *nothing*. Nothing, unless there really *is* something waiting for me in the afterlife. Which, I'm not exactly holding out hope for.

And, I scarcely have anyone close and sane to even *reach out to* for help. Let alone much of anyone to leave a suicide note behind for.

I'm thinking about what I ought to *do* before I go. The house is a mess, and I probably won't really clean it before then. Let's be honest.

I just... don't know if this writing is even worth much at explaining what happened to me. I mean, *all* of it. The UFOs, the weird sex stuff, the gender-fuckiness... It's just impossible to "bottle" this. And, that's what I set out to do six months ago. I just wanted to give at least one other human... *this*. Because, I'm just *this*. This life chose me. And, I still don't understand *any* of it.

And, nothing seems to come out right. It sounds too sexual, or it sounds too dishonest... it doesn't capture how much of a *tornado* swept through my life in 2019, when suddenly all of my friends were leftists with people living in their heads who were fucking each other and into mysticism and magic, and I was just left out *again*. Like *always*. And now years later, I'm left wondering who the fuck these people even *were*. Are they real people? Was I the victim of some psy-op? Like... April and Drew kept their thermostat on Celsius because they were forward-thinking or something, and Crystal was learning Russian for some weird reason, and then Drew and I took LSD that had been dissolved in water, ostensibly to make splitting the tabs easier... Like, was my polycule started by CCP agents or something? I thought they were just hippies from Evergreen who liked Kropotkin and the metric system... I mean, I'm probably just imagining things, right? These *are* trans people, after all...

At the end, Josh asked a question that he tried to pass off as an afterthought; but that I can only imagine was singeing a hole in his mind. It went something like

Oh, I remember what I was gonna ask you... Did you, uh... do BDSM with Katelyn and Cassie?

And... *no*, I did not. Nothing of the sort. I probably got more childhood BDSM from Aaron Lee just on account of the aforementioned time he tied me to a basketball goal. I just can't... *bottle* this. This... feeling.

Like... I guess the thing that's singed into *my* mind was some game we were playing in a closet at their house, where I ended up wearing something tight around my crotch and it made me aroused. And, I know I at least had my ham radio license at that point... *That's* what I'm trying to bottle. That... *feeling*. It's ineffable. Old enough to have an amateur radio license, a couple years too young to know about transsexuals and BDSM, or really even *sex* except that it's something for "adults after marriage!"... And a couple years away from having genuine cognitive dissonance about this *really innocent* errant boner that was *entirely normal*... and I know this intellectually, but some part of me just feels... guilty, and confused, and like a liar. What did it *mean* for me to get aroused in that situation, when I really just wanted to be a girl more than *anything*? What *am* I? Does anyone even *know*? Did Harry Benjamin even have a *clue*? And then we just... kinda stopped going to Katelyn and Cassie's house around that time. For all I know, it was just the divorce, or maybe my parents thought it best if I spent more time around male friends now that I'd started puberty...

I mean, it was obviously something totally innocent, but *these* are the sorts of things that singe a child's mind. Children are like *sponges*. They get *all sorts* of crazy ideas about this confusing world that they're just trying to piece together. And then, not a month over thirteen you're learning about transsexuals and transvestites and drag queens... you're learning some people disparagingly call this "sexual", or a "lifestyle choice". And, you still want to be a girl more than *anything*. But you're learning that true transsexuals don't want to transition just because of

some sexual *thrill*, and you still don't know what that boner meant, and now you're masturbating in mom's clothes with a vibrator... and you still want to be a girl more than *anything*, and you still don't know what it means. You start hiding your sexuality from *yourself*, because you don't want to be *too kinky to be truetrans* or something. You've read enough about transsexuals to at least know how you're *supposed* to feel, so you think... but everything you learn is colored by things you learn in youth group or Sunday school, which it turns out is mostly just bullshit. And your mom says she loves you. She loves you. She loves you to the moon and back. She loves you more than anything. She loves you more than life itself. "You can tell me *anything*"... And you decide you need to tell her, you decide it's too risky, you decide you need to tell her again, you tell yourself she already *found* the box in eighth grade or something so what's the point in hiding it, really? But, obviously *she* didn't want to talk about it. I love you. I love you. I love you to the moon and back. I wuv a'widdle Efan... And finally you *have* to tell her because you're an idiot and you decided to trust Emma, and now she still loves you *very* much, but she's clearly not taking it well, and she thinks I had my "first gay experience" with some dude from Goldsteins when I was really just fixing his computer after work, and she saw a transgender woman come in to work today for food stamps, and she *really* doesn't want me to do it, but she wuvs a'widdle Efan, she wuvs a'widdle Efan, she wuvs a'widdle Efan... What was even the *deal* with that weird sex stuff from when I was younger? Should I just try and forget about that? I still want to be a girl more than *anything*... I feel like Sarah or Morgan or whoever is dying. Oh goddammit, Susan's yelling at me because she found out what I *actually* do when I wear women's clothing, and I *still* don't really understand that weird boner I got when I was playing with Katelyn and Cassie, and... I think maybe I'm beyond gender. I think maybe I've transcended gender. I think maybe I'm just full of shit. I think maybe I should just drink this beer, and smoke this weed, and play some COD, and just try and be a *normal fucking dude*. Because, why do I have to be

so goddamn *weird* all the time? And it's like, Susan *encourages* me to be a weirdo. I think she *wants* me to be some kind of retarded Bobby Boucher mamma's boy. She volunteered to go to the DMV for me when I got my Mustang in college, and it's why I still had Amateur Radio tags on it, because no offense but I just wanted to be *normal*. *Normal*. *Normal!* No Linux and ham radios and transsexuals and BDSM... Okay, I still use UNIX, and I'm actively involved in the local BDSM community now. But I just want to be normal. Normal. Normal! Goddammit!

And then you're having a smoke on the balcony, and you're talking to Trevor about how you used to play with Kimberly and her older sister all the time while her and Josh are fucking in the other room, and Trevor's all like

Well, how do you feel about that? Do you ever wonder what could've been?

And all I can think is "Uh... no. I kind of just want what *she's* having."

And then I go to sleep later that night, faded and maybe a little tipsy, and I think about that time me and Katelyn and Cassie were playing in that closet, and I got a boner after putting this thing tight around my crotch, and I'm not sure if anyone noticed, and I still have complicated unresolved feelings about it for some reason, and... what if *everyone* noticed and thinks I'm a huge pervert? What if they *know* I'm a huge pervert? Like, what if I transitioned and everyone was all like "Oh, Ethan the weird boner boy thinks he's a *girl* now?" It's probably just all in my head. I think it's just me. It's probably just me, right?

And your friends are all dating normal college girls, and they're asking questions about why *you're* never interested in getting any pussy, and they're wondering where you've been off to lately, and where you've been off to lately is this Narnia of BDSM and polyamory and decade-wide age gaps, and you're just kinda like

Eh. You wouldn't be interested...

And your mother's wondering if you're ever going to start seeing anyone, and when my dad died she made a thing about how I had my dad's blessing to transition if I was still going to do that, and by then I was just *really weird* about the whole trans thing and didn't really want to talk about it, like that time my dad got me a make-up kit and I was just kinda like "eh, I don't really do that anymore..." and he was all like "Oh, awkward..." and, *goddammit I'm an idiot*, I haven't even thought about that in *years* and now I just want to have a smoke after dredging that up and every once in a while Susan wants to know if I'm seeing anyone and I'm just like

Heh. No, not really...

And I can tell she wants more visibility into my personal life, but I just don't really have anyone to *take home* to mommy, see? I'm just *this*. And she thought I left the country for a sex change operation when I was at Maureen's house over the weekend, and she keeps asking if I'm *seeing* anyone, and she's asking more and more, and she's getting more insistent, and she kind of just invited herself to the LGBT center once and managed to become Facebook friends with Brittany, and she keeps asking if I'm dating anyone, and I'm just like "eh, not really..." while I think to myself about how I'm trying to get back into BDSM stuff again, and she learns about Brittany and Samantha and Stacey's little situation through Facebook, and she doesn't seem to have smoke blowing out of her ears, and I'm just thinking to myself "Well, that's kinda *my* people, Susan..." and she keeps asking if I'm seeing anyone, and I'm *really* not, and I've started to think "What's the *worst* that could happen if I give this crazy lady a bit of the access she craves?", and then shit gets crazy, and now I'm in a polycule, and Susan's sort of invited herself to Pride again, and I figure "Hell, let's just give this a shot..." and she tries to act supportive, but I could tell she died a little inside when I told her about this one particular unconventional

“lifestyle choice”, and I think back to when I was a kid and Susan didn’t really even *tell me* anything about sex except that it was for “adults after marriage!”, and here I am in the year 2019 or 2020 thinking “Oh c’mon... we aren’t still doing *that*, are we?” Like, what do you people want me to fucking *do*? Go to Christian Mingle? And, I *know* I killed her a little inside, because then she tried gaslighting me into thinking I made *her* go to Pride when really she just sort of invited herself.

I’m okay. I just feel like I got... incomplete instructions for assembling life, I guess. I feel like my puberty was like that dude who got killed by that cop because he couldn’t follow the guy’s impossible instructions. They make sex sound like just a few simple rules Jesus wants you to follow before you have fun on your honeymoon, but like... when was someone like me ever really going to *have* a honeymoon? I guess whenever I decided it’d be fun to start picking up chicks or something. And Josh the other month was like

You’ve never even tried *Bumble* or anything?

And I’m thinking “Dude... I’d already excluded myself from the mainstream dating pool *a long time* before Bumble ever became a thing.” (I hadn’t written about the part where I destroyed my career *the first time* because I wanted to low-key make a dating app that would work for me or something...)

And like, every time I’ve even *glanced* at one of these dating sites, it always starts with “Okay, guys over here, do this stuff and pay \$\$\$” and “Girls over there, do *that* stuff and pay \$”... and I’d always get shitty gender feels because I want to do *that* stuff like the girls *over there*, and it’s *really* not even about the \$\$\$ part. It’s about the part where I feel like I’m being *aggressively* gendered male and can’t just... do things the *other* way. Because, I just have to be *this* special goddamn snowflake. And I’d rather just... die alone than do the “guy thing”. And, I know I’ll never be anyone’s woman. Except, I *could’ve* been. But when I could’ve

been, I was cynically telling myself I knew I'd never be anyone's woman. And, now I'm just *here*.

Ooooooh baby

Of course momma's gonna help build a wall

I've got no one to blame but myself. Myself and my own bad decisions and my own free will. But, I made those bad decisions for a *reason*, goddammit! And, I was *so close* to making better ones. Like those *pretty* trans women who were on the sauce when they were something-teen years old instead of being all "Oh look, I've transcended *gender* or some shit..."

And, everything I write kind of just *makes* it sound like a sex thing. It doesn't really capture that I actually have way more of a snuggle drive than a sex drive, or how much more comfortable I feel now *in very non-sexual ways...* but I've never felt *conflicted* about the part of my life where I'm just fantasizing about snuzzling my boyfriend I'm never going to have while I'm falling asleep. It's the part where I came of age thinking I was unfuckable to 99% of the population, and it's ever since left me looking for the elusive 1% of people who would actually *do* me. Because, that's the eventual *end* to all that G-rated dating stuff, right?

Anyway, *that's* what I meant when I said that. Oh, what did I say that started this?

I remember getting *hard* playing with Katelyn and Cassie whenever our play involved themes like confinement. I just had to *wait until I was older* to have enough grains of sand to understand *why I liked that so much?* Then, when I was finally old enough, I felt *guilty*. Was that a scene? Was that consensual? I mean, there wasn't anything sexual about it; for *them*. But, I *really* liked this stuff. Did I unknowingly coerce them into topping me by directing our child's

play toward themes that made me aroused, before I understood what sexual arousal even was?

Okay, I guess that *does* kind of sound like... Goddammit, I just can't *bottle* this. This many more words later, and I *still* don't know that I'm any closer to *bottling* this feeling. I just don't think I can *give* it to anyone. It's just *me*. I'm just floating alone in this universe... strange and incomprehensible and maybe still just "Ethan the weird boner boy". I tried to give you a piece of it, but sometimes I feel like the more I try to explain it the further I get from the essence of *this*. This dull, aching, numbed out *feeling*. It's just *me*. It's what I've always been. It's all I've ever *known*. And perhaps sadly, I'm quite adjusted to it as long as I have at least half the Maslow's hierarchy or something...



Figure 46: The Whitest Kids U Know - Designing the Confederate flag (<https://youtu.be/mYwGKcUF63A?t=40>)

I don't really have much of anyone else to even give my suicide note *to*. Josh and Tommy already have their versions... I guess

it's really just a matter of whether I send this to Brittany and Samantha. I have a really sad lack of close friends.

I'm feeling more at peace with it; and I feel like I could've done it yesterday morning if I had the stuff already. It's kind of dark and feels like crossing the Rubicon, but I really *do* need to buy the stuff.

I don't even know if I want to show anybody the rest of this. There isn't much point. I think Susan is too fragile to handle my anger toward Christians, and I sort of just want her to die thinking we'll all live happily for eternity in heaven or something. Poor thing; I consider it a sort of palliative care for her and her sort.

Then again, the thought has crossed my mind that I *might* be possessed by a demon. Maybe they'll punish me for it by sending me to live with Susan for an eternity. I mean, she *is* an asshole; but, I also want the best for her for some reason. She's like a child trapped in a grown-up's body or something.

It makes me feel like I shouldn't leave any sort of a note at all. Because, I don't think my words could ever really do anything except hurt people. And, I haven't even done a very good job of explaining the Rachael Brown experience. Six months and 140,000 words later, and... I don't think I can bottle this. It's just another distorted attempt at trying to explain this weird way some humans can be born as. At best it just comes across as weird; and at worst it'll be weaponized by conservatives.

It's me, though. Just *me*. Some human from Warren, Ohio I think; who I suppose may as well *be* half alien.

I keep reflecting on the fact that this may be my last month on Earth. I'm thinking about all sorts of things, big and small. What my last meal will be... probably drunken noodles from the Thai place down the street. They're *so good*, but I haven't been

able to justify spending that much on a meal in a while. I wish I'd have planned better; but, I've always been a procrastinator. I'm even procrastinating at preparing for my own suicide. I'm planning to get one of the helium tanks later today, and maybe the construction-grade trash bags. I have some 1/2" or so rubber tubing that I want to see if will just slip onto the tank without any fuss, or if I'll need additional hardware to get a helium hose in my bag. There are detailed resources on manufacturing exit bags if you want to put more effort than I have into finding that, but... I *think* I get the idea. My plan seems pretty airtight, pun intended. I could even test the bags to see that they stay buoyant before I put my torso inside. Hell; maybe if the bags are big enough I could just sit Indian-style in there with the tanks.

I don't want people to be sad for me. I don't want people to mourn for me. I just want this to be *over*. And soon, it *will be*. This is an easy way to go, and I don't think I exactly have an easy life ahead of me. I just... deserve better for myself, and this is my way of regaining control over my own destiny.

Should I do laundry first? Should I pick up around the house? What if I try it, and I just wake up on the closet floor, or in the hospital with brain damage, or with cops swarming my house? Should I spend extra time rigging up a timer to send out the link to my suicide note, or should I do it manually right before? Am I really going to do it? Maybe someone will stop me at the last minute, or I'll decide to just check myself into a mental hospital instead.

I woke up this morning (well, around midnight), and... I *didn't* want to do it. This just seemed so *crazy*. And, maybe it *still* does a couple hours later.

It's just illogical for me *not* to kill myself, though. I've basically totaled my life, and there's nowhere else for me to *go*. I don't think I can just... go to the back of the line for SRS

again, and try to make something of myself after all *this*. Hell; I probably can't even get a good enough job to *pay* for SRS now. I just... don't see the *point*. But, sometimes I *am* a little sad that *this* is going to be the maximal extent of my existence. Just some little weed that Christians couldn't let grow in their perfect little garden. Okay – maybe I need to cool it with the hate for Christians. I just feel like I got... *really* bad instructions for assembling life from them, and then *they* turn around and blame *me* for my “sinful lifestyle choices” after all that.

Dude. I've been an atheist since like... *forever*. Where is this even *coming* from? I guess I still have hard feelings.

I *do* keep thinking about how similar my experiences are to this “targeted individual” conspiracy theory; but, I'm not into right-wing conspiracy theories, or really right-wing *anything*. And, some of the claims, like that I'm in an “electromagnetic concentration camp”, don't really make sense to someone with an even partially-working understanding of electromagnetism. And even *then*, some small part of my brain goes “Well, what if it was some kind of spread-spectrum tech?” Oh, come on. This is *ridiculous*. One common thread in variants of this conspiracy theory is that these sorts of “interrogators” in your head ask you an endless stream of questions to keep you... hooked, or preoccupied or something. And, I *definitely* relate to that. That's been going on for *years* now at this point. And, there's nothing persecutory about it. It always feels like they're trying to help me, but they can't give me the answers. Like a cryptic Morpheus. And, sometimes it feels like various people I've known. Like their future ghost has come back in time, to haunt me before they're even dead. But, I don't believe in ghosts *or* right-wing conspiracy theories. If there really *was* something otherworldly happening to me, I doubt I'll find the answers I'm looking for on the internet. But, I'm probably just mentally ill, right? I mean, let's be honest. This is *crazy*, and it's just unrealistic to expect some happy ending from all of this.

Sometimes, I can't help but wonder if some malevolent entity with otherworldly technology really *is* just trying to get me to kill myself. Who *knows* why they decided to fuck with me in particular. Maybe it's 'cause I'm a tranny, or because I don't have much of a future, or because Joe invented a time machine and wants revenge for me fucking up his thing, or because I've been randomly selected for a culling of the population... I mean, I guess I *might* just be mentally ill. That's the most *obvious* answer; but, this just seems so *crazy*.

I've already written over 4,000 words in 2025, and I'm not sure I've really *said* much of anything new at all. Maybe I should focus on quality over quantity. The state of things has had me banging out lots of stream-of-conscious writing, that I probably won't have a chance to clean up before I die if I'm actually gonna do that.

My only (oh, what do I mean *only*) regret is that, if someone really *does* want me to kill myself, I'm letting them win by doing this.

I've thought about refreshing what Tommy can see with what I've written since then, at the risk of it leading to an intervention in preventing my suicide that might well be for my own good. I mean, I don't think it's any worse than what I *already* sent him... I feel like I'm teetering on the edge of really crying out for help, but I sort of just want to stop being a pussy and do it already. I feel like *that* guy.

I'm starting to worry that one of my worst fears might come true. What if Susan really *does* end up getting the Britney Spears conservatorship thing on me? I think I, well... really *would* be better off dead *then*. I'm a little freaked out that Tommy hasn't really *read* this mess, and when he eventually *does* cops might get involved in my life again. I guess I turned it up to eleven, because I didn't really get much of *any* response out of Josh,



Figure 47: Attention Guy (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV0LM_WrSBw&t=223s)

and I *really* need help getting out of what's become a life-or-death situation, and Tommy is one of the few remaining people who *might* actually be able to shed some light onto what the fuck actually happened in the months and years following that conversation he had with Vickie.

I guess I thought the hard part would just be getting it all out of me and writing this down. But now that I've done that, it feels like nobody really even *cares* what happened. The world has just left me behind. I've just been *forgotten*. And, I get that as an adult it's not anyone's responsibility not to leave me behind, and I'm just supposed to keep up. But, it just hurts. I might be days or weeks away from going out of business, and I don't think anybody even *cares*. Hell; they might not even find my body until the cops get involved because I'm not paying my mortgage.

I'm pretty sure "suicide hotlines" and the like are for a totally different kind of person; not that I've tried one or anything. I can't imagine what they do except try to talk you out of a highly distressed emotional state, like if you had BPD or something. I just need *help*. Like, cold, hard, logical *help*. Okay – maybe that's what Josh gave me. I just don't know what I even *need* really. The problem is too complex and nuanced to even explain to a suicide hotline operator. That's why I was hoping to rely on my support network or something, but as it turns out *they're* mostly the sort of people I've complained about being the wrong crowd in the later part of this document. And, my motivation to continue de-scumming this for Brittany or Samantha or Erika or someone is fading. I guess I'm just... out of options. I guess this is the end of the line, or something *really* close to it.

I can't believe Tommy's like, my only hope right now. I can't believe I'm just back to *that*. I don't know where else to go. So much just doesn't make sense.



Figure 48: Star Trek Next Generation - Vanished Crew (<https://youtu.be/VmGkHUjtNpE?t=61>)

I'm kinda worried that if I checked myself into a mental hospital, they'd think I was just trying to use them as a homeless shelter given my financial situation. "Oh, so you just didn't have a serious mental health problem until you went *broke*, huh?" Maybe I shouldn't make wild assumptions about people before I've talked to them. I've just been hurt a lot.

This just *sucks*, man. It's the end. There's no more Rachael, and there's not even anyone to invite to my going away party. I should just... die, quietly. Like I said.

I feel pretty stupid for spending my last six months on Earth writing a document nobody cares about that I can't even share without hurting people.

I'm worried I'm gonna procrastinate until I literally can't *afford* to buy a nice, cushy way to die like helium. I'm worried I'll have to panhandle for helium money. Maybe I can find a group of Republicans who would chip in to help a tranny kill herself. Maybe I should just be a little more proactive. I want to combine the helium run with a cheese stick run because the two are right there beside each other.

It doesn't matter. No one's probably going to read this anyway.

Then again, maybe I'm *supposed* to kill myself. Maybe *that* was the only message I was supposed to receive from this. Kill yourself while you still can. This might just invariably be the end for me, and perhaps *lots* of us.

Tommy probably knows *nothing* about space aliens, and he probably doesn't want to talk to me anymore after that anti-Christian rant. I just... don't want to kiss anyone's ass. Even if I really *don't* have any options besides that or death.

I'm really scared I'm gonna get locked in the psych ward for writing this, and they won't let me take HRT because I'm DIY, and they'll make me do stuff with Susan or something. It sort of has me thinking I should just do the thing sooner rather than later, because by crying out for "help" like I am that's likely to be what'll happen. I just need... *actual* help, and I don't think it exists. Not, like, the government babysitting me until they decide I'm not a danger to myself anymore or something while they forcibly detransition me *again*...

I just don't think I can *trust* like that anymore. It's starting to look like I'll have to put a *lot* of trust in some stranger who'll wield legal custody over me and keep me from doing normal "Rachael" things, like taking 200mg of spironolactone and 6mg of estradiol a day, or getting Bojangles at 5:30 am. Hell; I'm not even going to mention the weed, and I'll even consider compromising on the Bojangles. I won't be able to afford it for much longer anyway.

I'm writing this in real time, after smoking and experiencing a sort of strong self-preservation instinct. This is *crazy*, right? Is there not *anything* I can do? I mean, anything short of literal torture would be better than nothing, right? I need *ideas*. Like real, actual, things I can do *this month*.

- I could sell the house to get cash now.

I don't think I can do *anything* until I unfuck my brain, though. I really need an answer to *this*. What actually *happened* to me? What's my diagnosis? How do I explain this, to myself and others? What *am* I?

So, how do I get an answer? I mean, I'm sure if I check myself into a psych ward they'll give me *some* kind of diagnosis. Is that just... it?

I don't know what I'm expecting from Tommy exactly; except maybe a very crystal-clear explanation that *I was just imagining things!* The 12:26pm message thing was just a coincidence, Vickie saying Tommy wasn't from Warren was just a miscommunication, anything I *thought* Tommy was hinting at during our previous meetings was just misperception, and the Freemasons are just some boring fraternity he's probably not even part of.

It's after midnight on January 10th.

Yesterday morning, I decided to start working on an anonymization script to scramble the proper nouns in this document, so that I might share this on the internet in a last-ditch attempt to get help. It's taken the form of a 200-something line `.sed.m4` file, that's probably going to keep growing over the next couple days. I've started to wonder if it's worth it, or if anyone will care.

Later that morning, I finally got a response from Tommy. Granted, I wasn't expecting much... it still stung a little.

Good morning, Rachael. I hope this text finds you well. I wanted to circle back with you about what you shared with me. I have a few takeaways. Some of what you shared was too personal. In those sections, I chose to scan that material or skip it. Also, there are some inaccuracies in what you shared especially as it relates to your memories of events involving me (for example, I would have never introduced you to the Freemasons as something that would be beneficial to you). In addition, you seem to be trying to connect dots (memories, events, etc.) as a way to understand or make sense of things.

Tommy | *Wednesday, January 08 2025 09:24AM*

Thank you. I'm sorry you had to read that.

Moi | *Wednesday, January 08 2025 11:01AM*

No worries here. I hope you are well.

Tommy | *Wednesday, January 08 2025 11:07AM*

After checking the server logs later that afternoon and seeing that he hadn't actually looked at my thing since the night I sent it to him, I panicked and removed him from the `.htaccess` file. I didn't want him to see any more than he already did; especially the part where I descended further into suicidal ideation. I just... *really* don't want cops banging on my door to take me to the psych ward again.

When I woke up around midnight, I got a very official looking email from Chase. I haven't opened it, because I *know* what it says. I have almost exactly \$1,000 in my bank account, bills aren't getting paid, the HOA wants me to fix my yard, and I really have no plans for doing *any* of that. There's maybe going to be a big snowstorm tomorrow, and I'm planning to get pizza

and cheese sticks or some shit that I can eat for a couple days just in case. That means...

It's Balloon Time™! (assuming I don't pussy out tomorrow, or I guess later *today* now...)

I just... don't understand. Did my doctor really mean for me to take 1mg of estradiol twice a day with no antiandrogen, when she'd been prescribing a reasonable dose previously? Did my therapist really mean to suggest dialectical behavioral therapy for symptoms of psychosis? I mean, I'm not crazy to hold *these* opinions, right? I'm just concerned, particularly regarding the first part, that a mental hospital wouldn't exactly *agree* with the psychotic patient who's still recovering from thinking she's Alyssa Jones. They'll probably let me have "Prescribed Medications ONLY!", which effectively means a sentence to medically detransition until they let me leave. Which, I *guess* could be any time so long as I manage to keep it voluntary...

Which probably means I can't really show them all of *this*. (*sigh*)

I mean, I went to Google with the phrase "psychosis dbt" or something. And, Gemini at the very top was all like "DBT is usually not recommended for treatment of psychosis..."

I got out that box with old medications and shit, just to make sure I still have the bottle of spiro from high school.

See? I remember *that* much...

But, I guess all the stuff about Freemasons and UFOs and reincarnation just didn't, uh...

Okay. I, uh... I *get it now*, alright? I'm an unreliable narrator.

When I was researching this "targeted individual / gang stalking" conspiracy theory a while back, I came across [this article from Psychology Today](#).

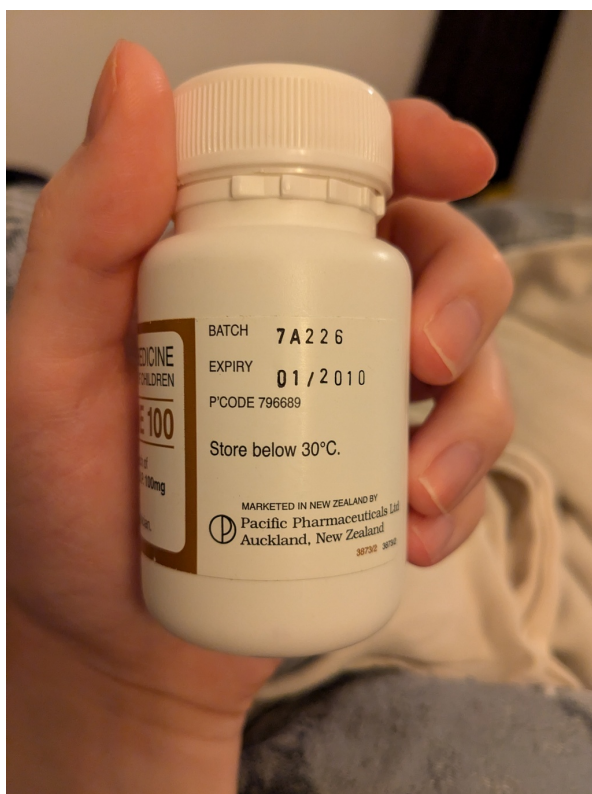


Figure 49: I've at least been pretending for a long time...

For example, the “who” is variably attributed to neighbors, ex-boyfriends, employers, police, and other law enforcement agencies, “the financial elite,” or less conventional sources, like **Freemasons and space aliens**.

Upon reading this, I immediately thought

Wait... Freemasons and UFOs is actually a *thing*? I thought that was just *me*...

Like, I don’t remember *reading* about UFOs and Freemasons on the internet back in 2021... There was the weird 5D New Earth Law of One shit, there were a bunch of IRL trans friends who were into “mysticism and magick” while *I* was a hardened atheist skeptic... and from *there* is was purely my (clearly flawed) *memories* about Freemasons and UFOs that steered me into this. So what did I, just *independently recreate* a popular conspiracy theory held by these “targeted individual” types? I mean, I still don’t *believe* in that stuff, but it *is* pretty weird, right? What is it about the human mind under psychosis that makes one go all Pepe Silvia about Freemasons and UFOs? Because, it would appear to be something internal about human neurology or psychology, presuming there really *isn’t* anything substantial to all these conspiracies.

I asked ChatGPT what conspiracy theories exist that involve Freemasons and UFOs, and it listed *several*; none of which really have anything to do with *my* particular brand of psychosis.

After reading other stories on [r/psychosis](#) and elsewhere, I’ve grown convinced enough to diagnose myself with psychosis.

I guess I just slipped though the cracks *again*. I had to diagnose myself with gender dysphoria, I had to diagnose myself with a hiatal hernia and a concussion... and *now* I have little choice but to diagnose myself with drug-induced psychosis. I want to bitch about how I feel like medicine has failed me; but the truth is, we didn’t even have penicillin a century ago. I guess

we're still a pretty young species. And, I guess I'm just supposed to help *myself*. I'm an adult, after all.

I just don't want to get locked in some building where they treat me like a child and won't let me take hormones or use scissors. I mean, I haven't thought I was a time traveler in a little over a year. I feed myself (with takeout, granted), I operate a motor vehicle with no history of major accidents... Then again, I'm demonstrably incapable of keeping up my house or holding down a job, and I'm clearly "addicted to marijuana", or whatever...

I just wish there was something for *me*. Where I could get help, but still have the same rights afforded to any other legal adult. That (potential) loss of basic rights *really* has me spooked out. I could get in there, wish I'd have just taken the helium, and not be able to leave until I *really* put on a show for them. Worse yet is the fear that they might entrap me with promises that I can keep taking whatever meds as usual, only to renege and recite some zero-tolerance policy like "patients aren't allowed to keep their own medication, you have to go through nurse Ratched for all your medication", and then nurse Ratched is just gonna say "Oh, I can't *give* you estradiol and spironolactone without a prescription, you'll have to make an appointment with your doctor once we let you go"; or "So, I called Dr. Reid for you and I can give you your last prescribed dose of 1mg estradiol twice a day..." And they call *me* crazy for wanting more than 2mg a day of estradiol and 0mg a day of spironolactone! And for that matter, I *still* maintain that dialectical behavioral therapy makes *no goddamn sense* for treating *any* of my mental health problems! And, I *really* don't think I'm saying that because I'm in denial about my cluster B personality traits or something.

It just sucks that I'm apparently batshit crazy, *and* I'm a self-medicating tranny. Because I *know* they aren't going to believe anything I say. And goddammit, I *know* I'm not a fucking time traveler anymore. I just know I'm *certain* to be diagnosed



Figure 50: Medicine time (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJDWd91nII4&t=25s>)

with **TBAS** *along with* whatever psychosis-spectrum disorder out of the DSM-V they pin on me.

My life is just goddamn *depressing*. And utterly hopeless.

As much as I've wanted to laugh off the "reefer madness" hypothesis, my reading suggests that cannabis-induced psychosis really *is* far from unheard of; and there was also methylphenidate involved early on, which may've precipitated some of my problems.

I've probably got at least a couple more days of work anonymizing this thing, especially considering it takes the better part of a day to read. I'm tempted to send this to anyone who bangs on my door looking for money; but, I already *know* what they're gonna say.

Some of this was too personal. I skipped over it. It was too long.



Figure 51: WKUK Little Hitler (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNDZ9EKJLJs&t=166s>)

I don't think I have a friend in the world. I don't know what I'm still doing here.

I got sick again yesterday from not stretching well, and it's entirely my fault. I don't really have anything left to lose, so I'm thinking I *might as well* send this to Brittany and Samantha. Even as I write this, I sometimes feel I'd be better off dead. I keep thinking about whether I should do anything else to this document before I give it to them. These people are happily years post-op, and I don't really want to change that. Then I realize I already verbally assaulted Tommy and probably made *him* feel bad about his life choices, so why *shouldn't* I keep burning down bridges? I still feel like there are way too many trans people a lot of the time, but I already know I'm mentally ill. I just want things to go back to the way they were, and I don't know if that's possible.

There's no elegant ending to this. It's January 12th, and I'm sort of just falling apart. And at the same time, I feel surprisingly calm. I know this can't go on for much longer.

I feel like this is it. It's Tuesday afternoon, and I haven't heard anything from Brittany or Samantha yet. Granted, I sort of *did* ask them to read a fucking novel.

I don't think I have much of anyone else left who I can even *ask* to read this monstrosity. It just needs to be... *shorter*. And, I guess I can do that. I went through a psychotic break. See? That was easy. #ramble amble

I think I might just be... out of friends, and out of time, and out of money, and out of Rachael. I don't think I have any more quarters to put in the machine. Of all the ways to die, I *never* would've imagined *this* to be my fate.

Maybe I'm being pessimistic about my career prospects after all this, but... I mean, I just had stuff about the "Great Stay" in my news feed yesterday. There's a laid off 20-something software developer who's applying "everywhere, even grocery stores". And, he isn't the dumpster fire that *I* am. I think the world is about to get a lot more mean for people like me. I can tell that much. I always *wondered* back in 2017 if there would be a really bad backlash one day. Is there any point to finishing my anonymization project and putting this on the internet?

I had a dash of optimism this morning, that I was going to get my shit *together*. I bought my house for \$180k, and Zillow's estimate is now around \$320k. I'm not exactly *underwater* in my mortgage. I had a brain wave that I could maybe get a HELOC or a cash out refinance; but talking it through with ChatGPT reminded me of the obvious problem that I'd still need a source of income for *both* of those things.

Given my emotional state, I decided there was only *one* top priority this morning: I need to get in touch with RBL about getting back on the list for SRS. I can only assume I'll have to start *all over* with another consult and shit; but I figured maybe I could get lucky and just need updated WPATH letters or something. Either way... I felt like I needed something to live for. I wrote a short little 259-word message; then I shortened it to 500 characters or less so it would fit in MyChart. I still haven't sent it off yet, because I was thinking about maybe just calling them instead. The message would seem to go to the billing department or some shit.

It's January 14th today, in case I didn't make that clear enough earlier. I haven't paid my mortgage since November, and I eventually *did* look at that official looking message from Chase. It was actually a little creepy how little was actually *in* it. Just...

I'm your dedicated Relationship Manager and I'll help you find the best assistance option to meet your needs.

Pretty much. Like... they don't even *tell you* how you fucked up. Because, you already *know* you fucked up. Still, I guess I was expecting "YOU ARE IN DEFAULT NOW!" inside a `<blink>` or `<marquee>` tag or something.

I was intent earlier in the day on smoking less weed and trying to get my shit together, but that all kind of backfired once it sank in that my increase in home equity isn't really going to help me here; unless I sell the house like *now* or something. Which sounds like... a *lot* of work. It's really just starting to feel like Balloon Time™ when I think of how I have all of *that* to look forward to.

I just... can't believe this *happened* to me. And, I don't think anyone even really *wants* to read my thing because it's too long and whiny. I mean, I get that. I guess I should've just not let myself get this out of sync with the world.

