

Brandon Gets His Big Break

Chapter Thirteen

By

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It was the Saturday night of the weekend that saw *The 2023 Frogtown Art Walk*. After the build party, Rico returned home with the assembled Glocks. In a moment of fear, over the threatening manner of Ice King (the delusional drug addict that helped him assemble the guns), he denied Jesus. This unspeakable failure left him with an even deeper desire to prove himself to the Lord by destroying the homosexual agenda. He would drive attention to his manifesto by hitting the [godless](#).

When he returned home, his wife was sleeping. Her shift started at 5 AM. Just as well, he didn't want to talk to the bitch.

His manifesto reflected the divine wisdom of [John Calvin](#), a French theologian (1509-1564). He knew that the attack was going to be over the top. All three of Christ's soldiers – Bobby, Dustin, and himself – would die. That was fine. That was only their physical deaths. Their Souls would forever sit at the right hand of God, given special attention for their role in helping retard the onslaught of Satanic evil in the form of the so-called 'LGBTQ minority'. Some minority! Why could he not escape them? They were stooges of Evil.

Calvin argued that God had already chosen those who would be saved before they were even born. It was all the divine plan. Rico was an emissary of the Lord Jesus Christ but denied Him when pressed.

He had been chosen by the Lord to play a role. He would draw the blood of deviants and set in motion events that would result in the mass execution of those reprobates. When the Rapture happened, the number of the Saved would be maximized. They would be spared the lies of the demented. He would head an assault on the entertainment industry. In so doing, he would set in motion events that would result in the mass destruction of the demented: the LGBTQ and their allies.

Calvin knew (through revelation) that God's choice of the elect was part of His plan for the world and these choices would ultimately lead to His glory. Rico knew that he – along with his apostles, Dustin, and Bobby – were all members of the elect. He also knew that Calvin wisely understood that it was all about 'double predestination': God had chosen some people for salvation (the elect) and others for damnation (the reprobate). Homosexuals were part of the latter. While events were foretold by God, a member of the elect had to fight as if the end was in doubt. Even though it was not. That was simply the plan. Rico's assigned role was to fight the homosexual agenda by drawing blood. This act would draw attention to his manifesto which explained that Christian Nationalism was needed to save the United States from this group of reprobates by killing them, per *Leviticus*. This was already decided by God but needed Rico to carry it out.

And then Rico would sit at the right hand of God.

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But he now wondered if that was a lie. It could not be God's lie (impossible!): he would be the liar. He lied – to God – when he proclaimed himself as one of the Elect.

But...he denied Christ.

[Proverbs 6:16-19](#) lays out the things that God hates. One of those things is 'a false witness who pours out lies'.

Rico had lied to God when he promised to be His soldier. He had to redeem himself.

He thought about the Calvinist view of 'Free Will'. John Calvin – under the Guidance of the Lord – developed his ideas during the Reformation. The discussion of 'Free Will' was different in the sixteenth century than today's so-called discussion. Now, it was the just a platform for vile Satanists to showcase their perversions. In Calvin's time – the sixteenth century – the question was whether the will was naturally enslaved by sin and captive to Satan. Embracing 'Free Will' meant rejecting this inherent slavery, while denying it meant acknowledging human bondage to sin. Calvin even referred to the will's slavery to Satan as 'voluntary slavery'.

For a moment, he voluntarily allowed himself to be enslaved by Satan. He was going to embrace the Lord and kill some reprobates. He would embrace his 'Free Will'.

Calvin taught that the work of the Holy Spirit in converting a sinner did not negate that man's 'Free Will'. When the Spirit drew a man to Jesus Christ, he came most freely. The Spirit removed the power of sin from him: the Spirit would replace it with new powers. These new powers were belief and trust. This led to salvation.

This transformation led Rico to enlarge his freedom. It allowed him to live a Christ-centered life with abundant knowledge, power, self-control, and joy.

He had been side-lined: this was true. It was only a glitch. He had to prove to Jesus that he was a good soldier. Reprobates had to die. It was godly.

Ever since he read in the entertainment trades – and he read them religiously as they reported on the work of Satan's minions – that a reboot of the '90s sitcom *Friends* would feature a transgendered character. He knew that he had to do something. It was not surprising that a Jew – a member of the modern Sanhedrin – was behind it.

Rico would help [Revelation 3:9](#) to come to fruition.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Rico knew how God hated lies. But he was not part of the synagogue of Satan. He would prove it to the Lord by killing some of them.

Around midnight, Bobby and Dustin showed up. They knocked softly on the door (as instructed by Rico).

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“Thanks for knocking softly.”, Rico said. “I knew the wife would be sleeping. I really didn’t want to hear the bitch whine.”

The three men made themselves comfortable. Rico sat in his throne (that’s what he called the La-Z-Boy) and the other men sat on the couch that was parallel to his throne. Between the couch and the throne was a coffee table. They sipped beers and talked.

“One second...I’ll get the guns.”, Rico said.

He returned with a knotted 7-11 plastic bag in each hand.

“Here you go.”, He said as he held the bags out. Bobby and Dustin each took one.

“Okay guys. Put the bag in your backpack. There are bullets in the bag with the gun. The gun is not loaded.”

He sat down and took a swig from his long neck. Then he said:

“Like I said: it’s going down Monday. In the words of the great Donald John Trump, it’s going to be wild.”

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The next morning – Sunday – Bobby called Dustin, the former said to the latter:

“Let’s get some [Mad Dog](#) and celebrate: we’re going to do God’s work tomorrow.”

“Bobby, that shit makes me crazy.”

“Oh...don’t be a pussy.”

“I’m not a pussy. Besides we should have clear heads tomorrow...no hangovers.”

“We’ll be fine. You heard what Rico said. We’re hitting that sound stage at 2 in the afternoon...tomorrow. We party tonight. . We’ll each puke in the morning and then have a nice breakfast. We’ll be fine.”

“Well...”, Dustin demurred.

“Let’s be real, Bro. We’ll probably die tomorrow. Let’s party tonight.”

“You wanna go to your place?”

“Hell...no. Or yours. Both of our women are bitches. Let’s cut loose. We’re men of God. Let’s get a room at the [Omni](#).”

“Okay...why not? Some MD 20/20 would be epic.”

Mogen David 20/20, also known as *MD 20/20* and *Mad Dog*, was a favorite of alcoholics. It was made by the Mogen David Wine Company. The company was known for its kosher wines, but it broke away

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from its conventional line to introduce a street wine that was fortified with extra alcohol. It came in a variety of flavors like raspberry and peach. The reputation of MD 20/20 as a cheap, high-alcohol content beverage led to its nickname *Mad Dog*.

The reputation was that it made you nuts. Among its drinkers – like Dustin – there was an urban legend that street wine produced temporary insanity. Sometimes, a person would try to convince him that there was no scientific evidence to support this claim. But Dustin knew that the shit made him nuts. He liked it.

“Now you’re talking.”, Bobby enthused. “Bring some clothes and your Glock.”

“Why?”

“Well, we’re hitting the sound stage Monday afternoon. Do you want to go home Monday morning to pick it up? No. Besides...do you really want to see your woman again?”

“Okay...I’ll bring the Glock.”

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On Sunday, Amy helped to break down the Art Walk. She then had dinner with some of her friends from the Collective. She had been planning to go home between 8 and 9 PM. But – after the older members of the group called it a night – she decided to go drinking with two of her girlfriends who volunteered for the nonprofit. They were all twenty-somethings.

At 10PM, they ended up at the [NOÉ Restaurant & Bar](#) which was in the Omni Hotel.

Mika was a member of the group. Besides both being members of the Collective, she and Amy had something else in common. Jim started his architectural education in 2010 and earned a bachelor’s & master’s in architecture. By the end of 2019. Jim got a job with [David Wright](#). This was ideal for Jim because of his interest in designing environmentally sustainable homes. Mika was a fellow architect who worked at the design firm and shared Jim’s interest in this area.

