

Zach's Story

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I didn't find my true drug of choice until I had been smoking and drugging for over a year. My fix turned out to be acid, which I started at the end of junior year in high school. I got my first hit in the parking lot of my drug rehab from a girl I had dated from band for about two weeks. I wasn't smoking at the time and acid was the perfect fit for me because it didn't show up on drug tests. I took the hit that same night while in the room watching TV with my parents. I didn't start tripping until after they went to bed, but I stayed up all night until I had to go to school the next day lying in my bed exploring my mind.

I continued to do acid for the next two or three months about at least once a week until my connections dried up. My obsession was so strong that one time my dealer actually wouldn't sell to me because she said I wanted it too badly. Acid shaped my political views into a true leftist. I considered myself a die hard liberal and Bob Dylan became my idol. After my connections dried up I only did acid on rare occasions which included a trip to California and the night before a championship hockey game (in which I got sat after my second shift. We ended up winning the game in overtime while I watched from the center of the bench).

My next trip wouldn't be until after I graduated high school at Bonnaroo in 2006. Bonnaroo was my gift to myself to celebrate my high school graduation and to cap off a nearly 6 month spree of smoking an eighth every day with my two buddies, Ross and Ryan. This would be the beginning of what I would like to call my "psychotic episode" that would soon follow.

The acid at Bonnaroo was crazy and I hadn't tripped in over 6 months. After I started tripping I was too fucked up to sit at the table with our neighbors from my hometown Pittsburgh, so I sat on the ground by my tent for a half an hour not knowing what to do. I was worried because I thought they would want us to go to the show with them, but I wanted to meet up with some of our other friends from Ann Arbor.

The crowd that I was trying to meet up with were mainly acquaintances of mine, and were mostly friends with the friend I was with. I had smoked bud with a lot of them, but they were a group of kids that I hadn't yet seemed to infiltrate. I was persistent about meeting up with them though, because I thought that if we chilled with them at Bonnaroo then I would be initiated into their crowd. I owed one of the kids money, and he happened to be the guy who met us to show me and my friend Ryan (Ross was off by himself somewhere) where they were sitting for the Tom Petty show. I was tripping my ass off and getting all sorts of thoughts and vibes. When we finally met up with them I just sat to the side not saying much, not that much could be heard.

About mid-way through the show one of my good friends from the Catholic Church, Paul, came over and we started to talk. He asked me if I was tripping which I replied to with a "fuck yea". We then talked about how dirty it was here and he made the line that "It's beer and bruski from here on out," which for some reason I agreed to. To me this was like making a decision to change my political views from liberal Bob Dylan idolizing to beer chugging frat boys. But to me it was worth it to be in the crowd.

Even with the oath to quit the acid I still had to say good-bye (or as one of my friends said it, "saying hello") to acid, so I tripped the next night while rolling on E. I ended up in an anxiety attack in my tent alone thinking that my neighbors were going to storm in and beat the shit out of me. Somehow I managed to fall asleep.

When I returned home my friends and me decided to cut back from the smoking and drugging. I received my grades from school for my final semester, but only one grade was on the report card, a C in my favorite class psychology. I was only taking three classes that semester because I was dual enrolling at the community college (which I got a respectable A and B+); psychology, band, and a composition class. In reality I was only taking two because I decided that I didn't have anything to learn from the composition teacher. I was still fucked up from Bonnaroo and couldn't figure out why I only had one grade.

I now saw a divide between hippies and frat boys, and I was determined to be on the frat boy side. I started hanging out with the crowd from Bonnaroo and going to their parties where I would drink and sometimes smoke a bowl at the end of the night. To me this seemed to be how bud was "meant" to be used; at the end of the night to come down from a drunk. With the staying out all night my sleep went to shit, and the nights that I wasn't out I couldn't fall asleep unless I was watching a TV show on my computer.

At the time I was working at a pizza shop downtown. To me my job was everything; it signified status to be working on the strip. It was a family owned business and my bosses were three brothers who liked to go out to the bars a lot. They were clearly conservative and at one point I dropped a quote from the movie Educators, "18 and conservative you got no heart, 30 and liberal you got no brains." That seemed to have initiated me, and soon they were asking me to get a fake ID so I could go to the bars with them. One day they even let me watch a superman documentary for 2 hours just because it was boosting of capitalism.

