



ERROR

SERVER ERROR

NO ENTRY

SUNSETTERS
NO ENTRY

A hideous glitch of a story
set to our best music.

A SICK STORY

Sometime after the coming of the 21st century, years after the administrative near-calamity of Y2K, and a little bit into the emergence in the music scene of a style that is called "grime," an incident occurred to a Western man. This man was given a name when he was born in a Western country, but journalistic practices suggest his name be withheld, and those same practices are hereby extrapolated to also withhold the country. For the purposes of narrative noun-ership, this man is just "the Guy."

The Guy was a warm-blooded barrel-chested card-carrying paragon of Western ideals, a regular dayjob crusader for God and the nuclear familiy in a post-nuclear age.

He never had many friends besides those who, like him, bore silent witness to a society morphing under their feet.

Prepped in school for a life of cold hard cash and unwinding by the TV, he became an early adopter of the World Wide Web in hopes of getting an early lead on the marketplace.

And so it was he thrived for a little while as he came into his own.

Liked for his wit, if respected only at a distance, he was on the path to getting used to this arrangement.

But something happened.

A SICK STORY

(INSTRUMENTAL)

PROPHETIC TO THE BLIND

Western society wasn't the only thing falling forward unto the brink of the unknown. Something changed in the Guy, something he didn't talk about openly.

Details are still vague on the particulars, but police consensus has confirmed this much:

At some point, the Guy found a forgotten journal.

Again: He found... a journal.

He never let anyone see this journal. When it was discovered by his bed after the incident,

forensics mistook it for a mistake. It wasn't his;

it didn't have his fingerprints on it,

or anyone's fingerprints for that matter.

It bore a tattered leather cover, caked in forest mud.

Its pages were older than the Guy,

older than most of the investigators in fact.

It was bagged away for later examination.

But the Guy...

Back in those days, to all outward appearances,

the Guy was just going a little nutty.

PROPHETIC TO THE BLIND

I read somewhere once that this world is doomed

I read somewhere once that all hope is gone

I read somewhere once we're under control

Despair raining down

Crushing hopes and dreams

Abandon hope, then drown in these dark streets;

You will find me there, digging through it all.

The center of absence is where I live.

Do you know how deep its claws have sunk?

Crack of the whip, and now you see your role

KEEP CALM CARRION

What a sickly joke

The system chews you up and spits you out

I can see them looking down on us

Yeah, I see them now looking down on us from inside of their Phrygian citadels.

From your TV sets, they sell you your peace

Is there no way out of this nightmare?

Doom, torment, and their lies

Try to close my eyes

Demon children logged into stranger's mind

Power all around, there's nowhere to hide

They've got you

Prophetic to the blind

TOWERS AND CITADELS

He would start preaching, at a moment's notice, of the Way Things Are Going. For a while, there was some tenuous relevance to what was in front of him-- a building under construction, a TV channel covering news what didn't before, and a shop employee with too many tattoos were triggers for some of his most notorious polemics.

"Guy," a friend would say, "I hate it as much as the next guy, don't get me wrong, but sometimes a hat is just a hat."

Or "Let him bring his dog, he's not harming anyone," another would say. This may have stopped the Guy from that approach, but in him was still an Anxious River in the rainy season, and the levees of Public Decency no matter how strong the foundation can't stop the flood.

So he would boil over now without a catalyst at all, such is the course of human change.

TOWERS AND CITADELS

*Towers and citadels,
Pundits and evangels,
How can it be
That terror wears the mask of news on TV?*

*How can we find hope when hope's rhythms, exploited,
control human nature against what does not sell?
And what sells is Life, packaged, dressed down,
out of the way of busy sad lost killers.*

CONTRACT DESK JOCKEY

(SHUT UP AND PLAY)

Now, the Guy wasn't exactly an outcast, nor was he expected to become one. He'd had friends before, sure as there's a reader there reading these words. At his job, sitting at a desk doing paperwork for contracts, he found some good people who brought light out of his eyes. They had the valuable and uncommon ability to parse his spontaneous rants, cut through the underlying anxieties, and address his needs. It wasn't always the easiest job, but they were rewarded with the proud bloom of the Guy Fulfilled. Those are the memories those friends still think of him by, and those memories were worth it, as his skills in persuasion and enthusiasm when honed to a warmer cause were a divine sight.

