

The Hatchet Man (fragments)

Thomas D. Freewill decided one day that he was not going to hide who and what he was from society. At the time Thomas lived at The Lodge, a group home for the mentally ill, but this is where society puts its invalids and other undesirables, to keep them safe, or rather to keep society safe from them. It was here that Thomas D. Freewill, in which the D. stood for "Doubt," decided to come out of the closet as an agnostic atheist. And not that he expected anyone there to understand what it meant to be a humanist, freethinker, and agnostic atheist... No. The people at the group home couldn't ascertain what this meant, esp. The staff who were Evangelicals and hated atheists. Though they presented a facade that pretended to love everyone and all of God's creation, they did not in fact have any qualms against persecuting an atheist.

And so Thomas D. Freewill made it known to others through a t-shirt that read simply:
"Atheist."

Initial reactions to the t-shirt were that it was okay to be who you wanted to be, except, it seemed, an atheist. The fellow residents at the group home couldn't understand what it meant to be:
"Good without God."

And it took only a day for someone to label Thomas D. Freewill:
"The Doubting Thomas."

A label Thomas D. Freewill took on with pleasure. Labels used for the sake of convenience by the herd, to pigeon-hole what the masses liked or dislike, or in this case, what they feared. But this was the state in Amerika these days. There were some that Thomas met who operated under the pretense that they were nonreligious, but still believed in God and were not an atheist as was Thomas D. Freewill. But these were what our Doubting Thomas called "Pretenders." They pretended to be nonreligious but were too cowardly to say they were atheist, or just didn't want the attention from their fellow humankind that Thomas D. Freewill underwent. No, it was not easy to say these days even in Amerika who or what one really was, at least in the South, where Evangelism was the fashion of the day. But Thomas was not against religion, so to speak, because he had a liking of Buddhist traditions and of Taoism, a spiritual philosophy. Yes, our Doubting Thomas appreciated this godless religion and this godless philosophy. The idea, too, that "religion is poison" did not appeal to our Doubting Thomas, because Thomas had studied Comparative Religions in college.

Another sore spot to Thomas D. Freewill was the University of Academia, where Thomas had once thrived until it served its purpose and Thomas moved on from Academia after several, several years of lost time being a student. The Doubting Thomas was a student of Comparative Religions and now was a teacher of Comparative Religions through his The Layman's Philosophy that he worked under. Even at the University of Academia, Thomas D. Freewill encountered being viewed as a deviant for his disbelief, his agnostic atheism. And even after college life, Thomas was accused of having a "fixed mindset," a crime he didn't commit, a sin he was innocent of, and it had a penalty he could not endure.

But for now, let me introduce some other characters to the reader who played a role in this fiasco:
"The Hatchet Man."

There was Faith G. Freewill, in which the G. stood for "Grace." Faith was Thomas. D. Freewill's wife for many years. Until the Lodge convinced Thomas and Faith to get a divorce so the Lodge could make more money off Faith because she would receive the most for her Fixed Income from the State here in Amerika.

And there was Page Neighbors, whom we will address more later, but for now I will say she was a nemesis of The Doubting Thomas in that she accused Thomas of being a harbinger of Satan and hit him square in the face with a wad of keys, saying: "You fucking Atheist, I hope you rot in Hell!" Of which was not the most original idea when it came to Evangelicals distaste for atheism, but it was what she said when she assaulted our hero the Doubting Thomas at the Lodge.

Next, there was Mr. Frank Manners, or just Mr. Manners who was the Lodge's resident counselor. It was Mr. Manners who accused Thomas of having a "fixed mindset." He, too, would persecute poor Thomas with all the power he had to try and crush a defenseless resident at the Lodge. Mr. Manners was a schemer and had hatched a plan to get rid of Thomas D. Freewill even before Thomas had come out as an agnostic atheist, who was also a Humanist and a Freethinker.

Another opponent of Thomas D. Freewill's was Dick Hagg, a loathsome man, who craved attention and power and control, which he in all actuality, had none. Dick and Jane Hagg, his wife, worked with the resident counselor to alienate the Doubting Thomas from his wife Faith G. Freewill. Little unbeknownst to Dick Hagg was that Faith G. Freewill was loyal to her husband, even after their sham divorce that the Lodge convinced her to make with Thomas D. Freewill.

And lastly, there was Gabby Babble and her friend Fig Fable. Both were a few years younger than Thomas D. Freewill. And the two were lesbians, or perhaps bi-sexual. Regardless, Gabby Babble and Fig Fable were persecuted by the Evangelicals; therefore, Thomas took a liking to them. And to the Evangelicals a serious disliking of them could not be hidden.

