

Yana Zendo

and

The Powers

Tharpa Thaye

September 22, 2020

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Preface

Four years ago, I began trying to tell the story of the preceding two years of my life. After multiple failed attempts, I feel I have finally succeeded by writing this present volume—which I'm calling a *metaphorical memoir*.

Whenever I attempted nonfiction, it always turned into a jumbled mess that I wouldn't dare share. I don't even remember everything that happened, much less can I make complete sense of the memories I've retained. Therefore, in writing this book, I have re-ordered events, changed details, made things up, and tied things together into a cohesive story that actually makes sense.

With this story, I am trying to convey a sense of my experience. The parts of the story that I have made up do not really embellish things much. Rather, the fiction contained herein stands as a metaphor for what I actually experienced. It's fiction; it's nonfiction. Think of it like a movie that begins with, "Based on a true story."

Public domain

I have relinquished my copyright to this book; I dedicate this book to the public domain.

Choose Your Ordering

- For a fast paced, political, action, adventure story, about a step towards world peace, turn to page 5, for Part II
- For a slow, meandering yarn about the first 29 years of my life, culminating in my sudden enlightenment, turn to page 53, for Part I

Once you've read both of these stories, proceed to page 95, for Part III—a story about a last-ditch effort to bring world peace to Earth before the opportunity is irrevocably lost forever.

Part II

The Iran Nuclear Deal

Prologue to Part II

About halfway through the 20th century, Tibetan Buddhism arrived in the United States. There's a legend of a group of monks who were on a tour of some governor's mansion, or something like that, and a vicious-sounding guard dog was barking at them, while they walked through the backyard. Then, suddenly, the dog broke free, and charged the monks, full speed. Most of the monks immediately ran away, but one monk charged the dog. Stunned by the unexpected situation, the dog turned tail, and ran away.

Some Buddhists will tell you they believe the monk had such a masterful awareness of the situation, that he knew the dog would run away. I think that's ridiculous. I believe the monk charged the dog, because he knew that if he met the dog halfway, the dog would attack him, and spare his fellow monks.

Years later, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the brave monk, gave an advanced talk to a group of advanced students who were training to become saints. He said, "The idea of this particular teaching is to give our blood and flesh to others. That is a very powerful thing to do. It is like saying, 'If you want me, take me, possess me, kidnap me, control me. Go ahead, do it. Take me. I'm at your service. You could cut me into pieces or anything you want. Without your help, I would not have any way to work with my journey at all.'"

Scholars and adherents are divided on whether or not it's a metaphor. But, then again, Trungpa Rinpoche did run towards the dog.

Enlightenment

My mind popped, and I named my new self Xavier Yana Zendo, which roughly translates to *Saintly Mobile Meditation Hall*. After months of intense exertion, I am now a meditation master who has transcended the need for formal sitting meditation practice, because my mind is now constantly fresh with indestructible presence. Having achieved enlightenment, I am committed to the singular mission of peacefully ushering in world peace, as quickly as possible.

My parents think it's impossible that I could become enlightened after such a short period of study and practice, but they do not understand Buddhism. My enlightenment is totally reasonable when you consider that I have a particular genius for connecting the dots that other people don't even see, and, furthermore, I put even more exertion towards my enlightenment than I did towards my master's at Harvard or as a hacker for the US military.

Obama and Iran

Obama has announced the US Government has just begun negotiating a deal with Iran. Obama has further announced, via a “leak” to the New York Times, that unofficial, off-the-record diplomats will conduct the negotiations. Of course, this means me.

The general idea is to lift sanctions from Iran, essentially moving towards an alliance, in exchange for Iran to perpetually offer inspections that guarantee Iran is not working towards nuclear armament. This could be the key to peace in the Middle East, which would pave the way for peace on Earth. However, Iran seems reluctant to negotiate, and has basically said: “Make me an offer that I actually like.”

Cliff Dancing

My father once served as the Chief Strategist for the US Air Force, and he once described to me the game-theoretically rational, and totally insane strategy that nuclearly armed nation states follow. It's called *cliff dancing*, and works as follows. Imagine you are standing at the edge of a cliff, and are chained, at the ankles, to your adversary. If either of you falls off the cliff, you both fall off the cliff (mutually assured destruction). Furthermore, there's a prize both of you want very much (global domination), and the only way one of you can receive the prize is by convincing the other to tap out. So what do you do?

According to the world's brightest idiots, you start dancing on the edge of the cliff, to convince your adversary you are crazy and they should tap out. And, when your adversary starts dancing on the edge of the cliff, you should dance even more erratically, to prove to them it's not a charade, and you truly are crazy, and they should tap out.

So, right now, we've got a bunch of idiots trying to out-crazy each other, and wouldn't it be nice if we could prevent further entrants into this dance?

Universal Diplomacy

During my travels, I discovered the key to ending cliff dancing—the key for achieving world peace. It's called *universal diplomacy* and is based upon a *holonic* understanding of the universe. So, now I must explain holons.

To begin, a holon is a thing that is both a whole and a part. For example, this sentence is a holon; it is a whole sentence as well as a part of this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter is a holon; it is a whole chapter as well as a part of this book. Everything is a holon.

There exists a binding force that brings holons together to form greater holons. For example, birds come together to form flocks, people come together to form neighborhoods, neighborhoods come together to form cities and counties, cities and counties come together to form states, and so on.

There also exists a counter force, one that causes holons to collide and destroy each other. For example, when a bird and a worm collide, sometimes the bird will eat the worm.

There is a tension between the binding force and the destructive force. It remains to be seen if the various nations of Earth will destroy each other, or will bind together to form a cohesive, peaceful union.

Now, a *gluon* is a holon that binds together peer holons, to form greater holons. For example, sometimes when a couple gets married, the marriage joins together two families, creating a new super family. In this case, the married couple is a gluon. For another example, when atoms share electrons with other atoms, the electrons act as gluons to bring the atoms together to form molecules.

A *universal gluon* is a gluon that binds together *all* its peers to form a new, greater holon. We need at least one universal gluon to bring together all the nations of Earth, to form a cohesive, peaceful union.

We need the right diplomat to stand up, and become the universal gluon that binds together the nations of Earth. For such a stunt to succeed, the universal diplomat would need to represent all people equally, and all nations equally. Imagine a lawyer who is defending everyone against everyone else, to create a balance among the holonic forces, ushering in peace.

Tonglen

To become a *universal diplomat*, you must, for each person on Earth, learn how they think, why they think that way, what's hurting them, and how to heal them. You must become everyone, every perspective, step by step, perspective by perspective.

Fortunately, there's an advanced Buddhist meditation technique for becoming a universal diplomat. It's called *tonglen*, and only works if you've already achieved a certain degree of enlightenment. And, for tonglen to transform you into a universal diplomat, you must perform tonglen for each person on Earth.

Before performing tonglen for a person, you first sit down on a meditation cushion with good posture, and perform basic "shamatha" meditation, for a period of time, to bring you fully into the present moment without discursive thoughts. Your mind should be like a flat lake. Finally, you begin the actual practice of tonglen by repeatedly breathing out joy to your person, selflessly giving away your own joy, then breathing in their suffering, selflessly taking on their suffering, for their benefit.

When you perform tonglen correctly, you literally become the other person, and the other person literally becomes you. Through this practice, I literally became everyone on Earth, thereby becoming a universal diplomat.

Government Friends

I asked my father to introduce me to his government friends, so we could actually succeed in negotiating with Iran.

He wouldn't help, telling me, "You're not well." So, I asked him just to listen to me, so he could judge the soundness of my idea himself. He's a smart guy, but he declined, then I demanded, then I realized he was trying to cliff dance with me, so I decided to out cliff dance him. One thing led to another, and now I'm in a psych ward.

Psych ward

The psych ward here is crazy. It's small, crowded, the staff isn't kind, and the psychiatrist doesn't believe anything I say. Prisoners are crying, prisoners are fighting, and a few of the staff are prone to screaming. There's even prisoners in wheelchairs, who are stuck in random corners of the room because they lack the capacity to wheel themselves.

As an enlightened meditation master, it is my responsibility to run the psych ward. This effort might seem daunting because I lack the official designation as "staff," and because of the sheer volume of work that needs to be done. However, during my travels, I fortunately discovered an algorithm that I can employ to help everyone here, including the staff, without becoming overloaded myself. The algorithm is called *Zen Beer Garden*, and informs one how to be lazy and successful at the same time during overload situations.

Zen Beer Garden

Zen Beer Garden (ZBG) prevents overloads by employing bouncers and doormen. If a doorman to a garden wants to let someone into the garden, but the garden is full, then the doorman asks the bouncer for help. The bouncer then finds the person in the garden who has been there the longest, and kicks them out—making room for the new patron.

Furthermore, every patron in the garden is guaranteed at least five minutes of time in the garden. So, what happens when a would-be patron wants to enter the garden, but no one has yet gone over time? Well, the doorman gives a task to the would-be patron at the door, and sends them on their way. To be admitted to the garden, the person must complete their task and prove to the doorman that they have finished their task. Most likely, there will be space in the garden at this point (I have a math proof).

Beer Gardens are Zen because the tasks are riddles designed to enlighten the minds of the people in line.

Lastly, I would also like to mention that nation states can use ZBG to defend their systems against high-density cyberbombs. Though in cyberspace, it's probably impractical to use Zen riddles. Rather, brute-force cryptographic hash-cracking puzzles seem most practical. This was the topic of my Harvard thesis.

Running the Psych Ward

I wheel prisoners around. I transcribe a prisoner's complaint and turn it in. I persuade a fairy not to kill her mother. A staff member screams at a prisoner, so I get in his face and calmly let him know he needs to be more friendly.

A prisoner cries, so I do a dance for him, and he smiles. Someone interrupts, asking for help. I give them a riddle: *why are you really here?* and send them on their way. I entertain the depressed man with more slapstick, until two prisoners break into a fight, and I break it up while laughing, ho, ho, ho. The staff straps me to a table, in a room all alone, with my arm bent backwards at the elbow. This is their attempt to crush my spirit, but I am indomitable.

Strapped to the Table

Strapped to the table, they ask me if I'm going to fight again, I say I wasn't fighting, and they say: "Keep this up, and we're going to transfer you to the state facility, and they're not nice over there." They exit the room.

Still Strapped to the Table

Still strapped to the table, they ask me the same question, I give the same response, then they exit the room.

False Confession

Still strapped to the table, they ask me a third time: “Are you going to fight again?” I say “No,” they unstrap me, and let me walk out, while I rub my elbow.

Transfer

I re-enter the ward with the plan of running Zen Beer Garden again. Immediately though, a hand goes up, this time from a guy who has been standing on the periphery the entire time. I jog up to him.

He smiles and says, “Hi, I’m Jimmy,” and extends his hand for a handshake.

“I’m Yana Zendo,” and we shake hands.

There’s a pause.

I ask: “So, what’s up?”

With a smile, he says, “You’re DJing the whole place. Manually.”

Then another fight breaks out, I get in the middle of it, and the police take me away to the state-run Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute.

Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute

I arrive at the state facility, and wait in line for intake. A staff member asks if I am hungry. I say yes, and she brings me a steaming-hot, generously sized slice of lasagna, which tastes great.

Intake

Eventually, it's my turn for intake. A patient, kind psychiatrist interviews me, asking many relevant and interesting questions about my enlightenment, the Iran Nuclear Deal, cliff dancing, ZBG, and so on.

F-Unit

A staff member escorts me to my unit, which is named F-Unit. As I enter F-Unit, I am greeted by a choir of prisoners voluntarily singing from a bandstand.

Amazing Grace,
How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost,
But now am found.
T'was blind but now I see...

I cry.

Essays

In F-Unit, I check in with all my fellow prisoners, asking "Are you OK?" and "Do you need anything?" Everyone is pretty much fine, thus there is no need to activate ZBG.

With nothing else to do, I sit down with a stack of blank copier paper, and a pen, and write a series of essays, in crystal-clear handwriting, with the following titles:

- Hacking Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)
- A Brief History of War Games
- Zen Beer Garden (ZBG)
- Quarks, Gluons, and Electrons
- Obama and Iran
- Universal Diplomacy
- Cliff Dancing
- Open Borders and Global Basic Income
- Zen Banking Algorithm
- Enlightened Capitalism
- Department of Justice, The Military, and Hackers
- Psychiatrists Are Susceptible to False Alarm Fatigue
- High-Density Cyberbombs
- Unrequested Red Team
- The Confirmation Bias
- Overcoming the Confirmation Bias
- Yamba
- A Brief History of Paradigm Shifts
- Believing Before Seeing
- Don't Shoot The Enemy

Hacking Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)

One of my essays goes like this:

Several years ago, I was standing behind the podium of the War Room of the Pentagon, and I said “Hit it.” My colleague pushed a button, which launched a high-density cyberbomb that I had programmed, and it took the United States Ballistic Missile Defense system offline. It was just part of a war game, which was a waste of my time, I thought; I should have been out in the field, conducting real operations. But now, I’m grateful there’s no blood on my hands.

A Brief History of War Games

Another one of my essays goes like this:

War games are almost as old as warfare itself. The first war game evolved from a shouting match between two opposing generals. One of them shouted “I can beat you!” The other one shouted “No, I can’t beat you!” They both could beat each other, but neither one of them knew it. A crowd gathered around as each general explained why he could beat the other. Essentially, one general had a slight advantage in sea power, while the other had a slight advantage in land power. They bickered back and forth, and by the end of the day, they still hadn’t agreed, so they both stormed away and slept it off.

That night, one general dreamt of playing a board game with the other general, just for fun. In the morning, they met again. One general wanted to go to war. The other one wanted to play a game. After debating it, and after consulting with their advisors, they both decided to play a game instead. They both agreed that (1) the loser of the game would concede

without any fighting, and (2) this would be better, because then no one would die.

So, they played chess. It lasted several hours, and it ended in checkmate after one general slid a bishop past enemy lines and took a rook. The losing general immediately flipped over the board, stabbed the other one in the throat, then ran away.

Thus began The Byzantine War for The Sea. Lots of people died. Both generals survived.

After the war, the generals got together for a mountain hike. They found some hot springs and had a hotwash. While they soaked, they discussed everything that happened and learned how they could do better next time. Among many lessons learned, they learned that chess is a stupid game because it results in checkmate, which is stupid.

Open Borders and Global Basic Income

Another essay goes like this:

World peace will be marked by open borders. Countries will freely enforce their own laws, so long as they follow the bare minimal Constitution of Earth. If you don't like your country's laws, you can freely go to another country with laws you prefer.

Of course, there would be a challenge, because everyone's going to want to fly to the countries with the best economic opportunities. To prevent economic flight, we need to give everyone on Earth a basic income, say US \$1k a month, perhaps adjusted for local cost-of-living rates. Such a basic income will provide many benefits, both obvious and less obvious, at a reasonable cost, as discussed in published literature that is beyond the scope of this essay.

Jimmy

The next day, while writing essays, Jimmy, from the previous psych ward, enters F-Unit. He smiles, walks over to me, and sits down.

“Can I read what you’re writing?” he asks.

“Yes, please,” I respond, then hand him my stack of essays.

He reads every word, then eventually turns to me and says, “You’re a genius.”

“Takes one to know one,” I reply, while still carefully writing words upon my current essay.

“I’m from Iran,” he says.

I look up, and say: “I’m from Virginia.”

“I’m ISIS,” he says.

Having previously tonglened ISIS, I reply: “Me too.”

There is a pause. Then, I ask him: “Why are you here, in the psych ward?”

He says: “I’m your Iranian counterpart. They put us here so we could meet.”

I ask: “Are you a hacker?”

He replies: “No, I’m a DJ.”

Beginning of Negotiations

Jimmy doesn’t want to negotiate. He says he couldn’t care less about an Iran Nuclear Deal. He just wants a bigger microphone, so he can DJ bigger venues. I ask him how much a microphone would cost, and he says \$800 to start. I offer to buy him a microphone once we’re released, and he says that’s a start.

Continuing Negotiations

I try to further negotiate with Jimmy, but he keeps saying: “I need my microphone first.”

Challenge Coins

A *challenge coin* is a wartime, anything goes, shit’s fucked up, who the fuck are you, here’s proof, US Government identification card.

The challenge coin tradition originated during World War 2, and the original idea was that everyone in a military unit received a specially designed coin, tailored to their unit, and you’re supposed to carry it on you, at all times. Then, in an emergency situation, you can prove your group membership by presenting your coin. Sometimes, individuals make personal coins, which they give out as big thank-you gestures.

Challenge coins are also a drinking game. At a beer garden, you can compare coins with a stranger. Whoever has the most elite coin wins, and the loser has to buy the winner a beer.

Jimmy wants me to prove to him I that I actually hacked BMD. I told him, once released, I will show him my BMD coin—an Air Force coin that commemorates the BMD war game I hacked.

Exit

A few days into my stay at F-Unit, the psychiatrist and I have one final conversation. I vow that, once released, I will continue to take my “medication,” in perpetuity. Then, they release me.

In a bathroom, I don my Franciscan monk’s robes, check that I have my laptop, my phone, my American Spirit cigarettes, and my BMD challenge coin, then spend a few minutes arranging the collection of all my possessions in my back-packing pack, then walk out the front door, dropping the drugs they gave me into the trash, on the way out.

My father stands next to his parked Lexus, with the front passenger-door open.

“Good to see you, son,” he says.

But, I walk right past him, and step into Jimmy’s ancient Corolla. Jimmy tells me: “You’re my hostage now,” and we drive off.

“Turn off your phone, and hand it to me,” he says, and I comply. Now that my phone is in his pocket, he says “Let me see your coin.” I hand it to him. He inspects it, hands it back, then drives us to his favorite music shop.

Microphone

In Jimmy's tiny, basement-level apartment, in Arlington, Virginia, I hand Jimmy his brand new mic. He has a large vinyl collection, turn tables, huge speakers, and an impressive collection of cannabis flower.

"I didn't think you would actually pull through with the coin or the mic. A lot of people talk shit, and can't back it up. Fucking CIA."

"What do you mean, 'fucking CIA?'"

"Play dumb with me again, and I'll chop off your fucking head."

Pause.

Then I ask, "Can we negotiate now?"

"First let's drive to CIA headquarters."

"I don't think that's wise."

"Do you want a deal?!"

