

Framed Egg #3



Made from real
paper!

(paper may or may not
contain poison)

Three months in a row I have done this now.

Unbelievable if you know my track record of never complet-

(check out that funny joke of not completing the senten-

Great EggspecLETTERS

Question?

What does "epistolary" mean?

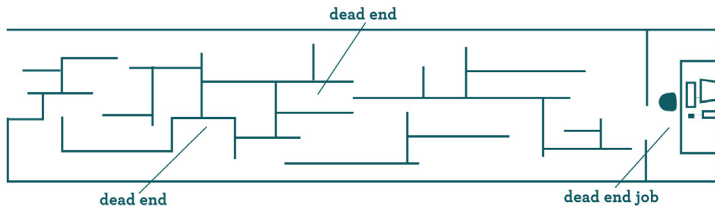
Cute Frererrer

Poison Control

Say -hypothetically- you accidentally spilled some anthrax and ricin on a piece of letter paper, but didn't want to just put it in the garbage. Would it be unethical to mail it to a magazine?

Answer Off The Air

Framed Egg
Famed Maze



"This is an unusual situation."

If this relationship is going to work out, it's important that you hate the same things as me.

Human beings are bound together by the things we despise.

You and I met at the movies, when we both rolled our eyes as we watched a husband and wife try to wrangle three toddlers. After the screening, we bonded over how annoying that family was and how shocked we were at their basic lack of courtesy. I see that conversation as implicit permission to *always* hate those kind of parents, and permission to *always* talk to you about it. For the rest of our lives together.

That goes both ways, obviously. You have stuff you hate too, and I can be a black hole of anger and bile for you. Spew your vitriol, release your aggression, and I'll take it all in. I'll agree with you, even, and spur you on. I think this is important.

Hate can kill you if you keep it bottled up. Heck - it can make you kill *other people* (which we don't want to do, even if they truly deserve it, like that woman on the bus who kept talking to someone on her cell phone about how nobody would give her a seat). It's best for our own health, and the safety of society at large, if we subject each *other* to our outpourings of loathing.

The only snag in this plan is what to do when we need to vocalize our hatred for each other. It's not desirable to have to listen to your partner rant and rave about why you're awful, much less agree with them. Instead, I suggest we parcel out the spite to our friends and family in small packages. They might get sick of this, or suggest we stop seeing each other, maybe offer us advice on divorce or therapy. But then all we'll need to do is *cut them out of our lives*. We probably hate them anyway, right?

I've tried this before, and it's worked to varying degrees of... well, failure. I think it's going to go great for the two of us, though, because we're in love, and I *believe* in love. I really do.

But not as much as I believe in hate.



Meet My Street Meat

It seems like superheroes are the new big “thing”, and I’ve always prided myself on keeping my hot dog cart up with the latest trends. Back in the late ‘80s I used to shape my burgers to look like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle* meat. Then Pogs were huge. Remember Pogs? That was a tough one to spin, meat-product-wise. I ended up burning small discs of meat, like *really* burning them, and selling them as “Pork Pogs”. It’s a shame Warner Brothers cartoons weren’t bigger at the time; I would’ve been a big fan of the slogan “Pig Out On A Porky Pig Pork Pog!”

The *Pokémon* craze seemed easy enough, of course. But nobody wanted to buy a “Charmander Chorizo”. I think the fact that you had to eat it while it was still on fire was a big disincentive.

Like I said, now it’s the superheroes. I had a tough time figuring an angle on that one. The most popular ones are the Spider-Man and Batman guys, right? But I didn’t really want to associate my food with vermin or insects, okay? I was hoping that *Hellboy* would do well so I could pretend that his girlfriend cooked all my food with her flame powers, but you can probably figure out how well that went based on the way you’re having to struggle to remember her.

She was played by Selma Blair, if that helps.

A bunch of my friends suggested tying into the *X-Men* flicks. But with all the scare stories about genetically modified foods, I didn’t want the word “mutant” anywhere near my wares. It puts people off their snacks if they think they’re eating a crime against nature.

So I’ve settled on Aquaman. I know that he hasn’t actually had a movie yet, but I think I’m getting ahead of the curve. I have a sign on my cart:

If Aquaman were real, it is not outside the realm of possibility that he would eat one of these hot dogs. That is not, however, to imply that they are fish-free, or dolphin-friendly.