My step father and me had always gotten along rather well. He married my mom in 2002, but he had been in my life for many years before that. Me and him shared many common traits, not only including our alcoholism, but our politics were not one of them. He was very conservative, and during my liberalness we had gotten into many heated debates. But now I was on his side, and somehow he could tell that I had changed. I can't say he congratulated me, but it felt like it, and it was always followed up with an "It's all in who you know" and "It's the only way to get anything you want". Finally I knew why I only had one grade on my report card.

Over time I gradually started to lose touch with reality, although I don't know how exactly it began. I remember taking note of a lot of "weird coincidences," which included things such as favorite songs on the radio, to open parking spots at just the right time. Although insignificant, in reality they held great meaning to me at the time. To me I was adapting to my new political beliefs, but in reality I was changing my behavior rapidly.

At work there were many events which began to test my sanity. By now I felt like an apprentice to the brothers at work, and they would tell me which customers to serve and would laugh when I would mess around with the pothead hippies that came in. One time a couple came in and was telling me about how they gave this one bum a dollar and how then the bum was then complaining about them only giving them a dollar. I had to admit that this seemed rather ridiculous. I was usually very generous with change and cigarettes to bums, and they had never given me anything but thanks. On my next cigarette break the same bum was yelling at me from across the street, but for the first time I just gave him the cold shoulder and ignored him. In my mind I couldn't help him; it was against the "rules".

Everything was going well in my mind. I was transitioning very well to being a nice conservative. At work I would goof off and joke around with the brothers. I would get these crazy flashbacks at work, which I thought was from all the superiority that went along with being conservative. To me it was how you were supposed to feel when you knew you were better than everyone else. One time when I was taking a smoking break I ran into some old kids from hockey, and I took the opportunity to gloat

about my job. One of the kids I was tight with, but the other one who happened to be Jewish and me had some bad history. I ignored the one kid, who was talking on his cell phone. Inside I continued to ride my buzz when one of the brothers made an anti-Semitic comment. I went from laughing to freezing, eyes locked on his. He didn't know what to do. I had caught him slipping up. It was the interaction with the kid from hockey that saved me, because all of a sudden I realized I had been racist to the one kid. I decided at that moment that I couldn't be a conservative, because I couldn't be racist (not that conservatives are racists; keep in mind my state of mind).

All of a sudden I was enlightened. I knew exactly how the world worked, with the rich oppressing the poor and taking in only the select few. How could I turn my back on my old views, against everything that I used to stand for? I knew the system, and I thought I could tare it down. All of a sudden I was a threat against America. I was torn. I didn't know what to do, who to turn my back on.

One night my family went out to Mongolian BBQ for dinner. It was a very nice dinner and the atmosphere was very nice. I had my journal with me in which I was writing down all the quotes that were coming to my mind randomly. One of them I thought of in the restaurant and shared with the family was "Maybe if the kids were treated like adults they would act more like adults... or maybe they'd all be dead." My family got a kick out of that, it seemed like everything was perfect; everyone was happy. Dinner was going so well that we actually ordered deserts. I ordered a chocolate brownie sundae with the honest intention of devouring it, but when it arrived I all of a sudden had no appetite. I sat there looking at it, and I asked my step dad what I should do. He laughed. All of a sudden I got up and ran off, with the sundae in hand. I began running down the streets asking everyone if "they knew of someone who could really use this." Eyes everywhere were darting at my sundae and many people were making comments on how good it looked. I finally found woman in a wheel chair several blocks away. I gave the sundae to her, told her where to return the glass and asked for a cigarette which I smoked on my glory walk home. I had broken free, and saved my soul. I got back to Mongolian BBQ right as my step dad was pulling away. When I got in the car my mom was gleaming at me, but my step dad was furious. He just muttered and ranted, talking about how we were going to have no money.

My little journal of quotes was continuing to grow. I had a small notebook and on each page I would put one of the quotes that were coming to me. They were liberal, and to me threatening. I would stay up all night continuously adding all my thoughts to the list. I had dreams of tagging them everywhere to start a revolution.