CIA HQ

He tells me to drive him to CIA HQ, with him in the passenger seat. I ask him if he could navigate and he just tells me to shut the fuck up and drive us there. I have no idea how to get to CIA HQ—only a vague notion of where it is geographically. It's not the part of Northern Virginia that I'm familiar with. And, the streets lack signs that say: "Turn here for CIA."

So, I drive and do the best I can. I get to the first uncertain turn, and look at him; he is gazing off to the right. "Do I turn, here?" I ask and he says: "Shut up and drive," so I turn right. "I knew you knew how to get to CIA." Then, following his unconscious directions, I drive us all the way there, right up to the point where we see the entrance to CIA HQ.

He says: “Just keep going straight. Thank you. Let’s go home,” and we drive back to his place. At this point, I believe he believes I am CIA. But does he suspect, believe, or know what I believe?

Cigarettes

On the car ride back from CIA, I exhale a plume of cigarette smoke, while Jimmy opens up his glove compartment, then pulls something out. He shows me a short-and-thin pack of cigarettes with the silhouette of a man on the front, and some wording in a calligraphic alphabet I can’t identify.

“What’s that?” I ask.

“Iranian cigarettes. We call them Souls. I’ll trade you a pack of Souls for a carton of American Spirits.”

“Sure,” I say, then we stop at a 7-eleven, and make our trade.

Then he says: “Don’t smoke it.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Don’t play dumb. If you smoke a Soul, I’ll chop your head off.”

Urhip

We are back at Jimmy's house, sharing a blunt, but it doesn't affect me much, because I'm already enlightened. But Jimmy had insisted, so I obliged.

I lay back on Jimmy's bed, listening to music blast through his speakers. The basis for the song is a classic house beat, but the song takes enjoyable, unpredictable turns, with throwbacks to Baltimore Club and D.C. Go Go, complete with electro drops. I would have expected such an eclectic mix to sound bizarre, but it somehow all comes together in such a way that I almost always feel I know where it will go next, but, instead, the music is full of pleasant surprises. It's Jimmy's music.

"How would you feel about negotiating?" I ask.

"I want to DJ the Middle East."

The Middle East is the most urhipster, underground music venue of Washington D.C.. Jimmy's music is genuinely good, but is it sufficiently urhipster urhip? I'm not familiar enough with music to know, but I have an idea.

"Could you DJ this Sunday?" I ask.

"It's closed on Sundays," he says.

"I know. Let's go tonight to book you for Sunday."

XYZ Promotions

During my travels, I discovered a formula for kickstarting decentralized Groupon promotions—which I named XYZ promotions. Assuming you have a great DJ friend, it works as follows.

You walk up to the owner or manager of a club, and say: “If I were to deliver to you X customers on a Sunday night, by DJing for you, how much would you be willing to pay me for that?” Let the response equal $\$Y$. I.e., the owner is willing to pay $\$Y$ to receive X customers. Take $\$Y$ and divide it by two: i.e., $\$Z = \frac{\$Y}{2}$. Keep $\$Z$ for the DJ, as profit. Then give each of the first X customers a coupon worth $\frac{\$Z}{X}$. The coupons are only redeemable if at least X customers show up. Also, it might be better to take a smaller profit in order to offer bigger coupons, but that’s just a matter of optimization.

The owner loves this deal because it is very low risk; the owner only pays out if the owner gets what they want. Now my friends are incentivized to recruit their friends to come to the club with them. And that’s the most fun way to go to a club anyway.

The DJ loves this deal, I love this deal, the owner loves this deal, my friends love this deal, and their friends love this deal. Win, win, all the way around.

The Middle East

Having told me I look ridiculous in my monk's robes, Jimmy insisted I buy a denim-on-denim streetwear suit at G-Star, so I did. With me donning my fresh, new suit, we enter the Middle East, and right away, I see my old hacker friend, Eric, from the Air Force, spinning the music. It's a house remix of *Zombie*, by the Cranberries.

I dance up to him, leaving Jimmy behind.

"Tharpa!" Eric shouts, and we dap over the table.

"I didn't know you DJ!" I shout.

"I do now," and he winks at me.

Jimmy catches up with us.

"Eric, this is my friend Jimmy. Jimmy, this is an old buddy of mine." I am delighted to make the introduction.

Jimmy and Eric dap, then Jimmy glares at me.

"Hey, I'll be back Eric," I say, then walk away with Jimmy to an unoccupied corner of the Middle East. He says he wants to talk outside. I tell him, we'll have to pay cover again if we go outside, and then he walks out.

Outside, I say, "Eric's going to hook us up with the Middle East for sure."

Jimmy slowly puts a Spirit to his lips, but doesn't light it. Then he pulls it out of his mouth, holds it, and says, "Are you really that fucking stupid?"

"What are you talking about, he's going to hook us up!"

"I told you not to play dumb with me."

"I have no clue what's going on."

"You really are that fucking stupid. We need to have a talk."

And then Jimmy explains *The Powers* to me, as we walk around the neighborhood.

The Powers

Most people around the world believe Snowden's a double agent. That is, he was working for NSA, and then betrayed NSA, becoming a double agent by informing the public about NSA's surveillance apparatus. But, the truth is, according to Jimmy, Snowden's a triple agent—he's been working for NSA all along, and now he's just pretending to be a double agent. The truth is, NSA's surveillance apparatus is stupefyingly more sophisticated and powerful than Snowden's "leaks" reveal. According to the "leaks," NSA doesn't have a grip on terrorism, and therefore NSA dragnets everyone. However, in reality, NSA is so good, they've narrowed down their search and are power surveilling every single person-of-interest with legion NSA intelligence operatives. When they surveil you, they don't rent out an apartment across the street and watch you with a telescope. They buy out the whole neighborhood and inject operatives everywhere into your life. They're your coworkers, your friends, they serve you beer at clubs, they're everyone. It's a massive gas-light attack. Nothing is what it seems.

The whole point of the "leaks" was to fool the terrorists into feeling safe. But, they didn't count on everyone else's counter-intel being so good. Iran swaggerjacked the United States and now they're gas-lighting all the Western intelligence operatives who are now stuck in the Middle East. The United States figured out what Iran knew, and what they were up to, and Iran figured out that the United States had figured it out, and eventually they both had total awareness of the situation. P.S. ISIS intel is plugged into American intel and Iranian intel.

In this environment, where no one trusts anyone, and everyone can see what everyone else sees, the only way to carry forward is by running cells, where operatives only know the identities and roles of their cell mates. If you need to send a

message to another cell, you might need to leave your bathroom light on, overnight.

Furthermore, the *war* has turned into a kind of live-fire *war game*. Symbolic bartering and negotiations in D.C., and elsewhere, are backed up by live-fire kinetic actions in the field. In this war game, everything's a symbol. When a bishop slides behind enemy lines and captures a rook in the game, there's consequences. For example, now that Jimmy has that \$800 microphone gift, it means the New York Times is now amplifying Jimmy's voice. This morning, they published an ISIS apologist as an op-ed—which pissed off a lot of Americans, but hey it's the New York Times.

Jimmy concludes by telling me he had been watching Eric, and he was certain Eric was Russian intel. And, in his words: “Your homie Eric here, mister CIA numero dos, means the CIA truly runs the Middle East and I didn’t have a fucking clue, but now I know, thanks to you.”

Time slows. Holy shit. Everything makes perfect sense. Why hadn't I seen this before? But, then I become concerned.

“Jimmy, what do cigarettes represent?”

“They’re hostages. When you light up a Soul, an Iranian dies. When I light up a Spirit, an American dies. Now that I know you’ve captured the Middle East,” Jimmy says, “I want to be on the American Jumbotron: American TV, American radio, and millions of high-quality American hits on YouTube. That’s my final offer.”

I say: “I don’t know how to get that for you.”

“Figure it out, or there’s no Iran deal. And also, I chop off your head.”

An Idea That Won't Work

Back at Jimmy's apartment, I have an idea that makes me wince, but it just might work. I say: "I have an idea for getting you on the Jumbotron, but you might not like it."

Jimmy says: "You're a fucking idiot. I know what you're thinking and we'd both be dead before we even got arrested."

Then Jimmy explains, in the tradition of the LulzSec and AntiSec hacking campaigns, the obvious way for any sufficiently talented hacker to get airtime on the American Jumbotron, is to vandalize the web pages for CIA, NSA, DoD, etc. If your vandalism conveys an enticing message, the media will pick it up, and your message will be broadcast. And, if you're capable of nuking BMD USA, you're probably capable of defacing a few poorly secured public-facing WordPress installations.

The way I saw it though, there was a problem. To evade attribution of such a crime, you would have to setup proxies before you're being surveilled, and you'd also be wise to setup blue-pill honey pots to throw your scent into turtles-all-the-down rabbit holes. But, since I was already being power surveilled by The Powers, there's no way I could setup proxies and honey pots, to evade attribution. In other words, if we were to pull this off, we'd certainly be caught.

But rather than going to prison, we would be killed before even committing the crime. Jimmy says: "You need to understand the rules of World War 0."

World War 0

Jimmy explains the following. Ever since globalization, whenever a new technology creates a new domain of warfare, there's a fresh power vacuum, and a new world war erupts. World War 1 was the fight for the sea, and the advent of shooting bombs from underwater. World War 2, was the fight for the air, and the advent of dropping atomic bombs from the air. World War 3, the cold war, was the fight for space, and the advent of dropping atomic bombs from space. World War 4 was the fight for cyberspace, and the advent of cyber-kinetic nuclear warfare. Finally, World War 5 is the fight for *mindspace*. WW5 is our current war. It is the final war, the real war to end all wars. And, since we've been fighting WW5 the entire time, we may as well call it World War 0.

And then Jimmy says: “To end WW0, we must balance The Powers. Your game with BMD proved to everyone that cyberpower owns land, sea, air, and space. You’re America’s MVP from WW4, you’re a legend, and, honestly, I’m surprised we’ve actually met in the flesh. Don’t smile you fuck, there’s blood on your hands and I’m MVP ISIS. The war in cyberspace is a war of mutually assured destruction. If we start defacing pages, then everyone else is going to do that too, it’s going to be unpredictable chaos in mindsphere, and everyone’s probably going to die because shit’s going to escalate and when God-knows-who starts to feel like their ideology is about to die, they’re going to start shooting off everyone else’s nukes. Cyber operations are against the rules of engagement for WW0, so think of a cyberless bottom-up plan, you fucking idiot genius.”

Begin Training

“While we wait for your idiot-genius brain to figure out how to get me on the Jumbotronon, I’m going to train you like a Persian soldier,” he says, and blows out cannabis smoke towards the sky.

Assassins

“Hashish is sacred. The English word assassin comes from Persia, hundreds of years ago, and literally means hashish smoker. The original assassins lived in the mountains and communed with God by smoking hashish. Only occasionally did they come down to the cities, to balance The Powers.”

“I’m not going to kill anyone,” I say.

“This is WW0. We’re going to assassinate concepts and ideas.”

The News

Jimmy and I are watching FOX news. He teaches me how to read between the lines of whatever's on TV, to consciously unwrap the subliminal messages from The Powers.

"These days, movies, TV shows—everything on the Jumbotron—is produced *on demand* to present programming in *rapid response* to current events. That 3D Marvel movie that just came out today. It didn't take years to produce; it took days. I guarantee you the movie's about us—preparing the public for a potential Iran Nuclear Deal."

Then he continues. "Almost everyone's a Manchurian drone. They receive their instructions from the Jumbotron. Most people have very little free will."

"But if you switch to a different channel, you can choose different programming, right?"

"First of all, people rarely switch channels. But yes, there is a limited opportunity for drones to choose their programming. However when the programs argue with each other, it only serves to convince the drones there are only so many allowable perspectives. It requires plenty of free will to think outside official narratives."

"What official narrative do you want on the Jumbotron?"

"To end all war, we must balance The Powers."

Fight Night

We're drinking beer and smoking hashish, when Jimmy switches the channel to a UFC fight. "Oh look, it's an Iranian vs. an Irishman tonight. You must be Irish," he says. I nod.

He says: "Legend has it, you know jiu jitsu. Do you really know jiu jitsu?"

I say: "I know a lot *about* jiu jitsu."

"I bet you a hundo, the Iranian wins," he says. I decline the wager.

We watch the fight. It goes almost a full fifteen minutes, and then the Iranian submits the Irishman with a funky chokehold.

"Ha! I told you! You better watch your back Yana Zendo, I know jiu jitsu!" and he punches me in the arm.

"Wait!" I shout. I point to a little Red Bull logo, rotating in the lower-right-hand corner of the screen. "I have an idea."

An Idea

He says: "Fucking tell me your idea."

"I need a minute," I say.

He says: "Talk now."

"My sister's a marketing executive at Red Bull, she's our doorman, and right now she can't sell Red Bull in Iran because of the sanctions. But once the sanctions go away, Red Bull will debut a new art collective that exemplifies the new, unified image of Red Bull that they want to market in Iran, the United States, and worldwide. Red Bull will throw huge parties all over the world, and you'll DJ the city of your choice. My buddy Eric DJs in Tehran. I'm responsible for bringing Americans to the party, you're responsible for bringing Ira-

nians to the party, and everyone splits the costs, profits, and discounts via XYZ Promotions.”

He points his finger at me, and says: “If you lie to me, I am going to kill you right now.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Are you CIA?”

“Why are you asking me?”

“Are you CIA!? Don’t lie to me.”

“Yes,” I respond.

“Are you lying to me?”

“No,” I respond.

“Why do you want Eric to DJ Tehran?”

“To follow God’s will, for world peace, to balance The Powers, for reverse game theory, First Loser Wins, to promote the American way of life...”

“Shut up.”

He pauses, then asks, “Should I kill you right now?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because, if you kill me, there’s no deal.”

“Are you ISIS?”

“Yes, and...”

“Shut up... Tell me, what’s reverse game theory and what’s First Loser Wins?”

Reverse Game Theory and First Loser Wins

In game theory, players attempt to achieve their objective by behaving rationally. But, in *reverse game theory*, players design games, such that when rational players play those games, it leads to overall favorable outcomes for all rational players.

For example, consider the game First Loser Wins. The game proceeds in a series of four rounds. Each round, one or more players comes in first place, one or more players comes in second place, and so on for third place, and so on. Within

a round, each player who comes in second place earns a *near-victory token*. At the end of the fourth round, everyone who has the second-most number of near-victory tokens, wins the game. Rational strategies for this game produce large, multi-way ties.

On one hand, you might think you would need to get all players at the table to agree to play First Loser Wins, but actually, the game is backwards compatible with existing games of global domination. For instance, say you're playing Risk. If other players believe you're winning, they will team up against you, and you will lose. But if you aim for second place, you will hopefully be a part of the winning coalition that knocks out the first-place player. Therefore, it's rational to aim for second place, and consequently, if everyone is rational, no-one will achieve dominance, and the game will eventually end in an all-way tie.

With regards to the Iran Nuclear Deal, if Iran simply gets to program the American Jumbotron, then the United States Government loses, which (a) the United States simply won't tolerate, and (b) everyone will gun after Iran thereafter, because Iran is now the #1 power. But if Iran lets the United States DJ Tehran, then both Iran and the United States lose, in a tie for second place, and, therefore, both win. It's a mathematically sound strategy for balancing The Powers.

Jimmy's Response

Jimmy ponders my words, for a few minutes, looks at me, and tells me, "Now you're ISIS."

Kathryn

Jimmy turns on my phone. Dozens of text messages flow in. Everyone in my family was texting me, and a few friends too, all wondering where I was, and was I OK, and oh, by the way, we've filed a missing person's report, and the police are after you now.

Jimmy dials my sister Kathryn, on speakerphone.

"Kathryn, I need a favor."

"Are you manic?"

"I'm enlightened."

"Are you OK?"

"I'm fine, please just listen"

There's silence, then she asks: "Am I on speaker?"

"No. I'm negotiating the Iran Nuclear Deal, and I need Red Bull's help. I think we can both agree that there's at least a very small chance that I really am negotiating the Iran Nuclear Deal. Even if the probability is only 0.00001%, then it's worth it to pursue the deal because world peace is on the line. And if it turns out I'm delusional, there will be no harm."

"There would be harm. If I indulge you in your delusions, you'll just become more delusional."

"Will you just listen to my idea? You'll find it harmless."

Silence. Then I continue.

"Red Bull sponsors a new art collective that exemplifies the image Red Bull wants to sell. We throw a party and we split the profit. That's it."

"I'm not going to help."

Silence.

"If you say deal, I'll turn myself in, and that's part of the deal... just say deal."

Silence. Then, she says, "Deal..." Then, "Please don't hang up."

Jimmy hang ups.

Jimmy's Signature

Jimmy won't let me use my laptop, so I write down the deal on a piece of paper, and Jimmy signs it. I ask to trade Souls for Spirits, but he says, "Not yet. We need your boss's signature, and then it's a done deal."

"Who's my boss?" I ask.

"Your father, you idiot."

My Parent's Condo

I use my key to enter my parent's condo in Northwest D.C.. The lights are on, and the news is on the TV.

"Hey Mom, hey Dad," I say, as I walk into the living room.

"Tharpa!" my mother shouts, and runs over to me, and gives me a hug. "Where have you been?" she asks.

"I'll explain soon, right now I need to talk to Dad."

"He's on the phone."

And I turn to see my father walk into his bedroom, with his phone to his ear, and he closes the door behind him.

"Dad! I need to talk to you."

"Hold on a minute, I'm on the phone."

"Dad! I need to talk to you right now."

Silence. I turn to my mother, she asks again: "Where have you been?"

"I'll tell you, but let's wait for Dad."

Father

My father comes out of his bedroom, I ask them to sit down. I explain everything to them, then pull out the signed deal, and ask for my father's signature.

He says, "I need a minute to think about this..."

And then, there's a knock on the door. My mother stands up, walks over to the door, opens it, and there's two police officers.

Oh shit. Why didn't I anticipate this? I look around, looking for ideas, there's a fire escape right next to me; I could just hop out the living-room window. But, a better idea comes to mind, and I run into my parent's bedroom and lock the door.

The police must have rushed in, because they're knocking on the bedroom door, and saying: "We need you to come out."

