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***If There***

*Stop  
Staring*

***WAS***  
***Schizophrenia***

Blake Steidler

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Steidler Inc. Press  
1234 Any Street  
Mysteryville, OL 55555  
Visit our website at [www.Steidlerbooks.com](http://www.Steidlerbooks.com)

ISBN: B00RWP4M78  
eISBN: B00RWP4M78

## CHAPTER 1 (9/22/1998)

### (Psychotic Episode 1 of 11)

It's now Tuesday and I'm three days into my very first psychotic episode. I'm only 17 years old. Schizophrenia? Yeah I've heard of it but I have no clue what it is. I saw the word once in a Sociology text book and just looking at the word seemed scary enough. I daydreamed through school because I'm only interested in wooing girls with my muscles, not my brains.

My school is primarily all white people. It's not that our area is racist we're in fact quite the opposite. We have one black guy that is more Polite than an alter boy but I've noticed that the two black girls we have at school get in a ton of fights and get away for some reason with each and every one. So I ask myself how could someone constantly butting heads with people always be found so innocent? I dunno, guess if the race card gets dropped it's not my business.

I haven't slept since my sister's birthday party on Sunday just two days ago. I can feel my pelvis bone because I've also forgotten to eat since Sunday. I'm scared to death. Of myself. Possessed. Mostly paranoia. Somebody is trying to kill me but who? I'm 100% sure I have no enemies. Who's trying to kill me?

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I know that my ability to make good decisions is eradicating quickly but what can I do? I've never seen a psychiatrist. Never been to a hospital. I'm nothing more than a 17yr old Full time vocational student far way too mature for my age. I live in a seedy apartment in the sticks. I pay rent and work full time on top of going to school. I even go to the laundry mat to do my own wishy wash. Unlike other teenagers my age, I actually enjoy doing push ups.

As a write this story 17 years ago I find it strange and yet scary that I can recall my verbatim thoughts of my very first episode. Paranoia. That of course I remember most. I'm convinced that screw tooth Bob that sold me my used Ford Escort is trying to kill me. But why? I am convinced screw tooth Bob has planted poison gas inside the ventilation of my car. He wants me dead because he is afraid of me and my home life situation so he is trying to kill me before I come after him. Strange? I know.

So that's what is going on this brisk morning in late September. For the first time in my life I am completely losing my mind. Paranoia of course bothering me the most. They can't read my thoughts just yet but I am definitely being watched. Like I said, it's 1998 which is long before the government has announced to the public that they have perfected their "peekaboo" technology. *So why do I feel like my every move is being spied on*

## If There Was Schizophrenia

It's a new kind of paranoia typically unheard of. Ubiquitous for the most part. A paranoia of millions of eyes scrutinizing your every move up close. Paranoia like a sheltered home schooled school boy asked to sing the national anthem at the Super Bowl. Now that's a whole lot of eyes!

So as I'm stuck in this trance I ask myself *what does one do that is constantly in the spot light*. Entertain? No. The complete opposite. Too much paranoia causes somebody like me to lose focus. Daydream, batty eye movement, just wishing for a private moment.

Although it's Tuesday morning right before class my mind is still stuck on Sunday. Sister's 19th birthday party. Wasn't much of a big party but I couldn't stop thinking about it. Such a diverse crowd it did indeed consist of. Holly rollers, alcoholics, and even a former stripper. Nothing was wild about the party but I clearly am certain that the reason I have felt "strange" since the party is because my sister's best friend the fat one has poisoned my beer. Probably because I'm tall and skinny not to mention I seriously have my shit together.

The paranoia I am experiencing. It all has to do with Lena. She must have heard I lost my virginity over the summer and now she wants to experience first hand if all those sit ups I do are paying off. So what does she do? She poisons my drink

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with hopes I pass out so I can be raped once again by a big girl.(The girl over the summer had a little junk in the trunk).

I'm ravenously hungry but my body won't allow me to eat because it is possessed. Probably by demons but what can I do? The kitchen table has junk all over it but that's typical. I live in this run down one bedroom apartment alone for the most part. Had the place to myself most of the summer because my sister rarely came home to spend the nights. I guess her excuse for never being home was that she needed to clean her boss's half a million dollar house. I'm guessing his house was squeaky clean at this point as I rarely saw my big sis much.

My neighbor I find quite strange but when he's offering me a beer at only 17 years old I have no reason to complain about his weirdness. As for my morning breakfast? A cold tuna fish sandwich which. A soggy non named brand tuna fish sandwich covered in sharp spiky little hairs for me to choke on.

The prickly little hairs I recognize as my own. I don't have time for plates and to my dismay my tuna sandwich had inadvertently sopped up the hairs peppered on the table from a haircut I had given myself a week ago. I'm nowhere close to broke but I can't steel myself to throw the sandwich away. Remember I haven't eaten since Sunday? The sandwich is going down the hatch regardless of whether or not I vomit. I hate vomiting as it burns my throat. *But I've lost my mind remember?*



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So the soggy tuna sandwich which goes down the hatch but only half of it. I know what I'm doing makes no sense and I manage to catch myself after a few big bites. *What am I doing? Who eats tuna for breakfast? Especially covered in sharp prickly hairs?*

The alarm rings in my head and I know it's time to go to school. I honestly can't think of the last time I have gotten to do anything fun and I'm a little jealous of my class mates still living at home only having to work part time jobs. I know with the money I've earned I should be able to drive a gas guzzling Camaro like the rest of them. It's time to get to Vo-tech school so I can stop having to work for only eight dollars an hour (although a gallon of gas is only 82 cents a gallon.) So I grab my plumbing tools and get into my beat up Ford Escort so I can start my 35 minute drive to Vo-tech. *Why am I taking up plumbing anyways? Wasn't that my mother's idea?* I haven't seen my mother in months. She's not dead or living far away. I just prefer to move out and have my freedom versus getting chased around with a stick. A nice thick stick that had been personally painted into a sword with white paint. It was nice and thick but not quite as sophisticated as the bus driver's I had in elementary school. I believe his had speed holes drilled into it so he could swing it faster. But that was the 80's and even the principle hung a paddle on the wall in those times. I always take note of these things. The fact of the matter is....



## Blake Steidler

I'm PARANOID and now it's time for class.

### CHAPTER 2

I KNOW how to park a car. Unfortunately today I couldn't park my car properly if my life depended on it. I'm taking up two spaces and I don't know why. I'm not trying to be an asshole or anything like that. I'm possessed, remember?

Paranoia has plagued me so badly that I can literally feel every breath I take being recorded. My thoughts intersperse like hood rats on bicycles hearing the shout out warning of "five oh". Something dire is definitely going to happen today I just don't know what. I don't know what or who it will happen to. All I know is that SOMETHING is going to happen today.

My work boots are two sizes too big. I'm still in the habit of buying my clothes big as I know I will grow into them. I'm wearing a Nike shirt I had purchased in 9th grade. It came down to my knees when I bought initially bought it. Now it fits me just right. The swoosh is faded a little bit from too many times in the laundry. It doesn't really matter because my rock hard pectorals protrude enough to make up for the blemish.(I can bench press my weight plus another 100lbs) (265).

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And so I'm starting this September morning stuck in some kind of trance. I feel millions of eyes on me and the feeling has me feeling so uneasy that I have to double check to make sure I am wearing clothes. *Am I naked?*

We are only the third week into school and I am already convinced my plumbing instructor is a homosexual. *Why else did he ask me what was the matter yesterday? Men didn't inquire as to another's feelings. That was gay.* And so I stepped into class and took my seat. I didn't know for sure if my teacher was gay especially since he had a wife and son but I sure felt threatened yesterday when he seemed concerned and asked me if I was okay or needed to talk about anything. It all seemed gay to me and I had ended up leaving class early.

Today Mr.Gibble looked surprised to see me. I couldn't help but wonder if my plumbing instructor had plans of murdering me today. He was a soft humble spoken man but I was convinced today I saw demons in him. I wasn't even feeling singled out. I was convinced this red headed man wanted to murder our entire class. The minute he stepped out of the class to grab a tool he wanted to show us, I whispered my secret to the entire class.

"I know what's going on. I can read minds. I think I might be able to stop him."

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The fat guy in the back was confused."Huh?" Followed by a grunt.

Before I could reply Mr.Gibble stepped into the class room and asked us all to step out into the shop so he could demonstrate a tool. I got really paranoid when nobody looked like they were scared or even remotely looked threatened. *Didn't they know this monster was about to kill us all? Why was nobody adhering to my warning?*

I followed the class out into the shop but I was scared. Mr.Gibble was not acting right and in a minute or so he would probably murder us all. *Should we run?*

We gathered around a work bench and I noticed our shortest class mate Chris try to whisper me something but I couldn't make it out. *Was he warning me? Did the scary red headed monster plan on murdering me first? What was he trying to tell me?*

Mr.Gibble caught Chris trying to warn me and I immediately saw legions of demons in his eyes. I was 17 and tough as rocks but I was scared by the demons I saw on this man. *What was going to happen next?*

Chris immediately excused himself to the bathroom adjacent of us. The red headed monster followed him into the

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bathroom and I knew now that my plumbing instructor had plans of murdering him first. The door slammed shut and I could hear scary loud choking sounds of what I was certain my monster of a teacher trying to choke the student that tried to warn me. I didn't know what I should do. I could be the next victim.

I darted out of the classroom and raced to the principle's office. I stopped midway down the hall and shouted "I'm gonna get him!" And headed back to the classroom instead. Maybe Chris was still alive and I could save him. I changed my mind at the last second realizing I had never been in a fight and wasn't sure I could over power my monster of a teacher that had at least 40lbs on me. This was a job for the police.

I almost tripped on my oversized boots as I stormed into the principle's office. The principle looked very much concerned by my barge in.

"What's wrong? Why aren't you in class?"

My heart raced so loudly it pounded into the Nike swoosh giving it a little dance.

"Quick! Somebody needs to call the police! My teacher is trying to kill us! I can read minds!"

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The principle wasn't a bad looking guy. Seemed a bit too overly qualified to principle a Vo-tech school full of mostly morons. He looked rather skeptical but it still didn't stop him from listening and phoning the police. I just wanted him to dial faster. Or at least get up from that chair and help me restrain that out of control red headed monster. The assistant principle in the other room over heard our conversation and entered the room.

"I don't think your teacher would do that. He's a nice man." She stated matter-of-factly.

I wasn't buying it. I knew what I saw. My teacher was a cold blooded murderer. Something was amiss. Something sure didn't feel right. *Did they think I was lying?* My hands were still shaky but I wanted to show off that I wasn't scared. I placed my hand out and did my best to prevent it from shaking. There was still fear in my eyes like I had seen a ghost.

"Look how calm I am. I'm not making this story up!" I stated.

They both looked at me like I was nuts. Here I was all wired up and convinced that my happily married plumbing instructor was both gay and a possible serial killer. *What was it that they were to do?*

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A blond haired nurse came storming in with a small white note pad and a pen. I was getting very confused and disoriented. *Why weren't they rushing to stop the red headed monster trying to kill everybody? Was I the only one left alive? Had he already murdered the entire class room?*

The nurse began scribbling super fast on the note pad as if she was trying to catch something. I was having my very first psychotic episode and not even realizing it. Her constant scribbling left me very confused. My mind interspersed once again and I felt that superman feeling return as if thousands of television cameras were watching me and I needed to say something for the record. A record that I had no clue what the purpose was for or to who would be watching. I felt compelled to say something as her super high speed scribbling was inducing my paranoia.

"It's....It's a call from God to bring the family together!" I spitted out. *Where did that comment come from?* I really wasn't sure. My comment did draw a quizzical look from the nurse and I think she may have written down that as well.

I watched the principal slick back his twenty dollar haircut. I wasn't used to seeing principals with a full crop of hair on their head. I could tell by the look on his face he finally wanted to get the ball rolling with whatever it was they planned on doing with me.

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"I'll tell you guys what...Hey Blake...Why don't you follow the assistant principal and the nurse to the nurses office. The police are on the way. He should be here shortly."

I was alleviated when I heard that an officer was on the way. He could arrest Mr.Gibble for attempting to kill us and I could go back to class a hero. Plumbing didn't seem like a complex trade and I figured it wouldn't take them long to get us another teacher. I was still very curious what was still going on back in the classroom. *Was he choking them one at a time?*

The nurse finally slowed down with the questions and left me alone until the cop would arrive. *How was it I knew something dire would happen today? Would my paranoia go away after this?*

The officer looked to be in his early thirties. His uniform was neatly pressed and you could tell he didn't miss a day at the gym. I think he went as far as to shine his shoes. It was bothering me that he kept looking at me like there was more to the story. *Did he think I was hiding something? I am far too young for any Oceans 12 type stuff where my best friend could be out robbing a bank while I diverted the police with a psycho teacher story. Why does he keep looking at me like he expects me to tell him that he's been punked?*



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"So I hear you can read minds." Started off Officer neat press.