I had to put that last bit there. I hate dolphins ever since my cart’s ill-fated *Flipper* tie-in.

Turkey Neck: a Christmas carol

(sing to the tune of “Turkey Neck”)

On a frosty winter night,
As I was sitting all alone,
Nobody else had come for dinner,
So I let out a plaintive moan,
And I called upon the forces,
Of our collective Christmas cheer,
Because I’d cooked so many courses,
For a big party this year.

Pretty soon I heard a tapping,
Upon my foggy window pane,
And the rustle of some wrapping,
Being torn apart again,
So I opened up my door real wide,
And said “friends, please come
hither!”
But I saw your face and then I cried,
And my skin started to shiver.

*Turkey neck! Oh, turkey neck!
Your flesh so red and your beak so
yellow!*

*Turkey neck! Scary turkey neck!
You’re such a gruesome, ugly,
terrifying fellow!*

You pushed past me with inhuman
power,
And devoured all my morsels,
Your beady eyes began to
glower,
and you said “now I feast on
mortals!”

*Turkey neck! Oh, turkey neck!
Your powerful jaws, and talons like
knives!*

*Turkey neck! Freaky turkey neck!
You made the townspeople fear for
their lives!*

We called upon Van Helsing
to come to our aid and slay you,
He summoned up Beelzebub,
Who very soon betrayed you,
We locked you in an iron cage,
And with our whips we flayed you.
Now with this jaunty Christmas song,
I gently serenade you.

*Turkey neck! Oh, turkey neck!
No longer a threat, because you’re
behind bars!*

*Turkey neck! Captured
turkey neck!*

*Maybe you’ll escape,
but you haven’t so
far!*



A Twist in Time

Dr. Miles Merker was in his laboratory again. He'd been spending more and more *time* there lately, and it was high *time* he realized that was too much *time* to be devoting to his latest project. There was nobody around to warn him about his obsession, though. Nobody, save his cat - Professor Einsnuggles.

"I think I've finally completed the device, 'Professor'," Miles said to his fluffy little buddy. "I can't believe I'm finished. After all this *time*. Well, let's see if it works."

Dr. Merker stepped into the large metal enclosure, and closed the guard door. After all, he didn't want his pet cat going back in *time* with him. Because that's what he had built - a *time* machine. He was going to travel in *time*.

"Wish me luck!" Miles waved goodbye at his cat as he became enveloped in a blue-white light.

Dr. Merker awoke in a large desert landscape, lying next to a pool of scummy water. He looked around and tried to figure out if his *time* machine had worked correctly, if he'd ended up in the right *time*. As he glanced at the red, cloudy sky, he saw a pterodactyl soar overhead.

"I guess I went farther back than I intended," he said. "Farther back in *time* I mean."

He was thirsty, and went to get a drink from the pool. When he got there, though, he saw that he was not alone - nearby were two creatures. The first was a small, almost-hairless mole, while the second had fur, and whiskers, pointed ears, and a tail.

"These must be some of the first mammals on Earth!" he said. They appeared to be growling at each other, arguing over the right to the water supply. "I mustn't do anything to disrupt the flow of events," Miles said. "I wouldn't want to mess around with *time*."

Just as he said that, some sand got in his nose, and he began to need to sneeze. He tried to stop himself, but the irritation was too much. Nobody would be around to say “gesundheit” for a few million more years, but that didn’t stop Dr. Merker from blasting the area with his saliva and snot.

And right in the path of that discharge? The small, mole-like mammal. Unbeknownst to Miles, this little creature was one of mankind’s early ancestors. It sniffed at the fluid now covering its snout, taking in all the current-*time* germs that the doctor had brought with him to this prehistoric *time*.

The mole began to shake and shiver, its eyes rolled back in its head, and it keeled over. Dead.

“Uh-oh. I hope that doesn’t change anythi-,” Miles started to say. But then there was a blip in *time*, or a glitch in the universe, or something.

Professor Einsnuggles was in his laboratory again. He’d been spending more and more *time*

there lately. There was nobody around to warn him about his obsession, though. Nobody, save his **human - Miles Merker**.

“I think I’ve finally completed the device, ‘**Doctor**,’”

Professor Einsnuggles said to his hairless little buddy. “I can’t believe I’m finished. After all this *time*. Well, let’s see if it works. Wish me luck!”