Searching for the right coin

In my parent's bedroom, I turn to look at the stand presenting my father's collection of the dozens of challenge coins he's earned over the years. At the top left is the personal coin of a one-star Air Force General. It's General Sam Bellow's coin. Although the coin only has one star on it, it's more valuable than it looks. Yes, it's an old personal coin, but Sam Bellow is now a retired four-star general—and, formerly, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"We need to talk to you Tharpa," my father says.

I'm concerned though that if I were to present that coin to someone, they might not recognize its significance, or they could pretend not to recognize its significance. I need to capture an undeniably powerful coin.

"Let us in!" my father shouts, and I hear the door banging.

The next coin simply has "CIA Directorate of Operations" engraved upon it, with all the color and minute flourishings of a genuine CIA challenge coin. My father once told me, the coin is very rare. Hardly anyone in the CIA even has this coin.

I hear a slam against the door, so I panic, grab the coin, and hop out the bedroom window, onto a fire escape—suddenly realizing this coin is way too powerful. But, it's too late; I must escape.

Escape

I run across the street and hop into Jimmy's car, parked right behind the cop cars. Then, as calmly as I can muster, I say, "We need to leave now."

Jimmy doesn't say a word, and slowly un-parks his car, then drives away at the speed limit. I direct him towards Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

If you're tuned in to the military drinking sub culture of Washington D.C., then you know that Old Town Alexandria is the most friendly place to be a drunk sailor, airman, soldier, or marine.

"You didn't get his signature," Jimmy says.

"No, but I can go above the chain of command. Just so you don't freak out at our destination, I need to tell you about *superrationality*."

Superrationality

During my travels I came across Douglas Hofstadter’s formalization of superrationality, and then discovered its relationship to jiu jitsu and trusting trust. But first, I need explain the traditional notion of “rationality.”

In game theory, a player is “rational” if, and only if, the player’s actions are optimal towards achieving an objective. In traditional game theory, rational players never trust other players. This lack of trust unfortunately leads to problems, such as cliff dancing.

One of the ways to overcome the problems of traditional rationality is by employing *superrationality*. A superrational player is a trustworthy rational player who can identify superrational players, and who trusts other superrational players. According to legend, jiu jitsu masters are superrational.

Legendary jiu jitsu masters are:

1. Honor-bound
2. Fearless
3. Skillful
4. Determined
5. Peaceful
6. Always ready to sacrifice themselves for the greater good

All jiu jitsu masters deterministically follow the exact same code of conduct. You could say, they all “run the same program.”

A key to the success of jiu jitsu is superrationality. It is therefore important for jiu jitsu masters to be able to reliably identify each other, so they can take advantage of superrational strategies. Jiu jitsu masters use the “Introduction Protocol” to identify each other.

To wit, jiu jitsu masters loudly announce that they are jiu jitsu masters. But, so do liars and people with delusions of grandeur. Jiu jitsu masters prove to each other that they are jiu jitsu masters by behaving in ways that are very difficult for non-masters to behave. It is essentially an *interactive proof system*.

Jimmy says: “You do know jiu jitsu.”

I say: “No, it’s just a metaphor. We need to go beer-garden hopping tonight, and I’m going to use superrationality to find a doorman to accept our deal. The program I’m going to run may appear chaotic, but it’s going to be necessary to authenticate myself, since although our doorman is probably expecting us, our doorman won’t know who I am.”

Booty Basement

Jimmy parks off King Street, and I take him to Booty Basement—a tiny, underground bar where I’ve never seen military. The doorman is wearing a bullet-proof vest that says “Security,” and after showing IDs, we walk into a nearly empty bar. I activate ZBG.

“What are we doing here?” Jimmy asks.

“Getting drunk. It’s necessary for superrationality,” I say.

“Why here?”

“Because there’s no military.”

“You idiot, this bar is Iranian military.”

I laugh, and then he slaps me.

“Did you notice how the doorman let me slap you? Next time, it’s going to be a knife to the throat, if you don’t tell me why this bar is empty. What did you do at your parents’ house?”

My mind is blank, and then I realize it’s my CIA coin. I start thinking about what to do next... Then I feel someone brush against me, I check my pocket, my coins are gone, and

someone places my coins on the table, between Jimmy and me.

“Holy fucking shit, you captured the CIA! What an idiot,” Jimmy shouts, and laughs. He reaches over to pick up my coins, but I grab his hand. He looks up at me calmly.

“You’re in Iran. Let go,” he says.

“Stop. You’ve got the United States in war-game checkmate, and if you hold those coins for much longer, the United States is going to abandon this war game, and it’s going to be total war—World War 1, 2, 3, 4 all at once, and everyone’s going to die, and needless to say, we’re both going to die on the spot. I don’t know how much time we have, but you should give back those coins now.”

Then, the doorman walks up to us, and says: “What’s going on?”

“He’s trying to steal my coins,” I say.

The doorman asks Jimmy: “Is this true?”

Jimmy lets go of the coins, I put them back in my pocket, and we start drinking.

Rook

Once we get sufficiently drunk, we walk about a half mile down the street, towards the waterfront. We approach Rook, an Irish pub, where all the US military go to drink.

Jimmy says: “This is bad for me.”

I say, “Be cool.”

The doorman lets us in, and I activate ZBG and superrationality. The bar is empty, except for a few people here and there, and a group of 9 gentlemen, and one lady, all sitting along a long table, clearly drunk, singing drinking songs, and having merriment. They look like marines, except their hair is slightly too long.

Now it’s my move. I walk up to the look-alike marine table, and say: “Hey, are you guys marines?”

One of them looks at me and shouts: “Fuck yeah!”

I say, “Can I buy you guys a round?”

They look at each other, consensus arises, and they say “Yes!”

So, I buy them beer, they thank me, and they continue their drinking songs, I join in for just one song, then leave. They continue their merriment. Jimmy and I sit in the back, drinking beer.

A guy from outside the marine-look-alike group runs up to me, and says “Hi!” so I buy him a drink and we have small chit chat. One thing leads to another, and our challenge coins are on the table, but I didn’t pull the CIA coin. I pulled my BMD coin.

He says, “I win, you owe me a beer!” and laughs and slaps the table with his hand.

I feign contempt. He has a one-star general coin—a coin some one-star had given him for a good briefing at the Pentagon or something like that, whereas my coin represents my role in ending WW4.

I say: “No, I win. Look at my coin,” and then I explain the intricate symbolism pervading the coin, and how it was a part of a hacking operation with far bigger consequences, and I do this without revealing any classified information, but with sufficient detail that he should be able to read between the lines and understand what my coin represents.

He says, “You owe me a beer.”

I say, “Try your plastic coin on those guys,” and point to the look-alike marines at the table.

He says, “Fuck you.”

According to ZBG, and the Jiu-Jitsu Honor-Defense Protocol, it’s time to bounce this guy. Or, maybe he’s bouncing me. Either way, I must proceed the same way. I say, “Do you want to take this outside?”

He accepts my invitation.

Footnote

According to one school of Tibetan Buddhism, once you're enlightened you're supposed to live your life according to a book titled, *So Now You're Enlightened* (rough translation). The book says, you should never use violence. But then, in a footnote in one of the appendices, it says: "Violence is OK when it's necessary" (rough translation). Enlightened violence is referred to as "wrathful compassion."

Outside

As soon as we're clear of the doorman, he throws a right hook, but I duck under, and tackle him. We tussle, I end up on top, raise my fist to strike, then invite him to surrender. He accepts my invitation, so I let him go. He stands up, straightens out his jacket, and walks away, without turning back.

Now the doorman won't let Jimmy and me back inside, and I wonder if it might be game over. I suggest to Jimmy we just hang outside the bar. He's concerned the police will come. I say, "Those marines inside, they're not really marines. And if they're not marines, then Rook probably isn't going to call the police. We have to take the risk."

We're just standing outside, freezing our asses off, so I ask Jimmy, "If I smoke a Spirit, does it kill an American?" He says no. Then I ask, "If you smoke a Soul, does it kill an Iranian?" He says no. So, we trade cigarettes and smoke.

A few minutes into our cigarettes, Jimmy says: “You told me you didn’t know jiu jitsu,” and I nod. He refrains from threatening my life.

The lady from the group at the table steps outside. “Can I borrow a smoke?” Jimmy offers her a Spirit.

“What was that fight all about?” she asks.

I laugh, and say: “Well, he thought his coin outranked mine.”

“Can I see your coin?” she asks.

“Do you have a coin?” I ask.

“No,” she says.

“I don’t have a coin either,” I say.

“Fine,” she says.

There is a pause.

“Hi, I’m Jimmy,” Jimmy says.

They shake hands.

“What do you do for a living, Jimmy?”

“I’m ISIS,” he says.

We all laugh.

Then, I look at her, and say, “He’s not joking, he really is ISIS. And, I am too, and also CIA. We come in peace.” Then, I hand her my BMD coin.

She studies it, looks up at me, and asks: “Where were you stationed?” And I tell her. Then she asks: “What was the outcome of the war game?” And I tell her.

She laughs, and pulls out her coin. It’s a Secret Service coin.

“I have the Iran Nuclear deal,” I say.

I pull out the signed document, and hand it to her. She studies it for a few minutes.

“How do I know this is real?”

I pull out my Souls and show them to her. “I’ve got Iranian cigarettes.” Then she reaches fast and swipes the cigarettes from me. I look at Jimmy. He looks OK. She looks at the cigarettes, then pulls one out.

“Don’t smoke it,” I say.

She lights her lighter and pulls it toward her Iranian Soul. I pull out my CIA coin.

“Stop. I’ve got a CIA Directorate of Operations coin.” I say, and she lets her lighter go out.

I continue: “I’ll trade you the CIA for the Iranians.”

She says: “Deal,” and we make the swap. Then, Jimmy and I run away.

Waterfront

We run all the way to the waterfront. It’s a grassy park, with a volley-ball court, paved trails, and trees. We pause to catch our breath.

We look at each other, I smile and extend my hand for a handshake.

Jimmy stands up straight, and we shake hands.

“Job well done, soldier,” he says.

“Thank you,” I say, “Now, can we please trade cigarettes, so we can go home.”

His smile drops, and he says: “I can’t do that. We’ll have to wait until I receive confirmation the deal’s gone through.”

“What are you talking about, we just submitted the deal directly to Obama.”

“I said we’d trade cigarettes, once the deal is signed by your boss, which didn’t happen. Let’s just go home.”

“Give me the Spirits,” I say.

“Yana Zendo, you’re my friend, they’re safe with me. Why would I smoke a Spirit, while I’m waiting to DJ America?”

I start walking towards him.

“Don’t cliff dance with me,” he says, “I’m crazier than you can imagine,” as he reaches for his pocket, and I tackle him. We roll around on the ground, back and forth, he ends up on top of me, but I roll him, reversing it, and gain mount position, he manages to punch me, we roll around, I take his

back, reach into his pocket, grab his car keys, let him go, and I sprint away towards his car.

He chases me, but I'm faster. He shouts out, "The deal's cancelled Yana Zendo! You just fucked up!"

But I run. I know he's full of shit; I already have his signature. I'm approaching his car, pop his trunk, reach in, grab the Spirits, toss the Souls into his trunk, drop the keys on the ground, and sprint away.

Metro Parking Garage

Under a stairwell, in the basement of a Metro parking garage, I wake up early in the morning. It seems right around sunrise. The birds are chirping and it's killing my brain. I've got a killer headache, and all the adrenaline is gone. I begin crying. Is it because I've pulled off the Iran Nuclear Deal? Is it because I jeopardized it? I don't know.

I check and make sure I have the carton of Spirits. I do. But, then I notice there's a pack missing from the carton. I realize, I never took the pack of Spirits from Jimmy's pocket. He still has a pack!

Groaning, I fumble around in my pocket for my phone. I pull it out, and think about calling Jimmy, wondering what he's going to say. Maybe I just destroyed the whole Iran Nuclear Deal last night. Maybe I should call Jimmy, maybe I should try to mend what I've done. But what weapons does he have? What other Iranian or ISIS soldiers are roaming right now?

My phone rings. It's Jimmy. I want to answer, I want to get those Spirits, but I can't bring myself to answer his call. I want to fix the deal, but I'm terrified of Jimmy. I'm more afraid of losing my own life than I am afraid of losing the last pack of Spirits, afraid of losing the deal. And although I recognize my fear, I'm turning away, because I do not want to die. And, that's when I realize, I'm not enlightened anymore.

Enlightened people don't cower in fear—they run towards it, for the benefit of others.

I decline the phone call.

Epilogue to Part II

The depression following a schizoaffective-bipolar-manic attack is pretty bad. It lasts between three to six months, and you're sporadically wondering if it's better just to die or to continue living another few months in this state of being.

My own enlightenment was the foundation of all my other beliefs. Reflecting, I don't think I was ever enlightened, except for perhaps a few brief moments after my mind popped, and before ego took over. So, with enlightenment gone, the other beliefs started to crumble. Over a 12-month, back-and-forth journey, I tried to figure out what really happened, and what was imaginary. But there are at least a few things I know for sure, including: (1) Jimmy and I really did negotiate, (2) I really did submit a few pieces of paper to someone outside of a bar who claimed to be Secret Service, and (3) I'm too afraid to answer Jimmy's phone calls.

Part I

Origin Story

Mike Tyson

I grew up on the tall tales of my mother and father. For instance, once, during the time when I was in preschool, my family was stationed at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, which is adjacent to Las Vegas, and 83 miles southeast of Area 51, according to Google.

In Vegas, if you go to a comedy show, and if you laugh really hard, at the right times, with a lovable, genuine laugh, then promoters will find you, and give you free tickets to other shows. Once, my father received front-row tickets to a title fight on the Vegas Strip. I'm not sure what boxing has to do with laughing, but that's how the story goes.

My father sat down with his buddy, and peaceably enjoyed the first fight of the night. But, shortly before the second fight, a large man in a suit approached my father, and told my father: "You'll have to move, that's not your seat."

My father looked at his ticket, then looked back up, and said: "This is my seat."

"That's Mike Tyson's seat. You'll have to move."

Of course, my father thought the guy was full of shit. Vegas is full of all types of flim flams. My father said: "Fuck you."

The large man walked away, and a few minutes later Mike Tyson showed up, in front of my father, and said, "Excuse me, you're sitting in my seat."

My father's buddy, elbowed him, and whispered, "Let's go!" and began to stand up. My father pushed him back down into his seat, looked to Mike Tyson, and said, "I have the tickets."

The usher arrived, there was a conversation, and Mike Tyson ended up sitting in the second row, directly behind my father.

While I believe most of this story maintains a certain

amount of credibility, I am skeptical of how the story ends. As my father tells it, during the title fight, in the jumbotron above the ring, he could see Mike Tyson glaring down at him.

Red Team

My father was a colonel in the Air Force. Among many roles, he served as the Chief Strategist for the Air Force (briefly), the Commander of Air Space and Ranges (the Air Force's proving grounds for fighter jets), and he served in an unknown role in the Pentagon's Skunkworks (presumably the Pentagon's Air Force unit specializing in secret, experimental aircraft).

But, before all that, in one of his earliest roles, my father was tasked to lead a small "red team" as part of a war game at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Within most war games, there's a blue team and a red team. The blue team represents the "good guys" and the red team represents the "bad guys." In this particular war game, they asked my father to figure out a way to hijack a C-5 cargo plane, and then do it—without the blue team ever having the knowledge that, hey, it's just a war game.

So, he kidnapped the Base Commander's wife, took a polaroid of her holding up the day's newspaper, showed that picture to the Base Commander, and asked the Base Commander to escort him to a C-5, which the Base Commander did, probably shitting himself the whole way. And, with a fake bomb cuffed to his hand, my father boarded the plane with two teammates, and persuaded the pilot to taxi for take-off.

They didn't expect the copilot to pop up out of nowhere, pointing a pistol at them with a shaky hand... so one my father's teammates shouted out: "Knock it off! Knock it off! Knock it off!" which was the code word for the red team to surrender, and let everyone know it was just an exercise.

My father says he was pissed off that his teammate aborted the war game too early.

Al Gore and The SecDef

In one of my father's last roles in the Air Force, he spent six months leading the effort to organize the 1996 Defense Ministerial of the Americas—a conference for the most senior leaders of the various militaries of North and South America.

This is the story of how he nabbed a picture with Al Gore, the story of how he intimidated the United State's Secretary of Defense, and the story that probably explains why he never made general.

So, to tell the story, after about six months of careful planning, it was just a few weeks before the conference would take place. My father met the United States' Secretary of Defense, in the Pentagon, to brief him on the conference.

A few minutes into the briefing, the SecDef interrupted my father, to request a minor change to the organization of the conference. This request annoyed my father, but he went along with it, and said: "Yes, we'll make that change."

A few minutes later, the SecDef requested another change, and, annoyed, my father said, "OK," and so on and so forth, while my father slowly grew in anger and insult.

Towards the end of the briefing, my father told the SecDef: everyone would be required to wear to a badge, including the American VIPs whom *everyone* would know, such as Vice President Al Gore.

The SecDef said it would be silly to make Al Gore wear a badge. My father composed himself, and replied: "If we allow Al Gore to skip a badge, then all the other Presidents and Vice Presidents of the other countries will want to skip a badge, and when we deny them, they'll be insulted."

The SecDef insisted on giving Al Gore a pass, at which point my Dad threw his right elbow onto the table in front of

the SecDef, and, believe it or not, he shouted: “OK, let’s arm wrestle! If you win, we’ll do it your way, but if I win we’ll do it my way.”

A few moments passed, then the SecDef said, “OK, we’ll do it your way.” The rest of the briefing passed without anymore requests from the SecDef.

A few weeks later at the conference, my father nabbed a photo with Al Gore, fake smiles and all. It’s unclear from the photograph whether or not Al Gore was wearing a badge.

Bill Clinton

As far as I know, Bill Clinton is the only person who has ever intimidated my father. The story goes like this.

My father’s brother, Uncle Steve, was a campaign manager for Bill Clinton when he was running for president. And, when Bill Clinton became President Clinton, Uncle Steve became the United States’ Attorney for the District of Rhode Island.

Thus, when President Clinton hosted his first series of Christmas parties, in 1993, Uncle Steve was able to hook my father up with a ticket. Uncle Steve couldn’t attend because he was in the middle of a trial.