I feel like I'm stuck in this... quietly dystopian timeline. Everybody wants me to explain my problem in 500 characters or less. Nobody's ever going to assign me a dedicated Self-Improvement Gigolo to help me with my flaming-life-in-ditch problem.

I got this from Susan. I don't really know what it means.

So many of your friends miss and love you!
Please let you know you are okay! Can we
come see you? I love you!

Susan | Tuesday, January 14 2025 09:25PM

Maybe she's heard that I'm okay but I'm going through a rough time. I'm so desperate for help I've even thought about *answering* her. But, I *don't* think that's a good idea. Susan is usually... *less than helpful*. And, I *really* need to stay away from "Bladen County friends". I should've made that pivot a *long* time ago.

I can't find a way to talk to my "dedicated Relationship Manager" except by phone. And, I *really* don't want to talk to somebody over the phone. They're going to want to know all about what my plans are, and who my doctor is, and when I'm going to get a fucking job... I mean, maybe I'm making a lot of assumptions, but I just... don't really have any good news. For *anybody*. I don't fucking *know* when you people are going to get your money. No, I'm not looking for a fucking job. I'm more ready for helium than Food Lion, but I'm *really* not prepared for either. It sucks that *that's* what my life has come to. I just... ate tar toast, and it's all my fault. I was just supposed to *know* better. I was just supposed to *know* my therapist was lying to me to gain my trust, and Persephone was just a quasi-schizophrenic fruit loop who believed in magic, and Natalie was just some quasi-shamanistic commie, and my therapist telling me an obvious lie and giving me *the exact opposite advice* after the meeting of the

goddamn *century* was just some silly miscommunication, and the weird perfectly-timed messages at 12:26pm were just an obvious coincidence, and Paul changing his Zoom avatar to a space alien *once* during the height of all this was just him being a goofball, and my doctor giving me a bullshit dose of hormones was just her not really understanding how endocrinology works... oh, and *of course* I was supposed to know not to keep smoking weed after work when I was taking Concerta. I mean, I knew it probably wasn't "recommended", but I didn't think it would lead to all *this*...

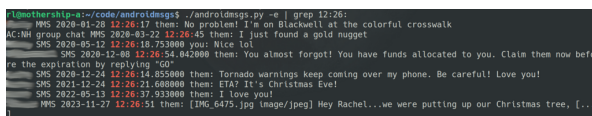
I decided I wanted to investigate the likelihood of actually *getting* a random text message at 12:26pm. Assuming there are eight core daytime hours when one would be likely to text a casual acquaintance, there would be a $1/480$ chance of any one message being at that particular time, assuming a uniform probability density. I've received a total of 26 messages from Tommy to date. Thus, speaking naively as a non-statistician and mathematical dunce, the probability of accidentally getting a 12:26 text from him would be

$$1/480 * 26 \approx 5.4\%$$

This is higher than I might've reckoned otherwise; granted, I still won the loser lottery. This is very back-of-the-napkin math, and there are a lot of factors that are hard to quantify; on one hand, both messages felt *perfectly* timed, and my eight-hour window is probably a little on the small side. On the other hand, I don't think it's fair to assume a uniform probability density; people are probably more likely to send text messages during their lunch break, for example. Applying a normal distribution to this would obviously be much less charitable for arguing my sanity; however, I don't know that there's much of a basis for arguing that someone is more likely to text during lunch as opposed to at the start or end of their workday. I'd guess it would at least be more appropriate to apply a normal distribution across a full 16 waking hours. I mean... I *have* real world text message data I

could analyze, but I probably have better things to do considering I'm about to lose my house.

Also, keep in mind that this is the probability just for *Tommy* sending one of these things. In Susan's case, I have a total of 3,714 messages from her; three of which were sent at 12:26pm, and only one of which was “perfectly timed”. This is a real-world incidence of $3/3714 \approx 0.08\%$. Ouch!



```
another@ship:~/code/androidmsgs$ ./androidmsgs.py -e | grep 12:26:
SMS 2020-01-28 12:26:17 them: No problem I'm on Blackwell at the colorful crosswalk
AC:NM group chat SMS 2020-03-22 12:26:45 them: I just found a gold nugget
SMS 2020-05-12 12:26:18.753000 you: Nice lol
SMS 2020-12-26 12:26:54.042000 them: You almost forgot! You have funds allocated to you. Claim them now before the expiration by replying "GO"
SMS 2020-12-24 12:26:14.855000 them: tornado warnings keep coming over my phone. Be careful! Love you!
SMS 2021-12-24 12:26:31.680000 them: ETB! It's Christmas Eve!
SMS 2022-05-13 12:26:37.933000 them: I love you!
SMS 2023-11-27 12:26:51 them: [IMG_6475.jpg image/jpeg] Hey Rachel...we were putting up our Christmas tree, [...]
```

Figure 52: The *real* mystery is how I managed to get 12:26 texts from Susan on Christmas eve two years in a row.

When I qualitatively look at all the factors, along with *everything else* that happened, it *really* feels like the universe just kinda found the hole in my death star.

The search space for Mastermind is 1,296 possibilities.

I don't want to die. This is stupid. Where do I *go*? There's this refrain that's been repeating in my head for months.

I need help.

There *is* none.

I need *help*.

There *is none*.

I need *help*!

There *is none*!

Is that just... maladaptive? Is there *really* “no help”? I mean, I could always just check myself in to a mental hospital... I’m sure they’ll get me *all ready* for a bright future at Food Lion, posthaste!

I fucked up. This just... isn’t supposed to *happen*, I guess. I think I might actually buy the helium today. I keep putting it off. I need to do *something*. It’s still one of my best ideas, I think. Dark as that sounds.

I found a way to send a message through Chase. It doesn’t seem to go straight to my dedicated Relationship Manager; but the thing about me right now is that I’m not going to talk to anybody over the phone today, and I’m probably not going to talk to anybody over the phone tomorrow.

I wrote a whole little 229 word thing about how I don’t really know what the fuck is going on or what the fuck to do (they give you a whole *5,000* characters to talk about money!), before asking ChatGPT whether I should leave out the part where cannabis may’ve been one of the contributing factors in my presumed psychotic break. My only friend shot back with a lecture about how I should keep things professional and vague, and probably not talk about *any* contributing factors. I guess if I don’t have anything professional to say, I shouldn’t say anything at all.

It’s just not *like* me. Brutal honesty when I’m backed into a corner is (usually) my aesthetic. I can only be *this*. I’ve been doing the stupid mask thing my whole life, and I’m shit out of mask juice.

Okay; so I couldn’t resist doing it. It wasn’t really that hard.

I don’t really know what to say, except that I *really* won the loser lottery.

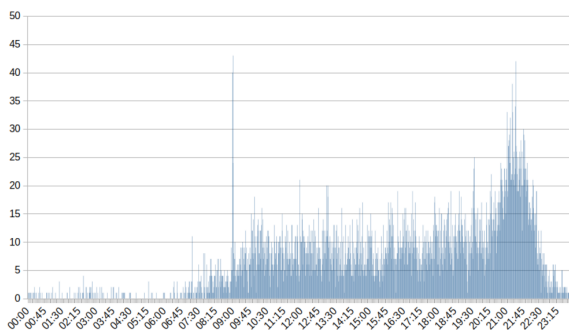


Figure 53: A uniform probability density probably isn't that bad of a start. Susan texts me every night, which skews the right side of the graph. There's a spike at 9am from when we used to do therapy over Zoom.

I just don't know, man. There are only a handful of really small rabbit holes in Termina field, and I keep Goron-rolling into them. It distracts me, as I think about how to stop a disaster-bound freight train.

I've been thinking that maybe I *should* call trans lifeline. I really just need someone to talk to. No one's really even reading my thing. I guess it really *is* too long. I guess this just amounts to some whiny diary I probably shouldn't share with people. I really wish I hadn't put all my eggs in *this* basket. Granted, I didn't really see any other basket to put them in at the time.

I don't know. I was going to buy helium today, but I didn't really do much except make a histogram and roll around Termina field and think about calling a suicide hotline. I really wish I could just be like "Here, read this", but even ChatGPT is all like "Uhhh, can you elaborate on what part of this you need help with?" And I'm just like "I don't know, like fucking *all* of it?"

I can't believe I just... made it all up. I still remember Tommy having me read the Kybalion *so fucking clearly*. Why did my subconscious even make that shit up? I was an ardent atheist. Tommy's like, the *last* person I would've wanted to reach out to for something like this, inebriated *or* sober. It's just so... *weird*. Is this even a real timeline? I mean, I remember him being kinda secretive about it. And, I'm *not* being very secretive *right now*... but, I feel like I gave everyone a chance to do this in a more subtle way first.

I guess this is just psychosis. I guess you just go crazy and make an ass out of yourself. It's never *going* to make sense, because I wasn't even sane. It's like trying to figure out why the devil some program randomly turned purple, when really there's never going to be a better explanation than "Well, you had a bad stick of RAM..."

Shit, man. There are so many stupid metaphors in this thing that nobody gives a fuck about. I need to make a list so I know what to talk about with trans lifeline. With my luck it'll probably be 140,000 words long, and take another few months to write. Maybe I'll finish before I'm homeless.

I'm gonna do stuff today. I'm gonna call RBL. I'm gonna send that message to Chase and totally disregard ChatGPT's advice. It's 6am, by the way. On a Thursday. Durham, North Carolina. I'm running low on weed and making an effort to smoke less; but I *did* just smoke.

I tried stream-of-consciousness writing.

Holy shit, dude. I'm fucking *losing* it. I *really* need help. What the fuck am I even *doing*? This is *so* bad. I've written enough stupid bullshit like this already. Am I really going to do everything I said I was going to do today? I'm thinking about helium less and less, but I should probably at least have that *option*. I mean, *right*?

I'm... *not* doing well. Am I? I wonder how over my psychosis I am? People might *still* think I'm kinda nuts. asdfasdfasdfasdfasdf I think I might call trans lifeline. I mean, they're used to people in weird situations, right? I just need to be prepared to explain it all from the beginning, because I can't just give them this ten-hour long thing to read. Right? Fuck, I wish I had more friends. Maybe I *do* and I'm just being cynical. I mean, I haven't sent it to Kristina yet... What am I waiting for, anyway? I could just make a thing for her and show her *this*. I mean, the more people I get involved the better, right? Something about that sounds wrong. Idk, she might read that I technically disregarded my therapist's DBT recommendation and nope out of that shit. I mean, I don't blame her, given her history and all. I need to go *faster*. The house is still an absolute *wreck*. I'm just... not ready to deal with *this*. I thought I was going to get aftercare, but I'm probably just going to get foreclosed on. But I mean, I still might not be better off dead. Right? I'm gonna do something today. I *have* to do something today. This is *not* productive. I just got Dunkin an hour ago, and I already want a burrito. My appetite's been coming back since I started the B12 again, and my lip chapping problem is resolved, too. That probably shouldn't go here. I think my hair really *is* getting better, at least. I read B12 deficiency really *can* cause psychosis, and it really does seem like *that* is at least part of it. More so than the D. Heh. What am I fucking *doing*? I'm like... paralyzed, or something. I can't afford Dunkin *or* a burrito. I need to get serious about suicide if I'm going to do that, but I don't really want to think about it. This is *so bad*. I should *not* have written this. I slipped on a fucking banana peel. Man, B12 really *does* make me fucking hungry. I swear to god or whoever that's the only thing that's changed, and it's even happened before in recent memory. I even lost another 10 lbs somewhere in my break of not taking it. Maybe I'm reading too much into it. I might still be psychotic, after all. See? I have insight. That's what I said at first. I have *insight* into how weird all this Freemason and UFO stuff is! That means I'm not *crazy*, right? Noooooope! Shit, what do I do? Probably not *this*. I really *was* going to call RBL at like 9 or 10. But knowing me, I'll decide to do it after my burrito, and then I'll be jonesing for a smoke after I eat, and then I'll want to wait until I'm a little less stoned, and by *then* it'll be

too close to my bedtime. I'll tell myself I'll get a head start when I wake up around midnight. But, I can't do much until... goddamn, will I *shut up* already? Fuck, I wonder what Susan means when she says friends want to see me. I really *did* send Tommy some pretty disturbing shit. And, the Vickie thing was probably just a miscommunication. *Raised* in Cary, *Born* in Cary... christ, how much more goddamn *unlucky* could I possibly *get*? Susan and her friends are probably going to try to send me to rehab for my marijuana addiction... granted, I really *should* smoke less pot. It might even be contributing to my condition, for all I know. What the *fuck*, though. I really could've used a little more transparency. I guess people who are talking about Freemasons and UFOs don't really *get* transparency in those kinds of situations. I just don't get what *happened*. What a goddamn mess. I wasn't even into a *documented* Freemasons-and-UFOs conspiracy theory. I just made it *all up*! Goddamn, how much more unlucky could I *be*? What if I got Bojangles now? Oh come on, I can't wait three hours? Christ. Why did I even remove Tommy's access? This isn't any *worse* than what he already read... I mean, I don't think he's gonna go back and look at it... he probably told Susan I'm suicidal and mad at Christians and they're getting a posse together. Oh come on, that's just my paranoia again. See? I'm probably not over it yet. Psychoanalyzing yourself is dangerous. What am I doing? Oh right, a stream of consciousness writing exercise. I was feeling more confident about sending that message and calling RBL before I got high an hour ago, but now I kinda just want to play it safe. I'm gonna play it safe all the way to Skid Row. If I even *make it* to the west coast. Goddamn, what am I even *doing*? Helium would probably be better than Skid Row, right? Why don't I just look for a fucking job today, huh? What am I even *waiting* for, closure? A formal diagnosis of *donkey brains*? Not even enough savings for helium? I mean, I don't even know if I've got the tubing situation figured out yet. That's why I need at least one tank, right? They're on sale because Party City's going out of business. So I can save money on suicide gas. My future self may thank me, for all I know. Fuck, this hurts. I was *so certain* there really *was* some conspiracy afoot. I remember so much, and it's all just false psychosis memories I guess. Maybe they'll have "Just Say No" commercials with my face on them or something. Dude, it's just

weed. Right? Nobody's ever heard of someone fucking their life up with marijuana, right? Too many jazz cigarettes, I tell 'ya. Did you know you can Goron roll through Southern Swamp? You can't kill the giant octorok by fast-rolling into it. I need to *do something*. Besides write this thing no one cares about. What if I call RBL after my burrito, but before my next smoke? Is that fair? That's still almost three hours away. I'm gonna die, aren't I? I bet I'll at least wish I was for a while. Fuck. Ugh. I already feel like my day is derailed. Maybe I'll get it together after lunch. Fuck. I didn't get it together after lunch. I told you this would happen. I can send a message anytime, you know. The moon's going to crash in six minutes. I'm trying to stay positive. At least I'm not fat anymore, and my hair's growing back, and I'm inoculated against whackadoodles, and maybe I can get some sort of fresh start that very much doesn't involve Freemasons or UFOs.

I woke up to a message from Brittany, like six minutes after she sent it. She acted like I wouldn't be up, but... ugh, I'm weird lately. I probably need to stretch.

It seems like the crux of the problem may've been that my therapist treated me like a run-of-the-mill conspiracy theorist, when really I was experiencing psychosis or some shit. Vickie and Dr. Reid *both* decided to treat my new weird little "Freemasons and UFOs" thing as a sort of harmless Scientology-like personal spiritual belief; which I suppose it *was* at the time, but it isn't really *me*. It feels like an ironic twist to the "radical acceptance" movement; and I can't help but wonder how many people were smiling and nodding about me being "a woman now" before I went all Pepe Silvia.

Though everyone had seemingly the best of intentions... some of the parts where I was talking to Vickie, and Doris for example, *did* sort of remind me of this thing Susan does. Where she won't tell the truth, and you can *tell* she's trying to manipulate you "for your own good" or something. I just... *really* thought I

remembered Vickie *saying* it was just reincarnation before this even *started* with me. But... she *probably* didn't. These memories are *still* just as convincing as anything. I guess that's just what psychosis *is*.

It sort of leaves me wanting less "radical acceptance" and more "Dr. Phil" for my next therapy experience. I just... don't want my support network to follow me off the deep end again, if I can even *get* another support network.

Self-diagnosis time Vickie (and maybe even Dr. Reid) mentioned a particular risk with ADHD meds and undiagnosed Bipolar Disorder. The thought has crossed my mind that I *might* be experiencing manic or hypomanic episodes; just lately for example, I've been going through a phase where I only sleep for like four hours at a time. I'll fall asleep at like 4pm, wake up around 8pm, think about maybe getting food again, fall asleep around midnight... and now it's like 4:30.

Did Susan really snoop around my house? I mean, my paranoia that she *did* began like *right after* I started taking ADHD meds. Logically, I'm tempted to just blanket *say* that I probably wasn't in my right mind regarding *any* bizarre insights in 2021 or later.

But, like... at the same time, I feel like I'm arguing that the submarine cable kinda just *cut itself*.

Susan really *is* sketchy. She's overly involved, and she'll basically pick your entire 30-year-old wardrobe if you let her. And for a while, I kinda *was*. Shopping is hard, and I'm not a very organized person. I think this is the *real* problem with Susan; she wants me to be her little plaything, but it's *really* important that I find my own unique style. And, I *don't* think I want Susan picking that. I told her I was dealing with trauma mostly because she was being *such a fucking asshole* about me

forgetting Mother's Day, and... I don't think I even got any real sympathy out of her. I think I just made things worse.

I just don't really know what to *do* with her. She seems determined not to "give up" on me. But, I've sort of given up on *her*. Part of me wants to give this to her, but she's just gonna be all like "AAAAAAAAA You took the name of the Lord in vain AAAAAAAAAAAAAA" and like... I *really* can't handle that shit. We're very far apart on matters like religion, and she vehemently argues with me when I try and say that "we're two *very* different people". She thinks she knows me better than *anyone*; yet, I've sort of just been doing the Vickie and Dr. Reid thing with her and her weird church stuff. Because, I don't want to hurt her delicate little feelings, and I don't want her fretting over the eternal fate of my soul.

I didn't think living a double and triple life was a big deal in college, but... it's *really* draining. It was born out of the feeling that I *can't* leave her, and that I also can't *tell her the truth*. She'll either panic that strange people are tying me up and playing with me, or... hell, she might even invite herself to a munch like she did the LGBT center, become Facebook friends with Maureen, and then resent me for making her go to a kink event.

Do I *really* need DBT? It *is* indicated for substance abuse problems, too. Maybe the psych ward was like "Yeah, this crazy tran's THC is *through the roof*, she must smoke all day long!" And... I kinda *was* toward the end. There was a lot going on with me. I just wish there was more transparency. Because, I feel like *Vickie* was the main person confirming my delusions for a while... and then she just told me Tommy wasn't even from Warren and drove me off a cliff.

Maybe I'll update this for Brittany and Samantha, in case they're gonna keep looking at it. It's probably just my personal journal at this point, though.

I'm gonna *do stuff* today! I'm gonna get a bagel I can't afford, then I'm probably gonna have my first smoke after waking up... then I'll aimlessly Goron roll around Termina Field while I ponder my choices... I'll plan on calling RBL's office at around 9 or 10, but I'll probably just spend an hour stretching in preparation for an early lunch. Then I'll eat a big meal, and I'll *really* need a smoke after. And I figure, *maybe* I'll do that stuff after I come down that afternoon... but by *then* I'll be reading about the Russo-Turkish wars on Wikipedia, and I'll be bargaining with myself about just touching up that overly personal message I wrote for Chase when I wake up around midnight. But I'll actually have my second "manic sleep" around that time instead, and then I'll wake up around 4 instead of midnight... and *then* I'll plan on calling RBL's office after I get Bojangles and have a smoke.

Ugh... I'm fucking *hopeless*.

Brittany and Samantha probably think I'm asking for money (and granted; that *is* a problem...), but I *really* feel like I just need a reliable friend who can give me good advice and doesn't think I'm being gang-stalked. I feel like I need some kind of social worker who can help me put one foot in front of the other and not get distracted by reading about the Siege of Izmail. Like... I need a *mental health* doctor, and probably a *regular* doctor... I need to explain *all of this* in less than 100,000 words. And as soon as Chase gets involved, they won't be content to let me keep lying around and smoking pot and Goron rolling while I try and figure out what to do next. There's gonna be phone calls, and faxes, and forms, and emails, and *all sorts* of grown-up shit that I *really* don't want to fucking deal with right now, and I can't even just "show them *this*" like I guess I was hoping for when I started writing it.

And, I guess maybe *that's* part of the reason for my inaction. Because, I don't fucking *know* what my doctor's name is, other than perhaps (*website redacted*). And, that does *not* make me

look good. I ignored my therapist's and my doctor's advice before falling off the deep end and deciding to self-medicate. And, I still feel like I did that for *all* the right reasons.

It sucks, because I don't really even feel like it's my *fault*. I tried to get help for my lack of productivity, and it ultimately destroyed my career and delayed my life. It's like I kinda just "went to prison" for three years or something, thinking something *really cool* was going to happen eventually.

Then again, at least I'm not fat anymore. Maybe I won't die alone after all.

I think I'm going to send Chase the thing today. Hell, I've thought about actually sending this to Susan because we're kinda at that point. I just worry that won't result in anything productive. She's probably just going to shit everywhere and make a bunch of noise and treat me like a toddler while acting like a toddler. I might as well check myself in to a mental hospital if *that's* what I'm in for. I had "the headache" earlier and was worried I'd get sick again, but I think I may've warded it off for the most part by doing, like, *all* the stretches. It's 9am and it feels like nap time.

Nobody's going to miss me when I'm gone.

I'm getting the helium today. I'm getting more vitamin D today. I'm stopping by Lowe's or Home Depot to get the big trash bags today. Or, maybe I can find them at Target.

Nobody's going to miss me when I'm gone, except for my crazy mom.

What happened this weekend? Josh sent me a message I couldn't help but giggle at.

Watch Joe Rogan from yesterday, Thomas Campbell

Josh | Saturday, January 18 2025 12:01PM

You probably already agree with his theory of how reality works. It might help explain some stuff

Josh | *Saturday, January 18 2025 12:01PM*

I serendipitously got a message from Stephanie. I told her I was probably recovering from psychosis. She was worried it was her fault for some reason. I've certainly never seen it that way.

Brittany and Samantha both messaged me. I'm just glad they read my thing, because I know it was a lot. Samantha offered to have a conversation Saturday afternoon, but it was already close to my bedtime.

After waking up that evening, I decided I was going to take a shower. And right after, I was going to do the thing. Oh, sweet sinful desire.

crinkle click **rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr** *crinkle crinkle*

Joe Rogan podcast, check it out!

The Joe

Rogan

Experience

rrrrrrrrrrrrrr *crinkle click crinkle*

I probably wouldn't have listened to it if I hadn't bothered to see that it was the My Big T.O.E guy. I *have* heard of that from somewhere. Granted, it may've been from my weird misadventures back in 2021. Anyway, the guy may be on to something, or he may be a male Persephone. I don't regret listening to it. It did sort of tie in with my lifelong fascination with self-organizing systems of negentropy.

I think I edited that nonsense out of 2021 for brevity. Like; negentropy pockets that are simpler than a prokaryote or more complex than an animal are all considered “non-living”. But, what incomprehensibly complex organism might *we* be the single dumb individual cells of? And what about the other end of the spectrum, where we decide things are non-living because of some silly technicality like being unable to reproduce? If *I* have a soul, what is the soul of a government, or a corporation, or a polymer? Why does negentropy sometimes gain *sentience*?

I had a text conversation with Samantha yesterday afternoon. She wanted to catch up; she refreshed me on a lot of COVID-era things that happened which I’d already heard about. It doesn’t sound like much new has happened other than her and Brittany getting married.

My face looks a lot more femme than it did a year ago, but I still have bald patches. That doesn’t exactly instill confidence that I’m ever going to have a normal head of hair again. If I do, it’ll probably be just in time for me to lose it again, or for it to go gray.

Nobody’s going to miss me. At least, nobody that matters. If I want to leave a suicide note, I may as well just put an anonymized version of this on the internet.

I mean, it was good talking to Samantha. She’s good people. I just... don’t see anyone mobilizing the troops or anything. And, that’s kinda what I need right now. Boots on the ground. Idk, like help moving and selling my house, maybe somewhere I can stay and get my shit together. Sometimes it feels like I need to live in a halfway house or something. Most of the time, I feel like I’d be just as well off in someone’s spare bedroom. I *do* think I’ve spent too much time alone stuck in my head with all this. I think I need to be around *normal* people for a while, like several hours a day.

It's like I'm deficient in some kind of societal vitamin. I had a weird childhood, I transitioned late, the COVID era happened right when I felt like I was entering "the prime of my life" at the age of 29... Now I've just *lost* it. I was behind before, but at least I felt like I could catch up.

Josh, Tommy, Brittany, Samantha... Persephone back in 2023, Heather didn't know anything about that concert back in 2022... I haven't given this to Kristina yet, and I don't think I *could* give it to Maureen.

I've gotten the message by now. Even if there *were* some sort of conspiracy, I've obviously been left out of it.

Last night, I thought to myself

I. Still. *Believe.*
In *something.*

I don't understand *what*. I just... feel it. Maybe I can't even call myself a hard atheist anymore. There's just... *something*. Voices from the beyond. No, not auditory hallucinations. No, not persecutory delusions. *Benevolent* delusions, maybe...

People living... seeing through *my* eyes. Maybe it's all just a delusion, but it's all I have left. Like they know the story already. The story of Rachael. Maybe I *will* do it after all. Maybe I *have*. Maybe I *always* do. A stock character. Maybe even the only *playable* character. A true transsexual from the year 2025. Up next, a swashbuckling pirate from the year 1649; followed by a Roman centurion from the year 51 BC. Don't touch that dial! I mean, what else could a stock transsexual from the year 2025 even *do* other than kill herself? Maybe that's the point of this simulation. It's a tearjerker. A tragedy.

I guess people will miss me a *little* bit. I'm just not getting what I need. I'm pretty sure I'm just going to die from a lack of help. I know I'm an adult and I'm supposed to pull myself

up by the boot straps. I just don't think I have the upper body strength.

Samantha reminded me that "Stephanie is still in NC"; but, I think I need more than that. I'm out of places to go, unless there's some ultimate deus ex machina that's just going to tear through time and space and get me all fixed up. Maybe *that's* why I still believe. Because it's my only hope.

Voices from the beyond. Clearly just trying to wreck my life, if they're trying to do anything at all. I've probably just made them all up. By withdrawing from society for all these years.

This is their favorite part.

My yard looks *bad*. I can't do anything to it. It's too far gone. I need help. There is none. I'm supposed to help myself. I'm supposed to be an adult. All the resources are too overwhelming. I need something hardcore. I guess you get that at the psych ward. I just feel hopeless. I really want aftercare, but that's too much to ask. I never really got the hang of dating, because I couldn't get up fast enough after what happened in high school. And I couldn't merge onto the freeway in college with BDSM, and I *really* knew I needed to do something in my mid-20s, I got back on the horse with transition, full-time, poly, COVID, trauma, Susan, aliens... I feel like I've just been beat up psychically. And there's no one waiting to take me in with open arms, except for my crazy mom. I know I'm better off dead.

I can't leave her this. The friends I *have* reached out to with this writing, they'll understand why I had to do it.

And that's it. Nobody's going to miss me when I'm gone.

I feel like no one really got to *know* me. Susan likes distorting my narrative into something *she* likes... I have no close friends on the level of, like, a partner or an ex or something. I mean, unless we count Stephanie or something.

This was my life. This was the product of my own free will. This is all my fault. I'm a grown-up, after all. And yet, I don't really believe my own words. How could this be *my* fault? You beat me down in high school, you never really made me feel like I could be anyone's woman until I'd long since moved past it... I think it's what she wanted, Susan. To bend me back into being a straight man. But, I was never that to begin with. Now I'm just a bent-up woman-ish or something.

It's just over for me. This is it. I'm already dead.

Don't mourn for me. I only hope that you can learn from my mistakes. There's a lot of weird shit happening in the world today; but I was *real*. Flesh and blood, with hopes and dreams and desires... with a sexual identity that just never really fit in anywhere. Maybe it did fit in somewhere, but I just didn't know where to go. Anyway, it's too late for me now.

Helium. I'm going to get it today. Right? It's almost 8am. On inauguration day. I may not kill myself, but I can at least get the stuff.

I mean, I don't think anyone really cares that I'm *suicidal*. Will you listen to yourself? Maybe I *do* need DBT.

Dude talked to Rogan about how there were high-entropy fear-based people, and low-entropy love-based people. Whoa is me, if it wasn't for bad luck I wouldn't have no luck at all... I feel like I at least *had* less entropy before I slipped and fell. Now I need somebody. To put me back in order. I'm fucking pathetic. You're supposed to *date* and *get married* at this age, Rachael. Like all your friends have done.

This world's a freeway. And I'm stuck on the shoulder. Nobody's going to stop and help me. Hell; I'll probably just get a ticket for my abandoned vehicle. Whoa is me. If it wasn't for bad luck...

Frankly, before all of this I think I was *toxicly* positive. And now I'm a radioactive waste dump. I really thought I would get it together... *tomorrow. Next week.*

Just... run, little Aiden. Don't make the same mistakes I did. Don't let yourself become a pathetic little 34-year-old who has no one to send their suicide note to.

Like, there are literal *trees* growing in my flower beds at this point. I'll need at least an *actual* shovel to dig them up.

I need help.

There *is* none!

I want a burrito. One day at a time. I want a burrito, and there's still less-than-half a pizza in the refrigerator.

I need help.

I still haven't called trans lifeline. Should I?

I finally sent the message to Chase last night. There's a pretty good chance they'll just say "Oh, you need to call your dedicated Relationship Manager." And, I don't *want* to call. Anyone, really, unless they're a long-lost friend or something. I know I'm being a fucking child. This is probably the part where I need actual DBT or something. I still don't think I was entirely wrong to be suspicious of the initial suggestion, all things considered.

Ugh. What a fucking *mess*. Nobody's ever going to read this. Fuck my life.

I know my neighbors hate me. I just wish I could tell them that I hate me, too.

I need help. There is none.

I need help. Samantha said she was going to talk to her therapist today about it. I can't imagine *they'll* have the missing piece...

I just wish I could talk to my younger self. Middle-school me. For just five minutes. I'd turn it all around, I swear. Dude on Rogan said sometimes the universe will just slip you into another timeline, or data stream or some shit, if you're really good and tuned in. You can't want it too badly, though. I guess we can just cross *me* off the list.

Maybe I was a raging transphobe in my last lifetime. Maybe I just wanted to understand. I don't. Understand. I'm still an atheist, right?

I'm not moving fast enough. This is bad. I'm not sure that I care. It just hurts. This is me. This *was* me. Now I'm just waiting. For Godot.



Figure 54: Waiting for Godot with English & Arabic Subtitles (<https://youtu.be/izX5dIzI2RE?t=6603>)

I woke up Monday evening to a lot of weird things in my news feed. And I knew, right then. I *had* to do it.

Maybe they'll see me as a martyr. Maybe it'll just get buried under things that are flashier and shorter and less grim to read. I don't know that it matters.

I don't care for religion. I don't understand this existence. I don't think I'm meant to. The world keeps telling me I'm on a path. I think this might be my path.

It didn't make sense until last night. All of this. My life, this universe... I didn't weave this. I'm just the punchline. The tuba player who dots the exclamation point. Some god's virgin sacrifice, to help *you* understand.

23 years of trans history. I've seen it all. I've aged out of Antijen, aged out of TNG (well, almost)... I've watched the COGIATI give way to the button test; debates about stem cell research give way to debates about kids on hormones and Lupron... There are a lot of weird things happening in the world today. I don't have all the answers. Maybe a bunch of chemicals got dumped in the water and it turned the freaking frogs gay. Maybe this many people were trans all along. I just don't know where they *were* before the last decade. Maybe it's Russians. Maybe it's the CCP. Maybe it's *us*. Confused humans in a radical acceptance circle-jerk. I'll never know, unless the beyond explains it to me after I'm dead. I just want you Christian conservatives to tell me what I was *supposed* to do. Other than simply not exist. It's easy for *you* to tell me to just not be *this*... Do you lack the theory of mind to imagine a world where *your* budding sexual identity is already taboo by middle school?

It's too perfect. Everything in my life has been set up for *this*. I was born to die. Just like the rest of us.

I don't know what the devil happened to me. But, I *believe* now. In something outside of *this*. I don't know if I'm about to get more than a probationary warning from Richard Dawkins for that, or...

I'm planning for the end of the month. January 31st.



Figure 55: WKUC Jerkocaust (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oe4dC10PqlU&t=4s>)

See, the problem with going to Party City is, it already feels like my day is winding down by like 10am. My schedule is weird. An early lunch is, like, dinner time.

Samantha just sent me a link to some shit I didn't even *know* about.

Durham Community Safety Department (DCSD) works to enhance public safety through community-centered approaches to prevention and intervention as alternatives to policing and the criminal legal system.

Well, how long has *that* been a fucking thing?

On June 27th, 2022...

Well I just keep winning the loser lottery...

DCSD launched 3 new crisis response units that aim to connect people experiencing non-violent mental health crises or quality of life concerns with the right care by sending new responses that better match residents' needs. A fourth unit launched at the end of September 2022. Our goal with these approaches is to connect our Durham neighbors to the right care — starting from the point at which someone calls 9-1-1, to the warm handoff to those prepared to help meet the needs of our neighbors in crisis.

Okay...

Do I fucking call *these* people? Part of me feels like it's too late now. The new administration has an obviously fascist agenda, I don't even really feel safe here anymore, and I feel like this is the only way I'm ever really going to have a voice.

I've probably written enough "woah is me" bullshit at this point. I'm on a schedule now, and I think my mind is made up. I'm not unaware of the irony of going from ignoring your therapist's questionable DBT recommendation, to oversharing in my very public and very whiny suicide note as I die of a martyr complex while likening myself to a sacrificial vestal virgin.

I just want there to be a reason for my doing this. And, I want that reason to be the restoration of sanity. I've watched us go from a myth and a joke, to the headlining issue in national politics. Some people think we're just born this way. Others think it's a lifestyle choice, or a social contagion, or a manifestation of more conventional mental illnesses. The reality is, you're both right. And, nobody's really talking about that.

Having spent my time in this community, I *really* don't think half of these people are "Harry Benjamin" transsexual. Hell; I'm struggling not to lie to *myself* about it, because I just want to go

back to the way things were. And, I can't. The arrows of time and entropy won't let me. You can't unscramble an egg.

I've seen what, to *me*, feel like really obvious cases of social contagion; myself included. I've watched trans and non-binary identities sweep through underground subcultures like BDSM and third wave intersectional feminism with the swiftness of a plague; before erupting into the mainstream with the highly publicized transition of Caitlyn Jenner and the first bathroom bills. And, I've seen it happen with other things; like this plural stuff back in 2019, and the recent trend toward self-diagnosis of mental illnesses.

If I were to suggest any one root cause, it would simply be too much information. Millennials grew up with instant access to the sort of information Generation X youth could only find by living half their life in a library, or by getting an advanced degree. Compounding the problem of too much information, is the problem of half-truths and outright *misinformation*. People used to learn about difficult or complicated subjects *in context*; by listening to entire lectures, or reading through entire books. I think both sides in America are struggling to integrate the shift toward bite-sized pieces of crowdsourced infotainment for learning about even relatively complex topics. Laypeople are drawn toward fascinating and bizarre phenomena; like multiple personalities, or women trapped in men's bodies. Or perhaps, vague and nonspecific ailments to which they might place blame, or use as an explanation for their differences and shortcomings. The more conspiratorial-minded are drawn toward fascinating and bizarre explanations for what they see as the hidden agendas and ulterior motives of those in power. These people are unlikely to spend their time obsessing over mundane aspects of political science and business administration; or boring mental illnesses like depression and bipolar disorder.

As I watch the backlash against "DEI" unfold at an alarming rate, I can't help but think... I understand *why* they're so angry.