Mika’s parents were Japanese.

Her parents chose her name because it had a connection to their heritage.

In Japanese, it was a feminine name and had two interrelated meanings. Some sources suggested that it signified ‘beautiful fragrance.’ Her parents liked this interpretation as it evoked imagery of delicate scents and natural beauty. And that imagery flooded her mom’s imagination when she first held her infant daughter. When that interpretation of the name first entered her mom’s mind, it was immediately followed by a related theory about the origin of what was about to become the newborn’s name. ‘Mika’ was also linked to the beauty and fragility of cherry blossom flowers. These blossoms hold immense cultural significance in Japan, symbolizing transience, and renewal. The name evoked the ephemeral nature of life and the fleeting beauty of spring blooms.

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And Mika's mom knew that was going to be her child's name: her dad agreed.

Most of her parent's respective families practiced Shintoism, the indigenous religion of Japan. In the faith, the concept of mortality is deeply intertwined with nature and the cycle of life. That view was expressed by the imagery of cherry blossoms or *sakura*. Followers of Shinto believed that everything, including mountains, trees, animals, and people possessed a spiritual energy that was known *kami*. Cherry blossoms were considered sacred, and their fleeting beauty symbolizes the impermanence of life.

Unlike Western traditions that feared death – and created nonsense to mitigate that fear – Eastern traditions embraced mortality. The temporary nature of awareness magnified its beauty and did not diminish it, *sakura*.

The Shinto belief was that *kami* was within everyone. They further felt that this was released at the time of death. It moved to another world: this realm was neither paradise nor punishment but a world of spirits where ancestral spirits watch over their descendants.

Her parents were agnostic, but both loved the Shinto faith and never fully divorced themselves from it. They understood that – instead of basing an understanding of life on an irrational fear of hell and an absurd promise of heaven (which caused people to do horrible things) – it embraced the beauty of life by tying it to one's ancestors.

Cherry blossoms serve as a timeless metaphor for human existence. Their brief blooming season—powerful, glorious, and intoxicating—reminded her parents that life is also fleeting. Just as the blossoms fall gracefully, our lives too are transient. Shinto encouraged mindfulness and living in the present, appreciating life's beauty and impermanence. It was a simple understanding of life. It was vastly superior to the view that rash action would secure an eternal reward: a reward that was obviously made up.

And Mika – as an adult – shared that view.

Mika also liked that her name made her think about the [Samurai](#), who lived by the strict moral code of *bushido* which exemplified those virtues, including acceptance of death without fear.

Life was beautiful and the fallen cherry blossoms symbolized the end of that short life.

Cherry blossoms in Shintoism represent both the beauty and impermanence of life. They encourage us to appreciate the present, honor our ancestors, and recognize the fleeting nature of existence.

Mika loved her name.

It was her idea to go to the NOÉ Restaurant & Bar.

She loved the outdoor patio as she felt that it had a cozy and relaxed atmosphere. It was a beautiful and warm night. She knew that it would be great to enjoy drinks under the stars while observing the cityscape.

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And they would be sitting amongst the patio's intimate fire pits.

The group had just left [Club Bahia](#), a vibrant nightclub specializing in Latin entertainment. It had been a part of Los Angeles since 1974. While she enjoyed the club's festive atmosphere and the live music of the [Azucar Band](#), she wanted to go someplace a bit more sedate so that they could talk.

Both in downtown Los Angeles, the nightclub was quite close to the patio and its fire pits: just a half mile apart. They would not even have to take another Lyft.

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After their phone conversation, around noon, Bobby and Dustin met at the [Grand Café](#) that was in the *Omni*.

The Grand Café interior emulated a French bistro. Like all the facilities in the complex, the restaurant catered primarily to the 'ultra-wealthy'. Management understood that the 'merely rich' were the lion's share of the clientele. If you scratched the skin off of someone who was 'merely rich', you found someone who was 'ultra-wealthy'. At least, you would find what that person aspired to become. To that person, the aspiration was everything. While that individual lived exceedingly well – with every need fulfilled with no need to be concerned about money – that individual could not really enjoy it as they were not 'ultra-wealthy'. Once becoming 'ultra-wealthy', that person could finally enjoy life.

Management knew their demo.

The bistro-style setting was meant to encourage the customer to slow down, savor the surroundings, and appreciate the simple pleasures of life. The 'ultra-wealthy' – diplomats, top entertainment moguls and so forth – needed to chill. As did the 'merely rich'. It was hard work fighting to be 'ultra-wealthy'. It was so cool to chill with 'ultra-wealthy'.

A good chunk of the clientele were those who were comfortable, making 50K or more. And they wanted to be 'merely rich'. That client would not dine at toney establishments like the Grand Café often. It would be an event...like an anniversary.

And Management was very progressive and welcomed them. All money was green. Or – much more accurately – all cards were plastic.

Sitting at a table – covered with a white linen tablecloth – Bobby and Dustin were both wearing tennis shoes, jeans, and a T-Shirt.

Bobby's shirt was black. On the front of the shirt were the words ULTRA MAGA in white. The words were separated by the image of an American Flag: the first word was above the image and the second below.

Dustin's shirt was also black but featured a reproduction of the cover art for the 1978 debut studio album of *Molly Hatchet*, a raucous southern rock band. A striking painting by the renowned artist Frank Frazetta, the piece was titled *Death Dealer*. The image depicted a menacing warrior clad in dark armor

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and mounted on a powerful steed. The warrior wielded a battle axe. The scene was set against a dramatic, otherworldly landscape of stormy skies and eerie lighting.

"I took care of the reservations online.", Bobby said. I got the Presidential Suite and an adjoining room...best that they had."

"Sounds pricey.", Dustin said.

"Pretty much wiped out my savings."

"Shit. What do I owe you?"

"If we're alive on Tuesday, we'll talk about it then. We won't be.", Bobby said. He laughed and took a sip of his mimosa.

"Well, I'm paying for lunch."

"You're about to pay for a lot of shit.", Bobby said with a laugh.

It was Sunday and that meant Jazz Brunch at the *Grand Café*. There were bottomless mimosas and an international cuisine that included seafood and prime rib. A quartet played standards.

"Good food.", Bobby said. "But I don't like the fucking nigger music. I wish that they play some *Metallica* or *Megadeth*."

"Or *Hatchet*.", Dustin said as he pointed to the image on his T-Shirt. He then fully extended an arm into the air and made the 'sign of the horns' hand gesture. The gesture's roots could be traced back to Italian folklore and superstition: it was believed that making this hand sign could ward off the evil eye or protect against curses. Hard rock fans began using it in the 1970s. Musician Ronnie James Dio – vocalist for the bands *Elf*, *Rainbow*, *Black Sabbath* (after Ozzy was cashiered) and *Dio* – popularized it: he claimed that he learned the gesture from his Italian grandmother, who used it for protection.

"Don't do that. It's Satanic."

"Sorry."

"We're in public...for Pete's sake. You don't want to give people the wrong impression."

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It was 10 PM. Amy and her friends at the NOÉ Restaurant & Bar which was in the Omni Hotel. More precisely, they were hanging out on the rooftop outdoor patio. After partying at Club Bahia - a vibrant nightclub specializing in Latin entertainment - it was a welcome change of pace. While they had a blast at the club, dancing to the live music provided by *The Azucar Band*, they all appreciated being at someplace a bit more sedate so that they could talk. The atmosphere was cozy and relaxed. It was a beautiful and warm night. Sitting amongst the fire pits, they enjoyed drinks under the stars while looking out at the cityscape that was below them.

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Mika said to Amy:

“So, you’re graduating next year?”

“Yeah...shit...I’m so excited about getting my degree. There was a time when it really seemed like I’d never pull it together and go to university.”