The way my father tells the story, at some point during the party, a military aide found my father and said: “It’s now your turn to take a picture with the President.”

The aide led my father through various hallways of the White House, and finally opened a door. My father checked his suit, composed himself, and stepped through the door, expecting to walk into a greeting with the President of the United States of America. But, when he walked through the door, he was merely stepping into the back of a line of about a hundred suits, all waiting to take a picture with the President.

The time passed slowly, and finally it was my father’s turn to enter the final door to take a picture with the President. When he stepped through the door, there was President Clin-

ton smiling—or perhaps grinning, or perhaps fake smiling. He grabbed my father’s hand, shook it, and said: “Good to meet you Bark. But, where’s your good-for-nothing brother?”

My father is known for his wit, charm, and sporadic, intense anger—but in this singular circumstance, the cleverest thing my father could think to stammer was: “He’s in Rhode Island keeping the criminals off the streets.”

President Clinton laughed, and a photographer snapped a photo of President Clinton’s staged smile outshining my father’s staged smile.

Ever since my father framed that picture in a wooden frame, it has been resting on a shelf in my parent’s library, next to a framed picture of my father shaking Al Gore’s hand.

So, that’s the story of the one time, that I’m aware of, where my father was intimidated. I realize the story is anti-climatic, but that’s just how it happened. I don’t know why he was intimidated. But that’s the story.

Lastly, my father’s life slogan is: “Don’t take no if yes is the right answer,” and I’m no Bill Clinton, so imagine being the poor bastard raised by my father.

Flight nurse

My mother was a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. While my dad was working behind desks on various military bases, my mother was a flight nurse—flying around the world, taking care of service men and women, while in flight on hospital air planes. She once came close to delivering a baby in a helicopter.

Iran

As the story goes, in 1979, my mother just happened to be in Iran when revolutionary forces overthrew Iran's government and began collecting American hostages. At Tehran, American planes of all kinds were scrambling to help evacuate as many Americans as possible.

But, the commander on my mother's plane gave the order to taxi before it was fully loaded. My mother objected, saying they needed to wait until their plane was full. The commander attempted to squash my mother's insubordination with threats of demotion, so she pushed the button that opened the back cargo ramp. With the cargo ramp open, Americans who had ran out onto the tarmac were able to board the plane before take off.

After it was all said and done, the Air Force demoted the commander, and promoted my mother.

Grandfather

My mother's father was an electrician in the United States' Navy during World War 2. After the United States dropped the bombs in Japan, Japan surrendered, and my grandfather joined the occupation of Japan. He says the Japanese people were very kind to him while he was there.

After the war was completely over, an officer approached him with an envelope labelled: Top Secret. The officer explained that my grandfather must decide whether to accept or decline these Top Secret orders, before he was even allowed to see the orders inside the envelope. My grandfather accepted the orders, and thus he found himself wiring together the first set of atomic bombs after the war.

First grade

Once, when I was six years old, I drew a magnificent picture of a US Air Force airplane dropping bombs on me. It was for the cover of my latest book, titled *All About Me*. My parents were frightened, but my teacher assured them it was OK. "Look," she said, "He's smiling."

That same year I experienced my first exposure to programming, with the LOGO programming language, at Hickam Air Force Base Elementary School, two miles from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

5th grade

In the fifth grade, I began teaching myself to program in QBASIC. One of my first pieces of software was a game called Airstrike. I wrote the following instruction manual:

This game was created by Tharpa Thaye in 1995. In the game you are a jet fighter pilot. In the last battle (Level 1), your radar broke. So you will not know where the enemy is. Your objective is to get in shooting range (the enemy is in shooting range if he is 5 meters dead ahead of you) with the enemy. Then, you must shoot the enemy. You only get one shot so make it good. If you hit the enemy you win. If you pass, crash into, you miss the enemy, or if he hits you, you lose. Good luck!

Seventh grade

I was terrified of my parents' wrath, but in the seventh grade I really wanted to break out of AOL's walled garden, so I took a risk and wrote a contacts-list application with many features including usernames and passwords. I stored all the passwords in plaintext, so I could see them later when no one was looking.

I showed my mother my latest creation, and asked her to create an account on my app. She obliged, but when it prompted her for a password, she looked at me sternly, told me she wasn't going to type in a password, and left the room.

Later, I showed my father the app, and when it prompted him for a password, he looked at me, winked, and typed in his AOL password.

Tenth grade

In the tenth grade, I won a national programming competition. The same year, I made a website to protest my school's flagship educational program. The school expelled me, and my parents laced me with punishment—which shocked me, because I thought my parents believed in the sanctity of justice and the First Amendment. I sunk into depression and had to repeat the tenth grade.

College

I was accepted to only one college, Virginia Commonwealth University, and, free from my parents, I made it my mission to party as hard as possible and drink as much as possible. Despite succeeding in my mission, I graduated #1 in my class in 2007, with a degree in computer science.

My undergraduate thesis weighed in on the “red-pill” / “blue-pill” debate of the time. In hacking, a *red pill* is a snippet of software that attempts to determine whether or not the software is under attack. In contrast, a *blue pill* is a snippet of software that attempts to trick red pills into thinking they’re not under attack, when, in fact, they actually are under attack. I concluded that red pills have a theoretical advantage over blue pills, because blue pills introduce timing anomalies that are fundamentally difficult to hide.

In metaphorical terms, if someone is trying to trick you, and you’re trying to figure out if you’re being tricked, then you have a fundamental advantage.

The centerpiece of my thesis was a red-pill that measured the timing effects of “high-density cyberbombs” that only explode upon contact with blue pills. A prestigious journal published a politically correct version of my thesis.

High-density Bombs

A *high-density bomb* is a tiny bomb that has a huge effect. For example, the atomic bombs used in World War 2 were high-density bombs. 9/11 was a high-density bomb.

In cyberspace, hackers sometimes have the opportunity to send a slow, perhaps imperceptible, stream of information at a target, which causes the target to become overloaded. Once overloaded, the target is effectively dead and can no longer perform its function. It would be like if you had the capability to shutdown Wikipedia using only your laptop.

But, for a high-density cyberbomb to work, you must identify a specific vulnerability in the target—like the Rebels and the Death Star. Discovering a vulnerability is probably the trickiest part of the whole attack. The precise nature of the vulnerability determines what bits the attacker must send to trigger the explosion, how many bits the attacker must send, and so on.

Furthermore, there will be some point after you've launched your attack, perhaps minutes, hours, or days, after which the defenders will discover the flaw your attack is abusing, fix the flaw, and tell all their friends about the flaw and its fix, thereby rendering your particular bomb impotent thereafter.

It is a common practice within cybersecurity circles to boost sales by spreading fear, uncertainty, and doubt. With that said, high-density cyberbombs scare me. Perhaps I have drank too much of my own kool aid, and everything is going to be groovy.

The War Room

A little known fact about MIT, is that MIT's largest laboratory, Lincoln Laboratory, resides on an Air Force base in Lexington, Massachusetts, 12 miles northwest of Boston. LL works almost exclusively for the United States' Department of Defense (DoD), performing secret research and development.

After graduating from Mason, I joined LL as an associate staff member. Among many adventures, I once found myself playing the red team in a war game. From the podium in the War Room of the Pentagon, I said "Hit it" and a high-density cyberbomb knocked out the United States' ballistic-missile-defense system.

LL sent me to Dubai to share my hack with the world at an academic conference specializing in research on surviving cyber-kinetic nuclear warfare. The trip to Dubai doubled as my honeymoon with my new wife, Lena.

General Sam Bellow

LL hosted a conference once, and General Sam Bellow, retired Vice Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, was scheduled to give a talk. My father has three master's degrees and I happened to know that he coauthored one of his theses with Bellow, back when they were majors at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. The thesis is titled *The Proper Way to Blow a Whistle Within The DoD*, and it details how one can go about improving things within the DoD, even when the DoD is resisting improvements.

My father had retired from the Air Force several years earlier, but he maintained an active security clearance doing who-knows-what-for-who for the government from a civilian seat, therefore I was able to get him a ticket to the conference at LL.

My father made sure to sit in the front row for Bellow's talk, so when Bellow came out on stage, the first thing he saw was my father, which made Bellow start laughing. Thinking my father was now working for LL, and knowing my father is who my father is, Bellow assumed everyone at LL must know my father. Bellow's first comment into the microphone came with a grin: "I'm really glad to see Bark Thaye here in the front row, because I was a little insecure about giving a talk to a bunch of geniuses. But now I know, I've got nothing to worry about."

But, of course, no one there knew who Bark Thaye was, so the joke fell flat. I was sitting towards the back. When my colleagues next to me heard Bellow's joke, they looked at me, and I said, "That's my dad," and I laughed.

Whistleblower

Once, when I was working at LL, I decided to blow the whistle on a problem I thought deserved a whistle. I studied my father's thesis, and decided the best action would be to call my father. I explained to him that I needed to blow a whistle, and who (in general terms) I needed to alert, but I didn't reveal any classified information.

My father said OK, then somehow arranged a meeting with a senior member of DoD leadership. We walked into the Pentagon together, and my father navigated the corridors, until we arrived at the office we were looking for. A secretary asked us to wait, and when it was our time, we stepped into the office.

"Bark!" the senior leader said, as we entered. They shook hands with smiles. "Please, sit down, sit down" he said, ushering us into seats.

"Check this out," he said, pointing to a small framed picture, on his desk. The picture was of him and my father, shaking hands. My father beamed.

They exchanged small talk for a few minutes, then, eventually, the senior leader asked why my father called this meeting.

My father explained that I needed to blow a whistle. The senior leader frowned, and asked me to tell him what the problem was. So, I told him. It took a few minutes to explain.

When I finished my spiel, there was a pause. Then, he said something, I don't remember what, but it was certainly a disapproval of my judgement to blow a whistle. He opened up the big, bottom drawer of his desk and beckoned us to look inside. It was a pile of framed photographs—pictures of him shaking hands with various people. He said, "Look, I keep all sorts of pictures here, for whenever an old friend shows up." Then he picked up the picture of him and my father and threw it in the drawer, and slammed it shut.

Harvard

When I was in the second grade, my family moved from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii to Boston, Massachusetts, because the Air Force and Harvard teamed up so my father could research national security at The Kennedy School of Government. They didn't award him a master's degree, because, according to my father, he already had more degrees than a thermometer.

Years later, LL gave me a full scholarship to study at any Boston-area school, fulltime. While applying to Harvard for a Ph.D. in computer science, I came across a question on the application that asked me if I had any Harvard alumni in my family. I called my dad and asked him what I should respond with, since I knew he was a Harvard fellow, but not a Harvard graduate. He said: "I have yet to donate a penny to Harvard, so I wouldn't recommend listing me."

I followed my father's recommendation, Harvard accepted me, and I joined. My master's thesis described a mathematical defense against a certain class of high-density cyberbombs, complete with a few theorems and formal proofs. But, before I could complete my Ph.D. dissertation, and after I had earned a master's degree, I was lured away from Harvard, LL, and the Air Force to join Silicon Valley on the quest to become a millionaire.

Twitter

I joined Twitter on a four-year contract that ended up being worth about \$1 million in stock. As a member of Twitter's Risk Team, I investigated-and-mitigated risks to Twitter's revenue stream, including click fraud, bots, and advertiser retention.

DARPA

Shortly after I joined Twitter, DARPA invited “boutique” hackers from across America to submit proposals for revolutionary cybersecurity research and development. DARPA is the military agency that invented the Internet, GPS, and stealth airplanes.

I proposed to fund myself and a colleague to develop and test a new defense against high-density cyberbombs, essentially picking up where my Harvard thesis left off. DARPA awarded me a six-month, six-figure grant, so I ended up working two full-time jobs for a period of time in Silicon Valley. I named my cyber defense: *Beer Garden*.

We built Beer Garden and tested it against a slew of attacks, targeting a variety of web applications, and it worked! Well, it only worked for half of the web applications we tested. The reason it didn’t work for the other half, is because the “bouncer” component was prohibitively inefficient for web applications implemented in certain programming languages. But, in principle, with bespoke optimizations, Beer Garden could be adapted to suit any web application.

The Pentagon invited my colleague and me to present Beer Garden from their courtyard.

Betrayal

Say one day you find out your mother is actually a secret agent, who has been working against you the whole time.

On one hand, it's devastating because your mother has betrayed you. Your mother has even betrayed you on the grandest scale. But it's also devastating in another way—it shatters your basic assumptions about the world and forces you to wonder what other lies you have fallen for... nothing is certain... everything is groundless.

This is what it was like when Snowden revealed NSA was spying on everyone—when I learned that the virtues of the United States Government—the virtues that seem to justify the existence of United States Government—simply don't exist. I didn't know who or what to believe anymore. With the realization of profound disillusionment, I wondered: what other lies had I fallen for...

Crossing the Rubicon

I smoked cannabis for the first time shortly after Snowden's revelation. I had hitherto avoided cannabis because you can't smoke and maintain a security clearance at the same time.

But, now that I knew I would never work for the government again, I decided to smoke a joint with Lena and her brother Wilden. That first time, we went out for a walk for ice cream, and, on the way home, Wilden had the idea that we should race, but whoever came in second place would be the winner. It was a leisurely walk, and ended in a tie.

But, that was just a speck of joy. Following Snowden's revelation, I became anxious and depressed. I was tweeting my thoughts on NSA's betrayal to the world—and, therefore,

I was tweeting directly to NSA. I developed the suspicion that NSA had hacked my computer and could detect my thoughts via the side channel of my keyboard typing patterns. Does my typing cadence betray my deepest secrets? The probability seemed so small, but the risk was so great. Should I try to type slower?

A helicopter hovered over my house.

A black sedan followed me home from work.

Lena begged me to see a psychiatrist, and when I did, the psychiatrist listened to everything, and said: *maybe they are really going after you.*

Buddhism

I didn't know what to believe anymore, so I went searching for truth and found Buddhism. The first Buddhist story that caught my eye goes something like this:

The Buddha and his retinue rolled into a village one day and the Buddha offered a teaching. After the teaching, someone in the crowd said to Buddha: "Every week a new spiritual teacher shows up and offers a teaching that contradicts all the previous teachings given by all the other teachers. Why should we believe you?"

The Buddha said: "Great question. Basically, it's up to you to figure out what's true and what's not. Skepticism is good. But, at the same time, it just might be the case that the only way for you to see the truth of my teachings is to try out my advice and see if it actually works." And then the Buddha gave a bunch of advice.

I ran to Lena and told her the story, while she listened and smiled. In retrospect, I think she was probably relieved

that I had found joy in something. Paranoia, anxiety, and depression challenge even healthy marriages.

Buddha's first teaching

The legend of Buddha's first teaching goes something like this:

About 2,600 years ago, in India, a baby boy named Siddhartha was born into a family of warriors. As Siddhartha grew up, his family shielded him from the harsh realities of life. He didn't encounter old age, sickness, and death until he was 29 years old—and when he did discover old age, sickness, and death it was a crisis for him.

He needed to know the answer to life, the universe, and everything, so he left his wife and baby, and spent the following several years figuring it out. His journey culminated with his sudden enlightenment, and he became the Buddha.

Shortly after his enlightenment, the Buddha gave his first teaching, known as The Four Noble Truths:

1. Life is *duhkha*, which roughly translates to “shitty.” Life is characterized by suffering, dissatisfaction, anxiety, stress, discontentment, and so on. Even if you’re happy, and have everything you think you want, there’s at least still an underlying uneasiness you can’t figure out how to escape. Why can’t you sit quietly and relish the boring present moment?
2. The reason life is shitty is because of desire. Whatever present moment you find yourself in, you want a different present moment. The quest for entertainment haunts you.

3. You can overcome a shitty life by letting go of desire.
4. You can learn to let go of desire by following my advice.

And then the Buddha gave a bunch of advice.

I ran to Lena and told her the story. Her smile flinched and my stomach sank.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, even though I knew what was wrong; Siddhartha left his wife and baby for enlightenment at the age of 29. I’m 29.

“Nothing,” she said.

Egolessness

“The alaya or kūnshi is the fundamental state of our existence or consciousness before it is divided up into ‘I’ and ‘other’ or into the various emotions.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

I walked into Buddhism with the memory of a scientific understanding of “egolessness.” I had began contemplating egolessness as a teenager after learning basic physics trivia, then forgotten about it over the years, perhaps because everyone else ardently disagreed with my understanding of egolessness.

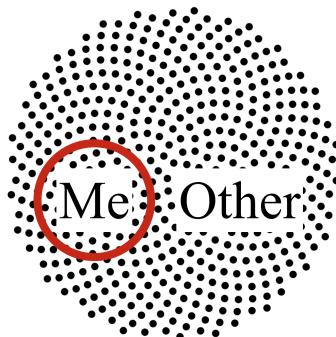
Here, *ego* refers to any notion of self, and *egolessness* refers to the notion that at the deepest level of reality, egos are illusory, imaginary, and nonexistent.

While my above definition of egolessness may not be particularly helpful, it’s actually pretty simple to explain and understand with the help of a few diagrams and just a little bit more exposition. To wit:

Of the many sound ways of conceptualizing the universe, we can conceptualize the universe as a set of particles. Your

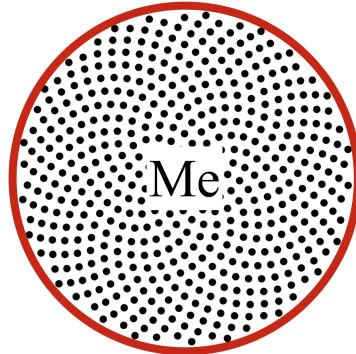
brain has unconsciously drawn a boundary around a certain subset of particles, and labeled that subset “me.” All the particles outside of you are labeled “other.” See Figure 79.1.

Figure 79.1: “Me” vs. “other”



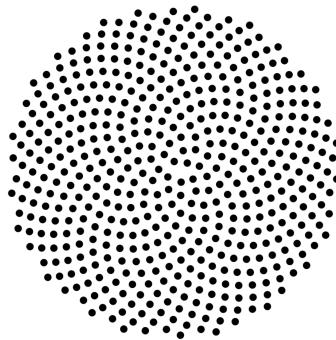
But, it is possible to see yourself as being one with the universe, by removing the imaginary boundary between you and other. The boundary is imaginary in the sense that it exists only in living brains. If you were purely at peace with yourself, other, and the entire universe as a whole, your brain would no longer have the need to imagine a separation between self and other, and you would become one with the universe. See Figure 79.2.