Another character I will mention is Minister Sinister, a White Christian Nationalist through and through. His hate for atheists ran deep, as we shall see below. Minister Sinister was not his real name, of course, but rather a pen name for a writer on the internet, who wrote the “Flog Blog” which was the short name for the Christian Nationalists Parent’s Guide to the Chastisement of Children, which encouraged Christian parents to beat the Devil out of their children. And these writings could be found on and read aloud on Amerika Faith Radio, or AFR.

Last, and certainly worth mentioning, is Jack Slacker, a dear and loyal friend of Thomas D. Freewill, who had lost his wife Jilt Slacker not long ago to the System, just as Thomas D. Freewill would lose Faith G. Freewill. Jack and Thomas spent many days just hanging out at the Lodge, enjoying life.

All these characters met one night at the Book Burning Bonfire led by a person mentioned earlier in these narratives, Quelle, or Q. as he was infamously known as nowadays.

The days of Thomas and Jack hanging out and enjoying themselves were over, though, now it would be the serious business of the Doubting Thomas and his faithful sidekick Jack Slacker fighting the fight for freedom from the shackles of the Lodge. Jack simply went along with Thomas as far as any reasonable... Really, Jack Slacker was extremely loyal to Thomas and Thomas was loyal to Jack Slacker, so much so that Thomas and Dick went from arguing one evening, to throwing blows. It started when Dick Haggie started ranting at Jack Slacker and this went on for about a quarter of an hour until Thomas had heard enough and told Dick to “Shut his fucking arrogant mouth!” Dick proceeded to tell Thomas to “Shut his fucking atheist mouth.” Whereupon Thomas lit into Dick with a solid couple of punches that rattled the short and stocky Dick Haggie. The two then exchanged blows for a moment more and Thomas wrestled Dick to the ground, got on top of him, and shoved a handful of dirt into Dick’s mouth before Mr. Manners could pull Thomas off poor Dick.

Mr. Manners determined that Dick was “probably” at fault and did not contact the authorities for Dick’s sake because he would have been taken to jail. Thomas, though, refused to apologize to Dick. Saying “that dumb son-of-a-bitch got what was coming to him!” Frank tried again to get Thomas to apologize, but Thomas D. Freewill knew he was in the right, and would admit no wrongdoing.

And so this incident sparked our Doubting Thomas to rebel against the Lodge and society as a whole, as far as the society of Evangelicals he butted heads with nowadays here in Amerika, and in the South.

There was another adversary to Thomas D. Freewill known as Rig. And it was Rig who encouraged Thomas to start smoking cigarettes again. Who would do such a thing these days, anyhow? But Rig was a Pretender for certain. He claimed to be a descendant of Horus, but was more a “horse’s ass” according to Thomas. Rig did influence to start vaping, assuring him it was harmless. Thomas D. Freewill was a bit naive sometimes and Rig took advantage of him with this weakness, not that trust should be a weakness, though. And ultimately it was trust that Thomas started vaping. Either way, Thomas was happy in his new addiction, a new drug, so to speak. But our Doubting Thomas did doubt his friendship with Rig, as he should, and began to separate himself from Rig at the Lodge.

Rig had an associate, I might add, whom Thomas D. Freewill disliked more than he had come to dislike Rig. This person went by Stickman, called this because of his tall and lanky build. Stickman and Rig began to gang up on Thomas because of his coming out of the closet. But Stickman was a supposed Christain, a believer in some God or what not, an Evangelical to be certain. And as most Evangelicals, his entire being was strewn with hypocrisy. Not that Thomas D. Freewill didn't have an appreciation for contradiction in one's personal idiosyncrasies. Stickman was a walking contradiction, though. Stickman always found the opportunity to bring Thomas D. Freewill down. But not down to earth but down as to send the Doubting Thomas off the deep end. And it was the Deep End that Thomas lived, though. The Doubting Thomas in Thomas D. Freewill was happy to go to the brink of reason, but just deep enough to metamorphosize into a spectral and luminous personality. Thomas was searching for his "self," and it was in the Deep End that he had come face to face with a visage of solitude, which he had found in a "black dream," as Thomas called it. A daydream that was on the dark side... something that seemed as spiritual confusion to the Evangelicals, but to the Doubting Thomas it was clear that Rig and Stickman were the equivalent of a couple of jackals, not to be trusted but kept close and watched. For, they were out to devour his soul: to eat Thomas D. Freewill's soul and shit out gold, as Thomas D. Freewill liked to jokingly say.