“So, you’re getting bachelor’s degree in Psych.”

She knew the answer but was priming the pump.

“Hmmm....hmmm. Going on to get my master’s and then my PsyD. I’m gonna help people damaged by child abuse. I was always meant to do that.”

“I love that about you.”, Mika joined. “It’s because of Doris...”

“Shit was rough. I guess I really value helping people...”

“Oh...’Saint Amy’”. Tamika interjected.

The group laughed.

Tamika’s *faux* cynicism was her contribution to the dynamic. And everyone got that. She could get away with comments that would bring a harsh rebuke if it came from someone else. It’s just how things coalesced over time.

“If you’re mom wasn’t an evil bitch...and things weren’t so fucked up with your people...would you have gone in this direction?”, Mika pressed.

“Who knows? Probably not. I probably would have been a nurse or doctor...”

“You would be an awesome ER nurse.”, Tamika observed.

There was a reason why her cynicism was accepted. She was a nurse at the *Los Angeles General Regional Burn Center*: it was a prominent facility where victims of residential fires were sent for specialized burn care. She had been there for five years and...the burnout rate was high.

The *Center* featured an experienced team of physicians, nurses, and therapists who provided comprehensive treatment for burn injuries.

Tamika both ran the ER response unit and was a therapist.

When someone was brought in, her team would evaluate the severity of burns and then monitor the healing process. This meant assessing the extent of tissue damage, depth of burns, and any associated complications. When that gurney first rolled out of the elevator, it was her team’s responsibility to provide prompt and effective wound care: to clean and dress the burn wounds to prevent infection and promote healing.

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From there, her team was concerned with quickly instituting the protocols of Critical and Acute Care. They needed to stabilize acutely burned patients. Both compassion and dispassion was required.

And her friends got that.

This strength of character was certainly needed when it came to pain management. When that gurney rolled out of the elevator, the person was in excruciate pain. Her team had to administer pain medications and manage the pain. In a world where a person – a lesser person – would get flustered ordering lunch, Tamika was stronger than most.

And her friends got that.

Tamika had advanced expertise: she was a *Certified Burn Registered Nurse (CBRN)*. Her CBRN certification meant that she had knowledge across the burn care continuum: pre-hospital care, critical and acute care, rehabilitation, and injury prevention education. This included providing emotional and psychological support as a patient was going through rehab. A victim of burn injuries often suffered severe emotional and psychological problems. It was her responsibility to assess the patient's emotional well-being and provide support during the recovery process.

She – like Mika – was a strong woman. And Amy liked surrounding herself with strong women.

Tamika had a mixed heritage: black, white, and Asian. Her expressive features and captivating smile made for a striking presence. When meeting her for the first time, a person might first connect with her eyes. Almond-shaped, they were soulful and communicated empathy. Her warm complexion complemented them. That evening she was wearing her hair in a Senegalese Twist, a braiding of multi-colored synthetic extensions into her natural hair. A chic look, it allowed her natural hair to enjoy a break from daily styling. And variety was her style. Her hair varied from natural curls to braids to a straight style. Regardless of her hair style – be it simple or an intricately braided coiffure – she always carried herself with confidence and grace.

Her name was derived from Swahili, specifically the Bantu language spoken in East Africa. It originated from the Swahili word *tembea* which meant ‘to wander’ or ‘to roam’. She loved it. Since the meaning reflected an adventurous spirit with an independent nature, she felt that it suited her to a ‘T’.

The two friends had had past conversations about how their names highlighted the interconnectedness of languages and culture: in so doing, the monikers emphasized unity and shared humanity. They marveled at the powerful significance of that as so much philosophy and religion – especially the latter – created false division.

‘Tamika’ had its roots in Swahili and signified strength, beauty, and resilience: ‘Mika’ was a graceful Japanese name associated with beauty and fragrance.

Overall, ‘Tamika’ was a name that resonated with positive connotations and embraced multiculturalism and shared humanity.

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“You know that I was totally playing when I called you ‘Saint Amy’?”

Amy reached over and gave her friend’s arm a squeeze.

“Of course...Jesus, woman.”

“I love that you want to help people.”, Tamika said.

“Hey...are you guys trying to make feel like shit for being an architect?”

The group laughed and then was silent for a moment.

“You were telling me that you that you knew that you wanted to be a therapist the moment that you met Linda in...um...Biology class.”, Mika said.

Amy laughed.

“Not exactly. But that totally put the bug in my ear. Shit...I was just thinking about that. I almost took a different unit. You know...a different classroom. I wouldn’t have met her...ya’ know? That moment changed my life. What would things have been like if Linda weren’t my girlfriend?”

Amy got a faraway look in eyes. Her friends waited.

It was August 15th 2008. It was the first day of Amy’s seventh grade term: which lasted four months.

Biology was second period. Amy was looking forward to it. She loved science and stuff like anatomy just spoke to her. In it, she saw God’s wondrous handiwork. It was a different God then that of her mom and her church. She stopped believing in that god.

But that was subconsciously.

Over the years Amy would reflect on the psychological schism that she was experiencing in that moment. She would talk to Jane about that. While she loved all three of her partners, she was infinitely closer to Jane. She would talk to her about things that she could never discuss with anyone else. Well...she would talk to her shrink Elaine Gonzalas about such things (and Jane set that up). While the relationship with Gonzalas was very helpful, they simply weren’t friends.

When she walked into Biology, she consciously embraced the teachings of her mom and her church with great passion. And that tormented her. She came to fully appreciate (with the help of Jane and Gonzalas) that she was being torn apart by her budding sexual desires. Her mom and her people hated faggots. She hated them as well but was one of them.

Was she disappointing the LORD or was the LORD disappointed in her?

Her thirteen-year-old self no longer thought about the doctrine with the certitude of fanaticism that defined her for most of her life. It was all slipping away. The thoughts were cold and dispassionate, a

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coldness that would give way to fear and confusion. Then the panic would close in on her. And she would be alone.

In the emptiness, she wanted to die.

She would return to the doctrine. Her conscious ruminations were becoming increasingly tormented. They were dry but gave rise to emotions that were drowning her. Her conscious thoughts were checked by her subconscious understanding. In the dark recess of her mind sat an appreciation that had not yet taken form:

It was all bullshit.

She thought that she was going insane.

Her biology class was being taught in one of the laboratory classrooms. Amy smiled broadly as she entered the room. Science and math took her out of her often-overwhelming depression. She was aware that depressed kids were supposed to lose interest in their studies. It was the opposite with her. Studying made her forget the oppressive dictates of her mom and her Church (as laid out by her Pastor...her Shepherd). She would later realize that her love of academics was an expression of her Authentic Self...every bit as much as her sexuality.

Years later, Amy was talking to Jane about her philosophy and started to cry uncontrollably. She was sitting on a couch and Jane was sitting on a chair that was perpendicular to it. She felt Jane sit down beside her. After wrapping her adjacent arm around her distraught friend, she handed her the box of tissues. When Amy pulled herself together to a reasonable degree, Jane spoke:

"I put the tissues out for when we're talking about painful stuff...Doris trying to drown you in the commode. Shit like that. This is a heavy talk. But smart people have heavy talks. Why are you crying?"

"You're letting me talk...you're encouraging me to share my opinions."

Jane rolled her eyes and gave Amy's shoulders a squeeze:

"Of course...I am sweetie. Of course."

"My people never did that. I just had to parrot their bullshit. You care about what I have to say."

"Of course I do. You're a smart girl, Amy."

"I am?"

"Yeah...you are. I don't say that sort of thing to be kind or polite. You're smart...freaking brilliant. That self-knowledge was beaten out of you."

"Remember...last week? You were talking about how the Jews were expelled from Spain?"

"Of course."

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"I knew that...I really did."

