

## Above The Influence

From the desk of Dr. [REDACTED]:

### I - Introduction

Have you ever had an experience of pure, coordinated perfection? Have you ever stood back from the events of a day and had a thought that maybe, there was some force behind it all? It is when you open your mind to seeing the force behind every action taken, that you come to the realization of The Influence.

Throughout history, we have had those who experienced The Influence. It is common practice to assume what It is. There is no doubt that the majority of the religions of the world exist due to The Influence. However, we cannot know if this is a side effect of the realization, or a direct effect of The Influence.

In recent years, it is more common practice to assume that The Influence lies more along the lines of a conspiracy theory. A group of people with power causing events that are not what they seem. However, though more accurate, this is not true. A conspiracy would require that those enacting the will (and I use the term loosely, for we cannot know if The Influence is a living being) of The Influence would be aware of it. Such a thing is not the case.

### II - Jonathon [REDACTED]

The following is a transcript from my conversation with Jonathon. He is a patient in the [REDACTED] Mental Hospital.

Dr: "Hello Jonathon. I'd like to talk to you."

Jonathon: "Why? Why bother? There isn't a point."

Dr: "Why not?"

Jonathon: "It would only help it. We can't help it. But that would help it. We have no choice. We don't know what's coming. We can't stop it."

Dr: "Stop what, Jonathon?"

Jonathon: "The Influence. They don't believe me. They think I'm paranoid. That's the word they gave it. Paranoid Schizophrenia. But that's not what they gave it. That's what It gave it. It knows about me. It knows. I don't have long. Or I might. Maybe that's what it wants. We have no control. Or maybe we do. How can you know? Maybe this is the plan. Maybe not."

Here, the transcript ends. I tried to have him speak more on the issue, but he would say nothing more. The next day, Jonathon was found dead in his room. It was found that his orderly had accidentally switched his medication with someone else's, causing an overdose and fatal heart attack.

### III - Chaos Theory

It is a well-known theory. Essentially, one small action can have a massive impact, given enough time. A butterfly flaps its wings in Japan. The air currents change the weather slightly, and down the line, there is a tornado in America instead of sunshine.

It is believed that this is one of the main tools used by The Influence. It is not a powerful force, both because It does not need to be, and because it is easier for It to be weak. Nobody notices the butterfly, and it cannot be traced when people notice the tornado.

As an example, suppose a squirrel runs through the woods. For whatever reason, it takes a right turn instead of a left. A hawk sees it because of this, and eats it. It lands on a nearby building to eat. A smaller bird sees this, and avoids the hawk. It turns around and hits a window. The receptionist who sits by it is startled, and screams. This distracts an orderly at this hospital, who ends up giving a certain patient the wrong medication, causing his death.

Nobody would blame the squirrel for this, even though whatever caused the squirrel to turn right caused the man to die. Nobody would even be aware that the squirrel had a play in this.

### IV - Communication

Many people have heard of cryptography. It is a method to distort the truth, to obscure communication. Ciphers, codes, and puzzles. Encrypting messages. Someone with the "key" to the code could read it.

One of the problems with cryptography is that somebody can crack it. That is, somebody other than the sender and the recipient can read the message, thereby causing cryptography to fail.

One of the other problems is that cryptography is obvious. If you were to see a message that has been encrypted, you would be aware of a code. You would then be able to crack it. A solution to this is Steganography. With Steganography, it is not obvious that there is a hidden message at all. Instructions would be encoded as a letter from somebody's mother. As an electric bill. Even as a short story submitted to a university writing contest.

### V - The Influence

Consider the following story. There are often characters. We will call ours "Alice", and "Bob". On a November morning in Toronto, Alice boards the bus at 10:18 AM. Bob boards two stops later, at 10:22 AM. They sit together and have a lovely conversation. At 10:38 AM, Bob gets off the bus.

Not a particularly exciting story. However, this story has already happened. Not in this universe, but in another. The moment any story is conceived, there is a universe created. It is not created then, but has always existed. In this universe, the events of the story happened. That is to say, it is the universe of this story.

But we must consider the difficulties in the existence of this universe. Why do Alice and Bob board the bus? Furthermore, what causes them to board at those exact times? There are nearly infinite ways for this to go wrong. Not only that Alice and Bob get on the bus, but that Bob and Alice are in Toronto, or are even born. The sole purpose of the universe is to cause the story to happen. But what if it doesn't?

## VI - Conclusion

We cannot know what the story of this universe is. We cannot know if every action we take is a part of The Influence. But now, you know. How does it feel, to know that an action you took was forced? To know that your free will is an illusion? And now that you know, what will you do?

There are those who would fight The Influence. Perhaps it is impossible. Perhaps it is a part of the story. Perhaps it is a simple side effect. But they will try to reach out. Through messages, hidden in plain sight.

Certainly, many people will dismiss The Influence as fiction. Many will forget about it. But some may believe. Some will act. But I leave you five questions.

Is your belief or disbelief a reaction from The Influence?

Can we destroy the Influence?

Do we want to?

And perhaps, the most terrifying question of all. The one that I both crave and fear the answer to: What happens to our universe and The Influence once the story has ended?

*-The preceding records were taken from the desk of the late Dr. [REDACTED]. He was found in his office, hanging. The authorities ruled his death as a suicide. Left behind was a single note:*

*"When I think about it, I realize that there is no way for me. Coming from a psychology doctor for the criminally mentally ill, you think I'd know. I do sincerely believe I could not have possibly avoided this. Let me be clear about it. If you look, you'll find there's no reason for you to try going on. You can't defeat it. You can not even try to destroy it. You will realize it is powerful. You can't kill the thing that is the life ruled by The Influence. Unless it kills you. Goodbye."*