I didn't come to my full realization of the oppression of the American government and their crimes committed until the following day. I had caught my step dad smoking a cigarette, which was a rare occasion. I didn't feel safe, and I felt like I couldn't stay in Ann Arbor. I told my step dad that I wanted to move. He told me that I would have to talk to my mom, but that I could have anything I wanted. Anything I wanted! Just to stay quiet. If I could just keep quiet I could have anything I wanted. After he left I began bawling. I got in my car and drove, and after a half an hour later I ended up at my church. I parked in the middle of the parking lot and ran up to the priests house to ring the door bell. The priest came out and calmed me down, as I was still crying. We talked, and I told him that I had a journal of notes that people were offering me anything to not reveal it. He asked me about my family, and when I told him about my step dad all of a sudden I had an epiphany. I was Christ.

I now began to grow really paranoid. I thought that everyone with a Nextel phone was one of those people, the people who were trying to stop me from redistributing the wealth. I looked for refugee in my friends. I continued to party, and to my surprise my friends started to come to me with their problems. At one point my old best friend from the first grade was trying to pull me to the side at a party, but I was still in my conservative mode and I blew him off. I felt noble; leading by example as I put it. To me I was holy. I could save people souls, give the gift of sight, but they had to earn it.

My family had just gotten the new internet phone by Comcast, but it was acting up. Every time we would use the phone it would go in and out. This was also the time that the government spying on its citizens was all over the press. When the Comcast people came I was suspicious of them, after all they did have Nextel phones. The guy was trying to say that it wasn't their problem, but I kept telling them it was because the signal wasn't going where it needed to go. I left, feeling intruded upon, and ended up at the gas station where there was a Comcast van. I first just looked at him funny, and then we were right next to each other when we both went to pay. I asked him if he was just at my house, and he responded very abruptly no. I thought fine, I won't save his soul. But as I was getting ready to leave he stopped me. He had a look in his eye. He asked me what I needed. I asked him if he could run my number. He got out his Nextel and phoned one of his friends. While he was still on the phone I told him that he will know what to do with the answer and I left. The world was going to get a shock when they found out all the government was spying was about me.

At one party I was at one of my friends, John's, house which happened to be a mini-mansion. The family owned two of their own businesses and my friend was extremely conservative. At the party all the kids were off to the side at the bonfire smoking cigars and drinking beer while the parents were on the patio drinking wine. At the party a girl friend from Logan, one of the guys in my new crowd, came up to me and began asking me about what my friend was saying about her. I knew that Logan was just using her for sex, but I felt I couldn't tell her, so I kept playing with her telling her that "It didn't work like that." I then proceeded to call the friend and just left a message about what his girl was trying to do. While John was opening his letters full of money I dropped a line about how I gave the bum the sundae earlier. He all of a sudden got up and walked toward his parents. I laughed. I was untouchable.

At the end of the party when everyone had left I ended up smoking weed with a kid that had been tagging along with me all night while Ryan from Bonnaroo was with us. After the bowl I played guitar and sang while he just lay on the grass. I thought of the kid as a lost soul, caught up in drugs without any meaning (how ironic). Mid way through a song he got up and said that he feels like he should just write down all the thoughts he had going through his head. I told him I had done the same thing last night. After an awkward silence I turned to Ryan and told him it was too easy now. That was also followed by another awkward silence.

I was now not sleeping at all during any nights, which was adding to my delusions. I was seeing signs every where; signs that would point me in directions. I had total faith in God and that God would point me in the right direction, so I would just go with the flow.

Everything came to a climax on the night that I went over to Logan's house to play halo. This was the kid who's girlfriend had come up to me at John's graduation party, and he was hosting a 4v4 Halo match with some of our buddies. I had heard from a friend of mine that he had a hookah, which I had been obsessing about recently, so we agreed that we would smoke a hookah later. He also happened to be Christian, so I felt that his home was safe from all the government spying that was going on about me. John was also one of the kids at the gathering, and I hadn't seen him since the graduation party or the incident about the bum. He was really competitive when it came to video games because he was really good at them. I, myself, was terrible, and I was just there because everyone else was.