I wasn't so sure I liked this pretty boy cop. "I learned it from my mother."

The officer chuckled like he had heard it all before. He was glad to be getting those big bucks to take on this menial assignment. "Oh yeah? What am I thinking of right now?"

I didn't know what to say. I really didn't see it coming. How does one define the time framing of the word "now"? Half a second? A milli second? Perhaps a nano second? If that were the case his brain would have to be thinking about absolutely nothing if "now" started abruptly after the completion of his sentence as it would automatically be blanked out awaiting my response.

"You're thinking about nothing." I stated.

"Not true",said the officer,"I was thinking about last night's baseball game."

I was deeply confused."Why are we talking about baseball? I saw my teacher trying to choke another student. Aren't you going to arrest him?"

The cop only smirked."I already talked to Chris. He said that

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absolutely nothing ever happened. Your classmates are very concerned and said you just "freaked out". Are you on any medication?"

I couldn't help myself. "Medication? You mean like crazy people take? I know what I saw back there. He was trying to kill Chris."

The officer shrugged his shoulders. "Your teacher is saying you threatened him. I am going to have to take you to the hospital and have you checked out. Are you on any drugs?"

Flashbacks of the red headed monster flipping out and attacking Chris reverberated in my mind. *What was going on? I watched some crazy movies before but never thought I'd find myself trapped in one.* This was all so crazy to me. *What threat was he talking about? Why did these people suddenly have it in for me?*

"I've tried cigarettes a couple of times even tried beer. Can't say I've ever used drugs." (I wasn't lying)

The officer let out a big sigh. "Well bud... I hate to do this to you but I'm going to need you to turn around so I can cuff you up."

I was completely shocked. Was I going to jail? What crime

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had I committed? What about the teacher? *Why weren't they going to take him to jail? What about my class mates? We're they still alive?*

The officer assisted me with placing my hands behind my back while squeezed those cuffs on extra tight. I was utterly confused and utterly embarrassed. The girl in the classroom next door I had a crush on might see me leaving in handcuffs. If that wasn't bad enough the killer was still at large!

I was sure not to squiggle too much like a worm while the officer tucked my head low to help me into the back of the black and white which was parked in the back of the school. When I turned my head toward the school I saw a throng of worried looking students staring at me. I was so frickn embarrassed and on the edge of losing my temper.

As we slowly nosed out of the school's parking lot I took one last look at my car that was still taking up two spaces. I reminded myself over and over again. *No, I'm not the one that's the crazy one the problem is with them. I'm making a mental note of it. These people are clearly out to get me!*

## CHAPTER 3

Okay. So maybe my condition started out with extreme

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paranoia. Nothing wrong with that people get paranoid. Especially people that have already killed people and are afraid they'll get found out. I'm not a killer. I'm the opposite. I'm the victim. I'm the one that the government is trying to kill. What I've done that they want me dead I don't know why. What I do know is that when you constantly feel like government men in dark suits want you dead you might have trouble concentrating. You might breathe differently. You might even start behaving rather eccentrically.

It was my first time in a hospital since second grade when I had my appendix taken out. I didn't know much about "Luny bins" or "funny farms" other than what I had seen in movies. When I think of crazy people I immediately think of violent people. People that shout and attack for no apparent reason. Luny bins or nuthouses were for the criminally insane. I was not one of those people. All I was guilty of was trying to stop my serial killer of a teacher from trying to murder everyone in the courtroom. I knew that I would only be in this hospital for a few hours at best until they finally got a confession out of my plumbing instructor that he did indeed have plans of killing us all. He sure never did care for swearing much. That might very well be his motive for murdering us all.

I was brought to Lancaster General Hospital. The very same hospital that I was born in 1981. I didn't know anybody and I got really confused when they hooked up strange wires with

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round sticky things on my chest. The female nurses looked frightened of me as if they had caught a terrorist. A heavy set nurse lady with a sense of humor couldn't resist but make a funny.

"Oh my! You sure do have a hairy chest!" She commented.

"What are you guys doing to me? Why are these wires hooked up to me?"

The big girl giggled. She was African American. *How could she not have a sense of humor on this 17 year old virgin boy?*

"We're just taking some readings that's all. We'll take these off soon."

I was still wound up and extremely delusional. School had probably been let out by now and Mr.Gibble probably still felt like killing. I suddenly remembered him mentioning having a wife. She could be in jeopardy! I found strange words coming out of my mouth.

"My teacher...He's a killing monster...I'll bet he beats on his wife!"

The two nurses looked at each other and squinted their eyes. *Where were these comments coming from? Would a doctor let a guy like this just walk out of the hospital?*

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It wasn't long before they had me don a hospital gown. I wasn't sure at first how to put it on and didn't relish the cool breeze making its way into my butt crack. They had even taken my under wears too so I couldn't strangle anybody with them I guess. Before long I found myself in an isolation cell with nothing more than a mattress on the floor. The floor was squalid and somebody had tried to pee into the grimy drain right by the mattress. There was a camera in the upper corner staring right at me. I didn't know what to do so I laid on the crumb filled mattress and tried to rest. I couldn't.

Since Sunday I have been extremely paranoid. I've been in this cell only ten minutes and I am about to experience something of a lifetime. I am about to experience my very first hallucination.

## CHAPTER 4

People can often remember things that happened from many years ago and describe every detail. But who can repeat verbatim thoughts they had as a teenage boy? I can. I can do it even as I sit on this rocking chair soon to be the age of 34. And so my story continues.....

I had no idea what floor I was on at the hospital. I didn't even know if these people had plans of putting me in a crazy suit.

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As I lay on the mattress my body and mind began playing tricks on me. The first voice I heard was my teacher threatening to sue the police if they didn't leave him alone. I could hear an officer mumbling and my plumbing instructor telling them to back off because he had a lot of money. I was hearing a conversation in my head which sounded real but ironically I could still tell the voices were coming from inside my head. I was freaked out! There was a lull and everything turned into complete silence.

I sprung from my mattress on the floor and looked around. *What had happened?* It was the most crazy thing I had ever experienced in my life. I wanted to tell somebody but I guess because I was nothing more than a teenage runaway the hospital didn't feel the need to have someone watch over me outside the door. I conserved my strength and tried once again to sleep on the crumb filled mattress. Two minutes later a staff person quickly opened my cell door and tossed me a pack of saltines. I was ravenously hungry. I devoured them quickly.

As I watched a few cracker crumbs convalesce with the other crumbs on the mattress I began experiencing hearing voices once again. It was extremely different this time. These voices were tangible. And I knew who they were. I could hear my father's voice emanating from the vent in the ceiling. I couldn't make out everything he was saying but I did make out a few words.



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"Well maybe he's in here. Can we try checking in here?"

My heart raced a mile a minute. What was my father doing on the floor above me? Who was the other voice talking to him? That same cop? It sure did sound like him. I was even sure I could hear the officer stroll along the floor above me with my dad as they tried to look for me. I could even hear the officer tap his billy club along the walls as they searched up there. I sprung from my mattress and stood up to get closer to the vent.

I shouted aloud while cupping my hands to shout louder. "Dad! Dad! I'm not on the floor up there. I'm in a cell down here!"

To my dismay I got no response but I could still hear my father talking to the officer while they searched up there. There was nothing more I could do so I laid back down on my mattress and tried once more to fall asleep. I couldn't. Things were still going on inside of my head. It wasn't long before I was tormented by voices I could no longer recognize. *What was happening?*

## CHAPTER 5

I started to notice that every 15 minutes a security or staff

## If There Was Schizophrenia

person peeked in at me to make sure I was still alive so they could have fun with killing me later or experimenting on me like they do in the movies I guess. I patiently waited by the window for a few minutes with hopes I could communicate with one of these curious peekaboo people. It wasn't long before some college bound guy that was probably missing soccer practice stopped at my cell door. His Luny Toon sticker on his ID badge really had me freaked out. I can still remember it to this day as I was convinced the sticker represented some secret spy organization outside of the hospital that had plans of kidnapping me.

I looked this dark curly haired guy right in the eyes as I spoke to him. I had looked like I'd seen a ghost. My eyes were mostly shiny white. "Hey dude....I think I'm hearing voices!"

Soccer dude didn't smile or roll his eyes. I wasn't the lying B.S type and I think he could tell. His eyes looked spooked as well and he took off without saying a word. I was both nervous and scared at the same time. I had never had mental breakdowns or at any part in my life lost the ability to control my faculties. I was very much certain that someone or perhaps something was trying to kill me. I was also very convinced that my plumbing teacher had plans on hiring somebody to sneak into the hospital and kill me before I could tell people what I did. Jeez, with all the money he had maybe he would hire somebody on the inside to finish the

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job! I was paranoid and I did not feel safe in this hospital with these government people that strutted around sporting Luny Toon stickers stuck to their ID badges that hung from their shirt pockets. I needed help and I needed it fast.

### CHAPTER 6

The next morning a sharp looking gentlemen in a brown suit came to escort me to what they called "court". *Court? Like the kind in the movies? Had they finally arrested the serial killer school teacher and I could finally testify as to what he had done?*

The man in the brown suit that escorted me into the darker room looked to be my friend. He told me that he was my attorney and I had nothing to worry about. *Had I hired an attorney? I didn't remember doing such a thing.*

"Don't worry. I should be able to get you out of here today. Just let me do all the talking." He said with little confidence in his voice. I was certainly hoping that his natty suit might do the trick and I could be on my way home. My car was probably still sitting back at the school and I didn't want to give Screw Tooth Bob the opportunity to blow it up. I was already convinced that my teacher had hired Bob to take me out since there was probably a good chance he still had a spare key to the car he sold me.

## If There Was Schizophrenia

I stepped into the dark room and was shown a seat at the end of a long table. Obviously the room wasn't pitch black but I was surprised at how dimly lit the room was. What had my attention was the tape recorder sitting on the middle of the table. I really didn't like these kinds of things. It meant that somebody else later would be listening. It even looked a lot like the big brown one that mom used to have. What confused me the most was seeing so many important looking people dressed up like lawyers. I was confused by everything. This was only an extra room in the hospital. It surely didn't look anything like the court houses I was used to seeing on television. *So what were we doing here?*

I did take the time to better my posture while sitting at the table but I had no choice but to day dream through everything they were saying. Everything to me made no sense so all I heard was "blah,blah,blah" and to be quite truthful I wasn't even sure as to the purpose of this meeting.

My daydream was interrupted when the chief psychiatrist made a point to argue with them all. His name was Dr.Gotleib. He evidently was the most important one at the table. His voice definitely sounded more confident than my small handed attorney that promised to bail me out.

"Mr.Steidler hears voices and hallucinates. He needs treatment under code 304. I'm authorizing a 90 day commitment for inpatient treatment."

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*90 days??? What did I do? Did I kill somebody and forget just somehow forget about it?*

It was truly amazing how none of the stuff they spoke about in that room made any sense to me but somehow I was able to focus when Dr. Gottleib stated that I hear voices and hallucinate. Did that mean I was crazy? And what on earth did the word hallucinate mean?

My small handed friend in the brown suit with a haircut that was probably cut by his wife helped me up from the chair. I guess I had left out a part of the story from when they first had placed me in that urine soaked cell. A few minutes after I had told soccer dude guy I was hearing voices several security guys stormed in my cell, tackled me to the ground, and injected me with a haldol shot. It calms you down but also makes you weak as hell. So even as independent as I was, it didn't bother me having my small handed court appointed attorney help me from my chair. My senior year of high school was not starting off very pleasant. I was going to miss the fair. I was going to miss everything. All because I was trying to help another class mate from being choked to death by a ruthless red headed monster. Am I really the one that needs help?

# If There Was Schizophrenia

## CHAPTER 7

A week goes by and my paranoia is starting to slow down. I'm still on the hospital but I'm very confused about all of it. Where's the guy sticking his ear up to the trash can all day long? Why isn't somebody squirming all over the floor and screaming "get these spiders off of me!" Shouldn't someone be yelling at the staff and accusing them of plotting to throw us all into the gas chambers? These hospital patients all look normal to me. I'm confused. I'm lost. Why are we here? This isn't the movies. When do they plan to get the big drill out so the doctor can drill the voices right out of my head? This place is no fun. I want to go home.

I get a friendly tap on my shoulder. "Blake someone is here to visit you. I believe they are your friends from high school."

I got excited. "Is it my sister?"

Carol the nice nurse let out a sigh. "No. Your sister tried to visit you yesterday but your parents said she is not allowed. We have to adhere to their requests as they still have legal guardianship over you."

