
INSANITY IS A STATE OF MIND
A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE
WASTE NOT, WANT NOT
NOT INVENTED HERE
HERE I SHALL REMAIN
REMAIN CALM AT ALL TIMES
TIMES ARE A' CHANGING
CHANGING TIRES
TIRES US WITH HIS DRIVELING NONSENSE
NONSENSE HE SAID
SAID ARTIFACTS WERE NOT FOUND
FOUND AND LOST
LOST IN THE HIGH CASTLE
I'M NOT A FAN, I JUST WORK HERE

“Does it make any sense to you?”

The officer in charge of the scene was James Monroe and did not have the fortune of bearing any resemblance to the late, eminent politician and President of the United States of America. He was rather squat and a bit stuffy in the midriff,

going bald in his late forties. He wiped the sweat off his forehead with a piece of leather cloth normally used to clean eyeglasses. Detective Van Buren, a rather tall, gaunt man at least a decade younger turned around from the wall to face what looked like a rather indifferent James Monroe:

“A stream of thoughts probably,” Van Buren began in his usual professional manner and went on while Monroe nodded feigning absorbing every last detail, his frown deep and his eyes focused but on nothing related to the crime scene:

“Convolutd, weird, but I cannot discern a pattern. It’s like random thoughts,” Van Buren said and shrugged before adding:

“Only it’s connected. See, the last word in each sentence is the first word in the next sentence. And there’s a couple of artistic references as well,” Van Buren noted as if ready to impress someone notably unimpressible. “See, like -” the detective managed to say before Monroe cut him mid-sentence.

“Yeah, I get all that. I can read myself. I’m not a Bob Dylan fan, but I can recognize some of it.”

Monroe was lying but it wasn’t a sense of underachievement that drove him - it was rather his disdain for the younger, athletic, better looking detective that the Captain said was soon going places, rather than Monroe who was soon looking for an early retirement without any of the benefits.

“You’re still not helping, though,” Monroe said, a step closer to Van Buren, looking uncomfortably up to match the detective’s gaze.

“Does it make any sense? Can you profile this guy?” Monroe asked, hoping for the kind of answer that placed unusual cases such as this one in a dusty, long-forgotten file.

Van Buren forehead was fraught with a deep, characteris-

tic frown. He turned around for a moment and shot a glance at the blood-stained wall filled with poetic graffiti, the kind of psychos that tend to be suspects in that kind of cases all but the most determined carrier-hunting police officers are ready to lose their real life over.

“In depth?” he asked sounding rather surprised, as if he wasn’t expecting Monroe to make a real case out of the Haiku murder.

“That’s supposed to be your job, ain’t it?” Monroe said with a smirk, his back bent behind slightly, his hands in his pockets, his heels carrying most of his weight as he careened slightly back and forth looking impatient.

Van Buren scratched his cheek and sounding quiet honest mostly to himself he told Monroe what he felt he’d like to hear himself if he were in his shoes:

“It’s not an exact science. I need more to go on. This, this could be just like sudoku to pass the time. Meaningless, you know?”

“Well then we’ll just have to find some meaning, won’t we?” Monroe said and smiled crookedly.

“I hate crime scenes. I hate this pathetic brew Hendles calls coffee, and I hate this job,” Monroe added before he started to stare intently at Van Buren, as if it was all his fault. The detective was growing tired of Monroe, his gripes and even the heat that didn’t usually get to him until after noon.

“Then why don’t you quit already?” he told him, not expecting a real answer from someone who like most people, were in the wrong line of business from the start.

“I don’t need therapy detective,” retorted Monroe followed by a sharp, venomous twist of his sweaty head. “What I need,” he went on, fumbling in his pockets with irritation, “Is to find this guy, so I can get back to regular I-don’t-

give-a-fuck-hours to go along with my they-don't-give-a-fuck salary.”

He smiled coldly and wiped his brow, pulled his smudged leathery cloth out of his pocket and patted the sweat once more.

“Give it some thought,” he said to Van Buren and turned around to leave, the forensics team still swiping for prints and looking busy even if they knew it themselves there would be nothing useful to gather once more.

“But I’ll need more than this, Monroe!” shouted Van Buren, frustration spewing in his voice from the fact that he had to take orders from someone like Monroe - a short, stumpy little asshole who couldn’t even keep a shirt clean of coffee and jelly stains just for one day.