"Then...why did you say that you didn't?"

"In that moment, I didn't. I...was...I was such a good student in High School. My teachers would go on about how smart I was. Being smart...knowing things...was not popular with mom or the church. They did not like facts that contradicted their beliefs. And that was most facts. Shit...our entire society is fact adverse."

...And Jane nodded with downcast eyes.

Amy would later realize that her love of academics was an expression of her Authentic Self...every bit as much as her sexuality.

The facts simply contradicted church teaching. And knowledge was discouraged as strongly as homosexuality. But her love of knowledge was a part of her. She had to hide it. This was (another) source of shame. She would come to believe that this proved that there was a God. It was not all that made up hate. God was Love. She was more than human emotion...much more. She was a Love that permanented the Universe. Humanity – which was often ugly – tended to blind itself to Her. Believing hateful nonsense instead. If one was fortunate, that person would connect to Her. And it was the Love of Universe that allowed her to connect to her Authentic Self.

"Yeah...when I started talking to Linda, it totally put the bug in my ear about going into counseling."

"Something Linda said?", Tamika asked.

"Yeah...the teacher had us pair off to be study partners. She told me that she was already thinking about getting into a good college. And keep in mind that this was the seventh grade. She told me that she took studying seriously. And then she asked me if I felt the same way."

"What did you say?", Mika asked.

"Well...I was taken back. The dumbass kids that I dealt with through the church just didn't talk like that. And...shit...she was so sweet and kind. She came off as thoughtful. That simply made her different from every other kid at the school. The truth was that the others could not get away from me fast enough."

"So...Linda told you that she took studying seriously. She asked you if you did. And you said 'yes'..." Tamika interjected.

Amy laughed.

"Yeah...I'll never forget this. I was so freaked out that there was a kid who was like me...who liked academics...that I blurted out 'I'd like that' even though it didn't answer the question directly..."

"Yes...it did.", Mika corrected her.

Tamika nodded in agreement.

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"I suppose that you're right. So, Linda and I talk some more. And she tells me that it is her ambition to earn a PsyD degree and be a clinical psychologist. Well...fuck...after she became my girlfriend...I realized that I wanted to be one too. I wanted to help people who went through the type of shit that I went through."

"Jane encouraged you to go to college...paid for a semester.", Tamika noted.

"Yeah...damn, that woman is the best. Not just the money. Ya' know...when I started working for her...I was so goddam lost...so isolated. She listened to me...saw me. I really had an intellectual connection with Linda. But...we were kids. Roz supported my academic career, but we never talked about philosophy...I couldn't talk to her about books or the news. She was totally righteous...you know? That just wasn't our dynamic."

"You were sad when you started working for Jane?", Mika asked.

"Um...yeah. I remember getting into it with Doris. I finally let her know that I thought that her beliefs were total bullshit. She slaps me down...literally. Boom! Hard across the face...and knocks me to the floor. I rebel. I get a boy's haircut. I dress up in a T-Shirt, jeans and tennies. When I came home...the bitch freaks. She really gives it to me. She was all...like... 'Oh, you think you're smart? You're stupid! The shit that you learn at school is all made up by Satan.' I was a total fucking mess when I met Jane. She starts to turn me around...in ways that I still can't comprehend."

Tamika took a sip of her drink and said:

"Yeah...We know. We know. You've been through a lot of shit. We know that. But...what have you learned?"

The tone was harsh and argumentative. But both Mika and Amy knew that the exact opposite was true. In a given week at the *Center*, Tamika dealt with more shit in a week than the average person dealt with in a lifetime. But she dealt with it. She had (metaphoric) balls. That gave her a confrontational edge when talking. Her demeanor was at odds with her demure appearance. A mixed race beauty – black, white, and Asian – she had an unassuming presence. Her almond-shaped, were soulful and communicated empathy. Her warm complexion complemented them. And she could handle more shit than the average guy.

Tamika reminded Amy of Jane. Jane had this dead pan demeanor. Based on that alone, it would be reasonable to assume that she just didn't care. When – in fact – she couldn't care more.

And both women were beautiful...in a disturbing way. That wasn't lost on Amy either.

Amy took a sip of her drink.

"What have I learned?", Amy paused, while her expression clouded with enhanced thoughtfulness. Then she said:

"There's no difference between being trans or being good at math."

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“You have to explain that...girlfriend.”, Mika said.

“A person is who he or she is. I’m pretty buzzed...and a lay person... but shit...I know that the human psyche is immensely complex. People...the really smart ones...devote their lives to understanding it. Genetics. Psychology. Neurobiology. And the rest. Honestly, they still don’t have a handle on it.”

“Hmmm...nature versus nurture.” Mika said.

“Yeah.”, Amy concurred.

“Yeah, there's an [ongoing debate](#) about ‘nature vs. nurture’ and how it affects personality.”, Tamika said. “You know...early twin studies revealed genetic influences on personality traits. Now...it's shaping up that specific genes are not directly responsible for personality traits. Genetics is just one piece of the puzzle: environmental factors also contribute to individual differences in personality. It’s about the interplay between genes and environment.”

“Science girl!”, Mika enthused. The three clinked glasses and took a drink.

“So...wait...that’s what you’ve learned from all the shit that you’ve been through?”, Tamika said with a challenging tone.

“No...just setting the table. Now...[I am a Christian](#). I really am. But...I don’t believe that the Bible is infallible. In fact, most of it is total bullshit.”

“Um...okay then...do you believe in Jesus?”, Mika asked.

“So...both Linda – my first girlfriend – and Jane – my polyam partner – both shape my understanding of God. Linda was Unitarian: Jane is a liberal Jew.”

“Go on.”, Tamika said.

“Well...there is order to the Universe. And I believe that there is an intelligence behind it. Jane and I argue about this – in a good natured way – because she thinks...um...differently, The Divine is a force that animates reality but lacks intellect or personality...it isn’t even aware of itself. Now...Jane believes in the Divine – which she prefers to ‘God’ – and it’s a hard belief...not a metaphor. And...Jim? He’s a secular humanist. He hates this shit. If it can’t be measured, it doesn’t exist. Jim and I never talk this stuff.”

“Brandon?”, Mika asked.

“He and Jane are in the same boat. Everything is tied together by something that the human mind can’t comprehend. But he’s down with shit like Buddhism and Taoism: Jane’s into a modern form of Judaism called Reconstructionism. Both Jane and Brandon feel there is a Creative force that has no awareness or intellect. But...I like Jesus. And...I believe that force *is* self-aware. I believe...really believe...in a single intellect behind Creation. What can I say? I feel it in my bones. I’d be denying myself if I denied Jesus. I know this part sounds fucked up...given the abuse that I dealt with as a kid. But I like celebrating

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Christmas...not just as a festive holiday...a time to drink, eat and fuck...but something with spiritual significance.”

“And science?”, Tamika asked.

“That’s how we understand our physical reality. I’m 100% pro-science. Brandon likes to say that if your beliefs contradict science that means that you have false beliefs.”

“What about secular humanism?”, Mika asked.

“I’m cool with it. I used to view it as a threat...or something. I get it now. If we can’t measure the reality of something, then we can’t all agree on that reality. But...Brandon says that imagination isn’t necessarily imaginary. Maybe it connects a person to a kind of reality beyond linear thought.”

“Wow...okay.”, Mika said. “So, a lot of family are Shinto. Now, I’m totally agnostic. But Shinto is all about *kami*. Now...they say that this is a wide range of things...um...deities, spirits, mythological beings and what not. Now...I don’t believe this stuff.”

“Okay...you don’t believe that...right? It’s total bullshit.”, Tamika was glowering. She was leaning back with arms crossed.

“No...But I feel that it reminds me that there is a single essence to existence. A Oneness that connects everything. This fills me with awe. Look...I’m an educated woman: I’m all for rationality and science. But...to really get what’s going on...you have to go beyond logic. Being Spock has its limitations.”