Unfortunately, that isn't this story. And for many different reasons, the Guy lost that friend group. Some of them got promoted and relocated, some of them were downsized or left for their own paths, and the remaining friend couldn't stand being the Guy's ballast all alone and simply cut all ties. How this must have affected the Guy, one can only speculate. He clearly tried to get on by himself for a while, but it wasn't long before he met a new circle at his first Sunsetters concert. They were smoking something illegal in the back rows, he bought them some beers, and they got to talking. He had never heard this band before and had only come to this concert because it was touring in his town, so this new circle gave him recommendations and a lot of drugs.

Perhaps, if circumstances had been different, this could have been a way out for the Guy.

CONTRACT DESK JOCKEY (SHUT UP AND PLAY)

I'm stricken with a buzz

When I'm around my new favorite rock band

Bought tickets for the evening show!

Takes me away from grinding labors,

Contract Desk Jockey,

Don't wanna think,

I wanna bop!

Oh, shut up and play!

Shut up and play!

Don't be clever,

Paid you to play!

Oh yeah, let's rock

Rock in the same way

- that's performance!

My friends all left me

I'm out with a new group,

We get high to forget the same things!

"This is the story of loneliness..."

Man, shut up and play!

You're not paid to

make me feel bad!

Shut up, just play!!!

God, shut up and play!

Stop the solos!

Stop the new songs!

Just play favorites!

Shut up and play!

Don't write! Just play!

Same songs each day!

Shut up and play!

Listen to me:

Fanbase ain't free!

Listen, I say:

Shut up and play!

BEING WATCHED

It's time to take a step back and gather more context. How did the Guy find the journal? This is a crucial riddle for the investigation into what happened.

His sojourns into the forest predate his downward plunge, so evidently they were an activity he simply Liked To Do. About once a year, the Guy was known to take a trail into a dense and winding forest (there were many such near him). He would bring camping equipment and spend several days out there, as he was competent at survival and relished the silence. He wanted to bring friends out there, but that never panned out. He didn't seem to mind, though; the forest was his ritual. To be lost amidst the trees, to have only the birds and the bees for company...

Anyway. One year came the strangeness: The Guy went into the woods... and then came back after only two days. It is generally accepted that this was when he found the journal. What was it doing in those woods? Who left it there?

Was it the journal that changed him, or was it the forest?

One of the only pieces of writing penned by the Guy, found in his house during the investigation, suggests he met someone out there, someone who gave him the journal. Following up on this lead is nigh fruitless. There are some reports, from time to time, of people going missing in those woods, or of feeling watched, but what can the police actually do about that?

It makes sense that official consensus would gloss over this part of the story. The details cannot save us.

BEING WATCHED

June 19th:

*In the woods there is peace.
And the birds,
And the woodland animals!*

*On the trail,
On my way out from you.
And the wind,
And the rustling trees hear me.*

Peace...

Alone...

June 21st:

*In the woods
All the birds have left
because the wind stopped.
A voice speaks to me:
"Do you want to see?"*

COLORS OF GRACE

So the Guy became an adult, the Guy found a journal, the Guy lost his friends and made new ones, and the Guy inched closer to a terrible incident. What was his mental state like then? It wasn't pretty. He had finished reading through the journal by this point, and he would spend his drugged-up nights processing its contents and fitting them into his view of the world. The journals, according to the Guy, were the age-worn logs of a soldier who fought a war to establish capitalism, only to be betrayed by his State for all his hard work. "Gunned down in the street by a faceless grunt," as it were. In any case, the keeper of the journals had died, and now the Guy's anxieties were fed bloody raw meat. He still wanted to believe in the world, but how could he when he now questioned the police? If he could no longer trust the police, wouldn't the rest of his beliefs inevitably close in on themselves? "There is an It that society is changing towards, a Bad It, and the police are In On It... so too must be everyone else." Yeah. You know how it goes. The Fox in the henhouse.