Monroe didn’t bother to turn around, but just gave Van Buren a wave of dismissal as he kept walking over to his car.

“Then give him some time. This doesn’t look like a passion crime now, does it?” said Monroe as he tried to fit inside the uncomfortable seating.

Van Buren threw his head back and had to shout to make sure he’d be heard:

“Technically, everything’s a passion crime. You see, Monroe-”

Monroe started up his car and revved it up to full for a couple of seconds before letting the engine settle to idle:

“Spare me. Call me tomorrow detective,” he said and put the gear in reverse.

Van Buren cupped his hands in front of his mouth and shouted slowly, as if the person on the other end was an alien or someone mentally retarded:

“I can’t. I am seeing someone important.”

Monroe had lowered his window. He lit a cheap cigarette, badly bruised and nearly torn up while Van Buren approached him.

“Dry humor and the worst timing when it comes to bull-shit won’t save you from this fucked up case, Van Buren,” he told him from up a close, smiling dryly through a small gold and silver array of shanty dentistry.

Van Buren leaned over Monroe’s car window and told him in earnest, without a hint of friendship or professional zeal:

“Fuck you, Monroe.”

“Right. The case is yours then. Fuck that back, Martin,” Monroe said and stepped on the gas, his car spewing dust and dirt as he sped away from the crime scene, backing up onto a small alley that led onto the freeway, narrowly missing a freshly installed phone booth.

“You see, it all started right back in ’78 when I was doing this stint as an oceanographer.”

“Pardon the interruption, but what do you mean a ‘stint’? It’s not like you just pick up a boat, ride alongside with dolphins and call it a day.”

“Oh, it’s not? Then you’d be surprised at what ‘research’ actually means most of the time. I actually met Jacques-Yves Cousteau once you know, he was pretty impressed.”

“By your oceanography skills?”

“By the ship, Calypso.”

“That was Cousteau’s ship.”

“It was mine when I sold it to him.”

“Cousteau was dead back in ’78. How did you sell him Calypso then?”

“I never said I met Cousteau in ’78. I sold Calypso back in ’63. By the way, the real name of the ship was Snazz Fuzz.”

“You said you were doing oceanography, or whatever the fuck you think oceanography is, back in ’78.”

“That’s right, I was.”

“I don’t get it. What’s that has to do with anything?”

“I only got into oceanography because of this woman, you know?”

“What does Cousteau and Calypso have to do with any of this?”

“Nothing, really. You brought it up.”

“I didn’t bring any of that up!”

“Anyway, as I was saying, it all started back in ’78.”

“You were just about to say about it was this woman that got you into doing oceanography.”

“She didn’t get me into doing oceanography. That’s not what I said, I said it was because of her. Don’t you have a tape recorder or something?”

“Yeah, I’m recording. It’s not a tape recorder, it’s a smart-phone.”

“Well, if it’s recording, it’s a recorder as far as I’m concerned.”

“Is there a point to this story or are you just an AA going for the free drinks?”

“Speaking of which, I need a refill.”

“Look, buddy, I’m really starting to think I’m wasting my time here. Just, thanks for your time or better yet, just, fuck this. I’m done.”

“Wow, wow. Chill, man. Have a drink yourself. You need it more than I do.”

“Listen, all that shit on the phone? Just come clean for me, I’ve got serious things to do.”

“Nothing more serious than what went down that day.”

“In the hangar?”

“In the hangar.”

“The alien spaceship?”

“What? No, no. It wasn’t alien, it wasn’t alien at all. I never said it was alien, man. Shit, you must think I’m one of those crazies.”

“You’d think?”

“It was old. Real fucking old. And I’m telling you, it wasn’t alien.”

“Yeah? What makes you an expert?”

“Because I built it, that’s what makes me the expert.”

“So, this is all about a hoax? You called me up to write down a story about an alien hoax? Where’s the story in that? Been done more than once in the past, buddy. It’s old news now.”

“I never said it’s a hoax. You keep twisting my words, man. Where’s the journalistic integrity and all that shit you stand up for?”

“This isn’t the fucking New York Times. I was just looking for something with an edge, something different. I’m not stupid, I just deal in stupidity. There’s a huge difference, but I’m not sure you’re able to discern it.”