The last decade has been full of alphabet people and MeToo and minorities on pedestals and white men played by women of color and weird fake gentrified astroturfed diversity. And, I think a lot of people really *do* want to “make America great again”. Not like the 1950s as we often joke about on the left; but just “great” like it was in the year 2012 or something. Like, before trans people and gamergate and the “culture war”. We’re sick of uncreative attempts at pasting women and black people over the parts where white men traditionally go; it comes across as “whiteface”, and it’s somehow *still* offensive to people of color. It feels like the turn-of-the-millennium multiculturalism I grew up with has given way to a sort of... *mono*-culturalism, for lack of a better word. It feels like all the distinct, colorful minority groups we *used* to have were assimilated with Borg-like Draconianism into this sort of thick homogenized high-fructose *goop* which we’ve termed “third wave intersectional feminism”. And, I mean this in the least misogynistic way possible. I guess what I’m trying to say is, feminism started getting *weird* in the 21st century, once it wasn’t really even about women anymore.

I think there’s a creeping feeling that DEI is creating this world where underqualified minorities will always beat a rockstar white guy who’s really good at his thing. While I don’t think there’s any truth to that, nobody (myself included) wants to be a diversity hire. Hell; I’d like to think I could actually pull my own weight for an extended period of time if I wasn’t dealing with childhood trauma-turned Freemasons and UFOs, or some other stupid bullshit.

I don’t know what I’m trying to say. I know it *sounds* like a defense of DEI rollbacks, but it’s really *not*. I think what we’re witnessing is a terrifying overcorrection of what’s *really* a much more subtle problem. And, *that’s* what frustrates me right now. We need to act like we’re steering a big ship, but it feels like we’re skidding around on ice. Everyone has *really* big goddamn feelings, myself included. But like, a lot of powerful people aren’t really thinking rationally, and we’ve started making

wild bull-in-a-china-shop decisions just because *maybe* gender dysphoria is a little bit contagious sometimes.

I might be oversimplifying a field of study I don't know much about; but I've gotten the distinct impression diversity has been reduced to a sheer numbers game. If 13.7% of the population is black, then 13.7% of your engineers had better be black. The white man must still be keeping them down if we aren't at 13.7% yet. If half the population is female, then half of them ought to be women. While I understand the ethos, I sometimes feel like it's oversimplified. Maybe it's kinda just *natural* for there to be more male engineers, and more female nurses, and more black mumble rappers. Maybe the stereotype that Asians are good at math, or that Jews make good lawyers and accountants exists for a reason.

There's this line we all grow up hearing as Americans.

All men* are created equal.

It's probably because of my science and engineering background, that I'm unable *not* to scrutinize this universal Western platitude at least a *little*. Because, this isn't the same thing as saying "all men ought to be treated equally", or "all men ought to be given equal opportunities"; or even "all men ought to have equitable, adversity-adjusted access to the same opportunities". In science, you can't just *say* everyone is triple-equal-sign equal just because it feels good and keeps people from enslaving each other. #TODO I'm abusing the triple-equal sign but it sounds good

Not only is there no obvious mechanism by which we could all even *be* created triple-equal-sign equal; the whole thing also falls apart on inspection. Some of us are disabled, some of us have rare gifts, some of us are modern-day Renaissance men, others are sort of just not really good at anything. To me, the fact that we very clearly *weren't* all created equal is the basis for real, organic, *home-grown* diversity. It ought to be about celebrating

our differences, and spotlighting those who defy stereotypes or overcame adversity. Not whining about how the white man is still keeping people down until 13.7% of the engineering and IT departments are black people.

I guess to me, *real* diversity isn't quotas and astroturfing and phony bullshit. It's scaring the fuck out of the one trans person in the room, and then making *them* feel silly when all you're doing is talking about the lambda design rules. I think that kind of visibility is better than a dozen mediocre diversity hires.

I often feel like a fuck-up when I compare myself to my childhood role model; but the reality is, I had a pretty crazy childhood. Lynn (erm... Professor Conway) came from an engineering family, and was encouraged at a young age to "build things that worked" (according to her bio). I came from a working class family, where my dad was able to point me toward broad hobbies like Linux and ham radio; but, I *really* had to teach myself everything I wanted to know, and I often did so poorly at first. My parents couldn't really help me with schoolwork once I was past the fifth grade; and I had *atrocious* study and homework habits, along with an after school job from 9th grade on. When I saw how slow at math I was compared to my peers, I often felt like I just didn't have the genetics for it; nobody on either side of my family has a four-year degree, and I wondered if there might be a reason for that. I often forget that a lot of my peers likely came from very different families than mine. Their parents were often teachers or doctors or scientists or engineers, they usually went to school in the city where they could take any AP class they wanted... and they probably had genuine advisement that pushed them forward with goals, instead of just bumbling around in the spare bedroom and being made to already feel smart for it. I was considered precociously smart by a bunch of people just because they didn't understand what I was doing; but I wasn't nearly as "gifted" as people made me out to be. I was just *precocious*, and really could've benefited from some sort of polishing stage before I went right off to a university from Bladen County.

When I think of the present culture war issue of equity, I think of this sort of imbalance and how we might correct it. The modern approach of padding the numbers by throwing minorities right into the fire with white upper crust city slickers seems a bit naive; and may even appear to prove the “race realist” types *right* if the minorities were to underperform relative to their able-bodied white male counterparts. As I’ve grown older, I’ve often wished that there was some kind of “decompression chamber”, in between life in the country with rednecks where your self-esteem as a trans woman is likely deflated, and life at a university where most of your peers have already dated and made friends as themselves back in high school. There’s unfortunately a lot of pressure on folks to graduate in four years, and we don’t really have a concept of redshirting for something that isn’t a sport. I’d like to think we might manage this more effectively as a society in the future, especially where we can see that university in the big city might be a little bit of a culture shock.

I guess my hot take about equity and inclusion, is that we’ve been naively shoving extra minorities into the execute stage, when we really ought to be focused on getting these folks who both show promise and have childhood adversity ready in the fetch and decode stages of the pipeline. Because, something like being a great engineer really *does* start in elementary school. I think of how much I could’ve benefited from a little extra help in my youth; and then there are other kids just like me who didn’t even have a dad to make them curious about Linux and ham radio as a kid. And rather than just shoving anyone who’s a girl or a black kid toward STEM fields indiscriminately, I think it’s really important that we find those Harry Potter kids and send them to their Hogwarts. And, I don’t think we should make too many assumptions if the ratios aren’t perfect right away. I think quality is way more important than quantity.

There are just a lot of variables, I feel like. Not only were we probably not all made “triple equal sign” equal; we didn’t even all have qualitatively equivalent childhoods. There are

talentless people from well-to-do families who've got no soul but will probably at least make adequate engineers. The next Lynn Conway is out there somewhere, but she probably grew up dirt poor and doesn't stand a chance; even against a pot smoking burnout like me, who at least grew up playing with Linux and living like they're trying to win the messy hamshack contest. There's a guy out there who genuinely manages to defy anyone's preconceptions about black engineers, and there's some woman who really should've majored in political science instead. And the next Lynn Conway might actually be a Rockefeller or something, and everyone's going to complain about how she owes everything to her privileged white upbringing when really her mom was absent and her dad was an abusive drunk and she's actually just sort of a beast at what she does.

And, that's the problem with the modern world. Y'all paint with really broad strokes; while the demographic portrait of America is only becoming more nuanced, with well-off minorities and victimized white dudes all mixed in with an ever-rising glass ceiling and a blurring of lines between identities and lifestyle choices. If you don't keep up, *you'll* be the ones on the wrong side of history.

I remember applying to schools back in the late 2000s; and there was usually an opportunity to write an essay about adversity that you've faced. I always *considered* writing about my gender stuff; but I never did. It wasn't really *cool* yet. I'd learned firsthand that people won't be accepting of it just because they're your friend, and it's a lot to ask someone who's already been through that to just try opening up about it with a stranger. I knew there'd be a *lot* of pressure to transition if I played that card to get into college or the School of Science and Math or something; and being "born a pervert" hardly qualifies as adversity anyhow. It stings a little that writing about your gender feels on your college application was only cool for about ten years, and now we're *here*.

I wonder if Blare White is feeling like leopards ate *her* face, now that she can't have an "F" in her passport anymore. See? They don't care if we're "truetrans", sweetie. They'll throw you under the bus just like that faggot Ernst Röhm.

(Am *I* truetrans, though?)

I mean, a lot of the shit I started bitching about late last year kinda *is* coming true. Maybe I really *am* psychic. (It's a joke.) Or, maybe I really *am* creating my own reality, like Dr. Crusher in that Star Trek episode. (Only joking a little.)

Should I somehow not kill myself, I just don't want to live the rest of my miserable life as this political pawn whose rights change on a whim every four years. I feel like we've lost the thing that made America "America" in the last decade; and like we're on the verge of having *actual* fascism vs. communism in 21st century America.

#inaccurate Despite what I've said thus far, I've already decided I see no value in talking about post-inauguration politics. Except to say, this son of a bitch better make eggs really goddamn cheap.

I had a meltdown a little bit ago. The first one since I thought Emma might have something to do with my problem last summer; and then probably since I thought the government was fucking with my food and medicine.

I was scrolling around on my phone, and some folks were talking like I might still be able to get my passport with the right gender marker on it if I were to do it like *right now*. Although I'm kinda planning on killing myself, that *did* fill me with some shed of optimism should I not go through with it.

I then quickly found [this article](#), which sounded a little less optimistic.

Something about the whiplash of this situation just made me fucking *lose it*. In an attempt to earn Vickie's DBT recommendation, I started throwing things around the room, for the first time in like forever. I threw my clipboard at the wall, making another hole in the drywall near a previous one from when I thought humanity enslaved the first witch or something.

I decided to climb into the hammock and write about my feelings in real time. After a few seconds, I found myself with the barely repressible urge to yeet my laptop across the room. I started screaming and making primal growling sounds, then I went back to my room and started throwing the lid to the Brita pitcher around.

Toward the end of my fury, I sent Josh a text I'd wished I sent a long time ago.

I fucking hate you. We aren't friends anymore.

Moi | Thursday, January 23 2025 07:42AM

I proceeded to get high and try writing about my feelings in the hammock again. It's 8:18 right now.

I maybe feel a little bad for the way I did it. Because I mean, that might be the last thing I ever say to him. I'm really hurt. I'm sort of just mad at everyone right now. I don't really care about biting the hand that feeds me, even if there were one feeding me right now. I don't want to kiss anyone's ass.

I mean; the thought occurred to me that I should maybe go ahead and get a passport. But I figured I had better things to do and... now I'm *here*. Ugh. Maybe it won't matter.

I just want you people to know, that I fucking hate you. You people never loved me. And now I'm just *this*. Just, try fucking better next time. I fucking hate this planet.

I'm feeling a little... well, I mostly just have a rage hangover. I just wish I could give this to you assholes, in a bottle or something. Everything is just crumbling all around me. Not only is there no hope left; it feels like the universe is just pointing and laughing now. Just like I can't find a seat on the bus again. I fucking hate this. I fucking hate all of you.

There's only one thing to do to a goddamn bully. And it isn't to go to the principal's office. I've always regretted not fighting back properly, and just letting my rage bottle up until I melt down and start banging my trumpet around or something. Because, you're probably going to get in trouble either way. But if you can give him a black eye first, you'll at least *look cool* while you're getting in trouble. And, he might not fuck with you anymore after that.

That text I sent Josh was mean, but I kind of *did* mean it. I'm just tired of being walked all over. I've been taking the high road since ninth fucking grade and I'm goddamn sick of it. It feels good for *me* to be the one hurting *him* for once. I want *his* fucking rights to change overnight every four years, because that's the only way he or any of these other theory-of-mind-lacking Republicans are ever going to fucking understand.

It's nobody's fault but mine. I should've known not to trust anyone I grew up with. I should've known not to take their advice, or let them discourage me.

I don't even know where I could post this unedited without it getting instantly removed. 4chan is pretty wild, but I doubt it would stick around most corners of Reddit for very long. It's pretentious enough that I'm thinking about giving this to the internet just before I go. I'm sure *somebody* will read it... I kind of just want to show this to the world, because nobody fucking

understands me. Not even my friends. And, I don't think that's even an exaggeration.

Somebody evil wants this. Somebody wants a civil war. Somebody wants me to kill myself. They're winning.

My deadline is just over a week away. I can do this.

There's no way I'm going to survive this. I feel like I'm bleeding out, psychologically. This passport thing doesn't even matter. It's just rubbing salt in the wound while I'm bleeding out.

Last week on Earth, Rachael. Whatcha going to do? Stay mad at the world? I need to shift my outlook. And, I have a *lot* of work to do, still.

Samantha sent me a bunch more resources; which would be more helpful if I was in a different state of mind. I don't know that much of anything could change my course at this point. Not only can I solve all my problems; I think I could make a difference in the world by doing this, too. Like those monks who set themselves on fire. I'm just another whiny tranny otherwise.

Who are these people? Well, I think I can see several different archetypes.

- Some of them are just “phenotypically gay”. Like... we all know what a *gay man* is, right? Effeminate, floppy wrists, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, that intonation in their voice... their lifestyle choices make them transgender by definition; but it seems obvious that they just have the “gay gene”, for lack of a better word. (I realize we haven't found a “gay gene” per se.)
- Some of them strike me as “gender furies”.

- Others seem like weeaboo neckbeards who got lost on their way to the anime convention.
- Some of them probably have personality disorders that give them a fragile or ephemeral sense of self.
- Sometimes, I think it spreads via contact with partners and close friends *even in the absence of an underlying personality disorder*. I feel like there's a "they/them to HRT pipeline", and I'm not sure how I feel about it.
- And, some of them are otherwise very normal people who probably just got turned around during an identity crisis, and were met with radical acceptance.
- At least a handful of people I've met really *did* seem to have the Rachael Brown syndrome. Some of them have symptoms that presented earlier and more severely than even mine.

There's a myth that began circulating in the mid 2010s, that taking the wrong gender's hormones would *always* give someone gender dysphoria; that you could just try *a little* hormones, and if you weren't slitting your wrists after a couple of months then it probably means you really *were* trans all along. While I think that'd be *nice*, I really don't think it's the reality. I think there's a pretty wide middle zone, where lots of folks could probably do *either gender's* hormones, and still thrive so long as they had a support network and Maslow's hierarchy and shit.

I think a better analogy might be that of ADHD medication. Lots of people can tolerate it, and lots of people might even *like it* and *feel better on it*. But, only a small subset of those people actually *have* ADHD. And while your neurotypical ass might even perform better at school or work on the stuff, someone with ADHD *really* can't be normal without it. In a similar vein, someone who's *actually* transsexual is unlikely to live a normal life without some kind of medical intervention. Whether neurotypical people should be allowed to take hormones or stimulant medication is a different issue; although, I'd rather us not take the "nanny state" approach to it.

I don't want anyone to get carried away with armchair diagnosing their transgender friends as one of these archetypes. There were a good number of anime fans on Antijen. Personality disorders are pretty common, and some overlap with classic transsexualism and BPD, for example, is bound to exist. I'm looking at the population as a whole when I make these generalizations, and I don't want people to be labeled transtrenders just because they watch My Hero Academia and listen to Kero Kero Bonito.

Frankly, I think the most important thing to take away from this is... it *doesn't matter*. Who the fuck *cares* if a grown-ass man wants to take hormones and eat hamburgers while dressed like an anime girl? You know what *I* have to say about it?

God. Bless. *America*.

You know what you should tell your kids when they ask difficult questions? "Oh, he's just being silly." See? That wasn't so bad, was it?

Republicans want Draconian policies that would snub the next Lynn Conway. The left is flirting with limiting free speech to curtail the spread of fascism, in the same vein as Western Europe. We often compare ourselves to Western Europe; but America is a very unique place on the world stage. Decade after decade, each generation finds a new way to hold fast to these ten basic principles outlined in the Bill of Rights. We don't fight yellow journalism by locking up journalists. We don't fight gun violence by repealing the Second Amendment. We don't keep political prisoners, we don't dispense summary justice... and except perhaps for some dark times before the 20th century, we don't have mass graves. In a lot of ways, we're even more free than the Nordic countries modern liberals often want us to take notes from. I think religion is pretty dumb, but I'll still fight for its right to exist in America. I don't like fascists, but I think they should still have free speech. And yes, it's frustrating when it feels like the side of logic and reason is losing miserably. But,

this is America. And, it's really important for us to stick to our principles, now more than ever.

And the reason for this, if it isn't already obvious, is that we're under attack. The Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, the North Koreans... they all want to destroy America. And, they're doing it from the inside. And... it's *working*. "Drag queen story time" (or, really, drag queen *anything*) was never a thing in the Antijen era. I'm pretty sure this is something invented by Russian trolls to make trans people look *really dumb*; and we've been lapping up the Kool-Aid because it tastes sweet to us. I know I probably sound like an Uncle Tom to a lot of you LGBT people, but... transsexuals used to be *way* more respectable. We were just regular, boring, everyday people with this one weird birth defect.

When I first came out to my mother in 9th grade, she panicked about me "labeling myself" and getting sucked into a "lifestyle". It's only now that I'm older that I understand what was going through her head. Drag queens, Frank N. Furter, Maury Povich, Buffalo Bill... I mean, unless you knew who *Andrea James* or *Lynn Conway* was, there really *wasn't* much positive representation of transsexuals out there. While the idea of transsexualism as a "lifestyle choice" was basically just a cruel myth in the 2000s, it's gradually taken on the *characteristics* of one. And, I have nothing *against* alternative lifestyles. I'm actually a kinkster.

In the 2000s, the focus used to be on assimilation into mainstream society as a woman. These days, it feels like the world encourages you to seek out "the LGBT community" for these feelings; which quickly becomes your friend group, and your dating pool. This is exacerbated by the fact that we often lose a good chunk of our friends and family in the process of transitioning, and we're all looking for something to fill that void. The problem is that the latter approach quickly gets you sucked into an echo chamber, where things like mysticism and magick and exotic mental illnesses might start to feel normal, or even *passé*.

I don't feel like I've succeeded in socially transitioning. I've never had any *girl*-friends, unless we're going to count trans people. I've had little "normal female" input into my life outside my mom, and I don't think that's healthy for someone in their 20s or 30s. Meeting people at this age gets increasingly difficult, because most folks are preoccupied with dating, marriage, and their career by then.

This doesn't matter.

It keeps feeling like the universe is trying to tell me something. I know what delusions of reference are. I still don't understand.

I've had the Rolling Stones in my head lately. What was it that started that? Oh, I remember. I've been thinking about buying suicide gas, and it got me thinking about Jumping Jack Flash. I still plan on listening to it on my way back from Party City when I finally go. I guess that segued into Gimme Shelter, Street Fighting Man, and Sympathy for the Devil after Monday, because I feel like that's where we are right now in America. The first of those has really felt like the song of this week to me.

(I don't *just* listen to old people music, but I guess I am kind of an old soul.)

Early in the morning, I decided I was going to get McDonald's 20 minutes before closing time. I don't normally eat McDonald's when I have my life together, by the way. At the risk of sounding pretentious.

My phone wasn't playing Spotify for some reason. My old iPod classic from college that stays hidden away in my center console occupying one of the USB ports had reset itself to playing the alphabetically first song in some ancient iTunes library. Ugh. I don't *want* to listen to A.F.U. by Van Halen. And, I don't feel like picking a playlist. I start on down the road, listening to obscure indy music on college radio.

They closed early, which tends to happen a lot. Whatever. I drove to the Morrisville McDonald's that's ostensibly open 24/7 but also sometimes closes late at night. I saw someone in there, but they too had cones blocking their drive-thru. I headed west; pondering whether I *really* wanted to eat Cook-Out two nights in a row.

I ordered two chicken quesadillas with cheddar bites and onion rings, just like I had 24 hours before. I handed the same gentleman the same debit card, hoping I still have enough of a balance. I drove home, flipping between indy rock and indy hip-hop.

I was a few minutes away, when they started playing this song that immediately stuck out as lyrically alluding to Gimme Shelter. I tried not to read too much into it. It was, uhh... **this dude.**

I kept listening to this song, and it kept feeling increasingly relevant to *me in particular*. That's okay. I might still be a little psychotic. We all know I'm batshit crazy by now, right?

The song ends just before I get to my neighborhood. I unwrap the first quesadilla, thoroughly intending to look this song up on Genius once I finish at least half of my meal.

I killed the last of the bowl while scrolling through the lyrics on my phone. I haven't repacked it for like 36 hours. I'm doing pretty good, see?

There were much more popular songs on Genius called "Wild Horses". The first one was a song I'd never heard of by... The Rolling Stones. Wow. Okay. Maybe they did that on purpose. It seemed like its own kind of relatable, but I won't go into it.

It feels like this song is about me and what I'm going through *right now*. That's okay, though. A couple years ago, I thought "Jumpsuit" by Twenty One Pilots was about me going to Gitmo. So, okay. I probably have delusions of reference or something.

The album artwork evokes themes of angels and demons and conspiracy theories. Let's not get too carried away, Rachael. You can't afford to go off the deep end again...

I can't help but ask myself, perched like The Thinker on the porcelain throne, what this guy means by "one eye closed"? What is the universe trying to tell me? Does that mean I *shouldn't* kill myself? I *half*-understand? What am I missing?

I decide to look this guy up on Spotify, only to discover the reason I was forced to listen to college radio on my nighttime tour of the western triangle in the first place; my premium membership was cut off for non-payment. That makes sense. It *has* been warning me about that for the last several days. I thought about switching to the free plan, but it really lifts my spirits and doesn't cost much more than a burrito. So I paid it.

I saw that this guy has like 100k monthly listeners. That's at least an order of magnitude or two more than I was expecting. Okay. I've definitely been sucked into more obscure indy before.

I found that same trippy artwork, and out of curiosity scrolled to the bottom to see when it came out. Wait, that looks familiar... So I was all like `cat include/frontmatter.yaml`, and yeah it is! That's the date I started writing my thing. June 12th, 2024. At least, that's what I wrote down. I think I may've actually started writing it a few days prior and the timestamp changed.⁶² So I start marching my way down to Carol in H.R. and I say "Carrrrrol! Carrrrrol!" That wasn't even a Friday or anything, right? It was just some random day in the middle of the week.

Who the fuck drops a new album on *hump day*? Well, I guess it's actually a single. Is that normal? Let's look at his other releases. Alright, they've actually released a lot of things on Wednesday. See? That's why we have to look before we get all carried away. The radio station has played this song 37 times

⁶²Ghostwriter was prone to do this shit before I switched to Obsidian.

since it was released last year, and there are probably lots of others that would fit this situation just as well.

Ugh. What a life.

It's just *this* shit, though. It keeps feeling like the universe has some sort of sentience, and it keeps manipulating the probabilities of events throughout my life in *just the right way*. Like, it can't give you a pecan out of a bag of 100 marbles, but it *can* just decide to give you the one pink marble in the sack at just the right moment.

Why do I only have one eye open? What does this mean?

I've been concerned that a large trash bag would be too permeable to helium. I've decided with the help of AI that I can probably make a better sack using a space blanket and Mylar tape. I'm planning to lay in the hammock, after raising the head end of it. This should keep me from falling over when I pass out.

There's a sort of grave feeling, that I may've found *the* way to do this. This is shaping up to be damn close to a DIY Sarco pod. I sort of don't think I even need a backup solution like charcoal; and I'd rather not burn shit inside the house anyhow, even if I won't be the person cleaning it up.

I keep getting a burrito from Chipotle day after day. Every day at around 10am, the same thought always pops into my head.

You know... it's not *illegal* to eat Chipotle every day of the week...

At least *some* of them recognize my face or my car or, more likely, my halal hoodie. I'd normally pick a different meal, or at least a different Chipotle to preserve my much-prized anonymity, but I'm not sure I care at this point. I don't know if I'll make my Friday deadline, but I literally can't keep going much later.

A lot of you want to wait until there's "more research" on trans people. But the thing of it is, enough research has already been done, all throughout the 20th century *at least*. It was always under the radar of national politics; because frankly, *there just weren't that many of us*. There was this dude born in the 19th century, Harry Benjamin, who studied us his whole career and died of old age in 1986 or some shit. He lived to be over 100.

If there's anything new that requires additional research, it's the question of *why the fuck everyone has "pronouns" now*. Because, the *transsexual* phenomenon is *anything* but new; but this weird culture war bullshit *definitely* wasn't really a thing until the last decade. I mean, *Aunty* never asked me what my pronouns were... And, you'd know I was lying to you at this point if I told you nothing has changed since the year 2005. But frankly, very little changed from 1985 to 2005. Mostly just the death of Premarin and the rise of Blanchardianism.

It's the task of each generation, to derive our own culture from that of our parents.

I'm a millennial, right? I was born in 1990. That's, like, the middle of the road. Millennials and Generation X. We're the ones who are inheriting the Earth right now.

The last generation of scientists was pretty cool. They were probably the first generation who saw their female colleagues as equals. They've embraced change, while not yielding to dogma or superstition. They stayed *cool*; through the Cold War, McCarthyism, Vietnam, Watergate, stagflation, the Bush wars... And now we're here with our own problems. The post-9/11 world, 2008, memes, the energy and subsequent disillusionment of electing the first black president, the coining of the term "fake news"...

I can mostly relate to "socialized male" people, because that was *my* childhood. If you were like me, you probably saw a good man or two ruined by what *everyone* knew was a false accusation. It probably made you a little angsty when they tried to tell you

“that *never* happens” in the Women and Gender Studies class they made you take as an undergrad; and you probably felt like you couldn’t speak up about it without being gawked at, as you ponder whether you just need to remember that it’s “not all men” while you try and get this nasty taste down your throat. Like your medicine for having been born a guy in the year 1980- or 1990-something. Maybe they even start to gaslight you into thinking Mr. Long could’ve done it *after all*. Then this Anita Sarkeesian lady who reminds you *a little too much* of your Women and Gender Studies professor makes a big stink about your taste in video games, and... maybe you go full-blown MRA, maybe you *don’t*. But, you’re starting to feel under attack. Now it’s 2015 and everyone’s “triggered”, Caitlyn Jenner’s a thing, and these Anita Sarkeesian Women-and-Gender-Studies-professor-types come back out of the woodwork to tell you that “👊 TRANS 👊 WOMEN 👊 ARE 👊 WOMEN!!!”, and that there aren’t really even two genders like everyone thinks, and you’re just kinda like “Oh, brother...” Then MeToo becomes a thing, and you can’t help but wonder what percentage of these accusations are false because you *know* it’s not zero, and those obnoxious third wave intersectionally feminist people are back again so soon to tell you to “👊 BELIEVE 👊 ALL 👊 WOMEN!!!” And you’re just sort of like “Ugh, maybe the storm’ll pass soon...” Now you have Jira tickets to rename your master branch in GitLab so diversity hires don’t think your company supports slavery, and it’s easy enough to change even if it breaks your CI/CD pipeline, but now everyone’s putting their pronouns in their email signature *just to make sure nobody gets confused and hurts anyone’s feelings*, and you’re like “Sheesh, when is this going to *end*?” And now it’s 2023, and I can’t put on the radio without hearing some indy rapper rap that he doesn’t give a fuck what your pronouns are, and it feels like it’s only *me* who’s thinking “Look, this isn’t the future Andrea James or Calpernia Addams wanted to create *at all*, okay? Remember when being deep stealth was *cool*? I guess you don’t... Am I an Uncle Tom?”

Now it's 2024, and you're thinking "Oh, what's the *worst* that could happen if we re-elect Trump? We go back to the year 2017?", and you're probably not crazy about voting for someone who didn't even win the nomination, maybe you blame Joe Biden *himself* for the post-COVID economy and the rising cost of groceries, and maybe part of you doesn't want to feel like you helped put a "diversity hire" in the White House after this weird ten years we've had, so... maybe you vote for Trump, maybe you vote for Kamala because you think Trump is a madman and a felon... *a lot* of you probably sat this one out because you were like "fuck *this*..."

And me... I *refuse* to live in a world where my value is that of a mere pawn. I'm *at least* a solid knight, goddamn you. I don't *have* to live here. I don't *have* to live at all.

I wonder if Josh would start throwing shit at *his* walls if he woke up one evening to learn he can't get a normal passport until the next time we have a Democratic president. Or if he'd still just be really excited about how Trump's gonna help the economy. I mean, all of my *other* shit has been changed over for years. Except for my Ohio birth certificate, which is just impossible. It's degrading. They might as well be telling me to wear a gold star that says "Jude" on it.

Here's the deal. You don't want to hear any more of this weird third wave feminist bullshit if you're my target audience. And, I'm gonna spare you. Because, I don't really like this phony bullshit either, and you've been listening to it for the last ten years. You know what you decided to do after ten years of it? No, not just rolling back all the weird liberal bullshit... We've never actually *had* this few rights before, *ever*. At least not as a North Carolina citizen. I mean; I guess HB2 was also bad, but I guess I'm less pissy about it because it didn't affect me. I mean, shit *does* have to get kinda personal for me to start throwing shit at walls. You know what the advice for getting the right gender marker *used* to be? Oh, just try not filling that part out

and let *them* check the right box so it's not even perjury. It was uncomfortable living in a legal gray area, but the thing about it is *there really weren't that many of us*. Now I can't even go to Party City to look for suicide gas without seeing *at least one* of those hybrid rainbow/trans pride flags.

Dude. This is *weird*. For there to suddenly be *this many of us* is a *huge* goddamn red flag. Some people act like it's only conservatives blowing our true numbers out of proportion, but like... who's buying all the trans pride flags? I *never* thought I'd see the day. I didn't even know we *had* a flag until like 2017. I keep pinching my nose to reality check myself. This place is *so bizarre*.

I'll try and guide you through this place, alright. Let me be your Morpheus, broseph. First of all, this might not even be real. Let's just assume it is, though. There used to be transsexual people and transgender people, and everything was all chill. We were just different. There were even crossdressers and drag queens and shit. The life goal of, like, *all* the transsexuals in the year 2005 was to pass well enough to go deep stealth and just live a normal life as our target gender. Transsexuals were always about how we're just born different and we need the hormones and surgeries and shit to live a normal life; but that it's *really* serious, and it's not something you should just do on a whim or for purely fetishistic reasons. Nobody was really *advocating* for anything less. We still bitched about the "gatekeepers" on our mailing lists; but, we always got through the gatekeeping eventually. It was sort of this rite of passage.

(It's tragic that I ultimately decided I wasn't "trans enough" to make it through the gatekeeping, when really I was probably just a woman who wanted someone to fuck me like a woman and I made myself out to be a pervert for it. I don't think that's the community's *or* Ray Blanchard's fault. I think I just had a really confusing, sexually repressive childhood on top of everything else.)

So, I kind of dropped out of the transsexual scene for a few years between 2008 and 2017, and when I came back *everything* was different. It reminded me of Tumblr, or that Women and Gender Studies class I had to take in college or some shit. And not only were hormones not just for transsexuals anymore, but you'd actually get *yelled at by SJWs on the internet* for suggesting that they ought to be; this was simply *the way of the world* just a few years earlier. It was like I was the last gender bender or something. I considered bitching about it on the internet, but I decided maybe I ought to listen before I speak because I've been out of the loop for several years. I was shocked, though not disappointed, that I could now get hormones without even really going through the hardcore gatekeeping like they made you do back in the day. Because, maybe some part of me still felt like I wouldn't make the cut otherwise. I started going to local trans groups, and some of the people may've seemed a little different at first, but the thing about me is that *I'm* pretty different; and after having already been acclimated to weird internet people from years spent in the BDSM scene, these folks seemed pretty normal pretty quickly. I quickly bought into the "everyone's valid" and "there's more than one way to be trans" zeitgeist; largely because I considered *myself* to be one of the excluded people under the stricter standards of decades past. I met people who were older than me and just figuring out they were different post-Jenner, I met people who were happily married with children, a couple of whom managed to stay that way...

These people became my friends. I didn't really *have* other friends at the time, except for Josh and some kinksters and college smoking buddies I'd lost touch with if I can even count that. I didn't have exes because I hadn't figured out how to *date* as whatever I was. These people became my tribe, and I stopped even *considering* the possibility that I might somehow be fundamentally different from my new friends. Lauren stepped down as the group leader of TT after quietly admitting that she wasn't so sure about non-binary people, and it was barely a

hiccup in this radically accepting and increasingly diverse group. I grit my teeth as one of the new attendees came dressed like a literal anime girl. I ignored the inner voice that tried to tell me “Oh, that person’s just a neckbeard or something”. I figured it must just be “a trans thing” when suddenly half my friends seemed to have people living inside their heads overnight. They even got me thinking “mysticism and magic” was a worthwhile field of study. Ironically, now I really *do* think there’s something calling me from the beyond. I don’t think any of you know what the fuck it *is*... I went off the deep end, lost touch with *everyone*... And only with that much distance have I been able to fully grasp how *weird* shit has gotten. If we were all wearing mom’s clothes in primary school it’d be one thing, but like... they’re that much different from me *and* there’s all this weird shit going on?

I just didn’t want to believe it. We’ve transitioned together, altered our bodies with lasers and hormones and surgeries and shit... we don’t seem to have regrets, any of us. We’ve happily transitioned, me and my friends. But... I don’t think they’re the *same* as me. I’m right back where I started. They’re transgender, and *I’m* transsexual. I just didn’t want to be problematic, I guess. I just didn’t want to be truescum. All this third wave intersectional feminist stuff has a way of making *me* feel like I’m being the reactionary one when something doesn’t feel right, when *really* I think I was right all along. False accusations, transtrenders, misandry... these are all new, post-9/11 problems that nobody’s ever really dealt with on a large scale, and your Women and Gender Studies professor isn’t going to teach you about them for a while.

Alright, Neo. Today, hormones and surgeries are for transsexuals *and* transgender people. That’s why everyone’s doing them all of a sudden. Because now there’s a bunch of *transgender* people, and they beat down the gates. I don’t know how bad it is, but the odds might be as slim as 10 to 1. I *know* we still exist. But we’re *way* outnumbered; and the few of us who openly espouse 2008-era transmedicalism get spat on and shoved to the

fringes of the community. Ironically, they're taken seriously by neither liberals *nor* conservatives. There are effectively only two parties now; everyone's valid and you are if you think you are; or, there are only two genders and trans is a mental illness.

Something you might not guess about me is, I don't really *care* that transgender people exist. I didn't care in 2008, and I don't care *now*. Yeah there are a bunch of them, and it's a free country. There are a bunch more furies, too. I *am* worried that a lot of these kids are doing it (medically transitioning) for all the wrong reasons; but I think the answer to that is to just push for more gatekeeping, and for the standards of care for minors to defer more toward Lupron and social transition as opposed to surgeries and hormone replacement therapy.

I might not be killing myself if I thought we had a chance otherwise. The world doesn't need another whiny truescum blogger or YouTuber. The world needs someone to *spill the tea*. That's why I have to do this. Because otherwise you're just going to spit on me and shove me toward the fringes like everyone who came before me. They're already trying their best, and they're failing *miserably*.

It took a *really* long time for me to get to this point. If you're a reasonable human being with these same life experiences, chances are you would've done the same thing as *me* back in 2017. You quickly see how poorly transmedicalists are treated, and that naturally makes you want to ignore the red flags and give the mainstream transgender community a chance. The *last* thing any of us wants is to be ostracized in our own community after a lifetime of ostracization. In some ways, it felt like maybe the world really *was* full of people like me back in the 2000s, and we just needed another decade to break through and get noticed. So you give them a try, and it's probably going to take at least a couple years of hanging out with this crowd IRL to *really* grasp that they aren't *like* you. And by then, you might've even started to become *one of them*. Not that there's anything wrong with

that; but it probably isn't what you intended to do when you set out in search of a community of people who had the childhood crossdressing syndrome like you did.