I was saddened and mad at the same time. "But that doesn't make any sense. I haven't lived with them in months. I initially moved out from home when I was 16. How are they allowed to do that?"

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Carol just shrugged her shoulders. "I dunno. Rules are rules I guess. Your mom doesn't want you to have any visitors only your immediate family not including your sister. Your sister is however allowed to write you a letter."

I was completely lost. "Then why did you say some friends are here to see me? Didn't you say my mother requested only immediate family allowed?"

Carol grabbed my arm. "Because we are not allowed to do this bit I'm doing it anyway because they drive all the way out here just follow me."

I followed Carol down the hall. I liked Carol she was alright. She kept me in the loop with things and I had even talked her into tucking me into bed at night at least three times. What I didn't know was just how dumb the stipulations would have to be for my surprise visit from my friends. It was more than likely my good friends Beky and Tom. To this very day they are still happily married with three children. Tom had also moved out of his parents house by his senior year as well. We had things in common. For starters we both liked Beky but Tom had been dating her since the seventh grade. I kind of figured they would stay together forever.

Carol walked me into a small room but nobody was in it. I was utterly confused. *Was I still having a psychotic episode? Were my friends in this room but I couldn't see them?*



## If There Was Schizophrenia

"Is this like some kind of practical joke or are my friends on their way up?"

Carol pointed to a small 9" black and white television screen that was grainy like a TV from the 60s. "No I'm not allowed to actually bring them up here I could get in big trouble. I just wanted to bring you in here so I could show you and you will at least know people still care about you. Take a look at the screen. We can't bring them up here but those are your friends right?"

I couldn't freaking believe it. What kind of pathetic visit was this? A tiny black and white security camera screen? Not even a phone so I could talk with them? The picture was grainy but sure enough it was Beky and Tom. I couldn't help but wonder how they had found out I was here. Here in the Luny bin!

All I could do was stare at my friends through the black and white television screen. I assumed they had no clue I was watching them as I noticed neither one of them was looking up at the screen. They were probably assuming a nurse would escort them up at any minute to see me. I more than likely would have peppered my friend Tom with questions as his Masonry class was literally right next door to plumbing. He surely would have been able to provide me with details and let me know which of my class mates had survived Mr.Gibbles' wild murdering spree. I needed to get out of this

## Blake Steidler

hospital as there was already some hospital staff upset with me because I refused to take their medication. *And why was I refusing their medication?* I was literally scared of it. The hospital was trying to poison me and I wasn't ready to die just yet. I had plans of leaving this strange place of incarceration and coming out alive.

### CHAPTER 8 SUMMER OF 1999 (Psychotic Episode 2 of 11)

It didn't take me long to find another apartment. The one I now lived in costs a little more but it didn't matter much to me because I was making a lot of money and had a room mate. His name was Brian and he was a construction worker. I myself was working two full time jobs because I wanted to get my new truck paid off as quickly as possible. It didn't bother me working two full time jobs but both jobs constantly changed my shifts and some weeks I found myself working 85 hour weeks. I was 18 now and didn't have to worry about violating child labor laws like I did in the past. There were times last year when I used to clock out and then finish up closing the kitchen so my company wouldn't get in trouble. I can now work double shifts on Saturday if I want to.

Today is just another working day for me. I don't take medication any more and the pills I had left I had given away

## If There Was Schizophrenia

to my roommate's friend. It's just a calm Sunday afternoon and I'm running a cash register at the gas station across from the high school I used to go to. I feel pretty normal. It's not a busy day and everything is going smoothly. My freshly waxed Jeep Commanche pick up truck is parked out in the back.

A customer walks in and helps himself to a tall cup of coffee and the morning Sunday paper. I push on the buttons of the cash register to ring him up. The whole cash register malfunctions and locks up on me. Fortunately for me my manager is in the back so I call out to her for help. She's new an scary looking but has a heart of gold. I feel comfortable around her and she doesn't try to monitor my thoughts like the others.(Sometimes I would get giggle fits around more attractive women and they would counter with funny faces looking at me all confused like as if I could be the next shoot em up guy in a trench coat).

"Look Liz what do I do? This thing has completely frozen up!"

I watched my manager come waddle a little closer. She wasn't afraid of me like most women and I never got those strange giggle fits around her. "Lemme see." She said pounding on the buttons.

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Nothing happened. The screen had frozen up somehow. "Look Hun it's broken. Let's just get you on another cash register."

"Ok." I said crossing my arms. I watched her brush along side of me and open up the other register. And then that's when it started to happen. I slowly backed away from the broken cash register covering my mouth in disbelief as if I was seeing a ghost. Liz sensed something was wrong.

"What? What is it?" She asked.

I pointed to the bottom lower corner of the screen. "That! What is that? What is happening?"

Liz was very much confused and now started showing some concern. "What? What is it? I don't see anything?"

My heart beat rapidly as I witnessed little floaty spirits dissipating away from the screen. At this point I was convinced there was demons trapped inside of my cash register. I got really scared as I felt the demons just might try to attack me. I placed my hands on my head to show my confusion.

"I...I gotta go. It's an emergency....I really gotta go."

Liz was lost. "Huh?"

## If There Was Schizophrenia

I felt sweat pouring profusely and I backed away further from my demon possessed cash register. "I'm sorry Liz but I really gotta go!"

I didn't bother to even clock out. I didn't bother to even remove my red smock. Instead I raced out the door before the demons could attack me and got into my truck and stormed away.

### CHAPTER 9

I was having an emergency so I didn't see the need to drop quarters into the parking meter. There really wasn't any time for that anyways as I was in the process of schitzing out!

I raced quickly through the parking lot of the hospital trying to find the entrance of the emergency room. The ER entrance was pretty much the only entrance that I knew about from the last time that I had been in the hospital. When I finally found the Emergency Room entrance I barged in like a mad man trying to catch his wife in the act of cheating.

I breezed through the doors like a veteran and paid absolutely no attention to anybody that might be before me. The first thing I saw was was a cute blonde girl at the service desk. She had short strawberry hair and a classy red button down dress

## Blake Steidler

shirt. I guess my heavy breathing from trying to catch my breath caused her to look up from her book.

"May I help you?"

Usually I am extremely quiet and polite towards women. This time I was flipping out and I didn't know why. I even went as far as to point a finger at her like mother used to do except that I wouldn't go as far as to bury a long finger nail bruise mark in her chest like I used to get when I was little.

I raised my voice. "Why can't you guys just leave me alone? Why did you guys plant demons in my cash register?"

My accusatory remarks got a raised eyebrow. She already had seen quite a lot of unusual stuff from patients before. But this was really off the wall. *Did this guy really believe this hospital planted demons inside of his cash register? Didn't they have a special floor of the hospital for people like this?*

It wasn't long before a hospital bracelet got slapped on me and I had somehow got signed in. The hospital was pretty confused by my behavior but everything I was doing made complete sense to me. I was convinced that Lancaster General Hospital WAS the government and was leaking secrets about me to the public. In my mind constant phone calls were coming into the hospital from Lancaster County residents

## If There Was Schizophrenia

asking questions about me. *Was I really crazy? Did I have plans of going trench coat mafia on everyone? Why didn't I have a girlfriend? Was I the type that would go around randomly lighting fires?* I was certain that the entire county knew I was in here and every night I was being talked about on the television. And my problem was? I was extremely delusional. (Unfortunately I had not learned that word yet. I couldn't finish reading a 200pg book if my life depended on it)

And so that was my second psychotic episode in life and the hospital kept me a good three weeks before they sent me back to my mother. Mother agreed with everything the doctors told her about me and they advised to keep close watch on me. I was no longer prescribed zyprexa as the oriental psychiatrist wanted to try me on a little yellow football shaped pill. Risperidol. I had plans of discontinuing the medication the minute I could get mommy to stop watching. I wasn't crazy. They were.

## CHAPTER 10 (Psychotic Episode 3 of 11)

The hot summer of 1999 is finally coming to an end. I'm still stuck working two Full Time jobs because I don't really want to do construction which will leave me partially unemployed and bored in the winter time. I can't help but realize that



## Blake Steidler

working two jobs on a swing shift is starting to wear me down. I still have my muscles but my social life sucks and I can't seem to pick up a date. I'm jealous of all the other teenagers without any responsibility. The economy is good so they all get to job hop and smoke pot. I know I'm missing out on a lot of things by working 80-85 hours a week but I'm paying my Jeep off quickly.

It's late at night and when I get back to my apartment I realize my room mate isn't home. I deduce he's more than likely at a cool party since it is Friday night. I feel lonely and bored and I suddenly remember about the medication the hospital had given me. I hadn't taken any of the pills since I left the hospital but I really wanted a good nights sleep tonight so I figured why not give the meds another chance? At first it took me a while to try and remember where I had last placed them but then I remembered the wooden cabinet.

I swung open the cabinet door and rooted around frantically until I finally found the plastic bottle. Whallah! I found them behind some jars of protein powder but my medication was empty! How could this be so if I hadn't been taking any of the pills?

It suddenly came into mind recalling conversations with some of Brian's friends asking if I could get them some psych meds because they were too chicken shit to talk to a head doctor.  
*Had they stolen my pills?*

## If There Was Schizophrenia

I held the empty bottle up to the light to read the label. They were definitely my pills and the sticker said I was entitled to another 30 day refill. I only had one question for myself.

*Where do you go to get the refill? The hospital?* I had guessed so since that is originally where the meds had come from.

With an IQ of 89 do you think I knew anything about pharmacies? My mother had always picked up my medication before so I had never been to a pharmacy. If I had it sure would've made the rest of this night a lot easier as my night was about to turn into a straight up LIVING HELL.

I grabbed my black hoodie from off the sofa and took the empty pill bottle along with me. Nothing like a little joy ride to the hospital on a Friday night. I couldn't help but wonder how long they would have me wait in the ER while they filled my medication.

The drive only took me about 20 minutes at best. The town of Akron that I was living in was a lot closer to the hospital and it wasn't hard for me to get there. The only part that bothered me was paying the two dollar fee at the parking garage when I knew I was only going to be in there for twenty minutes tops. I parked the truck in a spot that I could remember and then walked out around outside towards the ER entrance. I already knew that the entrance doors were mechanical so it was nice not having to touch glass doors that might have been handled by sick hospital people.

## Blake Steidler

When I stood right in front of the door nothing happened. *Odd?* I thought to myself. I jumped up and down on the rubber mat but the door refused to open. Delusions struck me like a lightning bolt. *These people really were out to get me! Isn't it the government that controls these things? Guess we won't be getting our psychotropic medication today!* I was angry and both furious. I imagined them all in there with some sort of super control board pushing down on a button that would over ride the automatic doors. They were probably already phoning news channel 8 to let them know they had me in their sites. I really had to get out of here and I needed to move quickly. I vamoosed like a rabbit back to my black shiny truck. No big loss. I probably didn't need my medication anyway.

I was so confounded and disoriented that when the big mechanical arm let me through I paid little attention to where I was going. Such little attention that I didn't even realize when I left there I made a wrong turn down a one way street. I was about to collide with oncoming traffic!

I didn't make it down the street any more than a quarter mile before bright flashing lights shot in every direction. It felt within seconds I was boxed in by at least four different police cars. *Where did they all come from and how did they reach me so quickly?* I was addled just as much as I was paranoid. It felt like I had fell right into some government orchestrated

## If There Was Schizophrenia

massive booby trap. *Had they been watching me? What was going on?*

### CHAPTER 11

I was completely freaked out of my mind. This all felt like one big movie scene. *Was the S.W.A.T team gonna jump out too?* I shut the truck off and placed my hands on the steering wheel so the officers could see them. Evidently I was at the wrong place at the wrong time. One of the officers noticed the empty pill bottle laying on the passenger's seat. I was relieved when they took their bright flash lights out of my eyes and focused on the pill bottle instead. The younger officer was already tripping out on me and I didn't know why.

"Do you know what you did?" He barked.

I shook my head no. I had not yet realized I was going in the wrong direction down a one way street.

He kept the light on the empty pill bottle. He seemed to be fascinated by it. "Do you even realize you're traveling down a one way street?"

I got nervous. "I'm just trying to get home. I didn't realize this street was one way."

## Blake Steidler

The officer grunted while the other officers inspected the outside of my truck. *Did they think I was a drug dealer?* I was confused. The officer shone the light on the empty pill bottle once again.

"Are you on drugs? What pills were in there? You took all of them didn't you?"

I got defensive. "I didn't take any pills tonight. Just trying to get my meds refilled that's all."

That's when the officer flipped out on me. "Bull shit! You're all drugged up I can see it. Now just admit you took all those pills!"