“Calling me names now, all of a sudden? Hey, what about those drinks? I can live with being called stupid if I’m drunk enough.”

“I should’ve left the moment you started that shit about Cousteau.”

“That shit’s as real as it gets. And the spaceship’s real too, man.”

“Right, sure. Anything else you might add so I can wipe my ass with it when it gets printed in the way-back-noone-gives-a-fuck page?”

“The fucking blueprints were alien, but I built that fucking thing. And it fucking flew, man. Way up, way out there.”

“You’re saying you built a spaceship, based on alien designs?”

“God damn right, I did. And it all started in ’78.”

“What the fuck is so important about ’78. What’s with fucking Cousteau and the fucking ship and the broad?”

“The broad’s not important now, she was just a fling. Nice tits, but just a fling. And Cousteau’s dead. But back in ’78, that was when I found the blueprints.”

“Is that right? Did they just happen to fall out of the sky in a spaceship that crashed in the ocean?”

“Oh, you’re good. Goddamn, you’re good. You knew? I thought noone else had leaked it.”

“Are you kidding me? What is this, some kind of poorly written script?”

“Hey! Shit’s real man. I’m telling you, shit’s real. I was there, man.”

“Keep saying that, it’s not making it sound any less fucked up.”

“Shit was fucked up, that’s true. I was constantly fucked up, high on coke and all kinds of shit, because of that bitch, Cindy. Really high maintenance broad. But then the sonar just picked it up and when the diver brought a piece back up, man was that a sight. Poor fella, had no fucking clue what the fuck he was looking at, but I knew.”

“So you’re sticking with this? You found a crashlanded spaceship at the bottom of the sea?”

“Not too far out of Belize, that’s right. God, the rush. I’m almost getting a hard-on right now.”

“You’re the crazy crazy type. But go on.”

“So now you believe me? Just because I almost had an erection, this makes everything look more plausible?”

“At least you don’t sound like you’re making this up, you’re not acting crazy. You sound crazy but you don’t look the look. It should be easier to publish this.”

“You’re going to publish this?”

“That was implicit in our deal, wasn’t it? You’re not going to give me some writer’s guild shit now, are you? I got tapes man.”

“What is this? You got tapes? You said you got this smart-phone thing, no tapes and stuff.”

“It’s a fucking expression, jeez! I’m recording this! Are we still on?”

“You can’t publish this, man. They’re going to crush you like a fucking bug.”

“Who is? The CIA, the NSA, who are you implying is going to be after this? Come on, give me something to work with here.”

“What? Are you crazy? These guys don’t exist, man.”

“Men in black then?”

“Wait, ain’t that a movie of some kind?”

“Men in black, black triangles, X-Files, you know, above top secret stuff shit.”

“You’ve lost me there.”

“Come on, do I have to hammer this stuff word by word?”

“How about drinks?”

“Damn, you’re good at manipulating people. Alright, drinks.”

“You’ll need it more than I do when I’m start telling you all that went down.”

“So you keep saying. What’s all this so far, just a fucking preamble?”

“That’s just how it all started.”

“What the fuck is your story about then?”

“How I met this woman.”

“I thought that was a fling. Come on!”

“Not Cindy, numbnuts. Her.”

“For the sake of fucking sanity and dearly hoping this gets back to the alien stuff soon, what’s her fucking name? For posterity reasons.”

“Damned if know.”

“So this all about a tear-soaked love affair? Is she in office now?”

“What? No.”

“Then what’s the fucking point of the story, man? You’re driving me in circles! I got nothing solid to work with.”

“The point of the story is, she doesn’t exist.”

“What, the woman? The fucking story? Fucking Atlantis?”

“Spot fucking on. I thought you said you didn’t know about all this.”

“Atlantis?”

“Yeah.”

“You found Atlantis.”

“She did. Among other things.”

“Alien spaceships?”

“It wasn’t alien, I already said it wasn’t alien. I fucking built the damn thing.”

“So you found an alien spaceship in Atlantis and copied it? Then met some chick?”

“You got it all wrong. I met this woman, Cindy, and then _.”

“For the love of God, can we leave women out of this?”

“Can’t, it’s integral to the story.”

“How so?”

“She was the pilot.”

“The pilot of the spaceship?”

“Yeah.”

“The one you built?”

“No, no. The original.”

“You met the pilot of the original alien spaceship that crashlanded in Atlantis.”