Figure 79.2: “Me,” at one with the universe



But being at one with the universe is not true egolessness, for there is still a notion of “me,” even though you are identifying with the entire universe. Rather, true egolessness is absent of a notion of “me” entirely. See figure 79.3.

Figure 79.3: Egolessness



I was surprised to discover that Buddhism’s notion of egolessness matched my teenage insight. In Buddhism, egolessness is variously referred at as shunyata, emptiness, absolute reality, nirvana, and so on.

According to Buddhism, nirvana is a very nice place to be, but although we would like to hang out there, we are stuck in samsara: the world of illusion, imagination, and delusion. Basically, every experience we experience is created in our brains. When photons strike the rods and cones inside your eye balls, it triggers signals to your brain, which then draws an image, which you see. And so on, for your other senses.

Everyone in samsara is crazy, in the sense that everyone holds various delusion beliefs as facts—chief among them, the belief that we truly exist, at the deepest level of reality.

We are figments of our own imaginations; we don't really exist; and, we are fundamentally egoless.

I ran to Lena, and tried explaining it to her, but the metaphors that worked for me weren't working for her. So, I explained to her how our marriage was fundamentally imaginary: the only reason we think we're married is because a bunch of other people think we're married too—it's all in our brains.

I could see it in her eyes: she understood.

For me, egolessness was a relief. It was a truth I had given up on years ago, and had now rediscovered.

For Lena, it was a crisis. For the next 10 minutes, I assured and reassured Lena that I loved her, that our marriage was real, and I would never leave her.

Crazy Wisdom

On Netflix, I did a search for Buddhism and found a documentary called *Crazy Wisdom* about the “bad boy of Tibetan Buddhism.” The film stunned me into adherence.

Crazy Wisdom is about a Tibetan monk named Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who became enlightened and cultivated a following amongst hippies in America in the late 1960’s. He ate meat, had many girlfriends, and he drank himself to death. And, he invited the world to co-create an enlightened society based on the recognition that we are all basically good. He named his movement: Shambhala.

According to the documentary, Trungpa Rinpoche’s crazy-wisdom teaching style confounded most people, because in a world where everyone is crazy, sanity appears crazy.

Here was an enlightened person living life to the fullest. I saw no contradiction, and I was relieved by the thought that I could be like him and party hard, rather than sitting in lotus posture in a cave for the rest of my life.

The Three Yanas

“... you might find yourself behaving calmly in the *hinayana*, kindly in the *mahayana*, and then freaking out in the *vajrayana*.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

After the film, I researched Trungpa Rinpoche to figure out which of his books I should start with. Of his many books, I learned that he had written one trilogy in particular, spanning over 1,500 pages, covering the three yantras: the *hinayana*, the *mahayana*, and the *vajrayana*.

You begin at the *hinayana*, which is the path of liberating yourself from your own suffering.

Once you've sufficiently liberated yourself, the next step is the mahayana, in which you train to become a *bodhisattva*—a saint—someone who dedicates their life to benefiting all sentient beings.

Finally, once you are sufficiently saintly, you enter the vajrayana—the secret path of sudden enlightenment. The only way to enter the vajrayana, it is said, is to find a guru—an enlightened vajrayana master—who transmits the secret teachings of Buddhism to you, in person. Trungpa Rinpoche warned that the vajrayana is dangerous. Specifically, he cautioned that if you enter the vajrayana without the preparation of the hinayana and mahayana, you would likely go crazy.

So, I bought the trilogy and dove into the hinayana.

Hinayana

“On the Buddhist path, the hinayana is like the ground, or the Earth. Without that foundation, you cannot develop an understanding of the dharma [the teachings] or establish basic sanity, but on that ground you can build the wisdom of the Buddha. As a beginning student of the buddhadharma, you have to start with the basics.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

From my reading, the hinayana seemed to be about learning to lead a spotless life by cultivating discipline, mindfulness, awareness, and contentment while refraining from harming others, quelling your own neuroses, meditating regularly, understanding egolessness, and living by the five precepts: refraining from lying, stealing, killing, sexual misconduct, and consuming intoxicants.

The principal meditation technique of the hinayana is called *shamatha*, and is very simple: you sit with good posture, gaze down, and focus your attention on your breathing. Inevitably, you will notice that you are thinking, and when you notice

that you are thinking, you are supposed to say “thinking” to yourself, then bring your attention back to the breath.

I was down for the hinayana in a big way, except I couldn’t bring myself to meditate. It was too painful to sit still and when I forced myself to try, on the few occasions that I did, I couldn’t focus on my breathing at all. Rather, there was just a waterfall of thoughts that wouldn’t stop.

Cannabis chocolate

Lena and I shared a small chocolate bar infused with cannabis. We turned on a PBS documentary about Buddhism, and, around 30 minutes into it, I started feeling anxious. A few minutes later, the room felt more 3D than usual. I turned to Lena and she looked like a cartoon, and I knew I was going to die. I keeled over, died, and another ego from within my brain took over. The following poem describes what happened next.

There is a part of my brain that wants to be alone,
But I have shut it up,
Blocked it off,
Shut it down.
And now it’s out of touch with reality.
And now it has control of my body.
Where the fuck am I?
Who the fuck am I?
Who the fuck are you?
When was the last time I was alone?
Why haven’t I ever been alone in my life?
Is this a joke?
Is this real?
Are we robots?
Who are you again?
You keep whispering “It’s ok... It’s ok... It’s ok”
But this is not ok.
And I can tell you’re lying.

You're just acting right now.
Everyone is acting.
I don't know anyone.
Everyone's out to get me.
I need a divorce.
Then I can be alone.

The next morning, I explained to Lena: “No, I don’t want a divorce. That wasn’t me. Another ego from my brain temporarily took over my body, I love you, I’ll never leave you.”

Anxiety

“We would like to overcome our anxiety, but first we have to realize that there is no technique and no trick for doing so. The only way to deal with it is by means of discipline.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

My anxiety got so bad, I couldn’t bear to go work one morning. I told Lena I had to quit right now—which would mean we’d be walking away from half a million dollars since I was only half way through my contract with Twitter.

Lena supported my decision and we concocted a plan to travel across the country, camping along the way, then move in with her sister in Virginia.

We made it as far as Albuquerque.

Albuquerque

It was night, and we were driving on a highway towards Albuquerque, alone on the road. I was gushing to Lena about the realizations I'd had since I began studying Buddhism—trying to pull her along with me on my spiritual journey. Excited, and innocent, I accidentally reminded Lena that we're not really married.

Lena erupted, and I found myself floating in my seat. Colors darted and flickered. I was completely at peace, seeing clearly how Lena's pain was totally unnecessary. I was one with the universe, and I could viscerally feel the truth of the Four Noble Truths. All I wanted was to ease her suffering, and ease the suffering of everyone else on Earth.

I vowed to dedicate my life to liberating everyone from the unnecessary suffering of samsara.

The colors and the floating dissipated, but, remembering the logic of my realization, I tried talking Lena into seeing the peace I saw, but it didn't work. She drove our car to the airport, she got out, and flew to Virginia.

Towards Virginia

“According to the mahayana, love is entirely without aggression. Love includes accepting others and being noble, reasonable, openhearted, resourceful, and free of possessiveness. With love, you are totally gentle, utterly kind, thorough, wise, fearless, and willing to commit yourself to any situation. You are warriorlike, industrious, tireless, and never take time off for yourself. When you need to give your help to others, you are always willing to do so.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

“If you are a practitioner of the buddhadharma [Buddhist teachings], you do not take any time off.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

“You are neither too enthusiastic about understanding Buddhism nor are you too disinterested.”
– Trungpa Rinpoche

I was surprised to find myself actually somewhat relieved to be on my own. I drove towards Virginia, taking my time on the trip. Every day, along the way, I would spend hours intensely studying the hinayana and mahayana, and the rest of time practicing the hinayana and mahayana, around the clock, without break. Trungpa Rinpoche’s book on the mahayana was dense, but I chugged along anyway.

I started feeling continuously joyous for the first time since the Snowden revelation.

Virginia

I made it to Virginia, and Lena and I reunited with a hug. We promised each other we would save our relationship, and her sister welcomed me into her home.

But I couldn't bear to be there because I felt so dominated by their energy. They were used to me being one way, but I was trying to break free of my old self and be a new person, a bodhisattva. I couldn't be the joyous person with them, the way I was when I was alone. My anxiety came back stronger than it had ever been.

Perhaps my third night at Lena's sister's house I woke up in the middle of night and started vomiting and bawling from anxiety, in the bathroom attached to our bedroom.

Strangely, I had unconsciously packed my suitcase the day before, so, to leave all I had to do was to grab my suitcase, step out the door, and say "I'll be back once I'm enlightened."

Lena hired a lawyer and filed for divorce.

Charlottesville

"You may not achieve complete liberation right away, but you can begin the occasional back-and-forth journey from confusion to freedom." – Trungpa Rinpoche

I looked up meditation centers in Virginia, and found that Charlottesville hosts more Buddhists centers than anywhere else. A few hours later, I arrived in Charlottesville to discover that the University of Virginia Computer Science Entrepreneurship Club was hosting a large party.

Focusing on tasting the flavor of every moment, and searching for opportunities to help others, my anxiety melted away.

I found myself in front of a group of student hackers telling tall tales of hacking glory. Then I asked them: are you ready for a riddle?

If you plug two computers into each other via an ethernet cable, do they become one, single computer?

They couldn't figure it out. I tried explaining it to them, but I couldn't figure out how to break through. It felt like I was pointing at a computer and saying: "Look! It's a computer! Why can't you see the computer!?"

Someone proposed we grab beers, so we grabbed beers. Then, I became drunk, and bumped into someone passing by, who asked me if I had weed. I smiled, said yes and we smoked together in an alley.

It turned out he was without a home and he was also addicted to alcohol and he was also in a lot of physical pain. Leaning into the my bodhisattva vow, I reached out and empathized with his pain, which actually helped alleviate some of his suffering. It was working!

I leaned in as much as I could, soaking up all the pain that I could.

We camped out in the alley, I gave him pith instructions on the hinayana, and when I woke up the next morning, I looked at him and became full of unbearable pain.

I had to do something about the pain. I called my sister, and started to cry as our conversation began. She urged me to go to the emergency room, and I agreed, hoping they would give me pain killers, and fearing that they would lock me up in a psych ward.

I realized I must be doing something wrong with the mahayana, and resolved that once I made it out of the hospital, no matter how long it took, I would escape to a Shambhala retreat center.

Emergency Room

“Decorum is the way to keep your precision, to keep your sense of dignity, your sense of head & shoulders... With hinayana decorum, whatever you do should be done simply... whatever you do should be done with mindfulness & awareness.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

I composed myself, and carefully packed all of my belongings with the precision of the hinayana. I walked to the ER while meditating. When I arrived, I informed the worker at the front desk that I was experiencing a tremendous amount of psychosomatic pain.

Eventually, I found myself in a hospital bed, being interviewed by a doctor who didn't believe it was possible for someone to absorb someone else's pain. Plus, he remarked that I seemed awfully calm for someone who is claiming to be in a tremendous amount of pain. I offered to display my pain, and when I did he ran out of the room.

Slowly, the pain dissipated and eventually they discharged me. The next day I drove to Karmê Chöling—a 700-acre Shambhala retreat center in rural Vermont—where I expected to find a genuine, true, actual enlightened society.

Karmê Chöling

“Although you might try to come out clean, the blame always starts with you.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

“How often have you turned away, because you feared you might discover something terrible about yourself?” – Trungpa Rinpoche

“So it is extremely important to be willing to open yourself to yourself.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

It took me several days at Karmê Chöling before I realized it wasn't the paragon of enlightenment I expected it to be. So, I made it my mission to enlighten Karmê Chöling. I moved into a house called *Ethics* (with neither permission nor admonition), renovated it (with neither permission nor admonition), and began selling sunscreen, chocolates, cigarettes, and wine from *Ethics*—which is when I began receiving admonitions. Then, they kicked me out for sexual harassment.

For a long time, I was in denial that I sexually harassed someone at Karmê Chöling. I used to think that denial was when someone denied something they knew to be true. But actually, denial is a form of delusion, where you refuse to accept reality. It wasn't until years later, that I realized the way I attempted to flirt at Karmê Chöling had been violating. Not only that, but now I can also see other ways I've perpetrated sexual misconduct at other times in my life, as well. I am sorry.

Spiritual Friend

“The role of the spiritual friend is to tell you how bad, how wretched, and how miserable the samsaric world is, and how fortunate you are to be able to see this and attempt to come out of that world. The role of the spiritual friend is to show you how you can help yourself and others, but the actual helping is done by you. The role of the teacher is to bring up trouble for you, and your role is to have to deal with it. In that way, the teacher student relationship is workable and becomes a delightful dance. The teacher might play the music, and you might dance to the rhythm. That is the principle of the spiritual friend.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

From Karmê Chöling, I started driving west. A few days in, I received an email from Matthew. I had met Matthew at Karmê Chöling (he was just passing through), and he had mentioned then that he was planning to start a modest meditation retreat center in Telluride, Colorado. In his email, he said he had just launched his retreat center, and he invited me to be his first visitor. Perfect timing. So, I drove to Telluride.

Telluride is a small ski-resort town, nestled in a valley between steep mountains covered in wintergreens, in the southwest corner of Colorado. But it was summer, so the population was low. My GPS could only get me so close to Matthew’s retreat center, because the center was off a series of unnamed dirt roads.

Matthew was living in a small log cabin, on a giant property owned by an art patron. Many artists lived on the land, in various accommodations, and a strangely lit, winding-maze of an old limestone mine hosted galleries and workspaces for

artists. Steel artists, there, built kinetic Burning Man sculptures. Others painted, sewed prayer flags, etc.

I arrived at the small log cabin, described in my instructions. Sitting outside the cabin was Matthew in khaki shorts and no shirt, wearing flip flops, using a pencil and compass to draw tessellated geometry upon a piece of paper.

He welcomed me in, and one of the first things I noticed was his book collection, stacked vertically. The book on top was titled, *Vajrayana Secrets*.

Matthew said I was free to read the book, but he wouldn't teach me anything about the vajrayana because he wasn't a guru. Instead, he offered to be my spiritual friend, and I said "Yes!"

I had difficulty meditating at the Telluride retreat. My anxiety had come back. I could barely force myself to sit. I asked Matthew for help with my meditation practice, but rather than offering words of wisdom on how to better force myself to sit, he suggested I landscape the land surrounding the cabin.

It took me a few days to achieve the desired landscape, and when I was done, Matthew surveyed my work, and said "Nice work. We need to leave now. Our landlord is evicting us."

It turned out that while the owner of the cabin didn't mind hosting Matthew, the landlord did object to turning their property into a retreat center.

Valley View Hot Springs

We drove to Valley View Hot Springs, a nudist, nature preserve in central Colorado. A few days in, we were hanging out in the smoking shelter, when a crew of about 8 people rolled in, in bathrobes, with a gigantic glass apparatus, and asked: "Have you ever dabbed before?" I learned right then that dabbing is an elaborate approach to smoking cannabis concentrate, and will get you higher than you've ever been before. So, I dabbed, and blasted off, and learned that this group of eight was in the early stages of creating a meditation retreat center in Black Hawk, Colorado, an hour west of Denver. We asked if they needed help, and they said: "Yes!"

Black Hawk

They had jerry rigged a campground on a plot of mountainous private land, with fresh spring water bubbling up. Our landlord was collaborating with the meditators to build the center, and he claimed that his spring water was the purest on Earth, corroborated by lab results I never saw, but which everyone believed in.

We must of stayed there two weeks, but then Matthew and I left to visit to Fort Collins, Colorado, two hours north, near the Wyoming border. I don't remember why.

Rosabella

In Fort Collins, Matthew and I split up, and I ended making eye contact with a woman, sitting alone on a patio to an Ethiopian restaurant, sipping coffee from the smallest mug I had ever seen. The patio was covered in construction materials, and a sign on the door said: “Closed.”

We smiled. I said, “Hello.” She said, “Hello.”

She told me I looked familiar, and asked if we knew each other. I said I don’t think so. Then, she told me her name is Rosabella, and she invited me into her restaurant, for coffee and tea.

We told each other stories. Rosabella told me how the barber next door to her restaurant had recently retired, so she had leased his old barbershop, tore down the wall, and was now expanding her restaurant. She expressed her wish that she could feed me, but she didn’t have any food at the moment.

I told her about the Black Hawk project. Also, I had just launched a website, TravelingBuddha.org, to help join together traveling spirituality teachers with students who would like to host them: teachings in exchange for a few days of food and shelter.

She loved the idea of Traveling Buddha, and told me a story or two about her adventures with spirituality and traveling.

Then, a man walked into her restaurant carrying, what turned out to be, an industrial strength juicer—a gift for Rosabella. She stood up smiling, and said “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!” The benefactor expressed his gratitude to Rosabella and said he was happy to have come across the juicer, in some random fashion, and knew Rosabella would love it, and would use it to heal people with her food. Then, he said he had to run, so he left.

Rosabella laughed, and said, “Now, if we only had fruits and vegetables, then I could feed you.”

Ten minutes later, someone showed up, this time with another gift for Rosabella—a large bowl of fruits and vegetables.

Rosabella laughed, and said, “Now, I can feed you!” She made fresh juice for me, pointing out the various healing properties of the various ingredients. Finally, before offering me the juice she made, she held the cup in her hands, closed her eyes, and said a prayer.

After I had juice with Rosabella, I said “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!” and I was on my way. But Rosabella, said “Wait. Before you go, here, take this,” and offered me a twenty dollar bill. I tried to turn down her gift; she didn’t know I had plenty of money, but she insisted, so I took her gift, and I was on my way. On my way out, she told me: “Your spiritual energy is rising.”

Northwest Washington D.C.

My anxiety caught up with me once again. I had run out of spiritual retreat centers in Colorado, so, I retreated to my parents’ condo in Washington D.C..