And it was not that Thomas even believed in a soul, perhaps, but only in a figurative sense. Thomas was more a believer in Nothingness, a state of not-being, of non-action and a world of complementarity of opposites as he had learned from Taoism and Heraclitus... He was on the Path to Oblivion, a thoughtless nothingness that Thomas believed was at the heart of our existence. The Evangelicals, like Stickman and even Rig and esp. Dick Haggie and Mr. Frank Manners -all of these individuals were floating around trying to avoid their shadows, their alter-egos, but Thomas D. Freewill embraced his shadow and was thankful it was always there with him, following him, unshakable. There is comfort in the certainty of your shadow, of the Other. But Rig and Stickman were lost in nothingness, and would return to that from which they had come: from nothing we come, and to nothing we return, thought the Doubting Thomas.

And while Rig and Stickman were persons that Thomas D. Freewill associated with, they weren't his kind. Thomas had a friend, Grace Cousins, who he had grown up with and still kept in touch with, and Grace was Faith's middle name, and she was more formerly known as Faith Grace Freewill.

Thomas and Jack, though, were on the same level, on the same playing field as actors in this world. The two spent many hours each day just languishing, taking it easy, and simply hanging out as friends typically do in this world. And they were of this world, not some fantasy of a world to come beyond death. This subject, though taboo to most, was a general topic of discussion among the two comrades. And Jack Slacker would never encourage Thomas D. Freewill to smoke cigarettes as his nemeses did. Jack, on the other hand, -Jack's biggest "bad influence" was limited to coffee and energy drinks: this was the extent of Jack Slacker's bad influence. Jack also liked to reminisce about the time he went to Farmer's Market and bought some magical beans, but we'll save that for another time and place than here.

Anyhow, Thomas and Jack liked to drink coffee and energy drinks whenever they could scrounge up enough money to buy one of these items. Thomas took to selling his book collection even to purchase these drinks that were a luxury item at the Lodge. Thomas, though, never sold a book that he hadn't already read, inside and out. The one thing Thomas D. Freewill would not part with: his Master Copy of what he called, The Great Work! This was a collection of Thomas D. Freewill's own writings that you as the reader might have heard of.

Regardless, the Doubting Thomas had many good things going for himself even at the Lodge, that most of the other residents had none of; except, Dick Haggie, who boasted about his sketches and writings, in which the stories weren't even typed and the sketches were not digitized, either. So Thomas offered to help type up Dick Haggie's work and digitize his sketches. This was before the brawl happened, and part of the reason it happened was because Dick resented that Jack Slacker delivered the message from Thomas D. Freewill that he would not be typing up any more of Dick's stories. Thomas made this decision because of Dick's failure to pay him the fee they had agreed upon, which was just 10 cents per page, and 50 cents per sketch to digitize them. Thomas felt this was a fair rate considering that Dick Haggie got to keep a third of his benefits of his Fixed Income; whereas Thomas and Jack only got to keep a measly \$20 of their benefits Fixed Income. Nevertheless, the Doubting Thomas was seen as the villain for supposedly over charging poor Dick, as Mr. Frank Manners put it.

But accusations always seem to follow Thomas, esp. accusations about his integrity which was questioned simply for the fact that he had come out as an agnostic atheist, who was also a Humanist who was “Good without God,” and a Freethinker, who practiced freethought, as well. This title may seem a little long-winded, but it was necessary for Thomas D. Freewill to state exactly who and what he was. And also by freethought, it was meant that Thomas D. Freewill exercised opinions that were formed free of the typical outside influences of politics, religion, etc. Thomas D. Freewill was indeed a free-spirit. He lived by the Layman’s Philosophy he had developed being acculturated to Globalized Culture at the University of Academia. Though, Thomas had abandoned the idea that Academia was for the betterment of Amerika, and its dream.

The idea that Academia was for the betterment of Amerika was an “either/or” argument, a false bifurcation, or a false dichotomy, that is. It was believed that Academia either made one a better person, or it did not. But Thomas argued that there was a third option: that by attending Academia without a degree, he was free from the ideology that the government and society and other institutions placed on attending the University of Academia. Indeed, Thomas had attended for some 10 years while avoiding getting a degree completely. This subtle defiance set people into confusion, though. How could someone not want to finish and be a lifetime student as Thomas D. Freewill had dreamed. The reality was not as glamorous: Thomas would be indefinitely “betwixt and between” being a student but never quite an Alumni, which he disliked the idea of.

He disliked the idea of being an Alumni, though, but in reality Thomas could have probably been okay with having become an Alumni. A person’s ideology seemed to mislead them in general Thomas thought. It was better just to avoid any deep thought on any subject, in fact. Thomas esp. thought this way about religion. Religion, the word derived from the Latin *religio*, which meant “to come together” seemed to divide people rather than to bring them together. So, deep thought was useful, or at least had its uses in everyday life. But in general, reflection on too much was useless, such as debates about which was a better coffee: Papua New Guinea or Jamaican Blue Mountain. This type of thought, or train of thought, so to speak, is a useless endeavor, and set to derail from the second one starts to engage in it.