The Cabal

After the inauguration, the new President of the United States was led to a small, dark room in a sub-basement of the White House. He was flanked by Secret Service agents, but when they reached a round door a man in a cloak appeared and told the bodyguards to turn and go.

“We can’t leave POTUS unprotected—” one of the agents began to say, before being cut off by the cloaked figure, who simply made a sign with his hands. The agents turned and ran.

The President thought this was all hella cool. He’d been worried that Presidenting would be boring as shit, but he was excited now. As a younger man he’d wondered if the rumors of a secret cabal of faceless men controlling the country were true, and now it looked like he was about to find out.

Behind the round door was a large room. The President could not see where it ended, and when he turned around to find the entrance he came through, it was gone.

As was the cloaked figure who had guided him.

“Hello?” he called out, stumbling forward in the near-darkness. “Is anyone here?”

“SILENCE!” a voice barked. Twelve men in ancient robes emerged from the void. “We are about to tell you the truth of your new role, the part you will play in our domination of planet Eart-”

“Wait, wait, wait,” the President interrupted. He was peering into the men’s robes, and noticed something strange, and awesome. “Do you guys actually not have faces?”

“Is that really important? You are to be instructed about the New World Orde-”

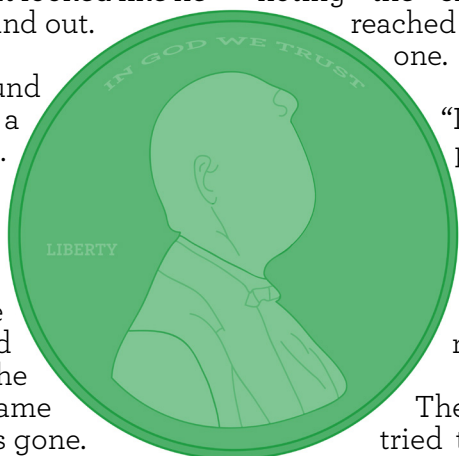
“Yeah, yeah, whatever. That is so cool! How do you guys eat?” The Prez was now looking closely at each man’s head, noting the smoothness. He reached out to touch one.

“Don’t do that, please.”

“Why? Does it hurt?”

“No, it’s just rude.”

The President tried to calm himself



down, but this was all so freaky. He wanted to text his buddies. They'd never believe this - the "faceless" men in charge of civilization were ACTUALLY faceless. Maybe that was why they were so controlling? Some kind of reaction to being bullied for being different? The President cared a lot about bullying, and had some new initiatives to combat it in the next four years. Maybe he should tell these guys...

"Are you ready to listen, now? Ready to be told your destiny?" he was asked by one of the men.

"Sure, sure, absolutely," the President said, backing away and smoothing down his suit, which he'd wrinkled by jumping up and down in excitement. "One quick question - do you folks need to shave?"

A murmur of dissent rumbled through the room, and the hooded figure who had first spoken to the President sighed.

"Fuck this," one of them said. "We'll just wait for the next guy. Who wants to go drink some Tang?"

Now the President was even more excited.

"You dudes have Tang!?"

You know that

thing where you think everybody you know has been replaced by impostors, or robots, or robot impostors? I think I have that. Except... I don't really mind. I feel like the replacements are nicer to me because they don't want me to catch them in the act, and they're a little smarter because their robot brains are so good at doing math and stuff, and they all have this delightful new-car smell.

I don't know if I should tell somebody. I mean, it's a little disconcerting, sure. You have to wonder what happened to all the "originals". But maybe they're fine. Maybe I don't need to worry.

Maybe I can just relax and enjoy the security that comes with knowing that if these new friends get on my nerves I can just deactivate them with an electro-magnetic pulse.

*Is your self esteem too high? Do you need to be taken down a peg?
Are friends constantly asking you to tone down the confidence?
Do you want someone in your house to tell you you're a dumb
bitch who shouldn't try anything since you're only going to fail?*

Try the

Mouth of Judgement from Existential

The many lips of the *Mouth of Judgement* will whisper terrible truths to you, day and night. You won't be able to turn it off, you won't be able to block it out. Wherever you go, you will hear the voices. Doesn't that sound comforting?