“Exactly.”, Amy concurred.

Tamika, still leaning back, squeezed the bridge of her nose with thumb and forefinger.

“No...no...no. I’m with Jim. If it can’t be measured, it isn’t real. Look, I know that you guys are talking about...well...using fanciful speculation in a harmless way. But, in reality, that turns into inquisitions really fast.”

“I agree.”, Amy said. “That reminds me of something Brandon once said. Most people are driven by one of two manias: that all opinions must be provable or the delusion that proof does not matter. God knows that delusion was the problem with mom and the church people. I’m saying that there is a third way. You can incorporate your imagination into your world view. You can realize that it is different than reason. And you don’t subjugate reason and science to your imagination. And who’s to say that the imagination isn’t a source of hard insights?”

“I hang with you Amy because you’re smart. But that’s stupid.”, Tamika said.

Amy was unfazed.

“I’m a red letter gal. You know...I look to the direct quotes from Jesus for inspiration. I’m also a deist. Um...Imagine that you find this complex and intricate watch lying on the ground. So...you examine its

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gears, springs, and delicate mechanisms. You recognize that such a precise and purposeful design implies a that there was a watchmaker —someone who intentionally crafted the watch.”

“You realize that there was probably no actual person that corresponds to ‘Jesus’...let alone a magical superbeing?”, Tamika said. “[I mean all four of the canonical gospels were written decades after Christ supposedly died](#). Hell, *John* -which really pushes the idea of Christ’s divinity – was written after the year 100 in the common era. The supposed authors of the gospels – assuming these guys even existed – didn’t write them. First person accounts of events that could not have been written by the narrators. They’re bullshit.”

“I know. I don’t believe in most of the stuff in the New Testament. The miracles? Bullshit. The resurrection? Bullshit.”, Amy said.

“But I thought you said that you were a Christian.”, Tamika pressed.

“I am. But...two things. I look to the quotes attributed to Christ for guidance. Hell, my favorite Jesus quote comes from *The Gospel of Thomas*...[verse three](#) to be exact. And *Thomas* is noncanonical...a completely different theology than the horse shit that is being crammed down our throats. *Thomas* is [Gnostic Christianity](#). And I do believe that there is an intellect behind the Creation. I mean really believe that. Jesus is a metaphor for this incomprehensible mind. It’s cool that you don’t agree. Heaven and hell is bullshit, anyway. Fuck, sweetie, it would suck if I just hung out with people who believed exactly like me. Besides, I totally get the structure that comes being a [Christopher Hitchens](#) type.”

“Wait...there’s another Christian theology?”, Mika asked.

“Yeah...‘Gnostic’. It dies out around the third century...actually it was destroyed by the foredaddies of the modern church. Its metaphysics were even more batshit than what we have now. But...ultimately it was a self-enlightenment philosophy like Buddhism.”

“Um...so are you a theist or not?”, Tamika asked.

“Not. I’m an atheist when it comes to ‘story gods’...all obviously made up horse shit. But I believe that there is more than logic can show. Given the incredible complexity, order, and functionality of the universe, I have to believe in an intelligent designer. Jesus is not real: he is a metaphor. He represents that entity or force or whatever. I embrace the idea that this intellect is unknowable... can’t be articulated. A theist articulates the shit out of things that can’t be seen.”

“It’s kinda like me and Shintoism.”, Mika added. “Now...I’m a flat-out agnostic. Really...I don’t believe in jack. But the Shinto beliefs get me thinking about the nature of existence. I don’t think that one can fully appreciate reality if you limit yourself to *Introduction To Logic*.”

“Fine, guys...Amy, what were you saying about the transgendered and people who are good at math?”, Tamika said.

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"Sure...", Amy said. "This is a good example where science and not – as you put it, Tamika – 'fanciful speculation' takes the wheel. Now, the DSM..."

"I'm sorry...what's the 'DSM'?", Mika asked.

Tamika answered:

"That stands for 'Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders'. It's this comprehensive classification system developed by the American Psychiatric Association. Mental health professionals use it to diagnose and categorize various mental health conditions. It allows clinicians to communicate effectively and make consistent diagnoses. Fuck...I love getting drunk with smart people."

The group laughed.

"So...anyway...", Amy continued. "The third edition of the DSM acknowledged the existence of gender dysphoria in 1980."

"And that term refers to the distress a person experiences due to a mismatch between gender identity and the birth sex.", Tamika interjected.

"Right.", Amy affirmed. "Now, the term 'gender dysphoria' actually appears later than '80...um..."

"It first appears in the DSM-5 which was released in '13. It replaced 'gender identity disorder'.", Tamika said.

"Right.", Amy said. "It was correctly felt the term was judgmental and implied that it was...well...a disorder when it isn't. Anyway... it refers to the distress caused by the...um...ah...incongruence between one's experienced and assigned gender."

"Nicely done.", Tamika said.

"Thanks. That's college money!", Amy said.

"Okay.", Tamika said. "So....the World Health Organization included 'transsexualism' 'in the ICD-10 which came out in '90.

"What...", Mika started.

"'ICD' stands for 'International Classification of Diseases'...", Amy said. "...a globally recognized system for classifying health conditions, diseases, stuff like that."

Mika rolled her eyes and took a drink.

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“And in the [ICD-11](#) the diagnosis was termed ‘gender Incongruence’.”, Tamika said. The [ICD-11](#) took transgenderism...um, I mean ‘gender Incongruence’...out of the Mental Health chapter and into the Sexual Health chapter, alongside other hormonal and urogenital related issues. The way that [science has evolved](#) its understanding of this stuff fascinates me.”

“Okay...”Mika said. “Stuff like that would piss off the Trump freaks and that’s the real reason why they got so upset by masks and vaccines.”

“It’s why religious extremists hate science – extremists of all stripes – because a discipline that is dedicated to uncovering the truth...and it can be a messy process...will continue to bitch slap superstitious drivel that was written thousands of years ago by shepherds. Over time – assuming humanity doesn’t backslide completely – we [will embrace a clear understanding](#) of reality progressively more.”, Tamika said.

She took a sip of her drink and said:

“Things are so fucked up now, but I have hope.”

“Okay...yeah.”, Mika joined. “Superstitious drivel has always colored humanity’s perception of reality. Hell, [Newsweek](#) came out with a [cover article](#) in ’95...’95 y’all...with the title *Bisexuality. Not gay. Not straight. A new sexual identity emerges.*

Amy rolled her eyes and took a drink. Then she said:

“Science has always been hobbled by nonsense. It’s clear to me that human sexuality is a complex phenomenon. I mean it just started to look seriously at the range of sexual attraction in...like...the ‘70’s. And now just starting getting serious about gender identity. It’s all about the rich complexity of the human mind. Even if the science is just starting to catch up, there’s all kinds of cultural evidence of the trans phenomenon. In Native American culture, the notion of a person possessing both feminine and masculine qualities was [well known](#). And these people had an honored place in society.”

“Fuck...I love getting drunk with smart people.”, Tamika said.

“Um...what’s the connection between trans people and people who are good at math?”, Mika asked.

“Pretty straight forward.”, Amy said. “A person’s essence is the interplay of nature and nurture. [That’s why](#) a person is good at math. A person’s sexual essence – both attraction and identity – has a similar basis.”

“I still don’t understand. What was the lesson that you learned from the abuse that you suffered as a kid?”, Tamika asked.

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“Just think about this conversation...three smart women talking science and spirituality...which blows off their controlling bullshit. There are a lot of people who hate that: they want to control us, stop us. *If they have to, they'll kill us...physically tear us up.* And how do they go about it? By embracing a lot of bullshit that was written thousands of years ago by bitter and controlling men. I come from that culture. I can't believe the inexhaustible bullshit that people accept so that they can control others.”