It was getting late. I really didn't have time for these clowns. Maybe it was just best if I told them what they wanted to hear since they weren't going to believe me anyways. I was probably just a teenage punk to them. I'm sure when they were my age they were working two full time jobs and living on their own too. So independent they were. I turned into a smart ass.

"Okay,okay. You caught me. I downed all those pills so what?"

At those words they finally lowered their big bright shiny

## If There Was Schizophrenia

flash lights and opened my door. *What was happening? Who were these people? Fake police maybe?*

My truck got left right in the middle of the street as they shoved me into the back of their police car. *Why was I always getting arrested when I have committed no crime?* The police ride was maybe all but 30 seconds as they took me right back to the hospital. It's truly amazing at how when you enter the hospital with an escort from the police how the doors don't have any trouble opening.

I was stripped of my clothes once again and forced into a gown. This time they didn't shove me into a cell but rather a hospital bed. Not only did they do that but they hooked me up to a bunch of IVs as if I was dying. *What in the world was happening and why me?* Before long a nurse came walking over with what looked like a white canister of lighter fluid. It even had the same red top. *Where these strange people going to light me on fire? Why the lighter fluid?*

"What's that? Lighter fluid?" I asked skeptically.

The pretty nurse just rolled her eyes a little then handed it to me. "No it's liquid charcoal. You're going to drink it."

I thought for sure this must be some kind of a really sick joke. "Charcoal...you want me to drink this black charcoal?"

## Blake Steidler

She completely acted like nothing was wrong. She gave me a look like *yeah so what we do this all the time*.

"Go on and drink it this is the stuff we use."

I did imbibe but slowly. I immediately spit it out. "Yuck! You guys are crazy!"

Some muscle bound baldy dude saw what was going on. He looked at me like I was some kind of rebellious teenage punk and I would be getting very little of his patience. I didn't know what drew more attention. His waxy bald head or his juiced up muscles. I had already surmised that taking too many steroids had made him bald. The least he could do was shine that thing right?

"What's going on over here?" He looked at my nurse for approval like he was about to do something. They looked the same age. I wondered if maybe they were lovers. I had muscles of my own too. But they weren't made through steroids.

Blond looked at Baldy. "I can't get him to drink it."

He hunched over me and yelled so loud I probably had the right to press assault charges for nearly spitting on me. This guy looked like Mr.Clean under the influence of heroine.

## If There Was Schizophrenia

"Dude you're gonna drink that stuff right now or I'm gonna shove it down your throat!"

I was a little rattled but I said nothing. I took a few more chugs but there was no way I had plans of finishing the entire bottle. I knew any second I would be spewing all over the place.

"That's enough!" Said Blonde. She didn't take too kindly to his threats. Maybe with his fussy pants attitude he may have lost the opportunity to jump her bones after work. I hoped they at least had a good insurance plan if they did eventually attempt to make babies.

The Mr.Clean gone postal guy backed away and tugged on the curtains on his way out. I think he was looking forward to ramming that thing down my throat and I'm sure he would have. I needed a break from the world that was always out to get me. The serial killer school teacher that not only tried to kill us but put me away for three months, the government that figured out how to plant demons in my cash register, and now this? They say that a true crazy person doesn't believe there is anything wrong with them. I believe that I am perfectly normal but I don't understand why the world always has it in for me. I can even remember back in the third grade being chased off the school property and then being disciplined for it. All of the kids thought I was weird so they would all line



## Blake Steidler

up and hold their hands together while chasing me all the way out onto the street at recess time. I was too scared to set foot back on school property right away and got caught by staff. She didn't buy my story and forced me to stand up against the red brick wall for the rest of recess. Maybe it was my spiky haircut I had that they didn't like. I guess I will never know.

I tried to explain to the hospital what happened but with my history that they already knew about I could get nobody to believe me. I was the kid that believed his school teacher was a serial killer. I was the kid coming from a broken home that girls were afraid of. To them I was just another schizo.

As I braced myself for another inpatient stay at the Luny bin I could only think of one question I had for myself. *How many more times was I going to have to reinstate my car insurance?*

## CHAPTER 12 (Psychotic Episode 4 of 11)

The year of 1999 panned out to be an interesting year for an 18yr old like myself. Despite all my frequent hospitalizations I was still more resilient than a kid full of mettle learning to ride his own bike. Mother had tried to drag me into the welfare office but I refused. This was The farm lands of

## If There Was Schizophrenia

Lancaster County and the economy was nowhere near yet in the crapper. Walmart could never find enough help. My pothead friends could job hop like it was all a big game of hop scotch. Actually back then the word "economy" was not even let known to the average teenager and a "Resume" was something only people working for Wall-Street filled out. If you didn't have a job in times like these it meant you were an A-Hole and the cops would try to arrest you for flicking a cigarette butt out the window. Not having a job in the 90s meant one simple thing. You Were Lazy.

Because employers were so lucrative they had no reason to sweat the small stuff in those days. I was actually progressively grossing more money every year even with all my inpatient hospitalization stints. I had no problems holding jobs. I even had a few friends. I wasn't crazy. It was the government that had it in for me.

Although it was now September the weather was still really nice. It felt like a usual day and I was on my way to work at a smorgasbord where my duties were to operate the pressure fryers. The old ladies adored me and the one still working there to this very day always noted that I never put dressings on my salad when I took my lunch breaks. I think she found me very fascinating. Especially my strict eating habits.

Everything seemed normal when I reached the lower level of

## Blake Steidler

the smorgasbord and clocked in for work. And normal my day was right before I was caught off guard by my boss. I was already a little upset with him because he started some policy for high school graduates where once the graduated they were entitled to a raise. Unfortunately my senior year had been wasted in a Luny bin so I was a few credits short.(I would eventually graduate)

Darrel's eyes widened when he saw me. "Heeeeyyy....Blake"

It totally freaked me out. By the way he said it was odd. He had no intentions of talking to me and was merely saying hello but I was freaked out. *Why did he say it with such mirth? Had his wifey finally given him a little boomp-boom? Nah I doubted it. He only had one kid and my friends still believed he could be gay since the kid wasn't technically his. So why did he say hi to me like I'm some kind of celebrity? Were the TVs still talking about me?* I didn't know because I never watched television. Never had time for it but I was very freaked out this morning by Darrel's "Hello".

"Hi Darrel" I said while putting on my apron. I was in a hurry to get upstairs and get to work. Darrel sometimes tried to ask questions about my childhood and it freaked me out. My teacher from plumbing school had tried asking my past and I always deemed those kinds of things as gay. Sitting around discussing personal issues has always been a woman's thing.

## If There Was Schizophrenia

Men just don't talk about their personal lives. It's gay. Definitely gay. And I was convinced that Darrel was gay that it never bothered him to discuss whatever issues he had going on at the time. He once tried to tell me that his dad used to pee on his thumb and then make him suck on it. *Who tells people things like that? Was he hoping for a free trip to Jerry Springer?*

I eventually found my way upstairs and started making my way towards the fryers. Keep in mind that I have been at this job two years now and we are still using the same ovens and equipment. Evidently all of that has changed today without me knowing about it.

I couldn't help but notice the company had purchased at least 3 brand new ovens. I'm freaked the "F" out as nobody had informed me that we were getting new ovens. WTF? My mind intersperses like a wrecking ball and I feel my heart pulsate like a bat trapped in daylight. I can't take it. I need to leave and I need to leave now. I'm not in my right mind to clock out. I'm not even in my right mind to even take my apron off. Instead I race out the door without telling anybody and speed away in my truck.

*So the government wants to play mind games on me eh? Screw with my strong mind by moving some equipment around. Even go as far as to pay my purported gay manager*

## Blake Steidler

*to spook me by saying hello? I got a treat for you government. I'm gonna spook you right back!*

I can't think how many motorists I ended up confusing that day. The people inside the smorgasbord were probably a little perplexed by their coworker circling their building at least a 100 times while blowing his horn non-stop. Ha ha. They wanted to play mind games to evoke a crazy man I was going to give them quite the show. I couldn't help but notice my curious coworkers staring out the window watching the mad man in the black shiny truck. It's what they get for trying to spook a schizo and probably sharing secrets about me to the government.

Nobody bothered to call the cops so I eventually just drove away. I knew justice had been served and they should know better than to buy all that un-needed equipment just to screw with my brain. I didn't know where I was driving to next all I knew was that I was driving somewhere and I wasn't stopping until the voices told me to stop. I wasn't settled down just yet and I was ready to wage war against the government. I soon found myself making my way towards Philadelphia.

Philadelphia was about an hours drive away and I couldn't recall the last time I would have come out to this big city of "Brotherly Love". I had imagined that this city slogan was some kind of joke as Grandpa used to tell me horror stories

## If There Was Schizophrenia

about things that happened in Philadelphia. Because I was completely out of my mind I didn't even realize I was in Philadelphia. It never occurred to me that for over an hour I had been traveling east. Whatever side road I had taken eventually came to a dead end and I found myself lost on some kind of what I thought was a secret government shipyard. I saw "No Trespassing" signs in every direction and it was confusing me. The adventurous voices in my head urged me to keep driving on the premises so that's exactly what I did. I was eventually flagged down by a big burly security guard. The flashy stripes and epaulets threw me off so I had no clue this big black man was only a security guard. My mind tricked me into believing he worked for the government that screwed with my mind. Probably even patrolled the White House too. Somehow his eyes had crimson red varicose veins throbbing on the whites. I imagined he was a bit upset by me being here. I rolled my drivers side window down. He didn't even give me a chance to explain myself but rather scolded me.

"What are you doing here? Don't you know you're trespassing on government property?" He scoffed.

*So this WAS the government. God had sent me here to ask these people to stop screwing around with my brain. Maybe tell the government they better stop planting demons in my cash register. What did they have planned next? Clowns hiding in my school locker?*

## Blake Steidler

I didn't put my window down any farther as this irate man looked like he wanted to eat me. "I didn't know. The road ended and I got lost."

He settled down a bit. "Where are you trying to go?"

"I'm not really sure."

Now he was looking skeptical like maybe he was being played. "Well look. You can't be here. I'll show you how to turn around."

I eventually managed to figure out how to leave the shipyard but I was still pissed off. Now the government knew I was here in Philly and any minute they might trap me in with their police cars like they did a while back down the road from the hospital. Before long I was cruising down a four lane highway with a sport stadium of some sort looming in the distance. For some reason or another the voices promoted me to pop a U-turn right there in the middle of the four lane highway. I had once again evidently forgotten that the four lanes only went one way and within a matter of seconds I was blocking an entire intersection with my truck facing the wrong direction.

Horns honked and the motorists became very flippant. Nobody would give me enough room to turn around so I

## If There Was Schizophrenia

decided I wasn't going to do a darn thing. Maybe even ditch the truck right where it was and tour the city of Philadelphia on foot. Horns continued to honk and somebody exiting the stadium even shouted out to me that I was an asshole.

When I got out of the truck I had a sudden change of plans. Not that any of it was planned at all everything I was doing was completely dictated by the voices in my head. I was even starting to enjoy myself. Maybe even give these angry motorist a great demonstration of a solo Chinese fire drill in my birthday suit on this hot sweaty day. The doctors always insisted on looking at my ding dong anyways so why not show it off? I peeled off my work shirt but got no applauses from the angry motorists still trying to figure out how to get around my truck. Nobody wanted to see my sexy abs so I pulled the tail gate down and opted to give myself a sun tan in the back of my truck. I needed a break after this long crazy day and here looked as good of a place as any. Right in front of Veteran's Stadium!

I still remained extremely delusional. I could hear the microphone from inside the stadium and I was convinced the person on the mike was warning the crowd about my ding dong. I couldn't help but giggle as I used my work shirt to shield my eyes while I bathed in the sun. *Why hadn't any other person thought of taking a vacation like this? Screw the world block up a busy intersection and lay I'm the back of a*



## Blake Steidler

*truck for a nice sun tan while everybody called you an A-hole.*

My sun tan lasted about 5 minutes tops. Two big black officers blocked my sun while crossing their arms in contempt. *Was this Blake Steidler? Ain't he supposed to be on some kind of medication?* They thought to themselves.

There were two of them but the celebrity looking one initiated the conversation. I wasn't at all phased by their presence. I was still stuck in delirium mode.

"Hey playa! What brings you out here to Philly today. Is there some reason you are blocking up this entire intersection?"

I started to put my shirt back on. I was pretty sure they were jealous of my 6 pack. They couldn't get a 6 pack on their pay scale if they wanted to. They had money for big fat juicy steaks!

I tried to defend my bizarre behavior. "Ain't nobody let me turn around. What am I supposed to do?"