When I got there not everyone had arrived yet. I was really loopy and was just standing around waiting for God to point me in the right direction. I wasn't taking any proactive movements toward anyone or anything, I was just standing around until people called upon me. Because of this I ended up in the living room by myself while everyone else was running around trying to set up the X-Box's. They had a cat, which I love, so I just sat down on their couch and was petting it. Someone then came to the door, and so I went to answer it. When I answered the door the kid just stood there and stared at me, with a look of dumfoundedness on him, and then asked "Do I know you?" I got a smirk on my face. Of course he knew of me, I was there to save him.

The X-Box's were finally set up, and everyone was ready to play. There were two different rooms, one of them was just a living room area and the other one was a custom home theater that the kid had. I ended up in the living room with John and two other kids. From the incident with the kid at the door I knew that I was in the house of God and all I had to do was signal to him that I was ready. Ready for what, I did not know. Everyone was picking funny names, so I thought that it would be the best way to signal to everyone that I knew I was Christ. I thought of the best stereotype of Christians that I could think of, and the first thing that came to mind was how they were against homosexuality, so I named my player "a gay" and ran around letting everyone kill me so that it would say "you killed a gay" on their screen. I thought it was ingenious. So did pretty much everyone else. Everyone was laughing except for John, the republican kid. He was pissed. Even though our team was winning he was bitching about how much I sucked, and how he was going to beat my ass if I didn't start playing. I was just laughing, he couldn't touch me there.

My team won the game. John was still pissed off at me, but everyone else thought it was hilarious. I was the center of attention. After the game we switched teams, and I ended up in the theater room with Logan, who's house it was. Finally I was truly safe. Since I switched teams I ended up with the name "bonerman," which I thought was funny. I was starting to get those flashbacks that I would get at work where my head would become very light headed and I would get strong body vibes. The door was kept shut, and they made sure that I was in the seat farthest away from the door. I was now trying to play the game seriously, but I still sucked. After awhile I just stopped playing and sat back in my chair and closed my eyes, my mind and body going crazy. Then the cat came up to me, and sat on my lap. This was the final sign, the arrow in the bull's-eye! God was giving me the final sign, and I had no doubts in my mind that I was the Jesus Christ, the next messiah.

It all made sense. My entire life was flashing before my eyes, and everything was sliding into place. My mom had been lied to by my father, told that she was loved, and then dumped when he found out about me. This must have been what actually happened to Jesus Christ, because I did not truly believe that Mary was a virgin when she had him. I had then gone through life unknowing that I was holy, just exploring the world through the eyes of a child. The government knew about me, and was trying to hide me from everyone else, because they wanted my power for themselves, to rule and oppress the world. When they thought that I was finally ready to join their side they had approached me, but they had made some mistakes; they made a racist joke. Their plan backfired.

They had even infiltrated my family with my step-dad, the Nextel carrying man with the most important mission out of everyone; to convert my mother. They may have succeeded there, but they would not succeed with me, I would never be a racist, and I would never allow them to get away with what they were doing.

After we were done playing halo everyone got prepared to leave. I was dead silent. I knew what was coming next, the one remaining thing that had to be done. And I was prepared to do whatever I had to do to save the world. John was still pissed; pissed that I hadn't taken the game seriously, as well as because he had been the only one that didn't find the joke funny. While we were heading outside to leave I had no idea where I was going, or whom I was going with. Ryan was there, and he seemed to be tagging along with me, so I just followed him. He wanted to hang out with some other kids later though, and that included John. I was scared. I knew what he was going to do to me, and I knew that I wasn't going to do anything to stop it. I was going to let him kill me.

I had to die, just as Jesus had to die. To save everyone from the sins they had committed. How I would die I did not know, but I knew it would be tonight.

Ryan and me went over to his house to watch some TV before heading out that night. Before long he began to notice that something was not right with me. His parents took us out to ice cream and I didn't

get anything. I just sat to the side silent and staring off into space. His parents were concerned, but they didn't do anything. I didn't know what was going to come next. I was waiting for a sign to lead me in the right direction.

When we left to go out we had no idea where we were going, we just wanted to get out of his house and away from his parents. My friend was starting to grow really worried, and I told him not to worry, that everything was going to be alright, and it had to be done. He asked me "What had to be done," but I just kept saying, "you'll see." We ended up at a park where we smoked some cigarettes, waiting to meet up with some kids later. He had no idea what to do, and I just kept telling him not to worry. I was thinking of all my friends and family that I would never see again. Reluctantly he went along with me, but he said that he had to call Ross, the other kid from Bonnaroo, first. I agreed, it sounded like a good idea. We decided to meet up with him.