Amy took a drink and continued:

“Here's the money shot: those who want to control others are being controlled. That person's ability to think clearly about reality is fucked up by the nonsense that they believe. That nonsense is foisted on them by those that want to control them. And those controlling those controllers are being controlled. I mean...[the dude at the top](#)...Pope, whatever...believes a bunch of moldy bullshit that written to control. No one thinks for themselves. Everyone is being controlled...even the controllers.”

Looking at the table, Amy said softly to herself:

“It was all bullshit.”

She looked up. Her eyes were dark. She spoke flatly with a mix of hate, anger, frustration, and contempt. It was a tone of voice that neither woman ever heard before...and would never hear again. It gave each of them goosebumps:

“It was all bullshit.”

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After Dustin and Bobby finished their lunch at the Grand Café, they headed up to their rooms.

Bobby had arranged for the Presidential Suite and an adjoining room. This would probably be the last night on Earth for these two soldiers of Christ.

And they might as well enjoy it.

The two headed up to the 17th floor where the Presidential Suite was located. The impressive, jaw-dropping, suite offered spectacular views of architectural landmarks such as [The Broad](#) and the [Walt Disney Concert Hall](#).

Neither man was much for travel. Each had an episode that required flying to a different city.

Bobby's sister – Angela - died a couple years back. The death was very depressing for him. If Angie had lived her life with Christ in her heart, the funeral would have a joyous time. While it would have stung that she had left the mortal plain, he would have taken great solace in the fact that she was with the Lord forever.

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Sadly, Angela renounced the Sacrifice of the Son of God. She not only turned her back on the Lord, but her lifestyle also mocked the epic pain and suffering.

On paper, she appeared to be a noble woman but that was an illusion.

She died on the New Year Day of 2023. Midway through '21, she was appointed CEO of [The Arkansas Foodbank](#), the largest food bank in Little Rock, Arkansas. It was a 99,000 square-foot facility. 2022 – Angela's first and only full year as CEO – was an impressive one. It fed over 280,000 people across 33 counties.

While she was not always certain what direction her career would take, Angela knew that she wanted to devote her life to helping people. After earning both her Bachelor's and Master's in nonprofit management: she earned an MBA with the same focus. After many years of both paid and unpaid labor, she worked her way up to CEO.

But Bobby knew that she earned the Lord's wrath.

She was both an atheist and a lesbian: a total bull-dyke. She may have devoted her life to feeding people, but she renounced the Lord and mocked Him.

The Bible emphasized that salvation was not realized through works but by faith.

As [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) said:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He found other verses – like [Titus 3:5](#) and [Romans 3 10-:28](#) – to be on point.

In this regard, [Romans 10:7-10](#) said it best:

Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Angela – the godless bull-dyke – was misled by her carnal nature so her life did not matter.

But even those who called themselves Christians ([but were not](#)) did not matter.

Even if Angela were heterosexual and claimed to be 'Christian', her life would mean nothing to the Lord. If she held toxic ideas – like being pro-choice or supporting LGBTQ, she would be lying when she said

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was a 'Christian'. And [God hated](#) liars, those who shed innocent blood and those who stirred up conflict in the community.

As Rico explained, non-Christians, fake Christians and sexual deviants would be taken care of in the new Christian Nationalist government. Rico introduced Bobby to a new word: *sedition*. It referred to conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state.

Rico was very fond of Lauren Boebert, a Republican congresswoman. She pointed out that the separation of church and state was junk. While speaking in a House of Worship (and this sanctified her words), she boldly stated *The church is supposed to direct the government, the government is not supposed to direct the church*. She expressed frustration with the notion of separation, claiming it was [not in the Constitution](#) and dismissed it as mere words in a letter.

And Rico affirmed that in a Christian Nationalist state the government would be submissive to the church. And that meant that women would be submissive to men. Boebert knew that her political power was a temporary evil. When a godly United States was finally realized, she would lose her right to vote (and her role in the government). She – along with other female Christian Nationalists (like Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene) – wanted this. They wanted to be taken care of.

Rico would remind Bobby of verses like [1 Timothy 2:11-15](#):

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Wise women – like Boebert and Greene – understood this. It was nasty business that they had to publicly assert themselves but that was only a temporary. In the new order, they would be *quiet*. And women who stood up for themselves would be guilty of *sedition* (rebellious against the authority of the state which was subservient to the church).

Satanic media demonized the concept that a woman's place was in the home, that she should aspire to nothing more than being barefoot and pregnant, This, in fact, is what the Lord wanted. It is what Boebert and Greene wanted.

It is what Rico wanted (but that was only because it was God's Will).

Rico would remind Bobby of [Ephesians 5:22-24](#):

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Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Women who stood up for themselves would be guilty of *sedition*, creating tension in church.

The Lord hated those who stirred up conflict in the community...His Community. And under the Christian Nationalist state – that Rico, Boebert and Greene prophesized – the government would be the community...His Community. Rico would point out that [Romans 16:17](#) told believers to avoid those who taught false doctrine. If the government was His Community, the entire population was His. And the only way to avoid the reprobate would be to remove that person from the population. The non-Christians, fake Christians and sexual deviants would have to be removed from the United States: it would then consist of only true Christians (an Earthly paradise). This involved the removal of millions. Rico pointed out that [mass deportation](#) would not be an option. They would have to be slaughtered. By holding false beliefs and doing bad things, they were seditious. For the good of the state – His Community – they would have to be taken care of.

In a Christian Nationalist state, there would be [a law](#) that would instruct gays be rounded and jailed...sent to camps.

Their blood would sanctify His Community. Rico explained to Bobby that there was a theologian that inspired his manifesto: the fellow's name was 'John Calvin'.

People always talked about the *New Covenant*. Jesus' sacrifice - His death on the cross – created this Covenant which replaced Mosaic Law (*Old Covenant*) found in the Old Testament, Christ's sacrifice emphasized grace and faith and replaced the old rules. Through His resurrection, Jesus defeated death and restored life for those who believe in Him. The *New Covenant* brought about an internal spiritual transformation in the believer. And this resulted in a new relationship with God.

Rico explained that humanity had fallen and needed the redemption only found in Christ.

And Calvin described the special situation of the Jews during Old Testament. God made a covenant with Abraham, promising the coming of Christ. The Old Covenant was not in opposition to Christ. His Sacrifice was a continuation of God's promise. Christ's obedience to the Father removed the discord between humanity and God.

It did not invalidate Mosaic Law.

Rico explained that Christ died for all people, but only intercedes for the elect. And people who violated Mosaic Law were not the elect.

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[Leviticus 20:13](#) was still in force.

When Trump, Boebert and the rest succeeded in turning the US Christian Nationalist, right thinkers would have to ensure that all biblical principles were upheld.

As [1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#) pointed out:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And – as Rico liked to point out – a Christian Nationalist state would be pretty lame if it allowed the unrighteous to walk around free and corrupt others, tricking them to believe Satan’s lies and denying them the all-important access to Heaven.

As for Angela, she was not a Christian. Even if she were a fake one, it would not good enough...not for the Lord.

Deeds were not enough. A person could claim to be a Christian but not be sincere in the expression of the Word. Such a person might think that his deeds would win God’s favor. He would be wrong. Bobby understood that a so-called Christian could easily be misled by his carnal nature. [Romans 8:7](#) said that well:

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Satan was – of course – behind the endless deception that arose from a man’s carnal nature. Bobby was so fortunate to find Rico (of course it was God’s will). This General in Christ’s Army led him to strike the evil reboot of *Friends*. The original was depraved enough. This new one was going to have a transgendered character – that would be played by an actual deviant. This perversion would glorify the evil. It was *Romans 8:7* in action.

When his disgusting sister – Angela – died, he attend the funeral and that meant flying out.