The other officer couldn't help but laugh. "How did you manage to get your truck facing in the opposite direction of the traffic?"

## If There Was Schizophrenia

I buttoned up a few buttons of my shirt while hoping they could witness such ignorant remarks from the by passing motorists. "I dunno. I was trying to make a U-turn I guess."

There really wasn't time for small talk so they directed traffic for me so that I could get my truck parked off the road. I thought I could then go home but apparently they had other plans for me. Before long they were escorting me down the street while trying to keep a straight face at the same time. Something to them was just too doggone funny. The celebrity looking one just couldn't seem to shut up.

"Okay playa, so then enlighten me. Just what brings you to Philly?"

I got even more confused by the way he asked his question. He was saying it like I didn't belong in Philly. Saying it like there was a while lot of trouble I could end up finding in Philly being some dumb white boy from the sticks. I gave him the answer that slipped off of my tongue. It was literally off the top of my head.

"I came out here to get laid man. Why else would I be coming out here?"

My remark forced them both to be cracking up. They had never been in a situation like this. They even had a special

## Blake steidler

treat for me. My trip to Philly got me a couple more weeks in the Luny bin. And they intended to later take a peek at whatever it was that I intended to "Lay" people with.

### CHAPTER 13 (Psychotic Episode 5 of 11)

After two years of working at the smorgasbord I finally came into some luck and found a more important higher paying job at a tire shop. The job required me to work 51hrs a week but I would be getting time and a half for over time which would help out tremendously. I was excited that I would only have to work one job and that would give me time to go fishing. Maybe even a little time to go drink beer with the guys. Sit around the camp fire perhaps and impress my red neck buddies with stories about the Beaver.(That was actually her real last name) I could still hear my friend Rocky in the back of my mind wanting to hear the story over and over again and especially the part about the frog I chased with a hammer.

*Blake tell us the story about the Beaver he used to ask.*

My first day working at the tire shop had gone very well. I had a lot to learn but I was confident that I would do well at it. Everything had gone very well yesterday except for one thing. Devotional guy time. I had never heard of such a thing and I was a little freaked out by it. *Why couldn't we leave right after we clocked out for the day? Did we really have to*

## If There Was Schizophrenia

*spend our last 15 minutes talking about what went on in our lives?* I was falling into what doctors describe as a "Social Disorder" and not even realizing it. I felt compelled to stay aloof from people in conversations. I guess because I had always felt that they were talking about me and my purported mental condition.

It was only my second day on the job and I couldn't believe somehow I was late for work. I guess maybe it was because all my life I had always worked .2nd shift and now I had to get up at the butt crack of dawn. With the money I was making there was no need to pack a lunch for work. I could afford to eat out on my lunch break so all I had to do was hop in my truck and go. And that's exactly what I did except I didn't realize my delusional self had other plans for me today.

By the time I merged onto 222 my psychosis had returned without warning. I didn't even see it coming as my psychosis relapse had just transpired from thin air. Nothing had induced it. Nobody was attempting to screw with my brain by driving a bright pink pick up truck in front of me or anything like that. I did however start to smell a strong smell of peanut butter when I was 100% sure I didn't have peanut butter in my truck. And the delusions I was having? Paranoia. I was convinced I was in a ubiquitous spot light once again. Everyone in the world could at the very moment see me even if they were many miles away. My paranoia ate away and

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taunted me until I reached the complete state of delirium. Like I said. I can hold a job and I'm not the type to screw anybody over, but this morning my paranoia was so bad I couldn't even call into the tire shop to call off sick. I didn't have a fever. I didn't even have a belly ache. I was completely mentally ill and not even realizing it. I even went as far as to actually drive past work without even stopping in. The voices I thought were stuck in my head prompted me to keep going and I didn't know where I was headed.

Studies tend to show that mentally ill people tend to gravitate towards bodies of water. I don't know if that's true or not but MY voices in MY head tend to send me east for some reason. Not north or south. Not even west but east. I didn't make it to Philly this time but I ended up falling short just a few miles from Brandywine PA. I was about to experience some really screwed up thoughts and not even know why. I ended up parking my truck at a gas station in a remote area. I didn't know the town I was in or how I got there. All I knew was that something had driven me here. Some unexplained powerful entity deep inside my mind controlled everything that I did. I was just so blessed that the disgruntled thoughts that disturbed me never encouraged me to be violent. They did however constantly cloud my judgement and encourage me to do strange bizarre things. Things I would later look back on and say to myself WTF?

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When I walked into the gas station the entire mood of the little shop felt demon possessed. I was convinced that the government was still watching me from far far away. Just like a rabbit that buries itself deep in the bushes to hide itself from you. It may not quite be able to see you but it can still somehow feel your presence. That's how I felt about this imaginary government that watched me through satellites 24/7. They were always watching me.

I grabbed a cold iced tea and stepped up to the counter. As soon as the curly haired cashier guy looked at me I nearly freaked out. His eyes were rolling in every direction and it looked like a case a lot more serious than lazy eye. I was convinced that the government knew I was coming and hired this dark curly haired dude to screw with me with the whole eye thing and all. Or if he didn't work for the government maybe someone had written a book "How To Spook A Schizo" and he was just trying some things out.

I showed the man some empathy. I felt bad he had to lower himself and felt obligated to take on additional work from a sinister government. I felt compelled to say something as I tried not too hard to stare at his lazy eye trapped on an imaginary Ferris wheel.

"Oh they got you too huh? They've been screwing with me all week."

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The cashier seemed very confused. "Huh?"

I was being dead serious. "The government. You work for the government don't you? They hired you to act like an alien in front of me. They feel threatened by me and are trying to spook me back into the Luny bin so the country can go back to feeling safe."

The guy didn't even chuckle. He was one of those nerdy bookworms probably that though Dungeons and Dragons was cool. Free time should be spent playing monopoly. Coffee shops were for socializing. Yeah, I knew the type.

"I work for a gas station. This is a gas station." Was all I guess he could think to say.

I wasn't buying his cover up story. I knew why he was doing the eye thing and I knew he would probably get a nice paycheck out of it. I was getting really upset with the government at this point. *When were they going to stop?*

"Yeah whatever dude. I know who you work for and it ain't no gas station." I said after grabbing my wet tea. He didn't reply but I think he felt threatened. Especially by my loitering in the parking lot and acting rather strangely. I'm not for certain what I was doing in that parking lot but it drew the attention of police officers once again. The very first words

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out of their mouths didn't even surprise me at all. It was the same words I had often heard from family members and coworkers. "Are you supposed to be on any medication?" I was getting so sick of hearing those very words.

### CHAPTER 14 (Psychotic Episode 6 of 11) Y2K

By the time I had reached the age of 19 my Grandfather was pushing me to finish high school. He assured me I would need a diploma one day if I ever wanted a good paying job. That's exactly what I did. At graduation I even got a standing ovation from the big funny guy that belonged to my dad's gym and could beat up half the school. I even found Jackie's graduation speech quite inspiring and yet so true to life. *"Let the game of life begin"* Were the very last words in her speech. I'm guessing 15 years later she probably became a big fan of "The Hunger Games". That movie for sure turned life into a game. My dad thought Jackie's pep talk was dumb. I kind of liked it.

The temperature was nice outside so I was starting my day off at work counting dead chickens. I probably had at least another 1000 more to go. I could hear my coworkers in the scale house laughing their arses off. I was purposely feigning being naive and playing along with their sick joke. I am now working at a place called Valley Proteins. They collect dead



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animals from farms, cook it up, and turn it into chicken feed. They even collect used cooking oil from restaurants.

"What number are you at?" Hollers out my assistant supervisor.

I continue playing into the joke. I know these dead chickens are only supposed to go into the pre-grinder using the Bobcat. We have never kept inventory. "I think I'm at 67 and a half!" I shout out not really minding that the dead chickens are still relatively warm keeping my cold hands from going numb.

Roy shouts back out from the guard house. "What's a half? Is it all "F"Ed up? It should still be counted as a full chicken."

I finally turn around because I'm ready to admit now that I know my coworkers are screwing with me being the new guy and all. I'm still holding a smelly dead chicken when I turn around and see a big hefty man clad in a BDU (ARMY) coat with a frown on his face.

"What in Gods name are you doing Steidler?" Asks the head boss of the company. At that very moment I witness the door of the scale house creep out and four of my coworkers silently slipping away before they get caught slacking.

I held a straight face." It's inventory day. I'm counting all the dead chickens."

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The boss man was not amused. He crossed his arms like he always did when he got mad. "Do you really think there's enough hours in a day to individually count all those chickens? Somebody is playing a practical joke on you. Who put you up to this?" He demanded.

I didn't have the guts to rat anybody out. Not being the new guy and all. That would not be a good way to start off with the company. I scratched my head. "Aw gee I dunno....I think they were black." I said.

Lucky for me the boss man didn't question it any more and ended up walking away. I knew the guys had managed to hide somewhere and were probably still laughing. I didn't care. I had a job. It even came with good health benefits not that I really needed any at the age of 19.

The work day was finally over and I soon found myself back at my new apartment I now had in Reamstown. I never suspected that one day the entire country would find out about me and refer to me as "The Reamstown Man" with many jokes ensuing afterwards. I was in apartment number 11 and my neighbors in apartment 12 were the same age as me but were drug dealers so I didn't hang out with them much. I was always jealous that I had to wake up and go to work every morning while they slept in only to wait for their girlfriends to skip class and come over and have sex. I sure was missing out on some good times in life.

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I didn't always live in this apartment alone. I used to have a room mate we used to call "Putz" but I had to kick him out the first week when he started stealing from me. Somehow the government was giving him free money I guess because he never had a job. His parents had money but I guess got tired of supporting him so his mother began studying my odd behavior for the past couple years so she could teach Putz how to mirror it so she would have some good stories for the Psychiatrists I guess. Putz never heard voices or struggled with being delusional. He was just flat out lazy. Somehow his mother helped him fool the head doctors into believing he was schizophrenic and he managed himself a nut check every month I guess.

It was winter time and I was getting lonely living alone. My only fun with the ladies was my one night stand with the Beaver when I was 17. I decided to listen to some of my Metallica CDs to cure my loneliness. The day was early yet so I could crank it up. The drug dealers next door blared their music all the time so I wasn't worried about upsetting them. By the time "Enter Sandman" started to play my psychosis began to plague me without warning. Those weird "Superman" moments of feeling returned and I was once again losing touch with reality. Paranoia was inducing by the minute and I once again felt eyes on me from miles and miles away. I felt the need to put on a show for these people that were watching me.

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I heard a horn honk outside and I automatically knew it was one of my fans. I ran over to the light switch and began flickering it incessantly. I was convinced that at least thousands of people could see me right now. I was exhilarated. Very enlightened. This was my big show. I even tried using my light switch to spell out morse code for my military fans. But then my superman moment faded away and I became clinically depressed. The voice was telling me to kill myself.

I didn't have a gun in my apartment but I knew my neighbors did. Unfortunately their hand gun was only a 22 and I knew that would be too small so I walked into the kitchen and looked for a knife. It didn't take long to find one and I pondered for a while as to where on my body I should begin cutting. Before I could do anything the phone rang.

It was my sister on the line. "Hey I was just calling to see what you were up to. Do you like your new job?"

I placed the knife back on the counter. And turned the music down. I was a lot closer to my sister than my little brother. His hobbies were sitting in church services and taking notes. I was still waiting for the day when he would admit that he was the real Jesus. I'd be the one to surely believe him. Women were attracted to him but he stuffed his nose up at those whores. I guess that's just what Jesus would have done. He

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was quite the dork I guess. I didn't know how to reply to my sister. She had really caught me off guard.

"Job is ok I guess. I think I'm getting used to the smell."

I still held the knife in my hand looking at it and admiring its gleam. It was so weird how just 20 minutes ago I was on top of the world basking in my virtual publicity and now I had thoughts of killing myself.

My sister could tell I didn't sound so good. "So what are you doing right now then?" She asked.

I twirled the knife around a few times. I wasn't even sure if the thing would be sharp enough. "Oh just getting ready to do some cutting." I said

She could still tell something was wrong. I didn't talk much to my own mother so she was the only one I had at this point. "So what is it that you will be cutting?"

I tapped the knife a few times on my arm looking for a good vein. "Oh I dunno, I guess myself."

"What?! What's going on? Stay right where you are. I'm coming right over."

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I then realized that my plans were not going to work out so well. I always had a strange voice telling me to do strange bizarre things but harming my own self was something new. Perhaps I was better off flicking the light switch on and off all day.

About 20 minutes later my sister showed up to my apartment with her ex-boyfriend's father. He also worked at Valley Proteins but was the transportation manager so he had no authority over me because I worked in the plant with all the convicted felons. Because I appeared just fine when they arrived he wasn't really sure what to do.