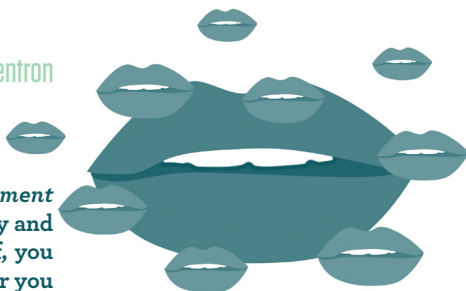
*The Mouth of Judgement
helped me realize that I'm
not happy after all.*
-lee, 42

*The Mouth of Judgement
is the only person who'll
be honest with me. Too
honest.* -name withheld,
age withheld

I tried to have sex with the Mouth, and messed up, and now it tells everybody who comes to my house.

-brian. 12

Great for pity parties!



Oil: it's not just fuel.

When Theresa Holme wanted to create a masterpiece for her gallery showing, she turned to oil. In the form of oil paints. It's right there in the name.

When Louis Phillips, a disabled teen, wanted to run in the Olympics - oil was there. The super-hard plastics in his prosthetic legs come from oil. Did you know that? I bet you didn't, you idiot.

When David Velt was in a car accident and desperately needed a transfusion, the doctors sure were glad they had oil on hand. Now, obviously, they should have used blood instead. But putting all that oil in Dave *could* have saved his life. You never know until you try.



So how about you stop criticizing oil? Because you could be in a similar situation one day. Perhaps you'll run out of food, and oil will be the only thing left to eat. You'll be pretty grateful for oil then, huh smart guy?

SET MENU

*"We like to think our customers
have a relationship with their meal."*

Our opening **salad** contains **four different varieties of beet**, which meet in your mouth. As they slowly become a part of one another, the **balsamic dressing** penetrates your tastebuds.

Then, you engage with the main course - a delicious and supportive **beef tenderloin**, wedded with **gravy and vegetables**.

Your palate now overwhelmed, you seek solace in a fruity **sorbet** that clears you mind of all the other food, the food that has taken so much from you. The sorbet understands, and listens, and doesn't nag you to clear your plate.

Our **slow-brewed coffee** separates from its oils in front of you, while the dessert of **nectarines** reconciled **with brandy** provides the light at the end of the dinner tunnel.

Divorce **tiramisu**.

Dear Congressman,

*My friends never
congratulate me when I come
up with an excellent piece of
wordplay (for instance: "railing
against the train industry").*

*Martin Luther King Jr.
gets a day, and I don't?*

Come on.

Walter Usell

We're doing 'secret Santa' at
work, and I pulled out Darfur.

I guess... I guess I better get
them something good.

Scrabble Emergency

**MUSIC: A FEW SECONDS
OF DANNY ELFMAN'S
1989 BATMAN THEME.
JUST ENOUGH TO START
BUILDING TO A CRESCENDO,
WHICH IS ABRUPTLY CUT
OFF BY --**

SUPERMAN

Hey, Bats! You're almost late, we nearly went ahead without you.

BATMAN

Y'know Clark, the signal is only meant to be used for emergencies.

SUPERMAN

This is an emergency. We needed a fourth for Scrabble.

BATMAN

Fourth? Who else is here? And why does this place *reek* of booze?

SUPERMAN

Aquaman started the party a little early, if you know what I mean. He always could drink like a *fish*.

**SOUND: SUPERMAN
LAUGHS.**

BATMAN

Yes, which is why he has a sponsor now.

SUPERMAN

Aw, lighten up, Bruce! Hey, can I ask you a favor? Will you help me convince Wonder Woman to play Scrabble with the strip rules?

BATMAN

Absolutely not. And don't you have x-ray vision for that?

SUPERMAN

Nah, it gave too many people cancer. *Litigious* people.

BATMAN

I'm gonna go fight crime now.

SUPERMAN

Oh, come on man. Just stay for one round? Look, I'll go first.

**SOUND: SCRABBLE TILES
BEING PLACED ON A BOARD.**

SUPERMAN

Q-S-G-G-Z-Y-F. Double word score, and fifty points for using all my letters. Alright!

WONDER WOMAN

Kal, I don't think that's a word.

SUPERMAN

Sure it is. It's Kryptonian.

BATMAN

For what?

SUPERMAN

For "*I can crush your head with my bare hand*."

BATMAN

We're done here.

SUPERMAN

If you walk out that door, I am heat-visioning your nuts off.