That was when he bought his travel suitcases with two wheels. Calling it a *rollaboard*, the salesman explained to him that such bags were particularly popular among frequent flyers due to their durability and ease of use. He settled on *Travelpro Platinum Elite 22*, a soft-sided carry-on. On his last day on Earth, he had his belongings – including his Glock – in it. He took it up to the Presidential Suite on the 17th floor.

Dustin had a hard-sided carry-on, the *Samsonite Outline Pro Carry-On Suitcase*.

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It made him think about free will (Rico explained it to him).

Rico explained that 'free will' was correctly understood back in the olden days. Now, it was the just a platform for vile Satanists to showcase their perversions.

Back in the olden days, smart and godly men understood that 'free will' was all about avoiding being enslaved by sin (being Satan's captive) Believing in 'free will' meant rejecting this slavery... 'voluntary slavery'.

When the Spirit drew a man to Jesus Christ, the guy came to Him freely. A guy was never forced to embrace Christ as his Savior. But the Spirit removed the power of sin from him: the Spirit would replace it with new powers. These new powers were belief and trust. This led to salvation.

The reason why the bag made Dustin think about this was that he bought it when he flew out to attend the funeral of a cousin, Reverend Cletus. A godly man, Cletus embraced free will (as did Dustin).

Cletus was a Shepherd of several hundred people. When he died, the Satanists were trying him on trumped-up charges of fraud.

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"It was all bullshit.", Amy said.

"Jesus is LORD!", a voice shrieked. Everyone at the table – along with everyone on the patio – turned towards it. Two men were standing at the elevator. They were casually dressed: jeans, T-Shirts, and work boots.

After settling into their suite, after lunch at Grand Café, they swapped their tennies for work boots. Each man had a pair in his carry on. It was their plan to leave directly from the hotel on Monday and hit the sound stage where the reboot of *Friends* was being filmed. It was anticipated that the situation would require good boots.

The men realized that their boots would serve a purpose other than the normal (construction). But they were going to do God's work that day: there would be blood. Traction would be needed. Being thoughtful Soldiers of Christ, they understood that good boots would be needed.

The upper was the front part of the boot where the man's toes went. The upper of each pair was made of leather. . The lining for each pair was a soft – fleece like – material. The men were construction workers and selected boots whose insulation would provide comfort on the coldest day. They knew that they would have to do some kicking. The insole of each pair – the layer inside the boot were the foot rested – provided cushioning and support. When doing one's part to bring about the Rapture, details mattered.

Both men were drunk, not buzzed but totally shitfaced. That was instantaneously obvious. Even standing still, both were swaying in a nearly imperceptible manner. Their eyes were glazed over. It was a

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drunkard's scream. Even though it was a short phrase, the slur was pronounced, the syllables blended together, While clear enough, the man was somewhat difficult to understand. The pitch belied a mix of anger and contentment. While he was somewhat difficult to understand, he overenunciated. He realized – whether consciously or not – how drunk he was, He overcompensated by trying to force extra crispness into every consonant and vowel. Given the importance that he placed on the words, he felt pressure to pronounce everything perfectly.

“Oh...fuck.”, Amy said.

She spoke reasonably softly...midway between conversational volume and a whisper. But the entire patio was dead silent. No one spoke and the pianist had stopped playing. Even though her table was near the center of the floor, her voice carried.

And anyone would notice her, she was a mix of feminine and masculine energy.

From that faithful day – when Doris slapped her to the floor when she finally told her mom how she felt about the beliefs that emanated from her Pastor...her Shepherd – the character 'Laura Petrie' from the classic sitcom *The Dick Van Dyke Show* took on increasing significance for her.

In 2008, her mom forced her to wear her hair like Rob's wife, who was played by Mary Tyler Moore. From the standards of the 1960's, it was considered classy and elegant: influenced by the fashion icon of the time First Lady Jackie Kennedy. It was a short, sleek bob that did frame her face nicely. But, in 2008, it was horribly dated.

She was an outsider at school. This was – to a large extent – because her mom and the church drummed into her that she should not get close to people who were not 'right with Jesus'. And her mom really did not want her to socialize with the godless spawn at the school. She wanted her child to come right home and study the Bible.

And Doris' plan worked: the hairstyle certainly did not help with her social life.

Prior to the day that she curated the boy's look - including the haircut - that physically manifested what was inside her, she had been toying with getting Taylor Swift's hairstyle as it reflected her youthful charm and evolving musical career. Swift had just released her second album, *Fearless* and her curly locks were a defining feature. Her 2008 hairstyle was a delightful blend of curls, youthful energy, and country music flair.

Setting aside the tensions at home, she hated her hair and wanted a contemporary cut.

Prior to that life changing day, Amy would wonder about wearing Laura Petrie's capri pants and blouses to school. She could have sold it as retro. She may have even been a trendsetter. Maybe...just maybe...that would have pulled her out of the funk about not hanging with people that were not 'right with Jesus'. That didn't happen: Linda did. While she consciously clung to doctrine shortly before meeting her future girlfriend, her subconscious renunciation of it was fighting back. And that expressed itself in interesting ways.

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She came to love the 'strong woman' vibe that emanated from the black and white images of 'Laura Petrie'. She was drawn to Laura's energy: both masculine and feminine. The guts that the makers of that program showed - which debuted in 1961 - was not lost on her. They were making a statement about the value of a strong woman. It was '61 and subtlety was required: but a statement, nonetheless.

She was never interested in looking like a dyke. She always felt the interplay of the feminine and masculine within her. She wore suits and a conservative male haircut. But she always incorporated just a little bit of makeup into her look. Her delicate facial features emphasized this feminine energy.

Bobby looked towards the voice.

"What the fuck are you?"

And the two men staggered over to Amy's table.

When the two men reached the table, Tamika spoke with a forceful and deliberate calm:

"We're just minding our own business...please leave us alone."

"Right off the bat...a lie.", Dustin said.

He shook his head and continued:

"You ain't minding your own business. You are corrupting innocents. The existence of this freak...", He said as he motioned towards Amy, who stared back in terror. "...is driving a wedge between even the most casual observer and the saving grace of Jesus Christ."

Bobby was considering Amy. He said to her:

"Wow...if you dressed normal...you'd be hot. This is a total affront to nature...to Jesus. Usually, you twisted freaks *look* like the freaks that you are. I hate to imagine the twisted orgy that the three of you are about to engage in."

Dustin shifted his attention to Amy and said:

"Of course...you are totally ignorant of the Word of God. You don't know what the Good Book says about cross-dressing."

"Oh, let me help you out...it's [Deuteronomy 22:5](#). Not that you know it...you godless she-devil.", Bobby said.

"I know it.", Amy said softly. She was terrified and responded in seemingly the worst possible way.

"You harlot! You godless lying harlot!", Dustin said.

"I should kill you now for blaspheming!", Bobby shrieked.

Amy closed her eyes and said softly with a voice that was tinged with shame:

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“A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.”

Dustin softened considerably.

“Clearly, you were taught the Holy Word. You turned your back on Him. He will take you back. He’ll do so enthusiastically. Let’s test your biblical knowledge further. Where in the Bible does Jesus tell the parable of the prodigal son?”

She opened her eyes but was staring down at the table. She said with mix of shame and embarrassment:

[“Luke 15:11–32.”](#)

Bobby said sympathetically:

“You’ve strayed, child. But...Jesus will take you back. I want to test you further. Where in the Bible does Jesus talk to Nicodemus about being Born Again?”

Amy was no longer fearful but was in Ms. Simms’ class. She felt something that she had felt in decades: the emptiness.

And in the emptiness, she wanted to die.

“John...Chapter three.”

The two men looked at each and smiled.

Dustin looked at her and said:

[“John 3:3?”](#)

“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’.”