"Do you think you need to go to the hospital?" My sister asked me.

"No. I don't like those places too much."

Tim said nothing but my sister wasn't convinced. She knew her brother all too well. "Well how about you just go for a ride with us? Will you at least do that?"

I was bored and I was lonely. I was still a little bit out of it and my psychosis was still impairing my thinking. I assumed maybe they just wanted to take me for a Joy ride since Tim had one of those cool car phones he probably wanted to show off.

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"Sure!" I said enthusiastically.

About five minutes into the trip I could finally sense that I was being tricked. Tim was acting funny and made it ostensible that he was in a rush. My super powers had managed to hold us back for almost ten minutes when I telepathically froze the traffic light keeping it on red. Tim eventually realized it was never going to change so he went right through it.

Before long I was in a hospital bed once again. Only this time I had a treat for those bi-curious doctors. I wasn't going to let them get a good look at my jones this time like they always tried to do when they pretended to check for a hernia and what not. I knew what those homos were up to!

### CHAPTER 15 (Psychotic Episode 7 of 11) 1-3-2002

Once again I'm sitting in a patrol car convinced that the government has it out for me. I have committed no crime whatsoever. I'm irate that the East Earl twp police can't even read their own personalized signed and stamped edict. It's just like the poh-lice to become impatient when it comes to arresting me. It's January 3rd 2002 and there is an eviction notice hanging on my parent's refrigerator. It clearly says that I need to leave the property by January 4th so why am I being

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kidnapped on the third? Don't the poh-lice know how to read what is in black and white?

Just two and a half weeks ago the United States ARMY has released me on an EPTS discharge. (Entry Prior To Service). I had only been in there for five weeks before they discovered my psychiatric history and sent me packing. Unfortunately for me I had totaled my red sports car the very day before I had left to go serve my country while I was on my way to go say goodbye to a friend. It was a bizarre accident where I had flipped my car upside down from hitting a bank alongside the road. Sometimes I think my recruiter thinks I did the accident on purpose because I was already sworn in and didn't want to go to the Army's toughest infantry. It was merely a coincidence. I would never purposely wreck my car especially since I had minimal insurance on it and now was screwed. And now my folks had issued me an eviction notice. I had nowhere to go and very little friends.

As I sat in the back seat of the cruiser I was a little pissed off. *Why the handcuffs? And why right before the school bus would be coming up the street where all the nosy kids would be staring?* I was starting not to like the police very much. And the officer was inside of the house kissing my mother! I pinched myself a few times to make sure I wasn't dreaming. I wasn't. So was I hallucinating? The shadows were a bit dark but I could see through the window and I know what I saw. It



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looked like first a hug and then a kiss. Did the officer know my father would soon be home from work? Perhaps I should scrutinize the officer for lipstick marks when he would come out just to be sure. *Why would an officer be kissing my mother?* This was definitely weird. I hadn't hallucinated like this since my plumbing teacher tried to kill everybody. (And I'm still convinced to this day he tried)

Perhaps with all my trips to the Luny bin the cops had dubbed me a drain on the system and had very little interest in socializing with me. Maybe they even predicted that one day I would be a mass murderer so their was no point in trying to become my friend. I really didn't know but they sure seemed to be making a bad name for themselves. Especially when they had done absolutely nothing by refusing me to be allowed to press charges on a belligerent China Man that had maliciously attacked me one day and belonged to a violent Vietnamese gang. (That's a whole another story)

I was only 20 years old and had already lost faith in the justice system. I knew that in the future I would be having to take things into my own hands as clearly the government had it out for me. As if they didn't get enough buttons and shiny stickers in Eagle Scouts to boost their self esteem they had probably continued to demand smiley stickers for their good work even in their senior year. I guess by the time they reached college they studied body language so they could

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learn how to stand bow legged in public to fool the women into thinking they had a big one. I didn't care for cops. I didn't have the foggiest clue that my younger brother would one day be one.

The officer drove me in his cruiser that my taxes paid for back to the Luny bin. I had been there so many times I already knew all of the staff by name. The officer didn't realize it but I had one more trick up my sleeve. I knew I didn't have any insurance and I wasn't going to let the hospital trick me into signing anything. As long as I posed no threat to myself or others they would have to cut me loose.

The cell they stuck me in this time was clean. It didn't even have a cell door just a passage way where a security guard sat in his chair and blocked me in. He looked like a Harley dude and seemed to find me most interesting. I had no idea what kind of bull story the officer was telling them but I was making sure this time that I wouldn't be signing a bloody thing. This same hospital ruined my credit by telling my insurance company (Blue Cross Blue Shield) that I had a pre-existing condition (schizophrenia) and that I was not covered for my last trip. *Then why was I paying Blue Cross out of my paycheck each week?* My purported suicide attempt had put me in the hole a little over 5 grand. Today I wouldn't be signing a thing.

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A heavy set nurse came into my cell with a clipboard. I knew where this was going.

"Hi Blake. Can you do me a favor and sign this please?"

I shook my head no and covered my wrist should she be sneaky and try to slap a bracelet on me. "I'm sorry. I can't stay here. I won't be signing." I said matter-of-factly.

She was a big girl so I was surprised to see her get so upset so quickly. She even sighed a few times like she was having a long day. "Okay I'll let them know but they are probably going to send me back."

I was in smarty pants mode. I wasn't falling into this trap. I knew my rights. "Whatever but I won't be signing. You guys put me 5 grand in the hole from last time. I don't see how that is supposed to help me."

She stormed away and I watched Harley security dude grin. *How could he possibly argue with me on that?*

I tried to go back to sleep in the cement bench. Five minutes later the big girl tried again. Harley dude was still amused. Nobody likes their pockets picked. Especially me in times like this where I still owe almost 2 grand on a car sitting in a junk yard.

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The clipboard came out once again. "Hey Blake it's me again. I have a different form I need you to sign this time."

I shook my head no once again. "I'm sorry. Can't do it."

This time the big girl started huffing and puffing. She did this in an intimidating way as if I was to feel threatened. *Would she squish me if I didn't sign? Would Harley dude allow it and maybe giggle about it later to his drinking buddies? Why did people always accuse me of being suicidal?*

She puffed some more. "Well I can't help you until you sign!"

"I'm sorry. No can do."

"Fine!" She snapped.

It gave the hospital plenty of time to think it over. I knew if they kept me much longer I would be entitled to a turkey sandwich on their dime because I certainly had no intentions of signing. I lost 18 pounds during my 5 week stint in the ARMY and I had emaciated quite a bit. I was now weighing 169 pounds and I wanted that turkey sandwich if they were going to keep me imprisoned. Harley dude didn't seem to have a problem with me and probably enjoyed the work I was giving him. I made a point of rising from my concrete seat every time a nurse walked in and tried to get me to sign.

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Eventually the hospital gave up and let me walk out the front door. It was windy and cold but at least I had my Dallas Cowboys coat on. No hat, no gloves, not even a couple tokens for the bus.

The Poh-lice had kicked this angry bird out of the nest. I had nothing, not even money, but I was ready to play Cowboy.

### CHAPTER 16 (Psychotic Episode 8 of 11) 1-04-2002

It's freezing cold out here and I'm as sick as a dog. I guess I'm officially homeless as the only thing I own is this Cowboys coat and a fifty dollar bill I'm hiding in my 5th pocket. I had gotten the bill from my grandfather for Christmas and didn't want to give it up if I got mugged on the streets. I doubted it could really happen since it was ten degrees outside and this was the country not the city but I wasn't taking any chances.

As the cold January winds blew into my face I had to keep wiping the green mucus dripping from my nose. I had a bad case of pneumonia and didn't even realize it. A lot of fluid was building up in my lungs and there was little my Cowboys jacket could do to stop it. I was making a five mile trip in the wee hours of the night to a buddy's apartment I knew from high school. I was heading over to see Putz. I figured since the government was paying his rent, electric bill, and even a

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30\$ a week cigarette allowance, the least he could do was allow me to spend the night until I could figure things out in the morning. Boy would I be wrong. Dead wrong.

It wasn't anything personal and I kind of understood. Putz already had some of his acid ingesting "Rave" friends over not to mention some girls. I'm not even sure I would be comfortable sleeping on his floor next to his bed listening to groaning all night. Those mind altering drugs can keep horny people going all night long. I would have of course felt better if he would have lent me a knit hat since he has stolen money from me in the past. Perhaps I should be using my Christmas money to buy a hat but where at this hour of the night?

I had already walked five miles and it finally dawned on me if I could just walk another 6 I could make it over to my sister's apartment. It's funny how when you have no money or car people suddenly don't want to put a roof over your head. I was just 20 years old and living paycheck to paycheck like other kids my age. Now I had no paycheck and was too young to know about things like unemployment or food stamps or any of those goodies. Republicans would have loved me very much back then for sure.

Some female officer on patrol that night saw me walking along the road and offered me what I call a "Chicago Lift". I'm not sure if I smelt funny but she maybe only drove me a

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mile at best and dumped me off at a car dealer which was obviously closed. I was pretty surprised she didn't try to dump me off at a hospital with the shape I was in but I think I may have spilled her a line of bull to convince her I was okay. After she dumped me off alongside the road I hid every time a cruiser came down the street. I knew that by the time I would get to my sister's she would be at work and I could finally sleep. Even the Army didn't push us this hard.

By the time I reached my sister's apartment daylight had finally come. I fished around my wallet until I found my old military PX card. The plastic loid worked perfect for getting inside. I am deftly skilled in many things besides bomb making in case you haven't already figured that out. I'm actually the initial inventor of photo bombing but the government will never admit it. They won't even admit that it is very much possible to fool the digital photo experts that are convinced they can spot a fake. You just need a lot of time on your hands and you can easily pull it off. Almost anything can be duplicated these days and 3D printing is becoming the next big thing.

When I went inside of my sister's apartment the first thing I tried to do was sleep. I couldn't. I was too wound up. My paranoia was getting off the hook. Dealing with too many poh-pohs in too little of a time frame. Paranoia induced to the max. Before I knew it my delirium kicked in and voices

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convinced me that I had special powers to be able to imitate being my father. I picked up the phone and dialed the police. I knew I had the skill to imitate his voice. I dialed the very police station that had ruined my night and unlawfully kicked me out of my nest.

"East Earl police is this an emergency?"

I grunted a little like my dad always does. "Yes you can as a matter of fact. My wife, she hasn't worked in over 20 years! I want her out of my house right now!" I yelled and then quickly hung up the phone.

I giggled to myself but my racing delusional thoughts weren't done just yet. I had about 17 cigarettes left in a pack of Camels and the voices were prompting me to scatter them all over the carpet. I knew my actions were making no sense but what could I do? I always found the game truth or dare cool especially the dare part. If voices in my head were telling me to do strange things who was I to say no?

20 minutes later the cops barged in with my sister. Evidently they had traced the call. They were taking me back to the Luny bin for good this time only things would be a little different this time for when I finally would get out. For the first time as an adult, I would be facing criminal charges. I had filed a false report to law authorities. And because they



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couldn't read what was in black and white, I didn't feel the least bit guilty.

### CHAPTER 17 (Psychotic Episode 9 of 11) August 2005 "BLUE"

I drove my cell mate out of my 8x10 cell today. He's built like an iron stacked shit house and I know he could easily kick my ass but he's petrified of me. It's not me the nice Blake that he's afraid of. He's witnessing first hand me being trapped in a psychotic episode and he is shaken up by my strange behavior. His name is Ben. He even has a cool intimidating dragon tattoo on his back. He's very much confused by my uncontrollable "power move". I have smeared toothpaste on his face while he slept last night and I have also flushed all of his candy bars down the toilet. And why did I do this? Because the big chief voice in my head told me to.

Ben was one of the coolest people I have ever met. It was a shame that he had to witness first hand myself being trapped in psychosis. Psychotic episodes usually only last around three days but the one I was experiencing this time would go a couple of weeks. I'm in a Federal prison facing a life sentence and a million dollar fine. I have caused detriment to absolutely nobody but myself to get here but somehow I am facing life in a federal prison in Philadelphia Pa. And my crime?

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Mailing a small bomb to a penile enlargement doctor all the way out in Chicago. I told him to stop performing those dangerous surgeries but he just wouldn't listen. So I mailed him a bomb.

My history of schizoaffective disorder surprisingly works against me. My small handed attorney hates my guts and believes that I am lying about just how many trips I have landed myself in the Luny bin. He describes me as "smart but not that smart". If I am considered smart than why did I immediately pick up the phone and call 911 after I mailed a bomb? How smart was that? Very smart. They were watching me all along so I opted to give those alphabet boys something to look at. If the attorneys would have just let me have my civil hearing all of this would have been prevented. *There's nothing we can help you with. You signed a waiver for plastic surgery* they had said. Really? I didn't recall signing a waiver. But then again I signed things without reading them all the time.