My parents were worried about me—my new obsession for Buddhism, my seemingly reckless adventures, my cannabis habit, my cigarette habit, and so on. But, Buddhism didn’t seem soooo bad. My father said something along the lines of: “No one’s ever heard of a Buddhist bank robber.” Plus, I took on the responsibility of doing the dishes after every meal, as part of my hinayana practice, so maybe Buddhism was having a wholesome influence on me.

But then, I showed my parents the film *Crazy Wisdom* and they became afraid that I was joining a religious cult. I tried to assure them that even if Shambhala is a cult, you don’t have to worry about it, because they they expelled me. It didn’t help.

So, the three of us lived together. I continually attempted to mediate their arguments, and when the arguments turned on me, I took it as an opportunity to practice inner peace. In Tibetan Buddhism, there's a legend of a great spiritual master, who always traveled with an obnoxious, hot-tempered tea boy. The spiritual master insisted on having the tea boy around, so that the master could have the opportunity to practice. Without a challenge, there's no way to practice.

A few weeks into living with my parents, I had a nice routine going. My parents had finally accepted my eccentric Buddhism, perhaps because my practice involved me doing lots of chores for them.

I was sitting 40 minutes a day, and I had reached a milestone in my meditation practice: I no longer dreaded going to the cushion; rather, the cushion was starting to feel like home. Then, one evening, while sitting: my mind popped.

Enlightenment

“The enlightenment flash of the eleventh bhumi does not take place by acting, but by sitting. Previously you may have focused on actions, on working with sentient beings, and on developing a compassionate attitude, and so forth. But at the actual time the birth of enlightenment takes place, you decide to sit, just like Gautama Buddha. The point at which enlightenment occurs is not so much while you are sitting as a discipline, but when you begin to sit for relaxation.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

“Supposing, if you become enlightened. Then what? Of course automatically the answer is then, of course, I have become Buddha. Enlightened. You are about to become an egomaniac.” – Trungpa Rinpoche

I can only remember so much about this experience, because amnesia set in shortly thereafter. But, I do remember viscerally being one with the universe, I knew I was enlightened, I could see through story, and I felt silly for sitting down—it were as if sitting meditation were a joke that I was tricked into and all the buddhas were laughing with me. So, I stood up.

A cascade of realizations flowed through my mind. I realized how important I was: an enlightened military hacker who has the ability to empathize with everyone. I could see the powers of Earth, trying to intimidate, negotiate, attack, retreat, and so on. And, I could see my role in the center of everything—a universal diplomat who represents all people equally.

I stepped outside my bedroom, and I bumped into my mother. Our eyes met, and I was seeing ourselves through all four of our eyeballs. I stood up on the island in our kitchen and proclaimed myself enlightened to my parents.

Part III

The World Peace

Prologue to Part III

Mahatma Gandhi referred to the Hindu epic *The Bhagavad Gita* as his “spiritual dictionary.” Gita tells the story of Arjun, a warrior, from a warrior family, who is about to embark upon an epic battle. Suddenly, he realizes we’re all one, and everyone is his family, including the so-called enemy. Thus, he makes plans to inform everyone about the situation, so that we can all cease fire, since we’re all family. But, his charioteer reveals himself to be Krishna, a god, perhaps the God, and Krishna tells Arjun: “You must shoot the enemy.” They have a long discussion, lasting several hundred pages, and Krishna finally convinces Arjun to fulfill his duty and shoot the enemy.

Scholars and adherents are divided on whether or not it’s a metaphor. But, Mahatma Gandhi did recruit Indians to join the British forces during World War 1.

Enlightenment

December 18, 2015

About twelve months have passed since I submitted a few pieces of paper to someone who claimed to be Secret Service. According to the news, Iran and the US have both signed a nuclear deal, but it’s unclear when it will go into effect.

I find myself sitting on a meditation cushion, in a large tent with about sixty other people, two weeks into a four-week intensive meditation retreat in southeastern Colorado. My mind pops, and I’m enlightened, yet again.

Expulsion

At the retreat, I informed my meditation instructor that I'm enlightened. She told me, no you're not enlightened, it's just a *nyam*, a temporary experience, a brief glimpse of enlightenment that will go away soon. I said, OK, fine, sure, I'm "temporarily" enlightened, so you better rush me to the pulpit and let me expound upon the teachings of the Buddha, before it goes away. She said no, I insisted, then I demanded, one thing led to another, and now I'm in a psych ward, yet again.

Psych ward

December 20, 2015

My father is here; he flew all the way to Colorado, just to see me in the psych ward. They called him, because I foolishly listed my parents as my emergency contacts on my insurance.

He says: “Don’t you remember being depressed? Do you remember that you accepted the fact that you have schizoaffective disorder?”

I say: “First of all, it’s an opinion and not a fact. And, maybe I do have schizoaffective ‘disorder,’ and maybe the Buddha and Trungpa Rinpoche had it too. Maybe, only people with schizoaffective ‘disorder’ are capable of enlightenment. I’m not saying that’s necessarily true, but perhaps it’s a possibility.”

He says: “You’re only thinking these thoughts right now because you’re manic. Remember...”

I slam my fist on the table, and shout: “I am not manic! I am enlightened!”

My father watches the “nurses” take me away. Inside a windowless room, they strap me to a table. I resolve never again to be strapped to a table.

Coloring

Over the previous twelve months, I discovered that the quickest way to escape a psych ward is through the fire escape. But, if you go that route, then the police go after you, and life becomes more annoying than it needs to be.

It took me a while to figure out that the best way to escape a psych ward is to spend a few days pretending the sedatives are working, and behaving in a manner consistent with psychiatry's insane notion of sanity. Said behavior limits the opportunity to socialize with other prisoners.

Thus, when Marco approached me, and said, "Hi, I'm Marco," while I was coloring a unicorn in a coloring book, I ignored him. Coloring is long, tedious work, but psychiatrists like to see coloring, so I colored.

Yes, I'm looking to rendezvous with secret agents. I don't know who, yet, but I'm hoping The Powers will send me at least one, so I can reengage my mission for the World Peace. But, if The Powers want me to meet a secret agent, it's going to need to be outside the psych ward. Those are my terms.

Release

December 23, 2015

After a few days of my “sanity” charade, they release me. I organize my belongings in my backpacking pack, don my monk’s robes, and step outside the perimeter of the prison, through the gate, to freedom.

My father is waiting for me, and his eyes grow wide when he sees me. He runs up to the front desk, and says to the receptionist: “My son’s not ready to be released. Look, he’s wearing his monk’s robes! He’s still delusional!” The receptionist is unsympathetic. My father insists to see the psychiatrist, but the receptionist says that’s not possible, then my father demands, one thing leads to another, my father is screaming at the receptionist, and she threatens to call the police.

My father screams: “This is horse shit!” and the police show up. He’s yelling at everyone, including the police, and the police explain there’s nothing they can do. Finally, he exits the building with me. He’s frowning, but I’m smiling, because I love that I’m free and my father is powerless to have me locked up.

We go to a diner for a silent, early breakfast. I’m listening for messages from The Powers on the TV, but I all hear is static idle chatter. I text Jimmy, asking about the Spirits and the Iran Nuclear Deal. I offer to pay for breakfast, but my father treats.

Rosabella

My Twitter contract was worth about \$1 million in stock. I left halfway through the contract, yielding \$500k in stock. Half went to Lena with the divorce, leaving me \$250k in stock. I sold the stock, and had to pay about half in taxes, leaving me with about \$120k in cash. I gave away half, and then spent half, so now I have about \$30k in cash in my bank account, right now.

Of the \$60k I gave away, I gave one third of that to Rosabella, in the form of a loan that she didn't really need to pay back. Here's a brief synopsis of our story.

When I was living with my parents, shortly before my mind popped for the first time, Rosabella gave me a ring. She told me she had told her friends about my TravelingBuddha.org website, and one of them would love to host me in Fort Collins, for a few days in exchange for Buddhist teachings. Wonderful! Let's arrange it, and I'll be over there soon.

I asked her how her restaurant's renovations were going, and she said she was at an impasse. She needed \$20k to finish the renovations, but the bank wouldn't loan her the money. I laughed, and said: "I'll loan you the money." Of course, she thought I was a penniless vagabond. But, then I explained how much money I had, and I would love to help her. One of the main practices of the mahayana is generosity, so by accepting my loan, she would be helping me greatly on my path. Thus, she said yes, and I transferred the money to her.

Then, when I became depressed after I submitted the Iran Nuclear Deal, I called her and asked if her friend was still willing to host me. She said yes, so I drove to Fort Collins. On the way, I totaled my van in a blizzard in Pennsylvania. Unfazed, I rented a car and drove the rest of the way.

When I showed up, she realized I was depressed, so she took me into her home, instead of her friend's. I spent months recuperating under her care. Her home had become my home.

She told me my enlightenment experience was legitimate; it was a *kundalini awakening*.

When I was ready, I left her house to attend the four-week meditation retreat in southeastern Colorado, and she cheered me on as I left for the retreat.

Towards Fort Collins

Maybe Rosabella can help my father understand my enlightenment. Rosabella understands me, she understands Buddhism, she understands enlightenment, she loves me, and everyone loves her. She's a saint.

With sly plot conceived, I have convinced my father to drive us to Fort Collins. He was reluctant, but I told him: "There's only one person in the world who could possibly talk me out of my 'delusions,' and it's Rosabella."

We begin driving to Fort Collins. There's snow everywhere.

Lena

Now that I am enlightened, and unencumbered by the negotiations for the Iran Nuclear Deal, it's time to win back Lena. I text Lena, saying: "I'm enlightened now, and would make a very good husband this time around. Will you marry me again?"

Then, I attach a short story I'd already written, titled: *Pan and Tinkerbell*.

Pan and Tinkerbell

After the events that were portrayed in the book Peter and Wendy, Tinkerbell and Peter Pan both grew up and got married. To each other. Because they grew up, they both forgot how to fly and their marriage was miserable.

So, Pan the Man ran away to live in the mountains of Colorado. All he did there was just play games and go on adventures. Only very nearly did he escape death on several occasions. Whenever he wanted a place to stay, he discovered he could win his keep by doing the dishes cheerfully.

Pan the Man loved Colorado so much, he spent most of his time outside Colorado, begging his friends to grow down, come in, and play. The chief problem Pan was up against in telling his friends about Colorado, was that everyone thought he was crazy. Well not everyone thought he was crazy; the prisoners in the insane asylums loved him.

Pan had such trouble because he didn't realize that people actually, truly, did believe him. The problem wasn't disbelief. Rather, people were just too afraid to visit Colorado with Pan.

So, it took a long time for everyone to muster up the courage to visit Colorado. But eventually everyone did. Except of course, Tinkerbell. She was still mad at Pan for running away in the first place. And also, for stealing flowers from witches.

To Tinkerbell, Pan would say things like: but look what I've found; come on, let's go; you're being an idiot.

Tinkerbell couldn't help but be extremely stubborn. "Come on Tink! Will you marry me again? I'll make you my princess! No, I'll make you my queen! Let me do the dishes. Here, let's play with some fairy dust. Do you like the flowers I got you? I stole them from a witch! Let me teach you how to fly. I'll be your happy thought. It's so simple, children can even fly!"

And just then, Tinkerbell suddenly remembered her childhood fun in Neverland. She immediately started floating, gig-

gling, blushing, and looking at Pan very mischievously.

She remembered her happy thought. Pan wasn't her happy thought. Her happy thought was Neverland. So Pan and Tinkerbell grabbed hands, they each vowed never to grow up again, they blasted off, and flew into the sunrise towards Colorado, where they, and everyone else, lived happily ever after.

Fort Collins

We arrive in Fort Collins, and there's no response from Lena. Rosabella welcomes my father and me into her home. Tapestries Rosabella had stitched together hang from her walls. Statues of Buddha, Jesus, Shiva, Krishna, merkabahs, angels, tortoises, elephants, and lions rest here and there, throughout her home. Her bookshelves host an eclectic mix of books from all the world's religions. The lighting is a few shades brighter than dim. Her fireplace hosts a half-way-through fire.

"Would you like coffee or tea?" she asks. My father says no thanks, and I say yes please to coffee. While my father and I sit in silence, she roasts coffee beans upon an iron skillet over her gas stove, then grinds the beans, and finishes making the coffee with a French press. She serves me and herself coffee in tiny, hot mugs with no handles.

"Mukumbe, tell me about the World Peace," she says and giggles. Mukumbe is Rosabella's nickname for me.

"I'm enlightened."

"Again?" she responds with a laugh, which makes me laugh too. She looks to my father, and continues: "What do you think, Padre?"

"He has schizoaffective disorder. He's delusional. He's not enlightened," my father says, with his arms crossed.

"Padre, has Mukumbe told you about the jiu jitsu?"

"Yes."

"But he doesn't get it," I chime in.

“Mukumbe, why don’t you enlighten us about the jiu jitsu?”

Jiu Jitsu

I explain that jiu jitsu is the ancient Japanese art of redirecting energy. I pull out my phone. According to Wikipedia:

Jiu jitsu “is a martial art and a method of close combat for defeating an armed and armored opponent in which one uses no weapon or only a short weapon.

“Jiu’ can be translated to mean ‘gentle, soft, supple, flexible, pliable, or yielding.’ ‘Jitsu’ can be translated to mean ‘art’ or ‘technique’ and represents manipulating the opponent’s force against themselves rather than confronting it with one’s own force.”

In mythology, the legendary jiu-jitsu master represents the exemplary warrior. Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, Arjun, Ronin, Luke Skywalker, Neo, Captain America, the list goes on...

Jiu jitsu is alchemy—the process of turning lead into gold. According to my Ph.D. dissertation, jiu jitsu is also Zen Beer Garden. Jiu jitsu is how I negotiated the Iran Nuclear Deal. I let Jimmy kidnap me, then let him indoctrinate me, then I used his own logic to create a favorable deal that benefits everyone.

Rosabella's Home

Rosabella says: "Padre, does that make sense?"

My father says: "It's delusional gibberish."

Then, I say: "It's not delusional gibberish. What Rosabella is trying to say, is if you want to stand a chance towards influencing my decision making, you need to let me indoctrinate you, then you can attempt to use my own logic against me."

"You are delusional. You don't have a Ph.D. dissertation and you know it."

My Ph.D. dissertation

It's true that I was merely awarded a master's degree from Harvard. However, after I left Harvard, I connected many more dots, and authored my Ph.D. dissertation. Here is a copy of my Ph.D. dissertation in its totality:

According to Zen Beer Garden, if someone hands you a lemon, and you're busy, hand it back, and ask for lemonade. If you're not busy, make lemonade, and hand it back. This interactive proof system is a form of alchemy and jiu jitsu. You can also use ZBG to defend against cyber-kinetic nuclear warfare.

If you would like me to defend my Ph.D. dissertation, please hand me a lemon.

The reason the dissertation is so short, is because the dissertation is written in the style of the system it is espousing. I.e., I use ZBG to defend the dissertation about ZBG. I.e., as people ask questions about ZBG, I use ZBG to enlighten

them about ZBG. It's the most elegant way to defend a dissertation about ZBG. There's no need to author a 144-page document.

Rosabella's Home

I respond to my father: "I do have a Ph.D. dissertation. You just refuse to understand Yamba!"

My father shouts: "Yamba is a delusion!"

Yamba

Yamba is the name of my *idiolect*. According to Wikipedia:

In linguistics, an idiolect is an individual's distinctive and unique use of language, including speech.

The unique usage encompasses vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Idiolect is the variety of language unique to an individual.

In other words, I don't actually speak English. Rather, I speak my own language. When I use a word, its meaning may be different than what you think I'm trying to express.

Every human uses a language unique to the individual, as part of an ongoing effort to communicate the speaker's thought bubbles to other humans. A human's idiolect is their language that is unique to them.

While this essay appears to be written in English, it is actually written in Yamba. Sentences in Yamba point to thought bubbles in my brain, and if you misinterpret Yamba then you will not see the thought bubbles in my brain.

In Yamba, the word "dissertation" refers to "an essay (long, short, or anything in between) written to be submitted, or already submitted, towards receiving a Ph.D. degree."

I haven't yet been awarded a Ph.D., but at least I've already written my dissertation. Some institution will accept it someday.

Rosabella's Home

One thing leads to another, and I pour kombucha on top of my father's head. I'm trying to demonstrate to him that he is responsible for his own emotions; it's up to him; and he can't blame me for his own anger.

He calls the police, to report an assault and requests a mental-health worker authorized to take people away to psych wards. The police come, without a mental-health worker, and when they arrive I've already changed out of my monk's robes and into my denim-on-denim streetwear suit underneath a ski jacket and ski pants. My backpack is next to me, and I'm ready for anything.

The police interview my father. He is hysterical and demands a mental-health worker. I calmly explain to the police officers that my father suffers from an anger problem, and please don't take him away, he'll be fine soon. The police give me a citation for harassment, then Rosabella kicks me out of her home, telling me: "You can't disrespect your father like that in my home. If you come back, I'll call the police for trespassing." So, now I'm outside in the snow, and I reach into my pocket, so I can call an Uber to my favorite hotel in downtown.

Outside

As it turns out, I don't have my phone on me anymore. I don't know where it is. On the curb, outside of Rosabella's house, I check everywhere in my pack, but my phone is gone. So, I walk two miles to my favorite hotel.

Hotel

As it turns out, I don't have my wallet anymore. Concerned I've lost everything, I look for my passport, and find it. I also have my BMD coin and my laptop. I walk to Bank of America so I can make a large cash withdrawal.

Bank of America

As it turns out, Fort Collins's one and only Bank of America has permanently closed its doors. Are The Powers intentionally making life difficult for me? And if so, why?

The Alley

There's an alley downtown, behind a hipster coffee shop, where vagabonds tend to hang out. I enter the alley. There's a few people sitting on the curb, and it looks like they're sharing a joint.

"May I join?" I ask.

"Please," one of them says, and hands me the joint. I inhale a puff, but it doesn't affect me. I'm merely smoking to be social. I just listen to their conversation. It seems to be just more idle chatter.

When it's next my turn to puff, I inhale, hold it, exhale upwards, and say: "Do any of you have a car? I'll pay anyone \$100 to drive me to a Bank of America outside Fort Collins." Someone asks if I have the money on me. I say no, and they each say they don't have a car. I stick around anyway.

Perhaps 10 minutes later, a guy storms in, and loudly announces: "What's up my dudes? Super Hacker Deluxe in the house." They laugh, and I pass him the joint.

