# Preface

I obtained the following email archive quite by chance while at a conference in Southern California. I spied among the street litter that familiar forbidden fruit logo etched into a silver casing, which could only belong to a Mac laptop. I carefully walked over to the pile of trash to find an laptop in severe disrepair, apparently discarded by the past owner. I looked around me for an owner, and, when seeing no one who fit the bill, I shoved it into my bag and moved on.

Once back in the office, I found the hard drive still operational, and the email correspondence of its previous owner is what you're about to read.

Like many of you, I've read *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. The senior devil Screwtape's pointed advice to his young and nieve nephew Wormwood opened my mind to the methods the Enemy uses to turn us away from Christ, however slowly or innocuously. As I studied the email archives, I found it fascinating how the Enemy's tactics have changed since Lewis discovered the original letters in the 1940's. Not only are the devils now using email and other forms of communication, but they have developed tactics that would have been an impossibility decades ago. Indeed, the methods employed today make the tools available to Wormwood so long ago seem like children's toys. The human foibles and weaknesses that these methods exploit, however, have not changed and will never change. We will always be prideful, lustful, violent.

I find it satisfying that the devils must navigate the mundane aspects of corporate life the same way we have do; emails, meetings and the like. As you will see, IT support seems to be lacking in the catacomb of Hell that Screwtape and his new pupil, Mugwort, reside in. Perhaps the fact that we and the devils both have to use these technologies illustrates how much control the Evil One actually already has in our world.

B.H. Lindblad February 09, 2020

# Chapter 1

FROM: Screwtape [mailto: screwball@hell.org]  
TO: Mugwort <muggy\_as@hell.org>  
SUBJECT: RE: New Patient Alert

Mugwort,

I received the new patient alert you forwarded from corporate. This new patient of yours is a rare fellow, eh? Twenty two years old, raised in the Enemy's church, repentant, etc. By all infernal standards, this one is firmly encamped with our tormenter -- a rare disposition in this age. Difficult tasks like the one facing you are what make legends out of young devils like yourself. The greater the pride, the harder the fall, as a past master once said.

I encourage you to immediately deploy our most highly-developed tool at once: inane and continual distraction. Our science folks have poured billions into the Distractive Arts over the past 40 years. No more will amatuers like yourself have to deal with "thinking" patients, like the one your cousin Wormwood failed many years ago. We have found that once a patient becomes fully addicted to short-term, episodic stimuli, the war is nearly over. In this hypotized state, the patient cannot focus on one thought for much longer than eight seconds, sometimes even half that can be a stretch.

Prayer, the most insufferable communique that our Enemy continually debases himself with, is all but guaranteed to desist when the patient's thoughts begin to resemble a loose bag of marbles.

What is his current involvement with his church? Please send me all details of his involvement at once so we can get ahead of that problem quickly. His attachment to a community of "believers" such as himself is the biggest obstacle we face at this point. As you may remember from school, He makes himself present when only a few of them gather, which makes our job hellaciously difficult. But you'll be happy to learn that our devils in Marketing have rendered large swaths of these American churches ineffective and totally void of His presence. Through cutting edge societal pressures and infiltration, many of these groups are actually well within our nest while remaining ignorant to the fact that they are serving the wrong god. Nevertheless, there are still dangerous churches out there that, if left unchecked, can completely surround a patient with an impenetrable fog of Grace that we are powerless against. So beware.

Let me further illustrate how the distraction techniques are applied. From a very young age -- sometimes immediately after birth -- we bombard the humans with our greatest weapon of conversion: screens. Be it television, streaming movies or even video games, all of these screens make our jobs a helluva lot easier. Screens have even displaced music (our leader's favorite) as our most popular medium for placing messages in their silly little heads. Now Mugwort, remember that these mortals have a finite amount of space in their brains, so the more real estate our propaganda can occupy, the less room our enemy has to work with. I should note that the cruft we place in the patient's head need not be officially sanctioned material to be effective. Any content that distracts the human from the Enemy is good content.

At any rate, we begin to distract the kids as early as possible. Their parents can actually be our biggest allies in this since they can plop their kids in front of a screen to gather time for *themselves.* Remember that this isn't a race; we have access to almost all people for countless hours every day for most of their lives to use this trick for our good -- don't rush it, you don't need to.

When the children begin to reach puberty, they become highly susceptible to two kinds of specialized screen attacks: sexual imagery and FOMO, or Fear of Missing Out. Our scientists have discovered that sexual imagery placed in front of these human teenagers during one of the peak hormonal stages can induce lifelong addictions to our most debauched visual media. Find out if your patient fell into that camp when he was younger so we can possibly exploit it further.

Now FOMO is a relatively new tactic. Not that humans didn't occasionally hear of a social gathering they weren't invited to in olden days, and experienced grief because of it. Far from it. But now, with the new technologies, any human anywhere in the world can be exposed to millions of other people who have it better than them. A teenager can go on social media and see *all* the parties they weren't invited to or an adult can take a virtual tour of a celebritie's mansion (you can almost taste the jealousy!) All of these things are good for us. When we can convince our patients to strive for worldly things entirely, this job becomes almost too easy.

I'll see you at the pot luck next week.

Screwtape | Executive Tempter Hell.org