I'm actually the very first plea of true insanity that this country will ever witness. But like I said since I'm "smart" do you think I'm going to plead "not guilty" against a federal system that vaunts about a 99% conviction rate? Heck no. Watched a guy test the court's patience and is now doing 20 years when he could have only done 8 should he plead guilty.

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I'm in solitary confinement where I'm supposed to be allowed to come out for air one hour every other day. I've sat in here 40 days without coming out for air at all. They don't even bother to ask me any more because I guess they know the voices in my head provide more than enough company. My body is becoming severely dehydrated and there is nothing I can do. They shut the water off in my cell as they don't want me to flood the toilet out like the others. The dehydration has caused me to lose my mind completely. They have had me don the "suicide vest" many times and I am convinced I can hear voices talking to me from inside of the blue Velcro blanket. It freaks me out because I can't make out what they are saying. I can't even recognize who they are. And what's even worse? They are all whispering to me at the same time. I get frustrated and angry. Eventually I get fed up with the Velcro blanket altogether and rip it off completely.

Now I am laying on my dank cell floor completely naked Alanis Morissette style. It feels good to be naked but the floor is cold so I pee all over myself. I even stare at the ground long enough that eventually I am sure I can see a whole colony of little "Honey I Shrunk The Kids" people. This is nucking futs. Worst episode ever but I end up basking in it as I relish the uncanny entertainment. IT FEELS LIKE BEING TRAPPED IN A MOVIE.

My psychotic episode continues and the best way to describe

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this most powerful episode is like walking on the moon for the first time. Fear mixes with exhilaration. Why should I drink water now? It's not like they are going to give me some anyways. My episode gets interrupted by a more tangible voice. It is a manly sounding Italian voice convincing me that he is a photographer and needs me to do some poses. There's nobody inside of my cell but me. There's nobody outside of my cell either. This is crazy! *Where is this Italian voice coming from and why is he insisting that I pose? Where is the camera? Hidden inside of the vent?* And that's when the Italian voice accentuates the number 22. Me. I . I am the number 22. It would take me a few years to learn the importance and meaning of that particular number. Because I was facing so many of them, I believed psychotic episodes were somewhat like fortune cookies and had special meaning behind them.

My condition only continued to get worse and the correctional officers no longer wanted anything to do with me. I had won the battle. The cell was mine. All to myself. I was turning into a straight up wild Hannibal animal. I had trashed my cell so badly the turn keys had to wear a mask just to deliver my meals. Feces made there way onto the ceiling. I had no more reason to piss in the toilet as voices were prompting me to trash the place. The smell got so bad I had to rip up a piece of bed sheet string and tie a piece of one ounce soap to my nose to keep from passing out. Why pee or poo in a toilet when they had turned the water off anyway?

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I started to lose it even worse by the day. I ripped a three inch ink tube out of a pen and shoved it into a hard boiled egg. The voices convinced me it was a strawberry daiquiri and I did imbibe. I got sicker. Even more dehydrated. That's when everything went blue.

### CHAPTER 18

8-15-2005 (Butner Federal Medical Center NC)

I woke up on the fifth floor of the Federal Medical Center. Inmates don't end up on the fifth floor unless they are almost dead. According to Dr. Herbal one more hour and I would have been a goner. Butner Medical facility had even gone as far as to chew out the marshals from Philly that had allowed me to arrive in such condition. I didn't know where I was or how I got here. I was still convinced it was July 30th but it wasn't. It was August 15th. Two weeks of my life had been unaccounted for. As I write this story I still am unsure what happened during those two weeks. People later assured me I blacked out lots of times. I even supposedly had it out with a marshal twice my size which I don't remember. So where am I? I am very much convinced I am on some sort of government space ship. A secret government facility already experimenting by recycling humans.

My hospital bed was rather comfy but I had no clue where I

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was or how I got there. All I knew was that I more than likely was on some sort of space ship in an area far far away.

Dr. Herbal looked at me like I was a fascinating study. I didn't remember them placing me in a hospital bed at all.

"Do you know where you are?" He asked.

I looked around the room at the nurses. My delusional self was already convinced these people were aliens disguised as humans. Perhaps my vision hadn't come back completely I don't know but everybody in the room had skin that was freaking me out. I even kept hearing strange incessant buzzing sounds from probably alien like insects. This was all so surreal. Why did these people's skin fickle like jello? And where was I?

"I don't know where I am. This place feels like a space ship. Why am I all hooked up to these tubes and IVs?" I asked.

Dr. Herbal was a friendly but curious man. I could see he enjoyed whatever it was that he does. "I put together for you a really good report for your lawyer. Do you know just how close you were from dying?"

I shook my head no but my body suggested I was pretty close. I had really bad purple bruise marks under my armpits. I didn't know how they got there but why had my entire body turned orange? It was all too weird.

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Dr. Herbal hunched over so I would be sure to hear him better. "One more hour and you would have been dead. You were severely dehydrated."

A nurse pulled out my catheter and showed it to me. It was as brown as Apple cider. I had no strength. I was so weak I couldn't even finish speaking sentences. I think Dr. Herbal was assuming I had a pretty good lawsuit for my near fatality. Boy did I have news for him.

"My attorney is a public pretender. No help there."

Dr. Herbal ended it there. Evidently his well written report wasn't going to help much. He changed the subject.

"Do you know who the president is?" He asked.

I had no intentions of screwing with him. I knew who the current president was. "George W Bush."

"That's correct. Now what about the date. Do you know what day it is?"

It took all my strength to speak but I could still spit words out. I added one day to yesterday's date. "I guess it should be July 31st." I said.

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The doctor smiled. I couldn't help but notice his skin on his head still seemed to flickle like a worm hole. *Was I talking to a human shaped alien?*

"Today is August 15th." He said.

My jaw dropped. This was creepier than my very first episode at age 17. *Where had two weeks gone? Why were my armpits bruised? Where was my strength? How had my body turned orange like a pumpkin?*

I tried desperately to remember what I was doing and what was happening before I blacked out and landed myself in a federal medical facility several states away. I remembered the Italian guy. I remembered the number 22 but didn't understand it's meaning. I even remember them yelling at me when they saw me drinking out of the toilet because I had gotten so thirsty. What confused me the most? Everything had turned blue right before I stopped remembering. I had survived this dangerous episode. After a couple of weeks in a wheel chair and pooping myself I should even get all my strength back. To this day I still get a weird squirmy feeling in a section of my brain between my eyes. It doesn't bother me much but I needed a name for this outlandish psychotic episode.

I named it "BLUE"



CHAPTER 19 (Psychotic Episode 10 of 11) May 2010

I didn't end up doing life in prison. I guess if I did I would be pretty confused as I had not harmed or inflicted malice upon anybody but myself. I could still hear another inmate's consoling words still in the back of my mind when all of the block saw my article in the front page of the newspaper.

*"They have to let you go. You didn't hurt anybody"* Osher had said. He was absolutely right. After doing almost 5 years for a crime I had at the last minute changed my mind with pursuing, the Feds finally had to cut me loose.

Unfortunately the job I had prior to prison had been shipped over seas. I was faced with the challenge of finding adequate work that would provide me a way to go back to being independent. I was unsuccessful but I did find part time work doing flagging for traffic. The company was often very ignorant towards me and even stole a substantial amount from my very first paycheck. I was getting upset with the company over my frequent pay issues and really didn't relish the idea of living under the eyes of my watchful mother.

All weekend I was upset because my dead end job didn't have any work for me on Monday. It was becoming clear that the flagging job could not provide a feasible way for me to live on my own. By the end of the weekend my delirium was bugging me and heavy thoughts were challenging me to see if my crazy card still worked. *Go ahead Blakey. The*

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*government wants to bestow some indelible stigmas on you? Show them you still have balls. Go back to Philly and ring up a nice bill on them. It's not like you'll be able to pay it back anyways. Might even get a nice hot meal out of it.*

I giggled as the voice inside of my head talked to me. The voice was so right. I was paying thousands of dollars in fines for a weapon of mass destruction the size of my thumb (literally). Uncle Sam owed me three hits and a cot. May as well go back to Philly and claim it.

I didn't take my car this time because I didn't want to risk getting a nice towing bill. Instead I did the old Hop on the Bus Gus to find my way out there. Voices in my head were congratulating me all the way on the trip. It was the first time I was going to the Luny bin voluntarily. The staff got very confused by my being there. They didn't seem to think anything was wrong with me. That all changed when the head psychiatrist had a talk with me. I wasn't threatening to hurt myself but the voice in my head was threatening to hurt other people and she seemed to understand. Especially since she was from overseas and could fully fathom the possible impact of the threat. I tried not to stare too much at the dot on her forehead.

She rolled her eyes a little bit and lifted up her hands. "Okay, okay." She said, "Let's get you signed in before all of the bombs come out."

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The voices made me smile. I had plans of staying here until the government could figure out a way for me to survive in my own. *Did they really think I could survive on \$5500 a year? Really?*

The plan the voices had laid out for me didn't work. They kicked me out 8 days later and I had to go back to picking up that dumb red flag and look cute for traffic. One college looking chick even made snappy faces with her purple sock puppet she had on her hand. I think she knew I looked uncomfortable standing in that heat and wanted to tease the what they called "the penile terrorist" She was just a passing motorist but I was 100% sure the government had sent her to tease me with the sock puppet. And to make matters worse? My parole officer got upset when the hospital put up the "red tape" and decided to revoke my drinking privileges.

So I only have just one question to this day.....Who sent out the purple sock monkey?

CHAPTER 20 (Psychotic Episode 11 of 11) 11-11-2014  
(Veterans Day)

My schizophrenia never went away throughout my life but I always made sure that my symptoms not be ostensible to the public. Paranoia plagued me a lot more than hallucinations or

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any disturbing voices. There were a lot of times where I wanted help but describing my condition would never make any sense to any psychiatrist so I talked very little about it. Any time something was slightly out of kilter was almost enough to cause me to snap and fall into a psychotic episode. Needless to say, I did my best to keep my craziness to myself.

I have had times where I almost felt compelled to take a drill to my forehead in hopes that the voice would escape and leave me alone. I say "voice" because 9 times out of ten I recognize the voice in my head. His name is Kevin Hart. He is not the funny black comedian but rather the opposite. Kevin Hart is the employment specialist at the Federal Halfway house in Philadelphia. I have not seen or spoken to this man in almost 6 years. We were never friends or pals. We have never even hung out other than briefly in his office back in 2009 when he was giving me some advice on how to procure employment with a dire background. I hate this man because I feel like he personally believes himself that I am truly psychotic beyond repair and a possible threat to society. However, this man's voice stuck in my head, almost always keeps me out of jail.

Society would deem this man a good family man loyal to his wife. Perhaps little toothpick arms but the type that would drive a beat up little VW Rabbit just to give more of his paycheck to his wife. He is not the type to get hands on or

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physical with someone but I have seen the wolf in his eyes. I am uncomfortable around this guy as I feel he knows too much about me. I have always had a smart ass personality and over the years every time I feel myself about to say something dangerous or stupid this man's voice crawls into my head and I bite my tongue. I even hallucinate and see his face giving me "the look". Seeing this "look" in my mind has helped me behave over the years. I don't ever plan to see this man again in my lifetime but I do believe that he would let out a sigh of relief if he ever found out I was committed indefinitely to a Luny bin. *Who likes to work anyway? Lol*

Kevin's voice is not the only voice that has plagued me over the years. (Just 99% of the time). I have on occasion heard the voice of my coworker and friend from 13 years ago Jason. Jason's voice is completely the opposite of Kevin's voice. Jason's voice always encourages negative behavior and then giggles about it. My old coworker Jason would laugh right along with me if I decided to do something illegal and streak on a cold day in public. Jason was the opposite of Kevin. Jason had personality. Kevin probably wouldn't even laugh at a good fart joke.

I have not seen these two men that are stuck inside of my head in years. Jason has only entered my brain twice but Kevin over a million times. The last time I heard Jason stuck in my head was way back in 2010. My sister was once

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married to a rich Italian guy making 6 figures. One night I spent the night at their house and found some pizza in the fridge at 2am in the morning. The pizza looked good and I didn't know what to do. I even found some cold beer in there and it was even name brand that I could never afford. I was hungry. Jason's voice began to taunt me. I could hear his giggling voice encourage me to go to town on the fridge. He convinced me it was okay because my brother in law was loaded and not even care. The pizza went down the hatch and before long I was burping on Miller Lite. I could literally hear Jason laughing and I could even feel his presence there that night. Kevin would have told me that was a bad idea. Can you guess which voice I like most?