COLORS OF GRACE

**WE TELL YOU THE WORLD IS BLACK AND WHITE
AND WE TELL YOU THAT CRIME IS BLACK ON BLACK**

*Pay to play the soldier's game once you've sold your heart
(you've sold your heart)*

*Ignite the cherry bomb pyre if you win
(pull clip and throw)*

*May fortune favor the brave, and god I doubt that's you
(favor the brave)*

*Nothing left to face but our mutually red white and blue destruction
(colors of grace)*

*Red on the bills,
White in the words,
Blue is the paint after the whitewashing*

*Said bloody morrow thrice into the mirror
Let's see if their muses drowned me out*

*A farewell kiss before a life of sorrow
I am just a traitor*

FOLLOW ME UNTO THE BRINK

Now, if this story had an omniscient narrator, if God could come and speak to us, He might tell us some worrying things here, as there are a very many unknowns to this case, and a case like this is unlikely to have an innocent resolution. As it is, the speculators have free rein to provide many worrying theories rather than just the one.

Was the keeper of the journal kidnapped? Assassinated by foreign spies as revenge for his part in an ideological war? If it was actually the local police, could it have been a personal grievance, as simple as that? Or a mistake?

Was it even the police? Couldn't it have been anyone?

Was the keeper of the journal even telling the truth? Couldn't he have been telling a story?

Was the keeper of the journal a cult leader? Did he leave the journal in the woods for it to be found?

None of this matters now.

FOLLOW ME UNTO THE BRINK

(INSTRUMENTAL)

THE BOY IN THE LIGHTHOUSE

Who was the Guy in his childhood?

If he had a family, they took him to live in a lighthouse when he was little. If he didn't, maybe he was left there. He slept at the top, maintaining the light for the passing ships. If he had a father, that father sailed away never to return. If he didn't, he likely imagined the father he never knew would come by ship. If he had a mother, she was either with the father, or is another cruelly forgotten detail for the speculators to take for themselves.

Regardless, it is known that someone lived in a lighthouse, many years ago.

THE BOY IN THE LIGHTHOUSE

*Heya boy,
Keep the light on
Keep it high.
And now you can cry.*

*Heya boy,
Keep the light on
Keep it high.
And now you can cry.*

*Heya boy,
Watch the ships go,
Out of sight.
And now here comes night.*

*Heya boy,
Keep the light on,
Keep it high.
And now you can cry.*

*Lighthouse boy,
Tears are brambles,
Your heart's dry.
Can you...
Can you fly?*

ELECTRIC DISTANT

Isolation is at the heart of this, of course. Society gives us a duty to weather the isolation in order to hold each other together. Many do not accept this duty and fight the fight of change, but in the end all will settle into an equilibrium that still maintains the same principle: Weather the isolation, boy. Such is the course of human sadness.

ELECTRIC DISTANT

(INSTRUMENTAL)

THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE

Meanwhile, what about the Sunsetters? Why not speculate about them too? The song that they were most famous for at the time of the Guy's introduction to them was "The Man Who Wasn't There," and it is all but certain he saw them perform it. That song has little explanation to it, coming in towards the end of a busy album, suddenly talking about a monster in a suit and tie. The lyrics purport that the singer has lost her mind after an encounter with this monster, that it follows her wherever she goes yet cannot be seen, that it breeds her anxiety. And she invites the listener to sing along with her to the (rather difficult) vocal part, whereupon the curse would spread to him too. What if? Right? What if.

THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE

*Follows me home in corner of my eye
A blur born of anxiety and lie
Gives birth to dread's corruptible despair
Don't look again,
The man will not be there*

*Shifting unknown, I just know his purpose:
State of paralysis, the blood furnace
He sees without a body,
Don't you dare look at him now,
The man who isn't there.*

*Follows me home in corner of my eye
His face begets anxiety and lie
His suit is fine, too fine, I atrophy—
Well, here I go, my mind says "no entry."*

*The capital messiah behind me
(who speaks in atonal chords with no key)
looks like a room - a dream - a wordless breath,
follows me home - he's the wight hand of Death.*

*From me to you, if you can sing along
You too will live in worlds of Glitch and Wrong
Nobody talks, nobody finds you where waits empty mind,
The man who wasn't there.*

DEATH OF THE AUTHOR

In the end, the story must go on. The Guy showed no sign of correcting his course, of stepping back from the abyss of aggression. His beliefs didn't necessarily stay the same, though. It has been argued that prolonged obsession with the journals had put the details of his rants in flux, if the angry core rolled on constant. Other investigators cast doubt on whether human psychology is truly so malleable as to be molded by some random thing a person read. "What, do you think television warps kids' brains too? Get out of the 90s," they say. I guess you can see both sides, can't you?