I was happy to meet up with Ross, because I wanted to see him again before I went. We had been best friends on and off ever since the second grade, and we had gone through a lot with each other. All three of us were now together, the three smoking buddies and the three kids who ventured off to Bonnaroo on our own. When he got in the car he had no idea of what was going on, or what had transpired so far that night. We still had no plans for the night, as we hadn't heard from anyone yet. Ross came up with the suggestion that we go smoke a hookah at the hookah café.

The hookah! I had forgotten all about it. Without saying more than "it'll be alright," or "don't worry," I ended up with my two best friends smoking a hookah downtown. I knew this was it. This was where I was going to die.

I told Ryan to tell my mom that I love her, and tell Adrian that I was sorry. Adrian was a girl that I had hooked up with a while back and had not talked to ever since because I did not know how to handle myself at the time. I felt bad for some reason, not so much from hooking up with her, but just that I didn't call her since. For some reason those were the only two people that I told him to say anything to. The hookah café was packed. It was a nice summer night, and there was hardly a table open. I was going crazy. I said very little, and just sat at the table bouncing my legs as if to music. Someone asked me what song I had in my head and I said "nothing", because there was honestly nothing at all running through my head. At the café we ran into a bunch of people; A group of girls that I had dated one of them before, and some kids from the same group of kids as the ones at Bonnaroo. And I just sat there, while everyone else carried on conversations and laughed and hung out. The girls asked what drugs I was on, and I laughed and said "None."

At any moment I expected Jon and a bunch of his friends to burst in on the café and beat me to death, but I just sat there waiting, imagining how I was not going to cry or moan or put up any fight. I didn't have a phone at the time, but Ross had received a call, and he told me it was for me. I had no idea who it was but I took the phone. It was Adrian. Another sign! The phone kept on going in and out, and eventually it cut out. I scrambled to call her back, and when I finally got connected again I just told her I was sorry and hung up. She would understand in the future.

I returned to my table, and started looking at all the people that were there. There was a ton of people in American Eagle and Abercrombie and Fitch clothes, the clothes of the enemy. Girls in tight jeans and guys with their asses half hanging out of their pants. Me and my friends made note of this one girl who's thong was totally hanging out of her pants. I dared my friends to go up to her and tell her that her thong was hanging out. None of them had the balls to do it, so I walked right up to her and asked her if she knew that her thong was hanging out. She all of a sudden got very self conscious and pulled her pants up. Everyone at my table was cracking up. The girl and her friends left soon-there-after. I was going to get it now.

Still nothing was happening. Why not? I waited patiently.

Shortly after my questions were answered. Paul, the Catholic kid from Bonnaroo arrived. I stared at him, a grin on my face. He asked me how I was doing as he shuffled to a table with some of his friends. "Livin' the life," I replied. Finally everything was in place. I had a witness from the church of God as to what was going to go down. I prepared for shit to go down, I moved to a table all by myself, telling my friends that maybe it would be safer if they leave. They now got really worried, and told me they weren't going anywhere. I was as happy as I had ever been.

At the table I sat waiting. People were gradually leaving and nothing was happening. I turned to a preppy kid sitting nearby and asked him, "If he lied, or if he let other people lie for him." He laughed at me and told me he let other people lie for him. I told him that he was a liar, and that he was one of "them." He asked who "them" was, and I said an "American". He laughed again and asked me where I was from. I said "no-where". Again he laughed, and said he'd never heard that one before. His friends and him left shortly-there-after.

I continued to sit, waiting.

Was nothing going to happen?

Nothing happened.

They were scared.

They couldn't touch me.

I was invincible.

I began preaching, about how Americans oppress everyone else, and that conservatives are liars that lie to woman just to get in their pants. Everyone was leaving, but then Paul came over and sat by me. He had been watching me out of the corner of his eye for the entire night, and I could see a glossy look in his eye, the look that I had seen in so many other converts eyes. He brought over one of his friends, and together we began to talk about how fucked up the world is, and how we need a revolution. I was to be the leader of the revolution.