“I guess I did.”

“And when did this happen?”

“I told you, it was ’78 and I was doing this stint -”

“The crash, when did the crash happen?”

“I believe it was, 2089. Something like that, maybe 2099, I’m really bad with dates.”

“2099 BC ? Wow, that’s some really intense bullshit. Go on, you’ve earned the drinks just now.”

“You really are the bad kind, always, always twisting my words. I never said 2099 BC, man. That was 2099, AD.”

“Time-travel too? I’ll buy you another round if you can tie this with a government coverup. Or the Soviets, Chinese Cubans. Same thing really.”

“You want me to tell you the story or do you want me to make up some bullshit?”

“Yeah, whatever. Sorry. Just, go on.”

“I don’t expect you to really believe me, but I do expect some professionalism here. Papers’ really gone to shit then.”

“Oh, this won’t be in a paper. It’ll go up on a blog.”

“What’s a blog?”

“On the internet, it’ll go up on the internet.”

“I thought internet was just for porn.”

“Among other things.”

“I hope it’s not some gay porn or some shit like that. Or that shit with all the choking. I don’t like that stuff. I don’t have a problem with that and all, what people do in their own privacy is none of my -”

“Don’t ruin it now, please get back on track. This isn’t a porn blog. There you go, drinks are here.”

“That’s better. Anyway, as I was saying, I met her. And she was.. I don’t really know how to put it in words, man.”

“From another planet?”

“Yeah, you could say that, she had this exotic air I’d never seen before, not even when I was stationed in Thailand back in ’72.”

“I was being literal.”

“Oh. No, she wasn’t alien man, how many times do I have to say this. She was a woman!”

“But I thought she was the pilot of the alien spaceship. What gives?”

“She was the pilot alright, but she wasn’t alien, not at all. Everything was right where it was supposed to be.”

“You mean, you had sex?”

“I told you I don’t like gay porn and shit. Straight as a mile, head to toe, front and back.”

“You had sex with the pilot of an alien spaceship that crashlanded in Atlantis on the future and you met her in ’78?”

“That’s right, though I must clarify for the record, that can in no way imply she was a minor in the state of Virginia at the time we consummated.”

“What?”

“I’ve got this court order. Happened back in ’84. Huge misunderstanding.”

“I really don’t want to know anything about that.”

“I also have no recollection, was in a coma at that time.”

“Is that what you said in court?”

“No, I was put on trial while in coma.”

“They can do that?”

“Apparently in Virginia they can. Or they could. They did, anyhow.”

“Why were you in a coma?”

“I thought you didn’t want to know anything about that.”

“Well it kinda sucks, to be honest.”

“It was because of what happened that day, in the hangar.”

“That day, in the hangar, you fell in a coma?”

“That’s what I’ve been saying all along, there was some serious shit going down.”

“This is still related to the story we were talking about earlier?”

“Which one?”

“Woman, pilot, future crash spaceship, that stuff.”

“Yeah, totally. That day, in that hangar, when I fell in a coma, that was the test flight.”

“Of the spaceship you built based on the schematics from the crashlanded spaceship?”

“Why do you keep asking this stuff, I thought you were recording it. You said you got tapes and shit.”

“Yeah, well... Never mind, sorry. Go on.”

“Well, I can’t remember any of it, I fell in a coma!”

“You missed the test flight? What the fuck good is that in a story?”

“Who said it was good? I said it was serious, that’s what I said? It sucked balls, man!”

“Alright, alright, calm down. Have another sip, maybe it will help.”

“Hasn’t helped me since ’97.”

“What happened in ’97?”

“Not much. Clinton was in office.”

“I meant why hasn’t drinking helped since ’97?”

“I took up drinking in ’97.”

“Okay. How does that tie in with the rest of the story?”

“I’m not sure it does.”

“So you were in a coma, from ’78, to ’84, then somehow got convicted of child assault? Did some jail time and then became an alcoholic? Makes sense, maybe an interesting addition, or an editorial.”

“If you twist what I say one more time, by God, I’ll kick you in the teeth.”

“I’m sorry, I was just recapping.”

“Well your comprehension skills suck. I said I fell in a coma at the test flight. Never said anything about getting convicted of child assault or doing time.”

“So you admit you’re an alcoholic?”

“I don’t have a drinking problem!”