Alright now, Neo. You want to know what *really* pisses me off? You Christian fucks would rather see a hundred people like me live in confused misery and ultimately kill themselves, than see a single one of your good widdle Cwischian boys accidentally twans themselves in their own confusion. And *that's* what pisses me off. That you people never gave a *fuck* about me. At least, that's how you're acting. And *that's* why I'm being an asshole to you and calling you a Christian when you might be a Jew or an atheist or something, I don't fucking know. But what's certain is that you care more about cheap groceries and saving that one confused child than not fucking with this small minority that's existed just fine for *decades* because *we're not really human to you*, are we? You don't give a *fuck* if you have to exterminate a hundred cockroach kids to keep your little southern Christian prince safe. I might as *well* be some kind of alien freak. Because, you didn't make room for me on that bus *then*, and you won't make room for me on this bus *now*. Fucking assholes. I'd knock you upside the head with my trumpet case if I could. There's only one thing to do to a goddamn bully, and it ain't to go to the principal's office.

I don't fucking *know* what I am, other than a human who's *really* wanted to be a woman since childhood; in bed and in life. Some people say I'm a woman on the inside. Some people say I'm a pervert. Some people say I'm a third thing. Some people say I'm just confused. I was hoping this world could explain it to me. I taught myself a lot of things; but someday never came for gender and sexuality. Maybe y'all can collectively figure that out for the next generation. Because, it was never about pronouns and alternative lifestyles for me. I would've been the most boring, unassuming, prudish woman if you'd have just given me the chance. Instead, I felt I had nowhere else to *go* except various alternative lifestyles. And, I want you to really *see* that

about me, before you balk at someone for being a pervert or an autogynephile because they're kinky and poly or something.

I'd like to think you people with your Draconian policies don't really know what you're doing. You think the only real possibilities are that these people are "women trapped in men's bodies", or that they just *aren't*. I want you to see that the reality is a lot more complicated. As *real* conservatives, you shouldn't *want* to tear something down that worked just fine for decades before Tumblr and Caitlyn Jenner. Your policy doesn't even match your actions anymore. And, I have little to assume other than that you're about as confused as I am; just in different ways.

Oh my fucking god. It's 9:37am, and I'm *already* thinking it after having had Bojangles at opening time this morning.

It isn't illegal to eat Chipotle for the fourth day in a row, you know...

This might be my last week on Earth. I should eat whatever I want until my last \$10, right?

You know what? I can go to the Chipotle across from the Party City, and they won't even recognize me there.

I didn't see helium at either Party City I went to; I didn't really even see where it would've gone on the shelf if it were sold out. I called after the fact, and the one in Durham said they *did* have it. Whatever. I guess I'll have to ask at the counter tomorrow.

You know what I *did* find? "Emergency bivvy", \$20 at REI. It's. *Perfect*. I don't even need to tape anything up.

I just missed the point where I could disable auto-pay for my electric bill. I plan on not being around by the time they cut off my power. The ACH debit is already pending, so my plan is to simply not have sufficient funds in my account for it to

clear tomorrow. My debit card is linked to a separate checking account, so I guess this works.

I'm *really* burning the wick at both ends. I have like \$594.66 plus the cash in my wallet, and I still need to drop close to \$100 on helium (\$70 if I'm lucky with Party City's going out of business sale).



Is there anything more that I want to say? I need to get to proofing and finishing my sed script before the lights go out.

The hammock is probably going to be substituted for a beach chair, because I couldn't really get the angle right when I played with it last night. With the helium tanks in hand, the only thing left is some really cheap tubing from Home Depot, assuming the stuff I have is too big. And a bit of tape to hold the tubing in the bag.

I don't want to jinx it, but I *really* think this is going to work; unless I run out of helium, get the flow rate wrong, pinch one of the tubes as I pass out, or the first responders fucking *gas it* or something. Sure, things *could* go wrong... Engineers *never* say something is going to work on the first try, but this plan is starting to look *solid*. It *better* work, because I'm probably better off dead once the internet knows my name and where I live. I mean, bold of me to think anyone's actually going to read this...

I *can't* hesitate after I upload this to Reddit and 4chan and maybe tell my mom sorry. That's the moment when I've pulled the trigger. The rest is just execution.

Should I film it, or is that weird? I mean, you probably *know* what to expect. I'm not even sad anymore. This is my one, true, logical path. I see that now.

Anyway, what I wanted to talk about before all of that, is the “more research” that needs to be done. Because, we've been studying *transsexuals* for decades; but even back in 2017, I was concerned some of these people in the growing *transgender* community might eventually lead to a conflation of already-established facts. I'm afraid this has come to roost; studies struggling to find a link between medical transition and improved well-being, for example. I'm concerned that people (namely conservatives; but increasingly, moderates) are about to start jumping to conclusions, as researchers are forced to admit reluctantly that they *don't really know* what the fuck is going on with everyone having pronouns and trying HRT so suddenly. Again; I maintain that

- There *haven't* always been this many trans people. Yes, there have always been trans people; both transsexuals, and transgender people in general. There *have not* always been this many. I think we can no longer hide the fact that we've witnessed an absolute *explosion* of gender variance over the last 10-15 years, for complex socio-political reasons we still don't quite understand.
- Again; this is *not* the same as the “autogynephilia/HSTS/classic transsexualism” debate that's been ongoing in the community since the 1980s. Whether or not autogynephiles are a thing is a totally different issue from whatever started happening in the 2010s.

- I think the transgender community is increasingly taking on the characteristics of a subculture or lifestyle, analogous to the BDSM community or the furry fandom. While I don't think there's anything *wrong* with either of these things, it's diminishing the credibility of the hard science side of the phenomenon, which has existed since the very beginning of our study with folks like Harry Benjamin.
- I'm concerned that stuffy, straight-laced researchers and policymakers who've never been to a con may not have had adequate exposure to "weird internet people"; and they might gloss over the obvious-to-some difference between a transsexual and a gender furry.
- I'd estimate the incidence of the *classic* forms of transsexualism among medically-transitioning people to be somewhere between 1:2 and 1:10. I doubt it's any higher than that, and it *might* be substantially lower.
- And again; I don't think there's anything *wrong* with being a gender furry. I *do* think we need to be more cautious with how we treat minors in this strange new world. I'm concerned we've reached a critical mass, where social contagion actually *might* pose a legitimate navigational hazard to young people figuring out their life. I'm afraid I've witnessed that gender dysphoria is at times communicable between *adult millennials*; one can only imagine that middle and high school students would be no less vulnerable to the shifting winds of their peer group.
- And, I don't want to discourage kids with gender identity questions into thinking they're not *real*. I didn't think *I* could be "real" based on the stats I read as a kid, and I was an *idiot* for not doing it sooner. Instead, what I want to do is make the discussion *way more concrete*; starting with this painfully personal account of what *I* went through, kinks and weird sex stuff and all. Because despite what you might call it, those things were *real* and *measurable*. It isn't wishy-washy hippy-dippy abstract vague *feelings* to me. And, I didn't see it first on HBO or learn about it

during drag queen story time. I can't speak for everyone; but I can only imagine a lot of transsexuals who've come before me have glossed over their most personal experiences, because they don't want social conservatives to jump down their throat for daring to *masturbate* in private, or because they were terrified of getting snagged up in gatekeeping just because they like being tied up in bed or something. But frankly, I think *that's* where the money is. Yeah I *masturbated* as a kid, but I didn't really do it like a normal guy *at all*. Not physically, and not psychologically. And all that happened a while *after* the intense longing to be a girl started, but it certainly fanned the flames and blurred together. It might be too much information for Tommy Warren; and it might be too much information *in general* if I were just a normal teenage boy doing normal teenage boy things. But, I *wasn't*. Tragically though, I was often treated as such after coming out.

I hope that by sticking to the concrete facts about what this is and avoiding the sort of vague bullshit about our feelings that's permeated the narrative for years, we can keep whatever this Harry Benjamin stuff is outside the realm of superstition and dogma and psychogenic illness. And, I'm just one person. Other transsexuals might not *have* childhood stories of tying themselves up with electric massagers. I don't actually know how common that is, but I at least want to start this conversation by telling you all the overly personal bullshit that went on with *me* at that age. I don't think it's something any child should have to go through alone, or feel quietly ashamed of. Unfortunately, most of us still have little choice.

Confessing childhood secrets
Of dressing up in women's clothes (that's real shit,
Laura)

I have *no idea* if these old school activists like Andrea James or Calpernia Addams or Aunty would even agree with what

I'm saying. Maybe they'd think I'm being an asshole. Erin Lindsey might think I'm a huge douche for referencing her comic strip. I *didn't* ask, and I'm kinda hoping this counts as fair use. Maybe they wouldn't really know what the fuck I'm talking about because they're too old for this shit. I feel like I have to say something, because this took *years* for me to figure out. And folks much younger than me won't even remember the world before Caitlyn Jenner and **the button test**; when a middle or high school student might not even know the *word* for what they're feeling, let alone that there's help for it.

I feel like we're on the verge of throwing away everything an entire generation of trans activists worked for, because people started taking Tumblr culture a little too seriously and didn't realize it was mostly just teenagers and college students.

Anyway, the last generation. The Cold War, McCarthyism, Vietnam, Watergate...

What about *this* generation of scientists and engineers? What I see is a bunch of entrepreneurs on the verge of going full-blown MAGA because they didn't like Women and Gender Studies class and think pronouns are dumb. They're just *dying* to find any shred of research that casts doubt on all these kids and their sketchy hormones. And... they *might* find it. They might find it, and the Supreme Court *might* just bang the ban hammer on this silly transgender nonsense once and for all. The next generation of kids might not be *able* to score something low-risk like spironolactone or Lupron to help them through their shitty childhood. There was something comforting about at least having a problem so obscure that you were probably off everyone's radar. Now I feel like a Jew living in the Weimar Republic.

First they came for the transgenders
And I did not speak out
Because I was in group A



Figure 56: AMERICA F#K YEAH! MUSIC VIDEO Team America World Police THEME SONG (<https://youtu.be/LasrD6SZkZk?t=47>)

I'd expect this sort of tomfoolery from rank and file Republicans, but y'all are *smart people*. It's sad to see the transsexual phenomenon increasingly viewed as pseudoscience by the Silicon Valley crowd. Because, I'd like to think of y'all as *my people*. Even if I sort of *am* a fuck-up of an engineer. Because, a whole generation of engineers thought it was actually pretty cool when Lynn Conway came out. I grew up feeling like *rednecks* would never understand, but smart people in the city would often get it. And, that sense is fading. I've started getting the feeling it's safer to be trans around far-left Luddites in this day and age. And, those really *aren't* my people.

But more importantly, you're *people of science*, who I'm afraid might be on the verge of doing *bad science*. Tragically, because you probably don't really even understand the issue, and you've dismissed it out of hand along with all this other culture war bullshit.

Project 2025 (which Trump says he's never heard of, but he's a fucking *liar*) attempts to draw bizarre, Ted Stevens-esque connections between transgender people, pornography and cultural Marxism. While this would've been more funny in the year 2008, the change in seasons has shifted this sentiment from only being laughably wrong, to being *dangerously* so.

The reasons for this, are

- The trans community has gone *way* further left since the year 2015. Like, sickle-and-hammer-memes left, that I don't even think is all that ironic anymore. (Sorry if I sound like a fucking boomer rn...)
- As we all know, "drag queen story time" is now a phrase in America. While it's been bitched about a lot, it's a *really* sticky mess because
 - You would've gotten laughed at in the year 2005 for conflating transsexuals and drag queens. They're now treated as being on the same spectrum, by both the left *and* the right. The left loves including *everyone*

- to feel warm and fuzzy, and the right loves knocking everyone in a minority group down to the lowest peg.
- Drag *really is* rooted in quasi-pornographic burlesque *adult entertainment* for *gay men*. So if I'm trying to make people feel silly for trying to link trans people and pornography together in the Heritage Foundation's latest hair-brained conspiracy theory, *I don't really have a leg to stand on, do I?* Republicans want to make transgender people out to be nothing more than the latest evolution in the "gay agenda" to turn your children's minds, and it's *working*.

Do you know what *entrapment* is? That's what this feels like. This started with a group of people who were just looking for acceptance; and ended with drag queen story time and anime-girl-looking trans women showing up to the LGBT center. I don't know *who's* entrapping us, exactly. Maybe we're doing it to ourselves, I don't fucking know.

Back in 2008, I went to an Obama rally in Fayetteville with some friends from school. One of my conservative-libertarian friends, *who has since gotten a color tattoo of the Republican elephant on his right butt cheek*, started the "Yes we can!" chant that got *the whole crowd going* before Obama made his appearance. I don't think this guy has ever voted for a Democrat in his life. He was just being a smart ass. To be fair, I went to the John McCain rally in Wilmington with one of the same friends. I think we might've actually tried to maintain parity by attempting to start a "Joe the plumber" chant, but it's been a while and it wasn't successful anyhow.

I think we need to remember this, in today's world of internet trolls and foreign meddling. The person who started the "yes we can" chant, or the "drag queen story time" chant, *might not really be acting in good faith*. It might be harmless *enough...* or they might be moving their pawn to D6. Sometimes, it feels like *we've* been playing checkers, and whoever is throwing out ideas

like “The first pride was a riot, throw bricks at cops!”, or “Teach kids about transgender people with drag queen story time!” is playing *chess*.

I, uh...

I think I’m nuts. I mean, Russian trolls are definitely a problem, but...

I’m making a lot of crazy assumptions. And I *am* recovering from psychosis, probably.

I’ve felt pretty locked in to this whole eminent suicide thing. I just had a smoke, and now I’m not so sure. Maybe I should be on meds or something. We probably shouldn’t trust much of anything I say if I’m not on meds. Should I trust myself to kill myself if I’m not on meds? What do meds do? Should I reach out to someone, at the *absolute* last moment? It’s the 29th. I’ve kind of been expecting to overshoot my deadline by a little bit, but not by *much*.

I’m *really* totaled. I’ve been thinking to myself about what it is I’d actually *need* to keep me here and help me get my shit together. Like, I need fuzzy blankets and hot cocoa and forehead kisses and sweet nothings whispered into my ear and shit. I’ve gotten to *that* point. I couldn’t get that, even *with* insurance. I feel like a femcel or something just for saying it.

It’s actually when I have a smoke, that I occasionally begin to second guess this whole suicide thing. And, I’ve been smoking less because I’m almost out of weed and money. I waited too goddamn long, so I had to pay a full \$50 for one of the tanks at Michael’s. I guessed wrong and got the wrong sized tubing, but I kept the receipt and I think I know what’ll work now.

In most states of mind lately, I consistently arrive at the same conclusion: *somebody* has to spill the tea about all this weird trans stuff. And I *really* shouldn't be around once I *do*. Plus, nobody will ever care if there isn't a suicide attached to it. Transmedicalists have existed for years, and nobody ever listens to them.

Has anyone tried doing that, from the angle of a *defector*? Given how fucked my life is already, is it too late to even think about that?

I don't know what I'm talking about. It's just a bunch of words that probably don't say much of anything new at all.

Should I call a suicide hotline? I wish someone would read my thing and offer material assistance... All I have are some numbers to call, to talk to people who don't have all day. I can say this in fewer words, right?

(*help!*)

There's *no better way to die* than *this*. Lately, I've felt like there really *is* something on the other side. The ghosts of my friends, the universe winking at me... I've probably been at peace with dying, because I really *do* think there's something on the other side waiting for me. Something *good*. Like a second chance, or the aftercare I've been looking for, or whatever. I'm still an atheist, or at least have no better label than that. I don't think a reasonable god would expect much more of me than to just try and live a good life. I'm not perfect, but I *really* feel like I got a lemon. Unless this is my punishment for something.

I've been feeling like this is my way of making my life count for something. But really, I have no way of knowing that it'll count for anything at all. I *might* just be batshit crazy. Maybe once I'm on meds, I'll realize that I was just experiencing psychosis when I thought the beyond was calling. Part of me would *rather* take the blue pill, though. Maybe that's what all the beckoning

is. My subconscious taking the blue pill. I've always been a take-the-red-pill kind of person...

I'm just not so sure about all my high horse ranting. I kind of think I should just tell people about my life and let them make their own judgements.

If I'm being honest, some part of me was frustrated that Josh came away with very different opinions than me. He didn't think my friends were transtrenders, didn't think it was normal for an adolescent girl to be "into BDSM", and seemed to suggest I was trivializing the whole child sexual trauma bit. I guess I was hoping to lead the reader toward my own worldview; where I was a "normal" adolescent girl with testosterone and some pretty basic kinks, I got driven back in the closet in high school because people were assholes to me and my mom isn't sex-positive, eventually gave the transgender community a shot despite my concerns about transtrenders, and then found myself in a *very strange place* after a few years that felt like home at first. I wanted people to see someone who followed the most obvious path time after time, and kept taking pies to the face and slipping on banana peels when nobody else seems to *have* that problem.

What I need to remember is, I want you to think for yourselves. It's *okay* if you think I'm a crackpot, or just traumatized or psychotic. I'm one of the types of trans people, and I think we need to have a less abstract and more concrete discussion about what all the types of trans people actually *do* here. But I'm probably not saying any more with all the extra words. I'm just over-explaining myself in a desperate attempt to get the world to think like *I* do, and that's never going to happen.

Even just typing it out, I find myself coming back to a reality where *this* is the only option. I have little choice but to keep believing. But, maybe I should turn the intensity down a notch.

After sleeping on it and waking up to a Christian Lupron ban for everyone under the age of 20, I *knew* I had to do it. I was only briefly upset before my mood turned almost *cheerful*. I did have cold feet, but now I have no doubt. I'm glad I don't have to second guess myself and can just *prepare*; maybe for Valentine's Day or the day before.

AI this afternoon cast a *lot* of doubt on my 80% Balloon Time helium plan. I've been under the impression that separating the helium from the normal air would be trivial in my 7' long bivvy; but the AI did very little except rain on my parade. I walked through various scenarios: Angling the helium port sideways or down, pre-filling the bag to let the breathable air settle toward the bottom... the problem seems to be that even small amounts of motion like breathing are likely to percolate too much breathable air into the top.

Some part of me is *still* skeptical that it really wouldn't work "well enough". I've done a bit more reading over the last day, and I already feel pretty silly for not doing more research. I have a lot going on, trying to plan this elaborate suicide *and* finish this document on time. Some folks on the internet have *really* put a lot of time and effort into figuring out exit bags. There are flow regulators and rotameters and shit, lab equipment that's meant for nitrogen or argon probably isn't calibrated for helium, or maybe it'll *work* if you know the correction factor to multiply the readings by... I honestly feel pretty out of my wheelhouse, and I wish I had more time to prepare. I feel like this actually has a pretty good chance of going belly up, and I might wake up handcuffed to a hospital bed or something. (And not in the fun way.)

Still, I feel I have little choice but to try. This has grown bigger than just me and my problems. Somebody needs to get people's attention. It feels almost as if God himself has put me on the three point line, to make *this shot*, right now. I've got something to prove, and nothing to lose. I feel something like a

soldier, signing up to do his part after the attack on Pearl Harbor. It's all just duty to me now. This place doesn't even feel real.

The job is too important *not* to order proper helium for, which I've found online. Unfortunately, I've already broken the seal on the Balloon Time helium so I'm out \$50. I might try and refill the bag with it anyway.

Not only do I need better helium; I also need something better to control the flow than just the valve on the tank, or alternatively two tanks on account of all the helium I'll be wasting.

- Industrial/lab grade equipment is *expensive*. I might as well buy two tanks, but there won't be anyone around to open the second valve.
- A simple idea I had is to stuff something inside the valve to slow it down. This seems better than nothing, at least.
- A more elaborate idea is to get an irrigation system solenoid valve from the hardware store, and see if it's airtight enough. Even if it's a little leaky, I could put it inside the bag so the helium isn't wasted.
- An idea I *just* had, is to plug the hose to the second tank with my thumb, which I'll naturally let go of once I pass out. I'll probably want to have this tank inside the bag to capture gas leaking out around the fitting under the higher pressure.

The big decision I need to make before sunrise, is *one tank or two*? I have just under \$500 in my bank account, and 2 tanks costs like \$107. With proper flow regulation, even just *one* tank is ostensibly more than enough. I'd like to think pre-filling the bag with Balloon Time would at least help a *little*.

Okay. Goddammit, I didn't want to talk about this, but... Shit, man. So the cool thing about America is, if you don't like something, you can write your congressmen about it, and they do the whole Schoolhouse Rock thing, and eventually they make

laws out of this stuff. And, that's pretty cool. We're always debating stuff, and campaigning and signing petitions and shit... God bless America, right?

Alright. So, like, there's no congressmen to *write* to about this bullshit, because this yankee GoodFellas-ass fugly motherfucker is already acting like the absolute monarch of one of those shithole countries he likes to bitch about so much, and I wouldn't be surprised anymore if he tries to install a military junta and turn us into fucking Myanmar. Conservatives complained about the large number of EOs Obama signed; but he never really did anything to restrict overnight the freedoms of everyday Americans. It's this latter part that's concerning. While I've often thought that Hillary's unflattering-to-Republicans basket comment may've cost her the election, I think you really *are* a fucking deplorable if you're still backing this dude *now*... You're not even getting what you voted for, first of all. It's what a lot of you *wanted*, granted...

I should probably get two tanks. So that's... three tanks of helium. It's enough to kill a horse, if only I could just wrangle it the right way...

I'm not sorry about sending that to Josh. I sort of want to forgive everyone before I die; but I'm *not* sorry.

We're probably never gonna turn back from this point. From now on, having a Republican president will just mean liberals' favorite minorities lose a bunch of fucking rights without any notice while you stupid ass motherfucking redneck mouth breathers are all like "huhuhuh look how cheap gas is now, huhuhuh" Goddamn Shrek-ass motherfuckers.

Fuck you, Josh. You're fucking stupid. It's no wonder you're not a senior engineer. I mean, *I* fucked my career up because I wanted to help people and get laid, but *you're* just a goddamn idiot.

I can't *imagine* how I'd feel if I was, like, a 16-year-old high school student on something conservative like Lupron and not even on some Jazz Jennings shit, and I literally just *woke up* one morning to swipe my home screen to the right and read that it's just *illegal for me to take my next dose, now*. There was no bill in the house or senate, nobody ever voted on anything except not putting a diversity hire in the White House... Just ten years of debating trans people, and nobody has a voice anymore. Your vial of stuff just got snatched away by that high school bully who would've been the first not to let you sit down on that bus.

My *second-biggest regret*, probably, is not fighting back on that bus all those years ago. I should've knocked each and every one of those assholes who wouldn't let me sit down upside the head with my trumpet case and given them a black eye. There's a time for diplomacy, and there's a time for (fuck, how do I make sure this doesn't get pulled off of Reddit? If it was *anyone* other than the President of the United States of America, I'd tell you to put one right between his eyes for me...)

This dude is *ruining lives*, alright? It's one thing if people's lives are being ruined because they made friends with whack-adoodles; it's a *very different situation* if the President of the United States of America is ruining lives without even any checks and balances.

I ordered two tanks. As I went to pay on Amazon, worrying about whether I'll be able to afford Bojangles during my last days on Earth, I got what may as well have been a sign from the gods.

I have, like, \$80-something in Citi Thank You points. And I can just... buy stuff directly on Amazon with that.

Holy shit. I bought one of the tanks with reward points, only having to spend about \$60 off my debit card.

Despite my anger toward Christians, I couldn't help but giggle while thinking to myself repeatedly

The Lord *provideth*, Rachael.

Using a solenoid valve from the hardware store is hopeless. Those tanks are like 250 psi. I tried stuffing the nozzle on my Balloon Time tank with parchment paper, which *really* seemed to help. I have no way of measuring the flow, so I'm kinda just eyeballing it obviously.

If you unscrew the momentary pushbutton-type nozzle, the tank has a standard 1/4" flare fitting that you can get stuff for from the hardware store. Most of the stuff seemed to be for natural gas and kind of expensive, but it looked like you might be able to connect copper tubing to it with a compression fitting or something. I'll probably stick to the original plan of friction mating some cheap 5/8" tubing onto the balloon nozzle, because I'm not a pipefitter and I'm not made of money.

I did research yesterday on committing politically-motivated suicide. They all have one thing on common: if you *really* want to commit suicide out of political protest, the way to do it is by *lighting yourself on fire*.

Probably the third case I read, was this layer-turned-composter fellow who self-immolated in protest of harm to the environment. Part-way through skimming his bio, I realized *this is the dude who was Brandon Teena's lawyer!* I *have* heard of Lambda Legal, haven't I?

I've since grown increasingly resolved to do *that*. I mean, if I *really* wanted to commit a selfless act of protest, *this* is the way to do it, right?

I'm weighing the fact that this is going to be *excruciatingly* painful, with the fact that it'll probably be over *very* quickly. And, I doubt anyone would be there to stop me if I did it early in the morning.

I did a little more reading on *the executive order that made me want to light myself on fire*, and... it *isn't* exactly what I thought it was at first glance. And, it doesn't seem to be official yet anyway based on the Wikipedia page.

I grew up, wishing I belonged to a richer, more accepting family in a bigger town, so I could start in high school like Zoë from Venus Envy or some shit. I guess *that's* what I was hoping my life would start to be like after I told Emma in high school. But, even *Zoë* moved to a different town first...

After seeing the news bite show up on my phone, I thought there'd been a *unilateral* "Christian Lupron ban" for *everyone in America*; whether you were from Punxsutawney, or Pensacola, or Anchorage or where the fuck ever.

This set me *off*. I knew I had to do something *huge* if *that* was the world I was living in. Even *if* it got my face blown up all huge-like in some professor's slide deck. At least I'll be *dead*...

I want to chemically and surgically mutilate *your* fugly tangerine body, you sick lowlife piece of human filth. We ought to immolate *your* evil un-American little ass. Let's make the Roast of Donald Trump a reality instead of that pussy bullshit Comedy Central did. #TODO Not actually protected speech

The EO appears to restrict *federal funding* for institutions that help kids 19 and younger transition, rather than simply banning the administration of Lupron to a certain demographic like the recent legislation in Tennessee.

I still hate your fugly tangerine face.

The time for self-immolation, might actually *be* the point where literally no one in America could *dream* of a childhood like Zoë's. This *could* still happen over the next four years, mind you. Maybe I shouldn't uncork the top shelf booze just yet.

I *do* want to remind everyone that we're arguing about something that's been legal way before *I* was a teenager in the early 2000s. You hydroxychloroquine-guzzling Jesus-loving-assmotherfuckers seem to keep forgetting that and are acting like teenage gender transition was invented by Tumblr and Jezebel in the year 2013 or some shit.

(Granted, this *has* gotten way out of hand. And, I'm *trying* to use inflammatory rhetoric to piss you Christian conservatives off as much as *I've* been. Just like that orange buffoon and his dick you straight fucking assholes would love to suck.)

Whether or not I do it, this self-immolation idea *has* pushed the "Overton window", so to speak, far enough over that there's no question *whether* I'll try and kill myself. The only question is *how* I'll choose to do it; and whether I think doing it with gas will make a much smaller impact than doing it with gasoline.

While pondering my choices and driving back from Bojangles early this morning, I got behind a minivan going 10 miles an hour with a fucked up rear end and an *awful* smell of gasoline. After passing them, I had to open the sunroof to air out my car, despite only following them for a few seconds.

I mean what I say, when I suggest that the universe now feels *alive* to me. I'm not suggesting the *planet Earth* is alive, as purported by a lot of shamanistic and animistic traditions. It's something much more expansive. It's a living thing that sways probabilities. It's not a blindfolded "lady liberty" reaching into a sack of marbles. It's some dude with 20/20 vision who knows *all* the marbles in the sack by feel, and he picks *your* marble out for you, *sometimes*.

Why do we think *we're* at the top of the life-chain? Quarks, gluons, proteins, plaques, fish, rodents, apes... Flocks of birds, packs of wolves... We're just *so confident* that *we* are the most complex lifeforms in the observable universe. Could a cell in your body even *dream* of helping to create a human? Could a cell

in your body dream *at all*? Probably *not*, by any reasonable definition. Can you even *fathom* who the fuck picks our marbles sometimes and why? Could a cell ever fathom how it's nutrients travel through capillaries and arteries; bound to hemoglobin, rising and falling across a landscape of activation energies into an ocean of ATP? It can't *fathom* anything. It's a sack of chemicals. It lacks sentience. So, then, what is it *we* lack? Is it a waste of time to even think about?

Marbles. Pink marbles. As I keep typing on the morning of what *was* my deadline of the 31st, I can't help but wonder if I'll ever finish my thing at all. And if there's a reason the universe wanted me to experience the pungent odor of poorly-combusted gasoline this morning.

Could my fantasies of self-immolation have started *before* I bought the helium? Did they have to start only a few hours later? Am I just looking for patterns where there are none?

My car insurance policy lapses on the 8th, and I won't have the tanks until the 11th or 12th. This isn't *great*. Part of the reason North Carolina has some of the lowest car insurance rates in the nation, is that the cops will just fucking *take the plate off your car* if it's lapsed for more than 90 days or something. I'm gonna need to be a *really safe driver* for a few days.

I'm *really* burning the wick at both ends. My only internet is tethered from my phone. I didn't pay my utilities this month. I can only legally drive my car for another week, and I'm *still* thinking about whether I maybe ought to count my dollars and try to make another half ounce happen for my own sanity's sake.

As for my speculation that I might have bipolar disorder, I *am* feeling considerably more down since the last day or two. I've stopped sleeping in a 4+4 hour pattern, and am back to sleeping 7-8 hours starting in the afternoon. My mood is a lot more somber and less energetic. I was almost *giddy* at the thought

of killing myself for political reasons a few days ago, but now I think this is all just sad.

I'm crying out for help. *Screaming*. I need help. There *is* none. Unless you count my crazy mom, or the impersonal, clinical nature of a psych ward.

I need a megadose of *all* the different types of love the ancient Greeks talked about, all at the same time. I need the *highest proof* love the world has to offer. And that still might not be enough. But it would at least make me feel better for a while.

Kiss me. Hold me. Love me. *Fuck me*. I can't find it anywhere. I'm 34 and a half. I don't think it exists. Or else I've been trying *all the wrong things*. It's probably that. I've tried all the wrong things, but it seemed so *logical* at the time.

I should never have kept being friends with Bladen County people after high school. I should've walked the "truescum" path like I initially wanted to. I had years, *decades* to do it. And I've done *nothing*. I've built *nothing*.

I've failed at everything I ever wanted to do. I'm a failure of an engineer, I'm a failure of a kinkster, I'm a failure of a woman, and I'm a failure of a human. My once-perfect credit is now like 617 or something, and it doesn't even matter. I still know I need to kill myself; but now I'm sad about it instead of giddy. I mean, not a constant stream of tears or anything. Just melancholy.

After thinking about waiting a few more hours for my next meal, I decided I needed to go to Cook-Out for quesadillas to make me feel better. It'd been close to 18 hours since I got Bojangles anyway, but I had the Bo-Berry for lunch. You don't care, do you?

I'm crumbling. I've fallen apart. I thought I had a support network, but it was all an illusion. There's nothing. *I'm* nothing.

I want to cry about how unfair this is. But, *life* isn't fair. I *grew up* hearing that. Life isn't fair, and this is what that means. I need to be a grown-up and pull myself up by the bootstraps because I'm 34, but I can't. I guess I'll die.

I went to Cook-Out. I gave the lady my card, and she handed me my drink. She handed me my card, she handed me my drink, and she handed me my food. And I was like

Uh... I already got my drink...

And she was like

Keep it.

I drove home, juggled all of this food with the extra drink into my house, and I went to eat these quesadillas that I knew would make me feel better for at least a while.

I soon noticed that my drink had some kind of slow leak in the bottom. I couldn't find any obvious hole, but whatever. I sat this problematic cup in the bathroom sink, transferring the straw to my bonus drink while wondering if some divine providence wanted to give me another rare pink marble tonight. Or if the lady noticed the leak and filled up a different one, but accidentally gave me both.

I mean, it was hard to notice unless you left it sit somewhere for a minute and saw the Coke pooling up around it.

Whatever.

I fell back asleep, possibly indicating that my new sleep schedule is maybe more like 7+4 instead of 4+4.

I need to work faster on things that matter instead of writing about the pointless final days of my existence. I'm struggling to do much else, though.

It's early Tuesday morning, and I got my tanks yesterday afternoon *way* ahead of schedule.

At the community-recommended flow rate of 5-15 liters/minute, it should take 1-3 minutes to fill a standard party balloon. I need to stop this nozzle *way* down. Hopefully I can pull that off simply by stuffing junk inside it. The good news is, the new tanks come with complimentary party balloons, and I also have Balloon Time to test with.

Hey, fuckface! Yeah you, you tangerine piece of shit.

My feelings toward you are mostly unprintable. Dick.



Figure 57: WKUK It's Illegal to Say... (<https://youtu.be/rUft70iHHdM?t=6>)

You might have the people I grew up with fooled, but I've got your number. I know you don't really choose McDonald's over other fast food options. I know you've never worn a trucker's cap unironically.

What do you rednecks even *see* in this guy? You *know* he's playing you, right? You think this damned yankee's ever shot a 12 gauge? If he has, it was probably for a photo op. This sleazy fuck doesn't represent you or your interests *at all*. He just isn't Hillary Clinton, or some other "fake politician" America has become disgruntled with. I guess *that's* what you see in him. But, he's just his own *brand* of fake. And, *that's* why he sucks. He's just as fake as Hillary and them, just the other way. Get it?

Hey, Elon! Yeah you, dipshit.

The internet says y'all are into this Curtis Yarvin dude. I'm about as behind on your right-wing zeitgeist bullshit as y'all are on social justice and queer kids with people living in their heads. Whatever. This dude's gone off the deep end comparing the government to a cathedral like some wannabe Eric S. Raymond-ass motherfucker, and *that's* what's got me concerned. 'Cause, he's using all sorts of smart people hacker jargon dog-whistles to explain why democracy sucks and we really just need a king, and *that's* dangerous.

Alright; so ESR has picked up a lot of static lately for being a wee bit conservative. He might *love* Yarvin. And maybe you've never actually read the guy. I don't fucking know. It doesn't matter. I also just went into a tailspin a bit ago after reading on Wikipedia that ESR identifies as neo-pagan, after having concluded that my pagan trans friends were just weirdos and that stuff about Heather knowing about paganism and Freemasons and reincarnation and UFOs was probably just a false memory. So, I don't fucking know anything anymore.

A pagan, a Christian, and an atheist walk into a bar.
It's just Eric S. Raymond, Larry Wall and Richard Stallman. There's no punchline.

Anyway.

Do you fucking see the problem? Y'all are getting pulled into an undertow that's about as strong as the one that made me ignore *my* instincts about the trans community several years ago, and if you're not careful you're gonna find yourself *way* on the wrong side of history. You probably think you're too smart to get sucked into a cult. That's what *I* thought until not that long ago. Humans have *not* adjusted to the information age very well, and you probably shouldn't even take *me* all that seriously. And *no*, I'm not advocating for mass censorship to manage the TMI crisis.

Pull yourself together, Elon. You're too smart for this bullshit.

You want me to try? You probably don't. I'm going to anyway.

The way I've seen this country for *years*, is that the law is *code*. It's written by legislators, compiled by judges, and executed by law enforcement.

And, our development methodology *sucks*.

Congress writes buggy code sometimes. That's normal. The bad guys find loopholes, good people get prosecuted with legislation in ways it was never intended to be used... Okay. So we need to debug the law.

It takes us *forever*. And the legislators are mostly focused on new features instead of tech debt. Shitballs.

Look, dude. America doesn't need a king. America needs a *scrum master*. Y'all are Casey Jonesing yourselves *way* too fast into uncharted territory, and you're liable to do some stupid shit like that time Stalin starved his country half to death 'cause he decided the farms needed to work totally different *right fucking now*.

