Alex Myers

SE English

Prof. Susan Mcgrade

October 18, 2012

Nice Guys Finish Last

A CEO, a Software Engineer, and a Farmer all walk into a bar, which one survives the zombie apocalypse. This is not as much of a punch line as it is a very interesting question. In the book World War Z, the interviewer comes in contact with over forty characters who have survived the Zombie War. The interviewer takes their accounts of their lives before, during and after the Zombie War. As the interviews progress there is a trend in the characteristics of the survivors, which begs the question is there a specific life background, skill, or personality feature that gives them the edge in the fight for their lives. There has to be something that all these survivors have that caused them to survive while millions of others perish.

In Greater Chongqing, located in The United Federation of China there was a man named Kwang Jingshu. Jingshu is a medical doctor from china. China is a very honor bound society which holds much pride in the family name being a continuation in this world. Dr. Kwang portrayed through the interview that he was a very serious, and almost pessimistic man. Pessimism in this time of Zombie outbreak is more borderline with realism. Jingshu had several skills that seemed to have brought him through the outbreak, he was an person of import, honor, and his realistic outlook on the situation. All these things enforce the idea that he must live no matter what the consequences, all while remaining level headed because there is no reliance or blind hope that someone will rescue him.

Nury Televaldi was the next to be interviewed in the city of Lhasa, in The People's Republic of Tibet. Nury was a smuggler of opium, slaves, and diamonds prior to the outbreak, afterwards he found work in trafficking refugees to "safety". Even though the Government added stricter regulations in order to keep refugees from coming in and overpopulating the cities. His consistent persistence shows that he is willing to do anything for money. Nury admitted to risking entire holds of passengers because some passengers wanted to bring along their infected family members in hope for a cure. Sometimes the infected got loose and would kill everyone in the hold, and he would have to dump the "cargo". Nury seemed to possess a lack of morals, or emotions which seemingly allowed him to do anything that was necessary to survive.

In Meteora, Greece a man named Stanley MacDonald was asked about his experience. Stanley was once a member of the Third Canadian Light Infantry. His unit was mainly in charge of hunting down opium dealers. While deployed in Kyrgyzstan they found a mountain that was supposed to be a cave of opium dealers on the side of a mountain. What he found was a mountain of undead. MacDonald barely survived the encounter, and upon return home, he was discharged and falsely diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress disorder. Stanley possessed military training as well as the emptiness that comes with witnessing such a horrifying event. These changes in personality gave him a sense of realism that urged him on to survive.

Fernando Oliveira, who is currently living in the Amazon Rain Forest, Brazil, was next to be interviewed. He is a gun toting individual who witnessed a very interesting medical incident. While assisting an illegal surgeon with a heart transplant the, donor who was unconscious on the table attacked the surgeon. Fernando was able to react quickly and kill the zombie. Fernando then bribed the police into ignorance, and disposed of both bodies. This shows again the resourcefulness and the willingness to do anything to survive. Fernando has both the background enough to own a gun and the determination to use it. These qualities is what allowed Fernando to make it through thus far.

The next interviewee, Jacob, is from Bridgetown Harbor in Barbados. His past contained false promises of jobs and a new life from the government. Which led to just a life of poverty, in which he found himself living in the slums of Cape Town. Jacob's interaction with the zombies was a very violent one. He was trampled by a mob of people running for their lives, stabbed by a woman who he was trying to help, and was hit by a car shortly after. Jacob woke up in a hospital to a world wrecked by chaos and a burning addiction to the numbness of morphine. Jacob's rough childhood mixed with the constant fight that he had to live through when living in the slums gave him a certain hardness. This hardness paired with the numbness he gets from his addiction to painkillers makes him a perfect survivor. Jacob is able to fend for himself and not feel regret or the need to help anyone expect himself.

However not only the self-centered egotistical survive. In the town of Tel Aviv, Israel a former spy named Jurgen WarmBrunn resides. WarmBrunn was a very knowledgeable individual, he worked to compile a large report about the zombie outbreak. This document also described a plan on how to prevent the outbreak from reaching epidemic proportions. This report was known as the Warmbrunn-Knight report. However, the plan was rejected by most if not all governments. Jurgen Warmbrunn did not have the military training or the rough childhood growing up, but he did have an intelligence and a drive to collect as much information as possible. This allowed him to be prepared and to not be caught off guard.

In the cold reaches of Antarctica in the Vostok Station, a man named Breckinridge Scott entertained the interviewer. Breck is a very rich man who leased a bio-dome in Antarctica. He could be described as extremely corrupt. Breck used the "African Rabies" scare which was what the media mislabeled the zombie outbreak. A drug named Phalanx, was developed to fight the "African Rabies". It was sold under false pretenses and Breck made millions. When asked about if he felt responsible for the false sense of security and the cause of the increased outbreak, he just laughed and blamed the consumer for not researching the product enough. This shows that money can still keep someone alive though the apocalypse as long as that person has enough of it and is not afraid to do whatever is necessary to get it.

Sometimes pure instinct is as good as a survival tool as any. In Topeka Kansas a young girl named Sharon, lives in an asylum. She lacks functional language skills, due to her parents death at an early age. She spent most of her time living alone amongst zombies. Sharon lacks any of the social niceties or what most would consider sanity. While she told her story of her time amongst the zombies she displayed her exceedingly effective way to mimic the zombies sounds and demeanor almost perfectly. This shows that the most primal instinct to adapt is a sufficient way to survive, which almost begs question are we all just overly developed zombies.

All these people, have very unique sets of skills but overall they have the ability to adapt for their own good. Most of them are either highly intelligent or have military training. They all want to survive and are willing to do anything to do so. Even if it is beyond the normal limitations of what society considers right. As can be seen, all the corrupt, immoral, and self-centered people are all in positions of power after the outbreak. Whereas those who survived on instinct or intelligence are locked away or discredited. This just goes to show that the nice guy finishes last.