The matter of our story here is, though, to echo what Thomas D. Freewill and a Professor, Dr. Critic. Thomas encountered Dr. Critic at the University of Academia long ago. The Doubting Thomas, who would be 50 years old soon, had been out of the University of Academia for 20 years now reflected on his discussions with Dr. Critic often still. Another professor Dr. Wit was more to Thomas D. Freewill's liking than Dr. Critic due to the fact that Dr. Wit was a generation older than both Freewill and Critic. And he had better insight into what would later be Thomas D. Freewill's magnum opus: The Great Work!

The controversy that surrounded Critic and Thomas was a story Dr. Wit had praised both the allegory and praised the explication of it. What happened was Critic, the hatchet man behind this story, -Critic dismissed the allegory as the work of a naïf and that Thomas was not the wordsmith he thought himself to be. Thomas responded to this with a livid attitude. An attitude that was understandable. The story was titled: The Box.

But Thomas, as furious as he was, wrote another allegory: The Secret Society.

In the piece of writing, Thomas wrote about a man and his unrelenting effort to get revenge from an invisible and unknown nemesis, which was a misuse of authority. The story never comes to fruition, or at the hero of the story R. never resolves his predicament or achieves his goal of revenge. Anyhow that was what irked Thomas, a professor who cited that to Thomas that "the invention of the unknown demands new forms, and a professor who admired experimental playwrights, but judged Thomas D. Freewill's experimental allegory was not worthy of thought.

One day, Thomas took his writing The Box to Dr. Wit who understood the intricacies and nuances of the experimental allegory. It is quite well that the whole fiasco amounted to nothing except a misunderstanding. Though, it wasn't a simple misunderstanding but a piece of writing that gave Thomas recognition from the University of Academia as writer of the year at the University of Academia which sent the Doubting Thomas off the deep end. And it took more or less 8 years for Thomas to recover his confidence as a writer.

Thomas D. Freewill came out of the woodwork after 8 years and was now deciding what to do with The Great Work!

Thomas was quick to regain his composure and complete furiosity as he previously in the group home years at the Lodge. Thomas bypassed the opportunity to publish his book, and he wrote with a sense of purpose.

All in all, Thomas was satisfied with his deconstruction of 'The Great Work!' because he was the one to save it by being critical of it himself. Critic never took back the stance that 'The Box' was worthy of thought, but Thomas proceeded to follow his path of writing, good or bad, and straight and crooked as Hericlitus had said and his path of obscure vision of the art and craft of writing.

Thomas D. Freewill was critical of Amerika, of its influence on Academia, and of its conflict of interest with evil corporations and their political agendas for monetary gain. Mammon and his minions made certain that a political divide cripple Amerika, and the influence of Evangelicals through their disregard of separation of Church and State. As well as the Evangelicals grab for political favor, which they claim is because they are in God's favor. Nothing could be further from the truth, though. Evangelicalism had at its core the bureaucratic and institutional nature of evil to grapple with before its Church was acceptable to the herd, and the herd went head fashion off the cliff of reality into the deep end where it was only spoken about with apathy and indifference. These two things, apathy and indifference, would be the status quo of people's thought and action someday soon. That is. if the End Times didn't come and sweep up the Evangelicals away in the Rapture. Which wouldn't be happening until the Age of Water far off into a future generation who would have forgotten about us, except that it would cast the first stone to set in motion the self-fulfilling prophecy it so dearly wanted, but a time in the Cabalah that speaks of the Second Coming of Christ not of the land that is coming, but the land that is constantly coming. And one has to take this quip to mind, for the narcissism of our Zeitgeist casts into our future an inexhaustible shadow of shadows.

Thomas D. Freewill had been in the group home for a few years when he was assigned a position at the Underground Library, and Thomas was put there by the Automata. The position was given to him under the pretense that he would be in charge of late fees and the resale of donated books. But if a person had a late fee, or book fine, The Underground Library was a private library, and a person could only use the library if they were a member of the Automata. And to be a member of the Automata, one had to attend the University of Academia. Thomas put down in his application that he had attended the University of Academia, but didn't tell the administrator for the Automata Society who did the hiring for the Underground Library.

But nothing was said about this anomaly that Freewill the root of. The Automata Society knew that Thomas had not finished at the University of Academia. Thomas was to be interrogated and searched before he entered and left work each day. And soon, time went by and Thomas didn't concern himself with this oddity of him not finishing. One day, though, the Automata sent an agent to conscript Thomas, but he was all too familiar with the agent because of his experience with the Gestalt and familiarity with Academia. Thomas could remember vaguely with a distorted memory, the time he spent in Backwards, Amerika.