As we left the friend of Paul's told me that he wanted to get some weed. I was against drugs. Drugs were the tools of oppression, that kept poor people poor and in jail. They were the best tools of oppression too, because people willingly wanted to participate in them, they themselves would sell all of their belongings for that next bag. It was a perfect system, a system of no flaws. If we were to have a revolution we would have to get rid of the drugs. I told him this, but he still wanted some weed. As we walked he asked me if I knew anywhere I could get some. I began yelling, "anyone have any weed!" at the top of my lungs and all of a sudden he too got very self conscious and told me to shut up. I just laughed, and walked away with Ross and Ryan, chest high in the air.

That night I walked around the neighborhood barefoot as if I was king. No one could touch me. I had the ability to do whatever I wanted, and I was going to save the world.

When I returned home my mom was getting ready for bed. She told me that my grades had come in. I was confused; I thought my grades had already come in. I looked at them. 3 grades. A C, B and D-, the

worst report card I had ever received. This was the missing link though. They had fucked up. I now had physical proof of the corruptness of the people of America. They had only given me one grade when I was going to join their side, but now that I wasn't they gave me a second report card... with different grades on it.

I tried to sleep but I couldn't. What was I going to do with this. I quickly made copies of them and ran them over to Ross and Ryan's houses. They were sleeping, so I just left them in their room. When I got home I again tried to sleep, but I ended up just lying in bed for what seemed like hours.

When my mom got up I went up-stairs. She made me some warm milk to try and put me to sleep, and I told her about the grades, and how it was proof that they were out there. She asked me who they were, and I just said, "them." She was worried, but she had to go to work. Right after she left I took my grades and just walked out the door and started walking. As I left I laughed at my step-dad, who was still in bed. He moaned as I walked out the door. He was going to go down.

Outside I just walked. The milk was starting to set in, and I imagined myself just falling asleep in the middle of the ground and the right people would find the grades and take them to the proper people in the media. I kept on looking for signs, thinking that there must be something else I could do. All of a sudden I remembered my name from the Halo game. "Bonerman." I rolled up the grades and stuck them in my pants to form a gigantic boner in my pants. I laughed, and kept on walking.

I ended up walking all the way across town. I had taken my shirt off, and just had on some gym shorts with a boner in them. I was looking for another sign. Outside of a shopping mall across from Arborland there was a homeless looking guy and a security guard smoking cigarettes and talking. I walked up to the homeless guy and asked him for one. He gave me one, and then we left the security guard and started walking and talking. I was growing impatient. I wanted to get things started. In the middle of one of his sentences I interrupted him, "Where do I go next?" He stopped. "Why don't you go get a cigarette from that guy," he said. Yes! It made sense. He must be one of them.

I made my way back to the security guard who was still outside smoking, and I asked him for a cigarette. He said no. To me it was a game, so I kept on asking him why not, and pretty soon I was dancing around him, waving my shirt in circles yelling at him, "you can't touch me." He couldn't do shit. He got on his phone and made a phone call. "They're not going to come," I yelled at him. "You guys can't touch me."

Pretty soon though the cops did in fact come. Two cars, one with a man in it, and the other with two ladies. They told me to calm down, and asked me what my problem was. I said America was my problem, and that a man had lied to my mother, fucked her, and then left her. The ladies began to grow teary eyed. I could see it. But the man was wearing sunglasses, and was a lot more abrupt in his actions. He tried to grab the papers that I was holding and shouting about, "I have proof." I didn't like that man. I told him to take off his sunglasses, which he did, and I saw cold evil eyes, not the teary eyes of the woman.

The ladies soon realized that I was not going to let the guy do anything to me. They talked to me, and the guy left, to go get back up or tell his people about what was happening. I showed the ladies my report cards, but I wouldn't let them touch them. They agreed, but told me that they were going to have to hand-cuff me. I was fine by it. To me they were my angels, my protectors, saving me from the evil men. Finally I was safe.

In the patrol car they told me they were taking me to the hospital to see my mother. I loved my mother, and I couldn't wait to see her. In the car they listened to music, and asked me what type of music I liked. They asked me if I had a girlfriend, and I told them no, but there was a girl that I loved, and I knew it, just knew it, that she loved me back. Within 10 minutes we had arrived at the hospital.