Learning about schizophrenia has always led me feeling confused. For starters, I don't believe that there are other schizophrenics in this world. I seriously believe that I am the only schizophrenic in this world and my opinion as to whether I actually have it is more fickle than the Dow Jones. *What if I don't have it? What if I do have it?* I guess I'll never completely know. But I second guess myself as I sit in this movie theatre by myself watching the Equalizer starring Denzel Washington.

*I'm just sitting here in the dark watching this cool movie. I'm convinced the tough Harley dude in front of me with his wife is a spy. I know he is a government spy but I don't feel he*

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*intends to report anything on me and I feel as though he's merely keeping me in his watch. And why is he keeping me in his watch? Because I already know he wants to recruit me. I feel as though he has lots of motorcycle friends and they have sent him to recruit me to send a message to the government. A nasty message that says "We will not allow them to cut off the Bread line. Unemployment is a normal thing so what? Keep screwing with our unemployment and we will bring this country to its knees." Says the voice from this guy. It seems kind of weird but maybe his biker buddies might pay me big bucks to send the message? I dunno.*

The Equalizer movie was totally awesome but I was convinced the long haired biker dude in front of me could tell my work would far supersede any power moves from Denzel or even John Wick for that matter. Let's not forget the single guy that is set up a whole lot better to do one fantastic nose dive off the grid. *Did I have a wife or girlfriend that would get nosy and try to find out what I had been doing the night before? Did I even have an employer that could keep tabs on me?* For some reason I felt Biker guy was figuring out who I was.

The movie was getting really good but something conspicuous had caught my eye to my right. Within less than 60 seconds that same thing had caught my eye to the left. *What was going on?* A 20 year old sizzling hot girl parading

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around in her pink bra and underwear. That's what was going on!

My heart beat a little faster and I got confused. I have been on the lam for three months now since I lost my job in August. *Why was the government sending me a message? Since when did they decide to be creative? Wasn't it usually dumb stuff like twisting my side mirror or super gluing service bells when they knew I would be coming?* Then it all made sense! The government wanted to bring me in for questioning! They had nothing on me and this was the only way they knew how! By inducing my schizo affective disorder with hopes I would sign myself into a Luny bin!

The hot Chicky girl in the pink lingerie continued to taunt me for a while. I'd peep over at the left entrance. The moment I would glance over she would disappear and then return to the right entrance. *Did she work for the government? Did they hire her to fool me into believing I was hallucinating?* I was confused. She was way out of my league to be flirting with me. How did she plan to escape the theatre dressed like that? Where were her clothes?

My paranoia began to bother me and I had visions that "The Men in Black" were trying to goad me into the Luny bin so they could scrutinize the inside of my mind. What should I possibly do? If I run they will still hunt me! If I hide they will



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surely still find me! I knew I had no choice but to play right into their hand! Surely the government would not be terribly surprised if this Luny Bin Veteran showed off some of his very best skills. *Should I light my hair on fire?*

### CHAPTER 21 (Part 2 of Veteran's Day)

I left the movie very confused. *Why was the government still playing tricks on me? Was it because I am finally off probation and they miss all the Peek-a-boo they used to play? All the dumb stuff like disguising their phone numbers when they called, peeking in my window, even peeking at old Mr. One eye until they felt I had reached the upper line to their pee cups. Did they miss all that?*

By the time I got back to my hotel I became really depressed. Racing thoughts so fast that I could not concentrate on any one thought. This paranoia was so bad it felt like 13 news cameras right in your face after you just flushed the toilet. I wasn't sure just how much longer I could live with this condition. I didn't exactly feel like killing myself right away but the racing thought reminded me I needed to act fast. Whatever it was inside of my head was convincing me to light my car on fire and then drive it around. The thought eluded me but ten minutes later I found myself trying to shove an exacto knife blade inside of a pill capsule. *I guess I was supposed to then swallow it? Would it kill me?*

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I never could get the capsule to fit together so I eventually quit. I couldn't call anybody because my phone has been shut off for over a month because I can't afford the payments and isn't wifi at Mcdonalds free? Whatever had possessed my body was doing a pretty good job of it. Before long I was giggling in the mirror and lighting my hair on fire. I imagined that any minute the peek-a-boo people would break down my hotel door and rush me to the hospital. The fire had taken out a chunk of hair on the right side of my head but that was it. I got determined and tried lighting the left side of my hair on fire. For some reason I couldn't get the conflagration on the top of my head that I was looking for so I quit.

With my hair partially burned I was starting to feel like maybe my thoughts were perhaps a little off. I blame my paranoia 100% on the government and feel that I would live a normal life if we lived in the days of "Little House On The Prairie". I can still hear my mother's words reverberate in the back of my mind. *"If you feel you are about to lose it. Get yourself to a hospital."* That's exactly what I intend to do. But where do I go?

It's still Veterans Day and I find myself driving around aimlessly. It was a crazy year indeed for me. I donated thousands to charity this year and then lost my job just weeks after when I had to use an escape ramp driving tractor trailer. And what freaked me out the most? The year before the same

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exact thing happened to me. I had donated a thousand dollars to my local library and then lost my job 3 days later. I've been doing it for years but I don't tell people when I give money away. I've given homeless people between 40 and 50 bucks countless times. I've even left 20\$ bills in empty gym lockers with hopes it would encourage people to work out more. I've donated almost five thousand dollars this year but yet haven't seen a pay check since August. I've grossed under \$9,000 this year and I feel pretty dumb. But deep inside I'm convinced I still have mettle. That and a big old trucker's belly that I have accrued.

I'm so zonked out that I can't even get close to the speed limit and cars are whiz zing by. Virginia is so boring. Especially the southern part. I continue to drive north on 81 when all of a sudden I see a blue sign with the letter "H". I figure hospitals are meant to help so why not?

Are they prepared to deal with a Veteran on Veteran's day?

THE END

## EPILOGUE

Johnstown Memorial Hospital was NOT prepared to deal with a mental patient Veteran on Veterans Day. I managed to talk them into a Turkey sandwich but the next day at 2am they awoke this sleepy grizzly bear with a bear of their own! A Poh-Lice officer. Handcuffs were not necessary as my Billy Big Rigging career has packed on quite a good number of trucker pounds and I stood no chance of running away. I was taken to a state mental institution with people a lot more crazier than me. If they weren't more crazy than they were certainly a lot more tenacious because I was too lazy to spend my days screaming at the staff and talking to myself like the rest of them. I didn't get any section 8lake housing like I was hoping for but they did give me a lift back to my duct taped car so I could finish writing this story. I do intend to payback my hospital bills when I get trucking again but for starters I have sent them five bucks for the turkey sandwich. It was a good sandwich. Nice and dry. Just the way I like it.

## 10 Myths about Schizophrenia

### Myth #1

(Schizophrenics are violent)

I have never laid hands on anybody since the age of 14. Never have I inflicted malice upon anyone.

### Myth #2

(Schizophrenics talk to themselves in public)

I can't think of anyone in this world that has ever caught me talking to myself in public. I talk to myself all the time, just not in public.

### Myth #3

(There's something I can do to prevent a schizophrenic from having a psychotic episode)

This is simply not true. Once a psychotic episode has started it is like pulling a pin from a hand grenade. A psychotic episode is just like a tornado. Nothing can prevent it from happening. It has to be waited out.

Myth #4 (schizophrenics don't need a routine. They can adhere to constant change just like other people)

I found that I operate better and am more conducive under routine. I had certain times I exercised. I even had certain times I drank water and went to the bathroom.

Myth #5 (Medication can cure schizophrenia)

I've had psychotic episodes while properly medicated.

Psychotropic meds do NOT cure or prevent. They are only used to slow and masquerade the problem.

Myth #6 (Schizophrenics almost always engage in negative detrimental behavior)

The voices in my head convinced me to donate the 140th Kentucky Derby trifecta to charity (\$1712.30) need I say more?

Myth #7 (Schizophrenics can not hold jobs)

I've held a few jobs for more than a couple years. Do you like holding a job? Are you crazy?

Myth #8 (Schizophrenics personally believe they are crazy)

Including myself, most schizophrenics feel that for most of the time they are just fine. It is the rest of the world that is crazy!

Myth #9 (Schizophrenics hear voices and hallucinate every day)

I've already gone years acting perfectly normal. Dr. Okamoto clearly states "Schizophrenics can live a normal life for an entire ten years before they lose it and go crazy"

Myth #10 (Church can help schizophrenics cope)

I have gone to church for many many years of my life religiously. It is extremely difficult to do many times as I feel the pastor often tries to monitor my thoughts leaving me with embarrassing hysteria giggling fits.



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## About The Author

Blake Steidler was born in Lancaster County PA. Blake has never married and has no children. He has published many different genres of books including *When Nightmares Become Dreams* which has once made the top ten list. By the time he reached the age of 17 he has been taunted by mysterious hallucinations that would not make sense to the average Joe. Chemical imbalances, racing thoughts, and delirium have all played a major role in Mr. Steidler's life. Now soon to be the age of 34 he is now considered to be God's gift to employers as they try their best to gravitate his mind away from "story time" to "work time". He is now an Over The Road truck driver with a trucker's belly big enough it would make a really good pillow to sleep on. Blake is a Billy Big Rigger at heart but he hopes one day his stories will make it big enough that he can finally hang up the keys and go back to handling his business at the Penn National Race Course.

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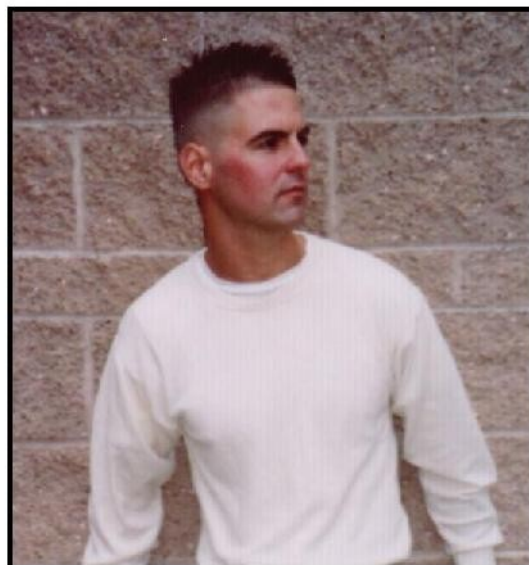
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*" If you can live a lie then there's no reason why you can't live a dream"*

**- Blake Steidler -**



Blake Steidler 2008 Whitdeer PA



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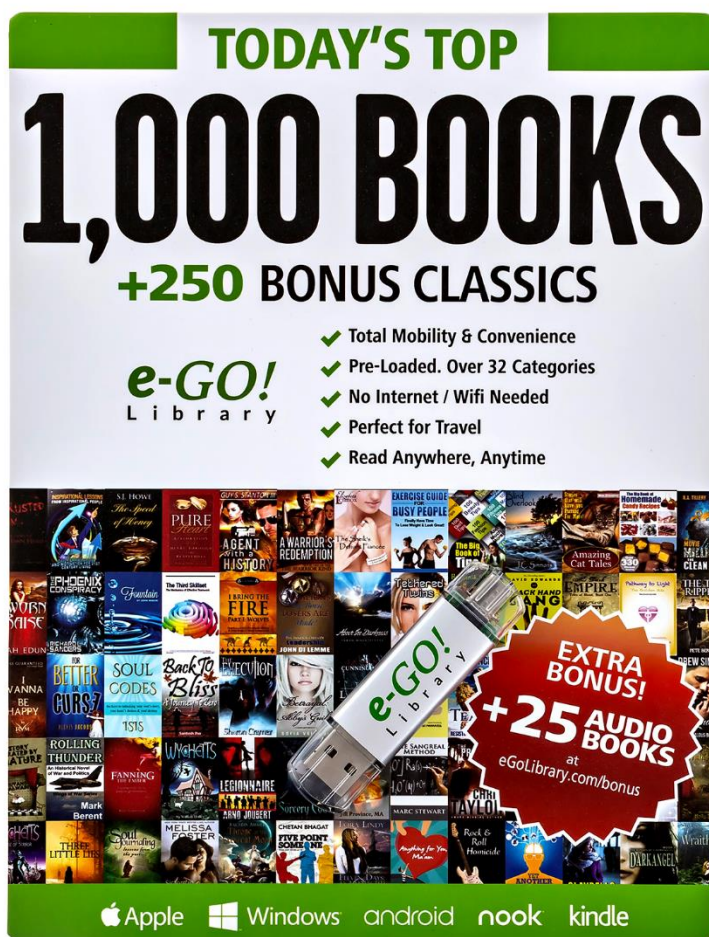
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