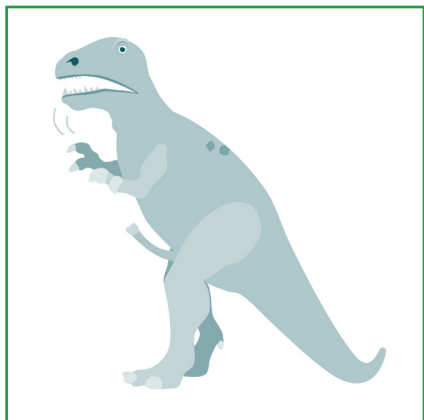
BATMAN

Make sure you throw Aquaman in the ocean so he can dry out.

SOUND: DOOR SLAMS.

SUPERMAN

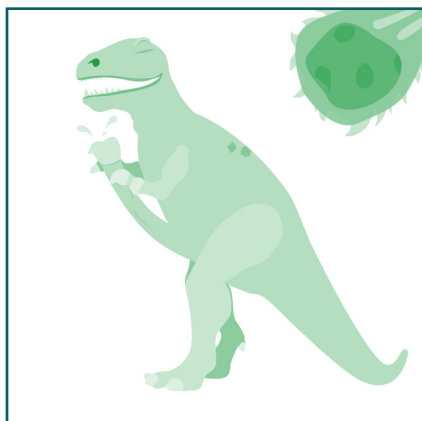
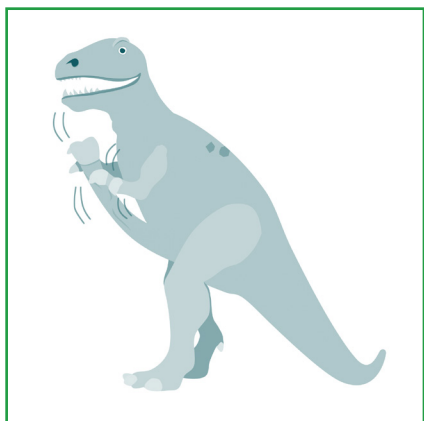
Say, Wonder Woman... Can you get cancer?



Dinosaur



Story



Cult

SOUND: the chiming of church bells

MOM

Your mother called earlier with another name suggestion: "Gregory".

DAD

Doesn't she know that picking such a conformist name for our son would be exactly the kind of excuse Reverend Handshake needs to justify sacrificing us at the next Harvest Bacchanal?

MOM

It's typical outside-world thinking. They don't take the time to consider how important a truly unique name is to MetaChrist, the Lord of All Things.

DAD

Praise MetaChrist.

MOM

Yes, Praise MetaChrist.

DAD

You know, speaking of names, I had an idea of my own. How about "Oomin"?

MOM

Oh, did you not hear? The Candlewids -that family two Faith Huts over- just named their new daughter "Oomin".

DAD

I never liked the Candlewids.

Favorite

MOM

Yes, they often fail to shave the appropriate patterns into their heads during Barber Tithe Celebratory Festival Worship Month. Still, I'm sure MetaChrist will punish them.

DAD

MetaChrist is wise and just.

MOM

Yes, Praise MetaChrist.

DAD

What do you think of "Belt"?

MOM

It feels a little constricting. But along those lines, I've been considering "Volt".

DAD

C'mon, now - we don't want him to be a *quarterback*!

MOM

Okay, let's see... Would you object to "Vinyl Long Play"?

DAD

That has a nice vintage sound to it. But I really like one-word names, like "MetaChrist".

MOM

Praise MetaCh-

DAD

Can we just take it as read for the rest of this conversation that we both Praise MetaChrist?

MOM

Okay, but remember, MetaChrist is always listening.

DAD

What do you think of “Kemt”?

MOM

I don’t recall anything about MetaChrist being unkempt...

DAD

No, for a name. K-E-M-T. Kemt.

MOM

I’d prefer Keml.

DAD

Keml’s too close to the name of UltraSatan’s henchman, “Kemml”.

MOM

Hm. I’ve been thinking about “Window”.

DAD

C’mon! “Window” is a girl’s name!

MOM

Maybe... “iPhone”?

DAD

I thought we agreed on no trademarked names.

MOM

You’re right, you’re right. MetaChrist *knows* this religion doesn’t need any more lawsuits.

DAD

I like “Soupçon”.

MOM

Eh. It needs a touch of something. I read a great name in a gardening book the other day - “Bucket”.

DAD

Leaves me feeling a bit empty.

MOM

Um... “Moot”? What do you think of “Moot”?

DAD

Oh, what’s the point?

MOM

The point in “Moot”?

DAD

In any of this. We’re never going to agree.