In any case, one day the Guy woke up and knew he had a duty.

DEATH OF THE AUTHOR

*Towers, citadels rending clouds in two
King Mob's sunglassed grunts immobilising you
They charge, carnage, a safe home this is not
Will you sing for this fell Ordensstaat?*

*Flaying, praying, breaking down your mind
Death throes, talk shows telling you it's fine
When I sleep I am faceless in my thought
That's what years do in this Ordensstaat*

*Sleep awaits me,
It awaits you.
When they broadcast,
It grabs you too.*

*Sleep awaits me,
It waits for you
When they broadcast
Red white and blue.*

*This past account, this man who died
Fighting for a right to hide
He did his job, I regard him well
But did he know he built our Hell?
He fought the war on puppet strings
Controlling force, what madness brings
He did his job, I regard him well
His victory just didn't sell*

*Sleep awaits me,
It devours youth.
There's no entry
Into the truth.*

*Sleep awaits me,
It waits for you.
Police killed him,
They'll kill you too.*

BEST REGARDS

The most authoritative account, the report of the incident made later that evening, has it that it was this way:

The Guy woke up, stood in front of the mirror for a time, put on his gloves, then opened the journal and gave it one last read before closing it, leaving it in the position that forensics found it. He grabbed his gun, a Glock 37, and left his house, driving towards the nearby shopping mall. Aside from the gloves, he was also wearing a pair of wrap-around sunglasses, a camo hunter's vest over a pale-blue dress shirt, and a pair of tight-fitting jeans. Witnesses described his behavior on arrival as "flaky," "wandering," "undecided." After approximately 3 minutes, he fired 5 shots into the crowd, hitting several. Police were called by mall security as the Guy made his way into a clothing store and took cover behind an abandoned counter. Police response time was 7 minutes, as they were held up by roadworks. During that time, the Guy fired a few more times at whoever was unfortunate enough to pass by, though he hit no one else. Upon seeing the police, the Guy shouted at them, calling them "King Mob." He made no attempts to submit peacefully and showed no sign of reconciliation. He fired once at the police, hitting an officer through the heart, and then made for the exit. Officers chased him for 30 yards and gunned him down on the sidewalk in front of the mall.

What else can be said? It's a sad state of affairs. We may never know the truth about the journal he found, but we know his truth: The Guy was the iconic Western man, breaking down in aggression about an anxiety he couldn't put a face to.

This is not a cautionary tale. This is reality, or is it fiction? Either way, it's all dust windward.

BEST REGARDS

JOURNAL:

Open the journal. . .

*Arms limp, perdition
Approaches, unburdened by weight
Translates into
A Crimean view
Of Atom the late. (Perdition
Approaches, utop
King Mobgoblin Cremate.)
High Street, Grim's around
The new library Pharmacy—
His elder crimp in warn-torn boot.
Grins at me, waves
- Money spells saves -
Do I know his transmute? (Grim's be
All laconic, pepperlate root [me with
Morpheme. {Now shoot.}])
Plays in the dark (are)
Still plays at heart (our)
Strings of deceit (hours)
Semper whereat (whores or sores?)
Mind the gap, my head is sore from
Looking for wooden Mobgoblin*

THE GUY:

*Mind the gap, my head is sore from
Reading journals, time to close them
Tear off this skin-like mask and
Come back to me
Expel my soul in but a breath
Tell me it all again
Just don't ask questions and I'll fix everything
Drawn steel hounding the messiah
(are our hours whores or sores)
Break this fucking world and tape it back again
I see you years back
Stolen the form of your reaper
Mockery as you come at me
My patriotism's at half-mast as my bullets fly
Think you have me here, king mob?
Yours isn't the only drawn steel
Eight and forty-six I lie
Bloody on the street, walls raising*

SUNSETTERS ARE:

ELSIE CARR (Vocals, Synths)

SALLY DEATH (Guitars, Mellotron)

DEGAN ALLEN (Guitars, Vocals)

PAUL BLACKWOOD (Bass)

FIN JENSBY (Drums, Percussion)

Produced by Elsie Carr, Sally Death, and Jack Allman at Gothic Egg Studios

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For actual credits, seek the nonfictional album commentary.