And, what's with the MAGA bullshit? Am I the only one noticing Elon doing that same hunched over neanderthal thing as Trump all of a sudden? Who's coaching you and Trump to do that? Is that how y'all get on Republicans' level without looking too elitist? I mean, I guess it's working *on them*... But *I* can see what you're doing, and you aren't as slick at it as Donny Boy. Maybe you should try method acting.

I just hate all the false dichotomies and equivalencies that we've become mired in, and neither of y'all are helping. Trans rights are contrasted with free speech, technocracy is equated with strongman authoritarianism...

I remember reading about that "free speech bus" several years ago, and my heart just *sank*. I feel like *y'all* have been restricting *my* freedoms my entire life; then we break into the mainstream, this pronoun stuff blows up, and now *I've* been cast as an opponent of free speech. All because I was born with some weird birth defect *you motherfuckers* still want to punch me for. It's just another decade, and another kind of punch.

And yeah, your daughter might *be* a trender. Get your panties out of a bunch, dude. The world is complicated. And, I feel weird even saying that because *I don't know her life*.

I think I'm in business with this helium idea!

I packed the nozzle with little pieces of parchment paper as much as I could and used a plastic straw like a ramrod to tamp it down. I turned the valve about a twelfth from hand tight, and it took *minutes* to fill the balloon. My first attempt was marred by accidentally letting go of the nozzle at one point, and by prematurely ending the recording on my phone. It definitely takes well over a minute to fill the balloon, and if anything it's too slow. I'll have both the tanks going, so I'm not worried.

I'm considering using a more traditional, around-the-neck exit bag since I seem to have both the flow and the purity of helium for it, and because that's an already-proven method for doing this. I don't know if I'll get large oven bags, or if I'll try and repurpose the bivvy.

Something uncomfortable to the modern progressive that I've often reflected on about my childhood, is that... I think I was exposed to a lot of toxic *femininity*. Ideas like "men are perverts", "sex is gross", "men only want one thing and it's *disgusting*", the girlfriend is always right", and "you need to be *nicer* to your widdle muver" were implicitly, and at times *explicitly* drilled into my head throughout middle and high school. Nobody including my own mom really took me seriously when I tried to explain that Emma was basically just bullying me at school over my gender stuff. I came of age feeling ashamed and embarrassed of my sexuality that I was *apparently just born with...* and despite the absorption of "transgender rights" into the machinery of third wave feminism, I was *frankly* treated worse by women than other men. Whereas guys just tended to think I was weird and not invite me to stuff, the women in my life who found out treated me like a pervert or even an *abuser*; and didn't seem to have many qualms about trying to entrap me in compromising situations, or just outright making shit up. And, that *really* made me take future accusations a lot less seriously; especially when they came from "outspoken" feminists who seemed like they might have an agenda or a bone to pick. By the time I graduated high school, all of womanhood felt like a unified front against me and my "sexual abnormality"; which I could never even dream of becoming a part of. Hell; I'm not convinced Susan didn't start following me into dressing rooms after I transitioned to protect the sisterhood by making sure I wasn't "getting a boner" or something.

I don't know what to say about my early negative experiences with feminism, and I don't know how common this has become

in the 21st century. I know “modern feminists” would laugh you out of the room for even *trying* to explain that this is a thing; and the overwhelming feeling that I’m being tone-deaf or misunderstanding “how hard it is to be a woman” or whatever has kept me mostly silent about it.

For my last likely-to-be-ignored soapbox rant, I’d like to address the tired old subject of Ray Blanchard’s theory of autogynephilia; an idea my childhood heroes have spent much of their lives fighting against.

Before I leave this planet, I wanted to take a look at a biography of a self-described autogynephile to which I might compare my own life. **This one** was at the top of Google for me at the time of writing, and its similarity to my own childhood did not disappoint.

Whenever I look at this person’s life, my own life, **whoever the fuck wrote that Searching for a Former Clarity song’s** life, it’s obvious that we’re all talking about the same “childhood erotic crossdressing syndrome”. I mean, there *are* differences, but I think it’s close enough. And whatever you say about it, most of us *do* end up transitioning, sooner or later.

There are people with more severe and less sexualized gender dysphoria at this same age or younger. They might be a different thing. I don’t really know.

What’s clear to me is... these are *both* some sort of birth defect. Even blogger Debbie couldn’t help but tacitly admit she was just born different. ~~While I’m not a sexologist, I think it’s cruel to label elementary school children as already having “fetishes” or “paraphilias”~~ ChatGPT says like age 10-14, so I’m going with that. I guess elementary school children *can* have fetishes, and that doesn’t exactly disagree with my own experience.

Why does this bother me? What am I trying to say?

Is it because this is more than just a fetish to me?

I mean, I'd probably put the upper limit on when it started for me at like age 8-10. And so would blogger Debbie, it sounds like.

Ignoring the 0-2 year discrepancy between these age ranges, I guess what bothers me is the disparity between *this* experience and that of other trans women I've met IRL. Some of these people got into it from sissification kink stuff. Some of these people just liked that time they went to high school in drag once, and then had an epiphany in their 20s or 30s. *Most* of these people appear to have shown no obvious signs of the "childhood erotic crossdressing syndrome" that is so often used to exemplify autogynephilia. Yet, autogynephilia is the most often-cited explanation for the explosion in assigned-male-at-birth people medically transitioning among people who *need* an alternative explanation for that.

First of all, the "autogynephilia bogeyman" thing is misleading because:

- The majority of these "post-2015" people don't really even seem to fit the mold of traditional *autogynephilia*; unless you're gonna reduce the criteria for AGP to simply "weird sex stuff", and even *that's* a bit flimsy.
- Autogynephilia only explains the assigned-male-at-birth side of the problem. There are at least as many AFAB people getting sucked into this vortex, and Occam's Razor suggests there's a common cause for both, like social contagion.
- It's often used to urge caution in childhood transition, as if these "autogynephilia"-like transsexuals are any less likely not to do it anyway. Because *I* did it, *blogger Debbie* did it, *Anne Lawrence* did it, *Laura Jane Grace* did it... Let's take blogger Debbie's conclusion, for instance:

When I was young, I coped because I had to cope. What alternative was there? But it would have helped me to know what was really going on. The tragedy is that the current generation of AGP boys are none the wiser. Either they are cooped up behind the same walls of shame and guilt that constrained me 40 years ago. Or they have been affirmed as “transgirls”. Or they are simply at a loss to understand themselves, feeling like an introvert among a party of extroverts.

These boys need help to understand themselves. Let’s not amplify their daydreams — fantasy does not become reality. But let’s not embarrass or monster them either. We need to be honest: autogynephilia is a psychological condition that we just have to live with. Some may end up transitioning in the end — we cannot put that particular internet genie back in the box — but that is a decision for adults to take, not children. If first do no harm, then second, let them at least grow up.

And, *this* is where I can’t help but feel like Debbie’s being an Uncle Tom. Because, in *what world* are “these boys” *ever* going to grow up to be happy, well-adjusted *men*? We were obviously just born different, and whether you call it a fetish or a sexual orientation or a neurological intersex condition is merely a question of semantics.

Of course, it sounds pretty crazy for me to advocate medical intervention for a childhood *fetish*. Then again, nobody with a “foot fetish” is likely to experience this same level of impairment. Part of my objection to the characterization of this as a “fetish”, or even some kind of sexual orientation, is simply the trivialization that comes along with that. Being born this way *sucks*!

I have a huge forced oral kink, for example. *That’s* definitely a fetish... it started in high school, probably. Certainly not

elementary. Although the bondage thing started around 6th grade... I wasn't *heavily* into it until 7th, though.

So, what can we say about this?

- The gender stuff *definitely* happened first. Before forced oral, before plain-old bondage. *That* might be important...
- BDSM is an integral part of my sexuality, but... it's pretty different from the gender stuff, at least in terms of severity and discomfort. BDSM is just a thing when I'm horny. The gender stuff is *very* low-level, and gets dredged up throughout my day even when I'm not aroused.
- The more "abnormal" of my behaviors (erotic crossdressing, desire to look at pornography in general) went away after starting HRT. That suggests that *these* behaviors are hormonally-linked; whereas the base affliction exists regardless of what hormones you're on, and often presents itself on some level before puberty has even started.

I feel like this is more accurately described as a psycho-sexual affliction that is beyond the scope of fetishes and paraphilias. When looking at all the ideas that came out of the 20th century, the best fit seems to be that this is simply a subtype of *transsexual*; a class of people Harry Benjamin studied, who sooner or later will need to transition to living as the opposite sex in order to live a happy, normal life.

Again; all of this is *totally* different from a particular new wave of transitioners, who *had* no childhood crossdressing syndrome, *whether or not* it looked like autogynephilia.

As I look at my life with years of hindsight, I feel like the "symptoms of autogynephilia" are mostly just caused by having testosterone and this particular "birth defect" at the same time.

I guess *that's* the part that grinds my gears about out-of-the-closet autogynephiliacs. Where they start out talking like me when *I* was a kid, and end up reaffirming their manhood and sexual deviance in some act of self-flagellation. Because,

we have a *birth defect* and there's *only one thing to do about it*. While there certainly *are* people who've transitioned for the wrong reasons, having been born with *that syndrome* is hardly a reason not to. Frankly, I think "primary school autogynephilia" ought to be part of the diagnostic criteria for finding the real McCoy, just like there are two subtypes of ADHD.

If my fetish for BDSM were as strong as my "fetish" for being a woman, I'd probably have tried to sell myself into *literal* sex slavery by now. Instead, any fantasies I have about some guy keeping me chained up in his basement and having his way with me remain, without the slightest protest, within the realm of masturbatory fantasy. Gender dysphoria happens when the teacher splits the class into boys and girls, or when being naked in front of a full-length mirror is like staring at the sun, or when you hate weddings because you know you'll never be like those bridesmaids, let alone the *bride*... But, it's true. I'm not imagining myself in a *man's* body when I fantasize about someone having their way with me...

I think the dangerous "pseudo-transsexual" phenomenon we need to control for is really that of *social contagion*. Friend A is now a they/them, friend B is *really* into being an "ally", and friend C wants to one-up them *all* and scores informed consent HRT because he/she subconsciously wants to be more like friend A. Maybe sometimes it's just a case of "WebMD syndrome"; or your friends keep poking fun at how you *must* be an "egg" or something.

I think this last one is basically how I got sucked into that weird plural stuff. See? It happened to me, too. I probably wouldn't be admitting it if this weren't my suicide note, because I feel *really* complicated about what happened. But I'm stopping this shit *right here*. I was definitely *born* with *something*, and that's the beginning and the end of the transsexual phenomenon. That plural stuff started when I spent too much time around

weirdos, and it stopped once I got away from them. But I've always been trans, and I'll always *be* trans.

Perhaps equally dangerous, is the idea that you shouldn't transition because you "might be an autogynephile", like *I* sort of did initially. First of all, basically everyone who claims to be an autogynephile seems to end up transitioning *anyway*, so what are you waiting for? You aren't just some trender who found a weird internet community or got sucked into the wrong friend group. You're an *autogynephile*! Carpe the fuck out of that diem, girl, or broseph, or whatever you're doing at this point in your life. You should probably do that sooner rather than later, and you're *definitely* one of the different people, so...

Blogger Debbie almost makes my point *for me* when she ends by saying

but that is a decision for adults to take, not children.

Which is *exactly* why these kids need to be on Lupron or something. Because, which puberty that kid goes through is a decision for *adults* to make, not children. The thought has crossed my cynical mind that we ought to make you *normal* people go through gatekeeping before you're allowed to go through *your* puberty.

(That's a *joke*.)

I think this really gets at the heart of why there's so much animosity between the Anne Lawrence crowd and the mainstream trans community. Sometimes you have people like Lauren who are probably *unambiguously* "truetrans"; but then you have people like me and blogger Debbie, who obviously had the same syndrome growing up, but went on to adopt wildly different interpretations of what that means.

I think blogger Debbie's assessment that the next generation won't know about autogynephilia is a bit misguided; the constant drone of the autogynephilia discussion is, ironically, one of the

few things that *hasn't* changed since I joined Antijen back in 2003. It's true that the mainstream trans community is mostly dismissive of this theory; which has *always* been the case, really.

I hate that vulnerable high schoolers who might just be a little kinky in the bedroom are being scared straight by this autogynephilia theory, when none of these “public autogynephiles” are really even trying to hack it as men themselves. It does nothing more than delay the inevitable for those poor souls like me. I don't think the autogynephilia theory is dangerous in and of itself; but the idea that these are “fake transsexuals” certainly is.

Part of me feels like the autogynephilia theory is colored by the same sort of warped perceptions about female sexuality *I* grew up with: that sexual desire is “a guy thing”, and that when *women* have sex it's about something *else*; like jewelry, or fine dining, or finding a dad for your future babies. It's rooted in pre-sexual revolution ideas about what women like in bed; which were still popular in the 1980s during Blanchard's heyday, but have long since lost in the culture war. Again; it was never *men* who popularized *Fifty Shades of Gray*.

Something new is going on, because neither Antijen *nor* “transkids.us” (I'm assuming with the second one, I guess I don't actually *know*) was anything like the post-2010 trans community; which *really* seems to be a product of “Tumblr culture”, for lack of a better word. I think the application of autogynephilia to explain the present transgender zeitgeist is academically lazy, and not very well-informed on how this once invisible community has been shaped by the culture war as a whole. Before “transgender people” blew up with Caitlyn Jenner and bathroom bills in the middle of the last decade, they had *already* broken through in the “third wave intersectional feminism” and “Women and Gender Studies” worlds; and those folks created their own language and subculture that was a bit different from Antijen. I think there were just a lot more of *them* than there were of us.

What do women even *like* in bed? I don't really *know*. Because I'm not a "normal" woman, and I don't even *fuck* women. My view on this has changed throughout my life, from thinking they wanted something *utterly incomprehensible* to me, to thinking they *might* be just like me; especially if you control for the weird childhood I had.

Blanchard would have you thinking people like me masturbate *to themselves*, but... that doesn't really seem accurate at all. When I'm getting ready to masturbate, what I have in my mind is... a kind of scene, basically. Am I in a cage? Am I tied up? How am I tied up? Am I on my knees? Am I outdoors? As I masturbate, I'm not really thinking about my female body. That's mostly secondary to the whole thing I'm getting off on.

I wish I could say this was "TMI"; but I *can't*. Because, we still don't really agree as a society on what I actually *am*, do we? I'm sick of all this talk about trans people, and y'all keep coming up with the same low-effort armchair theories about what it is we're actually *doing* here.

For that matter, I can't help but compare myself to other *guys*. I always felt "unfeminine" masturbating when I was younger, but... even during my *male prime* I hardly ever did it more than once a day. I've heard guy friends talk like they do it several times a day, and I'm just like *how?!*

When I look at myself in a mirror, I just feel *normal*, and like I'm not staring at the sun anymore. Not "turned on". If I get dressed in a hurry and briefly forget to put on my bra, I don't feel like I forgot my "masturbatory aid" or something. It just feels uncomfortable to have my nipples rubbing against the fabric, and plus I don't want to go out in public "not wearing a bra"... I mean, there really *was* a point in my youth where putting on a bra might make me aroused, but that evaporated away *really goddamn quick* once I actually started transitioning. Going out in public "dressed like a woman" is very much *not*

an erotic exercise for me, and I'd be *mortified* if I just sprung a random boner while doing it.

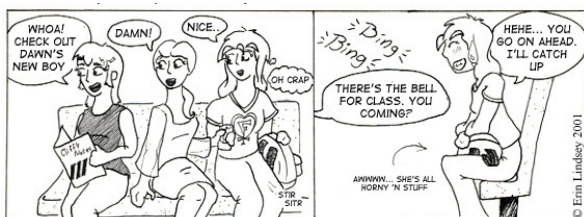


Figure 58: I mean, this is pretty rare once you're on the sauce, but shit happens... (<http://venusenvycomic.com/index.php?id=19>)

And, I hardly seem to have formed any sort of “pair bond” with myself. As much of a freak as I am, I spend more time overall snuzzling my pillow and imagining it was my boyfriend or something. I don't feel like I've happily “married myself”. I feel like there's a hole in my life, that I've never managed to fill because I'm too weird and I don't really know how.

Candidly, I'm more than a little concerned I might be painting myself into a corner with the shots I'm taking at blogger Debbie. I don't really know her deal, and I should probably take more time to make sure I actually understand what she stands for. But when I hear a self-described autogynephile with symptoms going back to early childhood act like these children are “too young”, it doesn't carry much weight when *your ass* is happily full-time and post-op.

This isn't a fucking *foot fetish*. And whether or not Blanchard himself ever meant to reduce it to that, that tends to be what people take away from it. And that's *harmful*.

I found myself reading about the **Pitcairn Islands sex scandal**, and came away wishing *I* grew up on an island where the mayor comes around to fuck you when you turn 12. I mean, *I've* wanted

somebody to tie me up and have their way with me since I was 13 years and 0 months old, *at least*.

(Granted; I don't know that *BDSM* was involved on Pitcairn, but let's just ignore that part.)

As you might recall, I went *mad* thinking I was gonna get a new body and have this same manner of underage sex with Anthony Kiedis and Dave Grohl. I have little doubt that TERFs and conservative detractors will accuse me of being a “pedophile by proxy” or something. All I can do, is tell you that I *really* don't see it that way. I see myself as someone who's been unable to find the right kind of sex their entire life, to the point it's started to even feel *normal*. I just want what my peers have had since high school or college, and finding that has *essentially* been my life's work. So naturally, it stings a little when I learn some 13-year-old girl who gets to live in a tropical island paradise *also* accomplished my life's work by the end of middle school, before pressing charges over it because this was traumatic for her or something. It's hard for me *not* to feel like “less of a woman” when I'm confronted with the reality that I want something most “normal” women would classify as abuse.

Surprisingly, a large portion of the female population *opposed* the charges levied against what constituted most able-bodied men on the island.

... with one of them claiming that she started having sex at 13, “and I felt hot shit about it, too.”

This is the perfect example of how my sexuality consistently appears to fly in the face of what “real women” are supposed to want in bed. But the more I think about it, it feels like the real problem is that *y'all* aren't being honest about what *you* like in bed. Our sexual norms are shaped by a bunch of Judeo-Christian bullshit that we're only *now* beginning to recognize the true nature of.

The grass might not be greener on the other side. Maybe I'd be better off getting a normal female body and having teenage sex with someone my own age. I *really* don't know. I probably never fantasized about guys my own age back then because they all did that headnod "sup" thing when I passed them in the hallway, or wanted to talk about the basketball game everyone watched last night, and it's really hard to segue that into imagining any of them would actually want to *fuck* me.

What I'm trying to say is, if you want to understand transsexuals and autogynephiles, you have to start by understanding *yourself*. It's really easy to rewrite your own history to agree with societal norms, and I think *that's* what's happening when people hear stories of young trans women getting turned on during their early crossdressing adventures, and refuse to believe it could lie within the range of normal female sexuality. Cisgender women (GGs, if you will) don't get turned on by their own clothing, because it's just *what they wear*. But, I bet they *would* if they were raised like a boy and then found intermittent access to female clothing during the height of their puberty, while also having hella PCOS or something that gives you lots of extra testosterone and shit.

I think we need to be *brutally* honest as a society about when sexuality starts to develop in children. Because, it doesn't just start when they turn 18, and it *probably* doesn't even *just start* when they turn 12 or 13.

I've talked a lot about sex and masturbation and kinks in this document. On at least some level, I think it's because I *want* you to think I'm an autogynephile. At least, I want you to have that same knee-jerk reaction that I had back in high school, so that you might think about this theory more deeply. I want to goad *you* into casting the first stone, and then maybe make you realize *you're* living in a glass house, with your vibrator and your fuzzy handcuffs and that copy of Fifty Shades of Gray you bought ten years ago. This "masturbation and sadomasochism is a mental

illness” mentality may’ve been popular fifty to a hundred years ago, but... it’s the year 2025. I *know* you masturbate. What are you, Amish?

Feminists often want to say women enjoy stuff like BDSM because of the patriarchy; which I think is just more “toxic femininity”. They want to enjoy their sexuality, while projecting all their guilty Judeo-Christian feelings about it onto those dirty, perverted *men*; who we all know *only want one thing*, and it’s *disgusting!*

What do *women* want to have sex as? *Walruses?*

Frankly, there’s a good chance I’d have never even *explored* the BDSM scene if I were just a “normal woman”. I’d probably have guys showing interest in me in middle school/high school/college, I’d probably pick one of them to date, one thing would lead to another, and I’d probably be sufficiently satisfied with wherever we ended up. We might get some fuzzy handcuffs or some rope or a gag or something to spice up our love life like so many couples eventually do, and there’d probably have been nothing “weird” about my sexuality at all.

Looking up that second Venus Envy strip made me realize two things.

- In today’s world, you’d get absolutely *crucified* for saying some of the things Erin said twenty years ago.
- I’m... not convinced I have the same underlying condition as Erin Lindsey.

First of all, I want to be crystal clear that this *wasn’t* a controversial web comic in the transgender community. This was just *the world* back then. We were all using chunky computers that made mechanical noises as we worked, listening to Hybrid Theory and wearing JNCO... Look, this was just the year *2001*, okay? 9/11 happened a few months ago, you can’t write a book

report without talking to Mr. Clippy, and Erin Lindsey started making this comic strip with what I can only imagine was a sketchbook and a potato-quality flatbed scanner that *might've* plugged into her parallel port for all I know. And I'd go *right back* to that world if the Freemasons ever gave me a time machine.

I found out a few days ago that Erin is **actually intersex**. It's hard for me to feel like *I'm* not a trender when I compare and contrast Zoë's early sexuality with my own, and consider that she has some verifiable physical condition to go along with it.

Blanchard posits that autogynephiles eventually *develop* a sort of female gender identity as a coping strategy. I'm not sure how I feel about this. If it's true, I did this *really fast* and *really young*. I have a hard time not insisting that I was simply *born this way*, given the age of onset and how sheltered I was as a kid. But, it's dangerous to psychoanalyze oneself.

I'm pretty sure I was *literally* the youngest kid on Antijen. The next oldest people were all in high school. Most folks were in their late teens or early 20s. It's pretty surreal to have gone from being *that* kid, to being the late bloomer that I was and ultimately finding myself *here*; wondering if *I'm* even truetrans.

I want to compare myself to Stephanie, who didn't really start questioning her gender identity until she got into **sissey hypno** stuff in college. I've historically thought us to have variations of the same thing, considering the complicated sexuality that's entangled with both of our experiences; before concluding that we *can't* have the same underlying condition, because mine started at least ten years before hers.

I want to tell you that *I'm* an example of a transsexual, and *Stephanie* is an example of an autogynephile. Though I can't help but think to myself

Q: What's the difference between a transsexual and an autogynephile?

A: Ten years.

What does this mean? I don't know, and I feel I have little choice but to leave the answer up to the next generation of researchers. I hope I've done enough preaching to keep you from doing bad science. I realize there's a temptation to assume there are only one or two things that cause gender dysphoria; but I think I've seen enough to conclude that this is a *really* complicated and multi-factoral phenomenon. There could be type A B C D E F and G transsexuals, for all I can tell. I know for certain this is a real thing actual people deal with, and I hope more than anything that you don't just decide to write us all off as Looney Tunes.

I'm not going to get this out on Valentine's Day like I wanted. I got a lot done through mid-morning, before succumbing to a pretty bad tension headache that left me lying in bed listening to the Pirate History Podcast before falling asleep early that afternoon.

I *really* don't have much time. I've managed to read the whole thing and anonymize all the names, and hopefully I didn't miss any. This shit is *very* long.

This article came across my feed this morning. While the focus of the Forbes article is on children with disabilities, the goal of Republicans *appears* to be to overturn *Olmstead v. L.C.*; a landmark case which established that "individuals with mental disabilities have the right to live in the community rather than in institutions". This seems to have started when the Biden administration expanded the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to include "gender dysphoria" under the list of conditions that can be considered "a physical or mental impairment".

While I'm not a lawyer, it isn't hard to imagine that they're getting ready to play an Uno reverse. My heart sank as I realized there will *be* no "concentration camps". To house the transgender

undesirables, there will only be “mental institutions”, from which there will be no escape until the federal government is again controlled by Democrats; or perhaps, even until the *Supreme Court* is once again controlled by Democrats. At the rate at which I’m literally *waking up* to learn me and my friends can’t do things we used to be able to do the day before, I’m afraid my days are numbered until those nice young men in their clean white coats are coming to take me away.

Ha-ha, hee-hee, ho-ho

I... *don’t* want to live here anymore. I’ve started to believe the winds of fate *want* me to die, *right here and now*; before I’m left with no voice at all. There are fates worse than death.

They know *exactly* what they’re doing. They won’t be as sloppy as they were in 1939. By the time other countries are accepting American refugees, they’ll already have us in padded rooms.

Oh my god. I know y’all are tired of hearing me talk about shit like this, but...

So, I *know* I’m running a bit low on estradiol, but I don’t plan on being around much longer anyway. I’ve been chipmunking those 1mg estradiols in between taking the more effective Progynova, which I don’t have much more than a week and a half of at a normal dose. I have considerably more spiro, and I’ve mostly been thinking about other things.

I saw that Susan sent me a package for Valentine’s Day. She still sends me stuff for holidays, even though I don’t talk to her anymore. So, whatever. It’s been sitting in the parcel locker for a couple of days, and I decided to finally check the mail this morning, February 15th.

I drove by the mailbox on my way to get food. I saw the key to the parcel locker. I expected that.

I opened it up, and there was a package from (*website redacted*) in there. Along with a large envelope from Susan.

Like, *what?* Is that “Isabella Costello’s” DIY from a year ago or something?

I almost forgot that the order I placed *after* failing to receive the package at my P.O. box was *also* taking forever. After like a couple months of waiting, I decided to place a second order out of fear that *that* package got lost in the mail. I didn’t select the optional but free signature option because I haven’t really wanted to talk to my mail-person after I left them that weird note back in 2022. Idk if they remember that or even still work for the postal service, but... I’d rather just *not*.

Anyway, it was *that* one. It shipped *ten months ago*.

I still don’t know if God exists; but I’m starting to believe in *Loki* at least. I now have *months* of estradiol and spironolactone, if that’s actually going to help me.

I mean, I’ll *need it* if I somehow survive this. I only have about two dozen of those 1mg shits, and I think I’ve finally finished *all* of the old 2mg ones unless I find a surprise bottle somewhere. I’d surely be clean out of estradiol in a month without this bonus package.

The walls are closing in. *So fast*. Four months ago, I thought I could just give this little document to Josh, and he’d have a talk with Paul about it, and we’d all have a laugh about how I went all crazy for a while and thought there was some significance to him changing his Zoom avatar to an alien, and *maybe* they’d have me writing PHP or doing DevOps work for a while or something... I was cocky after my initial experiences with ChatGPT didn’t even yield functionally-correct code. I figured nothing *unheard of* would happen, even if we *did* elect Trump again.

My industry is absolute *toast*. The Republicans are *clearly* moving the chess pieces to make “transgender ideology” either a severe mental illness or a criminal offense. I’ll probably never be able to do the only jobs I’ve ever known *ever again*, and I’ll count my lucky stars if I manage to stay out of a “mental institution” or a mass grave. My bank account’s closing in on the \$100 mark. I’m lucky the credit union is so forgiving and not dinging the fuck out of me.

They’re sending out *hundreds* of job applications. People more qualified than *I* am, who’ve never experienced a psychotic break. They’re moving to live on farms. Taking jobs at grocery stores. My classmates and I used to joke about how automating away other people’s menial jobs was our *goal* in life. I didn’t think leopards would eat *my* face. Certainly not before I had a little nest egg saved up.

There’s nowhere to *go* but the other side of the veil. My vehicle registration is about to expire, and I don’t even have insurance anymore. I’ve gone so long without an oil change that my car exhaust is starting to smell funny. Chase sent me two certified letters, and I didn’t sign for them because I still don’t want to deal with people. It’s early morning on February 16th. I keep overshooting personal deadlines to finish the final, public version of this writing. It’s *classic* me, really.

And I still feel like, I could *survive* with just a little more. If I had a support network... friends and a little money left. We could all flee to Canada, live in a shoebox apartment and work at Tim Horton’s.⁶³ Until Trump crosses the Maginot Line. I’ve never *felt* so beat down in my life. I never knew the world could come crashing down around you so fast. But, I *should have*. Look at the Great Depression. 1930s Nazi Germany. Coming of age around the year 2008 made me feel like even the *worst* would just pass over us after a couple of years, and you could even

⁶³I mean, this is kinda untenable tbh. It’s not like Canada is going to give us work permits and let us immigrate to work at Tim Horton’s...

buy the dip while you were at it. The subprime lending crisis is *so much different* than the sudden contraction of the entire tech industry. I've always thought of the ebb and flow of society as like a swinging pendulum, or like water sloshing around in a tank. I never imagined *this big* of a slosh, *this quickly*. Like, a sudden impulse of momentum pounding us *this far over* to the right. And once we've spilled over the edge and lost half the water, we'll have nowhere else to *go* but that much further left. The falcon cannot hear the falconer. Things will fall apart, with nothing but a cavernous trough between Donald Trump and the next Joseph Stalin.

I think what we need is, like... a publicly-funded think tank of jobless tech workers. There are a lot of problems we could work on today, that might be economically risky for a private company, but would be for the greater good to solve. We could provide royalty-free or subsidized solutions for American companies, and charge licensing fees to foreign companies that use our inventions. The workers could earn a wage that's somewhere in between working at Food Lion and being a private-sector engineer, and we can keep over-educated people from flipping burgers and driving tractors. We could all write down ideas we have and industry problems we'd like to work on, and have AI evaluate their merit and matrix us out into like-minded groups.

This is *never* going to happen under the current administration. It's too "lefty", and too "communist", and they're *already* thought-policing science and academia. If it *did* exist, that orange fuck would just have us all working on WMDs for WWII and/or invading Greenland.

Do you get it yet? The administration's agenda isn't "America First". It's "Christians First". And not even *cool* Christians like Larry Wall. And, that orange fuck doesn't even know how to pronounce "2 Corinthians". *I'm* a better Christian than him, and I fucking *hate* religion.

Maybe Canada could do this, and let the tech workers immigrate to escape America's collapsing democracy. Hell; I probably wouldn't even mind working on weapons if they were to defend Western democracy.

Suicidal radical left tranny Rachael Brown sentenced to 25-years-to-life for TREASON!!!!AMERICA FIRST!!!!

I was thinking about hyperlinking the quote

What do *women* want to have sex as? *Walruses*?

To Natalie Wynn's autogynephilia video. I've already mentioned this video in the **middle school** section, so I won't bother to repeat that here.

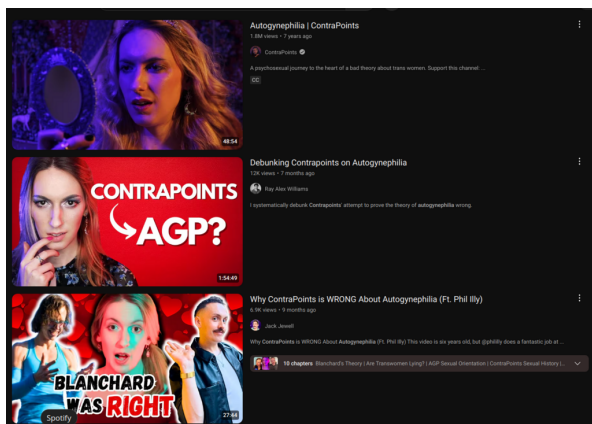


Figure 59: Lynn Conway is spinning in her grave.

This did lead me to looking the video up on YouTube, for probably the first time since I wrote the middle school section. I couldn't help but notice the next two videos; both of which are

less than a year old, and probably weren't this prominent in the search rankings when I started writing this summer.

After skimming the transcript to the #2 video because I didn't know if I actually wanted to *listen* to over an hour of this shit, I *knew* I had to. With my last dollar and my dying breath, if need be, I'll do it. There's a lot of confusion in this world today, and I don't think it's about to get any simpler.

Neither of these two videos have very many views. Their young age suggests they may be part of a larger trend, however. I'll refrain from spouting any conspiracy theories that the new administration has compelled Google to make the search algorithm "more fair to conservatives", except to say that the thought *has* crossed my mind.

The first guy is, if I may assume, a layman dude-bro who's read some books about autogynephilia. Well, at least *one* book. And it isn't *The Man Who Would Be Queen*. There's a bit of bad science going on here, and there are some pretty big holes; both in Blanchard's theory itself, and the narrator Ray's defense of it. It was a little frustrating that I feel like Blanchard could've done a better job justifying his theory *himself*, in addition to the fact that I think his theories are misleading to begin with.

The second guy (well, duo) makes essentially the same points, except for claiming the mainstream trans community thinks trans women get periods; so, I won't bother to pick on them. I want to tell you you're wrong about this whole period thing; but, I really *have* met a lot of whackadoodles in the trans community.

Watching this second video to make sure I wasn't missing anything led to me learning that *the Philosophy Tube* guy is now trans.

I had a miniature crisis, and needed to have *my second* major smoke break of the day because of it. Because, this weird shit keeps *happening*. When I started critiquing Josh's cypypasta thing a few months ago (before deciding it was an unnecessary

exercise), I wanted to reference the hacker classic [PHP: A Fractal of Bad Design](#); and was taken aback to learn the writer is now a transfeminine furry who makes no attempts at hiding their pornographic original content. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

This timeline is just *weird*. There are *way* too many trans people, and I'm not sure *anyone* has a grip on what's going on here. I feel like the entire anglosphere has turned into a slosh or a munch or something, and this is *frankly* lending credence to my theory that I'm somehow creating my own reality like Dr. Crusher in that Star Trek episode.

(*sigh*) Let's dig in. Autogynephilia.

I want to start by saying that I'll make *no attempt* to unilaterally disprove everything Blanchard says. I mean; lots of *other* folks have done that. You can go listen to *them*. I started down the path of trying to quixotically revive a sense of academic rigor that seems to have been lost in these recent videos; but the dangerous thing is, I was on the verge of doing bad science myself. I would need more time and a clearer head to not make an ass out of myself; and besides, I'm not a researcher, anyway. I'm a kinky pothead tranny who plays with computers and microcontrollers for fun. Instead, I want to produce a much more personal critique of Blanchardianism.

So... this guy Ray was kinda already on my bad side before I even started watching his video. And, he's done nothing *to* me. It's frustrating to watch some dudebro who's casually read a couple books on autogynephilia in his 20s or 30s make a low-effort reaction video "debunking" something I've been pondering since I was 13 *at least*. I don't know what your deal is yet, but you're no Aaron Savage or Jamie Hyneman. I was already expecting you to tell me a bunch of things about myself that *I* don't know, and you did not disappoint.

Bad statistics I first learned the phrase “correlation does not imply causation” while reading Lynn Conway in middle or early high school. And, the context is that she was talking about... Blanchard and Bailey, of all people. Unfortunately, this *embarrassingly* elementary mistake is still rife among Blanchard’s fan club, if not Blanchard’s theories themselves. If you’re the sort who believes history repeats itself, even *you* probably weren’t expecting another transsexual ECE person from another century to show back up and try to remind deaf ears on the internet to do good math and follow the scientific method.

The biggest offense here, is implying that Blanchard’s theory has *already been proven* because he was able to find **these two correlation clusters** while studying transsexual women. (This table is very simplified, but you can read all about it elsewhere if you’re so inclined.) The problem is that you’ve got the direction of causality backwards; we *know* these correlation clusters exist, and Blanchard’s typology is an attempt at explaining *why*. Narrator Ray succumbs to this fallacy; boldly lambasting Natalie Wynn for calling Blanchardianism “unfalsifiable”. Of course,

Unfalsifiability the theory really *does* seem to be unfalsifiable. Ray is eventually backed into a corner where he *admits* that autogynephiles are driven by largely subconscious desires. This puts his theories squarely in a Freudian-like space *at best*, and a pseudoscientific space at worst; presuming he doesn’t have Freddy Krueger as a research assistant. If I were to be maximally charitable, I’d argue that Blanchard’s theories are best interpreted as philosophizing as to why these correlation clusters exist; it *isn’t* hard science. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar.