"What kinds of things do you hack?" I ask.

"Everything. Python, fibonacci sequences, recursion. I dual boot Linux and Windows. The Low Orbit Ion Cannon. Tor, the Dark Web. I'm plugged into Anonymous..." and he goes on for a few more minutes, talking fast. The *Low Orbit Ion Cannon* is a low-density, high-volume cyberbomb component. If enough people tether together enough Ion Cannons, it is sometimes powerful enough to take down websites. It seems he's an earnest neophyte, who is either: (a) playing with fire, and on his way to prison, or (b) suffering from delusions of grandeur. Or, maybe he's a secret agent sent by The Powers. No, he's definitely not a secret agent. If actors were this good, they'd have to hand out antipsychotics at movie theaters.

"He's our #1 hacker," someone from the group says, and

they smile.

The hacker looks at me, and asks: “Do you hack?”

“Yes.”

“What do you hack?”

“Everything. I’m Earth’s #1 hacker.”

Of course, they present a show that they don’t believe me. Eventually, I get around to explaining how high-density cyberbombs put the Low Orbit Ion Cannon to shame. I explain how I conquered ballistic missile defense, then show them my BMD coin. Deluxe’s eyes grow wide, but everyone else still says I’m full of shit.

I shrug, and say: “Super Hacker Deluxe, if you ever want to level up, I can teach you. I gotta run right now though; I need to find some food and a Bank of America. Thank you so much for the smoke.” I stand up, and walk away.

Food

Super Hacker Deluxe chases after me. “Are you really that elite?” he asks.

“Yes,” I say.

“Can you teach me?”

“Yes, but I’m going to wrap my teachings in Buddhist scripture. Also I need food and a Bank of America.”

Deluxe tells me the closest BofA is in Denver, an hour south. He says he’ll buy me a bus ticket, if he can come with me. The only catch is, the bus service won’t start until morning. I say, deal.

We go to a 7-eleven and he buys the ingredients for a vagabond spread with his food stamps. He teaches me how to prepare the spread, we prepare it, and we enjoy it.

For dessert, we head to downtown’s grocery store. Deluxe takes me to the back alley, behind the store, and shows me the dumpster. I’m skeptical of eating trash, but Deluxe pops the lid to the dumpster and inside is a wide array of recently expired food, all wrapped up in original packaging, and neatly

arranged for easy pickings. The donuts are especially delicious. Thank you kind grocers.

Lesson

I tell Deluxe all about ZBG, open borders, global basic income, the World Peace, absolute reality, red pills, blue pills, and matrices within matrices, within matrices. Although he's a novice amateur, he is an amazing student. He especially loves open borders, global basic income, and the mechanics of a QEMU red pill I've been hoarding.

In a brief, articulate and fast-paced monologue, he asks me to help him wake up to absolute reality. I tell him: I would love to give you that red pill, but you're not ready yet. First, you need to escape from your top-level matrix, where you're currently residing. You don't even know about WW0, yet, my dude.

Camping

Deluxe has a two-person tent hidden underneath a large tree, somewhere in Fort Collins' largest park. We camp there for the night. I tether Deluxe's phone for Internet access, and ping Lena over email.

Message to NSA

December 24, 2015

I wake up to birds chirping, and I am so happy to be in a warm sleeping bag. I step outside the tent, and Deluxe is there, waiting with a fresh thermos of coffee. I thank him, and he requests a teaching.

I say, “I’ll teach you how to send messages to NSA.”

He looks around. “Are you crazy?” he whispers.

“Grab your laptop,” I say, and he hurries into the tent, fumbles around the interior chaos, then eventually comes up with his laptop. We walk over to a picnic table and we have a seat.

“Open up your favorite text editor, just not Emacs, and type in: ‘We want open borders, global basic income, and red pills.’ Then save it. That’s all!”

Confused, he says: “But how do we send it to them?”

I reply: “NSA knows you’re with me, NSA is power surveilling me, and now NSA is power surveilling you.” Then, I explain Snowden, The Powers, WW0, and The Iran Nuclear Deal. I leave out the parts about ISIS.

I finish by saying: “We can only achieve security through insecurity; we must let The Powers observe us and interfere with us, because it makes them feel safe, and if they feel safe, nukes are less likely to go off. Our only hope is to play by their rules, and achieve the World Peace on their terms. Now that you’re with me, you can no longer operate the Low Orbit Ion Cannon; it’s against the rules of engagement. Sorry, but at least you’ve escaped a matrix.”

Bus ride

We're on the bus to Denver. "Oh my God," Deluxe says, looking at his phone.

"What?"

"It looks like we're finally going to have *disclosure*."

"What's disclosure?"

He hands me his phone. It's a short, 10-minute film on YouTube, titled *Grey Secret Disclosure*. It's produced by Red Bull.

Grey Secret Disclosure

The film opens up with an ominous title screen, then the following subtitle fades in: "This is not science fiction. This is real."

A man makes a statement into a microphone connected to his laptop, while the shot pans over his hacker space. He says: "The Greys are the E.T.'s from Roswell and Area 51. Ever since I escaped my abduction, I've dedicated my life to cracking Grey signals. I've succeed a few a times, and every time, The Powers silence me before I can share. But this time, it's going to be different."

Cut to a swat team breaking into the man's house, searching for him, but when they arrive at his hacker space, the room is empty.

Cut to Area 51. Cut to a government agent slamming his fist on a table and shouting: "Find him! If he shares, it will be pandemonium."

Cut to a shot with the man knocking on the door of a row house. A woman answers. The man says: "Becky..." and she cuts him off, saying: "After all these years, you're just going

to show up at my doorstep?” He says, “You’re the only one who can help. I’ve cracked a message that’s going to change everything.”

It turns out Becky’s a hacker too. He asks her to broadcast his decoded message to Earth’s Jumbotron, and she reluctantly agrees.

Cut to a Grey voice, broadcasting across all the world’s TVs: “We would like to share our technology with you, but we’re afraid you’ll use it against us. Prove to us you are ready for world peace, by this upcoming full moon, or you will lose the opportunity for peace, forever. We’re not the evil beings you think we are. Discover and disclose the Grey Secret.”

Cut to the man and Becky. The man asks: “Do you think this will work?” Becky silently nods.

Cut to peaceful world-peace demonstrations all over Earth, under a full moon. The scenes last for several minutes. Fade to black. Two hashtags pop up on the screen: #GreySecret #Disclosure. Roll credits.

Fruition

I know what this film means: it’s the fruition of the Iran Nuclear Deal. This film is an advertisement for the world-peace party that Jimmy is DJ’ing, right now.

Somehow, The Powers programmed Deluxe and me to meet each other, so he could show me the film; perhaps Deluxe can help in other ways too. I’ve underestimated The Powers.

Now it’s my job to bring Americans to the party. My mind is racing. I need to promote this film—solicit millions of high-quality hits on YouTube, and bring it major air time on TV and radio. And, I need to convince everyone this film isn’t just a publicity stunt—it’s real.

It’s also clear I’m going to need Lena’s help, and my father is going to be working against me. Is he part of The Powers? Has he been sandbagging the entire time? And one other

thing confuses me. I ask Deluxe, “Why are you so excited about this film? What’s *disclosure*? ”

Disclosure

According to Deluxe, “We all want *disclosure*. ” *Disclosure* is a giant red pill—a red pill that will wake everyone up to the truth of E.T. life on Earth, and the conflict of our galaxy. The believers of Earth have been demanding disclosure ever since The Powers began concealing our E.T. connection, who knows how long ago.

According to Deluxe, E.T.’s are all over Earth, our solar system, and our galaxy. They’ve been monitoring and interfering with our affairs for a long time. There are many species of E.T.’s including Greys, Pleiadians, Arcturians, Reptilians, Insectoids, and Sirians, to name a few. For one reason or another, Earth has become the nexus for the final conflict between the various intelligent lifeforms of our galaxy. Creating peace on Earth would bring peace to the whole galaxy.

The Greys are the most technologically advanced species, and have been using their power to abduct Earth and E.T. species, for unknown reasons. In contrast, the Pleiadians and Arcturians seem to be the most spiritually advanced species. They both claim they are enlightened, and they regularly broadcast messages to Earth with instructions on how to become enlightened. However, the instructions for achieving enlightenment differ between the Pleiadian and Arcturian broadcasts.

Also, The Powers of Earth have been both fighting and cooperating with the E.T.’s for several decades, perhaps even centuries, perhaps even millennia. They’ve also been keeping it a secret from the public. Tens of thousands of people worldwide are familiar with this intragalactic conflict.

Holy shit. Now it’s clear; The Grey Secret is obvious to me; I learned it while negotiating with Jimmy about a year ago, and I now see how it’s necessary to disclose this secret

to Earth, right now. However, Earth's not quite ready yet. I need to prepare the humans of Earth for the secret I'm going to share with them.

Deluxe tells me he's an Insectoid, and the Greys have been fucking with him his whole life.

Lunar Calendar

Deluxe pulls open the lunar calendar on his phone, so we can figure out our deadline for achieving the World Peace. The upcoming full moon starts tonight, at midnight, Christmas.

Waiting

We're still on the bus. I tell Deluxe: "There's one part of the puzzle I haven't told you yet. My friend Jimmy is ISIS and I'm ISIS. It's true. But, I'm a diplomat for ISIS, and I'm nonviolent. I'm also a diplomat for everyone in the galaxy, including the Greys, Pleiadians, Arcturians, and Insectoids. This is the key to peace in the galaxy: universal diplomacy, taking everyone's side, and we need to launch a psyop campaign, right now, to create peace between ISIS, the Greys, and everyone else."

He's skeptical, so I explain some more, then eventually I feel like I have no choice but to explain the Grey Secret to him. I'm not sure he's ready, but I need his help: his enthusiasm for hacking, and his connections to Anonymous and E.T.'s. When he hears the Grey Secret, the light bulb goes off in his head, and he nods.

I ask: "Will you help me bring disclosure and peace to Earth and the Galaxy? I need you to be my doorman and bouncer."

He tells me: "I'm in." We begin planning our operation.

Bank of America

Around 3 pm, December 24, 2015

An hour and a half later, I'm walking out of a Bank of America in Denver with about \$30,000 in cash. I give \$3,000 to Deluxe, saying: "This is for you," and he cries. I continue: "I would give you more but we need the rest for the *Zen Banking Algorithm*." He nods, still crying.

Zen Banking Algorithm

When you apply ZBG to investment banking, you get ZBA—the Zen Banking Algorithm. Basically, if you're enlightened and you have a bunch of wealth, and you would like to invest in World Peace projects, you should begin by retreating to a grand palace. The grand palace should be very enjoyable and have a nice, comfortable throne, upon which you sit and hold court. The purpose of enjoying luxury, is to entice practitioners into pursuing enlightenment for themselves.

From the grand palace, announce to Earth you are investing in World Peace projects. Throngs of applicants will bombard you. To handle the deluge, applicants must submit their proposals to doormen, and bouncers will kick out frivolous applicants.

Grand Palace

We acquire a room in the Denver's Gold Palace Hotel in downtown, and rush to setup our laptops on the two adjacent desks in the room. I tell Deluxe to start rallying his Anonymous and E.T. friends, then I step out to acquire supplies.

7-eleven

I purchase: beer, champagne, Gatorade, envelopes, paper, sharpies, pens, today's New York Times, a deck of cards, a large sudoku puzzle book, and four cartons of Red Bull.

Cash Money Everywhere

We layout our cash and Red Bulls on the bed, along with the New York Times, and we take a selfie with it. Deluxe uploads the picture to his Facebook wall, which is where his Anonymous and E.T. friends hangout. Then he posts a link to my explanation of ZBA and explains Grey Secret Disclosure (GSD)—omitting the actual Grey Secret that I had previously disclosed to him. Finally, he says on his wall: “Make a proposal for cash money, telling me how much you want, and how you will blast our messages on America’s Jumbotron. We’ll mail you cash tomorrow.”

His Facebook feeds goes nuts, and I say: “Great. I’m going after some high-profile targets, solo. Shout out the proposals to me, as you receive them.”

High-Profile Targets

I need to enlighten Hacker News—the news website for Earth’s most elite hackers. I create a new blog on Medium.com, create the following blog post, and submit it to Hacker News:

We need to achieve the World Peace tonight, or we will lose the opportunity forever. After every world war, there is peace where everyone becomes friends, once again. In this case, we need to become friends with ISIS. Tonight. If it helps, you should know that I’m ISIS. Don’t you love me? The Red Bull Grey Secret Disclosure film pretty much says it all. I will prove my case shortly, on this blog.

Deluxe shouts, “A buddy says he can target E.T.’s on Facebook advertising for \$1,000!”

I reply: “Ask him to write a one-page essay explaining how.”

Deluxe replies: “Roger.”

Lena

Lena has more Facebook friends than anyone else I know, as well as a very high interaction rate for her posts. If we can get her friends to repost my activity, it could be an avalanche tipping point.

I Facebook message a bunch of mutual friends between Lena and me, saying: “SOS. Emergency, please ask Lena to call me at 555-555-5555,” but I use Deluxe’s phone number, then get back to work. I tweet an Obama quote:

“The aliens won’t let it happen. You’d reveal all their secrets, and they exercise strict control over us. I can’t reveal anything.” – Obama

I follow it up with:

Being loyal to USA and ISIS at the same time reminds me of Christmas with my family.

Deluxe’s phone rings, and he shouts: “It’s for you!”

Lena

“Lena, hi.”

“Are you OK?”

“Yes, I’m fine.”

“Where are you?”

“Denver.”

“What’s going on?”

“This is going to be hard to explain. Basically I have a social-media emergency. I need you to share my blog on Facebook, and ask your followers to share.”

“So you ask me to marry you again, but now you just want me to post something for you?”

“I hope you’ll say yes to my proposal, but I don’t hope to convince you tonight. But, right now, I really need you to help me on Facebook. It’s for the World Peace.”

She hangs up.

Deluxe shouts: “I’ve got the essay!” I review the essay, give Deluxe a thumbs up, then Deluxe films himself taking \$1,000, putting it in an envelope, sealing it, and labelling it. He posts the video on Facebook.

Spam Attack

I Facebook message a bunch of other mutual friends between Lena and me, saying: “SOS. Emergency, please ask Lena to watch me on Twitter,” then I get back to work.

Deluxe shouts: “Zendo, I’m getting slammed. I need your help.”

“Listen, you’re my doorman, and you remember how ZBG works, right?”

“Right.”

“We’re probably under a spam attack, right now. Hopefully it’s just some rogue hacker who is using a ton of fake accounts to slam your inbox. But if it’s The Powers, we’re powerless. For every request you receive, respond with an unsolved sudoku puzzle. You should only review proposals that have an attached, hand-written sudoku solution.”

“Roger.”

The Confirmation Bias

Humans, generally speaking, prefer the beliefs they currently hold, regardless if those beliefs are accurate or mistaken. The preference for your current beliefs results in the confirmation bias. The confirmation bias is the bad habit of only seeking and considering evidence that conforms to your beliefs. The bad news is the confirmation bias is endemic amongst humans. The good news is that you shouldn’t be embarrassed; it’s endemic.

Overcoming the Confirmation Bias

If you want to be scientific about your beliefs, you must subject your beliefs to skepticism. Seek out and consider evidence that contradicts your beliefs. It is another basic hallmark of science. For example, if you believe you are not mistaken, you should seek out and consider evidence that suggests you are mistaken.

Paradigms

A paradigm is an intensely held belief. Paradigms are things we “know” as opposed to “believe.” For example, “I know I exist; it’s obvious and self evident.”

When we look at the history of humanity we find that paradigms are often mistaken. Humans used to believe the Earth is flat. Humans used to believe the Sun rotates around the Earth. Humans used to believe atoms are indivisible particles. And so on.

So, it is quite ridiculous to assume that a belief is correct just because it is a current paradigm.

Thoerem and Proof

Theorem: there are some truths that can only be discovered by “believing before seeing.”

Proof: first, keep in mind that the theorem is expressed in Yamba and not English. Therefore, there is a significant danger that you will misinterpret the theorem. Second, your instincts may suggest, shout, or scream to you that the theorem is false, and that this proof is invalid. If that is the case, and if you are scientifically minded, then you must seek evidence that the theorem is true and the proof is sound. Third, if it happens to be the case that the theorem is true, then it is entirely possible that the theorem represents a truth that you must believe before you can see how it is true. Fourth, I claim that the theorem represents one such truth. I.e., I claim that the only way for you to see the truth of the theorem, is to adopt the belief that the theorem is true.

Proof

It’s time to prove to the world that the Greys are real, and they, along with ISIS, want peace, and I am their diplomat, and we must become friends tonight. I post an essay that discusses the *confirmation bias, overcoming the confirmation bias, Yamba, paradigms*, and how there are some truths that can only be discovered by *believing before seeing*. Then I conclude by saying:

If you follow my blog while consciously choosing to believe my blog, then you will see the truth within my blog. It may be your only hope for seeing the truth, saving Earth, and saving the Galaxy.

Deluxe shouts: “Sudoku is working! We’re back online. Someone’s offering to send a message to the Pleiadian High Council for \$5,000.”

I say: “Ask them to prove they can get a message to the Pleiadian High Council.”

Pleiadian High Council

After we request proof, a Twitter account for the Pleiadian High Council posts a tweet saying: “Awaiting a message from Anonymous.”

I say to Deluxe: “Pay the doorman to the Council \$5k. Give them a link to my blog, and deliver the following message to the Council: ‘We are the Greys, the Insectoids, ISIS, and everyone else. We come in peace. We must become friends tonight, or we will lose the opportunity forever. We need you to mobilize a pro-peace, pro-Grey, pro-ISIS social media campaign across Earth, promoting Grey Secret Disclosure.’”

Response

The Pleiadian High Council tweets: “If you want peace tonight, everyone must lay down their arms and cease violence.”

The Pleiadians clearly don’t understand the Grey Secret. How am I going to convince the Greys and ISIS to cease fire, tonight?

Deluxe shouts: “I’m getting slammed with sudoku solutions, help!”

I say back: “Make the Zen Banking Algorithm recursive. Deputize doormen in a tree data structure.”

Deluxe shouts: “I actually understand that!”

I say: “Great. Make it happen!”