“Denial is the most common characteristic.”

“Fuck you.”

“Bursts of anger, quite typical as well.”

“Now do you want the rest of the story, or don’t you? ’Cause I never signed up for tequila, and these are tequila shots. I hate tequila.”

“And gays.”

“I never said I’m homophobic goddammit!”

“Alright, I know what you said. I’m sorry. Jumped the gun, just a wrong assumption.”

“Alright.”

“Can we get to the details now?”

“What do you want to know?”

“Everything.”

“That’s a bit too much if you ask me.”

“Everything about your story.”

“But it’s not about me, I told you that.”

“About this story you want to tell me.”

“I thought that was I was doing.”

“With very little success and causing me a raging headache in the process. Let’s cover the basics: What was the ship like? Who built it? Where did it come from?”

“I think it was French. Maybe Le Havre, not sure. Got it from my father.”

“What?”

“Snazz Fuzz, the ship I sold to Cousteau. Calypso!”

“Don’t go there. Don’t go you dare go back to the start now.”

“The hanger? That’s where it started, I’ve already said that. Jesus man, fucking smartphones! Get a fucking tape recorder, for God’s sake!”

“I... I’m leaving.”

“You go on and do that now, you stupid cocksucker. Can’t write down a good story if your life depended on it!”

“Serious! You said this shit was some serious shit!”

“The hangar bit was! The coma shit! Not everything!”

“Fuck this!”

—

“See? All you need to do, is profiling. It takes a bit of time, but then you’re golden.”

“So, this was all just to get some free drinks? I mean, you don’t even like tequila.”

“Don’t be thick. He nearly had a mental breakdown.”

“I think he just had enough of your bullshit.”

“Which was the whole point.”

“I still don’t get it.”

“We wanted to feed him the bullshit.”

“Why?”

“So that nothing gets out.”

“About what?”

“About the truth.”

“Wasn’t that just a pile of gibberish?”

“Ah, see the beauty of it?”

“Not really, no.”

“And yet, you can somehow still be useful to me. Go load her up.”

“Half?”

“Full.”

“Going on a trip?”

“You’re coming with.”

“Me? Why? I don’t like any of the stories I hear.”

“Don’t be silly, it’s a completely safe and perfectly sound way to travel.”

“That’s just bullshit, isn’t it?”

“No, that’s the truth.”

“Still, I think I should just wait here. Drinks are cheap, too.”

“See, now that’s counter-productive. I just said you can somehow be of use.”

“I thought you just wanted me for refuelling.”

“That too. But there’s more.”

“Like what?”

“I need you to do me a favor.”

“What’s that?”

“Put me in a coma.”

“For real?”

“For real.”

“Right now?”

“No, when we get when we’re going.”

“When are we going?”

“2099.”

“What for?”

“We need to make this a reality, George.”

“But why? I’m pretty sure it’s not safe if a comma is involved.”

“Commas are punctuation marks, George. They’re completely safe unless used by the wrong editor.”

“I don’t get that. What does that have to do with anything?”

“Safety first and all that, you know.”

“So we’re not going to put you in a comma?”

“I just said you’ll need to put me in a coma. Was that man’s idiocy infectious?”

“I think I was just born this way.”

“I just think you were born upside down. Nevertheless, on such short notice, you’ll have to do. Family first.”

“Isn’t it safety first?”

“Are you trying to be a smartass? Do you know what a contradiction in terms is?”

“No? Yes?”

“Slightly there. Get inside.”

“Is it going to hurt?”

“I hadn’t thought about that. Still, it needs to be done.”

“Make this a reality?”

“Yes, George. Finally, after so many tries, this has got to work. At least it must’ve already worked some time in the future.”

“The time machine?”

“The time machine works, you egghead. The thing, with her.”

“You mean that orange guy from Fantastic Four? Is he involved with her?”

“Just shut up, close your mouth and get inside the damn time machine.”

“Can you explain all this stuff about commas and how they work?”

“Go read a book.”

“There’s a book on commas?”

“There’s a book on everything.”

“Oh, so when he wanted to know everything, all he had to do was read a book?”

“George, sometimes, I do hear the ring of genius in that thick skull of yours, but usually it cancels itself out from all the echo in your brain.”

“I’m not sure I understand.”

“Perfectly reasonable. Off we go!” he said and closed the phone booth door behind him.