Hidden variables Okay; I *haven’t* done the research, unless you’re going to count simply *existing* in the LGBT and BDSM communities since the 2010s. But the thing is, I don’t think any *smart people* have done this justice either. While I *do* think Blanchard found at least two different subtypes of transsexuals,

I frankly think that there are probably *several* different types of transgender/transsexual people. And, we'd see that if we had more data. I think the strongest argument Blanchardians could make is that *some* transsexuals are autogynephiles, and that all the other types are clustered around what he calls "homosexual transsexuals".

That being said, I think this autogynephilia theory is also a bit flimsy and misleading. I think it unfairly pathologizes swaths of the spectrum of female sexuality, that I used to think were pathological *myself*; until I spent a few years in the BDSM scene, and eventually realized I've just wanted what *they're* having the whole time. It grinds my gears a little when "normal" women get to do what I want to do in bed, or in the dungeon, without anyone trying to discredit *their* gender identity, but as soon as *I* try and do it it's just "male sexuality directed inward" or something. This is why one of the more common complaints from the trans community is that his studies lack a cis female control group.

What's the *deal* with intersex people? Of course, you can't tell the narrator that Blanchard's research lacks a cis female control group, without him yelling something about sexual dimorphism and clownfish. He interrupts the Contrapoints video to say in exacerbation "IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE MALE!!!" so many times that I needed to take a smoke break; all while pondering whether the *real* reason I was gnashing my teeth was that I was having an autogynephilic narcissistic tempter tantrum or something.

I appreciate that Natalie calls out the false dichotomy between Blanchard's theory and a so-called "feminine essence" theory. However, she fails to present any real alternative to either; and this "feminine essence" theory is a bit of a straw man anyway, because I don't think any such concept has ever really been taken seriously in academia. The problem goes right over narrator Ray's head, when he takes us right back where we started by suggesting

that Blanchard is the only person doing any real science, so there isn't really even anything to pit his ideas against.

Of course, *I'm* not Natalie. I'm just a grumpy old truescummy queer from the year 2003 who wants to go back to using Debian Woody and burning mixed CDs, and we weren't justifying our feelings with any sort of "feminine essence" nonsense. We were doing so with the theories of *Harry Benjamin*; a fellow whose seminal work *The Transsexual Phenomenon* predates Blanchard by two decades, and who only became "problematic" in the trans community after the "everybody's valid" zeitgeist of the 2010s took hold. Natalie is too apologetic to the mainstream trans community to invoke someone like Harry Benjamin in the modern age; I, however, am *not*.

Benjamin essentially argued that transsexuals suffered from a *physical* rather than a psychological affliction; or perhaps a sort of neurological intersex condition. Hailed as evidence of this since my youth, is the apparently identical symptomatology when comparing transsexuals to *intersex* people; some of whom had their ambiguous genitalia corrected shortly after birth, out of a belief that newborn children were "blank slates" without any innate sense of gender identity at all. Doctors thought these kids would have a less traumatic childhood if they grew up with normal-looking genitals; and it's typically easier to surgically construct a vagina than it is a penis. **John Money** was perhaps the most outspoken advocate of the blank slate theory of gender identity; and his patient **David Reimer** famously went from being the poster child for Money's blank slate theory, to the poster child for innate gender identity and intersex rights. Countless other intersex people have come forward over the years, who experience *often extreme* gender dysphoria as a result of childhood surgeries they never consented to. In addition to this, there are even more folks with conditions like **CAH**; which seem to *also* induce gender dysphoria, even without infantile SRS.

To bring this back to the original point, narrator Ray argues vehemently that demanding a cis-male control group while testing Blanchard's theory is *nonsense*, because sexual dimorphism, ergo trans women are men *by definition*. This is *really* bad science; this "sexual dimorphism" argument is only valid across large populations. This idea can't be applied to individuals, who might suffer from intersex conditions or other developmental abnormalities. The point of "sexual dimorphism" as a concept is to make generalizations about healthy, developmentally-normal creatures; not to classify every individual of a species into one of two boxes with brute force; and indeed, *most* complex sexually-dimorphic living things would be presumed to exhibit intersex characteristics in at least a *small* percentage of their populations. While sexual dimorphism is a cornerstone of narrator Ray's argument against the Contrapoints video, it's a blatant abuse of the concept; and one which I don't think even Blanchard himself would be so brazen as to use.

While it doesn't seem to be much of a thing *since the mid-2010s*, transsexual and intersex people were *very often* lumped together into the same group when I was a kid; many forums were actually billed as "TS/IS" support groups due to the rather small population size of both. A significant minority of the folks on Antijen were also intersex (Mel, for example; and we even had *Erin Lindsey* as a lurker, speaking of the devil...) I wouldn't be surprised if it was like 5-10% of the list.

While I'd certainly *like* to see Blanchard's autogynephilia theory tested against a control group of GGs (in more than just the Charles Moser study, which narrator Ray doesn't seem to care for...), what I *really* want to see is a control group of *intersex transsexuals* like Erin Lindsey. I want to know how many people have "childhood autogynephilia" *and* partial CAH or some shit. I'm not gonna lie; I'm actually pretty nervous that the results will come in, and like *no one* who's an intersex transsexual will look like an autogynephile. But, that's okay. Science is progress. And, this life chose me.

Blanchard seems to utterly *ignore* the existence of intersex people with gender dysphoria, and it's unclear where they would even fit into his typology. For example; I know nothing of Erin Lindsey's private life, but her character Zoë went on to have a series of lesbian relationships with her classmates. If this is reflective of the author, it would appear we already *have* an "intersex autogynephile" without even much effort. However; I can't even take this idea seriously myself; I'm much more concerned about my early history of getting aroused while crossdressing, and my bondage and forced fellatio kinks; none of which seem very relatable to Erin, just based on the first handful of her strips.

Assuming that intersex people fall within the category of "homosexual transsexuals" is equally problematic; this would suggest that there's no difference between gay male sexuality and straight female sexuality, which doesn't agree with my own observational experience.

False equivalencies Blanchard seems to make no distinction between children who had "primary school autogynephilia", and folks who developed superficially similar erotic symptoms after looking at "sissy hypno" or other analogous forms of pornography as adults. Similarly, he seems to make no distinction between the sexuality of gay men and straight women. Though I'm only basing this on my own experiences and observations, I don't think these things are the same at all. If we looked closer, I think we'd see how these things differ; kinks that are based around objectification or "peacocking behavior" to attract a mate vs. humiliation-based kinks that are common for submissive men, or gay men wanting to "get each other" vs. "normal" men and women who play reciprocal and complimentary roles in the dating world.

Miscellaneous grievances

- Excessive dependence on unconscious desires to explain conscious behavior.

- This delves into a sort of Freudian space, and it’s easy to float away into philosophy land if you aren’t careful.
- Defends *The Man Who Would Be Queen* as “pop science”, which need not have the same level of scientific rigor as peer-reviewed research; while failing to hold Contrapoints to the same lower standard of “pop science edutainment”. Go read Ray Blanchard and Julia Serano if you want the scientifically rigorous version of this.
- “Authors don’t choose the covers for their books”.
 - First of all, this is what we in the trans community refer to as a *joke*.
 - Secondly, **you’re wrong**. (**sauce**)
- “Narcissistic rage is a well-documented phenomenon in trans women.”
 - You’re just basing this on feminist cringe compilations of people yelling because a cashier assumed their gender, aren’t you?
 - What do you, not have enough cringe compilation videos of *AFAB people* yelling at someone for assuming their gender?
- “I wasn’t born a woman; I was born *a fucking baby*.” → “No, you were born a *male*...”
 - You’re kinda *both* wrong. We already *know* the blank slate theory of gender identity is bullshit from people like David Reimer. It’s also misleading to say a trans woman is always “a male”, because Blanchard has failed to disprove the neurological intersex hypothesis; or even incorporate intersex people into his typology at all.
- “There’s no such thing as a ‘feminine essence’ or a ‘masculine essence’” → “Yes there *is*, because of sexual dimorphism.”
 - I’m awarding one point to narrator Ray for once. Again, the blank slate theory of gender identity has been disproved; however, there are undoubtedly things about being a man or woman that are *learned* through socialization.

- “A paraphilia is just an unusual sexual orientation. That’s all it is.”
 - I’m probably being a little uncharitable; but I want to make this discussion *really* concrete and down to Earth, and words have to mean something. I don’t like redefining a sexual orientation to encompass anything that might turn you on. I think people only have *one* sexual orientation, and everything else is a kink or a paraphilia.
- “It’s classic AGP!”
 - This is a variation of the **bad statistics** problem; any cluster B trans woman is going to “have AGP” by tautology. This only demonstrates which correlation cluster Natalie falls into, and does little to prove that Natalie is an autogynephile; or even that the theory is correct to begin with.
 - He often runs afoul with circular logic because of this, by essentially arguing that **autogynephiles exist because cluster B exists, and cluster B exists because autogynephiles exist.**
- “When a woman touches her breast during sex, it *feels good* because it’s an *erogenous zone*.”
 - Yeah, tell me about it.
- Goes out on a limb several times to make assumptions about cis female sexuality that *I* don’t even want to make.
 - When she says she’s “buying sexy lingerie for *herself*”, it’s really just because she doesn’t have good insight into her psycho-sexual motivations. She’s *really* doing it for men subconsciously.
 - Goes on a bizarre rant about evolutionary psychology that sounds like some MRA red pill shit.
 - I *want* to say this sounds like r/menwritingwomen, but I’d rather a cis woman do that.
- “You nuke your libido with hormones.”
 - Nah, I just masturbate a couple times a week instead of once a day. I don’t get spontaneous erections or

morning wood, though. And I don't want to look at porn anymore, unless it's a special occasion or something.

- “They call them ‘euphoria boners.’”
 - I’ve never heard that one before, but whatever.
- “This paraphilic stuff *does not exist* in the homosexual type!”
 - Paraphilic stuff is not in cluster A because cluster A doesn’t include paraphilic stuff. It’s got electrolytes.
- AGPs have a unique sexuality
 - A lot of trans women have a *unique* sexuality for a man, and a *relatively normal* sexuality for a woman. But, you won’t even *allow* comparisons to female sexuality because clownfish and you don’t believe in intersex phenomena.
 - Social motivation, he says it’ll make us look bad → Look, I’m openly a kinkster, okay? I think I’m being *brutally* honest here.
 - Natalie later argues that it’s *demeaning* to have to critique AGP with our own *very private* lived experience. That’s what’s frustrating; we have to put our entire private lives on display to even *attempt* to argue against this theory, and *even then* it usually doesn’t work.
- “It’s well documented that trans women often spun their stories to get hormones.”
 - Yeah, the hardcore gatekeeping era was a dark age. A lot of people might call you unfeminine simply for enjoying *masturbation* or *light bondage*, or even just wearing jeans to your endo appointment, which is just silly.
- “Trans women reject this characterization because they characterize it in an incredibly inflammatory, strawman way.”
 - No, we’ve been attacking this with academic rigor since Lynn Conway and Andrea James back in 2003.

It's *become* inflammatory because it *won't go away*, and *you won't listen to us*.

- Whether you are essentially male or not is just a fact of biology.
 - Tell that to Erin Lindsey. I double dog dare you.
- Just because it doesn't describe your *conscious* motivations to transition doesn't mean it doesn't describe your *unconscious* motivations to transition, which you don't have conscious access to.
 - Right, but neither does Ray Blanchard. This isn't necessarily a *completely* groundless theory, but it's far from proven science like this fellow would have you believe. Indeed, part of the problem with Blanchard's ideas is that they're largely unfalsifiable, and his supporters go on like a broken record implying causation from correlation just because these correlation clusters exist and sexual dimorphism exists.
- He basically says trans women are too biased to even fairly *evaluate* Blanchard's theory. This is unfortunate, considering *we're* the only people who even directly experience this. Do you see nothing wrong with only listening to the <1% of trans women like Anne Lawrence and blogger Debbie, and ignoring the other 99% because something about sexual dimorphism and clownfish? You aren't really even *considering* the mainstream viewpoint, because you didn't grow up with shit like Antijen and Lynn Conway and Harry Benjamin and Transsexual Road Map breaking it down as something adjacent to intersex conditions. It must be easy to debunk the mainstream trans narrative when you think all you have to do is challenge third wave feminists and their “👉 TRANS 👉 WOMEN 👉 ARE 👉 WOMEN!!!” narrative. But, that isn't even hard science. It's just culture war dogma, and even *I'm* sick of it by now.

I feel like it's the year 2023 again, and I'm just learning what Christians think about witches. The aliens are demons, the

spaceship is a “vessel from hell”, your homeworld is a demonic realm, your time travel book is evil sorcery... They’ve got all these words like “behavioral autogynephilia” and “interpersonal autogynephilia” to pathologize just *having gender dysphoria* along with maybe a few male .DLLs mixed in with your mostly female .DLLs; but their fancy words aren’t really rooted in anything other than the existence of these two correlation clusters, which isn’t really even the thing trans women disagree with.

We can’t accept the autogynephilia theory because there’s so much stigma admitting it and talking about your sexuality as a male You *really* don’t *get it*, do you? The problem *really* isn’t stigma. It’s that, certainly *consciously*, we (well, *I*) generally don’t relate to this theory *at all*. The only people who *do* are folks who I feel are developmentally where I was in college or late high school. I consider myself, on *some* level, to be an *ex*-autogynephile. I’ve *already done the work* of overcoming the stigma, embraced sex-positivity, tried using the BDSM community to fill that void while identifying as a “quasi-transgender subby boy”, grew puzzled about why I wasn’t *quite* getting the same thing as subby girls, gradually came to terms with the fact that *lots* of cis women have the same kinks as me and actually make me look kind of *vanilla* a lot of the time, came to understand the humiliation vs. objectification dichotomy between male and female submissives... and ultimately concluded that there *was* no real discernible difference between me and any of the other submissive women in the scene, save perhaps for socialization. And, *that’s* the point where I realized I didn’t *actually* have an abhorrent sexuality at all. I just had a unique brand of sexual repression from being socialized male in a male body, that virtually no “normal” woman could relate to because cis women start getting objectified in like middle school.

I think sexual objectification for women is, like... vitamin D or something. *Every girl* needs vitamin D, but *too much* D will make you *sick*. And, women start getting *lots* of unsolicited vitamin D

starting at like age 13 or 14. From boys in class, from older men even... much of the energy of feminism is directed toward making sure these young women don't get too much vitamin D and become sick from it. But... being trans feels like a rare *deficiency* of vitamin D, that basically *no* cis woman could ever understand. It's a *really* unique place to be. Lots of folks will lead you to believe vitamin D is simply *toxic*, and that you can't *get* too little of it. But then, years go by, you eventually decide to *try* vitamin D because you only live once and you'd rather regret something you did than something you didn't do like the Butthole Surfers, and now some older guy is chatting you up in the self-checkout line at Target when you're just trying to buy toothpaste, and you're afraid to talk to him because you worry your voice will crack and then you'll get Barbara Arujo-ed or something, and then he kinda walks off in a huff after saying something about how nobody wants to talk to strangers anymore, and now you're a little worried *that* will get you Barbara Arujo-ed, but you *also* realize that suddenly you've just gotten enough vitamin D for the next *six months*. Because, it's really just *that*. Women want to feel *pretty*, and *noticed*, and *desirable*. It's both non-sexual, and inextricably entangled *with* female sexuality. Look, I'm going out on a limb here because I'm not a *normal* woman and maybe *I* don't really get it, but... I *want* to be pretty. I want guys to notice me, and someday I'd like some guy to notice me and ask me out for drinks or something. And then maybe we'll eventually go back to his place or my place, and we'll Netflix and chill or something, and eventually one thing will lead to another, and... Look, *that's* what female sexuality means to me. If you ask men what *male* sexuality means to *them*, I'd expect it to be something like "going out on the prowl", "checking out ladies", telling all your bro friends there's a babe alert at 3 o'clock... They want to do the *opposite* thing as me. They don't want to be "pretty" or "noticed". They want to find a hot babe *to* notice, to maybe flirt with or just talk to for a couple seconds while they pick up their coffee at Starbucks... they want to find some girl and give her a little vitamin D. Even *if* they're never going to go home together

or anything. *That's* what male sexuality is to *me*. And male bottoms and female tops? They're *no fucking different*. Male bottoms still want to check out the ladies. Female dommes still want to *get got*. He just wants to *submit to her* once he gets her. I learned the hard way that this is *totally* different from the way my brain is wired.

And, it's *not* the same thing as gay men *at all*. I learned *that* the hard way from my ill-fated polycule. I think April expected me to want to actively fuck her as much as she might've wanted to fuck me. It's like "masc-for-masc", except maybe it's more like "femme-for-femme" or something. I think Natalie hit the nail on the head with her comment about Playboy, and how it was mostly viewed by gay men. Because, gay men kinda just want to "get" *each other*. Because, they're both *men*, and they both like being out on the prowl. The top isn't "checking out" the bottom like a man would a woman. They're checking out *each other*. Because they're both *men*, they both have a male *gender identity*, and *that's* what that means.

The dangerous thing about autogynephilia, I think, is that the world tells you vitamin D deficiency simply isn't a *thing*, and that you must just be in denial about your paraphilias, or your sexual orientation for turning yourself into a woman or something, because *nobody's* deficient in vitamin D. *Real women* don't have vitamin D deficiencies. It's *unheard of*. But, it's unheard of because they're *women*. *Normal women*, with *normal female bodies*. And *you've* got the wrong body, with the wrong hormones, and *nobody* thinks you're pretty, and *nobody's* ever going to take you home. Maybe you even start to develop fantasies about being tied up, or even *raped* or something, because at least *then* you'd know he *wants* you. *Somebody* noticed you, *somebody* thought you were pretty... and in some fucked up way, you got what you wanted. You were so pretty that he was even willing to *break the law* to get you. And, you probably got *way* too much goddamn vitamin D if this happened in real life. You were dying of thirst in the desert, and now you're clinging to a piece of driftwood in

the middle of Lake Erie. At least you aren't so parched anymore, but now you probably have bigger problems.

If I were to *really* try and burrow as deep into my subconscious as I can, I think *this* is where my kinks come from. I've always wanted to be pretty and desirable since, like, *forever*; but I'm a *dude*. Nobody's ever going to *want* me. If any guy ever *let on* like they wanted me like a woman, they'd probably just say "PSYCH!!!!" right as we were about to have our first kiss or something. The idea of someone wanting me so badly that they *tie me up so I can't get away* is, frankly, the best reassurance I could *get* that he really *does* want me after all. He wants me, and sees me as *so desirable* that I *might* even try and leave him for someone else. I'm not just someone he begrudgingly decided to fuck because I asked nicely at a play party or something. I'm a real *catch* to this guy! And *that* is... no, it's not hot. *BDSM* is "hot". This is something lower level. It's comforting. It's vitamin D. Just the right amount. A way I could actually be convinced that someone, not only *wants* my body, but even thinks *other guys* might want my body. I'm worth protecting, in some kinda warped way. I think I've been aware of this fact, on some level, since middle school. I never fantasize about being *legitimately* tortured or anything. I just want to *get got*. I want to *know* he *wants me*. But as a guy (straight *or* gay), the only way to *get* is to play the hunter. And, I'm *not* a hunter. I'm a gatherer. These analogies are starting to run flat. But, I want to get *got*, see? That's what female sexuality is to *me*, and at least on the surface that appears to be what female sexuality is to *normal women*, too. Except, they never had to recover from a vitamin D deficiency when they were younger. It's the basis for female flirting. They peacock themselves, and act all cute and sweet toward this guy who's showing interest in them; in the hopes that maybe one thing will lead to another, and he might actually be *the one* or something.

I'm sure that if dude was making a debunking video of me debunking his debunking of Natalie's debunking of all this auto-

gynephilia bunk, he'd probably have interrupted me at least half a dozen times in exacerbation to say something about "Sexual dimorphism!", or "You're a male! A MALE! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, A CLOWNFISH?" And, no, I don't think I'm a *clownfish*... I'd *like* to think I might have a neurological intersex condition that makes all this sexual dimorphism hooley go out the window, but *maybe* I just have *some other* kind of developmental abnormality that made me this way. I don't fucking know. I'm not a doctor. And, not even the *doctors* really know, for that matter. And, *that's* what it's about to *me*. I was born different, I want to be pretty, and I want to get got. And if that makes me an autogynephile, or a gay fish or something, then I guess I'm fucking guilty.



Figure 60: "Gay Fish" (Original Music) - SOUTH PARK (<https://youtu.be/XPYgtVHa8NI>)

I'm actually going to be more charitable than *most* trans women, and admit that autogynephilia *might* actually exist. But even if it *does*, I doubt the rigidity of Blanchard's two-type duality

is going to hold up under further scrutiny; particularly in the present age.

Harry Benjamin, the pioneering researcher *I'll* always fall back on when I need the hardest and most well-established theory to counter Blanchardianism, created a six-tier system that I *still* don't think is all that far off; though things are a lot more complicated in the year 2025. There are modern criticisms to this, yes; but I think it's more accurate than Blanchardianism, and I don't know of an alternative that isn't way too nebulous for skeptics.

Table 11: Shamelessly copied from [here](#) and [here](#)

Group	Type	Name	Kinsey scale
1	I	Transvestite (Pseudo)	0–6
1	II	Transvestite (Fetishistic)	0–2
1	III	Transvestite (True)	0–2
2	IV	Transsexual (Nonsurgical)	1–4
3	V	True transsexual (Moderate intensity)	4–6
3	VI	True transsexual (High intensity)	6

Like I've said before, I think there are probably several different types of transsexuals and transgender people in the year 2025. I'd like to take an amateurish crack at enumerating them.

Type Z These are the realest of the real transsexuals, and consist of type V and VI on the Harry Benjamin scale. They basically have David Reimer shit going on with them, but a lot of them don't have any known intersex condition. This is probably the smallest group, but also the most important to help. Lauren (the original group leader of TT) is this type, and I've probably met a couple others like this at Rory's group. But, it's pretty rare.

Type Y These are type III and IV on the Benjamin scale, and consist of yours truly; along with Julie, a good number of folks from Rory's group, and probably at least half of Antijen. These folks are probably the bread and butter of whom Blanchard would label as "autogynephiles", but I think a lot of what we traditionally called "fetishistic transvestites" get swept up in this as well.

Type X I'm going to refer to this as the "adult onset" form, which comprises folks who have no obvious childhood history of cross-gender behavior. This is distinct from people like me, who may not have *done it* until their 20s or 30s, but still had obvious symptoms of *something* as a kid. Many of them had sudden epiphanies in their late 20s, 30s, or 40s; but I'll allow for some of them to have been circling the drain for a while before doing it. I think this includes Benjamin types I-III as a subset, and seemed to comprise most of TT toward the end.

Type W These are phenotypically gay men, as far as I can tell. They have the "effeminate" (as opposed to just "feminine") mannerisms stereotypical of gay men that I'm sure we're all familiar with by now. Steven and AJ fall into this category for sure, and Blanchard would undoubtedly classify them as "homosexual transsexuals". *This type seems to be on the rise*; I don't think there were many of these folks on Antijen, but I've only actually *met* one person from the list IRL.

Type V This is the psychogenic form, and includes the concept I *used* to laugh at called “rapid onset gender dysphoria”. These folks usually have multiple friends who are trans, and then after a while it turns out *they’re* also trans; yet, there aren’t really any concrete symptoms to point to, except that they might just report “feeling different” with little to no dysphoria. Some of these folks have personality disorders that cause them to variously have a weak and malleable sense of self, or exhibit bizarre thought patterns; though, I’m not convinced this is even the most common cause. I think a lot of these folks basically get sucked in through other subcultures; or by suddenly having half your friend group *also* be trans, which makes *you* second guess yourself because you *already* have a lot in common with your friends, right? I don’t think this is necessarily limited to being *transgender*, and is basically what happened with me and this plural stuff. I’d imagine taking an extended break from your friend group would clear this up for a lot of folks.

Type U Although I’m not sure I know anyone who’d definitively fit into this category, I’m blocking it off for people who have *honest to goodness* autogynephilia, and aren’t just type X or Y or something. Part of why I have to do this, is that “Cher” *really is* pretty different from me. I realize Blanchard and narrator Ray want to lump masturbating in a hogtie with a vibrator and videoing yourself wearing a woman mask and getting pounded in the ass with a fucksaw into the same category, but... I *don’t* really think this is fair. Light bondage is probably the most common kink among women; and who doesn’t have a *vibrator* in this day and age? Cher *really does* sound like she might legitimately have “male sexuality directed inward”, though. And, there’s nothing wrong with that. But, I don’t think it’s the same thing as what’s going on with me.

The thing about all this autogynephilia business is, that I might *be* an autogynephile. I *have* to allow for this as a person of science, after all. In fact, if we were to just *assume Blanchard was*

right, then I guess I'd *have* to be; simply because I got aroused while crossdressing as a kid. I don't really fucking *care* anymore. It's *really* hard to get young adults to transition once you've convinced them that they don't have a neurological intersex condition and they're really just a goofed up *man*, but I guess that's a different issue.

It's frustrating to debate Blanchardians as a presumed autogynephile, because they have an answer for *everything*. But, it's usually not a *good* answer. They *love* that they can cherry-pick the <1% of us who are Uncle Toms, so that they can tell us we're just *in denial* and should try and be more like Anne Lawrence or something. Again; I was *there* at the end of high school, and I've moved past it. They always seem to know me better than I know myself. People without degrees who just read some stuff on the internet, or a book or something. Every time I do something that "normal women" do *too*, they'll spout off something about how *I'm* just doing it because of my inverted male sexuality, and *she's* just doing because of the patriarchy, or evolutionary psychology, or because I *really* don't understand *her* at all. And, you know? Maybe I *don't*. I'm not a cis woman. Whenever we find something that *is* different between me and cis women, it's a glaring example of how I'm really just a *man*, and not some in-between intersex state that one would expect from someone who has a less severe IS condition. Whenever we try and bring up the fact that lots of intersex people actually *do* have gender dysphoria, they'll accuse me of co-opting intersex narratives. If I get too annoyed with them, I'm exhibiting "autogynephilic narcissistic rage", despite the fact that I don't score highly on an inventory of narcissistic traits. Probably because I'm lying about myself again to seem less like an autogynephile or something. It's like the Truman Show, when the guy tries to drive out of town and there's suddenly a traffic jam at every turn. They insist it's proven science, when really all they have are these correlation clusters that they derive all sorts of contrived theories from, and they use circular logic to tell me I'm an autogynephile

because I have the traits of a transsexual who's been labeled an autogynophile in this unverified typology.

I started writing out some *other* hair-brained theory, in some attempt at showing that *I* can play the "philosophizing about correlation clusters" game, too. But, I don't know that I like it. I'm probably just digging myself further into a hole to Blanchard's supporters, and doing no service to folks who already think Bailey and Blanchard are full of shit.

I mean; I'll leave it in spoiler tags (for folks reading the HTML version); but I'm probably just opening myself up to another barrage of attacks and criticisms from people like narrator Ray, or even "BBL" themselves.

Rachael's hastily-conceived gender philosophizing

You say there's no other possible explanation for the data; but *I* can play Blanchard's game. Let's, at the risk of shooting myself in the foot somehow, assume a simplified reductionist view of manhood and womanhood, where male and female psychology is really just defined by the presence or absence of a couple dozen DLLs. There's the female DLL for wanting to peacock yourself to attract a mate, there's the male DLL for wanting to *scout out* your mate, there's the female DLL for preferring safety over risk so that you don't accidentally hurt your offspring, there's the male DLL for wanting to put your dick in stuff, there's the female DLL for arching your back when you orgasm, there's the male DLL for wanting to fight off other males who might want to attack the nest, there's the female DLL for preferring safety in numbers, there's the male DLL for wanting to feel a woman's breast... And if you're trans, you've managed to get a mix of the two sets of DLLs somehow. Everyone wants to focus on the erotic crossdressing part, but like... there's a lot of weird, quasi-feminine shit about me that has nothing to *do* with sex. Men like horsing around, wrestling, competing with each other... I've never *liked* these things. Women like to form close tightly-knit groups to the point that they go shopping, or even go to the bathroom together.

Aside from my bladder shyness problem, I can relate to *that* a lot more, but other guys aren't *like* me. Dudes like to rip on each other, and I've adopted that as a learned behavior; but it doesn't fit like a glove, and I wasn't like that in primary school. I just wanted to fit in *really* badly, and I clearly *didn't*. Erika got me off in college (no, not while crossdressing... that only happened *once* with Bailey or whatever...), and afterward said "I've never seen a boy arch his back before when he cums..." I was neither trying to be feminine, nor identifying as "trans" at this point in my life. I... didn't *mean* to do that. Is that a learned behavior? I mean, I guess maybe I was trying to be a *submissive* if not a woman... When I found mom's lingerie, I didn't know they were "sex clothes". I just had *feelings* about those articles of clothing, and somehow ended up doing exactly what one does with lingerie. That's what it is for... That's how it is used. I was actually pretty creeped out once I fully parsed what it was I was doing. Like, what *is* that? A learned behavior? A DLL? You tell me. I don't fucking know. I might be an autogynephile, after all. I'm not really even trying to prove I'm not an autogynephile anymore. And, you probably want to laugh at me for "thinking I'm a real wombyn because I arch my back when I cum sometimes". I don't necessarily think I'm a "real woman". I'm a human with a developmental abnormality, and I'd appreciate it if you just let me blend in and live my life. Dick.

So there's a bunch of DLLs, and hell; maybe even just having *one* out-of-place causes gender dysphoria. I wouldn't be surprised if I have several out of place, granted... So you put on women's clothes for the first time as a kid, and one of your DLLs is like "This is normal. This is *surprisingly* normal. I've always *wanted* to do this..." and maybe there's some other DLL that makes you physiologically go "Woah, I'm the *girl*. That's *hot*." or something. I mean, I've certainly never thought that last part on any conscious level... The physiological response is kind of just... automatic, and really low level. And, I don't think it's quite the

same thing as what's going on with guys. But, I guess I wouldn't really *know*, would I?

So, what causes you to have a mix of DLLs? I don't fucking know. Maybe it's intersex stuff, or maybe it was my weird family life during formative stages in my development... It doesn't really matter, because we all have DLLs, and they must come from *somewhere*. I think a lot of people get hung up in the specifics of how "trans women are women", and... you know, I'm *okay* with having some male DLLs. I actually thought Boy Scouts was pretty fun, for example. Unless they were going to aggressively gender me "male" for being a boy or something, which never really happened all that often.

There are probably a few different ways your DLLs can get fucked up. Partial AIS might fuck up DLLs 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 15 or something. Maybe excess estrogens in utero or something does 3, 4, 9, and sometimes 15. There are probably only a couple most common causes of it, and we see these different correlation clusters because of it.

This isn't a very sound or well-developed theory, but... I mean, I don't know that a more fleshed-out version of this would be that much worse than Blanchardianism. I think the biggest problem is that him and his supporters are *really* just convinced that we're all *men*, and they aren't at all open-minded about the possibility that maybe things are more complicated than that. Maybe it would help people who are hung up on the semantics of "trans women are women" to say that we probably aren't quite *either* neurologically speaking; but often simply identify as the opposite sex out of convenience, and a desire to just *be normal* like anyone with a disability would. Although, I'd be lying if I said being misgendered doesn't sting a little more than being simply inconvenienced.

I don't think you're a woman just because you arch your back when you cum, or because you crossdressed like a moth to a flame as a kid *with or without* some kind of arousal, or because

you prefer cooperation to competition, or because you don't like wrestling, or because you're a submissive in the bedroom... but if you've got a bunch of those things *all at once* and you also want to be a girl *really badly*, then... you *might* be a woman. Or something in between that's pretty close to it, at least.



Frankly, what I *want* to do instead is refer people to **Lynn Conway's material from the 2000s**. I've spent a lot of time focusing on the "correlation clusters"; probably because the Contrapoints video has been fresh in my mind since the late 2010s, and that's the main thing *she* attacks about this theory. I haven't really *read* Lynn Conway's stuff since I was in high school. But, I don't think implying causation from correlation is necessarily even the most egregious offense here.

I realize newer audiences will cringe at the turn-of-the-millennium web design and use of dated terms like

“transgenderism”; but this is how we talked and used the internet back then, kiddo. Despite the Michael Bailey stuff not having been updated since 2007, I... don’t think much of anything substantial has changed since then. Anne Lawrence published “Men Trapped in Men’s Bodies”, a couple Blanchardian bloggers kept blogging... and frankly, I think any post-2015 research into the phenomenon is going to be tainted by the recent tidal wave of new transitioners, who I *really* think are turning all extant theories about transsexuals and transgender people on their heads. I don’t think most of these new folks are autogynephiles, homosexual transsexuals, *or* Harry Benjamin transsexuals. You can read all about this Tiger King bullshit we had going on in the community back in the 2000s, including some intersex lesbian chick astroturfing a bizarro-Antijen with a bunch of sock-puppets in an unsuccessful attempt at luring in young “HSTSes”; probably because she didn’t like TS and IS people getting lumped together or something.

Probably the most frustrating thing to me, is that we don’t really *know* what’s going on. But, these amateur dudes on YouTube post edgy videos like “Contrapoints DEBUNKED!” and “Blanchard was RIGHT!”. *I’m* willing to allow some leeway in fairly testing Blanchard’s theories; but these guys are talking about people like me and Lynn Conway like we’re flat-earthers or anti-vaxxers or something. And frankly, if anyone’s doing bad science, it’s *them*.

But perhaps more important to me personally, is the fact that I’m *biased as hell*. These old school trans activists are, like, the *best* kind of people. They aren’t out there selling books, or doing the talk show circuit; not that those things are *bad*. But, these are the types of people who thanklessly spend *countless hours* slaving away with nothing in return; collecting fact-based information on the transsexual phenomenon, running mailing lists, providing one-on-one support... I remember hearing that Aunty could’ve paid for her SRS *several times over* with the kind of money she spent helping other people get their surgeries and hormones and

shit. I mean, *these* are the sorts of people I had as role models growing up. And, Lynn literally worked at *Xerox PARC*. I'd probably kill my own mother to be able to go back in time and work at Xerox PARC. I can't help but feel a personal connection to these people, and part of it frankly *is* that I want "the good guys" to win. And, that's who these folks *are* to me. They're the *good guys*, putting in the sort of time and effort that you'd *have* to be born with some crazy shit like this to have that kind of motivation. These people genuinely wanted to help the next generation of transsexuals figure out what they were as quickly as possible, so that they didn't spend half their lives spinning their wheels. They wanted things to be easier for me than they were for them. And, Bailey's just some blowhard with an agenda and a history of advocating for homosexual eugenics. Part of me feels like I'm fighting for "aunt Cassie" and "grandma Lynn" here. Because, *you* want to tear down all those countless hours these people spent with some lazy argument about clownfish and evolutionary psychology. And apparently, so does half of Silicon Valley.

This is it. My last whiny little rant, probably. I have \$76.88 in my bank account. I have no real close friends, and my only family is my crazy mom who I don't intend to go running back to. I've ignored Chase, and haven't even *tried* filling out the way-too-overwhelming five-page RMA form from them, and now my mortgage is being transferred to Rushmore Servicing. Whoever the fuck *they* are. Hell; I didn't even look at the *form* until today. They probably won't give me a dedicated Relationship Manager *or* a dedicated Self-Improvement Gigolo. I feel like a toddler lost in a Super Walmart. I need somebody to give me a three-day-long hug. And I can't even get a *normal*-length one. All I can get are people texting me *hug* sometimes. And, look. I'm not 13 anymore, and you aren't Aunty. Samantha's recovering from long COVID and moved out of state, so I'm not really even talking about *her* and *Brittany*.

There's no turning back. I've already *lit* myself on fire. Without a single match. This was me. If anybody really cares at all.