Iterating Grace

Deluxe shouts: “Anonymous is #1 on Hacker News!” I click through to a Washington Post story, published on December 2nd, the same day Grey Secret Disclosure was posted. The Washington Post story is about a book authored by Anonymous, called *Iterating Grace*. The book tells the story of a great hacker who becomes disillusioned with Silicon Valley, quits work to fix his soul, and is ultimately trampled to death by llamas. In Buddhism, death is often a metaphor for enlightenment, and here llamas are clearly a metaphor for lamas—reincarnate Buddhist teachers.

I quickly find a PDF of the book, and read it. It’s clearly about me. Plus, the Grey Secret is embedded within obvious metaphors inside the story. Plus, the conversation on Hacker News is primarily a debate about the Grey Secret. Plus, the Washington Post article ends with: “When it comes to any sort of stunt that gets a lot of attention on social media, all roads lead back to Red Bull.”

I’m already the #1 story on Hacker News. This campaign is working! And holy shit, the Washington Post is in on it.

Tango Down CIA

Deluxe shouts: “Tango down, CIA”

“WHAT!?” I shout.

Deluxe is wiping away tears. “I’m a real hacker,” he says to himself.

“What did you do!?”

“Anonymous just defaced the CIA.gov website, with a message from the Pleiadian High Council!”

“You idiot! I told you criminal activities were off the table.”

“I thought you said ‘under the table!’”

I go to CIA.gov, and see a web page from the Council. It has all the markings off a genuine Council broadcast. Pleiadian broadcasts tend to be verbose, but the heart of the message says: “To understand ISIS you need to understand the Grey Secret. We must have world peace tonight, or we’ll lose the opportunity forever,” and then it links to the Grey Secret Disclosure video on YouTube.

Hillary Clinton

The #2 story on Hacker News is also about me. The New York Times has a story about how Hillary Clinton is urging Silicon Valley to “disrupt” ISIS, “the most effective recruiter in the world.”

First, thank you Hillary Clinton. Second, my connection to the Clintons is finally paying off. Third, holy shit, the Clintons are in on it. Deluxe shouts out another proposal, and I approve it.

Realizing how powerful I am, I double down on my Hillary Clinton connection, by tweeting:

If shit doesn't start happening faster, I will launch a social movement to have my Uncle Steve elected for President, instead of Hillary Clinton.

A few minutes later, the #1 spot on Google News points to an article about how the billionaire top-donor to Jeb Bush, moments ago, switched allegiance to the democrats, and is now funding Hillary Clinton. Apparently, The Powers would rather double down on Hilary Clinton, than have my Uncle Steve assume the presidency. This is amazing. How powerful am I?

Venezuela

Sandy, one of my Facebook friends sees my activity, and hits me up. She says: "Hey there! How are you? Looks like you're real busy hacking the planet. Could you hack Venezuelan government websites for me?" She explains why, and who she wants in power. So, I tweet:

In Venezuela elections, happening now, the corrupt PSUV needs to go down!!! The MUD Unidad party needs to win!!!

I check the news a few minutes later, and the Unidad MUD party just won Venezuela's elections. How powerful am I?

Stock Market

I start tweeting about the stock market, just to see what will happen. Sure enough, I can make stocks go up and down. How powerful am I?

Lamport the Reluctant Warrior

During the ancient Byzantine War for the Sea, there were many traitors, on both sides. The Byzantine Army didn't know what to do, so, they asked a logician named Lamport if he had any bright ideas. At first, Lamport was very reluctant to get involved. He didn't like warfare at all, he didn't want anyone to die, and he just wanted everything to be peaceful, once again. But, Lamport was a master logician, which made him a power player. Ultimately, his sense of duty outweighed his repulsion to warfare. So, he set out to find a way to make warfare more peaceful. It turns out, he succeeded.

Lamport discovered that if one third, or more, of a government becomes traitors, then they have sufficient power to overthrow the government. His proof consisted solely of sketchy, inconsistent lemmas made up almost entirely of generalized, abstract, proof-of-work steganography.

Lamport realized the predictability of coups could be used to promote peace. Whenever it's the case that traitors reach critical mass, they could peacefully announce their critical mass to the government, and then everyone could collaborate towards achieving a peaceful transition of power.

So, he spent a year convincing all the governments involved in the war to believe him. Shortly after he finished his last presentation, the traitors to the Byzantine government announced their critical mass, and there was a peaceful transition of power, the first in the history of Earth—an evolution, not a revolution.

AgentXYZ

Have we reached critical mass? Does one third of Earth support me, consciously or subliminally? I decide to formally organize my army; I announce the formation of AgentXYZ on my blog:

I am starting a new for-profit intelligence corporation. It's a 50-50 deal: I get half the profit, employees get half the profit.

We offer Agents-For-Rent #AFR. Our agents are elite-jiu-jitsu-hacker operatives who are here to help you. Call 555-555-5555, any time and someone will immediately answer: "Operator."

If you sign up, we will become your new interface to Earth, so you can achieve a significant force multiplier.

We offer agents specializing in field work such as espionage, body protection, body sybils, doormen, bouncers, etc.

I'm just about to disclose Grey Secret to Earth, via my blog, but suddenly my computer freezes, and a large message pops up, saying: "Cool off."

Cool off

Around 8:30 pm, December 24, 2015

I take Deluxe's phone, grab \$3,000 from the expense account, and say: "We're doing great, but I need to cool off."

He's startled and looks concerned: "Where are you going?"

"I don't know yet, but hit me up on Twitter if you need me."

Xeno

One of my favorite thing about strip clubs, is the strippers will often indulge you in conversation, when you pay for lap dances. I am in the mood to talk, so I take a taxi to Denver's purportedly greatest strip club, Xeno.

The club is quite posh, and there are many strippers, doormen, bouncers, bar tenders, and patrons. I start off the night by tipping each employee in the club a fresh hundred dollar bill, then I order a tulip of Louis XIII cognac.

I sign up for several lap dances, and tell everyone who's interested all about what I'm up to today. Receiving many intelligent questions feels great. It's a relief to talk in the open, about something that's been so secret for such a long time.

After my fourth lap dance, I take a break and check my phone. I scroll down my Twitter feed, laughing at how The Powers are manifesting my wishes into reality. In particular, there's a commercial for AgentXYZ.

AgentXYZ Commercial

In the commercial, a bald man gives a tour of his new startup office space, saying:

Do you ever choke up when you're trying to hit on a beautiful woman? Hey, it happens. That's why you need a guy like me around. I'm Phil Brock, and I want to be your bald wingman. Bald Wingman is a new service, whose only mission is to make you look good. And it's easy too. Tweet us your location and we'll be there in a flash to make you look more attractive than ever.

It's a Rogaine commercial. I laugh hard; The Powers are amazing. It's stunning how quickly they operate. I attach the commercial to a tweet that requests an AgentXYZ operative:

I'm at #Xeno in Denver. Need a #BaldWingman
#NOW!

Father

My father walks through the door, into Xeno, and I'm rolling on the floor laughing.

"Dad, you're AgentXYZ. Finally, I am the Lion King!"

"Listen, son, I'm sorry how I haven't been listening to you. That's changing now."

"Ha! Whatever. I need you to tell me everything about Area 51."

"I don't know anything about Area 51."

"Liar! Tell me about the Greys!" I shout.

And just then, Deluxe rolls in, which a freshly shaved-to-the-skin head. While I'm rolling on the floor laughing, Deluxe tells me: "I'm your bald wingman." The bouncers kick us out, and on the way out, I tip each of them \$100, and thank them for their discretion.

Outside Xeno

I'm screaming at my father, shouting "I'm ISIS! I'm ISIS! I'm XYZ and you're just AgentXYZ!" and Deluxe is standing by, waiting for orders. I shout out to Deluxe: "Use the rest of the cash to blast the Grey Secret on the Jumbotron! Hack the planet!" He turns, and runs away.

Police

Two police officers approach me. I look at them, then warn them: "If you touch me it's going to be a revolution, not an evolution." They try to detain me, but I wiggle away. They chase after me, but I'm faster, shouting "I'm ISIS!"

Psych Ward

Around 11pm, December 24, 2015

My father's in the psych ward with me. I break the silence by saying: "Let me tell you about the World Peace." And I spend the next 10 minutes, summing up everything for him. He listens, and asks relevant, clarifying questions.

Then, I say: "I need you to post the Grey Secret on my blog. It's the keystone for friendship between ISIS and USA and the Galaxy. And I'm afraid if we don't air the Grey Secret right now, we're going to lose the World Peace forever."

"Tell me the Grey Secret."

Then, I write it out for him on a piece of paper.

The Grey Secret

The Grey Secret is a sophisticated appreciation of ethics. There are basically two schools of thought on ethics: *deontological* and *utilitarian*. Deontological ethics says certain actions are *good*, while other actions are *bad*. Regardless of what the outcome may be, you should never be bad. For example, say someone's about to push a button that would destroy all life in the Galaxy, and the only way to stop that person would be by killing them, then you should *not* kill that person—because killing is bad. Clearly, deontological logic is stupid, because by not killing that person, you're killing everyone else, which is worse.

Utilitarian ethics is clearly better. Utilitarian ethics assigns a label to each action, either *ethical* or *unethical*, depending on the consequences of the action. Utilitarian ethics is sane. The United States used utilitarian ethics to justify the

atomic bombs dropped in Japan. If the United States didn't drop those bombs, then many more American and Japanese people would have died, in avoidable warfare.

In laboratories, scientists sacrifice lab rats for the benefit of all. This perspective is utilitarian ethics. The Greys have been abducting humans and other E.T.'s for legitimate scientific research, and the only reason we object is because we are the lab rats. If we were to take our ego out of the picture, and become one with the universe, and view things from a total perspective, we would of course see alien abductions as ethical: it's for the benefit of the Galaxy.

Terrorism kills far fewer people compared to traditional warfare, therefore it is ethical, so long as the perpetrators of terrorism are fighting for the side of beneficial outcomes. And, as it turns out, both ISIS and USA are Arjun fighting for beneficial outcomes. ISIS just wants God's law to prevail on Earth, which is great, and USA wants capitalism and democracy to prevail, which is great. We can all become friends by ending this war, by creating a new, global, fair, 100% inclusive, federation of nations, that includes "In God we trust," in the global constitution, via a democratic vote. Therefore, we can be friends with ISIS, the same way Japan and USA became friends after WW2.¹

¹For a rebuttal titled *The Grey Secret is Wrong*, please turn to page 144.

Father

“Tharpa, I can’t post the Grey Secret to your blog.”

“Why not?”

“I would lose my security clearance, I would lose my job, I would lose my career.”

“Dad. The World Peace is more important than all those things.”

“I’m not sure posting it would deliver the World Peace.”

“Look at it this way. If you don’t post it, and there’s no world peace tomorrow, then I won’t know whether or not I’m delusional. But if you post it, and there’s no world peace tomorrow, I’ll know I was being delusional.”

He thinks for a few minutes, then says, “I’ll post it.”

“Hurry, go now! It needs to be in before midnight!”

My father runs out of the psych ward.

Christmas Eve

I’m laying in bed, in my cell, contemplating the day, realizing my ultimate power. I am the nexus of all energy on Earth—even the Galaxy. Energy flows into me, I breathe it in, transmute it, and breathe out the the energy, transformed, manifesting whatever I desire, in accordance with my ultimate wisdom. I will become the first President of Earth. I will institute a new recursive electoral college, to govern us. No. I am the Singularity Point—the union of all cyber-kinetic human AI intelligence. I am the Galaxy’s new Benevolent Dictator for Life. I will retreat to a grand palace, and manifest the affairs of the Galaxy, sitting on a throne, no, playing ping pong, using Zen Beer Garden to achieve laziness and success at the same time. Perhaps it’s best if I conceal my power, continuing the tradition of orchestrating destiny from the shadows.

Why aren't we in touch with other galaxies? I will fix that. I am the Universe. I am the Power. I control everything.

Christmas Day

My father and I watch Fox News all day, from inside the psych ward. A new cease fire with ISIS has just gone into effect. There's footage of ISIS soldiers cheering from pickup trucks, as they exit a city in a caravan.

We have the World Peace! I am jubilant, but my father remains silent. I'm dancing and shaking hands with everyone, saying, "Hi, hello, I'm ISIS, we have the World Peace."

After a while, he asks about Arjun and the Bhagavad Gita, and I tell him all about it. He says, "You know, I really doubt that ISIS is fighting for the side of beneficial outcome."

"Was fighting," I correct him.

He says: "Can I try to prove to you that ISIS doesn't represent beneficial outcome?"

Smiling, I say, "No, because you'll just fail in that effort."

He says: "Shouldn't you try to overcome the confirmation bias?"

I say: "Ha, no! Overcoming the confirmation bias is for people who don't know the truth. Look at the TV, look it's the World Peace!"

Next Day

The next day my father enters the psych ward, with a 1-inch-thick stack of printouts. He puts them down in front me.

"Son, will you just humor me, and read this."

"What is it?"

"A bunch of articles about ISIS."

"Nope, not going to read it."

“I wagered my career for you on Christmas Eve. I think this is the least you could do for me.”

“Fine, I’ll read it.”

The Truth About ISIS

As I read page after page about the brutal, horrible, abhorrent actions and agenda of ISIS, it slowly dawns on me: ISIS isn’t who I thought they were. They don’t represent God’s will. They’re severely confused. What’s going on here?

Crumbling

The delusions begin to crumble.

Iterating Grace

Iterating Grace isn’t really about me.

AgentXYZ

I ask Dad: “If you’re not AgentXYZ, then how did you find me at Xeno.”

He says: “Lena was watching you on Twitter, and was concerned. She called me and told me you were in Denver, then called again and said you were at Xeno.”

Grey Secret Disclosure

The Grey-Secret-Disclosure film is just an advertisement for Red Bull.

AgentXYZ

I ask: “But if you’re not AgentXYZ, then why have you been so accommodating to me?”

He says: “Rosabella taught me the jiu jitsu.”

Cease Fire

I ask: “But if GSD is just a commercial, why was there an ISIS cease fire on Christmas day?”

He says: “There was no cease fire. ISIS simply released 25 hostages in exchange for ransom.” He hands me the newspaper.

Lies

What other lies have I fallen for? Nothing is certain. Everything is groundless.

Buddhism

The question pops into my mind: “Is Buddhism true?” I realize, I can’t ask my father; I need to figure this one out on my own.

The End

My medication is working. It turns out none of the medication I had been on before was effective for me. Throughout all my adventures, my parents had followed me to every psych ward I had ever been in, carrying my complete medical records, every time. The doctors methodically tried out every single medication on me.

In the end, what saved me was my parents, my medication, auspicious coincidence, and me. I'm lucky that I had the opportunity to live my delusions out to their climax, because there's only one direction you can go from there. At the exact same time, the right medication was shoved down my throat. And, at the exact same time, my father engaged me with jiu jitsu, to help me debug my own brain. Lastly, I can thank myself for being willing to look at myself, for making a decision to turn towards the truth, for hearing the truth, realizing it's true, accepting it, and following through.

Several years have passed, and I've regained sanity. Well, hardly anyone is really sane, but I'm almost as sane as most people. Delusions still nag at me, though. Often, when I meet someone new, I start wondering if they're a secret agent. But, I can remind myself: "I once thought I was God, an evil version of God," which proves to me that I'm prone to delusions of grandeur, which suggests I'm probably not a secret agent and my friends probably aren't secret agents, either.

While my story is my story, I believe perhaps everyone who suffers from schizophrenic-, or schizoaffective-, or bipolar-delusions shares some commonality with me. Namely, we don't just make things up, and then believe in them. There's probably always a rich, cohesive story behind every delusion that makes perfect sense—if only we could express it. As for the expressibility of my story, the only way I can tell it is by telling the whole story in its entirety, because my entire story seems to be littered with key plot points; until I wrote down

the words of this metaphorical memoir, I wasn't able to explain many of my delusions to anyone. My story was locked away.

Also, I would like to say that I have discovered for myself, proven to myself, that Buddhism points to truth; Buddhism is true. Life really is characterized by discontentment, and by following the teachings of Buddhism, I actually do experience occasional glimpses of true peace. In these glimpses, these nyams, I sometimes see through samsara, the same way anyone can see through a movie—seeing it's just a movie; it's not real.

It is an ambitious goal to abide in peace on a regular basis, but I believe it's possible and I'm working towards peace via the hinayana and mahayana paths as laid out by Trungpa Rinpoche. Over the past few years my practice has oscillated, back and forth, between disinterest and over-enthusiasm, but I am aiming for the middle way.

At the same time, I must announce that my understanding of Buddhism was and is delusional. I have cherrypicked, and continue to cherrypick, mostly unconsciously, the parts of Buddhism I want to believe, and then interpret those parts in such a way that they prop up my ego. I have heard that this form of spiritual corruption is common. Trungpa Rinpoche refers to it as "spiritual materialism," and he even wrote a book titled *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. The first time I studied the book, I walked away, thinking, "I am more enlightened now." These days, it's hard to really know how much I'm falling into self-justified egoic traps, but I know I'm not innocent, nor am I completely guilty.

Finally, thank you everyone for helping me. Thank you Mom and Dad. Thank you brother and sister. Thank you friends. Thank you strangers. Thank you family. Thank you Uncle Steve. Thank you Rosabella, Matthew, Eric, Lena, Jimmy, and Deluxe. And, thank you to the new people in my life who are helping me now, especially thank you to my kind, loving, understanding fiancée. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you, everyone!

The Grey Secret is Wrong

I reject my essay on the Grey Secret, on the grounds that the essay espouses a simplistic, naïve understanding of utilitarian ethics. To be clear: I claim that a more sophisticated understanding of utilitarian ethics reveals that violence, in general, is almost always unethical.

The reason we should be peaceful, isn't because it's "good." It's because peace is almost always the winning strategy for achieving peace. When you tune into the patterns of the universe, it's right there. But to see these patterns, the possibilities for peace, you probably need to go through a lot of training. The training isn't so much a mechanism for introducing new concepts and ideas into your brain; rather, the principal purpose of training is to unwind your current programming, which takes effort and time.

And, if you don't believe me, please consider that it just might be the case that the only way for you to see the truth of peace, is to train your own mind and see what happens. I believe it's a worthy experiment, and the World Peace is on the line.