SOUND: mom and dad both sigh

SOUND: footsteps

SON

Mom! Dad! Can you hurry up and pick a name for me, already? Christ!

MOM

You mean “MetaChrist”.

SON

Fuck you.

SOUND: footsteps

MOM

He hates us.

DAD

Ah, don’t worry. Teenagers hate everyone.

Breaking News

AKA “ripping off The Onion’s style”

Wealthy Christian
Pretty Sure Jesus
Likes Rich Guys

Actual Puppy Love
Mostly About
Humping

Kid Figures Out
Farm Where Family
Pets Go Must Be
Getting Real Full By
Now

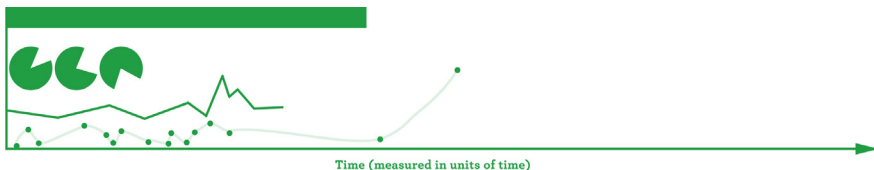
Grandchildren
Shocked Wars “Used
To End”

New Spider-Man
Movie Wants You To
Forget Old Spider-
Man Movie

Guy Who Plays
With Frisbee
Reluctant To Call It
That

It Would Be Kind
Of Cool If Every
President Was Just
The Same Dude
With A Different
Face

Third-World
Village’s Only Car
Menaced By Same
Village’s Only
Backseat-Driver



Iraq War Veteran Continues To Serve Country



Sonnet 3.14

Shall I compare thee to a Summer Glau?
That robotic, balletic, giver of hydraulic punches
and River of post-hypnotic hunches.
Will you Firefly me to the moon and restrain your rage
when I liken you to that Fred from Angel
dead-but-available
as Illyria
(so silly a plot twist as I would ever wish on friend or foe).

Or if I, placid as your cyborg kin, call you Miranda,
will you weep at the memory of all who dwelled
within
that experimental land or
will you be granted the Serenity to
pleasure me while I wonder
if they'll ever find a vehicle for you
that isn't a space-freighter or a time
machine?

Shall I compare thee to a
Summer Glau?
Or is she too serene?
Is there more seen
under your surface
than a sci-fi writer
could account for?
The last time
you cried, was it a
downpour?
Or would your circuits
get fried?



The Phonebooth

When he was done installing the payphone at the corner of Vine and Lancell, the company man returned to his truck and drove a few feet away, just far enough to be hidden from the view of those about to use it. He made sure to maintain a sightline. He waited.

The appearance of a new phone booth in a neighborhood was not often remarked upon. They blended into the environment with ease. As soon as the company man checked that the line worked, adjusted the phone books so that they at least started *out* level, and then left, people began to use the phone. Within minutes. Every time.

He liked to watch the first few calls, see how this machine he had provided to the community would change the lives of the people in it. This time, the man from the phone company watched a young woman laugh as she caught up with a friend back home. He saw a small boy call his mother to let her know he'd be at the baseball field a little longer than she expected. On this particular day, the man in the hidden phone truck felt sad as he observed an older gentlemen quietly weep into the receiver.

Phonebooths were both private and public, they belonged to everyone and nobody. The company man liked to take a few moments, watch the phone make its first calls, get an idea of the difference it would make to these people. Then the man in the blue overalls with the phone company logo on the left breast pocket shifted the truck into gear and drove away. He drove a street over, or a town over, or wherever the next payphone was due to go.

Ten years ago, the phonebooth at the corner of Vine and Lancell started ringing. People called from all over, curious as to if anyone would answer the last payphone in the country.

At first, every call got an answer. Those who lived nearby the booth wondered why it was so popular all of a sudden. Then one of the younger folks let everybody else know that the booth had been featured on a few popular blogs, and everyone in town started coming by to pick up the handset.

After a few weeks, people started coming in from *out* of town to answer the phone. Then from out of the county, out of the *state*. Local government had to appoint someone to manage the crowds of people who wanted to use the phone. News crews came by to cover the story.

The fifteen minutes of this phonebooth's fame ended up lasting several years, providing a steady source of tourist income to the town. Restaurants and diners offered phone booth-themed menu items. One café redecorated, painting the walls with the phone company's logo, and putting in a system that allowed customers to place their order by placing 25 cents in a slot on the table and lifting a receiver connected to the kitchen.