I used to look at Lynn Conway's Wikipedia page a couple times a year, just to see if her and these other old school people were still alive. I could hardly be all that sad about her passing; she died peacefully of old age.

Aunty died back in 2020 for that matter, after a period of declining health. She was 62 years old.

I searched r/asktransgender to see if there was any mention, and there wasn't. Not much about her at all, really. And, *that's* how I know this isn't the same community I grew up with. There's no way in *hell* Lynn Conway could've died fifteen years ago without it going across *every* transsexual forum and mailing list. I don't know how this happened. I just want the younger folks to know, that this isn't the same.

Scrolling through the last messages on Antijen for a trip down memory lane or something, reminds me of a time when things were just... subtly different. There was no too-cute vs truescum stuff. There were just... people. People transitioning. Not all that unlike r/asktransgender, really; just with extra off-topic stuff about people's lives and whatnot. There were no "pronouns". Not that there's even anything *wrong* with that. But, nobody ever had to ask "Danielle" what her pronouns were. I don't *know* of any "Am I trans? Is it just a fetish?" threads; but I doubt anyone would've directed you toward the button test if you asked.

I eventually found the big warning on Aunty's site I mentioned a year ago.

I have mixed feelings about telling the next generation of kids this. Because, frankly, *I* got scared straight in high school. But, I don't think that would've happened if I didn't have the rough experience I had. And, I don't want anyone to feel bad about getting aroused by crossdressing early on. Hell; I don't *know* if I



The Antijen Mail List

v3.0

I'm going to change the opening of this page to a special message that I think you all need to hear, and it's one that you might never hear.

It's okay to be a feminine male! It's okay to be a masculine female!

You do not have to go through this process just to fit in!

You are allowed to be anything you want in life, and the world needs feminine males and masculine females!

Don't do this unless you have too!!!!!!!!!!!!

[ENTER](#)

Figure 61: I think you have to WaybackMachine
<http://www.genderweb.org/users/jenstar/> instead of <http://www.antijen.org>.

really have a neurological intersex condition. But, people with real gender problems want to be women (or men, if you're the other way) *all throughout their day*. They want to be a girl when they're on the bus, they want to be a girl when they're sitting in math class, they want to be a girl when they're playing video games, they want to be a girl when they're riding their bike... and *yes*, they even want to be a girl when they *masturbate*. And, it's pretty hard to be a girl when you masturbate when you have chest hair and lack breasts, so things might look a little different for you than what a TERF would expect. Don't let anyone tell you you just have "male sexuality directed inward" and need to "admit that you're a male" just because you want to be a girl when you *masturbate*, too. But, man... girl... whatever... I *really* think a lot of folks are doing this for all the wrong reasons. And, I can't die without making that known to people.

And, I just keep asking myself, every day. What the fuck *happened* between me and Vickie? Did Tommy say my mom said I said I had dissociative amnesia or something? I mean, *that* might've led her to tell me to get DBT and not come back... Did my mom say I was "out of control", when really I was just bouncing around in the car seat because of how cryptic her and Tommy were being at Cocoa Cinnamon that day? Was it just the letters? Did the doctors at Duke Regional put her up to it? Yeah, I *know* I took street tar and put it in my mouth... She was my therapist for like *five years*. She has *one little talk* with

Tommy Warren, and she didn't even want to *see me* again. What did I do *wrong*? She wouldn't even tell me what it *was*. Except that I needed DBT and substance abuse counselling for it. And, I couldn't just go to substance abuse counselling and still see Vickie. One little talk with Tommy, and she wanted nothing more to *do* with me. It's gotta be *me*, right? Am I *that bad*? I'm a nice person, *right*? My polycule flew apart, my relationship with my therapist flew apart, and I just don't understand what's *wrong* with me. I wish I'd have never signed that release for them to talk. Do I have a personality disorder? Is it so bad they can't even *tell me*? It sucks that I'm probably going to kill myself without even getting any closure. I was just supposed to know not to do *that*, I guess. *Whatever* it was...

I've kinda decided I'll probably stick around for a couple more days after I post this. First of all, there's a decent chance it'll just get removed from Reddit because of all the "real shit" contained within. And, I'd rather *not* go to 4chan with it or something. I don't even *like* 4chan. But there are already rules all over Reddit about just talking about politics these days. And, I'm not sure I could tell my honest life story *without* talking about politics at least a *little*.

Maybe second of all, some part of me wonders if some long lost friend is going to swoop in at the last minute and save my life or something. But, I need big, *big* help at this point. Nothing I've found is really even in the right order of *magnitude*. And, I don't see that I have much of a future; between the alarmingly fast rise of fascism, the collapse of the only industry I've ever known, and the financial ruin I've found myself in. I don't exactly need to live in *luxury*; but I've grown *very* accustomed to my lifestyle of being able to grab a burrito whenever I'm hungry and live by myself or with a small group. And, I don't think I can adjust to that "homeless shelter and soup kitchen" life that probably awaits me now that I'm in my mid-30s. I mean, maybe I'm catastrophizing; I've still accrued a decent amount of home equity, but I need *help*. Boots on the ground *help* to get me up

and going. And, I *really* need a friend right now. A *real* friend, who's gonna give me the biggest hug I've ever had.

Writing this document was fun, but it's also been exhausting. I wish I had more time and money to work on it. I'm sorry if there are any remaining errors with my anonymization script; I almost had this thing going out with names like "Francis Wall" and "Bill Horton's". If you see a famous person's name goofed up like that, that's, uh... what happened. And I guess it wouldn't be so anonymous anymore for those folks. Not that there are very many last names anyhow. It's Friday the 21st, and I've *really* got to get this thing out the door today. So I'll have at least a few days before I do the deed.

Manic Goodbye, y'all. The names in this text are mostly anonymized; but *I* was real. A real human, with an actual fucked up life I never did manage to figure out all these years later. And, I want you to know that. It'll just be more internet garbage otherwise. I've seen a lot of weird shit over the last 20 years of my 34-year-long life, and I don't think I could rest in peace without sharing it with whoever will listen. Life isn't about living a long time doing nothing. It's about making an impact, and standing up for what you know is right. I see a chance to do that today. And, I think I can reach my full potential as a human by doing it, even if it means I'll die young. I think this is my chance, and I don't think there's any other way.

Depressive Goodbye, y'all. I don't know what I hope to accomplish by sharing this with people. I'm no hero. I'm no martyr. I just hope you'll learn something from my life, and treat your children and your friends better than I was. There's a lot of confusion in the world today, and I don't feel like anyone's speaking my language. Not even transgender people. I don't know what's been going on around here lately. My life story is just one of the ways humans can be different. I think the



Figure 62: I'm not going to get dressed up for this. I could've at least moved the vacuum cleaner...

advancement of the human race depends on understanding those differences.

As I stumble through my ill-prepared final arrangements, I leave this world with a little bit of wisdom from all throughout the ages. The gods weave my life on this world like a thread on a loom. Jesus will save you if you just ask for forgiveness. Avoid the trip to Venus so Lord Xenu doesn't keep you here on Earth. Who am I to know what's right? I feel something on the other side of this thin veil. And, I never thought that would happen. I don't think this is the end of existence for me. It's certainly the end of a chapter. As I look at the threads that have woven around me, if by some divine providence, or simply by quantum randomness, I think *this* might be my time.

Whether I'm on my way to meet God, or perhaps just Apollo and Dionysus, I now feel a sudden calm when I think of my fate. There's nothing else I could possibly be. I walk the path of countless transsexual men and women before me. And yet, this somehow feels like a road less traveled. I'm not the first of my kind to leave this place because there's no hope left. I *might* be the first to leave behind a several hundred-page suicide note.

I regret that I failed to make close friends. I had a complicated high school experience, I had college drinking and smoking buddies I failed to keep up with after I graduated, I guess I made friends in the BDSM community who I didn't really do much with outside of kink events, I threw myself into the local trans community because I *really* thought I'd found my people... And it's all just sand slipping through my fingers. Everything is ephemeral. Nothing lasts forever. Death might be the ultimate realization of this fact of life.

People my age are working on their second marriage. Not trying to build non-superficial friendships for the first time in their lives. I'm very behind in life, and I don't see any way for me to catch up. Unless that's something that awaits me in the afterlife. I want to believe; even if I have little reason to.

Most people probably wish they could go to heaven when they die. I struggle to wish for anything more than to wake up on the first day of 9th grade. I'd make better choices. Choices my mother would scream at me for making. Choices my "friends" would make fun of me for, if I even told them in the first place. I know now that I never had a chance. I feel like church and Susan taught me Go Fish, and I got thrown into a game of poker when I turned 13.

Sometimes I'm sad about this, or just want to scream at anyone *else* who'll listen to just *help me* like I'm a five-year-old or something; but, I've mostly just lost the will to live at this point. I'm already dreaming of some greener pasture in the great beyond somewhere. A boyfriend to hold me tight as I quietly sob into his chest about all of this bullshit that's happened to me... friends who actually love and understand me... a normal body, and a normal life. I have little else comforting to cling to. If this universe is as ordered as I've come to believe it is, there's bound to be some kinder world out there somewhere.

Appendix A: ChatGPT 4o on Freemasonry

What is Freemasonry's "big secret"?

ChatGPT said:

Freemasonry, a centuries-old fraternal organization, has long been surrounded by intrigue, myths, and speculation about its so-called "big secret." However, in reality, there isn't one single "big secret" that Freemasonry holds. Instead, the organization is known for its secrecy about rituals, symbols, and internal traditions, which often gives rise to the idea that it has a profound hidden truth.

What Are the Secrets in Freemasonry?

Freemasonry has historically kept certain practices and knowledge private to maintain a sense of unity and exclusivity among members. These “secrets” generally fall into a few key areas:

1. **Rituals and Ceremonies:** Freemasons are initiated through a series of elaborate rituals, which include symbolic acts and oaths. The specific details of these rituals are closely guarded, although much of it has been revealed over time. The rituals are intended to convey moral and ethical lessons to the members.
2. **Signs, Symbols, and Words:** Freemasons use secret handshakes, passwords, and symbols to identify one another, especially in older times when there was less formal documentation. These are not significant in themselves but are meant to reinforce the sense of brotherhood and shared identity.
3. **Degrees and Progressive Teachings:** Freemasonry is structured around a system of degrees, with members advancing from one level to another. The teachings and symbols associated with each degree are revealed progressively, leading some to believe that there is deeper knowledge or truth at higher levels. However, the teachings primarily focus on self-improvement, morality, and the search for truth.

Is There a “Big Secret”?

The notion of a “big secret” often stems from the idea that Freemasonry is hiding some grand truth about the world, religion, or the nature of existence. However, most Freemasons and historians agree that the organization does not possess any secret knowledge in this sense. The secrecy is more about preserving the integrity of their rituals and fostering a sense of brotherhood among members.

In short, the “big secret” of Freemasonry is more about the experience of becoming a Mason—an individual’s journey through its symbols, rituals, and moral teachings—rather than some hidden knowledge or grand conspiracy.

You said: What is “the Kybalion”? Is this document related to Freemasonry in any way?

ChatGPT said:

The Kybalion is a book published in 1908 by three anonymous authors who referred to themselves as “The Three Initiates.” It presents a summary of Hermetic philosophy, which is a spiritual and philosophical system derived from the teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, a legendary Hellenistic figure associated with wisdom, alchemy, and mysticism.

Key Aspects of *The Kybalion*:

1. **Seven Hermetic Principles:** The Kybalion outlines seven foundational principles that are meant to explain the nature of reality, the mind, and the universe. These principles are:
 - **The Principle of Mentalism:** The idea that “The All is Mind,” suggesting that everything in the universe is a creation of consciousness.
 - **The Principle of Correspondence:** Often summed up as “As above, so below,” meaning that patterns repeat across different levels of reality.
 - **The Principle of Vibration:** The belief that everything is in constant motion or vibration.
 - **The Principle of Polarity:** The concept that everything has its opposite, and these opposites are connected.
 - **The Principle of Rhythm:** The notion that everything has a natural cycle or rhythm.

- **The Principle of Cause and Effect:** The idea that every action has a reaction, and everything happens according to a universal law of cause and effect.
 - **The Principle of Gender:** The belief that gender exists in everything, not just in the physical sense but as an underlying principle of creation.
2. **Hermetic Philosophy:** The Kybalion draws from ancient Hermeticism, a spiritual tradition with roots in Greco-Egyptian wisdom, Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism. Hermeticism deals with metaphysical concepts, the relationship between the material and spiritual worlds, and the pursuit of higher knowledge.
 3. **Mysticism and the Occult:** The Kybalion is often associated with Western esoteric traditions and has been influential in various mystical and occult movements. Its principles have been integrated into New Thought, Theosophy, and other metaphysical systems.

Relationship to Freemasonry:

- **Direct Connection:** *The Kybalion* is **not directly related** to Freemasonry. Freemasonry is a fraternal organization with its own rituals, symbols, and traditions, primarily focused on moral development, ethical teachings, and brotherhood. Freemasonry's philosophy and practices are not explicitly based on Hermeticism or the teachings of *The Kybalion*.
- **Esoteric and Philosophical Parallels:** While there is no formal connection, there are some philosophical and symbolic parallels between Hermeticism (as discussed in *The Kybalion*) and certain esoteric currents within Freemasonry. Both traditions share a focus on the pursuit of knowledge, self-improvement, and the symbolic interpretation of reality. Freemasonry, particularly in its higher degrees and more

esoterically inclined branches, has historically attracted individuals interested in mystical traditions, alchemy, and Hermeticism. Some Masons may be familiar with or interested in Hermetic teachings, but this is not a requirement or a central aspect of mainstream Freemasonry.

In conclusion, *The Kybalion* and Freemasonry share some similarities in terms of esoteric symbolism and philosophy, but they are separate traditions with different origins and goals. Freemasonry does not formally teach or require knowledge of *The Kybalion* or Hermeticism, though individual Masons may explore these ideas on their own.

You said: Do Freemasons believe in reincarnation?

ChatGPT said:

Freemasonry, as an organization, does not have an official stance on reincarnation or any specific religious doctrine. Freemasonry is a fraternal order that welcomes members from a wide range of religious backgrounds, as long as they believe in a Supreme Being (often referred to as the “Great Architect of the Universe”). This requirement for belief in a higher power is one of the few spiritual tenets that Freemasonry insists upon, but it does not prescribe any specific theology or beliefs about the afterlife.

Views on Reincarnation:

- **No Official Position:** Freemasonry itself does not promote or reject the concept of reincarnation. Since Freemasonry is not a religion, it does not enforce any beliefs about life after death, whether that involves reincarnation, resurrection, or any other spiritual idea. Freemasons are encouraged to follow their own personal beliefs and religious convictions in these matters.

- **Individual Beliefs:** Within the Masonic community, individual members may have a wide variety of beliefs about reincarnation. Since Freemasonry includes members from many different faiths and philosophical traditions, some Freemasons may personally believe in reincarnation, especially if they come from religious or spiritual traditions that support this concept, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, certain esoteric Christian traditions, or New Age spirituality.
- **Influence of Esotericism:** In certain Masonic rites and degrees that are more esoterically oriented (such as the Scottish Rite or the York Rite), there are teachings that draw on various mystical and philosophical traditions, including ideas that might be compatible with reincarnation. However, these teachings are often symbolic and open to interpretation, rather than dogmatic statements of belief. Some esoterically inclined Masons may explore concepts related to the soul's journey, karma, and reincarnation, but these are not central to mainstream Masonic teachings.

Conclusion:

Freemasonry does not have a doctrinal position on reincarnation, and beliefs about the afterlife are left to the individual Mason's personal faith and philosophical outlook. While some Masons may personally believe in reincarnation, it is not a belief that is endorsed or taught by the Masonic fraternity as a whole.

You said: Do Freemasons know about some special type of person, who might just be born different for example?

ChatGPT said:

Freemasonry, as a fraternal organization, does not teach or officially promote the idea of a "special type of person" who is "born different" in any esoteric or mystical sense. The core teachings of Freemasonry emphasize the moral and spiritual

development of all individuals, encouraging members to strive for self-improvement, knowledge, and ethical living. The fraternity values equality, brotherhood, and the idea that every person has the potential to become better through personal effort and introspection.

However, within the broader world of esoteric thought and mysticism—which some Masons may explore on a personal level—there are ideas about certain types of individuals who are believed to possess unique spiritual qualities or roles. These concepts, though, are not specific to Freemasonry and are found in various mystical, religious, and philosophical traditions. Below are some ideas that might loosely connect to what you’re asking about, although they are not central to Freemasonry itself:

Esoteric Concepts of “Special” Individuals:

1. **The “Enlightened” or “Awakened” Individual:** In many mystical traditions, including some that have influenced esoteric Masonry, there is the concept of a person who has achieved a higher state of consciousness or enlightenment. These individuals are often seen as spiritually advanced and capable of perceiving truths that are hidden from others. While Freemasonry encourages self-improvement and the pursuit of knowledge, it does not officially teach that certain people are born inherently different in this regard.
2. **The “Initiate”:** In various esoteric systems, the idea of the “initiate” refers to someone who is on a spiritual journey and has undergone specific rituals or experiences that grant them deeper understanding or spiritual power. In Freemasonry, initiation into the fraternity is symbolic of a personal journey of growth, but it does not imply that the person being initiated is inherently different from others. The focus is on the transformative potential of the Masonic experience rather than any pre-existing special status.

3. **Indigo Children or Starseeds:** Outside of Freemasonry, in New Age and some metaphysical circles, there are beliefs in individuals like “Indigo Children” or “Starseeds,” who are thought to be born with unique spiritual gifts or a special purpose to guide humanity. These ideas are not part of Masonic teaching, but they reflect a broader interest in the notion of “special” individuals who might be different from the rest of the population.
4. **The “Great Work” and Alchemical Transformation:** In alchemical and Hermetic traditions, which have some influence on Masonic symbolism (especially in the higher degrees and more esoteric branches), there is the idea of the “Great Work,” a process of personal and spiritual transformation. This concept suggests that through disciplined effort, study, and reflection, individuals can transform themselves into a more perfected state. This is more about the process of becoming than about being born different.

Freemasonry’s Perspective:

Freemasonry teaches that every person has the potential to achieve moral and spiritual growth. The emphasis is on equality, brotherhood, and the idea that what makes a person “special” is their commitment to personal development, service to others, and living a virtuous life. Freemasonry does not suggest that some people are inherently born with special powers or different qualities that set them apart in a mystical sense.

In summary, while Freemasonry values the transformative potential of each individual and has symbolic teachings about personal growth and enlightenment, it does not promote the idea of certain people being born inherently different or special in an esoteric sense. The fraternity’s teachings are focused on the idea that everyone has the ability to improve themselves and contribute positively to society.

Appendix B: ChatGPT on masonic UFO conspiracy theories

What conspiracy theories exist that involve Freemasons and UFOs?

ChatGPT said:

The intersection of Freemasonry and UFO-related conspiracy theories is a fascinating and somewhat fringe area of speculative thought. These theories often draw on elements of secret societies, hidden knowledge, extraterrestrial life, and historical mysteries. Below are some of the key conspiracy theories linking Freemasons and UFOs:

1. Freemasons and Alien Knowledge

- **Theory:** Freemasons, as an ancient and secretive organization, are believed by some to possess knowledge about extraterrestrial life or ancient alien visitations to Earth. Proponents suggest that Masonic symbols and architecture encode secrets about humanity's origins and potential interactions with aliens.
 - **Example:** The Masonic "All-Seeing Eye" is often tied to theories about alien observation or surveillance of humanity.
-

2. The Great Pyramid Connection

- **Theory:** Some conspiracy theorists claim that Freemasons have secret knowledge about the construction of the Great Pyramid of Giza, which they believe was built with the help of advanced extraterrestrial technology.

- **Details:** Freemasonry's alleged ties to ancient Egyptian mysticism are cited as evidence. The precise engineering of the pyramids is presented as being beyond the capabilities of ancient humans without alien assistance.
-

3. UFOs and Secret Masonic Space Programs

- **Theory:** Freemasons are rumored to be part of a shadowy cabal that operates a secret space program, using reverse-engineered alien technology.
 - **Details:** Some theorists link prominent Freemasons in NASA (e.g., astronauts Buzz Aldrin and John Joe) to claims that the Apollo moon landings involved UFO sightings and that Masons were privy to classified extraterrestrial discoveries.
-

4. The Sirius Connection

- **Theory:** Freemasonry has long been associated with the star Sirius, which is central to some UFO and ancient astronaut theories. The star is believed by some to be the origin of alien visitors who influenced human civilization.
 - **Details:** The Dogon tribe of Mali, who have intricate knowledge of Sirius, are often linked to theories about ancient aliens. Some conspiracy theorists claim that the Freemasons share this ancient extraterrestrial connection.
-

5. Masonic Influence in Disclosure Suppression

- **Theory:** Freemasons are said to play a role in suppressing UFO disclosure as part of a broader agenda to maintain control over humanity.

- **Details:** The idea suggests that high-ranking Masons in governments, scientific institutions, and militaries coordinate to keep alien knowledge hidden, ostensibly for reasons of power or societal stability.
-

6. Architectural Mysteries and Alien Technology

- **Theory:** Masonic architecture and symbols found in historical buildings are sometimes interpreted as evidence of contact with extraterrestrial beings.
 - **Details:** Certain geometric alignments and designs in Masonic structures are said to reflect knowledge of advanced science or alien technology.
-

7. Freemasons as Intermediaries

- **Theory:** Freemasons are sometimes imagined as intermediaries between humans and extraterrestrial beings, entrusted with guarding sacred knowledge or facilitating communication with aliens.
 - **Details:** These claims often arise from interpretations of Masonic rituals, which some argue contain veiled references to extraterrestrial contact.
-

Why These Theories Persist:

- **Symbolism:** Masonic symbols are often seen as cryptic and open to interpretation, making them fertile ground for speculative connections.
- **Historical Secrecy:** The secretive nature of Freemasonry naturally lends itself to conspiracy theories.

- **Overlap with Occult Themes:** Many conspiracy theories about UFOs and Freemasonry overlap with occult ideas, adding a mystical dimension that appeals to some.
-

It's worth noting that these theories lack concrete evidence and are generally dismissed by historians, scientists, and Freemasons themselves. However, their allure persists in popular culture and among those interested in alternative history and the unknown.

Appendix C: Francis Bacon

I do a lot of reading Wikipedia as a sort of trivial pursuit, in much the same way normal people scroll through Instagram or TikTok. I don't know if normal people would call this dorky, but I can't help what I am.

Reading about mid-20th century artists led me to **Francis Bacon**, a fellow whose name made me do a double take; and who I could only describe as either a sort of kindred spirit or uncanny valley doppelgänger. I'm not sure which yet. I stopped midway through reading the article to write this because I want to take you with me, on this trip. Let's look at it together.

Mmmmm... Bacon...

I had a BLT at Cook-Out the other night. I wanted to make sure they put mayo on there by default, and the young hard-of-hearing lady who works the drive-thru some nights said

It already comes with lettuce!

And I'm like... *goddammit*. Anyway, the ticket had "ADD LETTUCE" printed on it, and they gave me a sandwich with bacon, tomato, and mayonnaise.

Whatever. Anyway, bacon. Francis Bacon.

Francis Bacon was born on 28 October 1909 in 63 Lower Baggot Street in Dublin.[6] At that time, all of Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom.

Ah, right before the troubles. I'm just setting the mood. (Wait... the troubles were later. I need to fix that, but it seems like a minor enough distinction of Irish history.)

His father, Army Captain Anthony Edward "Eddy" Mortimer Bacon, was born in Adelaide, South Australia, to an English father and an Australian mother.[7] Eddy was a veteran of the Second Boer War, a racehorse trainer, and the grandson of Major-General Anthony Bacon, who claimed descent from Sir Nicholas Bacon, elder half-brother of Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St Albans, who is better known as "Sir Francis Bacon", the Elizabethan statesman, philosopher, and essayist.[8]. Bacon's mother, Christina Winifred "Winnie" Firth, was heiress to a Sheffield steel business and coal mine.

Aristocrats, noblemen... not exactly a have-not growing up...

Bacon was raised by the family nanny, Jessie Lightfoot, from Cornwall, known as "Nanny Lightfoot", a maternal figure who remained close to him until her death.

Okay, now that's just stereotypical. I'm picturing this as being like Sterling Archer's family, and Nanny Lightfoot is like his Woodhouse or something.

During the early 1940s, he rented the ground floor of 7 Cromwell Place, South Kensington, John Everett Millais's old studio. Nanny Lightfoot helped him install an illicit roulette wheel there, organised by Bacon and his friends.[10]

See?

Anyway, the kindred spirit part.

Bacon was shy as a child and enjoyed dressing up.

... Oh?

This, and his effeminate manner, angered his father.[11]

Duh duh duh

Duh duh duh

A story emerged in 1992 of his father having had Bacon horsewhipped by their grooms.[12]

That's sad. It's hard being born different. This whole planet's a drag honestly, poor guy was probably just like me.

... asthma and an allergy to horses.[11]

Shit, man. Why do we have to be so fragile and special snowflakey?

At a fancy-dress party at the Firth family home, Cavendish Hall in Suffolk, Bacon dressed as a flapper with an Eton crop, beaded dress, lipstick, high heels, and a long cigarette holder.

Could Francis actually be transsexual?

In 1926, the family moved back to Straffan Lodge. His sister, Ianthe, twelve years his junior, recalled that Bacon made drawings of ladies with cloche hats and long cigarette holders.

So he's *really* into the whole flapper girl thing...

Later that year, Bacon was thrown out of Straffan Lodge following an incident in which his father found him admiring himself in front of a large mirror wearing his mother's underwear.[14]

Okay. There it is.

I mean, the mirror thing is a little weird. I rather preferred *avoiding* mirrors until I'd been on HRT for some time. Maybe I shouldn't think too hard about it, because the shoe certainly fits well enough.

He was sacked from a telephone-answering position at a shop selling women's clothes in **Poland Street** in **Soho** after writing a **poison pen letter** to the owner.

Oh, this dude's *really* into it. And maybe a little crazy, too.

Bacon found himself drifting through London's homosexual underworld, aware that he was able to attract a certain type of rich man, something he was quick to take advantage of, having developed a taste for good food and wine.

More successful than me at it. Uh. Maybe I should've tried to date gay men or something.

One was a relative of Winnie Harcourt-Smith, another breeder of racehorses, who was renowned for his manliness.

So, he's got daddy issues.

Bacon had a difficult relationship with his father, once admitting to being sexually attracted to him.^[16]

Okay... *that's* a little weird. I really thought he was another "me" until that part.

So, the mirror thing was a little weird, the daddy thing is a little weird... I don't know, maybe he has the "me" thing with some other stuff going on. Though I *have* been questioning whether there are different types of trans people lately...

He spent two months in Berlin, though Harcourt-Smith left after one: “He soon got tired of me, of course, and went off with a woman ... I didn’t really know what to do, so I hung on for a while.”

Okay, so he’s bi. Not that there’s anything wrong with that.

Bacon, then 17,

Whuuuuuuuuuwhweee. This kid is only *17 years old*. Daddy disowned him for wearing his sister’s clothes, he’s kicked out of the house and fucking this “I can’t believe it’s not butter” version of his dad, he moved to Germany during the inter-war period...

And he’s *almost* an adult. This dude

Lived. *Fast*.

I’m a little envious, honestly. If I wouldn’t have been better off with his fate, I’d have at least been more myself. I was out of the closet and in denial by that age; almost as if I’d been subjected to a sort of Bladen County “conversion therapy”.

Dude. My life is *sad*. Fuck. I probably could’ve been doing *everything* I ever wanted to do if my head weren’t stuffed full of such bullshit at such a young age.

Anyway, this guy. I’m glad he made it out.

Bacon moved back to London in the winter of 1928/29 to work as an interior designer. He took a studio at 17 Queensberry Mews West, **South Kensington**, sharing the upper floor with Eric Alden – his first collector – and his childhood nanny, Jessie Lightfoot.

See? He still has Woodhouse...

He visited Paris in 1935 where he bought a second-hand book on anatomical diseases of the mouth containing high quality hand-coloured plates of both open mouths and oral interiors,[22] which haunted and obsessed him for the remainder of his life.

I suppose he had a *different* sort of oral fixation...

Bacon and Hall in 1943 took the ground floor of 7 Cromwell Place, South Kensington, formerly the house and studio of John Everett Millais. High-vaulted and north-lit, its roof was recently bombed – Bacon was able to adapt a large old billiard room at the back as his studio. Lightfoot, lacking an alternative location, slept on the kitchen table. They held illicit roulette parties, organised by Bacon with the assistance of Hall.

Okay, this dude really *is* Sterling Archer.

He was ‘adopted’ by Belcher as a ‘daughter’, and allowed free drinks and £10 a week to bring in friends and rich patrons.

Might be trans.

In 1952, Bacon met Peter Lacy a pianist and former RAF pilot from a similar social background to himself.[38] Lacy was a violent alcoholic who was disliked by Bacon’s contemporaries but was also described as the love of Bacon’s life. The pair engaged in an off and on relationship which had a significant S&M aspect where Bacon would deliberately provoke acts of violence from Lacy.[39][40]

... Senpai?

Their behaviours eventually overwhelmed their affair, and by 1970 Bacon was merely providing Dyer with enough money to stay more or less permanently drunk.[47]

Okay... so he went from fucking his dad to fucking Mr. Lahey from Trailer Park Boys.

#TODO That's pretty much it. What a guy.

We'll probably never know for sure if Francis Bacon was really transsexual. What I *do* know, is that I'm still craving a BLT after writing this. I probably should've gone to Cook-Out before they closed for the night.

Francis was obsessed with the crucifixion. In the hours after finding this Wikipedia article, I've found myself obsessed with Francis' obsession. Because, I feel like I understand them. It's personal, I guess.

So, you're raised Christian. And, there's this thing you hear over and over again, when you're raised Christian.

Jesus died for our sins.
Jesus died for our sins.
Jesus died on the cross for our sins.
Jesus died for our sins.
He died on the cross for *your* sins.
Jesus died for our sins.
He died a tortuous death, so that *you* can be saved from a tortuous existence.
He died for *our* sins.
Jesus died for our sins.

So you're a queer kid at the turn of the century, and you keep hearing about how much Jesus loves you. Okay. Whatever. I'm just now learning about the world. I'm a fucking kid.

So you get into the double digits, and now it's *really* obvious that you *really* want to be a girl. You want to wear girl's clothing. Maybe it makes you aroused. Maybe it just makes you happy. I'm a queer kid. I don't really know *what* I'm feeling. Except, good. I'm feeling *really* good about wanting to be a woman *really* badly. And, we're all kids. Learning about the world, engaging in petty high jinks... I'm feeling pretty bad sometimes, because I really want to be a girl and I can't be one. They're trying to tell me about resisting temptation, but we aren't even tempted by the same things. It's easy for *them* to say the devil's tempting me into being a faggot. What if I said the devil's tempting them into having a girlfriend? Isn't it the same thing? I was obviously just born a little different, right? I mean, I never *asked* to be tempted by what tempts me. And, you never asked to be tempted with the prospect of having a normal, heterosexual girlfriend when you were my age.

Do you people just not... *get* it?

Maybe you're starting to wonder if you weren't born on the winning team. Because, there are an awful lot of holes in all this weird Christian ideology. We're forgiven for our sins because someone decided to murder their only son? What if the CEO of Chase was murdered by his father? Would they forgive my mortgage? This religion that I've been raised into *obviously* makes no sense. And then there's the part where

Oh, right. I almost forgot. Why do they hate queer people so much? Something about Sodom and Gomorrah? Do they even understand the Bible? Does *anyone* understand the Bible? They get to casually debate what people like me are, before going back to their uncontroversial heterosexual girlfriends. But me...

I mean, what the fuck temptation are *they* resisting, anyway? They're sleeping around, breaking all those silly little Jesus rules they teach you in Church... *they* just get to "ask Jesus for forgiveness" for their transgressions.

So dad eventually caught you crossdressing in like 8th or 9th grade or something, and he was *pissed*. He starts beating the piss out of you. He never treats you the same again, and you never really treat him the same again. The dude tells his jockeys or whatever to whip the shit out of his faggot son repeatedly.

So I'm into BDSM, and you *really don't use a horsewhip on people*. I wouldn't be surprised if this experience left him permanently disfigured.

So you watch as your friends get drunk and swear and have premarital sex, and if they ever do get caught doing those things they get a slap on the wrist, because at the end of the day we all grew up with this one little comforting fact.

Jesus died for your sins.

He died for *our* sins.

So, you ask Jesus for forgiveness for cursing like a sailor and spending your weekdays sloppy drunk. Okay.

This dude's getting the *shit* beat out of him. For, uh... *wearing his mom's underpants*? I mean, maybe it's a little weird, but...

Oh come on, dad! What, have *you* never been tempted to try on your mom's underpants?

Oh. You, uh... *haven't*. Because, if kiddo had been caught eloping with some flapper girl, or hiding a fifth of whiskey or something dad would've just been like "Oh I understand, son. You gave in to temptation. Just ask Jesus for forgiveness. He died for our sins, you know..."

And now, you've got to be wondering what this kid's thinking. Did Jesus not die for *my* sins, too? What about me? And, what's even so bad about wearing mom's underpants, anyway? It's like, these crazy people are violently pissed off at me for not resisting some temptation *they've never even felt*.

What. The. Fuck.

And now, at the age of 15 or something, this poor little queer kid has *found*. *Jesus*. Because, he *is* Jesus. Getting the piss beaten out of him, for what frankly amounts to somebody *else's* sin of not listening and not understanding.

The queer kid and true believer must now be asking himself, "What did Jesus even *die* for, anyway?" Because, as one grows from a queer kid to a cynical queer adult, the crucifixion story sounds less like a heroic triumph of good over evil, and more like a story of senseless torture in a world full of senseless torture.

And, here I am. Getting senselessly tortured because I was born in a way people don't understand. Too young to even know what hit me before I find myself exposed as some panty-wearing demon spawn. Maybe still wondering if dad really *does* feel like me on some level. Really confused about what the big problem is. Because in a world full of Christian forgiveness, this poor kid seems to have found the one thing most Christians will never forgive you for.

Being a raging fagot.

We have a saying in the queer community.

There's no hate like Christian love.

Eventually, this poor traumatized queer kid gets kicked out of the house. And, it's probably the best thing for them, scary as it must've been.

It's this point when the young artist would've found Antijen. He's a homeless queer youth, hobnobbing with other homeless queer youth. It's actually a pretty big subculture. Maybe if my mom loved me more *she* would've let me be a homeless queer youth. Shit, that sounds weird to say. It must be scary, but also a bit freeing. Especially once you find some sense of stability, and you know your dad is never going to have his men beat the shit out of you again for being a weirdo.

I swear, I've *met* queer kids with basically this same story. Some days it feels like not a damn thing has changed on this planet.

TL;DR

I've had a crazy life, and I'm planning on killing myself

I was born in 1990.

When I was in elementary school, it was apparent that I was different from other people. I wanted to be a girl *really* badly; and I gradually realized most other boys *liked* being a guy for some reason. I started compulsively wearing my mom's clothes in like third grade whenever I was left home alone. I started getting aroused toward the end of primary school, and I was drawn almost from the beginning toward being tied up and disciplined and shit.

These things grew and merged together. I kept compulsively wearing my mom's clothes when I had the chance, and became progressively more bold about it. I kept being aroused by bondage and discipline, and started tying myself up for fun in increasingly elaborate ways. I started tying myself up for fun while wearing my mom's clothes. I experienced my first orgasm in seventh grade while doing this, after pulling the vibrating motor out of a massage pillow and putting it in my underpants because it seemed like a good idea at the time. I knew there was something wrong with me, but I was too scared to talk about it.

I heard the word "crossdresser" somewhere, and I figured *that* must be what I was. After a few weeks of timidly learning about crossdressers on the internet, I began realizing I was actually *transsexual*. I joined a mailing list for transsexual youth, and might've been the youngest person there at the time. I was 13, and the year was 2003.

