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A fictitious truth that I have chosen is one made up originally as a joke between friends — the “Phoning it In” conspiracy.

The basic truth of the “Everyone’s Phoning it In” conspiracy is that no one truthfully believes what they’re doing or saying, not in a willingly malicious or lying way, but in a manner that either yields the funniest results or in a way that requires the least amount of brain power to fire the first reaction. In essence, any claim or action made by anyone (usually organizations or public figures) is done either instantly to not expend any more brain power than necessary or when thought out is only done to produce the funniest result possible (ergo, doing a comedy bit or a “bit”). This truth is interesting only because its core principle is set in comedy — it’s not “everyone is an idiot but me”, it’s “everyone around me is so much smarter than I thought and they’re using their smarts to mess with me specifically as a gag”.

A large portion of the “Phoning it In” conspiracies’ comedy also lays in the idea of being confused at the completely innocuous actions someone might take. If a random person is walking on the street, are they doing it for a bit, or are they just working off reaction? Could the trip and fall someone takes be entirely staged to provide the most humorous result in physical comedy, or could it have been an instinctual reaction to something seen? There’s similar vibes to the Truman show, except instead of believing that this is all being done to you for the sake of someone else’s enjoyment it’s entirely done for the individual: this conspiracy basically says no one is actually trying anything but making themselves have a laugh.

The fictitious entity presenting this would be an average American named Ernest Livingston (a pseudonym, being for a name version of “earnest living”). Ernest would be someone disillusioned by his 9 to 5 office job, believing himself to be the only one trying to do his job correctly and that everyone else is just wasting time. Of course the truth is Ernest is just an overachiever and people pleaser, but in his mind he’s framed everyone as a slacker at first, until he would see employees just trying to look busy at the office until he realizes what he calls a “secret, inherent genius” in everyone - their ability to phone it all in. Because work is his life, this would extend entirely then to his entire life outside, being how he views politics, celebrities, public speakers, etc. Of course to be clear, this would not make any real world political statements or bring any ties to current political topics; this is entirely about the bigger picture being obscured by smaller almost-nonchalant actions. When someone sneezes, Ernest thinks “That’s reaction, instead of blowing his nose it was easier to just sneeze; when he blows his nose afterwards though, the bastard thinks it’s funny to do it as loud as he’s doing it so he’s doing it a bit now”.

The benevolent untruth part of this conspiracy would be the encouragement to be mindful of your actions and to “be yourself”. If everyone is either reacting or being funny, the encouragement would be to take quiet moments, understand and absorb the world around you in quiet completion; stop and smell the roses and really appreciate the world. Ernest would ask everyone to live to be unapologetically themselves and to always give their actions a second thought before doing them, if not for themselves than others.