Within the decade, tourism slowed. Enough people still came every year to keep the town prosperous, though, and while the constant ringing of the phone annoyed the locals, they still appreciated its benefits enough to not pay the noise too much mind.

The phonebooth at the corner of Vine and Lancell didn't just settle into its surroundings - it defined them.

Raptor Plan

Part three

"In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." I identify a lot with that saying. Partly because I see the whole world as blind to the constant threat of velociraptor attack. And partly because I lost one of my *own* eyes installing a laser-guided crossbow system in the front yard.

Like Odin, I have sacrificed a part of myself to gain wisdom. The wisdom to fight monsters from the past. The wisdom to arm myself against creatures with toughened skin and razor-sharp teeth. The wisdom to pay someone else to install the damn crossbow next time, or at least wear some goggles or something. Safety first.

It is my hope that you will finish this manifesto and think about your own life, about how ill-prepared you are. Perhaps these words will save some lives. Perhaps a few of you will put down this book and go to your nearest gun store and purchase a rifle or two. Perhaps some of you will build a moat around your property, as I have, in the hope that raptors can't swim.

Perhaps one of you will write to me, and I will - for once - get to communicate with somebody who doesn't just laugh in my face.

You are lucky. I do not often have the spare time with which to dedicate myself to warning innocents such as yourself. I am usually running my family through a series of drills and exercises, making sure they are prepared to fight for their lives. Today, though, I've given my wife the permission to make a rare trip to the outside world. Our regular routine right now would involve a series of patrols around the house and its perimeter, but my wife says she wanted to take the girls shopping for body armor.

I have to tell you, this surprised and delighted me. All this time, I thought my wife didn't believe me. I thought she was convinced that I had lost my mind. Then she lifts my spirits by taking the initiative to go with the kids and invest in their safety. She even went so far as to pack up all their clothes, too, to donate them to a local homeless shelter, she said, since the girls will just be wearing their body armor from now on.

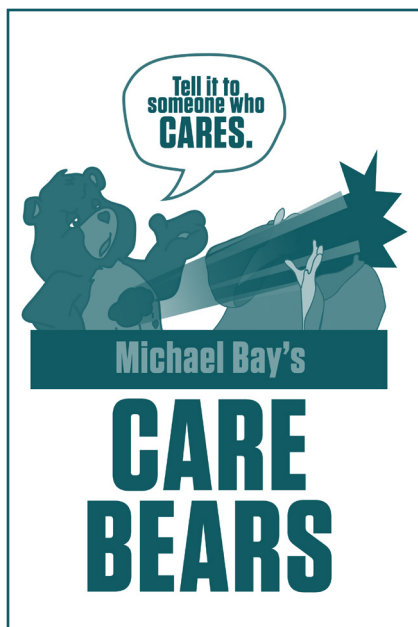
I was so proud. I wanted to go with them, to see my offspring in their new protective outfits for the first time, but my wife insisted it was a mother-daughter bonding event. I couldn't argue with that. After all, it's that kind of sentimentality that separates us from our reptile ancestors. If I had tried to come between a mother and her daughters, well... I'd be no better than a velociraptor.

I hope they're okay. It's been a few days now, and last time I checked, the army surplus store she was headed to isn't that far away. We moved to this house because of its proximity to both that store and a local harbor (I always have a small house-boat gassed-up and ready to take us away). I'd go after her, after the kids, but I can't leave my home -*our* home- without a watchman.

She'll be back. Where else can she find a man who'll keep her safe from dinosaurs?

Poem of the week of the issue

Peeing out my pee hole,
pooping out my butt.
My excretory systems
are stuck in a rut.
Gonna change things around,
in my bathroom place.
Maybe poop from my knees,
and leak pee from my face.
I'll shoot sperm from my fingers,
and sweat from my ribs.
Don't steal this idea,
'cause I called dibs.



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NEXT ISSUE: benevolent dictators - malevolent beraters - hyper-violent potatoes - wishing wells - jet-pack-rats - racial slurpees - pages of words **AND MORE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

"I can't give you anything without a prescription," she says, "not even the bathroom key."

"What am I supposed to do?" he asks.

She points to the floor, smiles, and pulls out a camera.

*—From my novel,
No Ordinary Pharmacy*