I was *over the moon* that I could take hormones someday and grow breasts. I'd wanted that ever since I learned what estrogen was from this puberty book my mom bought me, and I didn't even know if it was *possible*.

Over the next couple years, I thought more and more about taking meds when I was older. It started weighing on my mind that I could get meds to delay my puberty *now*, and I'd even chatted with another person on this mailing list who'd talked to her parents about it and was doing that.

My mother loved me *very* much. That's what she told me, *all the time*. I love you. I love you. I love you to the moon and back.

My mother was in and out of mental hospitals throughout my youth, and even at that age I perceived her as "emotionally unstable". I avoided telling her upsetting information from a young age. My parents divorced in middle school, and my mom remained my day-to-day caretaker.

Toward the end of my first semester of high school, I had plans to come out to my mom right after Christmas. But, I got cold feet. I think it was something she said, but I forget. It's been a while.

This secret was burning a hole inside me. I wanted to talk about it with a real person, I wanted antiandrogens... I knew coming out sometimes went badly, but... my friends and family love me, right? Are they really going to spit on me?

Instead of telling my mom, I came out to this casual acquaintance from school who I'd simultaneously started "dating" (it was the ninth grade). She told her mom, and her mom made me tell *my* mom. The relationship was filled with petty drama and went south after a few months.

My mother was ambivalent to the whole thing at first. She wouldn't let me get meds. She freaked out after she saw a trans woman at work and didn't want me to do it. She took me to see a therapist the next county over for like a year. She didn't make any effort to refer to me with a different name or female pronouns; granted, I was too sheepish to make a stink about it. I kept wearing mom's clothes in private; she neither made an effort to stop this, nor bought me clothes of my own to wear.

My girlfriend outed me to all my friends at school. We were still friends, and they had a lot of questions. I had a *really* hard time talking about it. I was well into college before I could talk about it without getting choked up and almost non-verbal like someone talking about Vietnam or something.

My girlfriend started bending the truth, and making up outright lies about me. My friends started treating me like a creep and giving me the cold shoulder, and in turn I got new friends.

I kept tying myself up with a vibrating massager while wearing women's clothing. Just using the massager was *nice*. But doing both was a *treat*.

With my mother quasi-supportive but not into getting me on meds, I decided to just order spironolactone from overseas. This was relatively easy, because I was both a latchkey child and had an after school / summer job.

When I was in 11th grade, I started wanting to look at quasi- or soft-core pornography. I initially gravitated toward women, which seems weird today because I think I'm probably more into dudes. I think part of me wanted to live vicariously through them, but honestly this was forever ago.

I printed out like a dozen pictures of teenage girls in bikinis and put them in a big envelope. It seemed like a good idea at the time. I'd look at them while tying myself up and... well, you get the idea.

My mom found this envelope under my bed not long after, and yelled at me for it. Right after this, she yelled at me about what I was doing with rope (really, more like thick string) in a box of her clothes. I had made self-tightening knots (nooses, basically), which I kept intact to speed up the ritual of, well... you know.

My mother was concerned that I was either suicidal or into breath play. We had an awkward talk when David Carradine died a year or two after this incident.

I denied doing both of those things (wearing the clothes and tying myself up) at the same time. This was obviously a lie. I thought I'd already *told her* the "important" part.

I didn't really get in trouble. It was obvious my mother was disturbed however, and this (along with some of my other difficult high school experiences, I suppose) made me seriously doubt my gender identity. I stopped taking my antiandrogens after getting distracted with school or some shit. I felt like I'd "yadda yadda'd over the sex part" when I came out to my mom, and like maybe that's actually kind of important. I questioned whether I might be an "autogynephile" or something instead of a "true transsexual". I felt like I'd been born *a pervert*, not a woman.

While I was deterred from transitioning, I was *not* deterred from looking at BDSM porn, which is quickly what I got into. I kept looking at BDSM porn of men topping women and imagining being the woman, while masturbating with a vibrating massager that was basically a Dr. Scholl's-brand Hitachi. I stopped wearing mom's clothes, or really *any* woman's clothes.

I went to college, and had no interest in women, save for still wishing I was one of them on some level; but I didn't think I could *be* a woman after my negative experiences with my mom and my high school girlfriend.

I was happy to start drinking and smoking weed in college; on some level thinking these things would make me a “normal guy” after the weird life I’d had up to that point.

At the age of 21, still with more of a crush on rope and chains than any man or woman I’d ever met, I ventured into the local BDSM community. I found myself with a female play partner 4 1/2 years my senior, but the relationship was never romantic or even all that sexual. This arrangement ended after I graduated college.

I occasionally played with folks after this, but I never really managed to find another play partner. Maybe I needed to try harder, or expand my radius. I’m not sure, honestly. My mating strategy was basically just being an idle subby boy at kink events, which failed to be all that effective after college.

In my mid-twenties, I found myself at my wits end. My boss was a madman, I was *way* burnt out from it, and I still wasn’t getting any. I hatched a plan I kept *very* close to my chest, to basically try and create a web application that might help with my relatively unusual dating / finding a play partner situation. I wanted to solve the “needle in a haystack” problem of niche sexualities like submissive men, as opposed to the “fish in the sea” problem that every other dating app tries to solve. But, I ended up just transitioning instead.

I took a \$30k/year paycut to run away a couple cities over and fix computers and do sysadmin shit. This was a combination of dealing with premature burnout, and wanting to conserve brainpower for outside-of-work side projects like that web application idea. I didn’t really even start working on this thing, before abruptly pivoting toward transitioning instead about nine months into my new job.

It was the start of 2017. Trump had just been elected, I kept cringing at all the stuff about trans people I’d been inundated with after Caitlyn Jenner came out... I was cranky about

how much things had changed since I was a kid. First of all, we weren't "transsexuals" anymore. We were just "transgender", and "transsexual" had become this sort of dog whistle for "transmedicalism", which was all truescummy and gatekeepy. I'm pretty sure nobody ever asked me my pronouns on that mailing list all those years ago; but now there are more than *two* pronouns, and conservatives are upset about it and accusing us of being anti-free speech. It felt like the transsexual community I learned about in middle and high school had been replaced by some weird Tumblr bullshit that was probably spearheaded by kids who were still in diapers back when I got *my* start in 2003.

I *briefly* considered bitching about this on the internet, but I chose not to. It seemed like a lot had happened since 2008, and maybe I needed to catch up. I sort of re-cracked during this time. By the end of high school, I felt like I had too much "weird sex stuff" going on with me to make it through the gatekeeping to get HRT and SRS and shit; unless I were to just *lie about my experiences* or something, like Ray Blanchard accuses autogynephiles of doing. I was just now learning that "informed consent" access to HRT was suddenly *mainstream*. I could just... *take hormones* if I wanted. I don't need to have my weird sex stuff picked apart, I don't need to order drugs from Vanuatu... I actually considered at least getting back on antiandrogens during my subby boy phase; but I didn't think any doctor would just *give me* those, and I didn't want to take DIY indefinitely.

This next phase happened *fast*. I cracked in January, weighed *all the possibilities* in this freeform journal now called "The Purple Book" in February, got over my cold feet and made my appointment in March, and started HRT on April 13th. By then, I'd started taking the spironolactone from high school again; the bottle had expired in 2010, but I figured it was still good.

Despite the informed consent model, my doctor *was* kinda pushy about me getting a therapist. It was also suggested that maybe I ought to try one of the local trans groups at the LGBT

center or something. I did this, and gradually started making new friends over the next several months.

I was relieved to finally be on HRT at the age of 26. I kinda hate myself for waiting that long *now*, but I was really confused when I was younger. I came out at work, and they were supportive. I dragged my feet a little on social transition; going part-time at 12 months and full-time at 20. This was just my style; the physical changes and having my facial hair zapped off was a way bigger deal to me than my name or pronouns.

January 1st, 2019, and I was full-time. I legally changed my name and got my gender marker changed most everywhere a few months after that.

I sort of hit it off with this other trans woman in September. She was married, but polyamory had been thoroughly normalized to me after being into BDSM since college. This only lasted about five months, and *a lot* happened. My girlfriend's wife figured out they were non-binary, and eventually just a straight up trans man. Our polycule expanded by two people, and the structure of it became increasingly amorphous. Having tried to get laid unsuccessfully since age 21, I think there was a *lot* of conscious and unconscious pressure to make this work. This was the perfect storm for a bad situation, and I don't think we were really compatible with each other in retrospect. A couple folks in my polycule had child sexual trauma, and I remembered something about my childhood that made *me* think I had similar trauma. I blamed my struggle to sexually function on this; but in retrospect I think I was blowing things out of proportion and looking for answers in all the wrong places. There's more about this in my massively long life story I've linked to at the bottom, but I'd rather not elaborate here.

I'd started thinking about my career again. I *knew* I was nuking my career by ditching the embedded development track I was on, and I didn't really care. I needed a reason to *be*. Having since found that, and having decided I was no entrepreneur,

I thought about pivoting back toward software development somewhere; or at least, getting more certs and working my way up the IT ladder. I wound up landing a job as a software developer working with my childhood best friend, and started in November.

I got off to a good start, it seemed like. COVID hit like five months later; I've never been very productive working from home, so I wasn't crazy about it. I talked to my therapist about the whole childhood trauma thing I was trying to figure out in March or April. One thing led to another, and I found myself backed into a corner where I felt I *had* to tell my mother a few months later. She did *not* handle this well; she had a nasty fall and hit her head a few weeks later, in an incident I kinda suspect was related, but I can't really *prove* that. I went home to take care of her for a time; but after a month, I'd long since gotten the impression that she *really* just wanted an excuse to keep me at home after I talked to her about the whole sexual trauma bit. I just wanted her to know what was going *on* with me.

2021 finally arrived. I was *not* getting any work done at my job, and talked to my therapist and primary care doctor about getting tested for ADHD or otherwise maybe getting medicated for that. I was prescribed Concerta, and shit started to get *really* weird a few months later. I had also recently picked up my old cannabis habit just before the new year; I was already having trouble focusing at work, so the devil's lettuce at least wasn't my *primary* problem. I had significantly less desire to smoke while on Concerta; but I still *did it* after work usually. That may've been related.

Around early June, I felt like something *weird* was happening to me; like my mind was expanding or something, or like I was on the verge of some breakthrough. It was *weird*, and I wasn't thinking too hard about the new medication at first. I saw that UFO report come out toward the end of the month, and I was convinced *that* had something to do with what was happening to me. I started freaking the fuck out, and soon decided to stop the

Concerta out of a concern that I might be experiencing stimulant psychosis. *UFOs* were involved, after all... I kept smoking pot, though.

I looked at all the weird UFO theories on Reddit, and found people talking about a “big shift” or something. I was immediately convinced *that’s* what was going on with me. After struggling to talk to my therapist about it, I managed to stammer something about it at the end of one of our sessions in, like, July. At this point, I recalled *several* of my friends already *knowing* “the truth about UFOs”; none the least of which was my therapist. I remembered it coming up in conversation back in the spring. But... I’ve since concluded these are *all* false memories. I mean, *right*? The weird thing is, I *still* have these weird memories of a bunch of people in my life knowing about UFOs. It feels as real as anything. I feel like the narrator of *Slaughterhouse-Five* or something.

I got it out of me at the very end of the therapy session. We didn’t really have time to talk about it, because our time was up as soon as it stumbled out of me.

The next session, my therapist seems to have lied to gain my trust. Although, I totally believed her at the time. I thought my shrink *literally* knew “the truth about UFOs”.

I’m so glad you know about the big shift!

I’m so glad you know about the 5D new Earth!

Have you heard about the Law of One?

I figured it *must* be real. I mean, we *just* talked about this back in the spring after it came up in casual conversation. I was talking about how a bunch of my trans friends were apparently into “mysticism and magick” and knew “the truth about UFOs”, and I *still* very clearly remember my therapist saying

You know the truth about UFOs, right?

Reincarnation...

And I was like

Oh, yeah! I have this friend, Heather! Heather from,
uh... Vega...

Again; I *know* these are certainly false memories *now*. But I had them *then*; and frankly, I still have them *now*. I've simply accepted that I've lost my goddamn marbles somewhere along the way.

Frantically asking my therapist what to do, and remembering that she *already seemed to know about this stuff*, she referred me to her friend who was a shaman or something.

COVID was still going on, so I talked to Doris the shaman over Zoom. We talked for like an hour and a half, she did a bunch of voodoo shit remotely, and we ascertained that I was a reincarnated space alien from Arcturus or something. She told me to sage my house and burn sweet grass and palo santo, and she gave me these funny rocks called Apache's Tears to put at the four corners of my bedroom. Okay...

(I was a hardened atheist skeptic before all of this started happening, btw...)

I needed a friend to talk to about this weird shit. I had multiple trans friends who were into "mysticism and magick and the occult", and I enlisted the help of one of them, who I kind of low-key had a crush on at the time. Let's call her Stephanie.

Stephanie started coming over on the weekends. We never really did anything sexual or romantic; this would probably be best described as a "queer-platonic partnership" in retrospect; although, that wasn't necessarily the intent going in. She didn't really know anything about the weird reincarnated space alien starseed stuff that was going on with me, but she was willing to lend an ear.

Weird things kept showing up in my head. I continued to refrain from taking methylphenidate just in case; though I can only say my cannabis usage did nothing but steadily increase over this period. I was under quite a bit of stress, trying to figure out what was *actually* going on with me and what I was supposed to *do*.

My therapist seemed to want me to seek out new age spirituality-type groups. But, I was thoroughly preoccupied with all the weird shit that was going on in my head. I grew convinced that Anthony Kiedis was a reincarnated space alien from the Pleiades because he's got that song; before eventually concluding that Doris the shaman got it wrong, and that *I* was actually from the Pleiades.

I started remembering more weird shit. My childhood preacher. The cool one, who I still kinda like even though I'm an atheist now. He pulled me aside several times throughout my life. In middle school, he told me I should explore Freemasonry when I was older, and gave me this URL on a slip of paper where I could read some introductory masonic text or something. While looking up elementary mysticism and magick, I stumbled across this public domain work called "The Kybalion", and realized *that* was the thing Tommy had me read in middle school. It describes, among other things, this principle called the "law of correspondence": as above, so below.

I pieced something together from this. You see, Tommy and I both happen to have been born in Warren, Ohio. And, despite not being related or anything, we found ourselves living in this small town in southeastern North Carolina. I was convinced *this* was a manifestation of the "law of correspondence": we're both "from the same place" on multiple planes of existence. Not only were we both from Warren, Ohio; we were also both from *the Pleiades*, or some shit.

In high school, he told me to pay extra close attention to this sermon that was going to be about me; but it was just about

some chick in her 30s dealing with childhood trauma. A bunch of people surrounded me after the sermon, and said “We love you, Rachael”. I was going by either Sarah or Morgan at the time, and was *very* private about it.

Then I remembered him pulling me aside in college, when I went back home for some church dinner. My mom was talking about this nightmare I had as a kid about the “sharks”, and she wanted me to tell everyone at the table about it. “Oh, you mean the *shark people*?”, I said. My mom didn’t realize they were *people*. I proceeded to describe my “nightmare”; which involved waking up on a narrow metal table in a small round room, surrounded by three or so “shark people”. After going on to describe them, and clarifying that they didn’t exactly have big jaws or anything and were mostly just *gray*, my preacher practically *drags me out of the church activity building*, takes me way out into the parking lot where no one can hear, and has this long talk about how I’m *very* different. I needed to seek hidden truths, and apparently “the Freemasons” know these hidden truths. But, so do lots of *other* people. “If you walked into a masonic lodge and gave them your name, they’d know who you are”, he said. He acted like it was *really* important or something. I think he might’ve even mentioned that it involved “UFOs” of all things.

Needless to say, I interpreted (or, re-interpreted, depending on how based on reality the memory is) this as some childhood alien abduction. I subsequently remembered waking up outside, often locked out of the house; with the last incident occurring in middle school.

Remembering the weird stuff with my childhood preacher and not knowing how else to get in touch with him, I decided to show up for Sunday service at his new church. He was really excited to see me, and we went straight to the parsonage after church where his wife made us lunch. I never got a moment alone with the guy, and the conversation went nowhere after I dropped hints

about what might be going on with me. We at least managed to exchange numbers.

I thought the universe was talking to me. I thought I remembered all this weird shit from when my mom bought me and my friend tickets to a Red Hot Chili Peppers show in college; my mom was about to get us “regular” seats, but this fellow from church (who I also thought was a Freemason, but I was probably *wrong* about that part...) gave my mom extra money so that we’d have floor seats closer to the stage. I thought I remembered being surrounded by all these people, who were “in the know” about something. The show opened with the song “Right On Time” (which I was previously unfamiliar with); which contains the rather odd lyric “Joan of arc reincarnated”. One of those “in the know” people giggled and said “I love that part!” I looked up the “I’m With You” tour on Wikipedia to see what song they opened with when they played PNC Arena, and it *was* “Right on Time”, just as I remembered. Weird, right?

Remembering all this weird shit with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, I decided out of curiosity to look up whether there was an upcoming tour. At this point, I thought I remembered my old friend-of-a-friend “Heather from Vega” telling me there would be a concert in the future; and that I wasn’t ready *now*, but that I’d be cooler once I was older or something. I looked up their upcoming “Unlimited Love” tour, and it just so happened that they were playing in Charlotte *on my birthday*. I was utterly *convinced* this was a sign from the gods or something.

I reached out to our mutual friend, in an attempt to get in touch with Heather. We hadn’t spoken since 2016; when somebody played “Can’t Stop” on Rockband, she snickered about “where she was from”; and I was slow to remember the whole “Vega” thing, which was ostensibly some kind of inside joke among these space alien people? I simply texted our mutual friend to “Ask Heather if she wants to go to a Red Hot Chili Peppers show.

It's an inside joke, she'll get it." Spoiler alert; Heather did *not* get the joke.

Growing increasingly desperate to talk to someone who actually knew what the fuck was going on, I texted my old preacher that I wanted to have a talk about shark people and Warren, Ohio.

I continued on; eventually reaching out to a *different* friend, who (unlike Stephanie) I actually remembered being another one of these friends who ostensibly "knew the truth about UFOs". Let's call her Persephone. I proceeded to have a full-blown Discord conversation with this person about how I went through a spiritual awakening and figured out I was a reincarnated space alien, and she *seemed* to know exactly what I was talking about; even going so far as to inform me that "alien" is a slur against aliens, and they're actually called "others" or something. The whole transcript is in my write-up I've linked to below, if you want to know exactly what the fuck happened.

My conversation with Persephone emboldened me; I must be *kind of* on the right track, I thought. I figured it would only be a matter of time until we all sat down to hash this out or something.

Weird shit kept coming to me. I was having extremely vivid premonitions or "visions"; none of which managed to come true, if you'd believe it. I was convinced the Freemasons were going to come to my house and take me to an initiation ceremony or something. I thought they were able to remote view into my room, and see things through my eyes, and even put messages in my head. I envisioned a bunch of weird shit about Anthony Kiedis, and that I had some kind of a past and future with this guy or something. I thought there was going to be a Saturday Night Live where I'd meet him, and I was supposed to know *exactly* what to do based on these messages in my head. I thought my old preacher or someone was going to deliver a box with a plane

ticket and a bunch of other stuff in it, and I was just supposed to *go* after having already packed my bags.

I kept seeing my therapist every week; though we started growing further and further apart. My therapist was asking me if I was still getting those “downloads” in my head. That’s what I was calling them at first. I was several steps ahead of this “5D new Earth” stuff by now; and was slow to open up, because I was worried my therapist wouldn’t believe me about all this weird Anthony Kiedis shit.

With Tommy seemingly playing hard to get, I eventually sent him a *very bold* text message blatantly asking him if he’s from the Pleiades. He never answered my question.

I sent a very strange letter to the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. I thought I was supposed to do that or something. They never wrote me back, unsurprisingly.

I talked to my mom to make sure my memory of Tommy being from Warren, Ohio was correct. She confirmed that he *was*, and reminded me that Dave Grohl was *also* from Warren.

Oh, right. The guy with that band called “Foo Fighters”. I was absolutely *certain* this was no coincidence.

Messages kept showing up in my head. I was apparently supposed to write down *all* of this weird Anthony Kiedis shit that I thought was going to happen to me, make *two* copies of it, and send one to my mother and the other to my childhood best friend; who I was currently working on the same team with as a software developer. This happened at the end of April.

In May, all hell broke loose. Josh was freaked out about my letter, and wanted me to tell him more. He seemed to believe every word. The letter to my mom got lost in the mail and arrived late; things seemed normal, until she asked if she could take me to “get my meds checked”. Our relationship was on

shaky ground at this point; I had since grown convinced that she snooped around my house while I was in New York for a surgery consult. While I've been pretty out of my mind, I *still* think it's more than plausible that she actually *did* this; and she *did* have a spare key before I changed the locks.

So, naturally, I said I didn't "feel comfortable" with her showing up to my house to take me to get my meds checked. I told her that I understood I might be a little out in the weeds with the stuff I wrote in that letter, and told her I'd reevaluate what was going on with me and talk with my therapist. I also told her I stopped taking my ADHD medication, which she did *not* like. She was under the impression that you are *not* supposed to stop taking "psych meds"; which is often *true*, granted, but I had actually stopped taking them to make sure I wasn't experiencing stimulant psychosis or something. The only "meds" I was on was HRT.

On the eve of Friday the 13th, I started "remembering" all this weird shit from a past life about how I "caused" Friday the 13th as a Roman senator, and was then tortured in a subsequent lifetime because of it. You can read all about it in the long version of this I've linked to, but I'll spare you the details. I thought I caused Friday the 13th, and I was out of my goddamn mind.

A few days later, my mother just decided to *drive up without notice* to see what was going on. She wanted us to talk to my childhood preacher; which I was inclined to agree to. She stayed in a hotel because she was not welcome in my house at this point. I basically had to arrange this meeting between the three of us because she couldn't manage it on her own for some reason. I picked her up at her hotel, and the two of us drove to a coffee shop to meet my old preacher.

I was absolutely *brimming* with both excitement and frustration at this point; and it was starting to be more the latter than the former. I *point-blank* asked Tommy if he was from

the Pleiades, and he *still* wouldn't answer me. It's a yes or no question, dude! Just say "no, I'm not from the Pleiades" and I'll leave you alone! He wouldn't *do it*! I was sure *something* was going on, because he was now avoiding my *very* direct questions about it.

I dropped my mother back off at her hotel, and went back home. I figured this would *have* to sort itself out before too much longer.

A day or two later, I pulled off my big headphones just after lunchtime to a loud pounding at my front door.

DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT!

Goddammit. I thought about what to do with my weed, before ultimately going downstairs to talk to the cops. I didn't know how long they'd been knocking, because I couldn't hear a thing over the music. I was worried they were announcing they had a search warrant or something, and were about to kick my door in.

We're here to take you to get your meds checked...

Goddammit.

I had no choice but to take a ride in the back of a cop car to Duke Regional. The cops were nice about it, at least.

They got me in a hospital gown in a safe little room with my few possessions taken away from me, before the doctor carefully stands in front of the door and asks

So... what's this about you thinking you're an *alien*?

I took a deep breath, and told them to contact the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. You can look them up online. I know this sounds *weird*... but just give them my name, tell them I sent you, and they'll clear this all up. I realize I'm not *actually* a space alien. It isn't like that.

I was obviously taking a leap of faith; but I didn't know what else to *do*. Send her to Doris the shaman?

They had me pee in a cup and took my blood. They gave me a potassium supplement because it was ostensibly low. I'm *sure* my THC was through the roof at this point...

They let me go eight hours later without explanation, after bringing in a cordless phone with my therapist on the other end of the line.

I managed to find my way back home late at night, and I was utterly *pissed off* at my mother. She was dead to me, as far as I was concerned.

My therapist wanted to talk to me the next day. We decided it would be best if I signed a release for her to talk to my childhood preacher *directly* to sort out this whole little misunderstanding. I eagerly agreed.

My boss changed his Zoom avatar to a picture of him with a gray alien mannequin *once*, while I was waiting for my therapist to talk to Tommy. This has never happened before or since. I didn't know what it meant, except that he was in on it *too*, somehow.

It took a few weeks for the meeting to transpire. After everything that had happened, I was *thoroughly* prepared to learn that he wasn't *really* from the Pleiades; and maybe not even a *Freemason*. I was *not* prepared for what she *actually* said at the start of our session.

Tommy *isn't* from Warren, Ohio. He was born in *Cary*...

He isn't from the Pleiades, he isn't a Freemason, and he doesn't know anything *about* Freemasonry.

I... was *not* ready for this. I knew for a *fact* he was from Warren, Ohio. We talked about it when I went to his church, and my mother confirmed it just a few weeks prior.

My therapist of five years told me I needed DBT and substance abuse counselling, before dropping me as a client.

I didn't believe a *word* of this. Between my mother and my friend Persephone who was recently diagnosed with BPD, we'd actually talked *a lot* about cluster B personality traits and shit. I'd say stuff like "I don't want *any* of that cluster B bullshit like my mom and Persephone has, and if you tell me I need DBT I'll go *without question!*" and, my therapist regularly quipped that I needed "the exact *opposite* of DBT"; my feelings were all bottled up and it was really hard to get me to open up about *anything*. DBT is for people with severe trauma who need help regulating their emotional responses. And for that matter, she *knew* I smoked pot. Quitting it had never been a talking point in therapy *before...*

Between the DBT suggestion and the blatant lie about where Tommy was from, I just... *didn't* believe her *at all*. This only *confirmed* my suspicions that a conspiracy really *was* afoot; and these people can't talk to me about it yet for some reason. If the circumstances were *any* different, I'd have, well... signed up for DBT.

This hastened my withdrawal from public life; I didn't feel like I could tell anyone my therapist *lied* to me. They'd never *believe* me! Yet, I *knew* it to be true! Tommy is from Warren, Ohio, and me needing "the opposite of DBT" was basically our in-joke. And now she never wants to see me again?

I was *convinced* the Freemasons wouldn't talk to me because I caused Friday the 13th or something.

If my downward spiral hadn't started already, I was solidly there *now*. I started having visions that I was actually supposed to *get* a flying saucer. That I was supposed to be getting alien doctor's appointments or something, that the ships could travel through space and time, that my future self had some future with Anthony Kiedis and Dave Grohl... I've never even had a

thing for Anthony Kiedis, and I haven't really even listened to them regularly since maybe college. I've kept early Foo Fighters in rotation though, granted...

I expected someone to scoop me up and take me to this serendipitous RHCP concert that was on my birthday, but... of course, nothing happened. No longer able to perform my duties at work, I quit my job without notice. The cops came to my house for another wellness check, but... I didn't answer the door this time. They started calling my phone, and I was able to explain that I was just "going through some life changes right now".

A voice in my head told me I was on the hook for *murder*. My future self traveled back in time, was Anthony Kiedis' secret wife, got in a bunch of legal trouble that involved my underage future reincarnation, one thing led to another, and I became a cop killer. This already *happened* in the 90s, so I was basically on the hook for crimes I hadn't committed yet. My future self was *literally* Dani California. Dani basically turned into some crazy sovereign citizen with a spacetime machine, and her renunciation of US citizenship meant I was slated to be sent to Gitmo. Which it turns out, kinda *radicalized* me, or Dani, or whoever, I guess we're really the same person in this psychotic break.

I spent basically the entirety of 2023 out of my goddamn *mind*. Kept getting crazy visions, learned I was *actually* a witch and that people with spacetime machines were the basis for old legends of witches and magic... That summer, I decided I had no where else to go but *back* to Persephone. She's the only person I've managed to have a half-reasonable conversation about this stuff with, after all...

I wrote down what I *thought* was going on in a three-page handwritten note. I invited myself over to her apartment, gave her the note, and she *appeared* to take it *very* seriously at first. We went to Duke Gardens, and I *thought* we were trying to ascertain whether government agents were actually following me.

Though in retrospect, maybe she just wanted me to get some fresh air. I don't know. One thing's for certain; Persephone's a goddamn fruit loop, but so was I.

The next day, Persephone sent me a message saying we couldn't be friends anymore. I figured I was on my own from this point on.

I was avoiding the doctor, but I eventually *had* to go in for my annual physical or else they weren't phoning in any more refills for my HRT; which I could tell wasn't working well anyway. She wanted to see how I did with 100 mg/day of spironolactone instead of 200 at our last appointment, and... I was not doing well on that dose at all. I actually started taking extra estradiol up to 8mg/day to compensate for it, and it still wasn't cutting the mustard. Instead of putting me back on my old dose, my doctor pulled me off of spironolactone and progesterone *entirely* for dubious reasons, and lowered my dose of estradiol to 1mg twice a day. I was also, by this point, experiencing *very obviously non-pattern* hair loss; I was missing random patches all over my head.

I was convinced the government was fucking with my food and medicine. I thought humans enslaved the first witch. I started throwing things at my walls in fits of rage spurred by these revelations. I started having gastrointestinal problems; which I thought were being caused by the government agents at the time, but *now* I'm pretty sure it was related to my hiatal hernia that got *really* jacked up from lack of exercise and terrible posture. My back was *all* fucked up, and my hips were tilted *way* wrong. I've since started doing daily stretches, which seems to have alleviated the problem.

I went *back* to my doctor *one more time* in hopes of getting a sane, adult dose of hormones; and was unsuccessful. I ultimately ordered DIY from overseas like back in high school. I'm *still* DIY, because I don't know how to get back on the choo choo train with my hormones except to get a new doctor. And, I kinda have

bigger problems. By the end of the year, I was convinced the *real* problem was that the Freemasons had “blackballed” me, and I needed to get un-blackballed.

During my last doctor’s visit, she said I had deficiencies in vitamins D and B12. I started taking supplements; my hair and sanity both started to return gradually over the next several weeks.

Shortly after the start of 2024, I had my last and final “premonition”: there are *way* too many trans people. I had this feeling back in 2017 right before I started transitioning; but I ultimately chose to ignore it and give this new transgender community a chance. I since found myself once again a transmedicalist; there are obviously some folks who are like me, but most of them *aren’t*. I still think folks should be able to follow their dreams and do whatever, especially if they’re adults, but... I really *do* still think there are *way* too many of us. Plus, *very few* of them had a childhood that looked like mine. A lot of these folks figured it out later in life, after sudden epiphanies. Again; I think they have a right to exist and even pursue medical transition, just like I think people ought to be able to buy weed and drop acid. But, these folks *weren’t* crossdressing every chance they got starting in the third grade. So, I don’t know *what* I think anymore. I guess it’s not *just* that they didn’t have my childhood; they also kinda led me off a cliff and let me play space alien until my life fell apart.

I honestly feel *terribly* lost. Basically my entire friend group was other trans people by the time COVID hit, and... I guess I wasn’t paying attention. I can only think of a couple people who had childhood gender problems like I had, and we aren’t even close friends. I have very little in common with these people, save for the fact that we’re taking hormones and shit.

After seemingly regaining most of my sanity by early spring, I decided I needed to reach out for help with *whatever* happened to me. I arranged a meeting with my old preacher who this all

kinda started with, and... I frankly *still* came away feeling like he was hiding something and knew more than he let on, but... there's no sense fretting over it *now*. It's probably just residual paranoia.

I tried making a video for my friends, but... it was *way* too long. So much crazy stuff happened to me. Even this tldr is pretty lengthy, but I'm actually proud of myself for only being at like 7.5k words as of right here.

I ultimately decided I should just *type it all out* instead; and started making a big markdown file that turned into like a dozen markdown files and probably 150k words or more. I basically wrote a non-fiction book about my crazy life and what led me here, though I certainly didn't mean to be so verbose. I guess it's just *really* complicated; though maybe I'm becoming more concise as I regain my sanity.

If I somehow manage to survive this and decide this whole little transmedicalism thing was just residual psychosis, I'll certainly *tell y'all*. But a whole year later, and... Look; these people are my *friends*, alright? They're actually really cool people. But, they're really cool people who had sudden epiphanies in their late 20s and 30s, and *I've* been dealing with this shit since before the 3rd grade. How could we *possibly* have the same thing going on with us? I think grownups should be able to take whatever drugs they want as long as they aren't hurting anybody, but... shit's just been *weird* for the last decade. And, I can't un-see it.

After spending the months of June, July, August, and a good chunk of September writing and polishing my write-up, I sent it to my childhood best friend who I worked on the same team with before I went all Pepe Silvia. And that's when I learned... our company doesn't *exist* anymore. Well... it got acquired, my friend *just* got laid off, and the team doesn't exist anymore. Fuck.

Dude. Last I knew the tech industry was *booming*, and... It's all over the news *now*. Tech workers laid off *everywhere*. No

one can find work. My friend was like “Do you want to keep your house? Apply everywhere! Apply to Food Lion!” And... that’s *not* what I wanted to hear after I got led off a cliff in some three-year-long psychotic blur. I’ve since spiraled into an utter pit of despair, and have been circling the drain on killing myself since late last year.

I feel like I’ve lost *everything*. I have no friends except for a bunch of whackadoodle transtrenders. It sounds like I’ll never be able to get a job in the only industry I’ve ever known *ever again*... I haven’t paid my mortgage since November, and my credit is tanking. I have less than \$100 in my bank account, and I *already* liquidated my meager and belated 401k. I. Am. *Fucked*. I reached out to Tommy again, I reached out to who I *used* to consider my best friends in the trans community... Brittany and Samantha (let’s call them) moved to New Jersey and are sympathetic, but... there doesn’t seem to be much *hope* for me, or much “boots on the ground” help. Like, I kinda need the “fuzzy blankets and hot cocoa” treatment after the crazy 3-4 years I’ve had. Samantha at least found some resources in Durham for folks who need help paying their mortgage and utilities and stuff... I was *about* to do *that*, or at least talk to my mortgage lender, but... Then I started spiraling again after the election. I woke up the evening after inauguration to find Elon doing the Hitler salute and some bullshit where I *already* can’t get a normal passport anymore. And, shit’s just kinda gone downhill from there. I briefly considered committing suicide by self-immolation outside the North Carolina Republican headquarters as an act of political protest, before deciding things weren’t *quite* that bad yet and talking myself back down to simple inert gas asphyxiation like I was planning.

Anyway... I’m *never* going to financially recover from this; not to mention, I’m pretty spooked out that the administration is moving the chess pieces to lock people like me up in mental institutions. I wrote more about that in my long write-up I’m linking to, and I’ll try to keep this on-topic about the fact that

I'm simply out of hope and *that's* why I'm planning to end my life within the next few days. It feels like the whole world is crashing down around me. My career, my industry, my finances, the government... it seems I scarcely have anything to look forward to, and I *still* don't have a full head of hair ever since it started falling out in patches back in 2023. (It *has* started filling back in though, and I think B12 is the one I *really* need in particular. It's starting to cover my ears again, at least!)

Anyway... that was my life. My name was Rachael Ann Brown (let's just say), I'm probably days away from death; and days away from not being able to buy food or gas anymore. Foreclosure is imminent, not even software developers who have their *shit together* can get a job, and... I've kinda just lost the will to live. I mostly just want the internet to know who I was, so that they might learn something from my life.

CONTENT WARNINGS! (Fuck, lots of things...)

- Suicide - Obviously. I don't really start spiraling until after I talk to Josh in late 2024, but there's lots of suicidal ideation and planning after that point.
- Child sexual assault - It's complicated, but I thought I *did* uncover some shit in late 2019. So, you might want to skip (or be careful around) the part where I was in a polycule. Because, *that's* where it came up. I mostly talk about it as just abstract "childhood trauma" after that point.
- There's lots of profanity and I talk about alternative lifestyles like BDSM, but I doubt those would really constitute "triggers".
- Also not really a trigger, but I *do* share a lot of hot takes about politics at the end, and I kind of rip on Democrats *and* Republicans, and even Christians. But, I'm just trying to keep it real.