Dustin probed further:

[“John 3:16?”](#)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

“And...you don’t even hesitate. You know this cold. You were one with the flock and can be again. Join us...and share eternal life.”, Bobby said.

Amy had been looking down. She looked to the man who was speaking. She did not see his face: it was Doris.

It was the expression that her mom had on her face after attempting to drown her in the toilet: calculating dispassion.

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Amy had rolled onto the floor and onto her back. Her entire body spasmed as it pulled in a series of breaths.

“Ahhh!...Ahhh!...Ahhh!”

Awareness returned. Her mother was standing above her with the cold expression.

After she was finally able to speak, Amy screamed with a pitched mixture of terror and panic as she laid on her back and stared at mother:

“I’m not a lesbian! I’m not a lesbian! I’m a good girl! I swear! Mom...I love Jesus!”

Doris centered herself with several deep breaths. She was spent and spoke with resignation:

“I didn’t make dinner. We’ll go to that buffet that you like. Get cleaned up. We’re leaving in 20 minutes.”

Doris started towards the door.

After a couple steps, she said without looking at Amy:

“You don’t tell anyone about this. If you lose your composure at the buffet...that will be a problem. Can you maintain?”

She looked back at Amy who was now sitting upright on the floor. She was red-faced and wiping a tear away. With effort, the child nodded.

Doris continued out. As she left the bathroom, she said:

“And wear a dress.”

And [‘James 1: 6-8’](#) flashed in her mind:

‘But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.’

Amy said:

“Fuck you...cunt.”

Tamika felt her heart sink. Amy had been handling the situation amazingly well. As much as she liked Amy, she simply did not think that her friend had the grit to handle a situation like this. And she had been. She was doing a masterful job. Then she snapped. Now, they were going to die.

“[Matthew 24:24!](#)”, Dustin screamed.

He grabbed Amy by the arm. He pulled her up and dragged her over to the edge of the room. He pressed her against the wall. He then placed his free hand around Amy’s throat and pushed in towards

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the wall. Amy started to choke and struggle. She grabbed the man's arm and tried to break his grip. She couldn't.

He pulled her towards him with one arm and grabbed a carafe of wine from a table. He crashed the glass container across her face. The wine splayed out in all directions.

"Cunt! Cunt! You deceive me – you evil temptress – and then emasculate me? A witch! YOU ARE A [WITCH!](#) I'm going to show you that I'm all man by making you a woman!"

He forced her back against the wall and raped her.

With one arm, he threw Amy to the floor.

With all the strength that he could muster – and he was a big man – he kicked her repeatedly in the head.

From the same table where the carafe was sitting, he grabbed a large carving knife. Falling on top of her, he cut her throat and gouged her eyes out.

At that moment, two uniformed police officers enter the patio with guns drawn.

Bobby grabbed Tamika.

"Let her go!", One of the officers yelled.

"Fuck this shit! I am a Soldier of Christ! I have a divine destiny". He threw Tamika onto a fire pit and her synthetic hair extensions quickly caught and the flame spread.

The officers shoot both Bobby and Dustin dead.

Several patrons rushed in and pulled Tamika from the fire: a businessman removed his suit jacket and smothered the flames.

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At 1 AM, there was a knock at the door of a house in Elysian Valley. Brandon and Jim rushed to answer it: Jane was at her office.

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Brandon Speaking

It was the Wednesday after Amy's murder.

My cell rings. I knew from the tone – the theme from *Friends* – that it was work.

"Um...hello."

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“Hi Brandon. It’s Josie.”

“Ms. Totah...”

“Josie...”

“Sure...Josie.”

“I wanted to call about what happened last weekend. God...I’m here for you...we all are.”

“Thanks. That means a lot.”

“Um...I hope that this doesn’t upset you. But Ilana told me about the nature of the relationship that you and Amy had. You and your other partners.”

I was silent for a moment as I attempted to form a response. I said:

“No...it’s cool. The press is saying that we were all roommates. But the truth will come out very soon. We weren’t secretive about it all. It is...um...a splashy story. It’s already getting heavy national coverage...I’m surprised that juicy angle hasn’t been reported yet. Fucking...vultures. I’m proud of our relationship...anyway. And...Ilana had to tell the top people what’s going down. You guys will be pulled into this...you know.”

“Don’t worry about that.”

“Are you calling to debrief me? To formulate a media response?”

“Oh...god...Brandon...”

And I I exploded:

“I loved her...Fuck!...Fuck!...I love her.”

“I know. Can you talk? I apologize for intruding. I can call back later...or, whatever you want.”

I moved the cell away from my face. I did some impromptu Vipassana Meditation: focused on my breathing. Not having tissues or anything, I did my best to wipe my face of the tears and snot with the palm of my other hand and then rubbing the mess onto the opposing shirt sleeve. When I was reasonably composed, I put the cell back to face. My voice was somewhat broken but overall collected:

“You would have loved her as well.”

“Oh...shit. I have no doubt of that. God...I’d give anything....”, Josie fell silent. “Can you talk? I can call back...or whatever.”

“I’m good. I really need to talk to you. What’s on your mind?”

“Ilana tells me that you don’t think can work in the writer’s room.”

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“Yeah...I might be able to function. I just don’t know. Creative writing is...”, I fell silent for a moment and then continued. “It’s coming out...our polyam. You know how this shit goes down. This is a salacious story. Perfect for keeping us from talking about how the environment is going to shit. Perfect for the Newsmax creeps. A dyke in a perverted tryst? Perfect! It’s coming out.”

“Jesus...don’t worry about that, Brandon.”

“We’re adults for Christ’s sake. Serious people. This project is controversial enough what with...well, you. I can just imagine what the smarmy talking heads are going to be saying...the snakes. If I’m a writer on this...you know that the ‘Jesse Watters’ types will be blathering about how I’m furthering the Gay Agenda. Then the writer’s room would be plunged into chaos. I honestly believe that we couldn’t even deliver scripts if I’m there. Are you calling to let me go?”

“No...we’re family. You are part of us. I respect your position and...honestly...think your analysis is spot on. Unfortunately. But we are family. We will get you something...something good. I’m here for you: we all are.”

“Go on.”

“As you know, I have both executive producer and consultant creds. I want you to interview to be my assistant.”

“You haven’t hired someone?”

“No...I did conclude the interviews and have two strong candidates. I’m reopening it for you. Are you interested?”

“Yeah.”

“I want to be clear. I am not making an offer. I want to interview you and I have two people that I like. I will consider you seriously but not making any promises.”

“I don’t know if I’m even qualified.”

“Yes...you are. Honestly, you’re background is arguably stronger than the other two...university and internship. You have hands-on. I’m counting that humor website...”

“*Consumer Follies.*”

“...Which you used to get on *The Mindy Project*. That shows drive and initiative...real balls. This is a very serious interview offer. And, if I end up going with one of the other people, I personally promise to get you something. With the *Friends* reboot if humanly possible, I’ll go outside to another project if needed. Not just me, Ilana has your back also.”

“Um...Okay, thanks.”

We scheduled a meeting.

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“Why are people so evil, Josie?”

“I don’t know, sweetie. It’s very important to me that we talk about this. I want it to be a face-to-face. We’ll talk about it in the interview.”

“In my job interview? Good versus Evil? Wow...that sounds...unique.”

“Actually...no. I’m acting as consultant over the development of my character...my trans character. Everyone that I talk to is really smart. They know the PC answers. They know how to placate me...how to kiss my freaking ring. I’ve been trying to get into get into the person’s head. Just talk philosophy. So, this is perfect. Shit...that is literally the most stupid thing that I’ve ever said.”

“Oh...I can top that. It was literally the most stupid thing that I ever heard anyone say. I’m counting reruns of *Hee-Haw*.”

I laughed: the first genuine one since hearing the news.

We talked some more and reconfirmed. We ended the call.

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